

Engineering Tripos Part IIB, 4M29: Designed to Lead, 2026-27

Leader

[Ms K Lanucha](#) [1]

Timing and Structure

Michaelmas term. 100% coursework

Prerequisites

None

Aims

The aims of the course are to:

- Developing essential leadership competencies through reflecting, exchanging ideas, and holding each other accountable for progress.

Objectives

As specific objectives, by the end of the course students should be able to:

- Enhance adaptability and resilience as a leader in the face of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity.
- Increase self-awareness and recognise the impact of emotions on leadership effectiveness.
- Develop skills to manage and regulate emotions in oneself and others.
- Enhance empathy and interpersonal relationships to foster a positive work environment.
- Understand the key elements of a high performing team and their importance.
- Acquire fundamental coaching techniques to support the growth and development of individuals.
- Learn effective questioning and active listening skills to facilitate self-discovery and problem-solving.
- Understand the importance of diversity and inclusion in leadership and its impact on team performance.
- Learn strategies to create an inclusive work environment that values and leverages diverse perspectives.
- Develop skills to build strong relationships and networks to support successful influence.

Content

The consists of a series of 7 seminars spread over a trimester.

Designed to Lead

One 2-hour weekly seminar for 7 weeks

Week 1 - Introductory session

In our opening week, students will dive into the fundamentals of the course, providing them with a roadmap,

essential information about designing their development plan, and engaging ice-breakers to set the tone for a collaborative and enriching learning experience.

Week 2- Leadership skills for VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous work environment)

This session will be focusing on a deep exploration of leadership skills tailored for the VUCA world—where volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity reign. Focus: the essential skillset required to navigate and lead in this dynamic global environment, where adaptability is the only certainty.

Week 3 - Emotional intelligence

This session invites students to explore the realm of emotional intelligence, help them uncover the nuances of understanding oneself and cultivating robust relationships with team members. Students will reflect on their individual work preferences, explore diverse communication styles, and harness empathy to construct bridges between colleagues.

Week 4 - Culture of high performing teams

This session will be focusing on the dynamics of high-performing teams. Students will delve into the key characteristics that define success, with a particular focus on psychological safety. Focus: understanding the pivotal role leaders play in fostering an environment of safety, vulnerability, and shared goals.

Week 5 - Coaching skills

This session will be focusing on how to develop coaching skills to support team members' growth and development. Students will learn about the GROW model of coaching (Goal, Reality, Options, Will). Students will hone their abilities in active listening, master questioning techniques, and refine their feedback.

Week 6 - Inclusive leadership

This session introduces the importance of inclusive leadership. Students will reflect on the business case for cognitive diversity and explore strategies to cultivate an inclusive workplace culture. This session will equip them with the skills to champion diversity and promote an environment where everyone's voice is heard.

Week 7 - Influencing skills

In this session, the focus will be on the power of influence. Students will sharpen their skills with a focus on confident body language, both online and in-person. They will learn about the subtleties of non-verbal and paraverbal communication to enhance their ability to inspire and others.

Week 8 – Individual sessions

Examples papers

N/a

Coursework

The module is assessed using a reflective portfolio.

In the first seven weeks of the module, students must submit seven reflective pieces (between 200 and 300 words each week) on Moodle (in an OU blog).

In week 8, students must submit a development plan (800-1000 words) as an assignment via Moodle. For the assignment, students will need to:

1. Reflect on their learning from the course. This can be done using a model such as Gibbs' Reflective Cycle. Details on this model and how it can be applied will be provided in class.
2. Drawing from the above, students will identify how to apply the learning by drafting their development plan. This plan needs to outline the key areas they have identified for development, explain why they are of personal benefit and define specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) actions to achieve their goals.

Examination Guidelines

Please refer to [Form & conduct of the examinations](#) [2].

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Links

[1] <mailto:kl333@cam.ac.uk>

[2] <https://teaching26-27.eng.cam.ac.uk/content/form-conduct-examinations>