

IMPERIAL

Build skills, grow your career, and engage with inspiring leaders and peers.



**Heads of Department Onboarding
Leadership Development Programme**
for Professional, Technical & Operational
(PTO) & Academic Staff

2025/
2026

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Foreword

Departmental leadership is one of the most instrumental roles within Imperial, critical not only to the success of your departments, but to our wider culture, reputation and societal impact. As academic leaders and people managers, you are at the forefront of shaping our research ambitions, educational excellence and institutional culture. Your leadership embodies our Values and delivers Science for Humanity, driving knowledge that serves society.

This programme has been designed with your unique responsibilities in mind. It offers a rich learning journey aligned with Imperial's strategic priorities and the evolving higher education landscape. Through modules on Leading Self, we invite you to deepen your self-awareness and build your personal resilience. In Leading People & Teams, we focus on inclusive leadership and creating high-trust environments that cultivate high-performing teams. Leading & Working at Imperial grounds your leadership in institutional knowledge, while Self-Effectiveness Skills equips you with AI literacy and strategic foresight to navigate the changing landscape of higher education. Our final theme, Leadership Habits & Peer Learning, ensures your growth continues beyond the programme through ongoing support and reflection.

Imperial is committed to your development: both your personal growth and the resulting institutional success. I encourage you to embrace this programme not just as a training opportunity, but as the entry point to a continuing, supportive leadership community. I look forward to working with you and to the ideas, collaboration and innovation you will bring forward within and between your departments as a result of this programme.

Professor Peter Haynes
Provost & Deputy President



As leaders at Imperial, we are entrusted not only with delivering excellence in research, teaching, and operations—but also with creating environments where our people can thrive. The Heads of Department Onboarding Leadership Development Programme is a unique opportunity to strengthen your leadership capability, connect with peers, and shape the future of your department with confidence and clarity.

This programme goes beyond traditional leadership training. It's a people-centred journey that equips you with practical tools, strategic insight, and a supportive community. From enhancing self-awareness and leading inclusively, to navigating complex challenges and driving innovation, each module is designed to help you lead with purpose and impact.

If you're looking to grow as a leader, inspire your teams, and make a lasting difference at Imperial, I strongly encourage you to take part.

Robert Kerse
Chief Operating Officer

Welcome

We are delighted to welcome you to Imperial’s Heads of Department Leadership Development Programme. This marks an important milestone in your leadership journey and reflects our shared commitment to investing in people-centred leadership across the university.

This programme has been designed to support new and aspiring Heads of Department—across academic, professional, technical, and operational roles—with the tools, insights, and community needed to lead with clarity, confidence, and compassion. It is grounded in our belief that leadership is not only about strategy and delivery, but also about creating environments where people can thrive.

As part of this year’s programme, we are pleased to introduce the newly formed People Function, which brings together our strategic HR, talent, and culture teams under a unified vision. Within this, the Employee Experience and Culture area plays a central role in shaping how we attract, retain, and support our people. Through this programme, you will experience first-hand our renewed focus on employee experience—from inclusive leadership and strategic workforce planning to recognition, development, and wellbeing.

Your participation in this programme is not only an investment in your own growth, but also a signal of the university commitment to cultivating a high-performing, inclusive, and values-led culture. We look forward to working with you, learning from you, and supporting you as you lead your teams and shape the future of Imperial.



Kathryn Al-Shemmeri
Chief People Officer



Audrey Fraser
Director of Employee Experience and Culture



What's in store?

Introduction to “People-Centred Leadership”: Onboarding Leadership Development Programme for Heads of Department

*(For Academic, Professional, Technical, and
Operational Leaders)*

Welcome to People-Centred Leadership, Imperial's comprehensive onboarding and leadership development programme designed for new and aspiring Heads of Department across academic, professional, technical, and operational roles. As a senior leader, you play a critical role not only in advancing the College's mission but also in shaping an environment where people can thrive. This programme supports your transition into leadership with the tools, mindset, and community you need to lead with clarity, confidence, and compassion.

At its core, People-Centred Leadership recognises that effective leadership begins with understanding yourself, grows through how you engage and empower others, and is sustained by creating inclusive, high-performing teams. The programme is designed to help you develop the skills and insights needed to navigate the complex, interconnected challenges of leading at a world-class institution like Imperial.

