

IMPERIAL

Leading through contribution, influence and collaboration



Leadership in Practice Programme for
Academic, Research, Clinical, Learning &
Teaching, Professional, Technical &
Operational Staff

2026/
2027

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Foreword

Leadership at Imperial is both a privilege and a responsibility. Across our university, leaders play a vital role in shaping our culture, enabling our people to do their best work, and turning our ambitions into meaningful outcomes for our students, our community and society. In a complex and rapidly changing environment, effective leadership matters at every level and in every part of Imperial.

This is the purpose of Leadership in Practice. The programme brings together colleagues from across Imperial to develop the confidence, capability and judgement needed to lead people, culture and change. Grounded in the Leadership Academy's ASCEND Leadership Model, it provides a shared framework for understanding effective leadership and, importantly, putting it into practice.

The programme is deliberately practical. Through the residential, workshops, peer learning and field experience, you will have opportunities to reflect on your leadership, learn from others and apply new approaches to the challenges you face every day. You will develop skills and institutional understanding spanning finance and people policy, powerful conversations and coaching, AI, strategic thinking, storytelling and presence.

Our ambition is captured in Science for Humanity: to advance knowledge and use it to make a positive difference in the world. Delivering that ambition depends not only on excellence in research and education, but on the leadership and culture that enable them. We need leaders who can bring people together, foster inclusion and collaboration, embrace change and create the conditions in which innovation and excellence can flourish.



Imperial is committed to investing in your development because developing our leaders strengthens the whole institution. I encourage you to approach Leadership in Practice with curiosity, openness and a willingness to experiment and, most importantly, to put your learning into practice.

I look forward to seeing how you build on this experience and to the contribution you will make to Imperial's future.

Professor Peter Haynes
Provost & Deputy President



As leaders at Imperial, we are entrusted not only with delivering excellence in research, teaching, and operations — but with creating the conditions in which our people and institution can truly flourish. The Leadership in Practice Programme marks an exciting evolution of our leadership development offer, welcoming a broader community of leaders from across Imperial who lead through expertise, influence, and collaboration, not just title or role.

Redesigned in alignment with the Leadership Academy's ASCEND Leadership Model, this programme is a rich, practical journey — from building self-awareness and situational insight, to creating enterprise-wide impact and lasting discovery. Each session is thoughtfully crafted to help you lead people, culture, and change with greater confidence and purpose.

I warmly encourage you to embrace this opportunity — to learn, connect, and grow alongside colleagues from across our remarkable university.

Robert Kerse
Chief Operating Officer

Welcome to Leadership in Practice

Congratulations on your appointment and a very warm welcome to the **Leadership in Practice** programme.

Whether you are new to Imperial or have recently been promoted into a senior leadership role, this programme marks an important milestone in your leadership journey. At Imperial, we are committed to developing and supporting leaders at every level, recognising the vital role effective leadership plays in creating an environment where our people, teams and communities can thrive.

Through this programme, you will build the knowledge, confidence and insight needed to lead people, shape culture and navigate change successfully at Imperial. We believe leadership is not defined by a position or title, but by the influence we have through our actions, decisions and behaviours. As leaders, we set the tone for our teams and contribute to the culture that enables individuals and organisations to succeed.

A key part of your experience will be an introduction to Imperial's bespoke **ASCEND principles**, which underpin our approach to leadership development and form the foundation of our flagship Leadership Academy. These principles will help you lead with confidence, authenticity, humility and purpose, while strengthening your ability to make a lasting and positive impact.

I also encourage you to make the most of the opportunity to connect with fellow participants. The relationships you build through this programme can become a valuable source of support, learning and collaboration throughout your leadership journey at Imperial.

I wish you every success and look forward to seeing the contribution you will make as a leader within our community.

Nichola Stallwood,
Director of Talent and Culture



What's in store?

Leadership In Practice Programme

For Academic, Research, Clinical, Learning & Teaching, Professional, Technical & Operational Staff

The **Leadership in Practice Programme** is designed for leaders across Imperial who lead departments, strategic projects, institutional partnerships and initiatives. Replacing the former Heads of Department Leadership Development Programme, it reflects the reality that leadership is exercised through **contribution, influence and collaboration**, not simply through formal authority.

Built around the **ASCEND Leadership Model**, the programme develops the mindset, skills and confidence to lead effectively in a complex, research-intensive university.

The ASCEND Leadership Model

A – Awareness

Understand yourself as a leader through self-awareness, coaching and feedback.

S – Situational Insight

Lead people effectively by understanding context, building relationships and creating inclusive, high-performing cultures.

C – Climb

Build the confidence and capability to influence, communicate, lead change and navigate complexity.

E – Enterprise Impact

Think strategically, lead beyond your role and create lasting organisational impact.

N – Network

Strengthen your influence through collaboration, peer learning and coaching.

