Annual Report 20/21
A summary report of OD development interventions, projects and initiatives
Introduction

Organisational Development (OD) is responsible for diagnosing, designing and delivering a learning and development offer that supports the enhancement of the performance of staff at the University.

A diverse range of development activities to all staff categories were offered in 2020/21. Whilst programmes and workshops were a key part of this offer a wider range of interventions were delivered as detailed in this report.

The year was characterised by the pandemic and the continuation of many staff working from home throughout most of the year. This led to the almost exclusive delivery of programmes and workshops online, building on the expertise in this form of delivery built up in the previous year.

Institutionally significant projects included the development of the University Values and work began on the development of the People and Culture Plan to replace the previous People strategy.

OD was instrumental in acknowledging the changes in working practice arising out of the pandemic and was keen to capture the positive sides of these arrangements both for individuals, in increased flexibility, and the organisation, in space utilisation. This led to the Reimagining Work Practice project, in which OD was an important stakeholder.
OD Projects and Initiatives in 2020/21

Developing Lancaster University’s Values

Engagement activities took place with staff, students and external stakeholders to develop the University’s new values, as part of the wider Strategy refresh. Three values, authentic to Lancaster, reflecting our special and unique culture were incorporated into the Strategic Plan 2021 – 2026:

- We respect each other by being open and fair and promoting diversity
- We build strong communities by working effectively together in a supportive way
- We create positive change by being ambitious in our learning, expertise and action

People and Culture Plan

A series of engagement activities took place with Faculties and Divisional senior leadership teams, Staff Networks, the People and OE Division, Trade Unions, Students’ Union and 1-2-1 interviews with key stakeholders (including UEB members) as part of the data collection and analysis for the development of the People and Culture Plan. There was also engagement with external ‘critical friends’ across a range of sectors. The Plan was ambitious in being framed around the University’s three institutional values and requiring action from staff across the institution. The plan is due to be approved and implemented in 2021/22.

Staff Engagement

A second pulse survey was carried out in January 2021, following the previous one carried out in July 2020. This was seeking the staff view on the more flexible working arrangements resulting from the pandemic and engaged staff to shape future working arrangements. It also aimed to support staff that were negatively impacted by the pandemic and give an indication of staff wellbeing. A high-level report was shared with all staff, with departmental results made available to Heads of Departments/Divisions to both inform future arrangements and determine the support needed. The results from the survey contributed to to the Reimagining Working Practices (RWP) project.

CEDAR Survey

The CEDAR survey - Culture, Employment and Development in Academic Research Survey - targets all those with a research portfolio at Lancaster. The data from this survey is used to inform the HR Excellence in Research (EiR) action plan, to act as a barometer for the research culture at Lancaster and to highlight any particular areas of concern and action.

University’s Wellbeing Offering

The Staff Wellbeing Engagement Group (SWEG) supports the development of an institutional-wide approach to staff wellbeing, following the adoption of the Five Ways to Wellbeing framework.

The group considers and makes recommendations to strengthen the University’s staff wellbeing provision. By doing so, a draft Staff Wellbeing Plan has been developed which has been informed by academic research and details three draft initial priorities (Promoting positive mental health, LU4U and Promoting positive physical health) for Being Well at LU.

Mandatory Training

During this year OD took responsibility for the coordination of mandatory training activities across training owners as well as being the first point of contact for any enquiries. A number of communications and initiatives to increase uptake took place such as embedding of mandatory training within the PDR process and additional reporting through the dashboard reports. Completion rates increased during the year, although on-going work is needed to achieve 95% staff compliance.
**Reimagining Working Practices (RWP)**

OD was instrumental in supporting both the People and Engagement strand of the RWP programme. Recognising the need for managers to be equipped to lead and effectively manage the transition to blended working OD instigated:

- Change Management workshops for all members of the RWP programme and all divisional and faculty professional services management team. A total of 13 workshops were delivered between June – November 2021 with the aim of:
  - providing an overview of the people aspects of effective change management,
  - introducing a model that ensured a shared approach to understanding and managing the engagement of staff during transition
  - providing practical ways to manage change
  - exploring ways to handle resistance

- The workshops were supported by a change management handbook and have been pivotal in supporting managers to effectively manage change within their areas.