This learning journey is structured across six thematic pillars:

1. Leading Self

We begin by helping you deepen your self-awareness and purpose through assessments including 360s, coaching, and a focus on values-based motivation. Knowing yourself is the foundation of authentic leadership.

2. Leading People & Teams

Leadership is a relational endeavour. You will build capabilities in developing others and holding powerful, constructive conversations that enable growth, engagement, and trust.

3. Leading & Working at Imperial

Gain critical knowledge of the systems and policies that underpin how we operate at Imperial – from finance and budgeting to people management practices – so you can lead effectively within our institutional context.

4. Leading Self-Effectiveness

Masterclass skill builders will extend your leadership toolkit, from strategic thinking and coaching skills to engaging with AI and solving complex problems with agility and creativity.

5. Leadership Habits

Sustainable leadership is built on everyday habits. You'll learn practical approaches for giving and receiving feedback, creating a thinking environment, and leading meaningful 1-2-1s and peer coaching sessions.

6. Leadership Learning Visit

The programme culminates in a cohort field visit and group reconnection event, providing time to reflect, share learning, and reinforce the community of practice you'll develop throughout the experience.

This programme is not just about leadership skills – it's about cultivating a leadership mindset that places people at the heart of every decision. Whether you're leading research, supporting innovation, or driving operations, you will leave this programme with the confidence and capacity to lead with empathy, vision, and impact.

We are delighted to welcome you to the People-Centred Leadership programme – and to this next chapter of your leadership journey at Imperial.



Valarie Williams-Foy,
Heads of Leadership Development

Leading Self

- 12 360 Degree Assessment & Debrief
+ Coaching Provision
- 14 The Self-Aware Leader
- 15 Motivation in the Spotlight Group Session –
Starting with Your Why?



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.

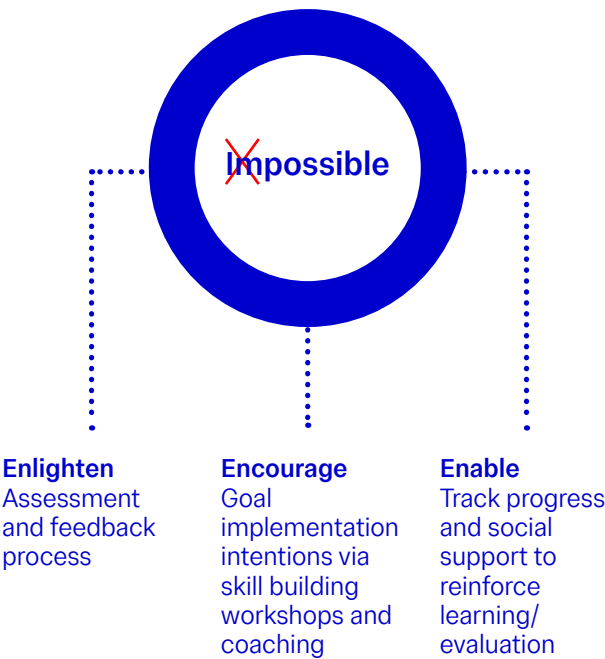
Insights and awareness are keys to understand more about oneself and how you are perceived by others. Internal and external feedback is key to correcting and modifying both conscious and unconscious behaviour. The 360-degree feedback process is a useful approach and technique for increasing insights 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 November, December, January 2025–6

360 debriefers: Leadership Development Department.

Follow-up: Each programme participant 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. We will 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 will provide a single point of contact for all the work within the project. We offer quality assured training with the flexibility to respond to individual needs and characteristics.



Key words/phrases: Self-Awareness, Leadership Style, Strength

The Self-Aware Leader

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

How This Workshop Enhances Your Leadership Capability

Self-aware leaders:

- Understand their strengths and development areas
- Recognise blind spots and biases
- Are clear about their purpose, values, and motivations

This one-day workshop is designed to deepen your self-awareness and enhance your personal leadership style.

You'll explore how your mindset, behaviours, and actions shape your unique leadership approach—and the impact this has on those you lead. Through guided reflection and practical tools, you'll gain insight into your strengths, uncover areas for growth, and learn how to adapt your leadership style to achieve more effective outcomes.

By the end of the day, you'll have greater clarity on the areas you'd like to explore further, helping you fast-track your development and maximise your impact as a leader.

