# **Advance HE’s Aurora programme 2025-2026**

# **University of Strathclyde selection process and criteria**

## Introduction

Aurora is Advance HE`s leadership development initiative for women. It is run as a unique partnership bringing together leadership experts and higher education institutions to take positive action to address the under-representation of women in leadership positions in the sector.

Aurora seeks to support women and their institutions to fulfil their leadership potential through thought-provoking activities, collaborative problem-solving activities and motivating stories supported by inspirational women role models. Participation embeds strong networks of early career women across the sector to share best practice, insights and experiences.

Led by a team of four leadership experts, participants explore four key areas associated with leadership success: Identity, Impact and Voice; Politics and Influence; Core Leadership Skills; Adaptive Leadership Skills.

Since 2013, 160 Strathclyde women have been sponsored by the University to participate.

The Scotland Aurora programme will take place online between September 2025 and February 2026, except for one in person session in January 2026 (outlined below).

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| Introduction Webinar | Tuesday16 September 2025 | 10.00-12.30 | Online - Zoom |
| Identity Impact and Voice | Tuesday 23 September 2025 | 10.00-15.00 | Online - Zoom |
| Core Leadership Skills | Tuesday 7 October 2025 | 10.00-15.00 | Online - Zoom |
| Action Learning Set 1  | Tuesday 28 October 2025 | 10.00-15.00 | Online - Zoom |
| Politics and Influence  | Tuesday 11 November 2025 | 10.00-15.00 | Online - Zoom |
| Adaptive Leadership Skills | Friday 12 December 2025  | 10.00-15.00 | Online - Zoom |
| Your Future in HE | Friday 16 January 2026  | 9.30-16.00 | Sheraton Hotel, Edinburgh |
| Action Learning Set 2  | Tuesday 27 January 2026 | 10.00-15.00 | Delegates self-host |

Please note: If participants cannot make all the Scotland dates, they can choose to attend online the session in another cohort, on agreement with Advance HE. Please note that only one transfer is allowed per person unless discussed and authorised by the Aurora Team. Please note that you are unable to transfer for just Action Learning Set 1 (ALS). If you wish to transfer cohorts for ALS 1, you will also transfer for ALS 2. Three weeks’ notice is required for transfer requests.

The full list of dates and sessions is available on the [Aurora website](https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/programmes-events/aurora#Aurora).

## Participant selection process

In 2025-2026, the University will select and centrally fund a limited number of women to participate in Aurora. Applicants will be considered on the basis of their ability to demonstrate that they meet the criteria and expectations of participants below.

Please note the University will pay the programme fees of successful applicants (£1100 per participant).

If applicants are unsuccessful in the central selection process but their department would be willing to fund their participation, additional places may be available on agreement with Advance HE. Enquiries should be directed to equality@strath.ac.uk

Recruitment is via a completed application form, which can be downloaded from the [Equality & Diversity website.](https://www.strath.ac.uk/professionalservices/accessequalityinclusionservice/equalitydiversity/genderequalityathenaswan/aurora/) Applications must be submitted by**5pm on Friday 20 June 2025.**

A panel will consider and score the applications based on how each of the criteria are met. The panel will be comprised of staff in the Access, Equality & Inclusion Service and OSDU with relevant expertise. The University’s Aurora Champion and past Aurora participants may also be involved in the selection process. Before the panel read your application, your name and email address will be removed and your application will be assigned a reference number. Applications will be shortlisted and participants selected by the panel by early August 2025.

## Selection criteria

Applications will be assessed on how they adhere to the below criteria and application word count. Applicants should be:

1. in an academic, research, teaching, knowledge exchange, technical or professional services role, usually between grade 7-9.
2. interested in developing their leadership skills in order to further their career, particularly with regard to leadership skills and progression into a future leadership role (*Application Question 2*)
3. able to demonstrate that participation in the Aurora programme specifically would benefit their future career aims and the aims of their department/the University (*Application Question 3*)
4. able to demonstrate a record of applying learning from training or development opportunities to current or past job roles (*Application Question 4*)
5. able to demonstrate that this is an appropriate time for them to participate in Aurora (in terms of career point, ambitions and learning and development to date) (*Application Question 5*)
6. supported in their application by their line manager.

## Expectations of participants

Participants will be asked to:

* attend the full **online** Aurora programme (7 interlinked days) and be prepared to undertake some self-directed study.
* commit to meeting regularly online with their Aurora mentor and actively engage in the mentoring opportunity.
* contribute to the University’s internal Aurora work and Women’s Network in order to help disseminate learning from the programme more widely across the institution. This may include providing guidance or mentoring to future Aurora participants, and participation in events.

As referenced above, participants will require a mentor within Strathclyde for support and to provide guidance. If selected, participants will be asked to identify a mentor, assistance can be provided via OSDU if required. Further details on the mentor role are available on the [Aurora website](https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/programmes-events/aurora/aurora-mentoring).

## Support and information for applicants

An information pack is available from the [Equality & Diversity website.](https://www.strath.ac.uk/professionalservices/accessequalityinclusionservice/equalitydiversity/genderequalityathenaswan/aurora/) which includes detailed information on Aurora and guidance for applicants.

If you have any further questions or require alternative document formats, please email equality@strath.ac.uk

Please note if you do not meet the criteria or are already using the skills, knowledge or expertise addressed by the Aurora programme you may want to consider other [development opportunities for staff](https://www.strath.ac.uk/professionalservices/hr/learningdevelopment/).