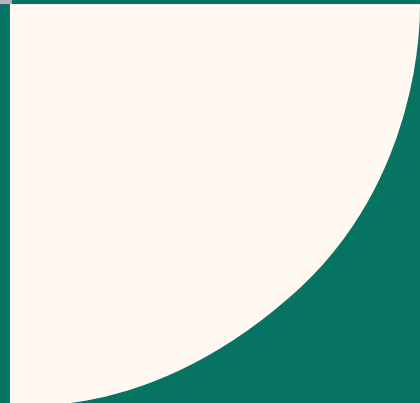




# Reaching Higher

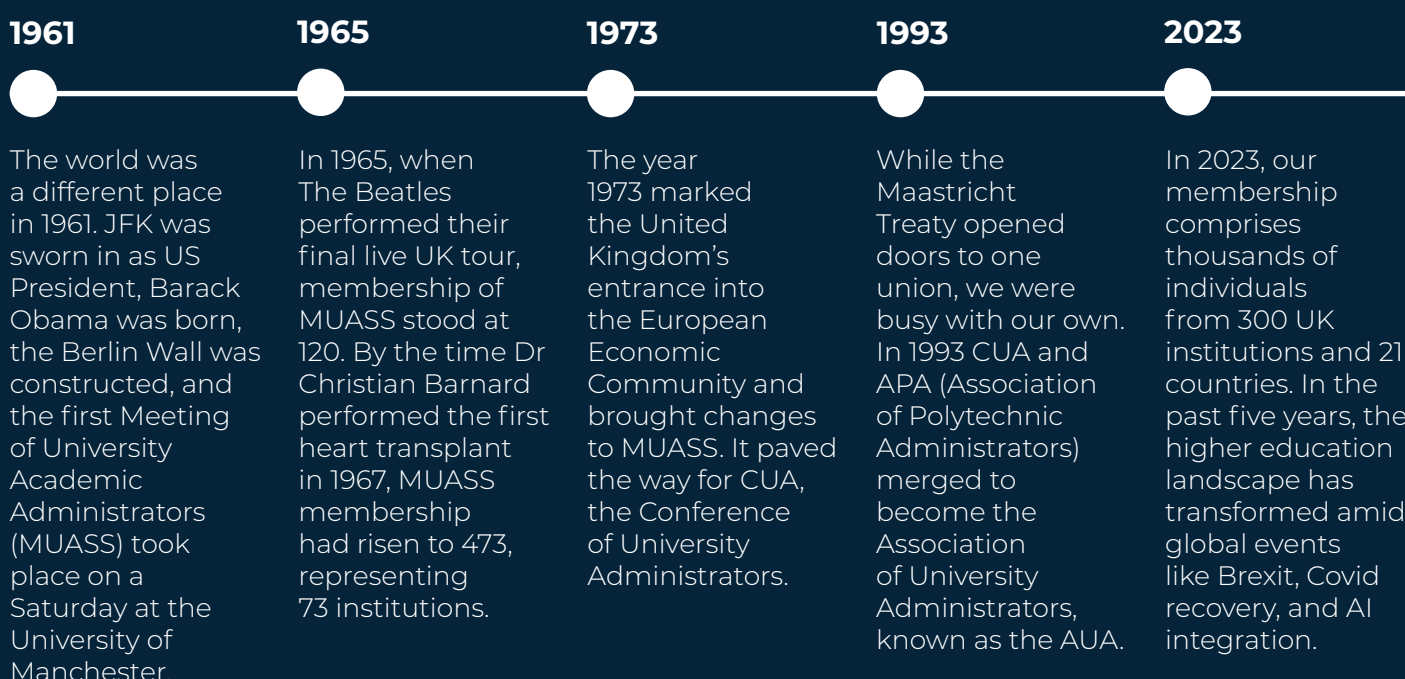
## 2023-2028 Strategy





## Evolution is in our history

Since its inception in 1961, the Association has undergone a remarkable journey. We have remained committed to serving our members throughout challenging periods and tremendous change. Higher education has progressed, and our sector's advancements are propelling us towards new and exciting places.



