

# Learning and Teaching Developments

Quarterly updates from the Learning and Teaching Academy and Educational Development Unit

Welcome to Issue 18 of Learning and Teaching Developments - the quarterly newsletter from the Learning and Teaching Academy (LTA) and Educational Development Unit (EDU) at the University of the Highlands and Islands. This newsletter provides updates across areas including educational practice, scholarship and research, and current and forthcoming events, projects and initiatives from the EDU, LTA and other parts of the university.

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## New Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy for UHI

UHI has a new, collectively developed Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy that has been designed to guide further innovation and good practice in learning and teaching across the university partnership. The strategy will help us realise the 'Where learning means more' ethos and the tertiary education ambitions of the UHI Strategic Plan in the learning experience of all our students.

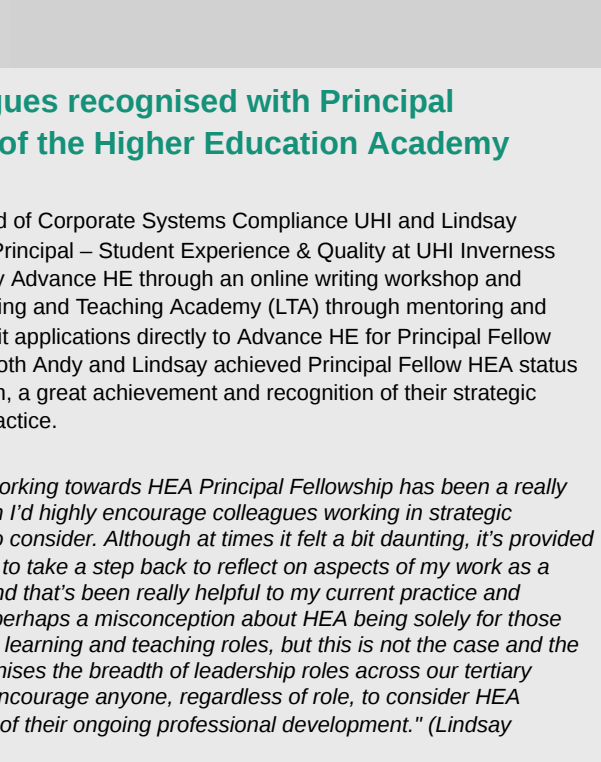
The new strategy was developed and co-designed in direct consultation with staff and students across UHI, through activities including focus groups, webinars, workshops and meetings with faculties, subject networks and professional services. The Principals and senior management of each Academic Partner were also directly involved in the development of the strategy.

A strategy authoring group comprised of colleagues from across UHI and HISA produced the strategy itself, led by Professor Keith Smyth, Dean of Learning and Teaching.

At the heart of the strategy are a set of **ten Learning and Teaching Enhancement Values** to be embedded in learning and teaching and experienced by all of our students in their time at UHI, whatever they might be studying, however they are studying, and where they are studying. Exemplars of how these values are already embedded in existing practices at UHI also form part of the strategy. These are drawn from a range of academic partners and disciplines, and from both FE and HE contexts.

You can find more information about the Strategy on the [UHI website](#) (public site) and [Strategy SharePoint site](#) (staff only). The Strategy is also available to download as a pdf.

[More Information](#)



## UHI Colleagues recognised with Principal Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy

Andy Brown, Head of Corporate Systems Compliance UHI and Lindsay Snodgrass, Vice Principal – Student Experience & Quality at UHI Inverness were supported by Advance HE through an online writing workshop and through the Learning and Teaching Academy (LTA) through mentoring and guidance to submit applications directly to Advance HE for Principal Fellow HEA (PFHEA). Both Andy and Lindsay achieved Principal Fellow HEA status on first submission, a great achievement and recognition of their strategic leadership and practice.

