

CMI Leadership Academy

CMI Leading AI Readiness Programme

The Accelerated Pathway to AI Leadership and Foundation Chartered
Manager Status

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Programme Overview

The CMI Leading AI Readiness Programme is an accelerated, high-impact pathway designed for managers and operational leaders to introduce AI into their departments and achieve Foundation Chartered Manager Status while delivering real-world impact and Return on Investment (ROI) for their organisations. It focuses on aligning operational leadership with the strategic and cultural requirements of AI adoption 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 4 AI and Automation Practitioner 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 Foundation Chartered Manager (fCMgr) status, 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.
- **AI 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
- **Foundation 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,

This qualification is available for registration from June 2026.



CMI Code	Title	Embedded Chartered Grade
LARP	CMI Leading AI Readiness 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. 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 July 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 July 2026.

Alignment to the AI and Automation Practitioner Standard

The table below signposts how this programme aligns to the AI and Automation Practitioner 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 Leading AI Readiness Programme. The signposting guides where that content may support each Masterclass.

Masterclass	Masterclass Overview	Alignment to KSBs from the AI and Automation Practitioner Occupational Standard
Leading Change for AI Readiness	Aligns operational leadership with the strategic and cultural requirements of introducing AI-related change into a team.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership, Ethics & Culture: K1, B1, B5 • Change Management & Stakeholders: K3, K21, S4, S5
Driving AI Excellence	Bridges theory and execution by mastering operational planning and using continuous improvement methodologies to optimise workflows for organisational change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational Planning & Strategy: K4, K17, S6 • Data, Analytics & Continuous Improvement: K5, K16, S9, S10, S14
The AI Impact Project	Requires managers to deliver measurable ROI through a real-world project, using data and project management methodologies to solve an AI challenge or change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Management: K24, S24 • Viability, Value & Impact Reporting: K13, S3, S15, S16, S22

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 Leading AI Readiness 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: Leading Change for AI Readiness

Aligns operational leadership with the strategic and cultural requirements of introducing AI-related change into a team.

By completing this Masterclass, learners will be able to:

1. Evaluate **approaches** to foster an inclusive, high-performance AI-led culture

Approaches:

- Leading Change: Proactively guiding teams through digital transitions by applying recognised change management frameworks, such as Kotter's 8 Step Process, Lewin's Forcefield Analysis, or the SCARF Model.
- Evaluating Leadership Models: Applying foundational leadership frameworks—such as Inclusive, Servant, Transformational, Situational, and Authentic Leadership—to successfully steer departments through the complexities of AI adoption
- Inclusive AI & Empathetic Leadership: Building trust and psychological safety so employees feel secure sharing alternative perspectives or concerns regarding new technology, especially when under pressure to deliver operational efficiencies
- Managing Transition Impacts: Taking proactive, structured steps to handle the workforce impact of automation. This includes supporting staff through transition phases by facilitating the retraining, redeployment, or upskilling of affected employees to maintain morale and motivation
- Driving the Ethical Business Case: Articulating the business case for ethical, responsible AI adoption to mitigate reputational risks and maintain high staff morale. This involves leadership taking accountability for setting clear values, policies, and overarching strategies for AI use
- Prioritising Workplace Wellbeing: Looking beyond immediate organisational gains to carefully assess the wider human impact of AI and automation on workplace culture, psychological wellbeing, and safe working practices
- Equity and Integration: Establishing clear workplace norms and professional boundaries for AI use, while identifying and removing barriers to progression for diverse talent pools, with a specific focus on social mobility

2. Develop **strategies** to manage stakeholders and overcome **barriers** to AI-related change

Strategies:

- Stakeholder Identification & Mapping: Using tools like the Power/Interest Matrix to identify internal (e.g., employees, senior leaders) and external (e.g., software vendors, customers) stakeholders involved in automation projects
- Inclusive Communication: Applying strategies for inclusive communication with stakeholders from diverse and non-technical backgrounds, building trust in digital environments
- Active Engagement: Engaging proactively with non-technical staff to understand their day-to-day roles, responsibilities, and specific concerns when automation solutions are proposed
- Constructive Dialogue: Facilitating open, constructive dialogue between leaders and employees about the adoption of AI and automation solutions, acting as a bridge between technical possibilities and human realities
- Influencing and Negotiation: Adopting techniques (such as "Managing Up" or The Harvard Principle) to manage expectations and influence senior leadership or resistant stakeholders
- Accessible Translation: Translating complex technical AI concepts into accessible materials to ensure clear dialogue and understanding across all stakeholder groups

Barriers:

- Psychological Barriers: Addressing “change fatigue”, fears of job loss, loss of control, and competence fears (status quo bias). This is mitigated by explicitly designing AI systems to augment rather than replace human work, where feasible.
- Communication & Clarity Barriers: Overcoming "change fatigue" and information vacuums by clearly articulating the business case for ethical AI adoption, focusing on staff morale and long-term sustainability.
- Socio-Economic & Role Impacts: Understanding the social and economic impacts of automation on non-technical roles. Overcoming this barrier by supporting staff through transition phases, including facilitating the retraining, redeployment, or upskilling of affected employees.
- Applying Change Management Models: Utilising established frameworks to guide the team through digital transitions, such as Kotter’s 8 Step Process, Lewin's Forcefield Analysis, or the SCARF Model

Mapping to CMI Professional Standard

Useful Resources:

- *Inclusive Leadership*: Edmondson, A. C. (2004) Psychological Safety, Trust, and Learning in Organizations
- Hiatt, J.M. (2006) *ADKAR: a model for change in business, government, and our community*. Loveland, CO: Prosci Learning Center Publications.
- Kotter, J.P. (2012) *Leading change*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press.
- Kübler-Ross, E. (1969) *On death and dying*. New York, NY: Macmillan.

