



Health Service  
**Leadership  
Academy**

# MSc in Leadership in Healthcare

## Applicant Guide



## Introduction

This Applicant Guide provides MSc in Leadership in Healthcare applicants with the information they need to complete the application process and includes the following information:

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## Virtual Programme Delivery

The MSc in Leadership in Healthcare is currently being delivered as a virtual programme. Residentials and any other face to face components referred to in this applicant guide will happen virtually until further notice. Should it be decided that any elements will take place face to face we will advise participants accordingly.

## Applicant Suitability

The MSc in Leadership in Healthcare is for those who are looking for development and stimulation to rapidly improve their service and enhance their leadership capability. It is aimed at those who:

- Lead teams or complex projects
- Lead services or systems of care
- Aspire to be responsible for a broader role and contribute to the wider organisation
- Would like development support to improve their leadership practices
- Are excited by the opportunity to apply new skills, learning and behaviours directly to real-time work related improvements
- Are willing to commit to at least 15 hours learning a week over the course of a 24 month period
- Are willing to commit to full attendance at all aspects of the programme

In the event of over subscription of applications the Health Service Leadership Academy reserves the right to prioritise applicants with most experience as health service managers in order to facilitate the greatest benefit for the health service in the shortest time.

## Applicant Eligibility

To be eligible to apply for the MSc in Leadership in Healthcare you must hold a minimum of:

- 2.2 undergraduate degree or above, or
- An equivalent professional qualification, or
- Relevant experience leading teams or services

In addition to the academic eligibility criteria above *and the suitability criteria* on the previous page, you must also:

- Be an employee of the HSE, TUSLA, or a body which provides service on behalf of the HSE under Section 38 of the Health Act 2004
- Satisfactorily complete the application process

Selection criteria will include:

- Applicant's personal statement
- Applicant's experience leading teams or complex projects or leading services or systems of care
- The Senior Line Manager Supporting Statement
- Applicant's previous leadership/management development programmes undertaken
- Creation of the best possible mix of participants from eligible applicants


In order to maximise the learning within each cohort undertaking the MSc in Leadership in Healthcare the Health Service Leadership Academy will seek to create the best possible mix of participants from eligible applicants. This will include having a mix of clinical and non-clinical participants, a mix of disciplines and professions and a mix of locations and types of health service organisations. In striving to achieve a strong mix for each cohort, this may result in some eligible participants not being offered a place on the next cohort.

In these circumstances and in the event of oversubscription, a waiting list will be established for eligible participants to whom places may be offered on a subsequent cohort.

You may be contacted by the Programme Director or a member of the Health Service Leadership Academy Team if clarification is required on any aspect of your application.

### Application Process

In order for you to be considered for the programme, there are a number of steps that must be completed:

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- 1 Download the Application Form and Senior Line Manager Supporting Statement from [www.healthserviceleadershipacademy.ie](http://www.healthserviceleadershipacademy.ie)
  - 2 Complete the Application Form providing all required information.
  - 3 The applicant's senior line manager, must complete the Senior Line Manager Supporting Statement. It is the responsibility of the applicant to arrange for this document to be completed.
  - 4 Read the Guide to Submitting Your Application available on [www.healthserviceleadershipacademy.ie](http://www.healthserviceleadershipacademy.ie).  
You will be submitting your application using the UCC Online Application Portal so please familiarise yourself with the steps set out in the Guide and complete the Application Form and Senior Line Manager statement in advance as they will be uploaded to the UCC Online Application Portal as part of the process. You will also need to upload Proof of Identity.
  - 5 Go to the UCC Online Application Portal, complete the necessary sections and upload the Application Form, Senior Line Manager Statement and Proof of Identity. The URL for the UCC portal is available on [www.healthserviceleadershipacademy.ie](http://www.healthserviceleadershipacademy.ie) and in the Guide to Submitting Your Application. Follow the Guide to Submitting Your Application to ensure that you submit your application correctly.
  - 6 You will receive an acknowledgement that your application will be processed once you have completed the information on the UCC Online Application Portal and uploaded the Application Form, Senior Line Manager Statement and Proof of Identity.
  - 7 You may be contacted by the Programme Director or a member of the Health Service Leadership Academy Team if clarification is required on any aspect of your application.
  - 8 Receive notification by email of the outcome of the application process by mid July 2025.

