

**CMI Leadership
Academy
Operational Leadership
& Management
Programme**

The Accelerated Pathway to Chartered Manager Status

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Programme Overview

The CMI Operational Leadership & Management Programme is an accelerated, high-impact pathway designed for middle managers who lead departments, functions, or significant operational areas to achieve Chartered Manager Status while delivering real-world impact and Return on Investment (ROI) for their organisations. It focuses on bridging the gap between team supervision and strategic leadership through high-impact masterclasses, whilst maintaining flexibility and adaptability to allow partners to tailor delivery to the needs of their learners.

Aligned to aspects of the Level 5 Operations / Departmental Manager apprenticeship standard, this programme equips managers with the core skills and embeds behaviours to deliver immediate workplace impact. The programme culminates in the achievement of Chartered Manager (CMgr) status, the highest accolade in the profession, which is embedded in the programme delivery.

Programme Structure

The programme consists of three core aspects, provided as a guide for delivery. This includes:

- **Masterclasses** - covering key topics which will support learners to develop their capability to lead effectively, which can be applied flexibly to suit learner and employer needs. They provide an overview of capabilities learners will be able to achieve on completion of the Masterclass, alongside optional suggested content which may support delivery and learning.
- **Management Impact Project** - facilitating learners to undertake a real-world project to deliver impact and ROI for their organisation, whilst demonstrating the ability to apply learning in the workplace
- **Chartered Manager** - a self-reflective process whereby learners demonstrate their professional competence, and commitment to being conscious, inclusive leaders

Registration Codes

The title given below is the title as it will appear on the qualification when awarded to the learner. When registering learners, Partners should consider which of the following versions to register learners on. By default, it is expected that most learners will be eligible for the Chartered Manager route (OLMP-M). However, where learners do not meet the minimum criteria as set out in the Chartered Manager section below, they should be registered on the Foundation Chartered Manager version (OLMP-Foundation).

This qualification is available for registration from April 2026

CMI Code	Title	Embedded Chartered Grade
OLMP - M	CMI Operational Leadership & Management Programme	Chartered Manager
OLMP - Foundation	CMI Operational Leadership & Management Programme	Foundation Chartered Manager

Masterclass Outlines and Suggested Content

The Masterclass content consists of outcomes (what learners will be able to do on completion) and suggested content, which may help underpin delivery and learning. The suggested content provides a guide; however, **examples listed are not mandatory or exhaustive**: Partners and learners are free to **select examples most relevant to their role or organisation**.

To support this specification, there are template documents such as Worksheets, Checklists and Scripts to support partners and learners in the completion of this programme. These are provided as a guiding resource and are not mandatory: they can also be contextualised to suit delivery goals, if preferred. The documents can be located [HERE](#).

Learning Journeys

As part of our membership benefits, all learners will have up to 12 month’s access to CMI Thrive, launching from April 2026. As part of their enrollment on this programme, learners will be able to access learning journeys, curated specifically to complement completion of the Masterclasses. Partners are also able to access these learning journeys to support programme delivery.

These Learning Journeys will be available from April 2026.

Diagnostic Tool

To support learners to measure their learning progress, an exclusive Diagnostic Tool aligned to the content of this programme has been developed. It is recommended that learners undertake this self-assessment diagnostic at the beginning, middle and at the end of their programme to validate knowledge and skill development.

This diagnostic tool will be available from May 2026.

Alignment to the Operations / Departmental Manager Occupational Standard

The table below signposts how this programme aligns to the Operations / Departmental Manager Apprenticeship Standard. Where a Partner may be currently, or has previously, delivered this Standard, they may choose to repurpose content to support the delivery of this CMI Operational Leadership & Management Programme. The signposting guides where that content may support each Masterclass.

