



Management Essentials Handbook

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Welcome

Dear Colleague,

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you as a new leader at Aston University. We have a strong ethos of collegiality, inclusion and support.

In recognition of you becoming a manager at Aston we would like to invite you to access our Management Essentials developed to support you in all aspects of your role as a manager and leader.

Whether you are new to the academic profession, new to Aston, or whether you come to us from a different sector altogether, there is always a process of acclimatisation to the structures, procedures and values of a new organisation.

No matter what our role is in the University we all have the opportunity to make a difference and to help transform the lives of our students and beneficiaries.

I am delighted that you have chosen us for the next stage in your career.



Yours sincerely

Beth Lloyd

Associate Director of OD



Are you new to Aston? Have you seen our 'New to Aston' page:
www.aston.ac.uk/staff-public/hr/new-employees

Purpose

So what is Management Essentials?

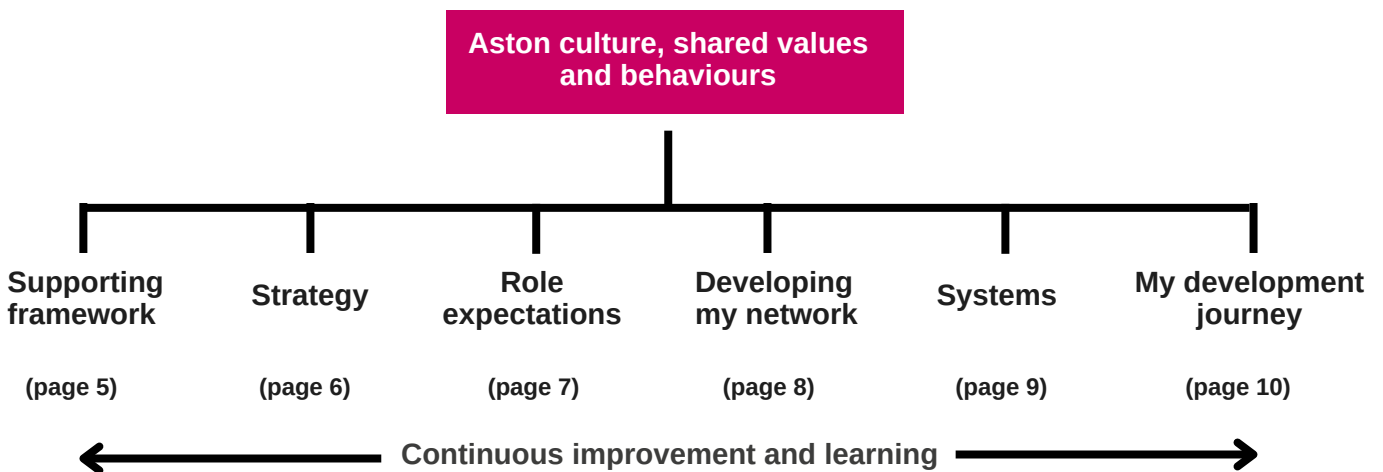
Management Essentials is a framework offering guidance and support for all managers, new and existing, academic and professional support to master the systems, skills and behaviours you need to know and move yourself, your team and Aston University forward.

Feedback from focus groups highlighted the need for a consistent reference point for all managers, whatever their level and whether they were academic or professional support.

Managers also requested that the guidance and support was both structured and flexible in order to support those at the beginning of their management journey and those who just needed to update and refresh.

The information in this handbook provides everything you need to start you on your journey and support you in being an effective manager.

What can you expect to find in this handbook?



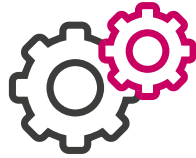
Supporting framework

Within Management Essentials we have developed this framework to support managers with all elements of their role. Feedback tells us there is a lot to learn and sometimes it is difficult to know where to start and where to go to find what a manager needs to do their job effectively. The framework is divided into four key areas which are knowledge, business skills, people skills- the what, people skills -the how.