D – Discovery

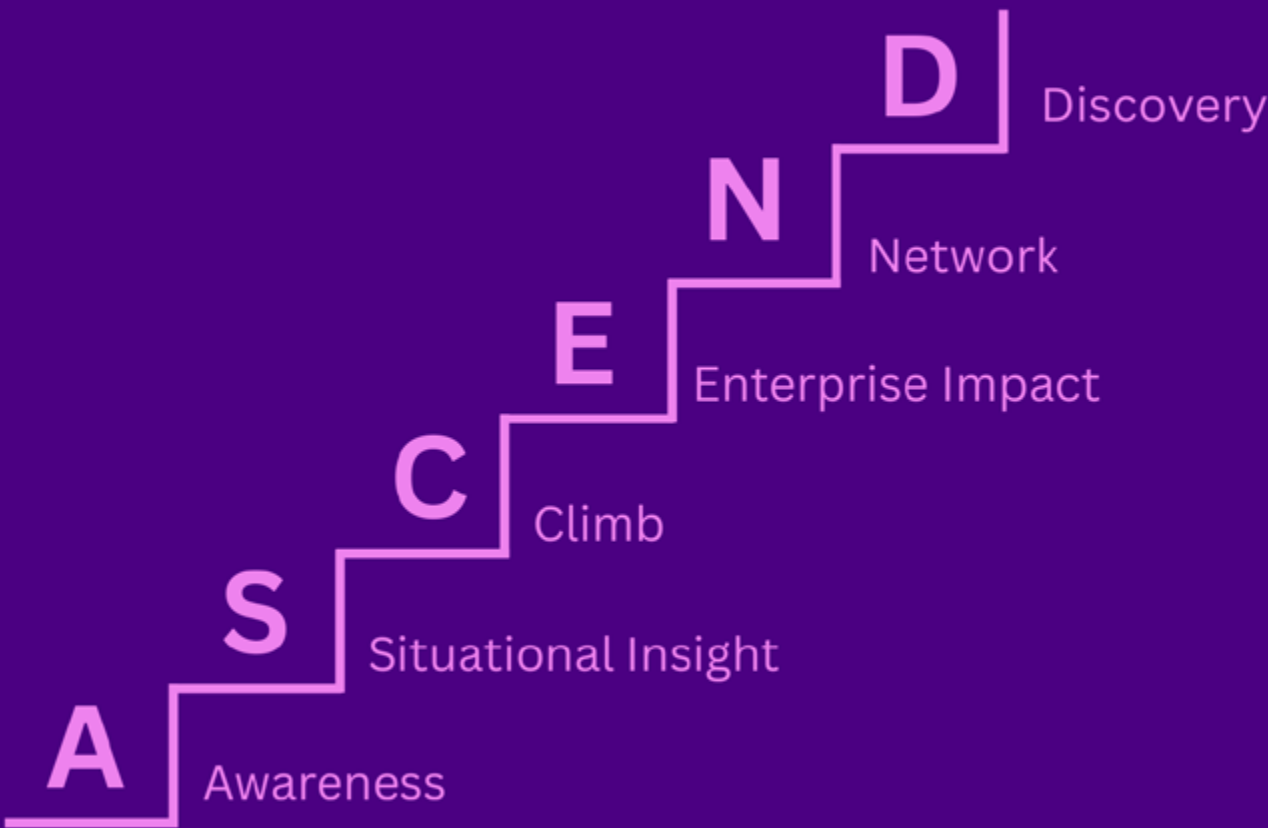
Reflect on your leadership journey and prepare for your future growth and impact.

The programme combines a residential experience, executive coaching, 360° feedback, action learning, and practical workshops to help participants apply their learning immediately in the workplace.



Valarie Williams-Foy,
Head of Leadership Development
& Leadership Academy Lead

Leadership Model



Programme at a glance

Date	Programme session	Delivery
19–21 October 2026	Leadership Residential (Transformational Leadership, Leading with Energy & Leadership Action Learning Lab)	Residential
23 November 2026	Leading People	Face-to-face
10 December 2026	Leading with Influence	Face-to-face
13 January 2027	Leading Powerful Conversations	Face-to-face
2 February 2027	Finance at Imperial & People Policy to Practice	Face-to-face
8 February 2027	Leading Effective One-to-One Conversations	Online
26 February 2027	Giving & Receiving Feedback	Online
15 March 2027	Building High-Performing Teams & Groups	Face-to-face
13 April 2027	Coaching Skills for Leaders	Face-to-face
29 April 2027	Leadership in Practice Social	Networking
5 May 2027	Leading Wicked Problems in a Complex World	Face-to-face
26 May 2027	Leading Change	Face-to-face
17 June 2027	AI Essentials for Leaders	Face-to-face
28 June 2027	Leading Strategic Thinking	Online
6 July 2027	Leadership Field Experience – Storytelling & Presence	Field Experience
14 July 2027	Graduation, Cohort Reconnect & Programme Close	Face-to-face

Programme components



Awareness

Understanding myself as a leader

- 12 Leadership Residential
- 13 Transformational Leadership
- 14 Leading with Energy
- 15 Leadership Action Learning Lab
- 16 Executive Coaching
- 16 360 Debrief



Leadership in Practice Programme Residential

ASCEND: Awareness in Practice (19–21 October 2026) **

The **LIP Residential** marks the beginning of each participant's leadership development journey. Over three immersive days, leaders step away from the pace of campus life into a dedicated space for reflection, connection, and learning. As the foundation of the **Leading Self** stage of the Leadership in Practice Programme, the residential is designed to deepen self-awareness, strengthen leadership capability, and build the confidence to lead with authenticity and purpose.

The residential begins with a shared evening meal, providing an opportunity for participants to build relationships, establish trust, and create a supportive learning community. Over the following two days, participants engage in a carefully designed programme that combines evidence-based leadership diagnostics, reflective practice, motivational insight, and collaborative learning.

Day 2 – Discovering Your Leadership Identity

The first day focuses on **self-awareness and transformational leadership**. Participants gain valuable insight into their leadership behaviours, strengths, and development opportunities. They explore how their leadership is experienced by others and identify practical ways to enhance their effectiveness, strengthen relationships, and increase their impact.

Day 3 (Morning) – Understanding What Drives Performance

Leadership effectiveness depends not only on capability but also on motivation. Participants explore the intrinsic drivers that influence their energy, engagement, resilience, and performance. These insights help leaders understand what enables them—and those they lead—to perform at their best, creating the conditions for high-performing, engaged teams.

Day 3 (Afternoon) – From Insight to Action

The afternoon brings these insights into practice through **Action Learning Sets** and the launch of each participant's **Personal Improvement Project**. Working in facilitated peer learning groups, participants learn how to use questioning, active listening, and reflective dialogue to explore real leadership challenges, challenge assumptions, and identify practical actions.

These Action Learning Sets continue throughout the programme, providing an ongoing source of peer support, accountability, and collaborative learning as participants implement their Personal Improvement Projects within their own areas of responsibility.