### Programme Overview

<b>Programme Title</b>	MSc in Leadership in Healthcare
<b>Qualification</b>	MSc in Leadership in Healthcare <i>(awarded by University College Cork)</i>
<b>Length of Programme</b>	24 months, part-time
<b>Time Commitment</b>	At least 15 hours per week
<b>Faculty</b>	Delivered by the IMI
<b>Modes of Learning</b>	Work based application (50%), Online learning (35%), learning set meetings and residential workshops (15%)
<b>Attendance Requirements</b>	4 residential sessions totalling a minimum of 12 days over the programme  A minimum of 11 action learning set days over the programme
<b>Attendance</b>	100% attendance at all elements is required

The MSc in Leadership in Healthcare is designed to meet healthcare challenges now and into the future and will enable you to bring about change and real improvement providing opportunities to put your new skills into action where you work. The focus of the programme is firmly on patient experiences and outcomes, so whether you work on the frontline or you indirectly focus on patient care, the patients and service users your organisation cares for will benefit as a result of your learning. The programme involves work-based evidence to be provided, meaning you can start making a difference to patients and services immediately rather than having to wait until after you graduate.

The programme supports you in your role and future career by:

- Providing you with intensive personal leadership development
- Improving your personal impact and helping you drive progress with your team and organisation to build a culture of patient-focused care
- Enabling you to make a real difference to patients, staff and services
- Helping you to take up your leadership role and lead others more effectively
- Helping you develop quickly by immersing you in innovative and intensive leadership development
- Helping you make an immediate and tangible difference to your workplace by applying your learning to develop practical innovations for immediate use
- Helping you build a powerful national support network within the healthcare system who are all driving to achieve real change for patients

## Programme Overview Continued

During the programme you'll be immersed in innovative and intensive leadership development; whilst also providing you with theoretical knowledge and practical understanding needed to deliver inspiring leadership.

Like most leadership development programmes, we'll ask you to examine what has shaped you as a leader and to look at the impact your leadership has on others. Please consider your views on this and your willingness and capacity to work in this way at this time before applying for the programme.

The key features of the programme are that it:

- Builds your capability with the latest thinking and learning from world-class healthcare experts, preparing you for the demands of senior leadership in the healthcare system today and for the future
- Applies cutting-edge learning methods blending a flexible state-of-the-art Virtual Campus with face-to-face development
- Is fully supported every step of the way by your tutor, your action learning set and online, through the user-friendly Virtual Campus
- Gives you access to experts in healthcare and other industries helping you understand best practice from both inside and outside the Irish health service
- Award of an MSc in Leadership in Healthcare upon successful completion



## Learning Methods

The learning methods are a cutting-edge blend to keep you inspired and motivated via a flexible state-of-the-art Virtual Campus, residential workshops, development and online tutor support.

The programme is delivered using the following core learning methods:

- 50% work based application (where set activities on the online Virtual Campus are put into practice at work)
- 35% online learning (academic content, assignments and discussion groups)
- 15% residential behavioural development workshops and action learning sets

### Work Based Learning

- Work Based Learning (WBL) is an important part of how the learning methods are applied in practice. WBL takes as its focus the work you are already doing and uses this as the basis for your learning. Much of your online learning will relate to your work place. It focuses your attention on what is practical and works, and helps to lighten the study workload, as some of the learning is within your day-to-day job.

### Action Learning Set Meetings

- Your Action Learning Set Meetings provides you with a forum to explore the links between individual, group and organisational dynamics, in order to equip you with the practical skills to craft your leadership role, style and skills. Your Action Learning Set meets a minimum of eleven times during the programme for full day working sessions.

### Residential Experiential Workshops

- There are four residential workshops during the course of the programme; the dates of which can be found on our website. The focus of these workshops will be on your personal and behavioural development in context. They take full advantage of group work, experiential and simulation learning activities as opposed to any academic theory or knowledge learning.

### Online learning through the Virtual Campus

- The Health Service Leadership Academy Virtual Campus has been designed to feel like an inviting space; delivering what you need in an interactive learning environment. It can be accessed at any time and on any device, at a time and place which suits you
- The Virtual Campus is where you can find all the resources you will need for your studies. It provides a range of different learning formats such as e-learning nuggets, simulation events, webinars, videos, psychometric assessments, surveys, electronic journals, books, tutorial and discussion boards, learning journals and more.

### Individual and Group Tutorials

- You will have individual and group tutorials over the duration of this programme. These will take place during specified weeks, but the day and time of tutorials (including evenings and weekends) will be mutually agreed with groups/individuals. Tutorials will take place either online or by telephone.