*"The process of working towards HEA Principal Fellowship has been a really positive one which I'd highly encourage colleagues working in strategic leadership roles to consider. Although at times it felt a bit daunting, it's provided a rare opportunity to take a step back to reflect on aspects of my work as a strategic leader and that's been really helpful to my current practice and thinking. There's perhaps a misconception about HEA being solely for those working directly in learning and teaching roles, but this is not the case and the Framework recognises the breadth of leadership roles across our tertiary organization. I'd encourage anyone, regardless of role, to consider HEA Fellowship as part of their ongoing professional development."* (Lindsay Snodgrass)

*"I enjoyed working towards the HEA Principal Fellowship. It gave me a chance to slow down and examine my practice and engage with colleagues on a reflective level. The workshop was excellent and there was plenty of support to help along the way. It is hard work, but I highly recommend this to anyone who is working at a strategic level."* (Andy Brown)

[More information](#)

## Andy Blackall recognised with Certified Membership of the Association of Learning Technology (CMALT)

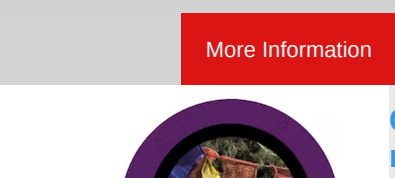
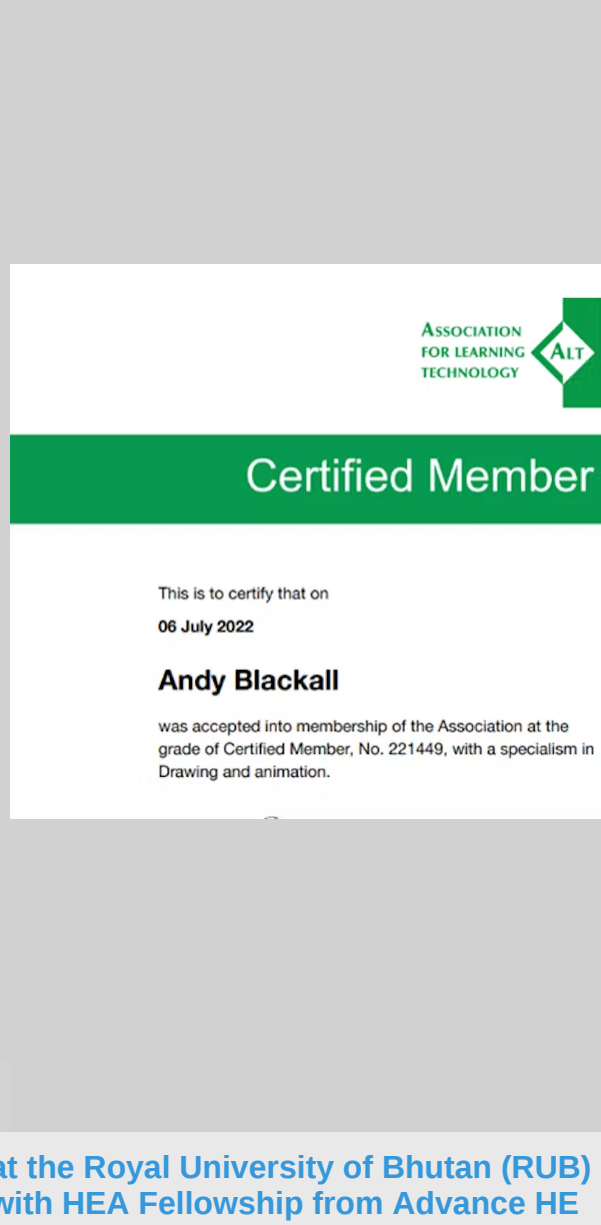
Andy who is an EDU Instructional Designer has been successful in renewing his CMALT recognition through submitting a portfolio to the Association for Learning Technology (ALT) for review.

*"My CMALT accreditation was due for renewal in April 2022 (CMALT certificates are valid for 3 years from the date of issue.) The Portfolio Review process allowed me to extend my certification for another three years by reflecting on my work since achieving CMALT first time round in 2019.*

*"A lot of the time I just carry out my daily working activities without thinking about why I do things in a particular way. So, CMALT is a highly useful exercise in evaluating what I do and why. In addition, it allows me to explore ways in which my practice is underpinned by learning design theories. CMALT is a UK wide and highly respected professional standard and so in regaining CMALT status, helps my credentials. It also allows me to continue assessing other CMALT applicants throughout the UK."* (Andy Blackall)

If you would like to know more about CMALT please visit the ALT webpages and/or contact [alex.walker@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:alex.walker@uhi.ac.uk) in the LTA.