The HE sector and member expectations have evolved significantly, and the Association is changing to meet these needs. We are committed to staying at the forefront of these changes, embracing innovation and providing tailored support to meet the diverse needs of our broad membership base, ensuring our services remain relevant and valuable in this dynamic environment.

With this in mind, we proudly introduce ourselves as the Association of Higher Education Professionals (AHEP).



**ahep**  
Association of  
Higher Education  
Professionals



# A New Strategic Direction

The Association embarked on a comprehensive strategic development process to redefine our purpose, identity, and value proposition within the sector. To gain a deeper understanding of our current position and future direction, the following activities were undertaken:

- A thorough and candid assessment of the Association's current position was conducted, comprising internal and external assessments to gain valuable insights into the Association's strengths and weaknesses and how it is positioned within the wider sector environment.
- Extensive consultations were conducted with a diverse range of customers and stakeholders to gather external perspectives, identify sector trends, and gain valuable feedback on the Association's offering and reputation.
- Focus groups and interviews with existing, former and potential members informed the development of member profiles, providing clarity of the preferences and needs of the professional services community.

Based on this research, the Association has identified three overarching strands that form our 2023-2028 strategy.



## 1. Identity, Purpose and Engagement

AHEP is dedicated to creating and maintaining a modern, professional, and recognisable identity that our members can be proud of. We are unapologetic about our mission and make it a priority to clearly articulate our purpose to the sector and beyond. Moreover, we actively engage in dialogue with the sector, working towards raising the profile of HE Professionals and fostering greater awareness and recognition.

## 2. Fit for the Future Products

AHEP provides a membership offer that prioritises transparency and clearly demonstrates progression and benefits at every level. This will be complemented by a suite of professional development opportunities that are rigorous, flexible, and responsive to the needs of our members. Additionally, we will proudly deliver a not-for-profit consulting service specifically for the HE sector, led by sector experts committed to delivering customised solutions to meet the unique needs of our clients.

## 3. Strategic Sector Partnerships

Establishing bespoke institutional partnerships with progressive institutions who are committed to the development of a diverse, high performing professional services community.

Also, in the pursuit of collaboration and advocacy for the professional services community, AHEP will aim to establish a coalition with esteemed sector organisations, fostering openness and cooperation.



## Strategic Objectives

The five objectives outlined below are the driving force behind the three core strands of our strategy for 2023-2028. These objectives serve as guiding principles, shaping our approach and directing our efforts to achieve our goals. By aligning our actions with these objectives, we aim to deliver impactful outcomes and drive positive change within the Association and the broader higher education sector.

- Grow membership in the professional services community, primarily in the UK and Ireland
- Reflect the diversity of society in all we do
- Raise the profile of professional services as a career of choice
- Drive collaboration and alignment across the sector
- Considered to be at the forefront of professional development, acting as a beacon of best practice for the sector



# 1.

## Identity, Purpose and Engagement

### Our vision

We are working towards a day when every higher education professional is connected, supported, and developed within a diverse and high-performing community.

### Our mission

We empower and connect **Higher Education Professionals**, supporting their growth and facilitating professional development throughout their careers.

We focus relentlessly on delivering our mission by:

- Empowering our members to identify and act on their development needs to grow professionally within the sector.
- Providing access to a variety of routes to engage with professional development.
- Facilitating members to build a network of contacts at institutions beyond their own.

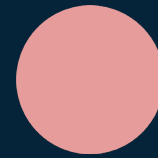
### Our values

AHEP's recently defined values are the core principles that guide the organisation toward its vision and underpin the actions taken to achieve the mission:



#### Credible

We take pride in being professional in everything we do. By modelling the professional behaviours defined in the AHEP Professional Framework, we drive credibility for ourselves, our members and the higher education sector as a whole.