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

Workshop Dates: [October 21 \(Group 1\)](#) & [October 23 2025 \(Group 2\)](#), 9.30–16.00

Format: [Face to Face](#)

Key words/phrases: Motivation, Productivity, Engagement

Motivation in the Spotlight Group Session – Starting with Your Why?

Understanding Motivation – Your ‘Why’ for Leading

This one-day workshop is designed to begin with your “**why**” – helping you uncover what truly drives and motivates you, both individually and as part of a team.

Motivation is a form of energy. The word comes from the Anglo-Norman term motif, meaning “drive” – and our motivators are the internal forces that influence how we feel and why we take action.

When motivation is understood and harnessed effectively, it boosts productivity, deepens engagement, and supports overall well-being.

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 day, 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](#)

Workshop Dates: [November 11, 2025](#) 9.30–13.00

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



Leading People and Teams

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Key words/phrases: Leadership styles, Management, Culture, Emotional intelligence, Neuroscience, Wellbeing, Inclusion, Trust

Leading and Managing People

Overview

In this workshop, we will explore how to use a range of leadership and management behaviours according to the situations being faced. This is especially important given how much significant change and transformation will be needed in the near and ongoing future and how important it will be for Heads of Department across both academic and professional services to motivate and engage people with those organisational changes.

What will it cover:

- **Emotional intelligence:** emotional intelligence (otherwise known as emotional quotient or EQ) is the ability to understand, use, and manage your own emotions in positive ways to relieve stress, communicate effectively, empathize with others, overcome challenges, and defuse conflict. We will explore what EQ means in practice for leaders and how to develop it as well as considering how to respond to the emotional impact of change.
- **Six leadership and management styles:** We will explore six distinct styles, each one springing from different components of emotional intelligence. Each style has a distinct effect on the working atmosphere of an organisation, or team, and, in turn, on its performance. With insight, self-awareness and practice leaders can switch between these leadership styles to produce powerful results, thus turning the art of leadership into a science that makes people feel included and clear about what's expected of them and thus motivates them to give their best performance.

- **Six aspects of organisational climate:** Every organization contains many micro-climates with varying levels of performance. The better the climate, the more people are able to focus on contributing their best to advance the enterprise – rather than feeling confused, frustrated, and unmotivated. The good news is a leader can have the biggest impact on the climate – and therefore the performance – of his or her team. We will relate aspects of climate to the specific leadership styles above that can make all the difference.
- **Social neuroscience:** much of our motivation driving social behavior is governed by an overarching organizing principle of minimizing threat and maximizing reward. We will explore how this can impact behavioural decision making for leaders and managers.

The Benefits

Imperial College is facing significant change and transformation. Inevitably, such change will result in emotional responses which will in turn have an impact on performance. Understanding the links between emotional intelligence, leadership/management and climate will enable Heads of Department across both academic and professional services to motivate and engage people with those organisational changes and to maximise performance.

How will the workshop improve my leadership capability

Understanding the links between emotional intelligence, leadership and climate will enable Heads of Department across both academic and professional, technical and operational services to motivate and engage people with those organisational changes and to maximise performance.

Tools/assessment: Given in the session
Duration: 1 day
Workshop Dates: December 10 2025, 9.30–16.00
Format: Face to Face

Angela Blacklaw is Managing Director of her own company and 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 and has worked on highly successful leadership development programmes for the NHS.

Angela has worked as an associate for several respected consultancies such as Korn Ferry, Ernst & Young, Hay Group, Civil Service College and The MindGym; she has also been a regular leadership associate for the East of England Leadership Academy for many years. She is a member of the Faculty for the NHS Leadership Academy.

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.



Key words/phrases: Conversations, Trust, Engagement

Leading Powerful Conversations

Overview

An experiential session exploring the transformative impact of powerful conversations to inspire change, solve problems, and enhance connection and collaboration between individuals, teams, and groups.

Share best practise and refresh powerful conversation skills, tools, and techniques to build a high-performance culture, personal and professional growth.

By embracing the power of conversation, individuals and teams can unlock new possibilities, address conflict, create positive change and a thriving culture.

What will it cover?

