

**Session title:** Programme Leaders: co-creating support through community development

**Session type:** Workshop (60 mins)

**Presenter:** Neil Ford, University of Southampton

**Session summary:**

Programme Leaders increasingly play a critical role in the student learning experience and delivery of strategic education objectives. It is also well known that Programme Leaders face significant challenges and often receive little support in their role. This participative workshop will investigate challenges and effective forms of development for Programme Leaders. Using examples from scoping research at the University of Southampton, participants will explore networks and communities of practice as effective forms of peer support.

**Session outline:**

The Programme Leader role is critical to the delivery of education and the student experience; however, the role is often ill-defined, under-resourced, and poorly supported with development opportunities (Murphy and Curtis, 2013 cited Lawrence and Curtis, 2018). This active workshop will engage participants through audience response and breakout discussion to explore the challenges and enablers for Programme Leaders at their institutions. The workshop will also identify good practice across the sector for developing Programme Leader support. Examples for the workshop will be provided by recent scoping research at the University of Southampton (UoS) which identified role confusion, resourcing and time-management, academic status, administrative support, and access to information as key challenges.

We will also draw upon recent experience developing the Programme Leads Network. This is a network of over 300 Programme Leads at UoS. We will reflect on the evolution of the Programme Leads Network into a community of practice that provides regular meetings, information and good practice sharing, peer support for asking questions and raising concerns and links to formal professional recognition.

After attending this workshop, participants will develop and understanding of the following key issues:

- the Programme Leader role - what do Programme Leaders do and what do they not do;
- common barriers and challenges - this will draw upon scoping research at UoS as well as recent literature e.g. (Lawrence and Curtis, 2018; Lawrence, Moron-Garcia and Senior, 2022; Naylor, 2022);
- effective forms of support (including workshops, resources, and peer support)
- co-creation of support through networks and communities of practice
- formal professional recognition as a motivator for programme leader development

This workshop will be of interest to anyone in an academic development role supporting Programme Leaders, or colleagues with Programme Leader responsibilities.

**References:**

Lawrence, J., and Ellis, S. (2018) Supporting Programme Leaders and Programme Leadership. London: SEDA Publishing. SEDA Special 39.

Lawrence, J., Moron-Garcia, S., Senior, R., (2022) Supporting Course and Programme Leaders in Higher Education: Practical Wisdom for Leaders, Educational Developers and Programme Leaders. London: Routledge.