#### Collaborative

We connect individuals on three levels: to their own career, to the wider AHEP network and, via this, to professional services staff working in higher education.



#### Inclusive

Our members become part of an accessible and diverse community that offers something of value to all professional services staff within the higher education sector. There is an active role available for everyone no matter what stage they are in their career or what career they've come from. The true value of the AHEP network lies not in the number of members but in their diversity and the contribution that each member makes.



#### Personable

When connecting with our members, partners and the wider sector, we ensure to maintain a welcoming, friendly nature through all interactions, fostering positive relationships throughout the AHEP community.

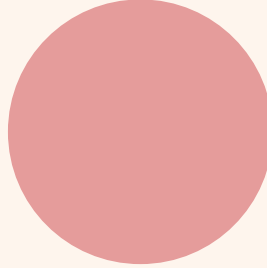
# 1.

## Identity, Purpose and Engagement

### Our organisational personality

Our organisational personality has been crafted to reflect our values and aspirations. Through thorough reflection and refinement, we have developed a fresh and modern image that embodies the advancements and evolution of our sector and the Association.

Our organisational personality can be defined as:



#### Strength

We share our unwavering commitment to resilience and the ability to overcome challenges with determination.



#### Simplicity

Ensuring that we communicate with clarity.



#### Contemporary

We stay at the forefront of trends and innovation, reflecting the ever-evolving nature of higher education.



#### Approachability

We foster a welcoming and inclusive environment, making it easy for individuals to connect with us and engage in meaningful dialogue.

With these defining attributes, our identity showcases a harmonious blend of simplicity, strength, approachability, and contemporary flair, enabling us to effectively meet the needs of our members and navigate the changing landscape of the HE sector.



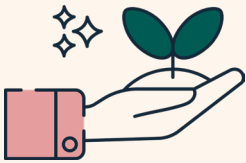
# 1.

## Identity, Purpose and Engagement



### Who is AHEP for?

AHEP exists to support and connect the entire higher education professional services community, and we have segmented our audiences as follows:



#### Early Career Higher Education Professionals:

We cater to individuals beginning their careers in the higher education sector, providing them with valuable resources, guidance, and support to flourish in their professional journey.



#### Ambitious Institutions:

We collaborate with institutions that aspire for excellence, growth, and innovation in the higher education landscape. Our expertise and resources assist these institutions in accomplishing their strategic goals and enhancing their reputation in developing their professional services practitioners.



#### Generalist and Specialist Managers:

Our services and offerings are designed to meet the needs of generalist and specialist managers within higher education. We comprehend their distinct challenges and provide bespoke solutions to enhance their leadership and managerial skills.



#### Strategic Partners:

We actively seek partnerships and alliances with organisations and individuals who share our vision for advancing higher education. By forging strategic collaborations, we aim to create synergies and achieve collective impact in driving positive change.

With this clarity, we can effectively tailor our initiatives, services, and communications to address their specific needs, foster meaningful connections, and drive mutual success.

# 2.

## Fit for the Future Products

Driven by our vision and mission, we are committed to delivering a comprehensive suite of three overarching products that actively contribute to the advancement of the professional services community and the wider sector.

These products have been carefully designed to align with our core values and address our members' specific needs and the HE sector's aspirations.



## Membership

Our membership offers valuable benefits to professional services practitioners:

### Belonging:

Join and actively engage in a community united by a common purpose, fostering a sense of belonging and pride.

### Recognition:

AHEP postnominals signify your accomplishments and recognition within the higher education sector, effectively communicating your professional standing.

### Networking:

Connect and learn from peers with similar interests, concerns, and challenges, fostering meaningful relationships and knowledge exchange.

### Solutions:

Stay informed about evolving trends, challenges, and opportunities impacting your profession and sector, ensuring the necessary insights to navigate changes effectively.

### Skills Development:

Adapt to the rapid pace of change by accessing support for acquiring new skills and updating existing ones.