- 1. How to use powerful conversations to inspire and motivate people by engaging in dialogue to surface passions, goals and aspirations that ignite purpose and drive.
- 2. How to build greater trust and psychological safety and provide a platform for integrity, open, authentic communication enabling honest expression of thoughts, feelings, and vulnerabilities. This enables deeper connections to be formed and relationships to flourish.
- 3. How to enhance active listening and focused reflection skills to increase understanding, self-awareness and empathy, and challenge people to raise their game.
- 4. How to improve problem-solving and decision-making by refreshing laser questioning skills and using a vital framework to explore multiple perspectives, challenge assumptions, encourage critical thinking, creative ways to address challenges and facilitate innovative solutions.
- 5. How to fast-track personal and professional growth and development by engaging in conversations that encourage self-reflection, challenge beliefs, and empower individuals with new insights into their strengths, values, and areas for development.
- 6. How to address challenging conversations and more tricky people and gain win: win outcomes.

- 7. How to resolve conflict and co-create collaborative solutions by creating a safe space for open and honest communication and respectful dialogue. You'll practise using a versatile model for active problem-solving, de-escalating issues, transforming them into opportunities for growth and collaboration.

The Benefits

By the end of the workshop, you will gain:

- 1. Advanced communication and interpersonal skills to use inside and outside the organisation.
- 2. Tools and skills to empower targeted performance improvements in others.
- 3. Increased awareness and knowledge to leverage self-confidence and leadership capability.
- 4. The ability to build trust, influence and engage people and teams to deliver outstanding results.
- 5. Confidence to address challenging conversations and underperformance issues.
- 6. Feedback to hone your conversation skills in a way that feels authentic to you.

How will the workshop improve my leadership capability?

You'll learn how to use an empowering approach in your many of your day-to-day conversations, to improve performance, productivity, motivation, wellbeing, engagement and strengthen the organisation and its impact.

Tools/assessment: Given in the session

Duration: 1 day

Workshop Dates: January 15 2026, 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: Inclusion, Identity, Privilege, Allyship, Microbehaviours, Diversity

Leading Inclusively

Overview

We have a historical and emotional connection to our identity. Based on our identity, we and the social groups we are part of have experienced privilege or oppression. This can be historic, yet still impacts people’s lives today, and it can be very present in our daily lives. Identity can impact on how included and safe we feel where we work or study, which in turn affects success in the workplace and in education. Leaders therefore need to understand their own identity and lived experiences, and how it has shaped their leadership, as well as the identity and lived experiences of the people they lead and the students and other stakeholders they work with. They can then take up their own power and agency to become active allies and make a tangible difference to lived experience wherever and whoever they lead.

What will it cover?

- Exploring diversity and inclusion, and its relevance for participants’ leadership practice.
- Exploring how identity is connected to lived experience and work/academic outcomes, and why leaders need to understand their own identity and that of others to lead for inclusion and improved outcomes.
- The role of allyship and personal power in effective and inclusive leadership.
- Identifying and understanding the power of microbehaviours: those subtle (often unconscious) actions, gestures, or words that communicate messages to others and can significantly impact whether people feel included or excluded.

Why should I attend?

Imperial College is made up of – and works with – a great deal of diversity in its people. It’s crucial for leaders to create cultures where all people feel welcomed, accepted, valued, and supported, regardless of their background, characteristics, or perspectives. This in turn gives people courage, boosts their confidence and enhances their performance.

How will the workshop improve my leadership capability?

Attending the Leading Inclusively workshop will deepen your understanding of how identity, privilege, and lived experience can influence both your leadership style and the type of workplace culture you help to create.

Tools/assessment: Given in the session

Duration: 1 day

Workshop Dates: April 13 2026, 9.30–13.00

Format: Face to Face

Angela Blacklaw is Managing Director of her own company and 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 and has worked on highly successful leadership development programmes for the NHS.

Angela has worked as an associate for several respected consultancies such as Korn Ferry, Ernst & Young, Hay Group, Civil Service College and The MindGym; she has also been a regular leadership associate for the East of England Leadership Academy for many years. She is a member of the Faculty for the NHS Leadership Academy.

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.



Leading & Working @Imperial

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27 People@ Imperial: Policies to Practice



Key words/phrases: Sector Finance, Revenue, Spend

Imperial's Finance

Outline

Demystifying finance for our Heads of Department

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

Imperial's financial operations

Workshop Dates: December 3 2025, 13.00–16.00

Format: Face to Face

Facilitator: Tony Lawrence, Chief Financial Officer

Dr Tony Lawrence, Chief Financial Officer, reports to the Chief Operating Officer, and is responsible for Imperial's finances at a strategic level and is a member of the University Management Board.