## Programme Structure

The programme consists of a 24 month learning journey comprising four modules that explore the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours that are important for leading others when building a culture of person-centred care within the healthcare system.

The programme is specifically designed to enable you to put your work role, tasks and experiences to practical use in your study of leadership, while also providing intensive personal and professional development.

The programme involves at least 15 hours a week, in which you'll explore themes that support your development of self, teams and organisations to achieve the learning aims of the programme which are:

- Ensuring that patients have good quality and safe experiences
- Understanding how you, as a leader, can make a difference to improving care quality and the patient experience
- Enabling others to give their best to improve care quality and the patient experience
- Making person-centred co-ordinated care happen
- Making decisions based upon the best available evidence to improve care quality and the patient experience
- Creating value for patients, service users and the communities we serve.

The MSc in Leadership in Healthcare modules are as follows:

MSc in Leadership in Healthcare Modules	
1	Optimising the impact of your personal leadership practice in delivering compassionate care
2	Creating high performance teams in healthcare
3	Developing an organisation / system wide perspective to improve patient / service user experience
4	Dissertation

## Programme Modules and Assignments

### Module 1: Optimising the impact of your personal leadership practice in delivering compassionate care

This module introduces you to a range of leadership theories and models that can be applied to improve the quality of care and the experience of patients and service users.

In **Part 1** of this module you will explore current thinking and best practice of leadership at the level of the individual leader and critically evaluate your current leadership practice.

In **Part 2** of this module you will reflect on your own leadership behaviours and how you respond to the needs of patients or service users, staff and the broader organisation.

#### Assessment

##### **Part 1**

One assignment of approx. 3,000 words in which you will critically assess and analyse key approaches to individual, team and organisational leadership as they apply to delivering better care and outcomes for both patients and service users, and reflect upon your own leadership practice and how it can be developed.

##### **Part 2**

One blog post/article of approx. 2,500 words or a Vlog of 15 minutes duration in which you will compare and contrast key approaches to enhancing individual and team performance within your service and critically evaluate the potential impact on patient/service use experience and outcomes.

A reflective essay of approximately 2,500 words in which you will critically consider the impact of your leadership style and your past experiences of leading and being led, on your approach to leadership.

# Programme Modules and Assignments Continued

### Module 2: Creating high performance teams in healthcare

In this module you will gain greater insight into teams and team effectiveness. Through a critical introduction to the literature and research evidence to effective team working you will explore relevant theories and models of teams and their effectiveness in practice.

In **Part 1** of this module, you will develop a clearer understanding of the team you lead through the application of relevant theories and models, and extensive reflection on your own practice as a leader. You will explore the foundations for effective team working, including steps needed to develop psychological safety, facilitate open debate, and support openness to concerns and suggestions within teams. Key topics will include team dynamics and team engagement, the impact of diversity on team effectiveness, conflict resolution and developing team positivity, as well as developing more effective inter-team working and grappling with situational constraints.

In **Part 2** of this module you will focus on the role that cohesive team dynamics and accountability play in the delivery of quality care and service improvement. In so doing you will make use of evidence, theories and models focused both on creating cultures supportive of engagement and learning, and optimising your potential as a leader so that you are equipped to lead teams both effectively and dynamically.

Learning will be demonstrated through measurable work-based learning activities that further develop innovative team leadership and team working in order to improve patient or service-user experience, safety and care.

#### Assessment

One assignment of approx. 4,500 words plus 1,000 word appendix in which you will consider key aspects of team effectiveness within your service and critically evaluate the role that you as a leader play in creating a culture of learning, engagement and psychological safety in order to facilitate the delivery of quality care and services.

## Programme Assignments Continued

### Module 3: Developing an organisation / system wide perspective to improve patient / service user experience

In this module you will focus on the organisation as a whole, and be introduced to models and concepts relating to values and stakeholder engagement, including the alignment of values at individual, team and organisational levels, and the identification of steps that can be taken to create change.

In **Part 1** of this module you are asked to explore and understand the context within which your services are situated, before applying these concepts more broadly to the organisation. This will include an examination of the structures, processes, behaviours, culture and patient/service user experiences of both specific services and the wider system. This will ultimately lead to the evaluation of a diverse range of perspectives, and an understanding of the regional, national, international and multi-cultural contexts and drivers for change.

