



Learning Outcomes

People Management Core & Specialized Credentials

International Certification Alliance

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LICENSING INFORMATION

The work in this document was facilitated by the International Certification Alliance (ICA) and done through the contributions of various experts and practitioners. These learning objectives are intended to help the growing Tomorrow-Ready™ community worldwide.

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HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT

This document outlines the learning outcomes that accredited member organizations must address to offer ICA's People Management certification. To achieve the certification, a learner must complete the core credential plus at least two specialized credentials.

Each learning outcome (LO) follows a particular pattern, described below.

O.O Learning Outcome Name

Additional Context, describing why this Learning Outcome is important or what it is intended to impart.

The learning outcome's purpose further describes what is expected to be imparted to the learner (e.g., a key point, framework, model, approach, technique, or skill).

CORE CREDENTIAL LEARNING OUTCOMES

People Management Core

This is an 8-hour Core Credential for professionals who are responsible for the performance, development, and experience of others. It introduces people management as a distinct practice from individual contribution, covering how to set direction, delegate work, manage performance, and build a team that is capable of doing its best work. The credential builds shared language and practical judgment for the core responsibilities every people manager carries, regardless of function or industry.

1. Foundations of People Management

1.1 Transition to People Management

Moving into people management changes how success is measured. Managers are responsible not only for their own work but also for the performance, growth, and experience of the people they lead.

Build learners' understanding of how the manager role changes responsibility, use of time, and measures of success.

1.2 Core People Management Responsibilities

People managers are responsible for direction, delegation, development, performance, and team effectiveness. Understanding the full role helps prevent over-focus on the responsibilities that feel most familiar.

Build learners' understanding of the core responsibilities that make up effective people management. This can include setting direction and expectations (translating team or organizational goals into clear individual priorities and success measures), hiring and building the team (selecting the right people and structuring roles well), developing people (coaching, delegating meaningfully, and creating growth opportunities rather than just assigning tasks), performance management and accountability (giving regular feedback, addressing issues early, and conducting fair evaluations), and day-to-day people leadership (removing blockers, protecting the team from unnecessary noise, and modeling the behavior and culture they want to see).

2. Setting Direction and Delegating Work

2.1 Goals and Strategic Alignment

Employees work more effectively when they understand how their responsibilities connect to team and organizational priorities. Vague or disconnected goals make priorities harder to interpret and act on.

Develop learners' ability to connect individual goals with broader team and organizational objectives. Help close the gap between a goal that sounds fine in a performance review document and one an employee can actually use to make decisions day to day. For example, "improve customer satisfaction" tells someone what matters but not what to actually prioritize this week. Introduce practices such as cascading goals that explicitly name the team objective they ladder up to, or a simple "why this, why now" line connecting the goal to a current priority.

2.2 Delegation for Capability Building

Delegation can build capability, ownership, and manager capacity when work is handed off deliberately. Poor delegation can instead create confusion, rework, or missed development opportunities.

Develop learners' ability to delegate work in ways that strengthen employee capability and ownership. For example, a manager might design a delegation approach that specifies the task's scope, sets the employee's decision-making authority explicitly (what they can decide alone versus what needs a check-in), and builds in one mid-point checkpoint rather than either disappearing entirely or hovering over every step.

3. Managing Performance and Growth

3.1 Ongoing Performance Management

Performance management works best as an ongoing practice rather than an annual event. Regular goal review, feedback, and adjustment help employees understand progress and address concerns earlier.

Develop learners' ability to manage performance continuously across the performance cycle. Cover the benefits of frequent check-ins over waiting for an annual review. For example, a manager might build in a short monthly check-in specifically on goal progress, separate from routine status updates, so a stalled goal gets caught and adjusted in month two rather than surfacing as a surprise at the annual review.

3.2 Intentional One-on-One Conversations

One-on-one conversations can support development, accountability, and early problem-solving. Without an intentional focus, they can become routine status updates rather than useful management conversations.

Develop learners' ability to hold purposeful one-on-one conversations that balance employee development and organizational accountability. Cover the importance of defining what the conversation is about and the desired outcome of the conversation.

4. Building an Effective and Psychologically Safe Team

4.1 Employee Onboarding

Effective onboarding helps new employees understand their role, build relationships, and contribute sooner. Weak onboarding can create unclear expectations, slower progress, and early disengagement.

