

# Frequently Asked Questions - Leadership Facilitation Skills

## Eligibility

### Q What leaders are eligible to apply?

- The Leadership Facilitation Skills course provides opportunities for **mid-career leaders, established and senior leaders**, supporting them in gaining the skills and aptitudes to progress in their careers and in widening their range of options to contribute as leaders in the cultural sector.
- **Mid-career leaders** may have a few years' experience of leading others, either formally or informally and understand how to bring people together to perform well. They are increasingly interested in the strategic direction that their work is taking them in and are developing their skills to anticipate future needs
- **Established leaders** occupy a credible position amongst their peers, with a solid track record of building teams and organisations that are rigorous, focused and ambitious. They have the passion, courage and resilience to anticipate change and lead others through it whilst appreciating the challenges that such change often brings. They are now in a position to assert their values in the core of their chosen organisation and are beginning to expand their sphere of influence, through their network and reputation, into a wider arena.
- **Senior leaders** have acquired a set of experiences, a reputation and a network that moves their leadership impact into the wider realm of their sector. They are often seen as having influence at a policy-making or strategic level. They might also be considered to be "thought leaders", being able to generate new thinking and actions that inspire others

### Q. Which cultural and creative sectors are eligible?

The Cultural Leadership Programme seeks to benefit the wider creative and cultural industries. The project's primary focus is the core cultural sector under the following definitions:

- Crafts
- Libraries & Archives
- Museums & Galleries
- Music
- Performing, Literary & Visual Arts
- The Leadership Facilitation Skills course seeks to benefit the wider creative and cultural sector, in areas such as design, the historic environment, publishing and other creative industry businesses.

### Q. Is it open to residents in the whole of the UK?

The primary focus is England. However, applications will be taken from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Individuals or organisations based (living) outside the European Union cannot apply to the Cultural Leadership Programme.

For further information please [refer to the Arts Council England's website](#).

## The selection process

### **Q What are the selection criteria for the Leadership Facilitation Skills course?**

#### **Essential**

- Participants should work in the cultural and creative industries as defined above
- Participants should live and work within the UK
- Participants should demonstrate experience of working in a leadership role in the sector preferably at mid career or senior levels
- Demonstrable commitment to using the Leadership Facilitation Skills within the sector.

#### **Desirable**

- Knowledge or experience of action learning
- Experience of facilitating groups
- Understanding of the potential of action learning within the sector.

### **Q How will the action learning sets be selected?**

- Action Learning Associates will manage the application process and will select and put together hand-picked action learning sets which represent a broad spectrum of creative and cultural industries. ALA delivered the first three phases of the Leadership Facilitation Skills course to over 110 leaders during 2008 to 2010. The company is highly adept at putting together cross-sector sets for leaders and will use their expertise to ensure a good mix in each cohort.
- Applicants from the same organisation will be allocated to different action learning sets and ALA will check set membership with participants in advance to avoid potential conflicts of interest or relationships which could hamper the action learning process.

### **Q How is the Leadership Facilitation Skills course structured?**

- Full immersion in an Action Learning set is the best way to understand it. The initial training course takes three days so that you can fully understand the process and principles, experience being in and outside the set and practice facilitating for real. There will then be a two month break during which you can start to put what you have learnt into practice and start to produce a Reflective Learning Log as part of the accreditation process. Your action learning set will then meet again for a further two consecutive days in January 2011 to complete the training.

## Action learning and leadership

### Q Leadership and action learning facilitation – what's the link?

- Contemporary writers on leadership tend to agree that the old models of leadership as command and control, based on scientific notions of organisation as machine or production line do not serve us well, faced with the complexity and constant change in our organisations today. These old models are surprisingly deeply ingrained in most of us, and we see them mirrored in the hierarchical organisations that many of us in the cultural sector work in. Writers like Margaret Wheatley (Leadership and the New Science) and Peter Sengé (The Fifth Discipline) propose a new model of leadership based on facilitation and learning. Drawing on the new science of quantum physics, Wheatley considers that focusing on the quality of relationships, reflecting on information that disconfirms our past beliefs and practices, and maintaining an inquiring mind are all attributes of the new leaders we need in our organisations.
- In action learning sets we learn a different way of relating to that which has become common in organisations; we slow down and listen to each other without interruption; we pause to reflect on recent experiences that challenge us; we examine our underlying beliefs and assumptions about our role as leaders; we celebrate our unique qualities as human beings. This we do in a supportive environment, where there is appropriate challenge to keep us working at our learning edge. Learning how to become a set member and to facilitate a set, gives us the opportunity to practice the skills of active non-judgmental listening and asking open questions that facilitate others to learn and change.
- The action learning facilitator training offers you the chance to reflect on your leadership journey with peers from the sector who understand the particular challenges you face. It teaches you to facilitate your peers as they tackle complex organisational challenges. These skills are directly transferable to your board, team, freelance enterprise, collaborative partnership and organisation, whatever your leadership role.