Tony completed a PhD in Physics at Imperial. He returned to Imperial as Head of Financial Management and Deputy Director of Finance in 2011 and became Director of Finance in 2018. Tony previously held various financial management roles at Shell and held a senior role at the Asset Protection Agency, an agency of HM Treasury.



Key words/phrases: Policies, People Management, Standards

People@ Imperial: Policies to Practice (Compulsory)

Outline

Imperial's people policies and procedures are carefully designed to align with UK employment law and best practice, with particular reference to the ACAS Code of Practice and the Equality Act 2010. These policies are regularly updated in line with legislative developments to ensure continued compliance and fairness across the organisation.

This one-day, face-to-face workshop equips leaders with the knowledge and practical tools to confidently apply these policies in day-to-day people management. Through engaging discussions, case studies, and interactive scenarios, participants will explore how to handle workplace situations effectively and in accordance with Imperial's standards.

The session will be led by senior members of the People Function and will include insights from a Senior Imperial Leader, offering first-hand perspectives on policy application at a strategic level.

Date: February 11 2026, 9.30–15.00

Format: Face to Face

Facilitators: Lisa Phillips & Ireti Webb, supported by Jack Leyshon-Richards, Head of Recruitment, People Function & Natalia Goehring, Director of Operations, Faculty of Engineering

Lisa Philips Head of People Partnering, Chief Operating Office (COO)



Ireti Webb, Head of People Partnering, Engineering Faculty



Self-Effectiveness Skill Builders

- 30 Core Coaching Skills for Leaders
- 31 AI sessions for Leaders
- 32 Leading Strategic Thinking
- 34 Leading with Influence
- 36 Leading Wicked Problems in a Complex World



Key words/phrases: Coaching, Mentoring, Culture

Core Coaching Skills for Leaders (Compulsory)

Outline

The one-day course 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.

Date: April 24 2026, 9.30–16.30

Format: Face to Face

Facilitators: Guildhall Ignite

About Guildhall Ignite

Guildhall Ignite specialises in tailored coaching and facilitation to increase confidence and agency in the workplace and beyond. We will 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 will provide a single point of contact for all the work within the project. We offer quality assured training with the flexibility to respond to individual needs and characteristics.



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.

Date: March 17 2026, 10.00–12.00

Format: Face to Face

Facilitator: David Shirer

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



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

Leading Strategic Thinking

Overview

This programme consists of two core elements:

- 1. A practical 3-hour workshop that teaches the core principles and practices of strategic thinking, specifically how to create a strategic vision and how to define strategies and tactics to achieve the vision.
- 2. A 90-minute feedback session following a period of time for delegates to reflect on the workshop and think strategically to create their vision and strategic ideas in preparation for peer and trainer feedback.

What will it cover?

The first 3-hour workshop will cover:

- Strategic Thinking - what is strategic thinking?
- The strategic thinking process
- Strategic Vision
- How to create a strategic vision for the team/department/organisation
- Strategic Ideas
- how to develop strategies and tactics to achieve the future vision

The follow-up session (session 2) will cover:

- Presentations
- Delegates will be invited to volunteer to present their strategy to peers on the course and the facilitator for feedback
- Q&A – delegates will have an opportunity to ask the facilitator questions about the strategic thinking process and provide course feedback

The benefit

To learn how to create a strategic vision that will inspire and empower the team

How will this workshop improve my leadership capability?

Anyone working as part of a team or department looking to lead/contribute to strategy discussions within the organisation need to develop their strategic thinking skills

Tools/assessment: Given in the workshop

Duration: 3 hours (Session 1) & 90 Mins (Session 2)

Workshop Dates:
June 5 2026, 10.00– 13.00
& June 10 2026, 12.00–13.30

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



Key words/phrases: Influencing, Stakeholders, Communication

Leading with Influence

Overview

In this workshop, we will explore challenges and experiences of influencing in 1:1 and local settings as well as for larger numbers and higher profile situations. We will introduce a comprehensive array of tools and strategies to enable prioritised, bespoke and effective influencing within your teams as well as across Imperial and beyond.