### Exclusive Offers:

AHEP is developing partnerships to add a range of privileges, including exclusive access and special discounts, providing tangible value that exceeds the membership fee.

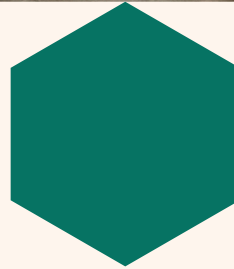


# 2.

## Fit for the Future Products

### Membership

We will offer a taster experience of AHEP for those who are curious, and beyond that, our membership structure consists of five levels:



Associate

This level may suit those starting out in their career, engaged in tactical and administrative work, handling day-to-day tasks, and those in related fields seeking to stay informed and connected.

Member,  
MAHEP

This level may suit HE professionals involved in operational work, implementing solutions, collaborating with stakeholders, and utilising evidence to inform decisions and actions.

Accredited  
member,  
AMAHEP

This level may suit HE professionals who work operationally and strategically, driving change, demonstrating organisational awareness, offering valuable insights on external trends, and making evidence-based judgments and decisions.

Fellow,  
FAHEP

This level may suit HE professionals who work strategically, driving significant change, influencing at senior levels, and supporting the development of future leaders in the sector.

Honorary  
Fellow,  
HFAHEP

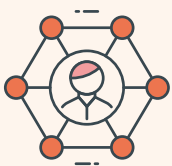
This role is reserved for a limited group of distinguished senior HE professionals who have made exceptional contributions to the sector and are recognised for their advocacy on behalf of the professional services community.

# 2.

## Fit for the Future Products



### Professional Development



#### AHEP Professional Framework:

Our framework combines essential behavioural and core knowledge components. This unique approach combines professional development initiatives, ensuring HE professionals can grow personally and professionally.



#### Clear Career Progression:

We provide a well-defined pathway underpinned by the AHEP Professional Framework, enabling HE professionals to identify career growth opportunities easily. This pathway serves as a roadmap, guiding individuals towards their desired career milestones and helping them map out their professional ambitions.



#### Comprehensive Support:

A suite of high-quality and unified training programmes, events, networking opportunities, and career support services. These resources are designed to enhance professional skills, expand knowledge, and foster meaningful connections within the HE community.



#### Flexible Development:

We are reimagining our learning and development offerings to accommodate the schedules of busy working professionals. As part of this, we are developing asynchronous content that allows individuals to engage at their convenience, aligning with their unique needs and preferences.



#### Special Interest Groups:

We offer digital-first special interest groups that facilitate collaboration and sharing best practices across the sector, ensuring accessibility regardless of geography. Colleagues from diverse backgrounds can connect, collaborate, and exchange knowledge, fostering collective learning and advancement.

# 2.

## Fit for the Future Products

### Consulting

AHEP Consulting is a consulting practice for HE professionals by HE professionals. Our overall aim is to develop professional service practices and improve sector performance.

AHEP Consulting is uniquely positioned in the HE consultancy marketplace, filling the gap between large corporate consultancy practices and independent sole trader consultants.

We differentiate ourselves in three key ways:

# 1.

Our consultants are HE professionals with extensive experience and detailed knowledge of best practice in the sector. This enables us to provide clients with a bespoke service that combines an external perspective with sector-specific expertise rather than applying prescribed, standard methodologies. Consultants both develop the proposals and deliver the consulting service, supported by the infrastructure of AHEP.

# 2.

Compared to large corporate consultancies, AHEP Consulting offers a competitive pricing structure. Compared to independent consultants, our prices are somewhat higher, reflecting the presence of a consultant team and the broader AHEP infrastructure supporting successful project delivery.

# 3.

AHEP is a charitable organisation, and any surplus generated by AHEP Consulting is reinvested directly in AHEP to support its charitable objectives. There are no shareholders or other parties with a financial interest involved.

We provide a consulting service across a range of professional service functions.

# 2.

## Fit for the Future Products



### Consulting

Services directly aligned to the AHEP's core purpose:

#### Recruitment and Admissions:

Strategic advice and operational reviews of student recruitment and admissions, including working with international agents.