Develop learners' ability to create an onboarding experience that supports role clarity, early contribution, and connection. For example, giving a new employee a clearly scoped small task they can complete and get credit for in their first week or two builds early confidence and momentum, while pairing them with a peer specifically for informal questions (not just their manager) helps build real team connection faster than a generic welcome meeting would.

4.2 Recognition and Motivation

Recognition can support motivation, engagement, and retention when it reflects the individual and the contribution. Generic or infrequent recognition is less likely to feel meaningful.

Develop learners' ability to recognize contributions in ways that support individual motivation and a high-performing team environment. Explore different types of recognition beyond compensation and titles such as public, private, or peer recognition. For example, publicly crediting someone by name for the exact decision that unblocked a project, rather than a general shoutout to the whole team, reinforces the behavior you actually want to see again.

4.3 Psychological Safety

Teams perform better when people can speak up, disagree, admit mistakes, and ask questions without fear of punishment or humiliation. Managers influence these conditions through repeated behaviors and team practices.

Develop learners' ability to create team conditions that support psychological safety and constructive participation. Teach concrete behaviors that signal safety such as asking questions before responding, acknowledging when they don't know something, inviting dissent explicitly, pausing and listening when someone speaks hesitantly, or following up on ideas people mention casually to show they're valued. For example, a manager might practice visibly thanking someone for raising a dissenting view in a meeting rather than moving past it quickly, or might model admitting their own mistake openly so junior team members see that doing so doesn't damage their standing.

SPECIALIZED CREDENTIAL LEARNING OUTCOMES

Leadership Styles

Leadership Styles is a 2–4 hour Specialized Credential that helps managers and aspiring leaders understand different leadership approaches and choose the style that fits the situation. Participants examine the mindset and behavior shifts needed for people–first leadership, compare different leadership styles, and build the self–awareness and adaptability to lead with intention and impact.

1.1 People–First Leadership Mindset

People–First leadership mindset means shifting from directing and controlling work to leading with people at the center. This shift requires a change in mindset, behavior, and attitude, not just new techniques.

Build learners' understanding of the mindset, behavior, and attitude shifts required for people–first leadership. For example, a mindset shift might mean moving from "I need to have the answer" to genuinely believing the team often knows more than the leader does about how to solve a problem. A behavior shift might mean asking a clarifying question before handing down a directive, rather than deciding first and explaining later. And an attitude shift might mean treating a missed deadline as information to understand rather than a failure to punish.

2.1 Comparing Leadership Styles

Different leadership styles create different effects on individuals and teams. Understanding these styles, and when each one is useful, helps leaders choose deliberately rather than defaulting to habit.

Build learners' understanding of different leadership styles, when to use each one, and their impact on individuals and teams. Cover different styles such as directive/command, collaborative/participative, coaching, and adaptive. For example, a directive style might be exactly right in a genuine crisis where speed matters more than buy–in, but the same style applied to a highly skilled, self–motivated team can erode trust and disengage people who no longer feel any ownership over their work.

3.1 Adapting Leadership Style

The same leadership style rarely works equally well across an entire team, even in the same situation.

Develop learners' ability to push past thinking of style choice purely as situational (crisis vs. calm, urgent vs. routine) and toward recognizing that the same situation can call for different approaches depending on the individual involved. For example, a leader running the same project might give one team member more room to make their own calls because they've shown strong judgment in that area, while giving another more structured check-ins because they're newer to that kind of work.

4.1 Personal Leadership Style

Understanding a leader's own dominant style makes it easier to see personal strengths and blind spots, and to make deliberate choices about where to grow.

Develop learners' ability to assess their own dominant leadership style and identify areas for growth. Introduce techniques to gather evidence on their leadership style such as assessments, self-reflection, peer observation, or feedback.

Authentic Leadership

Authentic Leadership is a 2–4 hour Specialized Credential for people managers who want to lead with greater clarity, integrity, and consistency. Learners clarify the values and purpose that guide their leadership, examine how their intentions are experienced by others, identify gaps between stated values and actual behavior, and make deliberate leadership choices that balance personal principles, context, and responsibilities to others. The credential reinforces that authentic leadership is not about leading one fixed way, but about adapting appropriately while remaining grounded in what matters.

1.1 Leadership Values and Purpose

Authentic leadership begins with clarity about what matters and what guides leadership choices. Without that clarity, leaders can default to habit, organizational pressure, or others' expectations without recognizing the trade-offs they are making.

