

Personal 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, Personal Leaders, is designed for individuals to develop skills that are universally valuable within the McMaster University environment with an eye to future career development.

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

- Understanding your work-style preferences and appreciation of different styles
- Communicating to effectively connect with peers and managers
- Enhancing team work (adaptability, positivity, attentiveness, creativity, etc.)
- Finding creative solutions through conflict
- Building effective working and reporting relationships
- Managing stress
- Enhancing your understanding of McMaster and creating your networks
- Embracing change in your work environment

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. It is recommended employees have been in their current role for 6 months as of the program start date.

Personal Leaders are all individual contributors. **Those who supervise people and/or lead projects in their role should consider applying for the Knowledge Leaders Program.*

Application & Registration

Interested individuals must complete a program application through the Mosaic portal. Once application materials are complete, McMaster Continuing Education will review and advise 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/personal-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 welcome information, including required pre-work, one week prior to the program start date.

Format

- Approximately 30 contact hours including live and online/self-study formats
- 4 virtual (3 – 3.5 hours each) and 1 in-person sessions (approximately 6 hours)
- Approximate online self-study time commitment is 3 hours per session
- Pre-session work may include individual assessments, videos, articles, worksheets, self-reflection exercises, discussion board postings, etc.
- All materials will be distributed through Avenue to Learn

Credential

A McMaster Certificate of Completion Microcredential (digital format) is awarded to participants who satisfy program requirements including discussion board participation, virtual session attendance, activities and assignment 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.

Partner Activity *mandatory assignment

The Personal Leadership Program includes a partnering activity during which participants are paired with one another in order to learn about a different department or because their department impacts one another in terms of processes. The partners are asked to spend time (2+ hours) virtually or in-person visiting each other's worksite during work hours. The purpose of this activity is not to learn new roles, but rather to encourage cross-functional and departmental discovery and understanding; to promote internal networking; and possibly to generate interest for future career growth. Partners will be selected during the program.

Supervisors: Participants will be meeting (virtually or in-person) with another member of their cohort to learn about operations/roles in a different part of the University.

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 or program manager 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: Playing from Your Strengths & Working with Intention

Develop a model for understanding yourself and others based on personality and temperament; and begin to identify and apply your individual strengths through a lens of positivity. Work with practical and transferable tools to build a commitment to solving issues and exploring new ways of working with colleagues and supervisors; and develop the roadmap for your continued learning (during this program and beyond).

Learning outcomes:

- “See” people around you more clearly: how others process and react to the ways in which information is delivered and shared.
- Identify your own work-style preferences, and develop an appreciation for the preferences of your colleagues.
- Leverage strengths and preferences to optimize performance: how creative intelligence shapes problem-solving and interpersonal preferences.
- Practice different methods of communicating to “connect” with peers and managers.

Module Two: The Essentials of Teamwork: Purpose, Relationship and Task

This session focuses on seeking feedback, team dynamics, working within dysfunction, and contributing through positive messaging to get the job done effectively, collaboratively (and often creatively). Participants will share practical and transferrable tools that can make an immediate difference within your role and with an eye to future application.

Learning outcomes:

- Build team and work group performance.
- Work effectively with others by “paying attention”.
- Add to team adaptability with a dose of “positivity”.
- Seek out feedback to improve performance

Module Three: Juggling with Finesse: Decision Making, Prioritizing and Communicating

Learn to make the most of your time and understand how to ask for and/or go after what you need to work effectively and to meet deadlines while continuing to foster positive working relationships. Connect with a partner in the cohort to complete a role-sharing activity that will expand your understanding of the University and your personal potential.

Learning outcomes:

- Learn why conflict can lead to solutions.
- Manage uncertainty while exploring options and creative solutions.
- Add to your toolkit: how to stay focused at work, and the hazards to watch out for.
- How to maintain a positive attitude at work.
- How to manage different bosses (the good, the bad and the ugly).
- How to more effectively prepare work for another person: building effective working and/or reporting relationships.

Module Four: Connecting the Dots: You and the University

Knowledge is power! Apply a bird's eye view to your role in relation to McMaster, and develop your "University acumen": improve your understanding of University processes that impact your role/future roles within the University; network to gain insight and intention within your role; explore your emotional intelligence and develop stress management skills; and ultimately build "direction" for yourself within the University.

Learning outcomes:

- Develop your "emotional intelligence" for the workplace and learn about tools to help with stress management
- Explore tools to help you effectively manage stress
- Enhance your understanding of McMaster – ask the expert panel
- Recognize the cycles of your own unit within the context of other departments and the University as a whole.
- Learn how to network across boundaries to gather information and to support your own goals.

Module Five: Putting your Best Foot Forward on Your McMaster Path

Stretch yourself! Use your gifts to make a difference and be noticed; embrace change with ease and grace; set goals for yourself in your professional development; determine where you are going next to apply what you have learned (in your current role and ongoing future at McMaster).

Learning outcomes:

- Reflect on your communications with your manager, and how this can improve
- Learn how to embrace change with grace in your work environment
- Test your progress – what have you learned? And where are you going?
- Apply what you have learned in your role