Masterclass	Masterclass Overview	Alignment to KSBs from Operations / Departmental Manager Occupational Standard
Leading People & Stakeholders	Master the "soft" skills of departmental leadership by fostering inclusive, high-performance cultures and managing complex internal and external relationships to drive team success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leading People: (K16, K18, S6, S7, B1, B2) Managing People: (K4, K20, K24, S3, S4, S19, S20, B3, B4) Building Relationships: (K10, K13, K14, S16, S17, B6) Communication: (K15, S1)
Operational Delivery & Excellence	Bridge the gap between theory and execution by mastering operational planning and the financial oversight required to run an efficient, data-driven department.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational Management: (K6, K8, K21, K25, S2, S12, S13, S21, B5) Project Management: (K9, S5, S9) Finance: (K7, S11) Management of Self: (K12, B5)
The Management Impact Project	Deliver measurable ROI through a real-world project, using data and project management methodologies to solve an operational challenge or opportunity, evidencing professional competence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational Management: (K6, S8, S10, S13) Project Management: (K9, S5, S9) Finance: (K7, S11) Decision Making: (K12, S2) Awareness of Self: (B1, B3)

Approval and Quality Assurance

Approval Process

The addition of the qualification to a Centre's approved remit requires the submission of an additional product approval request via CMI Partner Connect. Centres must complete the relevant application form within the platform, ensuring that all requested information and supporting evidence are provided in full. Details of how to submit an application are available [here](#).

Assessment and Quality Assurance

This programme is intended to be flexible and agile to suit the needs of learners and employers: this means that partners can adapt their content and assessment as necessary. CMI does not mandate formal assessments as part of the CMI Operational Leadership & Management Programme, but requires partners to verify learner eligibility for Chartered Manager (CMgr). CMI reserves the right to sample evidence of programme completion and CMgr eligibility as required. The programme is quality assured by CMI and is not on the Regulated Qualification Framework (RQF).

Progression Opportunities

Chartered Manager

Learners completing this programme will automatically be awarded Chartered Manager status on completion of their learning.

To qualify for CMgr status, Learners must evidence at least 3 years of management experience by the end of the course. Partners are required to verify the following:

- Timeline Check: Can learners evidence 3+ years' experience in a management/leadership role?
- Evidence: Is an up-to-date CV or experience log ready?

If the above criteria are not met, learners may be eligible for Foundation Chartered Manager (fCMgr) status. Partners must ensure learners are registered on the correct version of this qualification, using the CMI Codes outlined above.

For more information on Chartered Manager and its benefits, please [click here](#).

Masterclass 1: Leading People & Stakeholders

By completing this Masterclass, learners will be able to:

1. Evaluate **leadership styles** which foster an **inclusive, high-performance** culture within a department.

Leadership styles:

- Inclusive Leadership (Edmondson, 2004)
- Servant Leadership (Greenleaf, 2002)
- Transformational leadership (Bass & Riggio, 2006)
- Situational Leadership (Hersey & Blanchard, 1988)
- Authentic Leadership (George, 2003)

Inclusive Leadership:

- Inclusive leadership behaviours and unconscious;
- building psychological safety and supporting professional wellbeing;
- Social Mobility focus: practical strategies for integrating early-career talent and those from NEET backgrounds;
- establishing workplace norms and professional boundaries;
- identifying/removing barriers to progression for diverse talent pools.

High-Performance Culture::

- Characteristics of high-performing teams (e.g., Lencioni's Five Dysfunctions);
- setting clear accountability;
- "Say-Do" ratios;
- empowerment vs. delegation;
- fostering a growth mindset in a departmental context.

2. Develop **strategies** to manage and influence **stakeholders**.

Strategies:

- Stakeholder identification and mapping (for example: Power/Interest Matrix)
- Pre-wiring (the "Meeting Before the Meeting")
- Building reciprocity and social capital
- Active listening and "The Humble Inquiry" (Schein, 2013)
- "Managing Up" to senior executives
- Adopting influencing and negotiation techniques (for example, The Harvard Principle (Fisher et al., 2011, The Six Principles of Persuasion (Cialdini, 2007))
- Cross-functional collaboration
- building trust and rapport in digital and hybrid environments.

Stakeholders:

- Internal - Employees, managers and leaders, Board of Directors/Trustees, shareholders
- External - Customers, suppliers/vendors, government, regulators, competitors, general public, creditors/lenders.