Masterclass 2: Driving AI Excellence

Bridges theory and execution by mastering operational planning and using continuous improvement methodologies to optimise workflows for organisational change.

By completing this Masterclass, learners will be able to:

1. Implement **operational plans** that leverage AI to align with broader organisational strategy

Operational plans:

- Action Items: Translating strategic goals into operational actions by identifying where AI and automation can deliver scalable, efficient solutions
- Resource & Personnel Requirements: Assessing the necessary resources, including the technology stack (e.g., low-code tools, APIs) alongside human personnel, considering hiring plans, facilities, and time requirements
- Workflow Mapping: As a mechanism for incremental changes or automation pilots. Reviewing and completing workflow mapping to pinpoint operational problems or inefficiencies and recommend solutions such as automation pilots, incremental changes, or scaling opportunities
- KPIs & Reporting: Establishing Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to track progress, alongside reporting on productivity, efficiency savings, and further opportunities for automation.
- Financial Budgets: Managing and allocating financial budgets, including operational expense (OpEx) for SaaS platforms and capital expenditure (CapEx) for broader infrastructure.
- Monitoring Tools: Utilising tools such as dashboards, Balance Scorecards, variance reporting, and periodic performance reviews to provide progress reporting at the executive level. This includes integrating AI technologies to collect, process, and manage data effectively for intelligent system operation
- Assessing Viability & Risk: Undertaking analysis to determine if automation is viable, including assessing risks like data quality, process maturity, and evaluating unintended consequences on existing job roles.
- Contingency Planning: Developing risk registers, mitigation strategies, and contingency plans to handle potential system issues, maintaining robust risk management frameworks

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

Data-driven insights:

- Data Sources: Identifying and using different sources of operational data, including qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods, primary, and secondary data. Undertaking data analysis, preparation, and conversion to support the implementation of an AI solution
- Trend & Variance Analysis: Conducting trends and pattern analysis. Applying analytical and computational techniques using tools and datasets to evaluate, optimise, and design automation solutions, including performing variance analysis (such as Budget vs Actual).
- Operational Optimisation: Integrating AI and automation technologies to securely collect, process, and manage data effectively, enabling intelligent and efficient system operations. Applying these data-driven insights to human capital optimisation, predictive maintenance and planning, and process bottleneck identification

Methodologies:

- Lean Thinking: Applying Lean Thinking (Womack & Jones) methodologies to identify opportunities to enhance productivity, improve processes, reduce waste, and optimise operational outcomes.
- Iterative Cycles: Utilising continuous improvement frameworks such as Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA)

cycles and Kaizen principles as frameworks for managing ongoing and interactive change. Establishing robust feedback and evaluation loops to continuously improve systems, processes, and performance, ensuring that appropriate human-in-the-loop safeguards are maintained.

- Root Cause Analysis: Deploying diagnostic tools to uncover inefficiencies, such as the 5 Whys or Fishbone diagrams. This supports the identification and evaluation of opportunities for increased productivity, such as streamlining processes through the use of low-or no-code tools and AI platforms

Mapping to **CMI Professional Standard**

Useful Resources

- Lean Thinking: Womack, J. P. and Jones, D. T. (2003) Lean Thinking: Banish Waste and Create Wealth in Your Corporation
- Continuous Improvement: Deming, W. E. (1986) Out of the Crisis

Masterclass 3: The AI Impact Project

Requires managers to deliver measurable ROI through a real-world project, using data and project management methodologies to solve an AI challenge or change.

By completing this Masterclass, learners will be able to:

1. Use project management tools to deliver a workplace AI project to deliver organisational impact
<p>Tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Project Control: Utilising scoping documents, budget tracking, and RAID logs (Risks, Assumptions, Issues, Dependencies) to manage the lifecycle of the AI/automation project and risks and dependencies of organisational change.● Stakeholder Management: Applying tools such as stakeholder mapping, communication plans, and RACI Matrices (Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed) to ensure clear roles and balanced briefings that articulate both opportunities and risks● Tracking and Reporting: Using reporting tools, including milestone tracking, Gantt charts, dashboards, and KPI reporting, to keep line managers and stakeholders informed of progress <p>AI Project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Process Automation & Workflow Optimisation: replacing manual tasks, operational process fixes.● AI Tool Integration & Infrastructure: deploying AI features, system modernisation● Client Impact & Data Solutions: improving customer experience, data and compliance management
2. Present the analysis of project outcomes against objectives to demonstrate organisational impact
<p>Project outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Process and efficiency improvements● Financial and value metrics● Client and customer impact● People and culture● Safety, security and compliance
Mapping to CMI Professional Standard
Useful Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Project Control Tools (RAID & RACI): Project Management Institute (2021) A guide to the project management body of knowledge (PMBOK guide)● Data Visualisation: Tufte, E. R. (2001) The Visual Display of Quantitative Information

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