

Preparing for Academic Advancement (PAA) - MU, University of Galway and UL.

The objective of the Preparing for Academic Advancement (PAA) programme is to deliver a positive action intervention for academic women (HEI 1.17). The roll out of the PAA Programme aimed to support institutions to accelerate gender balance (HEA 1.4), by providing support to academic women to submit and successfully achieve promotion in line with the “flexible cascade model”, where the proportion of women and men to be promoted/recruited is based on the proportion of each gender at the grade immediately below (HEA 1.17).

Thus far 24 Academic Women with intentions of applying for Associate Professor/Professor roles, from 7 institutions, have completed the PAA programme of workshops, coaching sessions, and 12-month mentorship plan. This first programme was oversubscribed by 100%, requiring a screening process of applications by an independent Professorial committee. As a result, we successfully applied for a second round of funding and widened the network of institutions involved to include Maynooth, NUI Galway, UCC, UCD, TCD and DCU.

The PAA Programme consists of 3 modules (6 workshops) delivered virtually which the participants found provided greater opportunity for participants from both a work and personal perspective.

All 6 workshops were delivered as planned and feedback from participants has been very strong. The workshops were Module 1 - Realising the Vision for My Career (W1) (1 Day); Module 2 - Voice and Visibility for Negotiating my Environment - 2 Workshops (W2 & W3); Module 3 - Articulating My Value and Developing a Successful Portfolio x 2 Workshops (W4 & W5); Mentoring Workshops x 2 (W6 & W7).

A unique aspect of the PAA programme is access to cross institutional senior (AP/P) mentors providing one to one advice specifically on portfolio development providing feedback and supporting mentees in the development of individual strategies to successfully address any gaps identified. The 3 PAA project partner institution provided 24 mentors (12 Female 12 Males) for this pilot programme.

I have found the programme to be excellent. Between the workshops and the coaching sessions, it has really help to clarify for me what areas I need to address towards achieving my goals. I found the coaching session enlightening. It pushed me out of my comfort zone and helped me to stand-up and acknowledge my achievements and to stop downplaying them to myself and others. (PAA Cohort 1 Participant)

I submitted my promotions application to Associate Professor last week and am hugely proud of it, regardless of the outcome. I am however keeping my fingers crossed!! (PAA Cohort 1 Participant)

As I mentioned in my application, I am deeply grateful to have been expertly guided and supported through the PPA programme – it was an indeed an exceptional opportunity. (PAA Cohort 1 Participant)