- An online Change Management Toolkit was developed, providing ‘just in time’ guidance and support to managers.

- Following the successful change workshops, OD initiated Action Learning Sets for managers to provide sustained support and development in leading change.

**Global Learning Exchange**

This is a partnership between Lancaster University and the University of Lausanne with the aim of collaborating and learning from each other. Groups of staff have in the past taken part in exchanges between the two institutions. An exchange had been due to take place in spring 2020 and, to keep the partnership alive, a virtual exchange was held in summer 2021. An update from each institution was provided after which staff were matched according to commonality of job role to allow the exchange of information and ideas.

**HR EiR and new Concordat for the Development of Researchers (CIG – Concordat implementation group)**

In 2020 an updated version of the Concordat for the Development of Researchers was launched. This has a new focus on three key principles: Environment and Culture, Employment, Professional and Career Development.

In response to these significant changes a new Code of Practice was published. Lancaster’s submission for the HR EiR award will be submitted in September 2021. The forward action plan will be informed by the CEDARS survey data, and focus groups with members of the academic and research community. Actions from the plan are monitored by the Concordat Implementation Group, a sub-committee of the Research Committee.
OD Programmes and Workshops

These remain a key OD intervention to enhance staff performance. A wide number of programmes and workshops took place during the year with headline summaries provided below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of programmes delivered</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of workshops delivered</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of professional services attendees</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of academic and researcher attendees</td>
<td>356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of staff provided with coaching</td>
<td>67</td>
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* A programme is made up of two or more workshops/sessions taking place over an extended period of time.
Leadership and Management Programmes and Workshops

The Bonington leadership programme was offered this year and had a complete review and re-write; this also involved re-tendering, reducing the costs slightly. It had a new focus on dealing with the dynamic and changing environment, rather than a traditional ‘stories’ approach. The new refreshed programme was well received and a mid and end point evaluation survey was carried out.

In addition to the Bonington programme OD offered the following leadership and management programmes:

• LEADER@ - for colleagues responsible for leading a cross-institutional projects/work. Covers leadership styles, change, emotional intelligence and influencing.
• MANAGER@ for first time managers. Covers the best practice principles for managing people.
• Project Managers – for all staff required to lead projects.

These continued to be delivered online in 2020/21. Previously the programmes had been accredited through ILM, but it was decided to no longer offer this option.

The Recruiting the Best workshop was reviewed in December 2021 in order to re-focus the key objectives and content. The review was undertaken by senior HR and OD colleagues, the Athena Swan lead and the external facilitator. The aim and objectives were clarified and the workshop re-designed, initially for continued online delivery and also for in-person delivery for the 2021/22 academic year.

Academics and Researchers Programmes and Workshops

Details of the Academic and Researchers programmes and workshops, including the programme aims and target audience are available on the OD webpages.

Introduction to Research, introduced last year took note of feedback, and longer sessions were held so that the workshop was not rushed and to allow more time for networking.

Making Professor – the whole journey, academic promotions event, involving colleagues from OD, the Athena Swan and the Rewards Team was postponed until September 2021.

A cross institutional mentoring scheme was offered to mid-career researchers. This was a joint venture with Liverpool, MMU, Salford and Huddersfield. Mentors were sourced from the professoriate at each institution and offered to researchers. Early indications were extremely positive.

Some programmes such as Strategic Career Planning and Mentoring for Academics workshop were postponed for this year.
Professional Services Programmes and Workshops

Details of the Professional Services programmes and workshops, including the programme aims and target audience are available on the OD webpages.

The second cohort of MyPSCareer ran during this year, largely unchanged due to the very positive feedback that had been received from participants in the first cohort.

The PS Digital Conference was held shortly before the Easter vacation. This was project managed by OD and was a week-long series of sessions and workshops opening with a keynote session from Tom Cheesewright, a futurist and alumni of Lancaster.

