

LSE Mid-Career Academic Coaching Programme Guidelines Academic Year 2025-26

These guidelines are for:

- Colleagues who are making applications to LSE's Mid-Career Academic Coaching Programme
- Colleagues who are reviewing applications to LSE's Mid-Career Academic Coaching Programme

Introduction

Following a successful pilot round in 2024-25, LSE is again offering 20 mid-career academics, particularly from under-represented groups in the LSE research community who have experienced barriers to progression, the opportunity to take up a programme of coaching with external coach, Dr Katy R Mahoney. The programme aims to support you to navigate your career and achieve your aspired goals related to performance, working relationships, and skills and capabilities with the bespoke support of a professional coach. The coaching approach will tailor support to address each researcher's specific challenges.

Aligned to the [LSE Research for the World Strategy](#), and [Vitae's Researcher Development Framework](#), the key objective of the LSE Mid-Career Academic Coaching Programme is to offer a development opportunity targeted to the mid-career stage and strengthen LSE's research culture and environment to sustain our excellence in world-leading research and impact across the breadth of the social sciences.

This programme seeks to enable you to deliver high-quality research and impact, effectively communicate your findings to diverse audiences, enhance your skills and capacity in areas such as research leadership, project management and grant writing, and promote interdisciplinary approaches and foster strategic collaborations.

About the Programme

The programme of coaching comprises:

- one (1) 90 minute coaching onboarding and Q&A session,
- four (4) x 1-hour individual coaching sessions,
- CPD Standards Office coaching certificate for candidates on completion of programme for use as evidence towards chartered status applications,
- 12 months access to an online resource portal for handouts and additional career enhancing resources.

Dr Katy R Mahoney offers email support between coaching sessions for the duration of programme, insights into personality preference to support working within preference to maximise potential and additional coaching and personal development exercises and activities.

Coaching is about creating clarity and helping you realise your personal potential. This programme will support you to re-programme unhelpful thought patterns and find better ways to tackle career challenges. Your coach will help you to bridge the gap between where you are now and where you would like to be more effectively than if you worked alone.

Coaching is about empowering you to move forwards, finding your own methods to overcome obstacles. Participants in our 2024-25 cohort have described the programme as an “extremely valuable experience”, noting that coaching helped address critical structural challenges faced by mid-career academics—particularly those related to workload, burnout, and career stagnation. Coachees described shifts in mindset, improved time management, and renewed confidence in their academic identities, research, and writing, in many cases helping to support gains in research productivity and career development:

“The aim of [my] coaching sessions was to improve work/life balance, create more space for research and work towards career progression. I feel the coaching sessions have helped me to achieve this. I have clearer goals now for my research in the next few years, a realistic time plan for completion of my monograph, and developed an approach to work on multiple projects at the same time.”

“The sessions helped me better define my goals and priorities, better manage and protect my time. These outcomes will be very helpful to make faster progress towards my career goals”

What to Expect?

- Confidentiality: Total confidentiality, provided by a coach external to LSE.
- Challenge & Growth: A challenge to your current way of thinking, to identify unhelpful thought patterns and find better ways to tackle a specific problem.
- Actionable Steps: Discover manageable steps and agree on actions to help you move forward.

Don't expect your coach to be a counsellor, therapist or mentor. A coach focuses on future possibilities and helps you to discover those possibilities yourself. Your coach will complement, rather than replace, the support provided by line managers and professional mentors. This integrated approach ensures comprehensive support for researchers throughout their professional journey.

Applicants

Applicants are able to self-identify whether they consider themselves as mid-career. In particular, current mid-career academics (i.e. Associate Professor, Associate Professorial Research Fellows, Senior Policy Fellow) are invited to apply. We particularly encourage applications staff from underrepresented groups in the LSE research community.

How to Apply

Applications should include:

- A completed Coaching Application Form using the template provided
- Applications must be submitted by **end of day, Friday, 14 November 2025** by email to Dr Catherine Ulmer, Senior Research Culture Manager (c.m.ulmer@lse.ac.uk)

Please note: our application form asks prospective participants to answer a brief series of short-answer questions around the topics of personal and professional development. As you consider your answers, it may be helpful to consult Vitae’s recently refreshed Researcher Development Framework, which articulates the knowledge, skills, and behaviours of effective researchers, and is used for planning, promoting and supporting the personal,

professional and career development of researchers. It contains prompts and examples to help you think about how to plan and manage their professional and career development. The refreshed RDF can be found [here](#).

