

In this document you will find the answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs) relating the AUA's future direction. The FAQs will be regularly updated and if you have a general question that's not covered here, get in touch with us by emailing hello@aua.ac.uk





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Rationale For Change:

Why is the AUA changing?

In response to the changing UK higher education sector, the AUA is evolving to meet the shifting needs of professionals. As the sector undergoes significant transformations, such as funding changes, demographic shifts, technological advancements, and evolving regulations, the AUA recognises the importance of providing relevant support to its members. By staying responsive and adaptive to these changes, the AUA aims to empower professionals in higher education administration, offering tailored professional development opportunities and fostering collaboration among institutions.

Through strategic evolution, the AUA is committed to being a vital resource for professionals, enabling them to thrive in their roles and contribute to advancing UK higher education.

Why has the name changed?

The professional services community is now much broader than when the name the Association of University Administrators (AUA) was coined. It's important to note that not all our members work in administration, and not all our members work in universities. Consequently, the Association's name has been a point of contention for some time.

The selection of the Association's name has undergone thorough consideration and consultation. Multiple names were extensively tested with sector focus groups, ultimately adopting the Association of Higher Education Professionals (AHEP) name. The choice of AHEP reflects our commitment to inclusivity, aiming to create a sense of belonging for all our members—whether they are new, established, or potential—within the expansive and diverse professional community we represent.

How has member feedback been considered and incorporated into the strategy development process?

AHEP is your Association, and we greatly value member feedback in shaping our strategy. As part of the strategy development process, we conducted thorough consultations involving over 300 individuals through surveys, focus groups, and polls. Your valuable contributions during this consultation process have played a crucial role in shaping our new strategic approach.

We are dedicated to maintaining strong connections with our members and ensuring ongoing engagement to address your needs effectively. Your feedback on your experience with AHEP is highly appreciated, and we encourage you to share your thoughts and insights.

Keep an eye out for our upcoming engagement events, where we will provide opportunities for open dialogue and collaboration. By working together, we can drive positive change and further enhance the vibrant AHEP community.

How will the success of the changes be measured?

The success of the changes will be measured through the following five objectives that form the foundation of our 2023-2028 strategy:

Membership Growth and Retention: Increasing our membership within the professional services community, focusing on the UK and Ireland, whilst ensuring we retain existing members.

Diversity and Inclusion: Embedding diversity and reflecting the full spectrum of society in all aspects of our work.

Career Promotion: Elevating the profile of professional services as an attractive and sought-after career choice.

Sector Collaboration: Facilitating collaboration and fostering alignment among stakeholders across the higher education sector.

Leading Professional Development: Being at the forefront of professional development, setting industry standards and exemplifying best practices.

These objectives serve as our guiding principles, shaping our approach and driving our actions towards achieving our goals. By aligning our efforts with these objectives, we strive to deliver tangible outcomes and effect positive change within the Association and the wider higher education community.

How has Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion been integrated into the strategy?

Our commitment to EDI is enshrined within our strategic objectives. We actively promote diversity by ensuring representation from underrepresented groups in our staff team and Board of Trustees. Significant progress has been made in this regard, and we look forward to introducing you to our Board over the coming months.

Additionally, we are conducting a wide-reaching EDI audit to identify improvements that we can work towards addressing, ensuring inclusivity across all aspects of our organisation.

Why is AHEP partnering with other organisations across the sector?

By strategically building partnerships, AHEP seeks to amplify the collective voice of Higher Education Professionals, addressing sector-wide challenges and promoting the advancement of the professional services community.

Sector partnerships aim to provide tangible benefits to our members, facilitating their development, sharing resources, and creating opportunities for growth and collaboration.

Membership:

Will there be a new website, and can I log in as usual without any disruptions?

We are excited to announce that we have developed a brand-new website for our members, which promises to offer a more intuitive and user-friendly experience. The login process will remain unchanged, allowing you to access the new website seamlessly using your existing email address and password.

To ensure a smooth transition, we have been working closely with our team of tech experts and have allocated ample time for rigorous testing and troubleshooting. In doing so, we aim to avoid disruptions to your login experience during this transition period.

We are committed to providing you with a seamless and enhanced online experience, and we look forward to unveiling the new website for our valued members.

Will my fees stay the same, or will I be charged more for my membership?

