

Executive Leadership development programme

Leading strategically, delivering locally

Queen Mary Academy

Academic Leadership

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Welcome

Queen Mary's Executive Leadership Development Programme is designed for senior strategic leaders who want to deepen their leadership, build high-performing and inclusive cultures, and deliver meaningful impact through their local School or Institute strategies.

The programme balances university-wide priorities with your local context. You will be supported to apply every learning outcome directly to your own school or institute strategy - this is the golden thread running throughout the entire programme.

Further details on the programme's learning outcomes and individual session details can be found on the following pages.

The golden thread

Throughout the programme, you will be encouraged and supported to apply your learning directly to your School or Institute's local strategy.

This golden thread ensures that everything you do in the programme has real, practical relevance to the goals, challenges, and opportunities in your own area.

Programme learning outcomes

Strategic core

These outcomes build your understanding of the broader context, Queen Mary's mission, and your own leadership vision.

1

Evaluate the external environment, regulatory frameworks and sector trends to inform strategic decision-making within your school or institute.

2

Analyse Queen Mary's strategic ambitions, mission, strategic plan, and key performance indicators (KPIs) to determine your School or Institute's contribution.

3

Formulate and articulate an academic and organisational vision aligned with Queen Mary's 2030 Strategy, and design actionable plans to deliver it.

Operationalising your vision

These outcomes help you put your strategy into action, developing your School's reputation and impact.

4

Apply strategies to build a collegial, high-performance culture by fostering trust, delivering effective feedback, creating psychological safety, and engaging in reflective practice.

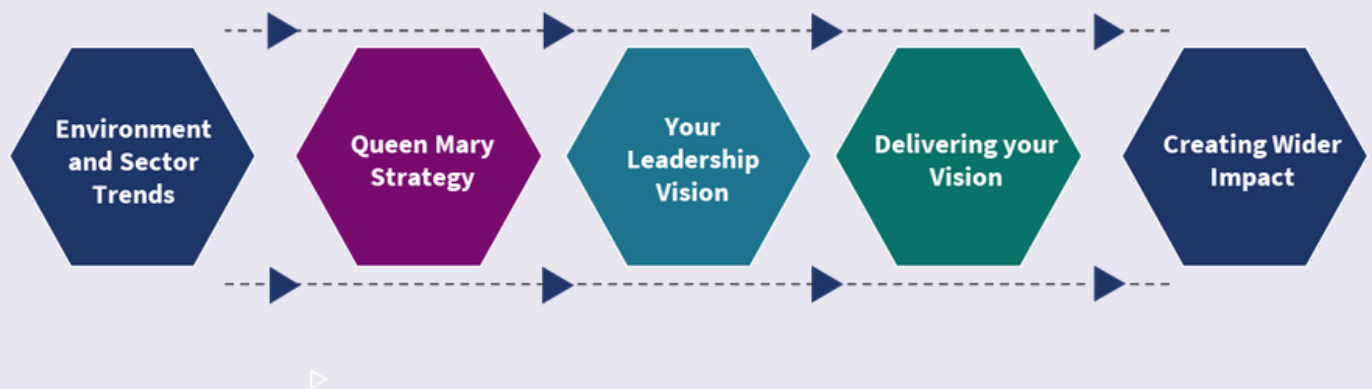
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Develop and apply strategic approaches to strengthen academic reputation and impact through effective collaboration, innovation, and leadership of diverse internal and external networks.

Your development journey

Your journey begins with exploring the higher education sector and wider external context. From there, you'll deepen your understanding of Queen Mary's institutional strategy and priorities, using this to further develop and refine your own leadership vision.

The programme then supports you to put that vision into action, mobilising people, processes, and partnerships to drive change. Finally, you'll focus on creating wider impact, enhancing the reputation and influence of your School or Institute within and beyond the university.



Programme sponsor

A Welcome from Craig Mahoney

As a Visiting Professor in the Queen Mary Academy of QMUL, it is my absolute delight to welcome you to this year's Executive Leadership Development Series as the Programme Sponsor. I look forward to share in your learning journey over the coming months with the exciting programme and engagements we have prepared for you. This initiative is a cornerstone of our commitment to nurturing the next generation of academic leaders who will drive our institution forward.