Building the Foundations for Leadership in Practice

ASCEND is designed to move participants from **awareness to action**. By the end of the residential, they will have a deeper understanding of themselves as leaders, greater insight into what drives performance, and practical tools to address real leadership challenges with confidence.

More than a development event, the residential establishes a community of reflective practitioners committed to learning with and from one another. It lays the foundations for the journey ahead, equipping Imperial's senior leaders with the awareness, clarity, and confidence to lead with purpose and create meaningful impact across the institution.

Key words/phrases: Self-Awareness, Leadership Growth, Transformation

Transformational Leadership

Overview

The future is unpredictable—and navigating it successfully requires adaptability. Leaders who can learn quickly and respond to change with agility are best positioned to thrive in uncertain environments.

Self-aware leaders understand their default leadership style, but they also recognise when a different approach is needed. While you may lead naturally in a certain way, different situations will call for different responses.

Your ability to flex your leadership style – while staying grounded in your values – will significantly influence your effectiveness. Every style has its strengths and limitations, but developing the skill to adapt ensures you can lead with impact, no matter the context.

Why Self-Awareness Matters?

Improving your self-awareness supports your ability to:

- Grow professionally and personally
- Empathise and connect more deeply with others
- Enhance your emotional intelligence
- Build stronger, more effective relationships

Tools/assessment: Given in the session

Duration: 1 day

Workshop Dates: October 20 2026, 9.30–16.00

Format: Face to Face



Valarie Williams-Foy,
Head of Leadership Development
& Leadership Academy Lead

Key words/phrases: Intrinsic Drivers, Engagement, Performance

Leading with Energy:

Understanding Motivation for Leadership Impact

(AM session)

Overview

What drives you to lead at your best?
Why do some challenges energise you while others leave you feeling drained?

This interactive workshop explores the powerful link between **motivation, leadership energy, and performance**. Participants will uncover the intrinsic drivers that shape how they lead, make decisions, and engage with others. By understanding what fuels their own motivation—and recognising what motivates those around them—they will gain practical strategies to sustain performance, build resilience, and inspire high-performing teams.

In this workshop, you'll:

- Explore your personal motivators and understand how they influence your behaviour and performance
- Learn how to identify and support the motivators of others
- Gain a shared language to talk about motivation and drive continuous improvement
- Develop coaching and listening skills to support motivation in your team
- Create an action plan to boost your lower motivators and sustain your top ones

By the end of the morning, you'll leave with greater clarity, energy, and practical tools to lead yourself and others with purpose and impact.

Tools/assessment: Given in the session
Duration: 3 hours
Workshop Dates: 21 October 2026, 9.30–12.30
Format: Face to Face

Valarie Williams-Foy

Valarie Williams-Foy is Head of Leadership Development at Imperial College London, within the Employee Experience & Culture Department. She leads the design and delivery of strategic initiatives that strengthen Imperial's leadership capability, enhance connectivity, and enrich the overall employee experience. Valarie works in close partnership with academic and professional services leaders to cultivate a high-performing, inclusive learning culture grounded in evidence-based practice. She also heads the Imperial College Internal Coaching Academy and is the strategic lead for the Imperial Leadership Academy. Valarie brings extensive experience from both the private and higher education sectors, having held senior roles at organisations including American Express, Dow Jones, and the University of London.



Key words/phrases: Questions, Reflections & Feedback

Leadership Action

Learning Lab

(PM session)

Overview

This afternoon session brings the programme together with a strong focus on integration, commitment and practical application. Centred on the theme “What I Will Do”, leaders launch their personal improvement projects—small enough to be achievable but significant enough to make a meaningful difference in their part of Imperial.

Through guided action learning, participants introduce their project ideas, receive constructive peer feedback, and learn how Action Learning Sets will support their ongoing reflection and accountability throughout the year. The day concludes with a forward-looking reflection on how each leader will continue their development journey, ensuring the residential experience translates into real, sustained leadership impact back in the workplace. After this day each peer group will receive 3 x2 hours of action learning support for the duration of the programme.

Post Workshop

Action Learning Sets Peer Communities+ Follow- up Session

Action Learning Community

To sustain momentum beyond the residential, participants will form an Action Learning Community with their peer group, bringing leaders back together in follow-up sessions to reflect on their experiences, share progress, and collaboratively tackle live workplace challenges. Using a structured

Action Learning approach, participants will strengthen peer networks, learn from one another's perspectives, and continue developing practical, solution-focused leadership skills. This ongoing community of practice reinforces learning, promotes accountability, and supports leaders to embed lasting change and drive meaningful impact within their teams and organisation.

Tools/assessment: Given in the session
Duration: 3 hours
Workshop Dates: 21 October 2026, 13.30–16.30
Format: Face to Face

About Guildhall Ignite

Guildhall Ignite specialises in tailored coaching and facilitation to increase confidence and agency in the workplace and beyond. They work with individuals and teams to maximise their potential and help them develop the tools to be at their very best when and where it matters most. Guildhall Ignite has a successful track record of delivering high quality and inspiring professional development training with a practical dimension.



Key words/phrases: Enlighten, Enable, Coaching

360 Degree Assessment & Debrief + Coaching Provision

Overview

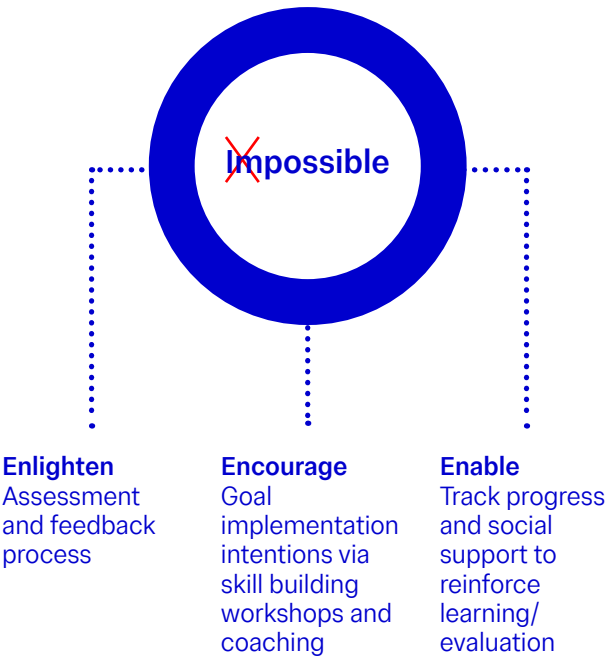
Using the enlighten, encourage, and enable behaviour change framework each participant will undergo 360-degree feedback which was designed with the college’s underlying values of **Collaboration, Respect, Integrity, Innovation** and **Excellence**. Each stage of the model will represent a milestone for participants to move through to transition to the end goal of being successful maintainers of new behaviours.