Knowledge

- The handbook
- Intranet
- My development
- Management forums and networks



Business skills

- Finance and budgets
- Health and safety for managers
- Project and change
- Risk and decision making
- Key performance indicators (KPIs)



People skills -The what?

- Policies and procedures
- Recruitment and selection/Probation
- Equality and diversity
- My Performance and Development Conversation (MPDC) - the process and the system
- Managing your team

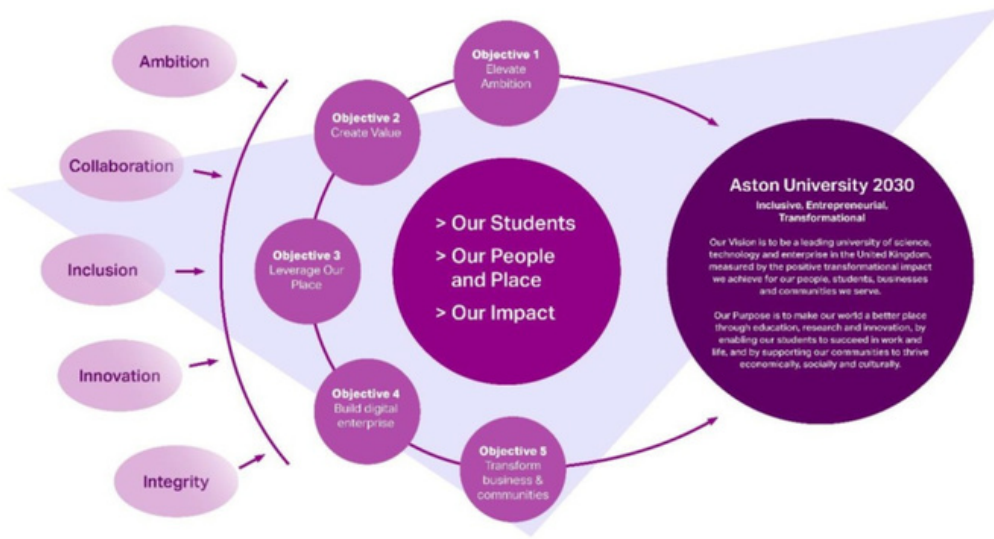


People skills -The how?

- Having adult to adult conversation
- My Performance and Development Conversations (MPDC)
- Introduction to coaching
- Manager as coach
- Managing performance improvement
- Having Adult to Adult Conversations
- Having Effective Development Conversations



Strategy



In order to bring our strategy alive for all staff at Aston University, we need to ensure all My Performance and Development Conversation (MPDC) objectives provide a clear line of sight back to Aston's strategy, values and behaviours.

Our Strategy for a Changing World

For over a century, Aston's history has been intertwined with the history of Birmingham, a remarkable city, that once was the heartland of the industrial revolution and the manufacturing powerhouse of the world. Born out of the First Industrial Revolution, Aston University has a proud and distinct heritage dating back to our formation as the School of Metallurgy in 1875, the first UK College of Technology in 1951, gaining university status by Royal Charter in 1966, and becoming The Guardian University of the Year in 2020.

Throughout this period Aston University's enduring purpose has been to make our world a better place through education, research and innovation, by enabling our students to succeed in work and life, and by supporting our communities to thrive economically, socially and culturally.

Building on our remarkable past, we now ask ourselves, what is our place and role in the Fourth Industrial Revolution (and beyond) within a rapidly changing world?

Our behaviours linked to the Aston Strategy and values (2023-2030)