In response to the cost-of-living crisis, the Association decided in the year 22/23 to freeze membership prices to support its members. We have been mindful of current constraints when planning the fees for the new membership structure, ensuring that we can cover our costs and provide a high-quality offer to members while also ensuring that members receive a return on their financial commitment.

Changes will be made to ensure fairness by recognising the feedback received during the consultation, where members expressed concerns about the current fee structure being linked to salary rather than the value received from the Association. The new fee structure will be designed to reflect the value provided at each membership level. Additionally, introducing an Associate level will offer a broader range of membership options with corresponding fees.

Detailed information regarding the updated fee structure will be released in September, providing members with a clearer understanding of the changes and options available.

My institution currently pays for my membership – will this be affected?

If your institution agrees to cover your membership fees, this can continue. However, the coverage of individual membership fees by institutions varies and is typically a matter between you and your specific institution.

Will there be changes to how I pay for my membership? For instance, will I need a new Direct Debit mandate?

We are excited to announce that we will introduce additional payment options. In addition to Direct Debit, we will offer convenient options such as Apple Pay, Google Pay, and PayPal, providing you with flexibility in managing your membership payments.

If you want to continue paying by Direct Debit, you will not require a new mandate. In accordance with the Direct Debit guarantee, we will provide advance notice of any changes to the payment amount, ensuring transparency and giving you at least ten days' notice before the revised Direct Debit is processed.

What benefits will AHEP offer?

Building upon the strengths of AUA, AHEP will provide an enriched experience with more valuable content and expanded opportunities that we will build on in the years to come.

With AHEP, you can expect access to a wider range of resources, including relevant publications and best practice guides, empowering you to stay at the forefront of the higher education profession. Moreover, AHEP will introduce avenues for networking, collaboration, and knowledge sharing, enabling you to connect with a diverse community of higher education professionals and broaden your professional horizons.



By joining AHEP, you can be confident that you are embracing an exciting chapter that will offer you more ways to learn, grow, and elevate your professional journey.

Who is the Association for?

The Association of Higher Education Professionals (AHEP) is designed for individuals in management and professional services roles within higher education.

By joining AHEP, you become part of a thriving community of connected, high-performing individuals in higher education. The Association offers opportunities for growth, networking, and collaboration, aiming to foster collective success and pride among its members.

Our members work across a wide range of professional areas, including but not limited to:

- Student experience
- Teaching and learning
- Recruitment and admissions
- Faculty/College
- School and Department
- Data professionals
- Quality and Standards
- Change and transformation

The HE sector encompasses numerous other areas where our members excel, demonstrating the breadth and depth of their involvement in shaping and advancing Higher Education.

We invite you to join AHEP and be part of this dynamic community, where together, we can grow, connect, and succeed in the ever-evolving landscape of higher education.

Will my membership level remain the same in the new structure?

The existing membership levels of Member, Accredited Member, and Fellow will remain available in the new membership structure. You can rest assured that your current membership level will be automatically



transferred to the new structure without any need for you to take any action.

You can access all the benefits, privileges, and recognition associated with your current level. This seamless transition ensures that your hard-earned achievements and professional standing are preserved within the updated membership framework.

When it's time to renew your membership, you will simply need to pay the relevant membership fee within the new structure to retain your current membership status. However, if you wish to downgrade your membership level, you have the flexibility to do so.

Will the new membership structure affect my current benefits and access to resources as a current member?

We understand the importance of providing valuable resources to our members, and we assure you that your access to resources will not be diminished. In fact, as we make changes to our membership structure, you can look forward to additional benefits and enhanced offerings that will further enrich your membership experience, and full details will be revealed in September.

I am working towards becoming an Accredited Member or Fellow. When will the new requirements be available, and will they be different?

We encourage all our members to consider progressing through the membership levels to reflect your achievements and professional standing.

Rest assured, we value your dedication and do not want your hard work wasted. We will launch full details of the new structure and criteria at the end of September.



There are some differences between the current Accredited Member and Fellow and those in the new AHEP structure. However, your membership level will be seamlessly transferred if you achieve Accredited Member or Fellow status before the official launch.

If Member, Accredited Member and Fellow will still appear in the new membership structure, what's different?

While Members, Accredited Members, and Fellows will still be present in the new membership structure, notable differences will enhance the overall membership experience.

Each level represents a clear and robust proposition, accompanied by transparent pricing, allowing individuals to see what they will receive in return for their membership fees.

How will I know what membership type is best for me?