Insights and awareness are keys to understand more about oneself and how you are perceived by others. Internal and external feedback is key to correcting and modifying both conscious and unconscious behaviour. The 360-degree feedback process is a useful approach and technique for increasing insights and self-awareness by comparing your self-perception to those of others. Using the college’s 360 tool you will receive a detailed report highlighting potential blind spot as well as strengths.

“Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself”.

Leo Tolstoy

The Framework
The 360-degree assessment will help participants to move ahead with their development journey that will include some degree of enhanced self-awareness, skill acquisition and deliberate practice.



One-to-One Leadership Coaching Offer
Following the 360 assessment participants will be supported with coaching as part of the program. Coaching has the potential to raise self-awareness, identify choices, offer a space for reflection and challenge. Coaching provides bespoke professional development to bridge the gap between current performance and full potential. In the coaching sessions, participants may be invited to explore multiple perspectives around an issue to develop new insights and identify options for action.

Provider:
Guildhall Ignite Coaches are all highly experienced and accredited as Executive and Leadership professionals who having held Leadership positions themselves in organisational and educational contexts.

Tools/assessment: Imperial College’s 360-degree Assessment & Debrief
Debrief session duration: 1 x 1.5 hours
Dates: Throughout the programme
360 debriefers: Leadership Development Department.
Follow-up: Each program participant, following their 360-degree assessment, is entitled to three executive coaching sessions

About Guildhall Ignite
Guildhall Ignite specialises in tailored coaching and facilitation to increase confidence and agency in the workplace and beyond. They work with individuals and teams to maximise their potential and help them develop the tools to be at their very best when and where it matters most. Guildhall Ignite has a successful track record of delivering high quality and inspiring professional development training with a practical dimension. Their associates bring their creative expertise to their Executive and Leadership Coaching work. As leading professionals drawn from the worlds of, HE, theatre, music, media, TV, social work and the charitable sector, their coaching team draws upon a wide range of creative and educational experience.



Situational Insights

Understanding people, context and what individuals need to succeed

- 20 Leading People – Influence, Performance & Development
- 22 Finance at Imperial & People Policy to Practice
- 24 AI Essentials for Leaders



Key words/phrases: Leadership, Culture, Employee Experience, Collaboration

Leading People: Influence, Performance and Development

Overview

In this workshop, we will explore the experiences, priorities and skills of leadership fundamental to all who take on significant leadership roles. We will focus on the role of leaders in building and sustaining a positive and inclusive culture for staff that enables maximal performance, is cognisant of differing role pressures, and is considered in setting and maintaining reasonable workloads and boundaries. We will explore the role of influence and the ways in which leadership can be exercised beyond position and hierarchies.

What will it cover:

- Establishing partnerships to create opportunities for safe and inclusive reflection on the common goals and challenges of leadership;
- Understanding and sharing what ‘pressure points’ leaders across the system are facing;
- Balancing the role of ‘leader’ with the role of ‘expert’, and managing the institutional and colleague expectations that arise from each;
- Balancing an inclusive and psychologically safe approach to team and individual management with managing the expectations of strategy and delivery;

- Exploring the intersections between leadership styles and the fundamentals of inclusive employee experience;
- Exploring opportunities for and challenges to behaving authentically while in a leadership position;
- Developing the skills to influence upwards and sideways;
- Exploring approaches to reflexive and emergent leadership that reflect real time demands.

Why should I attend?

Building the right culture for staff to work in has a direct and measurable impact on both their wellbeing and their productivity. This workshop will enable participants to reflect on and explore the leadership considerations, skills and practices that are best placed to build and sustain a positive and inclusive local culture and accordingly to help shape the overall culture of the School and College.

Tools/assessment: [Given in the session](#)

Duration: 1 day

Workshop Dates: [November 23 2026, 9.30 – 16.00](#)

Format: [Face to Face](#)

Angela Blacklaw

Angela has extensive management and leadership experience in the public sector. She has expertise in designing, delivering, and evaluating a range of leadership and talent development.

After several years working on policy on HM Treasury, Angela chose to focus on individual and organisational learning as Head of Internal Communications in the Food Standards Agency, Head of Change Communications and Culture Change in Defra, and Head of Talent Development in the Department of Health. She then set up her own consultancy practice and has worked as an associate for several respected consultancies such as Korn Ferry, Ernst & Young, Hay Group, Civil Service College and The MindGym. She is a member of the Faculty for the NHS Leadership Academy and has worked with NHS staff at all levels for well over a decade. She also teaches creative practice on the MA in Songwriting at the Institute for Contemporary Music Performance.

Qualifications include Fellowship of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (HEA), Post-graduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (UEL), Certificate in Organisation Development (NTL Institute), Master of Science in Human Resources, Post-graduate Diploma in Training Management, Certificate in Programme and Project Management.



Joanne Murphy

Joanne Murphy is Chair of Inclusive Leadership at Birmingham Business School, University of Birmingham. Her research explores leadership, change and organisational development in political volatility, including environments affected by ethno-political conflict. She has worked with a range of organizations including NATO, UNESCO, the John Smith Foundation, The College of Policing and the William J. Clinton Leadership Institute. She is a Fellow of the NI thinktank Pivotal and the International Leadership Association and holds a PhD from Trinity, College Dublin. Her fourth book ‘*After the Peace: Policing in Northern Ireland 25 years on*’ is due for publication in 2026.