3. Apply coaching and mentoring **approaches** to develop talent and manage **succession planning**.

Approaches:

- Coaching and mentoring models (for example: GROW (Whitmore, 1992), OSCAR (Gilbert & Whittlemore, 2009), CLEAR (Hawkins, 1985), 5Cs Model (Clutterbuck, 1985).
- Use active listening and powerful questioning;
 - providing constructive feedback;
- distinguishing between coaching, mentoring and sponsoring.

Talent:

- Individuals in early career stages and/or new to employment
- High-potential individuals
- Technical experts ready for their first management role

Succession Planning:

- Skills gap analysis
- Creating personal development plans (PDPs)
- Supporting career pathways within the department to aid retention

Analyse **approaches** to overcome **barriers** when leading teams through organisational change

Approaches:

- Application of Change Management models (for example: The Change Curve (Kübler-Ross, 1969), Forcefield Analysis (Lewin, 1951), 8 Step Process for Leading Change (Kotter, 1996), Transition Model (Bridges, 1991), SCARF Model (Rock, 2008))
- Motivating and empowering teams (for example: Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (Herzberg, 1959), Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1987)).
- Clear communication (for example: articulating the case for change, using storytelling to gain buy-in, golden thread)
- Building resilience
- Monitoring engagement

Barriers:

- Psychological barriers - lack of psychological safety, change resistance, fear of change, loss of control, competence fears, status quo bias
- Communication barriers - lack of clarity, consistency and transparency, "change fatigue" fog, information vacuum, senior leadership-frontline disconnect
- Structural and cultural barriers - misaligned incentives, siloed mentality, lack of resources

Useful Resources

The following resources are optional but are provided as they may support this Masterclass:

- **Authentic Leadership:** George, B. (2003) *Authentic Leadership: Rediscovering the Secrets to Creating Lasting Value*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- **Change Management (8-Step Process):** Kotter, J. P. (1996) *Leading Change*. Boston: Harvard Business Review Press.
- **Change Management (Transition Model):** Bridges, W. (1991) *Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- **Coaching Models (GROW):** Whitmore, J. (1992) *Coaching for Performance*. London: Nicholas Brealey.
- **High-Performance Teams:** Lencioni, P. (2002) *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- **Humble Inquiry:** Schein, E. H. (2013) *Humble Inquiry: The Gentle Art of Asking Instead of Telling*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- **Inclusive Leadership:** Edmondson, A. C. (2004) 'Psychological Safety, Trust, and Learning in Organizations: A Group-Level Lens', in Kramer, R. M. and Cook, K. S. (eds.) *Trust and Distrust in Organizations: Emerging Perspectives*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- **Negotiation (The Harvard Principle):** Fisher, R., Ury, W. L. and Patton, B. (2011) *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In*. 3rd edn. New York: Penguin Books.
- **Persuasion Principles:** Cialdini, R. B. (2007) *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*. Revised edn. New York: Harper Business.
- **Situational Leadership:** Hersey, P. and Blanchard, K. H. (1988) *Management of Organizational Behavior: Utilizing Human Resources*. 5th edn. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Masterclass 2: Operational Delivery & Excellence

By completing this Masterclass, learners will be able to:

1. Create and implement **operational plans** that align with broader organisational strategy.

Operational Plans:

- Action items - strategic alignment, operational action, resource allocation
- Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
- Resource and personnel requirements - hiring plans, technology stack, facilities, time requirements
- Financial budgets - operational expense (OpEx), capital expenditure (CapEx)
- Risk management and contingency - risk registers/assessments, mitigation strategies, contingency plans
- Monitoring and reporting tools - dashboards, Balance Scorecards, periodic performance reviews, variance reporting, progress reporting at the executive level

2. Appraise **tools** to manage and monitor financial performance to drive **resource efficiency**

Tools:

- Cost-Benefit Analysis
- Budget (for example: zero-based budgeting, incremental budgeting)
- Variance Analysis
- P&L statements

Resource Efficiency:

- Monitoring resource usage;
- identifying "waste" (Lean principles);
- Procurement basics and supplier management;
- justifying resource requests through data.