Develop learners' ability to clarify the values and sense of purpose that guide how they want to lead. Distinguish meaningful leadership values from aspirational labels, explore how values influence priorities and choices, and recognize that values can come into tension with one another or with organizational expectations.

2.1 Leadership Intent and Impact

Leaders often judge themselves by intention, while others experience their words, decisions, priorities, and repeated behavior. Gaps between intent and impact can weaken trust and credibility even when intentions are positive.

Develop learners' ability to examine how leadership values and intentions become visible through behavior and how those behaviors may be experienced by others. Consider the signals created by decisions, communication, follow-through, use of authority, and responses under pressure; distinguish intention from impact; and use feedback or other evidence to test assumptions about how they are showing up.

3.1 Values–Behavior Alignment

Leadership credibility is strengthened when behavior consistently reflects stated values and weakened when repeated choices contradict them. Alignment becomes especially difficult when pressure, competing priorities, or organizational expectations create real trade-offs.

Develop learners' ability to recognize alignment and misalignment between stated leadership values and actual behavior. Examine moments where pressure, incentives, conflict, competing responsibilities, or fear may pull behavior away from stated values; consider the consequences of that gap for others; and distinguish authentic leadership from simply acting on personal preference.

4.1 Values–Aligned Leadership Choices

Authentic leadership is demonstrated through choices, particularly when values, relationships, performance needs, and organizational pressures compete. Alignment does not mean choosing the easiest or most personally comfortable option.

Develop learners' ability to translate leadership values into deliberate action in complex situations. Consider competing values and responsibilities, identify where adaptation is appropriate without abandoning what matters, make a leadership choice that is consistent with their principles and role obligations, and explain how they would communicate or act on that choice with integrity.

Hiring and Selection

Hiring and Selection is a 2–4 hour Specialized Credential for managers who want to make consistent, evidence-based hiring decisions. Learners explore how to define role requirements, use structured interviews, reduce bias in candidate evaluation, and make hiring decisions based on relevant evidence.

1.1 Role Requirements

Hiring decisions are almost impossible when they begin with outdated job descriptions or unclear expectations. Current role requirements provide a common basis for interviews and candidate evaluation.

Develop learners' ability to define role requirements before candidate assessment begins. Cover specific role requirements such as skills and experience level needed, the key outcomes the person will be accountable for in their first six months, and the competencies (like collaboration or independent judgment) the role genuinely demands.

2.1 Structured Interviews

Unstructured interviews produce inconsistent evidence and increase the influence of bias. Structured interviews connect questions to role requirements and create more comparable evidence across candidates.

Develop learners' ability to translate role requirements into consistent, job-relevant interview questions. Introduce elements of structured interviews such as a consistent set of behavioral questions tied directly to a specific role requirement, a shared scoring rubric so answers are evaluated against the same criteria, and the same core questions asked of every candidate for that role.

3.1 Evaluating Candidates Fairly

Affinity bias, halo effects, and first impressions can distort candidate evaluation. Pre-defined criteria help interviewers focus on job-relevant evidence rather than overall impressions.

Develop learners' ability to reduce the influence of common bias during candidate evaluation. Introduce bias-aware practices such as scoring each answer against the rubric immediately after it's given rather than forming an overall impression at the end, deliberately noting specific evidence for each rating rather than a gut score, and having interviewers evaluate independently before comparing notes with each other.

4.1 Evidence-Based Hiring Decisions

Hiring decisions are more defensible when they use evidence gathered against predetermined criteria. Managers also need a consistent way to combine evidence from multiple interviewers.

Develop learners' ability to synthesize interview evidence into a clear, evidence-based hiring decision.

Delegation and Developing Others

Delegation and Developing Others is a 2–4 hour Specialized Credential for managers who want to use delegation as a deliberate tool for employee growth rather than a way to offload tasks. Participants examine how to decide what to delegate and to whom, how to hand off work with enough context and support, and how to follow up in a way that builds capability rather than dependency.

1.1 Deciding What to Delegate

Delegation is not a binary choice between doing the work and handing it off completely. Different levels of authority can match different levels of risk, development value, and employee capability.

Build learners' understanding of delegation as a range of authority levels rather than an all-or-nothing choice. Introduce levels of delegation such as asking the employee to gather information and recommend an option before the manager decides, or having the employee decide but checks in before acting.