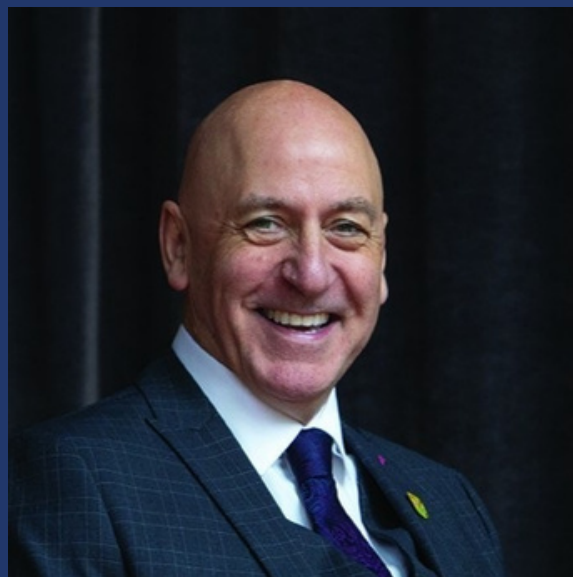
The programme has been carefully designed to help deepen your strategic leadership capabilities. The golden thread running through every session is the direct application of your learning to your individual School or Institute strategy. This ensures that the knowledge and skills you gain here are not just theoretical but are immediately relevant and impactful in your day-to-day work.

Our goal is to equip you with the tools to build high-performing and inclusive cultures, to enhance academic reputation, and to deliver meaningful change aligned with Queen Mary's 2030 Strategy. I look forward to seeing the innovative strategic projects you will lead and the positive impact you will create across the Queen Mary community.

Thank you for your commitment to this journey. I wish you every success on this programme and in your future leadership endeavours.

Professor Craig Mahoney's Biography

Professor Craig Mahoney is an academic leader and chartered psychologist with over 35 years' experience in UK higher education. He has held several prominent roles, including Vice-Chancellor and Principal at both the University of the West of Scotland and the University of Law. He was previously the Chief Executive of the Higher Education Academy, a precursor to AdvanceHE focusing on enhancement of learning and teaching in universities.



An enthusiastic advocate for equality, diversity, and inclusion, Craig is a research and teaching academic with a strong interest in student-centred learning. He holds a bachelor's degree in Chemistry and Mathematics from the University of Tasmania, a master's degree from the University of Birmingham, and a PhD in psychology from Queen's University Belfast.

Mahoney is also a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and a Fellow of the British Association of Sport & Exercise Sciences. He has served on multiple boards, including the Quality Assurance Agency, the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education SportScotland, the Carnegie Trust for Universities of Scotland, and British Universities and Colleges Sport.

In addition to his role as CEO of The Education Group Craig is also currently Chair of Brooklands Technical College and Chair of GoGreen, an Horizon Funded Research Project hosted at Maynooth University Ireland.



Programme overview

Unit 1: Leading in context – sector insight and strategic alignment

Overview:

This unit sets the strategic foundation for the programme. Participants explore the wider HE landscape and Queen Mary's institutional priorities, connecting this context to their leadership responsibilities and local School or Institute strategy.

Sessions:

- **Leadership in higher education** – The unique landscape in which we operate
- **Queen Mary's strategic ambition** – Our mission, strategy and values
- **Understanding your role** – Responsibilities in realising QMUL's strategic priorities
- **Embedding Inclusive leadership practice** - leading with equity and awareness

Mapped learning outcomes:

- PLO 1: Sector and environment insight
- PLO 2: Understanding and aligning with QMUL's strategy
- PLO 4: Building a high-performance and inclusive leadership culture

Unit 2: Shaping strategic leadership – from vision to delivery

Overview:

This unit supports participants in developing and articulating a leadership vision, and exploring how to deliver it strategically. Sessions include practical tools, internal structures, data use, and the cultural mindset required to lead change.

Sessions:

- **Operating as a senior leader within Queen Mary** – Panel and Q&A
- **Leading strategy delivery** – Starting with why and leading with impact
- **Cultural change and strategy delivery** – Empowering leadership in action
- **Strategic use of data and AI** – Turning insight into action

Mapped learning outcomes:

- PLO 2: Aligning vision to institutional strategy
- PLO 3: Developing and articulating a personal leadership vision



Unit 3: Building collegial culture and reflective practice

Overview:

This unit focuses on the people side of leadership, building cultures that support performance, inclusion, and development. It introduces tools to lead reflectively, empower others, and handle difficult conversations with clarity and empathy.