Key words/phrases: Sector Finance, Revenue, Spend

Imperial's Finance (AM session)

Outline

Demystifying finance for our Heads of Department

The financial position of the university and challenges in the wider sector

Imperial's financial operations

Tools/assessment: Given in the session
Duration: 1/2 day
Workshop Dates: February 2 2027, 9.30-12.00 AM Session
Format: Face to Face
Facilitator: Anna Caffyn, Chief Financial Officer

Anna Caffyn
Chief Financial Officer



Key words/phrases: Policies, People Management, Standards

People@ Imperial: Policies to Practice (Compulsory) (PM session)

Outline

People @ Imperial is a half-day, face-to-face session led by the Chief People Officer, designed to help leaders better understand our colleague community and the strategic people priorities that will shape Imperial's future. Drawing on key workforce insights, the session will explore how the People Plan sets out our ambitions to create a thriving, inclusive and high-performing university, enabling our people and teams to deliver excellence in support of Imperial's mission.

Building on this strategic context, participants will develop their knowledge and confidence in applying Imperial's people policies and procedures in everyday management practice. Through practical guidance, interactive discussions and case-based learning, leaders will explore how to respond effectively to common workplace situations, make informed people decisions, and foster positive outcomes for colleagues and teams. The session will provide a valuable opportunity to share experiences, learn from others, and strengthen capability in people leadership across Imperial.

Duration: 1/2 day
Date: February 2 2027, 13.00-16.00 PM Session
Format: Face to Face
Facilitators: Kathryn Al Shemmeri, Chief People Officer

Kathryn Al Shemmeri
Chief People Officer



Key words/phrases: AI, Application, Effectiveness

AI sessions for Leaders

Outline

AI Essentials for Leaders is a dynamic, 3-hour in-person workshop designed for non-technical leaders seeking to lead effectively in the age of AI. Led by Professor David Shrier, the session demystifies artificial intelligence and data analytics, providing a foundational understanding of key concepts, tools, and strategic applications in higher education. Through real-world case studies and hands-on experience with tools like ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, and Google Gemini, participants will explore how AI can enhance decision-making, streamline operations, and improve staff, student and faculty services. The workshop also addresses ethical considerations and offers practical guidance on implementing AI responsibly and effectively within academic institutions.

Workshop Dates: June 17 2027, 9.30–12.30
Format: Face to Face
Facilitator: David Shrier

David Shrier David Shrier is Professor of Practice, AI and Innovation with Imperial College Business School. He is also founder and Co-Director of the Trusted AI Alliance, a multi-university collaborative of more than 3,000 AI researchers seeking to create responsible and trustworthy AI. For Imperial, he leads the cross-Faculty module AI Ventures, as well as the Fintech module in the Business School. His most recent book is Basic AI: A Human Guide to Artificial Intelligence. David is also an active AI business builder and runs venture studio Visionary Future.



“Leadership is a practice, not a position- shaped through reflection, relationships and the courage to act.”

Climb

Building leadership capability

- 28 Leading with Influence
- 30 Leading Powerful Conversations
- 31 Leading Wicked Problems in a Complex World
- 32 Leading Change



Key words/phrases: Influencing, Stakeholders, Communication

Leading with Influence

Overview

Leading with Influence is a practical workshop that equips leaders with the skills, tools and confidence to influence effectively across a range of contexts, from one-to-one conversations and local teams to larger, more complex and high-profile organisational settings.

Participants will explore the challenges of influencing without relying on authority and develop a comprehensive toolkit of approaches to build trust, strengthen relationships and communicate with greater impact. The workshop covers push and pull influencing techniques for achieving both compliance and engagement, explores nine distinct influencing strategies with a focus on intention, purpose and the components of trust, and introduces stakeholder analysis to identify levels of interest, influence and power. Participants will consider the key individuals, senior leaders, groups and organisations they need to influence, evaluate the strength of existing relationships, select the most effective influencing strategies for different situations, and learn how to structure communications to meet stakeholder needs and maximise impact within their teams, across Imperial and beyond.

Tools/assessment: Follow-up materials and resources to be provided before, during and after the workshop.

Duration: 1-day

Workshop Dates: December 10 2026, 9.30–16.00

Format: Face to face

Angela Blacklaw

Angela has extensive management and leadership experience in the public sector. She has expertise in designing, delivering, and evaluating a range of leadership and talent development.

After several years working on policy on HM Treasury, Angela chose to focus on individual and organisational learning as Head of Internal Communications in the Food Standards Agency, Head of Change Communications and Culture Change in Defra, and Head of Talent Development in the Department of Health. She then set up her own consultancy practice and has worked as an associate for several respected consultancies such as Korn Ferry, Ernst & Young, Hay Group, Civil Service College and The MindGym. She is a member of the Faculty for the NHS Leadership Academy and has worked with NHS staff at all levels for well over a decade. She also teaches creative practice on the MA in Songwriting at the Institute for Contemporary Music Performance.

Qualifications include Fellowship of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (HEA), Post-graduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (UEL), Certificate in Organisation Development (NTL Institute), Master of Science in Human Resources, Post-graduate Diploma in Training Management, Certificate in Programme and Project Management.



Nicki Mc Kay

Nicki is an experienced leadership development facilitator, executive coach and organisational development consultant with extensive experience across the public and private sectors. Since establishing her independent consultancy in 2008, she has worked with organisations including the NHS Leadership Academy, Civil Service College, UK Government departments, NHS organisations and major private sector employers. Her expertise includes leadership development, facilitation, executive coaching, organisational development, psychometric assessment and designing impactful learning programmes that build self-awareness, confidence and leadership capability at all levels.