What will it cover?

- Push/pull influencing: push (for compliance) and pull (for engagement and motivation);
- Going deeper into nine distinct influencing strategies: thinking more deeply about intention and purpose and exploring the components of trust;
- Stakeholder analysis in terms of their levels of interest, power etc;
- Considering the individuals, senior managers, groups, organisations etc that you most need to influence, the quality of your existing relationships and which strategies to best employ;
- Formatting communications to meet stakeholders' needs in the most effective order.

The benefit

At its core, leadership is about influence. In fact, without influence, leadership simply does not occur. As no single influencing strategy works in all situations or with all people, leaders need to be able to adapt their influencing skills and persist until they reach the outcome they are looking for. The best influencers think carefully about what they want to achieve and how best to go about it. This workshop will enable participants to consider a wide range of influencing strategies, to analyse and prioritise the needs and positions of the key people they need to influence and turn these reflections into clear plans of action.

How will this workshop improve my leadership capability?

It will help you to perfect and adapt your influencing skills through building knowledge and capability regarding the choice of influencing strategies to use in each situation.

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

Duration: 1-day Face-to-Face Workshop

Workshop Dates: [June 24 2026, 9.30-16.00](#)

Format: [Face to face](#)

Angela Blacklaw is Managing Director of her own company and 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 and has worked on highly successful leadership development programmes for the NHS.

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Nicki Mc Kay

Nicki has a wealth of expertise at a senior level within a number of organisations, both public and private. Nicki established herself as an independent leadership development facilitator and coach in 2008 and is currently a faculty member of the NHS Leadership Academy and an associate of Civil Service College. As a consultant, trainer, facilitator, and coach Nicki has worked with a variety of organisations including, Department of Health, Cabinet Office, Scotland Office, Department of Works and Pension, Competition and Markets Authority, Health Education East of England, Kent Surrey and Sussex NHS Leadership Collaborative, Human Tissue Authority, Central & Cecil Housing, Delphi Automotive and Virgin Atlantic.

Nicki's core specialisms include:

- Proven facilitation skills: designing and delivering a range of development activities, from programmes for staff aimed at confidence-building and developing self-awareness, to leadership development programmes using experiential learning and feedback on observed behaviour
- Qualified coach: ILM Diploma in Management Coaching and Mentoring, with experience of coaching individuals at all levels of seniority
- Extensive experience of using psychometric tools as part of management / leadership development programmes



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

Leading Wicked Problems in a Complex World

Overview

We live in an ever more complex and global society. Like it or not, the world changes, and approaches that used to work for us don't work anymore. In this complex and ambiguous world, some issues are just too complex, too subject to unpredictable influences, ever to be neatly solved. If so, how can leaders ensure they are addressed? On this workshop you will explore the difference between "tame" and "wicked" issues and find new perspectives on responding effectively to them. You will also consider how insights from neuroscience can help you engage with your teams and with the wider systems in which you operate.

What will it cover?

- Understanding and distinguishing between "wicked" versus "tame" problems
- Contrasting the benefits and limitations of traditional "mechanical" thinking with a different and more modern systems-based approach
- Experiencing being part of a complex adaptive system in the room
- Exploring how to lead in the face of complexity, and how to make shifts happen in the system
- Establishing the importance of connecting with people in all parts of a system
- Using insights from neuroscience to consider how basic human drivers affect how people work together
- Applying all this learning to participants' own work-based "wicked" issues.

The benefit

The world in which Imperial College operates is becoming ever more complex. Delegates will be able to recognise the nature of their own "wicked" challenges and apply practical techniques to inspire, engage, motivate and lead others when the way ahead is unclear

How will this workshop improve my leadership capability?

It will help you to perfect and adapt your influencing skills through building knowledge and capability regarding the choice of influencing strategies to use in each situation.

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

Duration: 1-day Face-to-Face Workshop

Workshop Dates: March 26 2026, 9.30–16.00

Format: Face to face

Angela Blacklaw is Managing Director of her own company and 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 and has worked on highly successful leadership development programmes for the NHS.