Sessions:

- **Leadership reflections** – Trust, Performance and Learning from Experience
- **Creating a collegial and high-performance culture**
- **Developing people within Queen Mary**
- **Critical conversations** – Leading with clarity and empathy

Mapped learning outcome:

- PLO 4: Building a high-performance and inclusive leadership culture

Unit 4: Enhancing Reputation, Innovation, and Influence

Overview:

The final unit shifts focus outward, supporting leaders to enhance academic reputation and influence within and beyond QMUL. Participants will develop strategic plans for visibility, impact, and cross-boundary collaboration.

Sessions:

- **Leadership reflections** – Reputation, influence and legacy
- **Leading to enhance academic reputation**
- **Developing your strategy for reputation and impact**
- **Negotiating and influencing**

Mapped learning outcome:

- PLO 5: Enhancing academic reputation and strategic networks

Leadership development groups

In addition to the core units and workshops, participants will be invited to attend leadership development groups where they will discuss their own challenges and share success with peers. This is an informal and supportive environment where participants can gain insights and feedback to help them on their leadership journey.

Unit 1: Leading in context – sector insight and strategic alignment

Session 1: Leadership in Higher Education

The unique landscape in which we operate

This session sets the scene by exploring the distinct challenges and opportunities facing leaders in the UK higher education sector. We'll examine sector trends, regulatory pressures, and evolving expectations around teaching, research, inclusion, and civic impact, providing context for your leadership role at Queen Mary and beyond.

Session 2: Queen Mary's strategic ambition

Our mission, strategy and values

This session will explore Queen Mary's 2030 Strategy, mission, and core values, and what they mean in practice for academic leadership. You'll consider how institutional priorities connect to your own School or Institute, and begin to reflect on how your leadership can help realise our ambition to be the most inclusive university of its kind, anywhere.

Session 3: Understanding your role

Responsibilities in realising Queen Mary's strategic priorities

In this session, you'll explore the scope and influence of your role as a senior academic leader. Through discussion and reflection, you'll identify how your responsibilities connect to Queen Mary's strategic goals, surface opportunities for greater impact, and consider where you can lead improvements within your School or Institute.

Workshop 1: Embedding inclusive leadership practice

Leading with equity and awareness

This session will explore what it means to lead inclusively in today's higher education landscape, with a focus on current trends and emerging challenges. You'll reflect on your own leadership approach, examine barriers to equity, and identify practical ways to embed inclusive thinking and actions in your everyday decisions, ensuring that colleagues and students alike can thrive.

Programme outcomes covered:

Programme learning outcomes 1, 2 and 4

- Understanding the HE environment, sector challenges, and regulatory pressures
- Exploring Queen Mary's strategic plan, mission, and KPIs
- Analysing your role in contributing to institutional priorities
- Creating high-performance, inclusive cultures

Unit 2: Shaping strategic leadership – from vision to delivery

Session 1: Operating as a senior leader within Queen Mary

Panel and Q&A

In this interactive session, you'll hear directly from senior leaders in HR, finance, and governance as they share insights on navigating Queen Mary's organisational structures. Through panel discussion and Q&A, you'll gain a deeper understanding of how decisions are shaped, where influence lies, and how to work effectively across institutional systems to lead change and deliver strategic priorities.

Session 2: Leading strategy delivery

Starting with why and leading with impact

This session focuses on the mindset and behaviours required to lead strategy delivery effectively. You'll reflect on the power of Queen Mary's mission as a guiding compass for decision-making, and explore the principle of ambidextrous leadership, balancing stability with innovation, and strategic thinking with operational delivery. Grounded in the idea that leaders must first be clear and resourced themselves, the session equips you to lead others through meaningful change with clarity and purpose.

Session 3: Cultural change and strategy delivery

Empowering leadership in action

This session explores the vital role of culture in delivering strategic change. You'll be introduced to a practical leadership toolkit that combines goal-oriented and inspirational approaches, and effect on how leaders act as role models for the behaviours they want to see. The session also focuses on empowering others, building shared ownership and enabling colleagues to lead cultural and strategic change alongside you.

Workshop 2: Strategic use of data and AI

Turning insight into action

This session explores how academic leaders can use data and emerging AI tools to inform strategic planning and decision making. You'll examine key sources of institutional and sector data, such as student outcomes, research metrics, and staff engagement—and consider how to interpret and apply these insights to support your local strategy and drive meaningful impact.