2.1 Development Needs and Delegated Work

Delegation develops skill when a task stretches an employee without overwhelming them. Work that is too easy or too difficult can waste the developmental opportunity.

Develop learners' ability to match delegated work to an employee's current capability and development needs. Help learners understand that appropriately stretching work is work where the person has some foundation but needs to grow. For example, an employee who's confident running routine analyses but has never presented findings to leadership might be given a task that includes that presentation piece specifically.

3.1 Delegation Handoffs

Delegated work is more likely to succeed when employees understand why it matters, what authority they have, and where support is available. Weak handoffs often create rework or repeated dependence.

Develop learners' ability to hand off work with clear context, authority, and support. For example, a strong handoff might include the reason the task matters to a larger goal and a named person to check with if they get stuck.

4.1 Follow-Up on Delegated Work

Follow-up can strengthen ownership or create dependency. Too much oversight can undercut autonomy, while too little can allow problems to grow unnoticed.

Develop learners' ability to follow up on delegated work while preserving employee ownership. For example, a follow-up approach might ask "what have you decided so far and why?" rather than "have you done this yet?", which invites the employee to demonstrate their own reasoning and ownership rather than simply reporting compliance.

Performance Management

Performance Management is a 2–4 hour Specialized Credential for managers who want to address performance issues directly and early rather than letting them drift into a bigger problem. Participants examine how to set clear performance expectations, recognize early signs of underperformance, hold direct performance conversations, and document performance formally when needed.

1.1 Setting Performance Expectations

Clear performance expectations matter because employees can't reliably deliver the work a manager actually needs if that standard was never made explicit to them in the first place.

Develop learners' ability to set clear expectations and examine system conditions before attributing a performance gap to the individual. Underperformance can reflect unclear expectations, competing priorities, missing tools, or weak support rather than individual deficiency. Managers need to examine the surrounding system before concluding the person is the problem.

2.1 Recognizing Underperformance Early

Underperformance is easier to address when early signals are recognized.

Develop learners' ability to recognize early indicators of underperformance before they become larger performance issues. Missed details, slipping deadlines, or changing engagement can create an opportunity for a lower-stakes conversation before problems grow.

3.1 Holding Performance Conversations

Managers often soften accountability messages so much that the employee does not understand the problem. Effective conversations combine directness about performance with genuine care for the person.

Develop learners' ability to hold clear, respectful performance conversations that combine directness with care. Clarity comes through techniques such as being specific about what's not working, naming the impact (why this matters), and stating what needs to change. Care comes through techniques such as curiosity about what's blocking them, investment in their success, and follow-through on support.

4.1 Performance Documentation and Escalation

Formal documentation creates a clear record when informal performance conversations have not resolved an issue. Poor documentation can undermine fairness and create legal risk, making timely HR or legal involvement important.

Develop learners' ability to create fair performance documentation and recognize when additional HR or legal expertise is needed. Build learners' understanding that performance documentation is about creating a clear, objective record of what happened, what was communicated, and what changed. Good documentation protects both the employee and the organization by making expectations and conversations transparent. Introduce issues that require escalation such as discrimination concerns, safety violations, harassment, insubordination that challenges authority, or repeated performance issues where previous documented conversations didn't result in change.

Recognition, Motivation, and Retention

Recognition, Motivation, and Retention is a 2–4 hour Specialized Credential for managers who want to move beyond generic praise and one-size-fits-all perks to build genuine engagement and retention on their team. Participants examine what actually motivates individual employees, how to recognize contributions in ways that land, and how to notice and respond to early signs of disengagement or flight risk. Learners will explore individual motivation drivers, meaningful recognition practices, reading engagement and disengagement signals, and responding to retention risk.

1.1 Individual Motivation Drivers

Employees differ in what motivates them. Motivated employees generally produce better work, stay engaged for longer, and are less likely to leave, which is why understanding what drives a given individual matters to a manager.

Build learners' understanding of individual variation in motivation and the limits of one-size-fits-all approaches. Recognition, autonomy, growth opportunities, or other factors may matter differently from one person to another.

2.1 Meaningful Recognition

Recognition is more effective when it is specific, timely, and meaningful to the individual.

Develop learners' ability to match recognition to the employee and the contribution being recognized. Generic praise may fail to reinforce the contribution or behavior the manager wants to encourage. Recognition should be thoughtful, specific, acknowledge the effort or skill, and aligned with what the person values.

