



HELOA Midlands Training Day Agenda
University of Leicester
Thursday 10th September 2026
Registered Charity numbers: 1182953 (England & Wales) and SC050285 (Scotland)

10:30 - 11:00 - Arrive, sign in & Network with tea and biscuits

11:00 - 11:30 - Welcome & Introductions

11:30 - 11:45 - How HELOA mentoring can help you and your professional development- Isobelle Greenhill VC (Membership & Engagement)

In this session, we will hear from the HELOA Midlands committee on how our mentoring scheme has supported our members and how mentoring can help you. We will cover how the scheme works, how to be either a mentor and/or a mentee, and most importantly, how you can get involved and what benefits you can expect as a HELOA Midlands member.

11:45 - 12:45 - Objectives without the eyeroll- Making objectives & development plans work for you! - Wisia Rossi VC (Training) & Nikhita Kataria VC (Training)

Join us for an interactive discussion exploring how HELOA can help you achieve your appraisal, professional development and organisational objectives. We'll showcase upcoming HELOA opportunities, connect colleagues with relevant networks, partners and supporters, and provide time to reflect on where you are in your own objective-setting journey

12:45 - 13:30 - Lunch

13:30 - 14:30 - Breakout Rooms:

Option 1: Beyond Access: Inclusive Practice in Outreach and Recruitment - Laura Crawford- Loughborough University

Outreach and recruitment play an important role in shaping students' perceptions of higher education long before they apply, enrol or arrive at university. This session offers a space to reflect on inclusive practice, share examples, and consider how inclusion and accessibility can be embedded even more intentionally across the student journey. Together, we will explore how we can anticipate diversity at the point of design, rather than relying on individual students to identify or share support needs. Drawing on concepts such as the hidden curriculum, the "ideal student" and Universal Design for Learning (UDL), we will consider the assumptions and implicit expectations that can be built into outreach and recruitment activities, who these might advantage or exclude, and the ways in which we communicate who university is for and what it is for. Through practical examples and discussion, participants will have the opportunity to reflect on their own context and identify approaches that anticipate diversity, remove barriers to participation, and create more equitable student experiences from the earliest stages of the student journey.

Option 2: The Student Reality Check - Understanding the expectations of the 2027 cohort - Richard Nicholson- The Student Room

The promise of higher education hasn't changed for the 2027 cohort. Students still expect university to open doors, foster community and be a pathway to future success. What has changed is the environment in which those expectations are being tested.

Drawing on the latest student conversations on The Student Room and emerging trends, this session will explore the gap between what students expected university to be, what they are experiencing, what they are now looking for from institutions, and how recruitment and marketing teams can respond.

Finally, we'll look at how AI is changing the way students navigate higher education. Using Diggory, our AI university coach, we'll show how it helps students make confident, informed choices about where and what to study. The lesson here: AI works best when it builds trust, strengthens confidence, and connects students with the information, people and reassurance they actually need.

Attendees will leave with practical insights to help shape messaging, recruitment activity and student engagement strategies for the years ahead.

Option 3: Networking coffee session for managers

We're excited to introduce a new Networking Coffee Session at our upcoming HELOA Midlands September meeting - designed specifically with managers in mind. Whether you're a long-standing member or newly stepping into a leadership role, this informal drop-in offers a relaxed space to connect over a tea or coffee and engage in the conversations that matter most to you.

It's an ideal opportunity to exchange ideas, explore shared challenges, and discuss emerging priorities across the sector. You'll be able to connect with colleagues, compare approaches, and highlight best practice in a setting that encourages open, constructive dialogue.

If you're looking to broaden your network, gain fresh perspectives, or simply carve out time to talk with peers who understand the realities of your role, this session is a valuable addition to your day.

14:30 - 14:45 - Short break

14:45 - 15:30 - Round table discussions

How to combat loneliness on the road

Working in outreach often means spending long periods travelling independently, covering large regions, and balancing busy schedules away from your immediate team. While the role offers great opportunities to build relationships and make an impact, it can sometimes feel isolating. Join this discussion to explore how we can stay connected, maintain our wellbeing, and create a sense of community while working remotely and on the move. Share experiences, practical strategies, and ideas for supporting one another as a dispersed team, ensuring that no one feels they're working alone.

The challenges of funding programmes linked with APP

Access and Participation Plans (APPs) place increasing expectations on universities to deliver meaningful outreach, attainment-raising activity, and student success programmes. However, securing sustainable funding for these initiatives can be challenging, particularly in

a climate of financial pressure across the sector. Join this discussion to explore the realities of funding APP-linked programmes, balancing impact with budget constraints, and demonstrating value through evidence and evaluation. Share experiences, challenges, and innovative approaches to maintaining effective partnerships and delivering meaningful outcomes with limited resources.

How to Make Postgraduate (PG) Education a Leadership Priority

Postgraduate education is increasingly important in supporting workforce development, driving innovation, and responding to evolving industry needs. However, in many institutions, strategic discussions can be dominated by undergraduate recruitment, student experience, and regulatory requirements. How can postgraduate education secure a stronger place on leadership agendas? Join this discussion to explore the opportunities and challenges surrounding PG growth, student demand, programme development, employer partnerships, and institutional investment. Share experiences and ideas for raising the profile of postgraduate education and ensuring it is recognised as a key driver of institutional success and impact.

Doing More with Less in Student Recruitment Teams

Student recruitment teams are under increasing pressure to deliver ambitious targets while operating with constrained budgets, leaner teams, and growing expectations from across their institutions. From managing multiple markets and channels to delivering personalised engagement at scale, the challenge is no longer simply doing more—it's doing more with less. Join this discussion to explore how recruitment teams are prioritising activity, embracing technology, streamlining processes, and focusing resources where they can have the greatest impact. Share practical strategies, lessons learned, and innovative approaches to sustaining performance in a challenging environment.

15:30 - 15:45 - Round up

15:45 - End

At the end of the day we will be going to optional and very casual leaving drinks for Becci who will be finishing her term as HELOA Midlands chair after this meeting. Everyone is welcome to join, we will be going to a nearby pub and we would love for you to be there.

***All sessions are subject to change**