Programme outcomes covered:

Programme learning outcomes: 2 and 3

- Deepening understanding of QMUL strategy (continued from Unit 1)
- Developing and articulating your personal leadership vision
- Beginning to translate strategy into action at School/Institute level

Unit 3: Building collegial culture and reflective practice

Session 1: Leadership reflections

Trust, performance and learning from experience

In this session, you'll hear personal stories from experienced leaders about building trust, managing performance, and navigating complex leadership situations. Through honest reflections on success, failure and resilience, you'll gain practical insights into the realities of leading teams and shaping culture in challenging times.

Session 2: Creating a collegial and high-performance culture

Shape the conditions where people thrive and performance follows

This session will explore how academic leaders can intentionally shape culture to drive collective performance. You'll examine the relationship between trust, accountability, and wellbeing, and consider the role of leadership in modelling the values, behaviours and expectations that enable others to thrive.

Session 3: Developing people within Queen Mary

Grow talent, support development, and lead conversations that matter

Focused on growing talent and building capability, this session explores how to lead meaningful conversations about performance and development. You'll learn how to navigate Queen Mary's people development processes, and how to create space for colleagues to stretch, learn and grow in line with local and institutional goals.

Workshop 3: Critical conversations

Leading with clarity and empathy

This interactive workshop provides frameworks and tools to help you lead difficult conversations effectively, particularly when stakes are high. You'll practise applying these approaches to real scenarios, learning how to manage emotion, maintain trust, and communicate with impact.

Programme outcomes covered:

Covers Outcome: 4

- Creating high-performance, inclusive cultures
- Building trust, giving feedback, leading teams
- Embedding reflective leadership and people development practices



Unit 4: Enhancing reputation, innovation, and influence

Session 1: Leadership reflections reputation, influence and legacy

Learn from lived experience about what it means to lead with lasting impact

In this session, an Executive Leadership Programme alumnus will share honest reflections on the challenges, opportunities, and lessons learned in building their leadership reputation. You'll explore what it means to lead with influence, within your School, across the institution, and in the wider academic and community landscape, and consider the legacy you want to create through your work.

Session 2: Leading to enhance academic reputation

Build visibility, credibility, and recognition for your School and yourself

This session explores how academic leaders can shape and grow their School or Institute's reputation, locally, nationally, and globally. You'll examine the drivers of academic reputation, reflect on how to amplify existing strengths, and identify where your leadership can make a visible difference.

Session 3: Developing your strategy for reputation and impact

Turn reputation goals into a strategic and actionable plan

Building on the previous session, this interactive session supports you to develop your own strategy for enhancing reputation and influence. You'll work through how to define your key audiences, align messaging with purpose, and build partnerships and platforms that elevate the work of your team and your School.

Workshop 4: Negotiating and influencing

Navigate power, build alignment, and lead conversations that move things forward

This practical workshop equips you with tools and techniques to negotiate effectively and influence across boundaries. You'll explore your own influencing style, practise adaptive approaches for different contexts, and develop strategies to build alignment and buy-in around your priorities.

Programme outcomes covered:

Programme learning outcomes: 5 (and reinforces 3 & 4)

- Enhancing academic reputation and wider influence
- Strategic collaboration, communication, and innovation
- Influencing beyond your immediate team or School



Strategic leadership projects

A core element of the programme is the opportunity to lead a strategic project aligned with Queen Mary's institutional priorities.

Participants will work on their school/institute enabling plans as part of their projects, ensuring that they reflect the University's 2030 Strategy and the evolving needs of the higher education landscape. Where participants don't own an enabling plan they will work on another strategically aligned project.

With the support and approval of their local leadership, participants will shape their own leadership focus, translating programme learning through their projects into meaningful impact.

Throughout the programme, peer support and feedback will be embedded to help participants refine their ideas, overcome challenges, and gain fresh perspectives. The programme culminates in a final event where participants will present or pitch their projects, sharing their leadership journey and the value of their work with senior stakeholders.

These projects offer not only a chance to apply learning but also to raise the profile of important initiatives across the Queen Mary community.

The information given in this publication is correct at the time of going to press. The University reserves the right to modify or cancel any statement in it and accepts no responsibility for the consequences of any such changes.

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