3.1 Early Signs of Disengagement

Disengagement often appears gradually through changes in initiative, participation, or communication. Managers who notice these shifts early have more opportunity to understand and address what is happening before it is too late.

Develop learners' ability to notice early signals of disengagement before they become larger retention or performance concerns. Introduce signals such as participation trends over time, someone who used to volunteer for stretch projects has gone quiet, or shifts in language during check-ins, where detailed forward-looking updates give way to vague, noncommittal answers like "yeah, it's fine."

4.1 Retention Conversations

Noticing disengagement or a retention risk only matters if a manager also knows how to respond to it. Observation without a genuine, well-handled conversation just means watching someone drift toward leaving without doing anything to change it.

Develop learners' ability to respond to disengagement and retention risks in a direct, intentional conversation considering psychological safety. Retention conversations can backfire when managers respond with pressure, defensiveness, or vague reassurance. A useful response needs to address the employee's actual concerns while considering psychological safety.

Leading in an AI-Augmented Organization

Leading in an AI-Augmented Organization is a 2–4 hour Specialized Credential for professionals in leadership, management, and change roles who want to develop their ability to build the organizational conditions that enable teams to work with AI responsibly, effectively, and sustainably. AI adoption in organizations is often driven by tools and technology decisions made faster than the human and organizational capabilities needed to use them well. Leaders who do not address the cultural, structural, and accountability conditions surrounding AI, and who do not follow through with the workflow changes and training investment that responsible adoption requires, leave their teams to navigate complexity alone.

1.1 Leadership Practices in an AI-Augmented Organization

AI does not change the purpose of leadership, but it increases the importance of modeling critical AI use, creating safety for concerns, and making accountability explicit.

Establish what effective leadership looks like when AI becomes embedded in everyday work.

2.1 Psychological Safety Around AI

Teams make poorer decisions when people feel pressure to accept AI outputs, hide uncertainty, or avoid raising concerns. Psychological safety supports more honest human–AI collaboration.

Help leaders recognize the psychological safety conditions that shape AI use and the leadership response needed to strengthen them. For example, the impact of how AI can be framed as either added capacity or as reduced headcount.

3.1 Accountability for AI-Assisted Decisions

When accountability is unclear, problems caused by AI-assisted decisions can be blamed on the tool, the data, or whoever happened to be involved. Clear responsibility supports safer use.

Develop leaders' ability to establish minimum-viable accountability for verification and outcomes before problems occur.

4.1 Culture of Responsible AI Adoption

AI adoption culture is shaped by what leaders model, what behaviors are rewarded, whether concerns are heard, and whether workflows and training evolve alongside the technology.

Help leaders assess AI adoption culture and focus leadership attention on changes that make responsible use easier to sustain. Cover indicators of a healthy culture such as whether concerns about AI outputs are raised openly or whether people disclose AI use.

Customer–Centric Culture, Leadership & Decision–Making

Customer–Centric Culture, Leadership & Decision–Making is a 2–4 hour Specialized Credential for leaders, managers, and practitioners who shape how people make decisions and act on behalf of customers. Customer–centricity does not become culture because an organization declares a value; it becomes culture when leadership behavior, employee experience, incentives, decision rights, routines, information, and accountability consistently reinforce customer–centered action. This credential helps learners diagnose the conditions shaping behavior, enable people to act for customers, and design practical mechanisms that embed customer perspective into everyday work.

1.1 Culture as a Reinforcing System

Organizations may say customers come first while everyday signals tell employees otherwise. Leadership behavior, incentives, policies, decision rights, tools, information, and informal norms collectively teach people what really matters. Distinction: the Customer–Centricity Core introduces these organizational conditions; this specialization examines how they work together as a culture system that can be deliberately shaped.

Develop learners' understanding of customer–centric culture as the pattern of conditions that shapes how people think, decide, and act—not simply a stated value or individual mindset. Explore how formal and informal signals can reinforce or contradict the customer promise, and why employee experience and customer experience are connected.

2.1 Culture, Incentives and Decision Rights

What people actually do for customers is shaped by what gets rewarded, what creates friction or risk, whose voice carries authority, what information is available, and what happens when a customer needs conflict with short–term internal pressures.