Timeline

- Coaching Application Form deadline: end of day Friday, 14 November 2025
- Applicants notified: w/c 1 December 2025
- Coaching Kick-Off Meeting: 9 December 2025, online via Zoom, 10am-12pm (*as it is important for programme participants to attend this meeting, we ask prospective applicants to please place a 'hold' in their diaries until further notice*)
- Coaching Sessions Begin: January 2026
- Coaching Programme to End: June 2026

Assessment

Applications will be assessed by a Panel of academic colleagues, the Senior Research Culture Manager, and external coach. They will be evaluated using the following assessment matrix:

Assessment Criteria	
Applications will be evaluated on a Scale of 1 to 5 as follows:	
Does the applicant clearly explain how the coaching programme will support their transition to the next phase of their career (aligned with short- and long-term goals) and the potential impact on their future academic contributions?	
Score	Description
1	No Evidence: The applicant does not explain how the programme will support their career transition or impact their academic contributions. There is little or no alignment with personal goals.
2	Poor Evidence: The applicant provides a vague or incomplete explanation of how the programme will support the next phase of their career or impact their future academic contributions. There is minimal alignment with their personal goals or these are insufficiently detailed lacking relevance to their needs.
3	Satisfactory Evidence: The applicant explains how the programme will support their career and academic contributions, but the response lacks depth or specificity. Some alignment with personal goals is evident.
4	Good Evidence: The applicant clearly explains how the programme will support their career transition and enhance their academic contributions. Strong alignment with short- and long-term goals is demonstrated.

5	Excellent Evidence: The applicant provides a compelling and detailed explanation of how the programme will support their career development and significantly enhance their academic contributions, with specific outcomes linked to personal goals.
Does the applicant convey how the programme will enhance specific skills necessary for the researcher's development (i.e. leadership, grant writing, project management, developing others, collaboration, communication, resilience, innovation etc.)?	
Score	Description
1	No Evidence: The applicant does not clearly convey how the programme will enhance the skills needed for their career development and the connection to their short- and long-term goals is unclear or absent.
2	Poor Evidence: The applicant provides a vague explanation of how the programme will enhance skills needed for their career development.
3	Satisfactory Evidence: The applicant conveys how the programme is likely to enhance the skills necessary for their career development, but lacks specificity or alignment with their short- and long-term goals.
4	Good Evidence: The applicant clearly conveys how the programme will enhance specific skills necessary for their career development. The explanation is detailed and provides a clear connection to their short- and long-term goals.
5	Excellent Evidence: The applicant identifies specific and tailored skills that the programme will aim to develop and provides a comprehensive explanation of how this will strengthen their career development, which are also well aligned to their short- and long-term goals.
Does the applicant demonstrate the applicant's motivation, readiness and commitment to engage fully with the coaching programme?	
Score	Description
1	No Evidence: The applicant shows little to no motivation or readiness. No clear commitment to the programme is evident, demonstrating uncertainty or lack of interest in personal or professional growth through coaching.
2	Poor Evidence: The applicant demonstrates minimal motivation and readiness. Commitment to the programme is weak, with some interest but lacking clear enthusiasm or understanding of the coaching process.
3	Satisfactory Evidence: The applicant shows moderate motivation and readiness. There is some commitment to the programme, but it may be accompanied by doubts or a lack of clarity in goals.
4	Good Evidence: The applicant displays strong motivation and readiness. They show a clear commitment to the programme and demonstrate a good understanding of what they wish to achieve. They are well-prepared and eager to engage.

