

CMI Future Leaders Academy

CMI Leadership Essentials Programme

Bridging the Gap: From Education to a Career

Contents

Programme Overview	3
Approval and Quality Assurance	7
Progression Opportunities	7
Masterclass 1: Mindset, Identity and Self-Leadership	8
Masterclass 2: Communication, Networking and Your Digital Edge	10
Masterclass 3: The Application Task	12
Annex 1 - Revisions To Document	13

Programme Overview

The CMI Leadership Essentials Programme is a high-impact, development journey designed for young people (for example, aged 18-24) who are transitioning from Further or Higher Education into their first career role. It addresses the systemic gap between academic theory and the practical human skills required to feel 'ready' for the workplace. By developing 'everyday leadership' mindsets, digital fluency, and an understanding of core workplace behaviours, this programme enables young people to navigate the gap between studying and employment. It helps organisations reduce the risk of early-career turnover by ensuring new hires enter the workforce with the skills they need to be productive and deliver immediate value.

Aligned to CMI's Professional Standard as well as to Level 2 on the regulated qualification framework (RQF), the CMI Leadership Essentials Programme helps instil into young people the workplace behaviours, skills and resilience that organisations expect of them. It culminates in the achievement of a certificate of achievement for their CV, a CMI digital badge and Foundation Chartered Manager (fCMgr) status, recognised by employers, that will increase their chances of employability amongst their peers.

CMI research shows that successfully integrating young people into the workplace, and keeping them there, is about ensuring they have the practical everyday leadership skills, but also ensuring that they are then managed effectively. That's why CMI has also developed the [CMI First Line Managers Programme](#). This is the ideal programme for managers and leaders of young people entering the workforce, supporting them to navigate the challenges of managing early-career professionals effectively.

Programme Structure

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

- **Masterclasses** - covering key topics such as professional identity, communication, and digital tools, which can be applied flexibly around studies or initial employment. 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.
- **Application Task** - facilitating learners to demonstrate applied competence through a real-world task, a volunteering project, or a hypothetical case-study simulation for those not yet in work.
- **Foundation Chartered Manager** - a self-reflective process whereby learners prove their readiness to enter the professional world as conscious, ethical leaders.

Registration Codes

The title given below is the title as it will appear on the qualification when awarded to the learner.
Completion of the programme will result in the award of Foundation Chartered Manager status.

This qualification is available for registration from June 2026



CMI Code	Title	Embedded Chartered Grade
LEP	CMI Leadership Essentials 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, organisation or situation**.

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 months' access to CMI Thrive. As part of their enrollment in 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. Learners will also have access to CMI's new mentoring network.

These Learning Journeys will be available from July 2026.

Diagnostic Tool

To support learners in measuring their learning progress, a bespoke 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 end of their programme to validate knowledge and skill development.

This diagnostic tool will be available from July 2026.

Alignment to the CMI Professional Standard

The table below signposts how this programme aligns to the CMI Professional Standard at the 'Self-Manager' and 'Team Member' levels.

Masterclass	Masterclass Overview	Alignment to the CMI Professional Standard
Mindset, Identity & Self-Leadership	<p>Flipping the switch from student to professional. Focus on resilience, goal setting, and personal brand.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navigating the student-to-work transition and resilience. • Personal branding and overcoming imposter syndrome. • Leading yourself and understanding the 'big picture' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Effectiveness: Managing yourself; Communicating and influencing
Communication, Networking & Your Digital Edge	<p>Mastering professional tone and digital tools. Networking and maintaining professional standards across platforms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking, tone, and digital professionalism. • AI, data security, and data fundamentals • Collaboration & conflict resolution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpersonal Excellence: Building relationships and networks; Using emotional intelligence.
The Application Task	<p>Deliver real impact by identifying, planning, and implementing a small-scale improvement or task.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning your own work, autonomy, and adaptability • Decision making and problem-solving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational Performance: Achieving results; Driving delivery; Identifying and implementing change.

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 Leadership Essentials Programme, but requires partners to verify learner eligibility for Foundation Chartered Manager (fCMgr). CMI reserves the right to sample evidence of programme completion and fCMgr eligibility as required. The programme is quality assured by CMI and is not on the Regulated Qualification Framework (RQF).

Progression Opportunities

Foundation Chartered Manager

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

To qualify for fCMGr status, Learners must complete this qualification and demonstrate competence by the end of the course. Partners are required to verify:

- Reflective Practice: Have learners completed a CPD Log with reflections?
- Application of Learning: Have learners applied learning and demonstrated competence through a professional discussion?