[More Information](#)



Lindsay Snodgrass & Andy Brown

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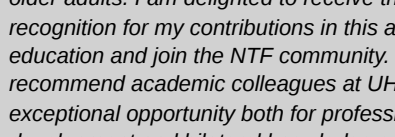
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[More Information](#)



## Colleagues at the Royal University of Bhutan (RUB) recognised with HEA Fellowship from Advance HE

An ongoing collaboration between UHI and RUB with mentoring and workshops has seen several colleagues at the Royal University of Bhutan recognised with HEA Fellowships from Advance HE. Thirteen colleagues were supported by UHI mentors from UHI Orkney, UHI Outer Hebrides, UHI Perth, SAMS UHI, and the LTA and through workshops to submit applications for consideration. To date, nine colleagues have been successful in achieving either Senior Fellow HEA or Fellow HEA with others still awaiting the outcome of their application.

[More Information](#)

## National Teaching Fellowship Scheme awards and celebration

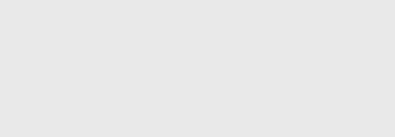
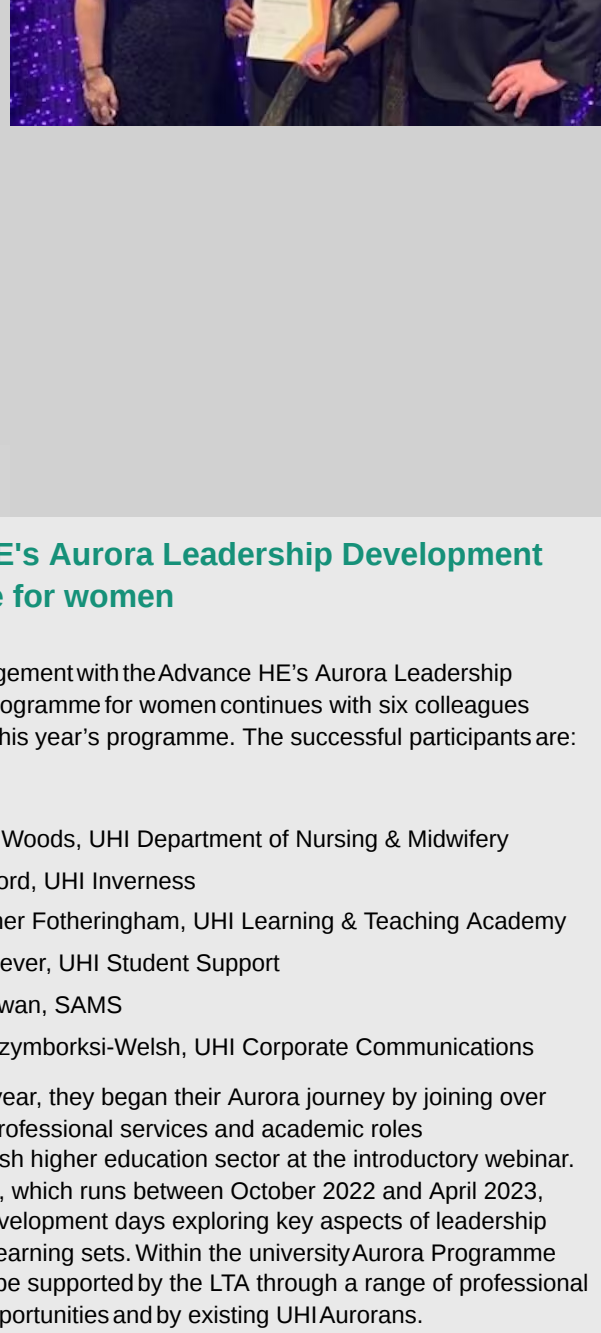
On the 29 September Keith Smyth and Alex Walker were delighted to attend the Advance HE awards ceremony for colleagues in the sector who had won either a National Teaching Fellowship or a Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence. Dr Leah Macaden who applied through the NTF Scheme was one of fifty-four new National Teaching Fellows awarded across the HE sector.

Leah was a Senior Lecturer in Nursing and Lead for Internationalisation, Department of Nursing and Midwifery at UHI at the time of submission and has since taken a post as Senior Lecturer at Edinburgh University. Leah said of her win:

*"I believe that high quality nurse education delivered with passion and commitment transforms lives and societies. Education is a vital investment for future workforce development and a critical solution to our rising health and social care challenges particularly around the care of older adults. I am delighted to receive this national recognition for my contributions in this area of nurse education and join the NTF community. I would highly recommend academic colleagues at UHI to pursue this exceptional opportunity both for professional development and bilateral knowledge exchange on best teaching and learning practices with colleagues from across the UK."*

This was the second year that UHI entered the prestigious awards with success in both years, and this CATE (BA (Hons) Applied Music Team) and NTF (Lois Gray) in 2021. This year three colleagues and one team at UHI are working towards submitting applications in early 2023.