The 5-day conference was themed around future ways of working and incorporated the sub-themes of wellbeing, sustainability, change, digital, inclusion etc. Over 600 PS staff participated in the conference, which was hosted via a Teams site, incorporating over 25 workshops and drop-in sessions on offer, and was judged to be a great success.

Coaching and Mentoring Development Opportunities

Coaching is increasingly recognised as a key development offer for a range of development goals. Coaching continues to be embedded within the leadership and management programmes as well as being offered on a 1:1 basis via internal and external coaches. Group coaching is incorporated in the Resilient Researcher and Balanced Academic programmes and was offered during the Michaelmas Term 2020 as a wider opportunity to support leaders, managers and non-managerial staff during the pandemic.

Coaching with an external coach is offered to new HoDs, Associate Deans and new senior Professional Services Leaders.

Coaching with internal coaches is available for all categories of staff, through the internal coaching bank. All internal coaches are qualified and offer their service voluntarily. Supervision and CPD is provided to the coaches.

During this year OD took advantage of a recently approved level 5 coaching apprenticeship. The external provider gave a series of promotional sessions and there was a great deal of interest from staff across the university, although the level of commitment required reduced the number to eleven registered for the first cohort. This cost comes from the apprenticeship levy.
Conclusion

A wide number of projects and initiatives took place during the year, making an important contribution to the theme of transformative change in the Strategic Plan 2021/26.

A comprehensive OD offer was made to staff across the University. This was made up of well-established provision and new provision that responded to the impact of the pandemic and the resulting changes to working practices.

All programmes and workshops were offered online this year. A new process for the administration of online events was implemented leading to an improved service. This was in response to a complaint regarding difficulty in joining some sessions. The OD admin team agreed a change in process to check in at the start of all OD events so that any technical issues could be resolved speedily. The complainant was satisfied with the response from OD.

A link to the feedback form was sent to participants one hour after the end of the workshop. The number of respondents was disappointing compared to the high number making the returns when the evaluation postcards were used in face-to-face events. The feedback is shared with the facilitators and Organisational Developers when there are any areas of concern. Longer programmes such as the Bonington Development Programme and @Lancaster programmes are evaluated through a post-programme questionnaire and review meeting.

Overall, the feedback from programmes and workshops was very positive. A number of participants commented that they would have preferred face to face events and, whilst this was out of the control of the OD team for this year, this will be borne in mind when designing the offer for next year. Whilst some of the OD provision is facilitated by internal staff most programmes and workshops follow a consultancy model, using external specialist facilitators. This model is supported through the very positive feedback received for the facilitators.

The PI Development Programme, Mentoring for Mentees and Mentors and the Managing Mental Health at Work received some less favourable feedback compared to other programmes. The PI Development Programme was reviewed at year end, resulting in an additional offer of a Research Leadership programme. It was decided to offer a mentoring workshop specifically focused on the needs of academic staff, as some of the negative feedback was around the appropriateness of the sessions for academic staff.

The Managing Mental Health at Work workshop hosted by MIND had high take up, but it was felt it did not quite hit the mark and wider considerations were needed on the fit of this type of offer with the Staff Wellbeing Plan.

Recommendations

The following actions and changes will be made for the 2021/22 OD offer:

• To continue to offer Project Management online for 2021/22. This enables remote colleagues and/or colleagues based at other campuses to access the programme.

• To continue to offer the Bonington Development Programme in the 22/23 year to ensure we maintain the high calibre of appropriate applicants.

• To deliver the next cohort of the Bonington Development Programme in the 22/23 year to ensure we maintain the high calibre of appropriate applicants.

• The Leader@, Manager@ and Project Management will continue to be delivered as non-accredited programmes.

• To continue to embed EDI considerations into the OD offer.

• To increase the number of evaluation forms received by providing facilitators with the online evaluation link in advance to post in chat and allow time for completion prior to the end of each session.

• OD, HR and the EDI Manager, Athena Swan and Race Equality Leads (in 2022) will, in partnership with Faculties and Divisions, review the end-to-end recruitment and selection process that will improve the candidate experience, promote diversity and embed inclusion throughout the process. This will complement the Recruiting the Best workshop.