

Pathways to **PRACTICE**

— A PRACTITIONER'S TOOLKIT —

LEADING AND MOTIVATING YOUR STAFF

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We achieve this mission through a combination of training, conferences, and knowledge acquisition and sharing. We partner with key stakeholder organisations and institutions to promote our membership's interests and advance international higher education in Europe and the rest of the world.

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CONTENTS

- 03** Topic in context
- 04** What problem does it solve?
- 05** Who should be involved?
- 06** What does success look like?
- 07** Terminology
- 08** Key steps in the process
- 11** Don't forget
- 12** Take-aways
- 13** Further reading
- 14** About the authors

TOPIC IN CONTEXT

It goes without saying that staff leadership and motivation is a crucial aspect of delivering on strategy in any organisation. However, this is particularly the case in an international office given the specific nature of its work, which is fundamentally about people and relations between them.

International offices are responsible for collaboration with other universities and organisations to achieve international goals for the institution, as well as working closely with other internal units to facilitate that international collaboration. As such, staff in an international office need to be supported to work within and outside their institution.

What is more, the staff profile of an international office is often more culturally and linguistically diverse than other units; as such, this requires a different set of skills in terms of staff leadership/management and motivation.

In many cases, leadership roles in international offices have both direct line management of staff (within that office), as well as indirectly guiding and influencing staff in other parts of the institution. This collaborative leadership outside of immediate hierarchies (and potentially across silos) is an aspect of leading and motivating staff which is particular to international education and internationalisation.

Naturally, institutions structure their international offices differently and give them different responsibilities. As such, the role and position of an international office within an institution will influence the type of staff leadership which is required – whether it is vertical (based on direct line management), horizontal (based on collaboration and influence), or both.

WHAT PROBLEM DOES IT SOLVE?

Internationalisation is a collective whole-of-institution endeavour which requires buy-in and action from many to be successful.

Leading, motivating and nurturing a group of specialist staff in an international office or as part of an internationally-focused project is a critical stepping stone to successful internationalisation.

Given the distributed structures of higher education institutions, showing leadership to staff outside an international office (through collaboration, encouragement and support) is also crucial for success.

WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED?

This guide is principally focused on staff members (at any level) with staff leadership and management responsibilities within an international context in higher education. These staff may sit within an international office (or equivalent) or within other teams responsible for international projects (such as European Universities alliances).

Beyond that, these recommendations could be of relevance to your line manager/boss, staff who are directly supervised, staff who are indirectly supervised, a range of other internal stakeholders in your institution and possibly a set of external stakeholders (including partner universities, funding agencies, government bodies and diplomatic posts).

Another community of interest for this toolkit is the group of colleagues from other institutions (or through a professional network such as the EAIE) who may serve as a peer support group or external reference network in your leadership role.



WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

Ultimately, an international office is tasked with achieving certain objectives in an institution's strategy – as such, successful leadership of staff will lead to the achievement of those objectives.

However, other goals include nurturing a group of staff with a positive spirit and a common passion for international education, enabling younger staff to learn more about international education and to progress their career.



TERMINOLOGY

Leadership styles:

Frameworks that describe the main ways in which people lead.

Vertical leadership:

Traditional top-down leadership style where the leader exerts complete control over subordinates.

Horizontal leadership:

A more collaborative approach where leaders work side-by-side with subordinates to accomplish tasks.

Situational leadership:

A framework that matches leadership behaviours to the performance needs of those being managed or influenced.

Bases of power:

A model showing how the different forms of power affect one's leadership and success.

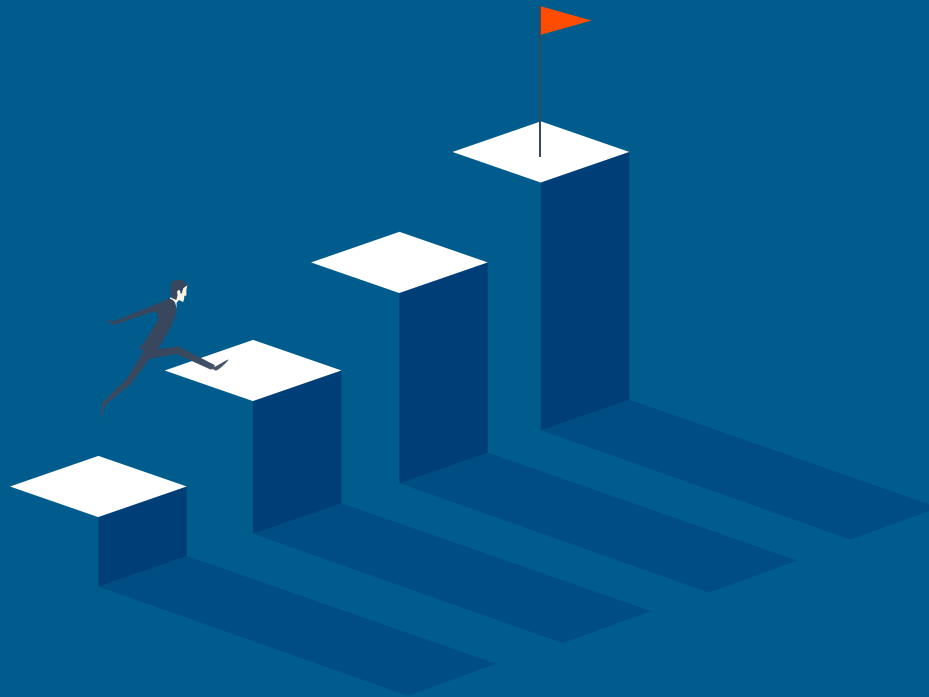
Personality test:

A tool used to assess and measure the characteristic patterns of traits that people exhibit across various situations.