Key words/phrases: Conversations, Trust, Engagement

Leading Powerful Conversations

Overview

Powerful Conversations is an interactive, experiential workshop designed to help leaders harness the transformative power of conversation to inspire change, strengthen relationships and create a high-performing, collaborative culture. Through practical tools, techniques and shared best practice, participants will refresh and enhance their conversational skills to build trust, foster psychological safety and communicate with greater authenticity and impact. The workshop explores how to use purposeful conversations to motivate others, deepen active listening and reflective practice, improve problem-solving and decision-making through effective questioning, and accelerate personal and professional growth. Participants will also develop practical approaches for navigating challenging conversations, resolving conflict, and co-creating win-win solutions that strengthen collaboration, enhance performance and create lasting positive change.

Tools/assessment: Given in the session.
Duration: 1-day
Workshop Dates: January 13 2027, 9.30–16.00
Format: Face to face

Carole Gaskell's trademark is harnessing the potential that exists within individuals, teams, and organisations and taking it to the next level, smarter, better, faster. She has been catalysing performance, motivation, and productivity in many of the world's leading organisations since 1998 and is the author of global best sellers: *Transform Your Life* and *Your Pocket Life Coach*, plus *Full Potential Leadership* and *Full Potential Coach – Transforming People's Potential into Results*. Voted one of the UK's top coaches, Carole is a Master Practitioner in Transformational Leadership, Neuro Agility and other assessments. She combines cutting-edge science and psychology with practical tools and relevant, vital ideas for action to supercharge leadership, create thriving cultures and leverage people development as a serious strategy for growth.



Key words/phrases: Wicked problems, complexity, tame and wicked problems

Leading Wicked Problems in a Complex World

Overview

This session takes a systems perspective to leading in a world which is becoming more complex and less predictable. Building on work around critical, tame and wicked problems, it encourages participants to explore their own leadership practice in the context of problem analysis, encouraging distinctions between problems that respond well to direct action or clear management and those that are complex, rather than complicated and instead require an adaptive leadership response. Participants should gain clarity on problem analysis, their default interpretations, and ways to enhance their own leadership practice.

Tools/assessment: Follow-up materials and resources to be provided before, during and after the workshop.
Duration: 1-day
Workshop Dates: May 5 2027, 9.30–16.00
Format: Face to face

Joanne Murphy
Professor Joanne Murphy is Chair of Inclusive Leadership at Birmingham Business School, University of Birmingham. Her research explores leadership, change and organisational development in political volatility, including environments affected by ethno-political conflict. She has worked with a range of organizations including NATO, UNESCO, the John Smith Foundation, The College of Policing and the William J. Clinton Leadership Institute. She is a Fellow of the NI thinktank Pivotal and the International Leadership Association and holds a PhD from Trinity, College Dublin. Her fourth book '*After the Peace: Policing in Northern Ireland 25 years on*' is due for publication in 2026.



Key words/phrases: Wicked problems, complexity, leading through ambiguity, neuroscience

Leading change through Complexity

Overview

This workshop examines what it means to lead change within complex, evolving systems. Participants explore how change is understood, framed and enacted, and consider adaptive approaches that support effective transition. Through a blend of practical frameworks and reflective dialogue, the session builds capability in navigating uncertainty, asking insightful questions, and designing adaptive interventions that respond to real organisational conditions

Tools/assessment: BYOD: Laptop/Phone
Duration: 1-day
Workshop Dates: 26 May 2027
9.30-16.00
Format: Face to face

Joanne Murphy

Professor Joanne Murphy is Chair of Inclusive Leadership at Birmingham Business School, University of Birmingham. Her research explores leadership, change and organisational development in political volatility, including environments affected by ethno-political conflict. She has worked with a range of organizations including NATO, UNESCO, the John Smith Foundation, The College of Policing and the William J. Clinton Leadership Institute. She is a Fellow of the NI thinktank Pivotal and the International Leadership Association and holds a PhD from Trinity, College Dublin. Her fourth book *‘After the Peace: Policing in Northern Ireland 25 years on’* is due for publication in 2026.



Enterprise Impact

Leading beyond my role

- 36 Leading Effective 1-2-1s
- 37 Giving & Receiving Feedback
- 38 Building High Performing Teams and Groups
- 39 Leading Strategic Thinking



Key words/phrases: Questioning, Listening, Performance

Leading Effective 121s

Overview:

Leading Effective 1:1s is a practical workshop designed to help managers make one-to-one meetings purposeful, engaging and impactful. Effective 1:1s are a cornerstone of strong leadership, providing dedicated time to build trust, support performance, encourage development and strengthen working relationships. This session explores best practice for planning and conducting meaningful two-way conversations that meet the needs of both the manager and the individual. Participants will learn how to tailor the frequency and focus of 1:1s to suit different people and situations, prepare effectively for productive discussions, and use powerful questioning and active listening skills to encourage openness, ownership and positive outcomes. By the end of the workshop, managers will have practical tools and techniques to transform their 1:1s from routine meetings into valuable conversations that drive engagement, performance and development.

Tools/assessment: Follow-up materials and resources to be provided before, during and after the workshop.

Duration: 90 mins

Workshop Dates: February 8 2027, 12.00–13.30

Format: Online Workshop

Angela Blacklaw

Angela has extensive management and leadership experience in the public sector. She has expertise in designing, delivering, and evaluating a range of leadership and talent development.

After several years working on policy on HM Treasury, Angela chose to focus on individual and organisational learning as Head of Internal Communications in the Food Standards Agency, Head of Change Communications and Culture Change in Defra, and Head of Talent Development in the Department of Health. She then set up her own consultancy practice and has worked as an associate for several respected consultancies such as Korn Ferry, Ernst & Young, Hay Group, Civil Service College and The MindGym. She is a member of the Faculty for the NHS Leadership Academy and has worked with NHS staff at all levels for well over a decade.