#### Student and academic administration:

Strategic development of student and academic administration functions, including Registry/Faculty/School/Department structures.

#### Academic Quality:

Development advice, support, and review of academic quality processes and regulations.

#### Student Affairs Management:

Operational advice and reviews of student affairs administration, in particular, student complaints and academic appeals.

#### Professional Services Operating Models:

Development and optimisation of professional services organisational models, including service standards, monitoring, and evaluating best practice.

#### Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion:

Improving practice in equality, diversity, and inclusion, including equality impact assessment.

#### Professional Development:

Delivery of tailored CPD for professional services staff and support the implementation of positive behavioural attributes that drive high-performing staff.



# 3.

## Strategic Sector Partnerships

### Institutional Partnerships

Institutional Partnerships empower and unite the professional services community across universities, colleges, and educational institutions of all sizes and locations.

Being an institutional partner demonstrates a commitment to best practices, supporting and developing the professional services community, and advocating within the sector. It provides a platform for a collective voice, enhances institution status, and elevates the voice of professional services.

By working closely with our institutional partners, we tailor a partnership package that represents excellent value for the institution.

The partnership package could include the following benefits:

- Discounted membership for the institution's professional services practitioners.
- Several free places that could be used as staff incentives.
- Discounted or several free places at the Association's annual conference.
- Access to coaching for senior leaders.
- Opportunity to collaborate on professional services related to research and publications.
- Access to several consulting days per year.
- Access to and award of the 'Mark of Excellence'.
- Opportunity for your senior leaders to profile your institution's best practice at the Association's annual conference.
- Being profiled across our channels to highlight the institution's proactivity in developing and supporting its professional services community.
- To foster a meaningful partnership, we request each institution to appoint a senior sponsor who will set partnership goals and make decisions on behalf of the institution. This senior sponsor will maintain regular communication and collaboration with us, ensuring the partnership benefits their professional services staff.

By partnering with us, institutions can unlock valuable resources, networking opportunities, and recognition for their commitment to professional development and supporting their professional services practitioners.



# 3.

## Strategic Sector Partnerships



### Sector Partnerships

Numerous member-led organisations actively support higher education, contributing to the sector's improvement by nurturing, connecting, and supporting their professional members. AHEP, as a newly launched initiative, aims to enhance collaboration by fostering partnerships with institutions and sector organisations, promoting a more interconnected and collaborative higher education community.

To establish successful partnerships, three key components contribute to their establishment, management, and evaluation:



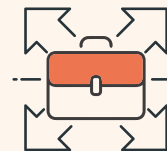
#### Cooperation:

Partners demonstrate a collaborative approach, leveraging strengths and avoiding duplication of work, with mutual agreement on parameters and decision-making processes.



#### Openness:

Effective communication fosters clarity, smooth referrals, and regular interactions, aligning with the partnership's objectives and parameters.



#### Flexibility:

A flexible approach enables adaptation to challenges and opportunities, with provisions for winding up the partnership when its purpose is fulfilled.

AHEP will consider these factors in engaging with individual organisations, potentially exchanging benefits to ensure a sense of privilege for the respective memberships. Additionally, partnerships may offer opportunities for cost reduction through resource sharing or co-purchasing.

By strategically fostering partnerships and collaborations, AHEP aims to amplify the collective voice of Higher Education Professionals to effectively address sector-wide challenges and promote collective advancement in the higher education sector.







At AHEP, we maintain an unwavering commitment to promoting diversity, inclusion, and sustainability in all aspects of our work. We endeavour to cultivate an environment where individuals from diverse backgrounds feel valued, respected, and empowered to contribute their unique perspectives.

Additionally, we prioritise sustainable practices to minimise our environmental impact and actively work towards creating a better and more sustainable future for all. Through these core principles, we aim to foster a culture of equity, embrace social responsibility, and drive positive change within our Association and beyond.