5	Excellent Evidence: The applicant exhibits exceptional motivation and readiness. They are fully committed to the programme, with a clear vision and strong determination to engage fully. They are highly prepared and enthusiastic about the coaching opportunity.
	Does the applicant clearly explain how their coaching experience will enable them to positively influence LSE's research culture (responsible practice, supportive environment, stimulating ecosystem), for example through mentoring, community building, fostering collaboration, promoting inclusion or driving positive change?
1	The applicant does not identify any meaningful outcomes or achievements. Their response shows little awareness of research culture or fails to connect coaching with outcomes that could positively influence LSE's research culture.
2	The applicant identifies very limited or vague outcomes. Connections to enhancing research culture are weak, lacking depth, feasibility, or alignment with LSE's priorities.
3	The applicant describes some relevant outcomes and achievements. There is a basic awareness of research culture, but links to coaching are general and lack specificity or clear impact.
4	The applicant outlines clear and realistic outcomes that align with enhancing research culture at LSE. They demonstrate a good understanding of how coaching could help them contribute (e.g. through collaborations, interdisciplinarity, inclusivity).
5	The applicant presents a compelling, detailed, and ambitious vision for outcomes and achievements. They clearly articulate how coaching will enable them to influence research culture at LSE, with specific, feasible, and impactful examples (e.g. leading strategic collaborations, fostering positive behavioural change, promoting inclusivity).
Additional Consideration for Assessors: Ensure the coaching programme is inclusive and supportive of researchers across a range of backgrounds.	
Description: One of the aims of the LSE Mid-Career Academic Coaching Programme is to support individuals across a broad range of backgrounds - including disciplinary areas, career tracks, protected characteristics (in particular from underrepresented groups in the LSE research and policy community). As such, the assessment panel will consider whether the programme thoughtfully addresses, and is responsive to, the needs of diverse groups to foster an inclusive and equitable culture and environment at the School.	

About Dr Katy R Mahoney

Dr. Katy R Mahoney FRGS, VRDF is a distinguished professional researcher coach deeply committed to supporting individuals within the higher education community. Her expertise lies in assisting clients who navigate the intricate balance of professional responsibilities, family commitments, and external pressures. Katy fosters a nurturing and practical coaching environment that provides stability and fosters growth for her clients. Central to Katy's coaching philosophy is empowering clients to identify their priorities and define success within their academic or professional pursuits. The transformative experiences her clients undergo reflect her coaching ethos, characterised by integrity, candour, and a strong focus on client-centred practices.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. When will this programme start?

Following a kick-off onboarding meeting for the 2025-26 programme cohort, the aim is for this programme of coaching to start in January 2026 and last around 4-5 months.

2. What is coaching?

"Coaching is... unlocking a person's potential to maximise their own performance. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them." - Timothy Gallwey, *The Inner Game of Work*
Coaching is about supporting individuals to create clarity and realise their researcher potential. As a coach, Katy assists individuals in bridging the gap between where they are now and where they would like to be far more effectively than if they worked alone. Katy does this by:

- Helping to raise awareness through asking questions, which allows individuals to get clear on what they truly want to achieve.
- Assisting in creating practical, step-by-step action plans to reach their goals.
- Providing a 2-step support programme to overcome obstacles that may be encountered.
- Providing tools, techniques, and strategies to create lasting change and success.

3. How will the sessions work?

During the first session, current challenges will be discussed along with considering the overall research/career goal and the manageable stepping stones that could be taken to move forward. The reality of the current situation will be discussed, considering all ideas and options to move forward and challenging the current way of thinking. You will then decide the way forward and what you are going to commit to doing by when. At the end of the session, the second appointment will be arranged in relation to your commitment to action. During the second call, you will review your progress with Katy, understanding what worked and how to continue moving forward. The sessions are 1 hour long and conducted using Zoom.

4. What can be expected from coaching?

- To be asked questions and listened to in a totally confidential and non-judgemental environment.
- To be challenged in the current way of thinking to find paths that feel more congruent with aspects of life and the approach to research.
- To be encouraged to change the current way of thinking about certain challenges, locating unhelpful thought patterns, and discovering a more resourceful state.
- To discover manageable steps and agree on actions to move from where they are now to where they want to be.

5. Will Katy tell me what to do or fix my problems?

Although some skills may be similar, a coach is not a counsellor, a therapist, a mentor, or a consultant. Katy will not tell you what to do. If you want someone to support you to set goals, create action plans, and provide ongoing feedback that is tailored specifically to you then coaching is what you are looking for. Opting for a coach means working with someone who is committed to support you to feel more positive about the direction of your work and more confident that you can achieve success.

6. Who does Katy coach?

Katy coaches many different types of people, including senior research managers, academics, research staff, PhD students, clinicians, and medics. People come to Katy for coaching because they are finding it hard to move forward in their career, on a project, or in their research. Others come for coaching because they want to make a change. For example, they might want to start writing more, be more productive, or find a better balance in their career. They know that there is a gap between where they are now and where they want to be in the future.