Be your best self	Make it happen	Focus on impact	Think big picture	Serve our beneficiaries
Be self-aware, value feedback, learn from it and take action to continually improve.	Demonstrate a 'can do' approach and take accountability to achieve your goals.	Internally and externally lead by example, demonstrate Aston's values and be accountable for your own impact.	Enhance contribution to the University through an understanding of the bigger picture and show commitment to its strategy and values.	Be receptive and proactive in using staff and beneficiary feedback to inform and improve the Aston University experience.
Take advantage of development opportunities to flourish and achieve your full potential.	Maintain direction in face of setbacks and work to remove obstacles to achieve success.	Be open, honest and transparent and communicate effectively to build shared understanding which enables others to deliver at pace.	When making decisions use insightful, intelligent data and consider the impact beyond your own service.	Follow all business processes, policies and systems to deliver, spot and action opportunities to improve.
Adapt to unfamiliar situations and work in an agile way to accommodate shifting demands and change.	Commit to new direction and step outside your comfort zone to innovate with confidence.	Foster a supportive environment which embraces difference and leverages its strengths to enhance our cultural and intellectual value.	Be aware of the wider HE sector and commercial context to deliver solutions which create value.	Work collaboratively using the diversity of Aston and it's community to effectively analyse problems and develop innovative solutions to continually improve.

For a full Aston Strategy 2023-2030 please visit: www.aston.ac.uk/about/strategy.

For a full Behaviour Framework visit: www2.aston.ac.uk/staff-public/documents/hr/policies-guidance/Behaviour%20Framework.pdf

Role expectations

All managers are key to the success of the University with the following expectations:

- Be a role model and a member of the management team, representing the department in informing and delivering the strategy and objectives.
- Encourage and develop innovations and continuous improvement.
- Have an overview of all activities within the department or team.
- To provide leadership to the workforce and the coordination of activities including identifying and implementing new opportunities.
- Fostering an inclusive environment where people can thrive
- Setting clear priorities and monitor progress using the appropriate tools. (www.aston.ac.uk/staff-public/hr/policies/mdc)
- Manage gaps in performance, empowering staff to be their best self.
- Inspire staff through your communication to secure their buy- in and commitment.
- Recognising, recruiting and retaining high performing staff while challenging and addressing under performance.
- Manage a budget and resources within a team or service to deliver quality outcomes.
- Allocate workload equitably within the department or team, ensuring an overall balance of contribution according to the school and department needs.
- Identify ways to continuously improve services, learn from experience and build a culture of high performance.

Lead others

Be your best self -

I adapt my leadership style to the individual and situation so that people can give their best

Make it happen -

I take responsibility for team effectiveness, focusing on improving outcomes and decisions

Focus on impact -

I create an inclusive environment that values wellbeing and enables everyone's contribution

Think big picture-

I encourage curiosity in my team so they learn, explore and innovate

Serve our beneficiaries -

I inspire shared purpose so we positively impact our beneficiaries

A good manager knows their team and knows what style of management to use and when.

“ A good manager gets to know each individual team member understanding what motivates them and uses conversations to praise and improve performance. ”

A good leader is someone who can be humble and admit they don't know the answer.

Reflection

Having understood the role expectations, take some time to reflect on where you are now and what skills, knowledge and behaviours you already have to support you in your role.

Regular periods of self-reflection help leaders ensure they're headed in the right direction with regard to engaging their teams, making progress on their own leadership development, and creating a legacy that is sustainable over the long-term. Different leaders will have different approaches to how they reflect. Some might look at their daily interactions with others, while some will focus more broadly on how they've made an impact on their organisation and people. Self-reflection is one of the best ways to deepen your inner knowledge and discover how to do your best work. It can also improve your confidence and help ward off Imposter Syndrome. Harvard Business School Professor, Francesca Gino, found that workers who spend 15 minutes reflecting on their day feel more capable, competent, and in control.

Whether you are a new manager, a manager with some experience (but maybe new to HE) or an established manager with lots of experience, there are always opportunities to reflect on you within your role as a manager and leader.



Here are some questions that may help you in that reflection:



- What are my strengths / what comes naturally to me?
- What gives me joy / energy?
- How do my strengths help me in my role?
- How can I play to/utilise my strengths to enhance my performance further?



- What areas need development e.g. skills, knowledge, behaviours?
- Where are my blind spots? / who can help me identify them?
- What am I curious about?
- What habits help / hinder me?
- What am I afraid to let go of?
- What do I need to acknowledge and why?