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Leadership Habits

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Key words/phrases: Coaching, Mentoring, Culture

Leading Peer Coaching

Outline: Leading Peer-to-Peer Coaching

Peer Coaching Workshop:
Enhancing Leadership Through
Reflective Practice

This interactive workshop introduces participants to peer coaching as a powerful tool for leadership development. Through guided practice, participants will learn how to support one another in a structured, reflective environment that fosters accountability, insight, and growth. The session will explore the principles of peer coaching, the importance of active listening and questioning, and how to apply a simple, practical framework to real leadership challenges. By the end of the workshop, participants will be equipped to engage in meaningful peer coaching conversations that build trust, encourage new perspectives, and strengthen their leadership capability.

Date: November 26 2025,
12.00–14.00

Format: Online

Facilitators: Guildhall Ignite

About Guildhall Ignite

Guildhall Ignite specialises in tailored coaching and facilitation to increase confidence and agency in the workplace and beyond. We will 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 will provide a single point of contact for all the work within the project. We offer quality assured training with the flexibility to respond to individual needs and characteristics.



Key words/phrases: AI, Application, Effectiveness

Leading Thinking Environments

Outline

Peer Learning in a Thinking
Environment: Lunchtime
Workshop Series

This two-part workshop series introduces participants to the Thinking Environment — a powerful framework that enhances communication, collaboration, and leadership through inclusive, structured dialogue.

Session 1 (In-Person, 2 hours):

Participants will explore the core components of the Thinking Environment and practice key techniques including rounds, thinking pairs, and dialogue. The focus will be on how these practices can support meaningful engagement and collaboration within their leadership programme.

Session 2 (Online, 2 hours):

Building on the first session, this virtual workshop will help participants deepen their understanding and consider how to apply the Thinking Environment beyond the programme. It will cover strategies for structuring meetings, facilitating open discussions, and creating inclusive spaces for thinking — both in person and online. These workshops are designed to empower participants to lead and collaborate more effectively.

Date: May 20 2026, 12.00–14.00
(Session 1 – Face to face) &
May 29 2026, 12.00–14.00
(Session 2 – Online)

Format: Face to Face (Session 1)
& Online (Session 2)

Facilitator: Andrew Scott

Andrew Scott is a coach and facilitator who has been working mainly with Universities for the last 20 years. As well as his interest in narrative approaches, the subject of his 2016 book, *Shifting Stories*, Andrew has been specialising in the Thinking Environment, as developed by Nancy Kline in *Time to Think* (et seq).

He has studied with Nancy and her colleagues for the last ten years, increasing his skills and accreditations with *Time to Think*, and is now a member of the Global Time To Think Faculty, training others in the approach, as well as applying it in increasingly diverse and innovative contexts.

Andrew and his wife Jane live in the Lake District where they are frequently visited by children and grandchildren. In between visits, they walk and cycle on the fells, and sail on Ullswater.



Key words/phrases: Questioning, Listening, Performance

Leading Effective 1-2-1s

Outline:

Leading two way communications

A good 1-2-1 meeting is regular, dedicated time for a line manager and their direct report to connect, build rapport, and address work-related topics in a focused and productive way. It should be a two-way conversation, with both parties contributing to the discussion and working towards positive outcomes. However too often 1-2-1s can feel lacking in purpose, disappointing, dominated by the manager, too long, rushed or a waste of time meaning that they are endured rather than looked forward to. In this 90-minute session we will explore best practice for holding effective 1-2-1s to set you up for success and give you top practical tips to refer to into the future.

What will it cover?

- Recognising the importance of tailoring 1-2-1s content and frequency to meet need (one size does not fit all).
- Understanding how to plan for 1-2-1s and what to cover at them.
- Exploring questioning and listening skills to help both parties get the most from the conversation.

The benefit

It can be tempting to skip 1-2-1s, rush through the conversations or finish them early, to attend to the ‘real work’ that is always waiting. But effective and regular 1-2-1s are critical to boost performance, drive development, build trust and confidence and help team agility by addressing blockers and challenges as they arise.

How will this workshop improve my leadership capability?

This workshop will strengthen your leadership capability by equipping you with practical strategies to run more effective and purposeful 1:1 meetings, tailor conversations, ask better questions, and listen more actively. You will build stronger relationships with your team, foster trust, and improve overall performance and engagement.

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

Duration: 90 mins

Workshop Dates: February 18 2026, 12.00–13.30

Format: Online Workshop

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Key words/phrases: Feedback, Clarity, Performance

Giving and Receiving Feedback

Outline

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.