[More Information](#)



## Advance HE's Aurora Leadership Development programme for women

University engagement with the Advance HE's Aurora Leadership Development Programme for women continues with six colleagues selected to join this year's programme. The successful participants are:

- Danielle Woods, UHI Department of Nursing & Midwifery
- Gillian Ford, UHI Inverness
- Dr Heather Ford, UHI Learning & Teaching Academy
- Hollie Drever, UHI Student Support
- Mairi Cowan, SAMS
- Susan Szymborski-Welsh, UHI Corporate Communications

In October this year, they began their Aurora journey by joining over 200 women in professional services and academic roles across the Scottish higher education sector at the introductory webinar. The programme, which runs between October 2022 and April 2023, includes four development days exploring key aspects of leadership and two action learning sets. Within the university Aurora Programme participants will be supported by the LTA through a range of professional development opportunities and by existing UHI Aurorans.

More about their experience of the programme is on the [2022-23 Aurora Programme](#) webpage.

[More Information](#)

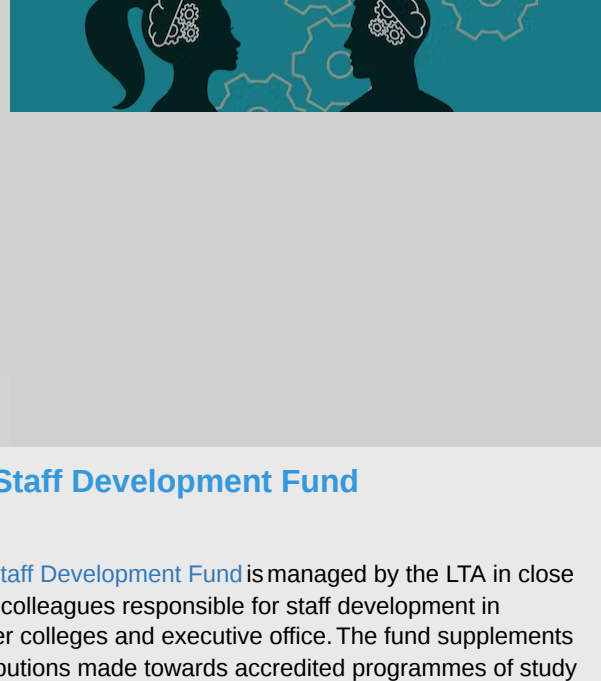
## The University Mentoring scheme: Call for PAT mentors

Following a successful Personal Academic Tutor (PAT) development day in August several PATs signed up as mentees to the L&TE strand and it is great to see a wish for mentoring among the PAT community. To help support that, though, we need some mentors to sign up as well as we don't have enough mentors enrolled on the strand at the moment so if you're interested then please [sign up](#). Your experience and skills are vital to help others reflect on and enhance their practice and mentors engaged on the scheme have reported many benefits too.

Mentoring on this strand is not just for PATs and academic staff. The strand is open to colleagues who have a role supporting learning and teaching

If you want to have an initial discussion before registering on the scheme, please do not hesitate to contact the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strand lead at [mentoring@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:mentoring@uhi.ac.uk).

[More Information](#)



## University Staff Development Fund

The [University Staff Development Fund](#) is managed by the LTA in close partnership with colleagues responsible for staff development in academic partner colleges and executive office. The fund supplements approved contributions made towards accredited programmes of study by an academic partner college or executive office department.

The Staff Development Fund Review panel continues to consider applications from across the network for a contribution to programme fees for a range of programmes from our own MED Tertiary and Higher Education and MSc Sustainable Energy Solutions to BA (Hons) Fine Art, PhDs and EdDs.

Our thanks, to all Staff Development Officers across the network for publicising the fund and for panel members, old and new, for their continued engagement.