Key words/phrases: Feedback, Clarity, Performance

Giving and Receiving Feedback

Overview:

Sometimes we feel we really SHOULD raise issues with someone at work, yet we don't raise them. Maybe we need to give challenging feedback or to manage poor performance. Often, we shy away from honest feedback conversations: we feel awkward, don't want to upset people, or we are not sure how to start. At the same time, others may hold important information about us and the impact we have that we would benefit from knowing. Yet while these issues remain unresolved, there are unwanted consequences for us, for them and for Imperial. This 90-minute virtual event will enable you to explore approaches and techniques to ensure that these conversations really succeed and to take away top practical tips to refer to into the future.

Tools/assessment: Follow-up materials and resources to be provided before, during and after the workshop.

Duration: 90 mins

Workshop Dates: February 26 2027, 12.00–13.30

Format: Online Workshop

Angela Blacklaw

Angela has extensive management and leadership experience in the public sector. She has expertise in designing, delivering, and evaluating a range of leadership and talent development.

After several years working on policy on HM Treasury, Angela chose to focus on individual and organisational learning as Head of Internal Communications in the Food Standards Agency, Head of Change Communications and Culture Change in Defra, and Head of Talent Development in the Department of Health. She then set up her own consultancy practice and has worked as an associate for several respected consultancies such as Korn Ferry, Ernst & Young, Hay Group, Civil Service College and The MindGym. She is a member of the Faculty for the NHS Leadership Academy and has worked with NHS staff at all levels for well over a decade.



Key words/phrases: Psychological safety, trust and purpose

Leading High-Performance Teams & Groups

Overview:

This session will explore approaches and strategies to leading high-performance teams and groups in a university setting, and how academic and professional services leaders can create collaborative, resilient, and high-performing cultures in increasingly complex environments.

Themes will include characteristics of effective teams, including psychological safety, trust, shared purpose, and accountability, alongside the leadership behaviours that enable innovation and continuous improvement. Participants will consider strategies for leading across disciplinary and organisational boundaries, managing conflict constructively, and fostering inclusive decision-making. The programme will also address the challenges of hybrid working, balancing individual autonomy with collective performance, and aligning team and group objectives with institutional priorities. Practical discussions will include motivating diverse staff groups, developing high-performing research and teaching teams, enhancing cross-functional collaboration, and using coaching approaches to improve engagement and performance. Throughout the day, participants will be encouraged to reflect on their own leadership practice and identify practical actions to strengthen team effectiveness within their own institutional context.

Tools/assessment: Follow-up materials and resources to be provided before, during and after the workshop.
Duration: 1 day
Workshop Dates: March 15 2027, 9.30–16.00
Format: Face-to-Face

Joanne Murphy

Joanne Murphy is Chair of Inclusive Leadership at Birmingham Business School, University of Birmingham. Her research explores leadership, change and organisational development in political volatility, including environments affected by ethno-political conflict. She has worked with a range of organizations including NATO, UNESCO, the John Smith Foundation, The College of Policing and the William J. Clinton Leadership Institute. She is a Fellow of the NI thinktank Pivotal and the International Leadership Association and holds a PhD from Trinity, College Dublin. Her fourth book ‘*After the Peace: Policing in Northern Ireland 25 years on*’ is due for publication in 2026.



Key words/phrases: Pausing, Reflecting, Self-Enquiry

Leading Strategic Thinking

Overview:

Leading Strategic Thinking is a practical programme designed to equip leaders with the knowledge, tools and confidence to think strategically and translate vision into action. The programme consists of a core 3-hour interactive workshop, followed by a practical follow-up session that enables participants to apply their learning and receive expert feedback.

The workshop explores what strategic thinking is, why it is essential for effective leadership, and introduces a structured strategic thinking process. Participants will learn how to develop a compelling strategic vision for their team, department or organisation, and how to identify the strategies and tactics required to achieve that vision. The follow-up session provides an opportunity for participants to present their strategic plans to peers and the facilitator, receive constructive feedback, ask questions about applying the strategic thinking process in their own context, and reflect on their learning to support continued development.

Tools/assessment: During the workshop
Duration: 3 hours
Workshop Dates: June 28 2027, 9.30–13.00
Format: Online

Jayne Mc Cormie

Jayne is the Founder and Managing Director of The Thinking Business. Her career spans more than 30 years in sales and marketing working for companies including United Biscuits, Terry's of York, Heinz and Premier Foods. Since starting The Thinking Business in 2000, Jayne has helped her clients think their way to success by helping them to develop their strategic thinking, creative thinking, storytelling and mind mapping skills. Jayne's academic credentials include a Bachelor of Education (Honours) degree and a Master of Business Administration degree from Henley Management College and a Master of Arts degree in Creative Writing from the University of Hull. Furthermore, Jayne is also a graduate of the Disney Institute in Creativity and Innovation. Jayne is licensed by Tony Buzan to provide training in the world-famous Mind Mapping® technique, speed reading, memory skills and accelerated learning. She is also an accredited consultant of the Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument (HBDI).



Network

Leading through relationships

42 Coaching Skills for Leaders

42 Action Learning Sets
+ Follow- up Session

42 Leadership Social



Key words/phrases: Questioning, Reflecting, Self-Enquiry

Coaching Skills for Leaders

(A) Coaching and its performance impact

This workshop for leaders offers an introduction to the core concepts of coaching. Grounded in the belief that coaching is a key behaviour in aligning people with the needs of a professional role and organisation, it offers practical skills that everyone can instantly use to begin to develop, try and witness the impact of a coaching approach first-hand. Developed for leaders, including those with mentoring opportunities/responsibilities, it will enable you to develop colleagues and create a culture of positive engagement in your teams and across your organisation. The day is highly interactive with time for practice to apply key learnings.