3. Analyse data-driven **insights** and continuous improvement **methodologies** to optimise efficiency

Insights:

- Different sources of operational data - qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods, primary, secondary
- Trends and pattern analysis
- Variance analysis (Budget vs Actual)
- Human capital optimisation
- Predictive maintenance/planning
- Process bottleneck identification

Methodologies:

- Applying Lean Thinking (Womack & Jones);
- Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycles;
- Kaizen principles;
- root cause analysis (e.g., 5 Whys, Fishbone diagram).

Useful Resources

The following resources are optional but are provided as they may support this Masterclass:

- **Balanced Scorecard:** Kaplan, R. S. and Norton, D. P. (1996) *The Balanced Scorecard: Translating Strategy into Action*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- **Continuous Improvement (PDCA):** Deming, W. E. (1986) *Out of the Crisis*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- **Lean Thinking:** Womack, J. P. and Jones, D. T. (2003) *Lean Thinking: Banish Waste and Create Wealth in Your Corporation*. Revised edn. New York: Free Press.
- **Operational Excellence:** Liker, J. K. (2004) *The Toyota Way: 14 Management Principles from the World's Greatest Manufacturer*. New York: McGraw-Hill

Masterclass 3: The Management Impact Project

By completing this Masterclass, learners will be able to:

Develop a **business case** for a specific operational **challenge** or **opportunity** for improvement

Business Case:

- Executive summary
- Problem statement - including SWOT or PESTLE
- Strategic fit - alignment to overall organisational goals
- Analysis of options and recommendation(s)
- Cost-Benefit Analysis - financial and non-financial benefits, ROI
- Risk Assessment
- Implementation timeline
- Success metrics and benefits realisation plan

Challenge:

- Staffing issues (such as recruitment and retention)
- Skills gaps
- Dated digital and technological infrastructure
- Supply chain fragility
- Lack of clear reporting and monitoring functionality
- Compliance with legal or regulatory requirements (for example: Sustainability)

Opportunity:

- Adoption and integration of AI
- Recruiting new talent to the organisation
- Transitioning to “circular supply chain”
- Predictive maintenance of software systems
- Cloud-first infrastructure modernisation

2. Utilise project management **methodologies** and **tools** to implement a management impact project

Methodologies:

- Waterfall
- Agile
- Scrum
- Kanban
- Lean
- PRINCE2

Tools:

- Project control tools - RAID logs (Risks, Assumptions, Issues, Dependencies), scoping document, and budget tracking
- Stakeholder management tools - RACI Matrix, stakeholder mapping
- Communication plans
- Reporting tools - dashboards, Gantt charts, KPI reporting

3. Present the **analysis** of project outcomes against project objectives to demonstrate organisational impact

Analysis:

- Qualitative vs. Quantitative results;
- measuring productivity gains;
- cost savings or revenue generation;
- gathering stakeholder feedback post-implementation.
- Presenting findings to senior management;
- writing executive summaries;
- using data visualisation to tell the "ROI Story."

Useful Resources

The following resources are optional but are provided as they may support this Masterclass:

- **Agile Project Management:** Highsmith, J. (2002) *Agile Software Development Ecosystems*. Boston: Addison-Wesley.
- **Project Management Methodologies (PRINCE2):** AXELOS (2017) *Managing Successful Projects with PRINCE2*. 6th edn. London: TSO.
- **Strategic Analysis (SWOT/PESTLE):** Johnson, G., Whittington, R. and Scholes, K. (2011) *Exploring Strategy*. 9th edn. Harlow: Financial Times Prentice Hall.
- **Data Visualisation:** Tufte, E. R. (2001) *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information*. 2nd edn. Cheshire, CT: Graphics Press.

Annex 1 - Revisions To Document

The below table summarises any revisions made to this document since publication.

Revisions Summary	Rationale for Revision	Document Version	Revision Date
Update to duration on Pg 4	Duration extended	Version 2	Apr 2026
First Draft	Initial Consultation Draft	Version 1	March 2026