URC WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

TAKE ON TOMORROW

COURSE INFORMATION

Congratulations on your acceptance to the United Rugby Championship Women's Leadership Academy 2026.

This document serves as your onboarding information and will outline what you need to know to get started on the programme. Everything outlined here will be addressed in the online onboarding session.

WORKSHOP DATES

Date	Time	Speaker
Wednesday, 21 January	18:00 (GMT)	WLA Onboarding
Friday, 23 January	10:00 (GMT)	WLA Onboarding (back-up day)
Wednesday, 28 January	18:00 (GMT)	Workshop 1 | Hollie Davidson
Wednesday, 4 February	18:00 (GMT)	Workshop 2 | Matthew Thoma
Wednesday, 11 February	18:00 (GMT)	Workshop 3 | Elma Smit
Wednesday, 18 February	18:00 (GMT)	Workshop 4 | Deirdre O'Sullivan
Wednesday, 25 February	18:00 (GMT)	Workshop 5 | Niahm O'Connor
Wednesday, 4 March	18:00 (GMT)	Workshop 6 | Sue Butler
Wednesday, 11 March	18:00 (GMT)	Workshop 7 | TBC
Wednesday, 18 March	18:00 (GMT)	Workshop 8 | Michaella Snoeck
Wednesday, 25 March	18:00 (GMT)	Workshop 9 | Ann Austin
Wednesday, 1 April	18:00 (GMT)	Workshop 10 | Michelle Wilson
Wednesday, 8 April	18:00 (GMT)	Workshop 11 | TBC
Wednesday, 22 April	18:00 (GMT)	Graduation & MVP Announcement

**Dates and times are subject to change due to speaker availability*

URC WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

URC TAKE ON TOMORROW

WORKSHOP ETIQUETTE

Please be on time. On time means waiting in the lobby 3-5 minutes before the session starts. Our speakers have offered up their time voluntarily and to arrive late would be disrespectful to them. Yes, things happen, and there may be times where you may be late. Please email wla@unitedrugby.com in advance so that we can advise the speaker.

Name. Please make sure that your Zoom account has your name and surname when you join the session. It is important for the speaker to know who they are speaking to, especially if you ask questions. Let's try to keep the sessions as professional as possible – but we promise they will be insightful and fun too!

Cameras. Connectivity may be an issue for some delegates attending the workshops. Initially, please can you ensure that your video is turned on so that the speaker can see who she is speaking to. Once introductions have been done, cameras may be turned off. If you pose a question to the speaker, please turn your camera on.

Mute. Please mute your microphone on arrival to the session. Only un-mute once we invite you to ask a question. The host will mute you if you do unmute yourself out of turn.

Questions. Each session will have a time allocated for questions. Should you want to ask a question, please raise your hand using the icon in Zoom, or alternatively type your question in the Zoom or WhatsApp chat. We will invite you to ask the question when the speaker is ready, or when the question session opens. If we run out of time and your question is not answered, don't worry. The speakers have all agreed to receive additional questions via mail the day after the workshop. These will then be answered when they are available and shared with everybody on email.

Recording. All workshop sessions will be recorded. The recoding will be loaded onto the WLA Hub the day after the workshop. It can be found under "Workshop Recordings". When the recording has been loaded, a note will be made on the WhatsApp group to alert you.

We don't mind you using an AI tool for note taking, however no other recording platforms may be used. The WLA will be the only recording permitted.

Speakers. Our speakers are accomplished leaders who generously share their time, experience, and insights with the programme. While they are deeply passionate about supporting the next generation of women in sport, many have demanding professional schedules.
We respectfully request that you do not contact speakers in their personal or professional capacity unless the speaker has chosen to share their contact details. Feel free to connect with speakers via their public social media platforms.

URC WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

URC TAKE ON TOMORROW

CONFIRMED SPEAKERS

Speaker	Position	Country
Ann Austin	VP Community Development & Charitable Programs, WTA	USA
Deidre O'Sullivan	Head of Operations & Regional Competitions, World Rugby	Ireland
Elma Smit	Content Producer and Presenter, Whisper TV / The Good The Scaz & The Rugby	UK / South Africa
Hollie Davidson	World Rugby Match Official	Scotland
Matthew Thoma	Senior Digital Channels Manager, United Rugby Championship	UK
Michaella Snoeck	Chief Media Officer, Formula E	UK / South Africa
Michelle Wilson	Director, Global Sport Group	USA
Motshidisi Mohono	Presenter, SuperSport	South Africa
Niamh O'Connor	CEO, Western Force Rugby	Australia / Ireland

Shira Kilgallon	Podcast Producer, The Good, The Scaz & The Rugby	UK
Sue Butler	Head of Sport, S4C Television	UK

THE WLA HUB

You will receive a mail from the WLA HUB which includes details about how to access the HUB.