Duration: 1 day
Workshop Dates: 13 April 2027, 9.30-16.30
Format: Face to Face
BYOD: Laptop/Phone

Key words/phrases: Reflecting, Connecting, Community

(B) Leadership in Practice Programme Social

Outing Date: April 29 2027, 12.30-17.00
Format: Face to Face
Organiser: Leadership Development Department

(C) Peer Groups working with Action Learning Coach

Workshop Dates: Throughout the programme
Format: Face to Face



Discovery

Preparing for the future

46 Leadership Field Trip - Storytelling

47 Graduation Cohort Reconnect & Programme Close



Key words/phrases: Questioning, Reflecting, Self-Enquiry

Leadership Cohort Field Trip: Storytelling

Overview:

This session helps leaders strengthen their executive presence and communicate with clarity, confidence, and authenticity through the power of storytelling. Participants learn how to use their voice, breath, body language, and personal narrative to create meaningful connection and deliver messages that truly resonate. Through guided techniques from performing arts experts, leaders explore authenticity, practise active listening, and discover how to shape and share stories that inspire, influence, and mobilise others. By the end of the session, they leave equipped with practical tools for presence, audience awareness, and strategic storytelling—enabling them to show up with conviction and lead with greater impact in every interaction.

Tools/assessment: Given in the session.
Duration: 1 day
Workshop Dates: July 6 2027, 9.30–16.30
Format: Face to Face

About Guildhall Ignite

Guildhall Ignite specialises in tailored coaching and facilitation to increase confidence and agency in the workplace and beyond. They work with individuals and teams to maximise their potential and help them develop the tools to be at their very best when and where it matters most. Guildhall Ignite has a successful track record of delivering high quality and inspiring professional development training with a practical dimension. Their associates bring their creative expertise to their Executive and Leadership Coaching work. As leading professionals drawn from the worlds of, HE, theatre, music, media, TV, social work and the charitable sector, their coaching team draws upon a wide range of creative and educational experience.



Key words/phrases: Reflecting, Connecting, Community

Graduation, Cohort Reconnect & Programme Close

Dates: July 14 2027, 12.00–15.00
Format: Face to Face
Organiser: Leadership Development Department

Application & Registration Process 2026/7

Building Leadership from Within – Leadership in Practice

Booking & Eligibility
Leadership in Practice Programme (Formerly the Head of Department Leadership Programme) – 24 places

To: Senior Leaders

Subject: Applications Now Open – 2026/7 Leadership in Practice Programme

Applications are now open for the Leadership in Practice Programme, Imperial's leadership development programme for colleagues who are developing or strengthening their leadership capability.

The programme recognises that leadership is exercised in many ways across the university—through influence, collaboration, expertise and the ability to bring people together to achieve shared goals.

We ask senior leaders and line managers to support colleagues who would benefit from this opportunity by encouraging applications and providing the time and commitment needed to fully engage with the programme. Your sponsorship before, during and after the programme will help participants maximise their learning and embed new leadership practices within their teams and across the university.

Programme at a Glance

Duration

October 2026 – July 2027 (360 feedback+ coaching+ face to face workshops + virtual + coaching + touchpoints+ field trip)

Who it's for

The Leadership in Practice Programme is designed for colleagues in key leadership roles across Imperial—including Academic,

Research, Clinical, Learning & Teaching, Professional, Technical & Operational Staff job families—who lead people, research, education, services, operations, projects, programmes, centres or strategic initiatives. It is particularly valuable for those whose leadership relies on influence, collaboration and stakeholder engagement, regardless of formal job title.

Learning Approach

Interactive workshops, practical leadership tools, peer learning, coaching, discussion and workplace application.

Commitment

Participants are expected to attend and actively engage in all programme sessions.

Cost

Department funded or please refer to the booking page for programme fees.

How line managers can maximise impact

Your sponsorship is vital before, during, and after the programme. A short toolkit outlining high-value actions you must take to support your nominee and eligibility criteria has been included in the [nomination form](#).

Key dates

- Applications close: October 2 2026
- Cohort confirmed: October 9 2026
- Programme Start Date: October 19 2026

Apply via the link below (cost details included).

Unsuccessful first-time applicants may opt to remain on a waiting list.

Application form

For questions, please contact Valarie Williams Foy, Head of Leadership Development & Head of Programme, at v.williams-foy@imperial.ac.uk or send your queries to leadershipdevelopment@imperial.ac.uk

Thank you for championing leadership excellence across Imperial.

To: Prospective Applicants

The Leadership in Practice Programme is designed for colleagues who want to strengthen their leadership capability and increase their impact across Imperial.

Before applying, please discuss your participation with your line manager to ensure you have their support and can commit the time required to fully engage with the programme and apply your learning in the workplace. The [nomination link](#) includes all supporting documents to support the process, including

the Manager's Toolkit, Eligibility Criteria and Nomination Form.

We encourage applications from colleagues who:

- Hold key leadership responsibilities across Academic, Research, Clinical, Learning & Teaching, Professional, Technical & Operational Staff job families.
- Lead people, research, education, services, operations, projects, programmes, centres or strategic initiatives.
- Exercise leadership through influence, collaboration and stakeholder engagement.
- Want to strengthen their leadership capability and enhance their effectiveness in communication, collaboration, strategic thinking, change leadership and personal impact.
- Are committed to applying their learning to improve outcomes for their teams, colleagues, the wider University and the communities they serve.

Participants are expected to attend all sessions wherever possible, actively contribute to peer learning and complete any reflective or workplace-based activities between modules to gain maximum benefit from the programme.

Booking

Places are limited and allocated on a first-come, first-served basis unless otherwise stated.

To apply, please visit:

Application form

For further information about the programme, please contact the Head of Programme, Valarie Williams-Foy at v.williams-foy@imperial.ac.uk or Leadership Development Team at leadershipdevelopment@imperial.ac.uk or visit the [Leadership Development webpages](#).

Leadership is not defined by hierarchy—it is defined by the positive impact you have on others.

The Leadership in Practice Programme will help you build the confidence, capability and practical leadership skills to influence, collaborate and lead effectively in a complex and evolving university environment.

For programme content and
eligibility enquiries, contact:

Valarie Williams-Foy,
Head of Leadership Development
& Head of Programme
v.williams-foy@imperial.ac.uk
020 7594 3483

For all contact and general booking
enquiries, contact:
leadershipdevelopment@imperial.ac.uk

Leadership in Practice
Programme Registration
Form 2026–2027

