



The challenge

The Humanities Division at the University of Oxford wanted to provide professional development opportunities for their time-pressed senior managers working in areas such as administration and finance. Because managers are based in different departments, with their own issues and challenges, the professional development needed to be individualised, time-efficient yet cost-effective.

What happened?

SUMS offers both group and 1-2-1 coaching and the latter was deemed most appropriate in this case. The sessions provided to managers by SUMS consultant Alison Price blended coaching and mentoring, as Alison is both a trained coach and has worked in senior management in HE. Managers each attended five sessions, providing them with 'time to think' and a safe space to discuss any issue they chose with an experienced and independent person, culminating in the creation of a professional development support plan. All sessions remained confidential, though Alison fed back to the Division any generic issues that emerged during the programme.

The outcome

The coaching programme has energised managers, giving them a boost in confidence and increasing their professionalism. The support has helped team members manage their roles



in an environment where each holds a high level of responsibility. One staff member who had stepped up to a management position used the coaching to build their confidence and strengthen their effectiveness as a team leader. For another manager, whose responsibilities had expanded, the programme helped them

to understand how to prioritise and develop a working style that would meet the requirements of the role. Overall, the team has benefited both individually and collectively. The programme allowed the Division to create new structures to increase their resilience and deliver services more effectively.

This individualised but flexible coaching framework has worked well and provided excellent value for money. Just as important has been the person who delivered it and Alison is extremely good, with a real understanding of our work environment.

LYNNE HIRSCH, DIVISIONAL REGISTRAR AND HEAD OF ADMINISTRATION, HUMANITIES DIVISION

Professional development support at the University of Oxford

For More Information

e – sums@reading.ac.uk

t – 0118 935 7073

www.sums.org.uk