Existing members will smoothly transition to the new membership structure, retaining their current level. Whether you're a new member or considering upgrading, we will provide a comprehensive breakdown of the benefits for each membership tier. This valuable resource will guide you in selecting the membership type that best aligns with your specific needs and aspirations. And don't forget, our dedicated AHEP team is always available to engage in friendly conversations, offering guidance and support to ensure you make an informed and confident membership decision.

What are the membership levels, and will the post-nominals change?

Our revised membership levels and post-nominals are as follows:

Associate: Designed for individuals starting their careers, engaged in tactical and administrative work, handling day-to-day tasks, and those in related fields seeking to stay informed and connected.



Member, MAHEP: Suitable for HE professionals involved in operational work, implementing solutions, collaborating with stakeholders, and utilising evidence to inform decisions and actions.

Accredited Member, AMAHEP: Tailored for HE professionals working both operationally and strategically, driving change, demonstrating organisational awareness, offering valuable insights on external trends, and making evidence-based judgments and decisions.

Fellow, FAHEP: Geared towards HE professionals working strategically, driving significant change, influencing at senior levels, and supporting the development of future leaders in the sector.

Honorary Fellow, HFAHEP: Reserved for a select group of distinguished senior HE professionals who have made exceptional contributions to the sector and are recognised for their advocacy on behalf of the professional services community.

So, what about the Association's existing offers to members and the sector?

The strategy is about building on the best of the AUA and doing more for our members and the sector. We will continue to offer the things you have been used to, like:

- The PGCert in Higher Education Administration and Management
- Annual Conference
- International Study Tours
- Mentoring
- Consulting
- Mark of Excellence

However, we will change some of these things to implement the improvement voiced during the consultation.

What are Institutional Partnerships?

Institutional Partnerships foster collective investment and support for the professional services community in universities, colleges, and educational



institutions of all sizes and locations. These partnerships offer valuable benefits, including discounted staff membership, access to the AHEP Professional Framework, free places for staff incentives, discounted or free conference attendance, coaching services, research collaboration, consulting days, the Mark of Excellence award, and institution profiling.

Being an institutional partner demonstrates a commitment to best practices, supporting and developing the professional services community, and advocating within the sector. It provides a platform for a collective voice, enhances institution status, and elevates the voice of professional services.

Each institution will have a senior sponsor who champions internal partnership opportunities and collaborates with AHEP to tailor offerings for professional services practitioners.



Professional Development:

Will I retain access to my CPD, and will there be any risk of losing my information during the transition?

Your CPD record will be accessible for you to continue building upon when you login to the new website. We understand the importance of preserving your progress record, and we are ensuring a seamless experience, so you can confidently continue your professional development journey without interruptions.

Why is the AUA CPD Framework being replaced, and what implications does this have for institutions currently using it?

The AUA CPD Framework was produced several years ago, and it became clear from our consultation process that it needs a refresh to reflect the current and anticipated needs of the sector. The AHEP Professional Framework will come into effect from the end of September 2023, replacing the current AUA CPD Framework. The release will include a series of digital resources and guidance on how you can use and integrate the framework, and it will also align with the membership structure.

While you may continue to use the existing CPD Framework, the Association will no longer support it. We encourage institutions currently utilising it to transition to the AHEP Professional Framework to access the latest resources and guidance. The updated framework aims to better serve the sector's needs and provide enhanced support for professional development in higher education.

What is happening to the networks?

The feedback received during consultations highlighted the desire for themed networks rather than location-based ones. As a result, we are implementing changes to our approach to networks and networking.



While current themed networks become online Special Interest groups (SIGs), regional networking events will continue to be organised to foster local connections among members. We also encourage Advocates to continue hosting engagement opportunities within their institutions.

Existing and future networks will transition into online SIGs, ensuring accessibility for all members regardless of location. SIGs will provide a platform for like-minded professionals to connect and engage around common interests. To enrich the SIG experience, designated in-person collaborations will be facilitated at conferences.

Is everything going online?

Whether through in-person gatherings or online sessions, we are dedicated to ensuring our members access valuable resources and meaningful networking experiences.

Facilitating personal connections and knowledge sharing within our membership community is paramount. While we recognise the value of face-to-face interactions, we also understand the benefits of virtual engagement. Therefore, we are committed to offering a comprehensive calendar of in-person and online events. This approach allows us to provide diverse opportunities for our members to connect, share insights, and support one another in the ever-evolving landscape of higher education.