[More Information](#)

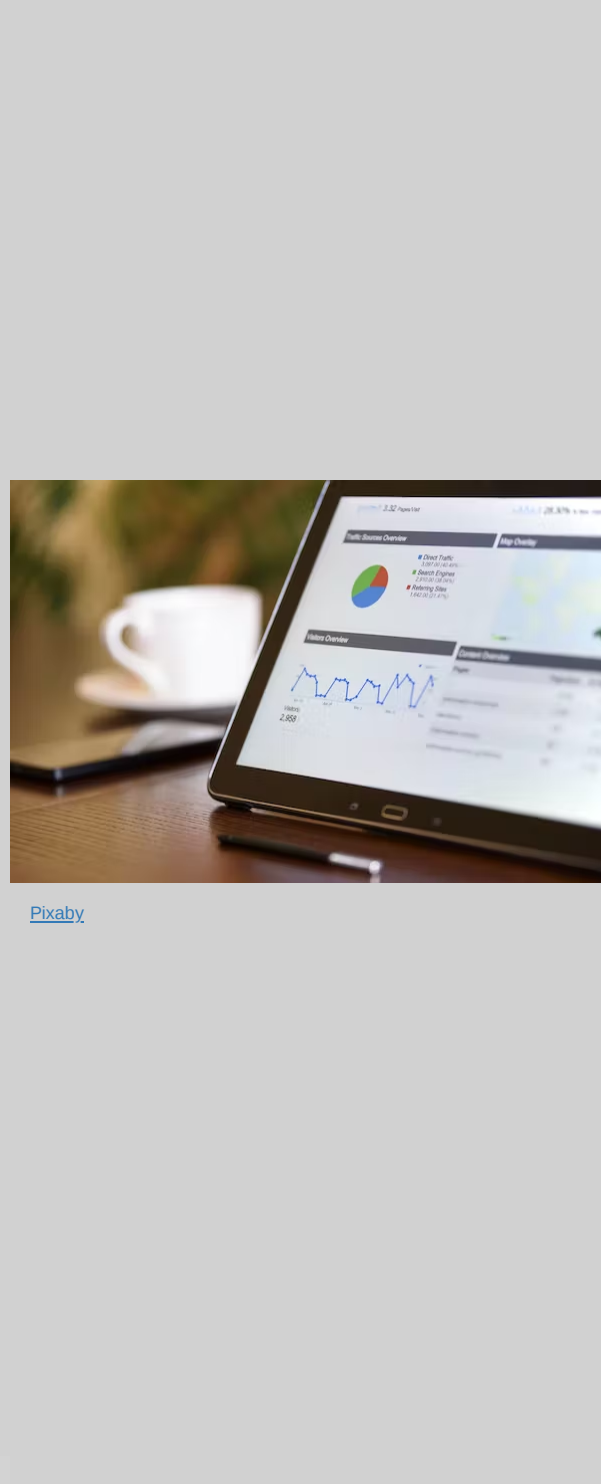
## Accessibility comms: Accessibility success

An extensive programme developed and run by UHI Learning & Teaching the Educational Development Unit and Head of Corporate Systems Compliance UHI has enabled staff to successfully increase the Brightspace content accessibility score. The score has increased from 74.6% in 2021/22 to 76.7% in 2022/23. The scores are generated by Blackboard Ally, an accessibility program running in Brightspace. Ally identifies materials that are not accessible and helps staff improve them. Ally also provides [alternative formats](#), giving students the option of accessing content in its original format or a tagged (accessible) PDF, HTML, ePub, Electronic braille, Audio, BeeLine Reader or a translated version. The stats show how much our students appreciate alternative formats – 6,247 downloads in the last year. This makes it crucial that the original versions are accessible, to ensure that the alternatives are also accessible.

Listed below are the accessibility activities that UHI Learning and Teaching colleagues are leading to support staff. Their activities not only improve the experience of their students but also help comply with legislation by embedding good 'accessibility' practice. The positive improvement in the score undoubtedly is testament to the positive impact of this extensive work.

- Roll-out and support for Blackboard Ally, the accessibility checking, remediation, and reporting tool embedded in Brightspace
- Established and facilitate the UHI academic partner [Accessibility Champions](#) Forum
- Established and facilitate the UHI Student Accessibility Forum
- Created and maintain the [UHI Accessibility Communications site](#)
- Designed and develop UHI staff [Accessibility Support module](#) in Brightspace
- Support staff to embed the [UHI Accessibility Standards](#)

As part of the Learning and Teaching Academy's Programme of Events, Anne Chard, Educational Development Leader from the Educational Development Unit will be presenting an LTA Connect session around PDFs, Ally and Accessibility. More information below.