### Q Where can I find out more information about action learning?

- Visit ALA's website at [www.actionlearningassociates.co.uk](http://www.actionlearningassociates.co.uk) for information about action learning, useful resources and a reading list.

## Accreditation and follow up

### Q Does the Leadership Facilitation Skills course provide an accredited qualification?

- Yes. The course is accredited by the Institute of Leadership & Management (ILM) – Europe's market leader in leadership and management qualifications. Accreditation is entirely optional but those who choose to gain accreditation will receive an ILM certificate for the Professional Development Programme in Action Learning Facilitation upon successful completion of the programme. This involves 100% attendance and participants are required to produce a personal Reflective Learning Log as a record of their learning and practice. Participants will be able to submit their Reflective Learning Logs after the training programme so they will make an on-going commitment to personal development after the course has finished.

**Q What level qualification is the Professional Development Programme in Action Learning Facilitation?**

- As an ILM approved Development Programme it does not have a level on the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF).

**Q Will I get help after the course if I want to set up my own action learning set?**

- Yes. Your Programme Leader can provide additional support (via email) following your initial training to help you set up and run your own action learning set(s) within your organisation or cultural networks.

**Q Once the Leadership Facilitation Skills course is completed will there be any further support?**

- We would hope that by the end of the course your group will have all the necessary skills to continue as a self-facilitating action learning set if they choose to do so. The set will then need to make its own meeting and venue arrangements. The majority of sets which took part in the first three Leadership Facilitation Skills courses are continuing to meet as self-facilitating sets and have found this peer support network a very valuable add-on to the training.

## **The logistics**

**Q What are the costs?**

- The Leadership Facilitation Skills course is funded by the Cultural Leadership Programme but we are asking participants to pay a one off fee of **£250 +VAT**. Participants will be invoiced once they have confirmed acceptance of a place on the course. If anyone drops out the fee will only be refunded if we can find a replacement.
- Participants are expected to cover their own **travel costs**
- Participants will also have to pay for their **overnight accommodation and evening meals** when necessary (but not hotel day rates).

***If these costs will exclude you from applying for a place please contact us – a small bursary fund is available to cover some of the costs for applicants who would otherwise be excluded.***

**Q If I have special access needs will the course cover the additional costs?**

- Yes. Please let us know your access requirements or any other issues that you consider relevant. We will endeavour to address any related access needs.

**Q What if the locations don't suit me or will involve considerable travel and significant costs?**

- The locations have been chosen as those most likely to fit the majority of expected applicants and the areas that the CLP wants to target. If the application process highlights the need for other locations then this could be taken into consideration. Final locations will be decided by the application process. Some financial assistance could be made available if the costs of travel would prohibit applicants from attending the course.

**Q. Can I just attend the three day course – do I need to attend the two follow on days?**

- Participants are expected to make a commitment to attend the full Leadership Facilitation Skills course which requires attendance for all five days.

**Q. How do I apply?**

- Please complete the application form (download from the website) and email it as an attachment, together with a short CV (no more than 3 pages) to [gail@actionlearningassociates.co.uk](mailto:gail@actionlearningassociates.co.uk)
- Please do not send any other attachments as these will not be accepted
- Please complete and return the monitoring form direct to CLP
- For further information contact Gail Plant on **0207 407 1971** or email [gail@actionlearningassociates.co.uk](mailto:gail@actionlearningassociates.co.uk)

**The deadline for applications is Wednesday 15 September 2010**

It will take some weeks to put together the right mix of action learning sets and to allocate people to training dates. Please hold the date or dates you have indicated you can attend until you receive confirmation from Action Learning Associates. The course is likely to be over-subscribed so if you are allocated a place and then can't make the dates your place will be offered to another applicant. We will inform you of the outcome no later than the beginning of October 2010.