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

Masterclass 1: Mindset, Identity and Self-Leadership

By completing this Masterclass, learners will be able to:

1. Manage the **transition** from education to work.

Transition:

- Flipping the switch: Navigating the gap between studying and professional life, understanding “unspoken rules” (for example: when to send an email vs a chat message), negotiating “grey areas” and ambiguity, moving from passive to proactive learning to fill a skills gap, recognising when you are stuck and proactively asking colleagues or managers for help and support, time management vs output management when meeting deadlines
- Resilience and wellbeing: adopting strategies to grow, maintain personal wellbeing and manage setbacks at work (for example: establishing boundaries), managing digital pressure (the need to be “always on”), and building a support network.
- Achieving goals: working towards targets and adopting continuous professional development (for example, iterative goal setting and seeking feedback).
- Bouncing back: Turning workplace anxiety into excitement by reframing mistakes, adopting a growth mindset, and celebrating the little wins.

2. Develop a **professional identity** and **personal brand**.

Professional identity: (how you are in the context of work)

- Defining your values: deciding what you stand for (for example: radical honesty, extreme reliability, creative problem-solving)
- Developing “business acumen”: understanding the ‘big picture’, how businesses actually work and what customers want
- Adopting professional ethics: building identity on boundaries, learning to say “no” to things that compromise your work or wellbeing and “yes” to challenges that align with your career goals

Personal brand: (how others see you)

- Understanding your digital footprint: ensuring LinkedIn profiles focus on the value you can provide, engaging with industry content
- Understand how employers perceive you and how to use your skills to stand out
- Highlight your “thing”: identifying the niche skill you are good at (for example: coding, presentations or AI)
- Overcoming imposter syndrome: being open and transparent about your strengths, acknowledging that feelings of inability are normal, and constructively accepting and taking on board feedback and criticism, and tracking feedback and wins to validate progress.

3. Apply **self-leadership** to daily tasks.

Self leadership

- Everyday leadership: Learning how to lead yourself first before leading others. Taking personal accountability and ownership over your attitude and daily outputs.
- Personal goal setting: Adopting continuous professional development.

Mapping to **CMI Professional Standard**

Personal Effectiveness: Managing yourself; Communicating and influencing.

Useful Resources

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

- TBC

Masterclass 2: Communication, Networking and Your Digital Edge

By completing this Masterclass, learners will be able to:

1. Apply effective communication methods with colleagues and customers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mastering written, verbal and non-verbal communication for different audiences. Knowing when to step away from messaging platforms and have a direct, verbal conversation• Build and grow professional networks: mastering 'small talk' and helping to grow your network.• Digital professionalism: Standards across email, social media, and internal platforms.
2. Collaborate effectively within a team
Effectively: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understanding team dynamics:• Understanding different personalities and motivations in the workplace, and how to navigate them• Responding to stress and workplace conflict.• Navigating workplace conflict: what to do when you disagree with a teammate or manager, and knowing when to escalate. Understanding when disagreements should be handled face-to-face vs virtually.
3. Utilise tech and data to be productive
Tech: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developing broad digital skills: developing digital fluency beyond just AI, including mastering everyday project, knowledge, and communication tools• Modern digital tools and AI: Applying skills to work smarter and faster.• Project and knowledge tools: visual collaboration tools (for example: Miro or Canva) to brainstorm ideas and create visuals, personal knowledge tools (for example: Notion or Airtable) to document everyday processes as you learn• Automation tools: smart scheduling (for example: Motion) to use AI to manage your diary automatically• Communication tools: using grammar tools (for example: Grammarly) to help ensure your tone is appropriate in emails or messages Data: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Data fundamentals: Understanding the types of data (for example: customer, product, financial, performance and AI-generated data) and the role of data in a business context• Cyber security awareness: Following policies to protect against data breaches and security threats.
Mapping to CMI Professional Standard
Interpersonal Excellence: Building relationships and networks; Using emotional intelligence.

Useful Resources

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

• TBC

Masterclass 3: The Application Task

By completing this Masterclass, learners will be able to:

1. Identify an opportunity for improvement.
Opportunity: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Based on a real-world task, a volunteering project, or a hypothetical case-study simulation for those not yet in work.● Evidencing the application of everyday leadership skills and professional growth.● Reflect on the impact of the task on self, organisational or operational efficiency, on other people or on how other people view the organisation
2. Apply practical approaches to problem-solving and decision-making.
Approaches: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Problem solving: knowing how to spot a problem using established models such as The “5 Whys” Technique and The IDEAL model, approaching solutions with the team, taking ownership and accountability by proposing solutions instead of just reporting problems● Decision Making: taking the lead on projects and making smart, independent calls, utilising models such as The Eisenhower Matrix, Cost-Benefit Analysis and The 10-10-10 Rule and applying them to daily tasks
3. Use self-management to manage own workload
Manage: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Planning and organising administrative tasks and daily workflows.● Using tools and resources to manage daily tasks and workload.● Personal accountability and ownership: taking responsibility for tasks and exercising informed judgement● Adaptability and working in the grey: reviewing work and pivoting when faced with changing requirements or ambiguous instructions
Mapping to CMI Professional Standard
Organisational Performance: Achieving results; Driving delivery; Identifying and implementing change.

Useful Resources

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

<ul style="list-style-type: none">● TBC

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
First Draft	Initial Consultation Draft	Version 1	May 2026