- How can I develop myself as a manager and leader?
- Who can I connect with to develop myself?
- What are my measures of success and how will I know?
- Where do I want to be in the next 3-5 years?

These reflections will help to inform your career and development goals, build your knowledge and skills and foster relationships.

Developing my network

You are not on your own, there is a whole network of people who are there to guide you and make your journey in management easier. Think about who can support you in different areas of your role and also consider who you might like to spend time with and learn from to keep yourself well, energised and motivated.



Join the Leading Aston
Yammer Community
<https://web.yammer.com/>



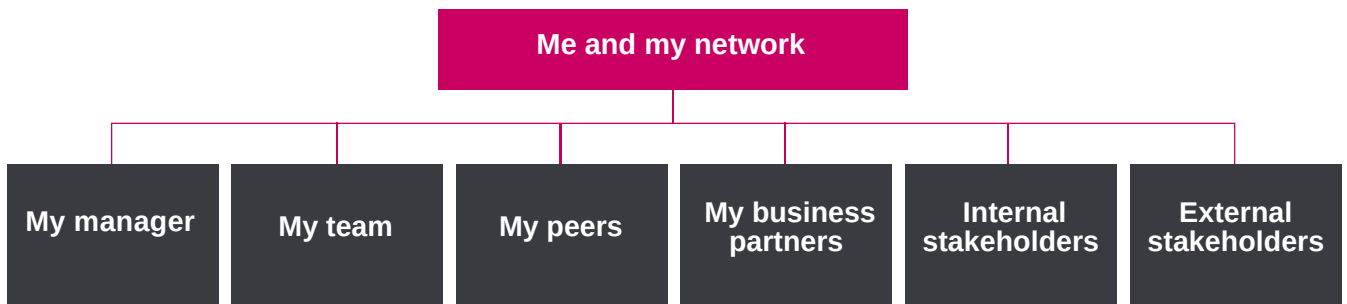
Staff and stakeholders - my team, my network

Who do I need to know?

Who can support me to develop my knowledge and skills?

Who can help me understand how I make things happen around here?

Who are my beneficiaries and key stakeholders?



Role	Name	Contact details	Notes
My manager			
My team			
My peers			
HR BPs			
OD BPs			
Finance BP			
Stakeholders			

Systems

There are several systems you will need to get used to using and it's fair to say not all of them are intuitive, however, they are there to help you do your job and do your job well. We are continually striving to improve our systems and to find out more visit <https://www.aston.ac.uk/staff/project-management-office/>

The links below provide overviews and detailed information of many of the systems, policies and procedures you will need to understand and apply in your role as a manager.

Why not start by listening to our short vidcasts delivered by the HR team and University legal providers on key employment issues or look at the quick reference guides for an overview of key HR processes.