This organisational analysis will help you understand and focus on what needs to change to improve service delivery, care quality and the experience of patients and service users.

In **Part 2** of this module you will take a more strategic view on issues of quality, efficiency and effectiveness. You will examine the use of resources with a view to the future, look where duplication and waste can be reduced and increase the use of shared resources across system boundaries. This requires working across multiple services and care pathways, understanding models of governance, analysing inequalities in services and building strategic relationships and networks.

A key focus of the learning will be enabling your team to work more effectively in interdisciplinary, complex and ambiguous contexts through the evaluation of shared roles and accountabilities. The positive impact of sharing decision making with patients/service users and, where applicable, their carers will be explored, so they have greater choice and control of decisions about their healthcare.

#### Assessment

One assignment of approx. 4,500 words plus 1,000 word appendix in which you will critically evaluate a diverse range of perspectives on the structure, processes, behaviours and culture within your service, focusing on potential changes and improvements to service delivery, care quality and the experience of patients and service users and how they might be implemented.

# Programme Modules and Assignments Continued

### Module 4: Dissertation

This module will prepare you for your dissertation. You'll learn how to collect and analyse information and make sense of this through different theoretical approaches that govern the way you understand the world and in turn influence your leadership. Working independently, you will conduct and write up your dissertation, which will be a critical evaluation of the way in which care quality, diverse patient experience and patient engagement have improved as a result of your own and your team's learning and leadership actions.

#### Assessment

Half hour presentation to a panel of tutors for feedback on the proposed dissertation

Approx. 3,000 word dissertation proposal

Approx. 10,000 word dissertation

## Practical Arrangements

The programme requires participants to make a commitment of at least fifteen hours per week to programme work, and it is up to each person to fit into their own lives. It is likely that most of this will be undertaken in participants' own time. However, as the programme has a strong focus on the practical application of new learning, they are strongly encouraged to practice developing their range of leadership behaviours in their own workplace. Accordingly, we would ask line managers to support participants in doing this so that they can become a more effective leader.

In addition, attendance is mandatory at four residential sessions totalling a minimum of 12 days over the 24 months of the programme and a minimum of 11 action learning set days throughout the programme. Line managers are being requested to treat time spent at residential workshops and action learning set meetings, also at individual tutorials and group tutorials (both approx. 1 hour in duration) as time spent at work.

While there are no programme fees currently charged for participating on this programme, if the programme is delivered in person in the future, participants may incur travel and subsistence costs associated with attending residential and face to face components of the programme. Where this arises it must be paid directly by participants themselves (including any cancellation charges which may arise), and then recovered through normal local Travel and Subsistence procedures. In this respect, we would be most grateful if line managers could please ensure that arrangements are put in place to allow participants to submit their claims through local Travel and Subsistence process. Regrettably, the Leadership Academy is not in a position to refund other areas of the HSE, or external agencies for costs incurred in this regard.


## Contact Details for Further Support

Should you require additional information about the MSc in Leadership in Healthcare or the Health Service Leadership Academy, please visit our website ([www.healthserviceleadershipacademy.ie](http://www.healthserviceleadershipacademy.ie)).

For further information, please contact the Health Service Leadership Academy using the details below:

 [www.healthserviceleadershipacademy.ie](http://www.healthserviceleadershipacademy.ie)

 [leadershipacademy@hse.ie](mailto:leadershipacademy@hse.ie)

 087 488 6796 or 087 272 8198 or 087 281 9507

## Submitting an Application

**To submit an application you must use the UCC Online Application Portal.**

Please read the [Guide to Submitting Your Application](#) as this explains everything you need to do to successfully submit your application via the UCC Portal.

The URL for the UCC Portal is in the Guide.

You will need your completed Application Form, Senior Line Manager Supporting Statement and Proof of Identity to upload to the UCC Online Application Portal in order to submit your application.

If you need any help with the UCC Online Application Portal, please phone

01 207 8412 Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.

You can also email [leadershipacademyhse@imi.ie](mailto:leadershipacademyhse@imi.ie).

## Closing Date

**Closing Date: 5pm on Friday 16th May 2025.**

**Incomplete applications or applications received after the closing date will not be considered.**

**Applicants can only apply for one of the Health Service Leadership Academy programmes. The Health Service Leadership Academy will not accept more than one application per person.**

*The contents of this MSc in Leadership in Healthcare Applicant Guide are correct at the time of publishing and may be subject to change.*