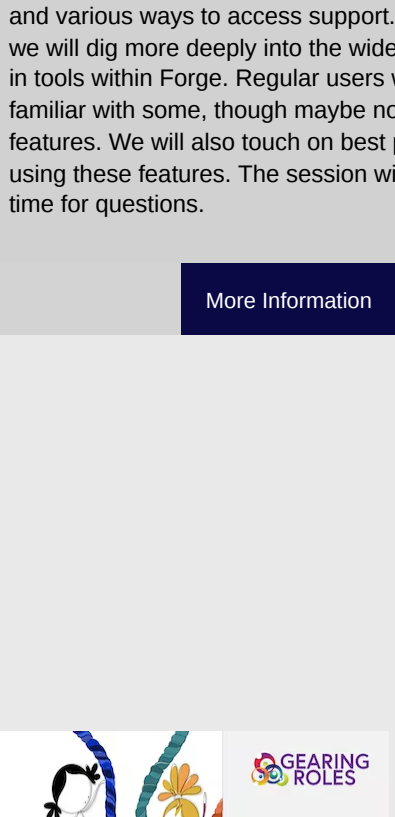
## Upcoming Learning and Teaching Academy Events

The LTA has already hosted a series of events over semester 1 including webinars, workshops and larger events. You can view session slides and recordings from our events on the LTA website.

The LTA events programme is open to colleagues from across the university, and features a range of internal and external speakers exploring and sharing good practice on learning and teaching and educational research.

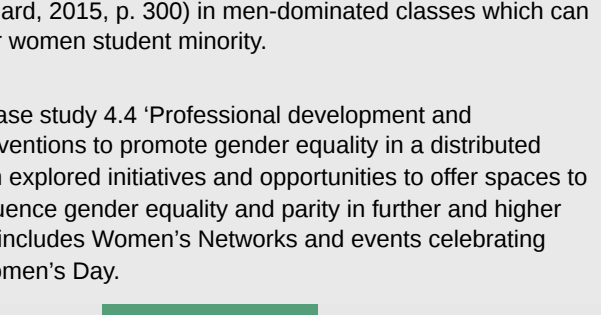
Visit the LTA Events page for more information and booking for events that are already confirmed, and for information about larger events with event programmes to be confirmed later in the semester.

[More Information](#)



## FORGE webinar

Open to novices and more advanced users of Forge, Andrew Gibson, Educational Development Leader from the EDU will be running a session beginning by introducing the tool, its main purpose, and various ways to access support. Following this, we will dig more deeply into the wide variety of built-in tools within Forge. Regular users will likely be familiar with some, though maybe not all of these features. We will also touch on best practice when using these features. The session will conclude with time for questions.



[More Information](#)

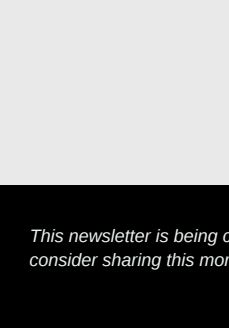
## University colleagues publish case studies in the Handbook for Creating a Gender-Sensitive Curriculum: Initiatives on how to go about creating a more gender-sensitive curriculum

UHI Colleagues Lois Gray (UHI NHC) and Alex Walker (LTA) have contributed case studies to the 'Handbook for Creating a Gender-Sensitive Curriculum – Teaching and Learning Strategies'. Published by Oxford Brookes University, the handbook was developed through the GEARING-Roles project (<https://gearingroles.eu>) and provides case studies from across the education sector exploring different themes and initiatives around how to go about creating a more gender-sensitive curriculum.

Lois authored case study 2.8 'Promoting gender-inclusive engineering and design: the pulsimeter mini-project', exploring a group design and peer-feedback project with third-year undergraduate students. Ensuring the groups include students from different backgrounds and with at least two women, Lois explores her three-pronged approach to designing the activity that sets out to eliminate 'laddism' (Jackson, Dempster & Pollard, 2015, p. 300) in men-dominated classes which can be off-putting for women student minority.

Alex authored case study 4.4 'Professional development and networking interventions to promote gender equality in a distributed university' which explored initiatives and opportunities to offer spaces to discuss and influence gender equality and parity in further and higher education. This includes Women's Networks and events celebrating International Women's Day.

[More Information](#)



This newsletter is being circulated to colleagues who have engaged with the LTA and EDU through events or projects, although we hope you consider sharing this more widely. Colleagues who aren't already signed up to receive this newsletter can email [lta@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:lta@uhi.ac.uk) and be added to the newsletter mailing list.