Solve

<https://solve.aston.ac.uk/>



HR Policies and Procedures

www.aston.ac.uk/staff-public/hr/policies



Staff Portal/Core HR

www.aston.ac.uk/staff/hr/aston-staff-portal



Academic Policies and Procedures

www.aston.ac.uk/staff-public/hr/policies/academicpromsprocedure



Agresso - finance system

ston.ac.uk/staff/finance/corporate-accounting/agresso



Staff Expenses

www.aston.ac.uk/staff-public/hr/payroll-and-pensions/expenses



Digital Aston

<https://www.aston.ac.uk/staff/project-management-office/digitalaston>



SITS - Student Information System

<https://www.aston.ac.uk/staff/academic-services/css>

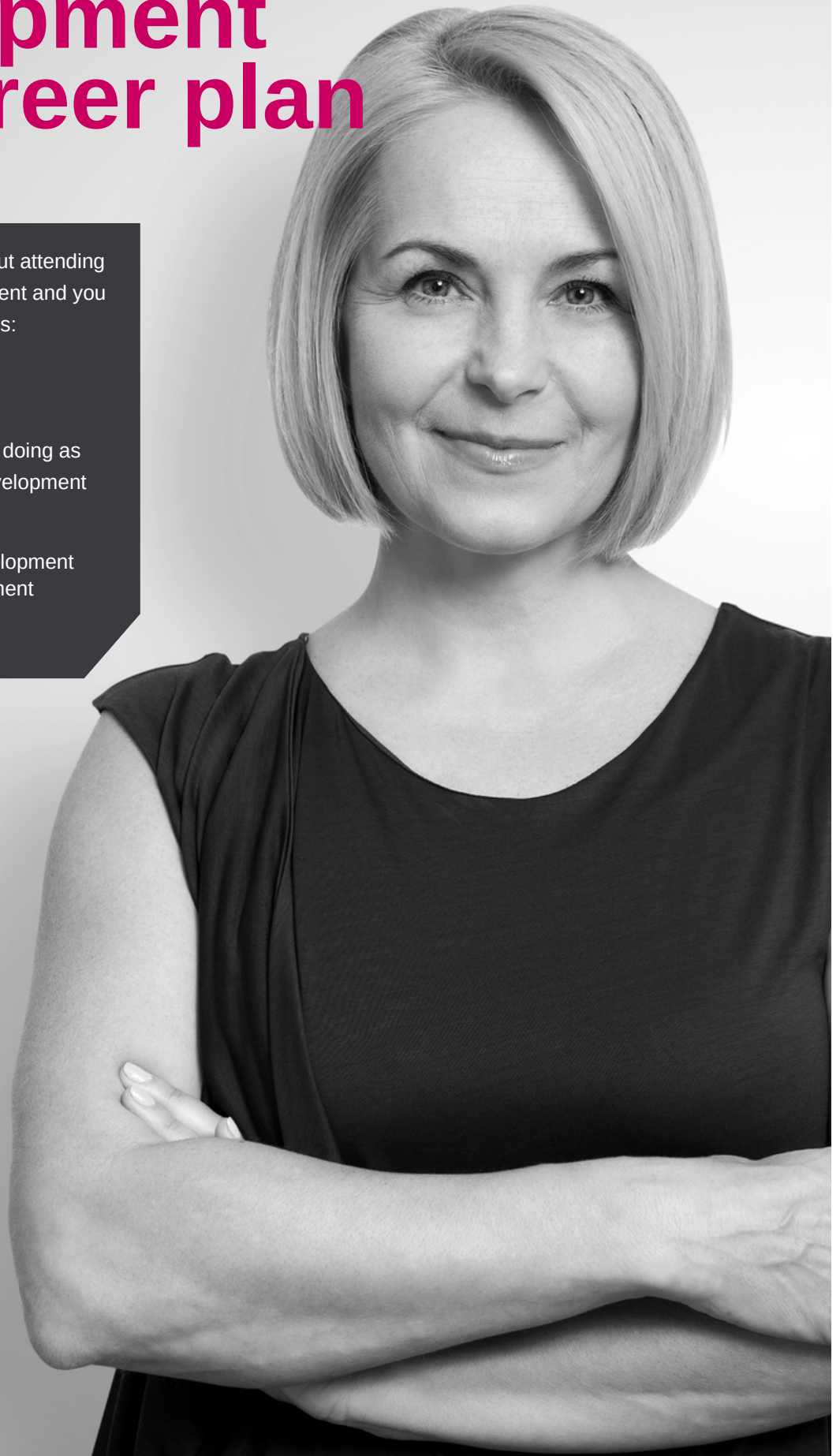
Development and career plan

Your development is not just about attending training - it is a life-long commitment and you will have the opportunity to access:

- coaching and mentoring
- action learning sets

Look for opportunities to learn by doing as well and build these into your development plan.