The following information will be uploaded to the WLA HUB for you to access:

- Speaker Bios
- Workshop dates and timings
- Link to join each workshop
- Workshop recordings
- Speaker presentations
- Interesting articles and news

Please use the WLA HUB to ensure that you make the most of this programme.

THE WLA INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT

The WLA programme has its own IG account (**urc_wla**). This was created to have a safe, supportive space for you to learn and grow your social media skills. The account is about building a WLA Community – not Followers.
To Network. To Connect. To Engage. To Learn.

You may not all be interested in a career which focuses on the digital side of the sports industry, however, social media and content plays a vital role in every aspect of the industry – from legal to medical, and from the field to the boardroom and across

commercial aspects, so we do ask that you participate and take learnings from this opportunity in a space where it is safe to try new things.

We will be sharing an IG strategy document which will explain how the IG account will work – but it is up to all of your to create and share the content. The account is not being run or moderated by the URC - the WLA cohort is responsible for this account and you will all be tasked to conceptualise ideas for content and roll out those campaigns as a collective.

There will be a separate IG workshop to take you through how this will all work. Date TBC.

WHAT ARE OUR EXPECTATIONS OF YOU TO GRADUATE?

1. You will be expected to attend a minimum of 9 out of the 11 workshops, unless arrangements have been made in advance with Shelly or Karen.
2. If you are unable to attend due to unforeseen circumstances or because of work commitments, it is expected that you excuse yourself in advance. Please mail your apology through to Karen on wla@unitedrugby.com. It is easier to track the apologies on mail rather than on the WhatsApp group.
3. If you are not able to attend a workshop, we expect that you catch up on the session by listening to the recorded session which will be loaded onto the WLA HUB.
4. Engagement in the workshop sessions.
5. Engagement with the URC WLA LinkedIn page group.
6. Acceptance to the URC WLA WhatsApp Group.
7. Engagement with other delegates on the official WhatsApp page.
8. Participation with content creation and engagement on the WLA Instagram account (this is not compulsory, but it is encouraged).
9. Complete the pre- and post programme survey's.
10. ON TIME submission of a final assessment video (a submission video similar to the introductory video) where you highlight what you learned from the programme and identify which speaker impacted you most and why. You can also reference how you believe the programme will benefit you in the future.

URC WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

TAKE ON TOMORROW

We know that not everybody feels comfortable to talk in sessions however we do encourage you to ask questions as this is a safe, supportive space to learn and grow and to build you confidence.
Other ways to engage include asking questions in the WhatsApp chat or engaging on social media.

HOW CAN YOU BE SELECTED AS THE URC WLA MVP?

1. You will be expected to attend a minimum of 9 out of the 11 workshops, unless arrangements have been made in advance with Shelly or Karen
2. If you are unable to attend due to unforeseen circumstances or because of work commitments, it is expected that you excuse yourself in advance.
3. If you are not able to attend a workshop, we expect that you catch up on the session by listening to the recorded session which will be mailed to all delegates post the workshop.
4. Engagement in the workshop sessions.
5. Engagement with the URC WLA LinkedIn page group.
6. Acceptance to the URC WLA WhatsApp Group.
7. Engagement with other delegates on the official WhatsApp page.
8. Participation with content creation and engagement on the WLA Instagram account (this is not compulsory, but it is encouraged).
9. Sharing of content across various platforms.
10. Complete the pre- and post programme survey's.
11. ON TIME submission of the final assessment video

A panel at the United Rugby Championship will evaluate the delegates based on feedback from the various sessions and monitoring of social media and review of the final video submission.

The MVP will be announced at the online graduation ceremony to be held on Wednesday, 22 April.

Every delegate who graduates will receive an official graduation certificate.

URC WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

TAKE ON TOMORROW

WHAT BENEFITS ARE THERE TO BEING VOTED THE MPV?

- Work experience at the United Rugby Championship Grand Final on Saturday, 14 June (host city, country TBC) including flights, accommodation and visas, if required.
- Work experience tailored to your chosen career path in sport. The final role will be determined in consultation with you.

The URC WLA does not end once you graduate. You will join the WLA Alumni programme and still have access to the URC for guidance and mentorship.

We look forward to being part of your journey in sport!