



Mark of Excellence

Case Study

The Leadership and Development Foundation (LDF) sits within People and Organisational Development (POD) within Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU). The LDF submitted for the Mark of Excellence on a whole institution basis. The key people responsible for the submission were Meriel Box, Head of Leadership and Development Foundation; John Trantom, Leadership and Development Adviser; Michael Monaghan, Leadership and Development Adviser.

Why did you choose to work towards the Mark?

It was more a question of why wouldn't we work towards the Mark of Excellence? The AUA Values match our LDF ethos. Whilst acknowledging that this application would take time and a lot of hard work, we saw an opportunity to align our provision with the framework of the leading professional body for professional services staff and the chance to be one of the first to be recognised for doing so.

LJMU has a relentless pursuit of excellence and as a team we were clear in our certainty that attaining the Mark demonstrates that the University is serious about creating a healthy and progressive workplace environment with development of staff being a priority. In turn we felt that this would lead to increased credibility for LDF internally with LJMU staff and senior managers.

Becoming the first post-92 university to achieve the Mark we feel, enhances the reputation of LJMU as a 'pioneering modern civic university', puts us at the vanguard in the sector and validates our belief that the LDF provides services to staff which are of the highest standard.

What have been the main benefits of achieving the Mark of Excellence?

- Staff (including senior managers) are aware of just how much the University does in a development capacity for staff and enthusiastically engage. This was one of 8 commendations made by the AUA Assessor
- Attaining the Mark has helped to promote the LDF within LJMU. We have extended our LJMU AUA CPD Programme due to demand from staff who are keen to gain accredited membership/Fellowship of the AUA
- It feels like parity of development opportunities exists for both academic and professional services staff
- The MOE acted as a springboard for increased engagement with our internal AUA network, which includes the delivery of nine annual development events 'LJMU AUA Network Forums' aligned to one of each of the AUA Professional Behaviours and quarterly AUA endorsed LJMU AUA CPD competitions and awards. It has solidified itself as a vital and valued platform for the professional development of our staff.
- The work that we put into the AUA submission supported our entry in the national UHR Awards for Excellence 2018 for Business Effectiveness and Organisational Performance where we achieved runner-up.



Were there any unexpected outcomes?

Not entirely unexpected but the LDF team have also been practising what they preach by spending some focussed time on their own CPD which is supporting new initiatives within LJMU, such as coaching and mentoring supervision. Michael Monaghan has also received invitations to present/facilitate at other universities particularly showcasing the resources which he has devised based around embedding and using the AUA CPD framework interactively.

What was the biggest challenge of working through the process and how did you overcome it?

There were so many things that were included that it took time to work out how they could be linked and articulated in a way that made sense. With lots of things ongoing it took time before we could see results that supported our intended outcomes.

What one piece of advice would you give to organisations considering working towards the Mark?

Find a senior manager who believes in what you are trying to achieve and is supportive of your application. If I can add more advice it would be to think creatively how you can encompass the AUA CPD Framework in your activities and take enough time to see the results from your efforts to bolster your submission.

Six months on what difference(s) has it made to your organisation?

Meriel Box, Head of LDF commented, "We are raising the professionalism of staff through engagement with the AUA professional body and the CPD Framework. We explicitly mapped our LJMU Values to the AUA professional behaviours to embed these in our high performance culture."

We have adopted an approach whereby one of the first questions we ask ourselves is how the AUA CPD Framework fits with whatever we are doing. We now have one of the highest AUA membership rates and our success has been recognised at Governor level. It is great for staff to see our continued strong links with the AUA. We hosted a regional AUA mini-conference and our Professional Services Conference once again asked for submissions to be linked to the Framework. The AUA enhanced their link with LJMU by sponsoring the Star Quality Award at the Professional Services Excellence Awards.

How did your adviser support you through the process?

It was useful to get an external perspective and help us to articulate some of our thoughts and ideas. Whilst offering encouragement, it was also useful in helping us to take a step back, ensuring we took our time and got our submission to a high standard.