To find out more about your development visit our Organisational Development pages: www.aston.ac.uk/staff-public/hr/development



Access the Management Development Plan here:

<https://www.aston.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Management%20Development%20Plan%202023%20v1.5.docx>

Useful Links and resources


 **Staff intranet:**
www.aston.ac.uk/staff


 **Wellbeing:**
www.aston.ac.uk/staff/wellbeing


 **IT Helpdesk:**
www.aston.ac.uk/ict/helpdesk


 **New employees:**
www.aston.ac.uk/staff-public/hr/new-employees


 **Health and safety:**
www.aston.ac.uk/staff/safety

 **Policies, procedures & guidance:**
www2.aston.ac.uk/staff-public/hr/policies/index


 **Staff portal**
Book annual leave
View your payslips
Claim your expenses
Book training
www.aston.ac.uk/staff/hr/aston-staff-portal

 **My development**
Mandatory training
E-Learning
Coaching
Mentoring
Apprenticeships
www.aston.ac.uk/staff-public/hr/development

 **Recruiting and Engaging staff**
Information on recruitment
<https://www.aston.ac.uk/staff/hr/recruitment>

 **Inclusive Aston**
Our vision is to create an inclusive environment in which individuals can operate at all levels regardless of their personal circumstances. Our success as an institution depends on the diversity of our staff and students, and we value the contribution that every individual makes.

www.aston.ac.uk/about/inclusive-aston

 **Staff Equality Networks**
We have several Networks at Aston University that staff can access, get involved with, or utilise for service, resources and advice.

www.aston.ac.uk/staff-public/hr/policies/equality/networks



**INSPIRING
WOMEN AT
ASTON**



**Minority
Ethnic
Group**



Dynamic Working: <https://www.aston.ac.uk/staff-public/hr/policies/dynamic-working>

Glossary of terms

ALS - Action Learning Sets - A structured method for small groups to address complicated issues by meeting regularly and working collectively.

ASG - Academic Subject Group (referred to as 'departments' from 2017/8)

Athena SWAN Charter - The Athena SWAN Charter was established to encourage and recognise commitment to advancing the careers of women in science, technology, engineering, maths and medicine (STEMM) employment in higher education and research.

BP - Business Partner

CLIPP - Centre for Learning, Innovation and Professional Practice

ECAP - Exceptional Circumstances and Absence Panel

ECR - Early Career Researcher

FEC - Full Economic Costing. This is an approach to costing research projects.

HEFCE - The Higher Education Funding Council for England.

HEA - The Higher Education Academy. A UK-based organisation responsible for enhancing teaching and supporting learning in higher education.

HEI - Higher Education Institution

HESA - Higher Education Statistics Agency

KEF - Knowledge Exchange Framework

LOA - Leave Of Absence

LTC - Learning and Teaching Committee

MDC - My Development Conversation

NSS - National Student Survey

MDC - My Development Conversation

NSS - National Student Survey

PG - Postgraduate

PGR - Postgraduate Research

PGSSCC - Postgraduate Staff Student Consultative Committee

PGT - Postgraduate Taught

PTES - Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey. An annual sector-wide survey of postgraduate taught students' learning and teaching experience.

REF - Research Excellence Framework. This is a system for assessing the quality of research in Higher Education Institutions in terms of outputs, impact and environment.

RKE - Research and Knowledge Exchange

QAA - The Quality Assurance Agency for England. This is an independent body tasked with monitoring, assessing and advising on the quality standards of HEI'. Aston University was reviewed by the QAA in 2015.

OD - Organisational Development

SITS - Student Information Systems

SSR - Staff Student Ratio. This shows how many students are taught per member of staff and informs national league tables.

STEM - Science, technology, engineering and mathematics. STEMM is also a term when medicine is added to the subjects.

Teaching Periods (TPs) - The period of time when teaching is actually taking place.

TEF - Teaching Excellence Framework

Term - Periods of time the University is open. There are three terms in each academic year.

UCAS - Universities and Colleges Application Service. A UK charity whose main function it is to provide the application process for almost all UK Universities and Colleges.

UCEA - Universities & Colleges Employers Association

UG - Undergraduate

UGSSCC - Undergraduate Staff Student Consultative Committee

UKVI - United Kingdom Visas and Immigration is a part of the Home Office.

WASS - Web Appointment Scheduling System

Contact us:

orgdev@aston.ac.uk

<https://www.aston.ac.uk/staff-public/hr/organisational-development>