

Knowledge Leaders Program

McMaster University is focused on cultivating human potential, leveraging the diverse talents of its employees and recognizing that everyone is a leader in their own role. This highly practical and engaging program, Knowledge Leaders, is designed for those who lead projects and/or people in their daily roles at McMaster.

The program helps to foster a culture of engagement, collaborative relationship building, and positive change through employee development. Key topics include:

- Creativity and innovation
- Problem identification and solution sourcing
- Enabling a positive workplace culture
- Managing projects with clear vision and effective communication
- A performance improvement model
- Leading teams through effective coaching

Session summaries are included below.

Eligibility

Employees are eligible provided they are employed: a) On a part-time or full-time continuing or contractually limited appointment of at least 1 year; or, b) Under the terms of a Collective Agreement, written contract or employment contract which specifically extends the Tuition Assistance benefit to employees.

Knowledge Leaders are operational team supervisors, or individual contributors, professionals or subject matter experts who regularly collaborate with project teams, committees or work groups, and may supervise students.

Application & Registration

Interested individuals must complete a program application through the Mosaic portal. Prior to initiating your application, ensure you are logged out of other Mosaic tabs or browsers. Once application materials are complete, McMaster Continuing Education will review and notify applicants of their acceptance. Upon notification of acceptance, individuals must register for the program in Mosaic. In summary, individuals who are accepted into the program must go through two stages using Mosaic: 1) apply and upon acceptance, 2) register. **See website for detailed Application & Registration steps.**

<https://hr.mcmaster.ca/employees/development/knowledge-leaders/>

Applications are reviewed and processed in the order they are received. Space is allocated on a first-come, first-serve basis as long as applications are complete and meet the eligibility criteria. If the program reaches capacity, applications will be considered for the next available cohort.

Participants will receive program information, including required pre-work, one week prior to the program start date.

Format

- Approximately 30 contact hours including live/synchronous and online/asynchronous formats
- 5 virtual/live/synchronous sessions (approximately 3 hours each)
- Pre-session work may include individual assessments, videos, articles, worksheets, self-reflection exercises, discussion board postings, etc.
- Approximate online and pre-work time commitment is 2-3 hours per session
- All materials will be distributed through Avenue to Learn

Credential

A McMaster Certificate of Completion is awarded to participants who attend all sessions and satisfy program requirements including discussion board participation, virtual session attendance, activities and project completion.

Program Design

The cohort learning model of participants from various roles, employee groups, and departments allows participants to embark on a learning journey with their peers, act as a source of support for one another throughout the experience, and stay connected after the program ends. This program typically generates collaborative relationships, and participants leave the program with a new network within the University.

Assignments

Learning Transfer Plans *mandatory assignment

Participants will develop **Learning Transfer Plans** in consultation with their Supervisors/Managers and with support from the program facilitator during the program. A couple formats will be presented to participants. The purpose is to help transfer learning more effectively by asking participants and their supervisors to discuss opportunities to apply learning in their roles and identify areas for support. This activity should be completed a minimum of two times during the program.

Supervisors: Please note you will be asked to assist the participant with the Learning Transfer Plan.

Case – Problem Solving Project *mandatory assignment

Participants will identify a “problem” to solve in their role or department, and during the program they will experiment with the tools introduced to attempt a solution. Participants will be required to submit an outline/summary of their case for review, and an informal presentation will be made to peers in small groups on the final day of the program.

It is expected that participants will complete program pre-work administered via Avenue to Learn and/or email. This includes assessment tools, readings, videos, worksheets, reflections, etc.

Late Submissions

Participants are asked to contact the instructor in advance of a deadline the participant is unable to meet.

Conduct Expectations

As a McMaster participant, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the “Code”). All participants share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, whether in-person or online.

It is essential that participants be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Participants disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved participants access to these platforms.

Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)

Participants requiring accommodation based on religious, indigenous, or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Participants will need to contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

Accommodation for Participants with Disabilities

Participants are asked to contact Continuing Education at WeAreAllLeaders@mcmaster.ca in advance of a course or session in which an accommodation is required.

Copyright and Recording

Participants are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors.

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a participant for the purpose of personal study. Participants who wish to record sessions need to acquire permission from the instructor. Participants should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

Extreme Circumstances

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

Session Summaries

Module One: Change Up Your Brainstorming

Learn how to enhance problem-solving effectiveness by developing skills in creativity, acquiring a number of valuable techniques, structuring the problem-solving process and nurturing an environment where everyone can participate in the problem-solving activity.

Purpose:

- To build strengths and skills in (re)defining problems and sourcing solutions.

Learning Outcomes:

- Explore why and how people differ in adapting to uncertainty and tackling puzzling challenges.
- Learn how to build a work environment that helps spark ideas, problem-solving and progress.
- Practice techniques that enable creativity and innovation.
- Develop a Learning Transfer Plan to use in this program.

Module Two: Trust, Teams and Purpose

Develop a model for understanding how to connect with others so you may effectively lead and manage personalities associated with your projects. Work with practical and transferable tools to build a commitment to supervising people and projects with positivity and quality decision making.

Purpose:

- To gain insight into enabling a positive workplace culture in association with factors that support highly motivated and productive teams.

Learning Outcomes:

- Deepen understanding of the real drivers of engagement and performance
- Learn how to put in place “structures” that support productive teamwork
- Practice techniques for building trust, accountability, and confidence to boost and sustain team capability and progress

Module Three: Getting Buy-In

What is your message? And how will you get buy-in and participation from all those that influence the success of your projects? Learn to communicate positively and effectively with stakeholders, inside and outside of complicated reporting structures, and adapt your speaking styles depending on the audience and the situation. Learn how to meet effectively with the right people, at the right time and with effective messaging to support your project agenda.

Purpose:

- To better manage projects through clear vision, stakeholder buy-in and effective communication.
- To introduce the PDCA cycle as a performance management and improvement mind set.

Learning Outcomes:

- Discuss importance of ‘Buy-In’
- Assess stakeholder influence and power
- Explain key communication principles and practices
- Explore factors for building strong teams
- Use conflict to enhance decision making and engagement
- Plan and conduct effective meetings
- Reflect on what performance means for individuals and teams.
- Learn to manage performance through the structured PDCA cycle of management

Module Four: Coaching, Influence and Connection

This highly interactive session will help you to develop a mindful approach to those you supervise in your role. You will understand when and why it is important to let go of tasks and to delegate them, and how to do this effectively. You will also add valuable coaching and feedback skills to your toolkit.

Purpose:

- To better lead project teams through effective delegation, coaching and influence.

Learning Outcomes:

- Explore and apply techniques to delegate effectively and create accountability and results

- Discuss sources of power and influencing strategies
- Link inspiration to influence
- Explain and practice essential coaching skills
- Apply skills and techniques for meaningful conversations
- Discuss change and strategies for coping
- Share recognition strategies
- Discuss career management tactics

Module Five: How Have You Moved the Dial?

In this final session, you'll focus on a few final "tricks" for your supervisory/project work, and pull the "sticky" ideas together so you know how you will apply them when you leave. Where will your talent take you? And how will you get there?

Purpose:

- To reinforce and integrate the leadership concepts and practices covered in days one to four.

Learning Outcomes:

- Test and deepen learning experiences
- Share individual experiences in trying out one or more leadership practices
- Use peer feedback and conversation to add to "soft power" skills
- Recognize and celebrate the learning gained during the program