KEY STEPS

IN THE PROCESS



- 1. Analysis and self-assessment**
- 2. Planning and development**
- 3. Practice**
- 4. Reflect and learn**

1. ANALYSIS AND SELF-ASSESSMENT

- Work out what you know about yourself, your personality and your leadership style (what are your strengths & what are your weaknesses)
- Work out what you know about your institution and its objectives
- Identify what you know about your office/team and its place within the institution
- Crucially, work out what you know about your staff and their motivations (if they're of different ages and backgrounds, then they may think very differently to you)

TIPS AND TRICKS

- Take one or two personality tests to learn more about yourself – these don't need to be directly focused on leadership
- Based on the results of these tests and an assessment of your strengths and weaknesses, consider what leadership style is best suited to you
- Discuss these results and your assessment with close friends and/or colleagues
- Consider your current work environment in this context. What do you know about your staff? Why are they part of your team? Do you share similar views and opinions?

2. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

- What type of leadership and management is expected of you?
- What type of leadership are you comfortable with?
- What professional development or support can you secure in terms of your leadership (from within your institution or outside)?
- What can you learn by doing?

TIPS AND TRICKS

- Scan your environment for examples of good leadership and identify the traits of good leadership in your institutional context
- Based on your self-assessment, identify leaders in other parts of the institution who share a similar leadership style to you
- Consider reaching out to other leaders for guidance and mentorship (formal or informal)
- Consider undertaking formal professional development in leadership



3. PRACTICE

- Articulate a clear vision for your staff, but remain flexible and open-minded to how this vision will be achieved
- Determine what type of leadership is best suited to the different situations you find yourself in (eg line management meeting with an individual staff member, teamwork with staff, meeting with external partners, internal committee meeting etc) and practise these different styles
- Ensure that you have the flexibility to shift quickly between leadership styles

TIPS AND TRICKS

- Depending on your leadership style and the institutional context, you may want to involve your staff in developing a vision for your collective work
- Remain tight on the goals but flexible on the means. In other words, adjust your leadership style to the needs of staff and different situations, but without compromising on the broader goals for your team

4. REFLECT AND LEARN








- Reflect on your own performance
- Seek feedback from others on your leadership
- Combat isolation in leadership by knowing where to turn when you encounter problems (*ie* peer support group or network)

TIPS AND TRICKS

- Regularly assess your own performance, when things are going well and when they're not
- Don't hesitate to ask for advice from other colleagues outside your team
- Try asking staff at the end of a meeting about the outcome and the way in which the meeting was run
- Share with your team when you are facing a challenging situation - be open but not vulnerable
- Recognise your own weaknesses - is there an opportunity to delegate some responsibilities to others, if they have complementary skills or strengths?



CHECKLIST

-  Remember that leading and motivating staff involves just as much listening as talking
-  Helping your staff to do their job well is the key
-  Do you prefer harmony or conflict in the workplace? Model the behaviour you want to see in your staff, *ie* practice what you preach
-  Hiring decisions are some of your most important – make sure that you hire people who are better than you at certain things, so that you’re not the expert on everything
-  Remember that staff leadership is potentially more important in difficult times than in good times
-  Do not avoid difficult situations and learn how to deal with difficult staff – practice communication styles and escalation/de-escalation techniques to manage workplace conflict
-  Always deliver bad news in person










TAKE- AWAYS

Beyond your day-to-day leadership, don't forget the bigger picture

- As a leader in the field of internationalisation, your institution relies on you to read and interpret the global trends affecting international higher education
- Find ways to be aware of these trends
- But don't let the bigger picture overwhelm you - why not work with your team to develop possible responses to new developments in the field?

Remain optimistic - happiness is infectious and one of the most evident traits of good leadership!

FURTHER READING

-  **Leadership styles**
<https://www.mindtools.com/a7m23wp/leadership-styles>
-  **From vertical to horizontal leadership**
<https://www.dukece.com/insights/from-vertical-to-horizontal-leadership>
-  **Situational leadership**
<https://www.betterup.com/blog/situational-leadership-examples>
-  **Bases of power (French and Raven)**
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_and_Raven%27s_bases_of_power#:~:text=The%20original%20French%20and%20%20Raven,bringing%20the%20total%20to%20six.
-  **What is a personality test?**
<https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-personality-testing-2795420>
-  **Sabine Pendl & Wessel Meijer: Ten tools for managing an international office (EAIE blog)**
<https://www.eaie.org/resource/ten-tools-managing-international-office.html>
-  **Sabine Pendl & Wessel Meijer: Managing staff, cultivating talent (EAIE podcast)**
<https://www.eaie.org/resource/podcast-pendl-meijer-managing-international-office.html>

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