What will it cover?

- Recognising the impact and consequences of failing to hold feedback conversations, and the benefits of doing it well.
- Understanding what it takes for people to be able to listen to challenging messages.
- Techniques to ensure you get your messages across with clarity.
- Techniques to and enable others to contribute to the conversation.
- Techniques for requesting and responding to feedback.

The benefit

Withholding feedback can sometimes seem like the kinder thing to do but without constructive feedback, people may repeatedly make the same mistakes, feel unvalued, and ultimately seek other employment. Taking the time to hold feedback conversations stops small performance issues from becoming larger and more complicated and enables people to be heard. If not addressed, individual issues can become bigger team issues and affect morale as well as performance.

How will this workshop improve my leadership capability?

This workshop will strengthen your leadership capability by equipping you with the confidence and practical tools to navigate challenging feedback conversations effectively, address performance issues constructively, foster open dialogue, and create a culture of trust and continuous improvement—key to building high-performing, engaged teams.

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

Duration: 90 mins

Workshop Dates: February 25 2026, 12.00–13.30

Format: Online

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Peer2peer Leadership Learning

Key words/phrases: Reflecting, Connecting, Community

Final Cohort Connecting Session

Date: July 9 2026, 13.00–15.00

Format: Face to Face

Organiser: Leadership Development Department

Key words/phrases: Reflecting, Connecting, Community

Cohort Residential Field Trip

Date: July 1–2 2026, 9.30–16.00 (Overnight stay on July 1)

Format: Face to Face

Organiser: Leadership Development Department

Booking & Eligibility Requirements

Building Leadership from Within – Inclusive Talent Development

To: Senior Leaders

Subject: Nominations Now Open – 2025/26 Heads of Department Onboarding Leadership Programme

Applications are now open for the 2025/26 Heads of Department Onboarding Leadership Programme. This one-year programme develops the strategic, people management, and cultural leadership skills of newly appointed* academic and professional, technical & operational (PTO) Heads of Department.

Programme At A Glance

Duration

October 2025 – July 2026
(360 feedback+ coaching+ face to face workshops + virtual touchpoints+ field trip)

Places

24 total
12 Academic HoDs + 12 Professional, Technical & Operational (PTO) HoDs

Eligibility

- In post 6 months – 2 years*
- Leads a department and holds departmental strategic responsibility

Cost

Department funded
(see application form for details)

*Later career Head of Department (HoD) seeking a structured “refresher” may apply if places remain.

Inclusive nomination guidelines

Where more than one eligible candidate exists, please use a transparent, equitable selection process. Suggested criteria include:

1. Performance and potential to advance departmental strategy
2. Alignment with growth priorities or change initiatives
3. Commitment to knowledge transfer back into the department
4. Support for under represented talent (active sponsorship encouraged)
5. Formal application and, if helpful, a brief interview

How line managers can maximise impact

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

Key dates

- Applications close: September 30 2025
- Cohort confirmed: October 7 2025
- Programme Start Date: October 21 or October 23 2025, depending on your allocation

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 & Programme Lead, at v.williams-foy@imperial.ac.uk

Thank you for championing leadership excellence across Imperial.

To: Prospective Applicants

Application Guidance – 2025–26 Heads of Department Onboarding Leadership Programme

Before submitting your application, please ensure you have approval from your line manager who will need to sign your application form. You will be required to provide a departmental budget code, as departments are responsible for covering the cost of participation.

We aim to build a diverse and inclusive cohort and encourage applications from those who meet the following criteria:

- Current Heads of Department
- Recently appointed Heads of Department who have completed their probation period and whose role includes both strategic leadership and operational management responsibilities.
- Heads of Department seeking a structured refresher to support their continued professional development (subject to availability of places)

The application form includes two key sections:

1. Work Experience – outlining your leadership responsibilities and achievements
2. Professional Development – highlighting learning experiences that have shaped your leadership (see definition below)

Professional development includes training, formal education, or learning activities that enhance your knowledge, skills, and leadership effectiveness. This may range from informal virtual sessions to formal in-person or multi-day programmes.

Please note: Programme participants are expected to attend **at least 95%** of the sessions to receive certification.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact us at
HoDsprogramme@imperial.ac.uk

Please find the [application form](#) attached.

Heads of Department Programme registration form 2025–2026



For programme content and
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