

MFA CULTURAL LEADERSHIP

Course Overview 2025

CUL9104 Leadership and Governance (20 credit points)

Placing the arts and cultural sector in context, you will review attributes of leadership in a range of social, cultural, and institutional frameworks. You will examine major leadership theories and styles including transactional, democratic, relational to transformative. You will critically analyse individual leadership preferences and behaviours of the participating student cohort. You will learn about models of governance in the context of the cultural sector, including how the role and responsibilities of the board and executive leadership intersects with sound governance to realise organisational and creative goals. This includes a comprehensive examination of the legal, governance, and operational frameworks of cultural organisations, investigated through perspectives of power dynamics, values, and ethics. This subject will equip you with skills and knowledge to assess and determine the essential characteristics of leadership and governance necessary to build organisational resilience

CUL9106 Communications and Advocacy (15 credit points)

Recognising the importance of cultural leaders as front-line advocates for the sector, you will learn to articulate complex ideas with clarity, confidence, and credibility across multiple media — written, live, and recorded. Storytelling structures and principles will be taught by practising professionals to assist you to create engaging presentations. You will learn to lead and facilitate groups in creative dialogue and critical conversations. Workshops will support you to develop individual communication styles and competencies through practising interactive scenarios, presenting to camera, exploring techniques to develop vocal and physical presence, and techniques of persuasion. Practical work will be underpinned by examination and critical analysis of communication theories, and evaluation of case studies of successful communicators and advocates. You will analyse and evaluate advocacy arguments and campaigns and develop effective campaign practice and strategical skills.

CUL9103 Cultural Policy and Practice (20 credit points)

You will learn about cultural policy and planning and its relationship to arts and cultural practice. You will review public policy theory and analyse cultural policy, from international, national and local community planning. You will learn about the varied contributors to the cultural policy and planning cycle: policy makers, planners, university researchers, independent think tanks, industry leaders, arts and cultural organisations, and individual artists. This provides a diverse panoply of experiences and perspectives including exploring whose voice is included and whose is excluded. It enables you to identify and analyse policy characteristics and offers a hands-on approach to developing and implementing policies and plans. You will learn to evaluate the key attributes of Australian models in relation to international approaches, with particular reference to contemporary developments in the Asia Pacific region.

COM9103A/B Practice-Based Research Project (20 credit points)

This subject prepares you for conducting research connected with your arts and cultural practice. You will learn key concepts, processes and methodologies of research design and communication, including research ethics and appreciating diverse knowledge practices. Across two semesters, you will propose and conduct research complementary with your creative practice, using research to support your creative process or share knowledge found through making work.

CUL9101 Cultural Transformation and Sustainability (40 credit points)

Contemporary society is rapidly transforming, and it is crucial for leaders in arts and culture to keep up with these changes. You will learn how the cultural sector can lead the way in this dynamic global landscape. Areas of transformation that this subject will focus on include: who is leading organisations and why diversity in leadership matters, ensuring art and culture is accessible to everyone, and positioning the arts and cultural sectors as active change-makers in environmental substantiality. You will develop theoretical knowledge and practical skills to apply to your own leadership roles. You will learn how to implement change, be entrepreneurial and enterprising, understand social impact, and ensure sustainability. To do this, you'll look at case studies from the field and draw on your own experiences to evaluate current practices and suggest improvements. You will learn to identify areas in the arts and cultural sectors that you believe require improvement or change and be able to make well informed recommendations and provide practical suggestions for transformation practice-based research, social impact studies, and systems analysis.

CUL9107 Evaluation Methodologies for Cultural Leaders (15 credit points)

Evaluation Methodologies will provide you with an understanding of theories of change and enhance your knowledge of contemporary evaluation practices. It will empower you to effectively identify and apply suitable methodologies for conducting, managing, and commissioning evaluations. In response to the growing emphasis on diversity and inclusion within research practices by policymakers, funders, and community stakeholders, this subject provides critical insights and practical skills. It offers critical perspectives and practical learnings, focussed on inclusive, collaborative, and culturally appropriate evaluation methods. You will engage in applied research with a particular focus on social research techniques and theory, including the efficacy of measurement metrics. This will foster evaluative thinking and offer opportunities for you to collaborate with others in the cohort on co-designed research approaches.

CUL9108 International Case Study (35 credit points)

The International Case Study is a unique opportunity for you to deepen your knowledge and frame of experience through an immersive period of research overseas. You are encouraged to undertake a placement in an area of the arts and cultural industry that will challenge you beyond your immediate practice. The key objective of the placement will be to undertake research into of an aspect of leadership within the host organisation. The case study will be framed by bespoke learning objectives and outcomes defined to enhance leadership capacity. The experience will include the delivery of a case study report or a practice-based research project. The case study, its core research question/s and the methods to be used will be negotiated in advance, in consultation with you and your nominated host organisation.

CUL9109 Cultural Futures Lab (15 credit points)

Based on work you will have done throughout the course, in this subject you will collaborate with your cohort to realise a public facing project that synthesises your learnings and emphasises practical applications and audience engagement. This will be informed by the matter of concern that has driven your inquiry during the course. You will contribute to a public cultural discourse and build connections with diverse communities. By cultivating forward-thinking approaches and fostering creativity, this subject equips you with skills to navigate and shape the cultural landscape with impact and resilience.