Develop learners' ability to diagnose the behavioral signals and organizational mechanisms that support or undermine customer–centricity. Examine incentives and consequences, decision rights, performance measures, policies, customer evidence, cross–functional friction, and the gap between espoused values and everyday behavior.

3.1 Leadership, Empowerment and Employee Experience

Employees cannot consistently act for customers when leaders model conflicting priorities, customer information is inaccessible, or people lack the authority, capability, psychological safety, or support to respond. Customer-centric cultures therefore depend on both leadership behavior and an employee environment that enables good judgment.

Develop learners' ability to design leadership and employee-enablement practices that make customer-centric action easier in the flow of work. Explore leader role-modeling, access to customer insight, clear guardrails and decision authority, capability building, recognition, psychological safety to raise customer issues, and removing internal friction that prevents employees from acting on what they know.

4.1 Reinforcement, Accountability and Learning

Culture-change efforts fade when customer-centric behavior depends on a few champions or one-time campaigns. Sustainable culture is reinforced through recurring decisions, rituals, accountability, visible follow-through, and learning from new customer and employee evidence.

Develop learners' ability to embed and evolve customer-centric culture through practical reinforcement mechanisms. Explore governance and prioritization routines, customer stories and evidence in decision forums, accountability and recognition, feedback loops, progress signals, and periodic review of whether existing norms still serve customers as needs, technology, and operating conditions change.

EQ for People Managers

EQ for People Managers is a 2–4 hour Specialized Credential for professionals who hold formal responsibility for the performance and development of others. Learners develop the ability to recognize how managerial authority changes the emotional weight of their behavior, understand how their reactions influence team climate and psychological safety, use EQ effectively in high-stakes manager–employee interactions, and respond constructively when employees raise concerns, disagree, admit mistakes, or take other interpersonal risks. The credential emphasizes using empathy and emotional awareness without losing clarity, accountability, or managerial responsibility.

1.1 Emotional Demands of People Management

Formal authority changes the emotional and relational dynamics of work. A manager's words, reactions, attention, and decisions often carry more weight because they can affect opportunity, performance, workload, recognition, and belonging.

Develop learners' understanding of how formal authority changes the emotional demands of professional relationships. Consider how employees may interpret manager behavior differently because of the power differential, how managers' own expectations and reactions can influence their behavior, and how managers can remain aware of both their own emotional experience and the greater impact their behavior may have on others.

2.1 Manager EQ and Team Climate

Employees learn what is safe, valued, and risky by watching how managers respond to questions, disagreement, mistakes, uncertainty, and emotion. Repeated manager behavior can shape the emotional climate of the team.

Develop learners' ability to recognize the ripple effects of manager EQ on team climate. Examine how consistency, reactivity, curiosity, emotional attunement, defensiveness, and responses to challenge can amplify or stabilize emotional dynamics and influence whether people speak honestly, ask for help, raise concerns, or withdraw. Reinforce that managers do not control team climate alone; their authority nonetheless gives their behavior disproportionate influence.

3.1 EQ in High–Stakes Manager Interactions

Performance concerns, accountability, change, conflict, and disappointing decisions can create emotional pressure for both managers and employees. Formal authority raises the stakes because the manager may need to maintain clarity and responsibility while responding to strong emotion.

Develop learners' ability to use EQ when managerial responsibility and emotional intensity are both high. Explore ways to notice and regulate their own reactions, acknowledge the employee's experience without losing clarity or accountability, distinguish empathy from agreement or avoidance, and make deliberate choices about when to listen, clarify, set a boundary, make a decision, or continue the conversation later.

4.1 Manager Responses and Psychological Safety

Psychological safety is shaped by what happens when someone takes an interpersonal risk such as raising a concern, admitting a mistake, disagreeing, asking for help, or challenging an idea. A manager's response can make similar behavior more or less likely in the future.

Develop learners' ability to respond constructively when employees take interpersonal risks. Examine how emotional regulation, curiosity, acknowledgment, defensiveness, punishment, dismissal, or overreaction can shape future candor; distinguish psychological safety from comfort or lack of accountability; and practice responses that keep it possible to speak honestly while still addressing performance, standards, or consequences when needed.

Mentoring Programs and Matching

Mentoring Programs & Matching is a 2–4 hour Specialized Credential for professionals who want to design mentoring programs that enable meaningful and equitable mentoring relationships. Learners develop the ability to define a clear program purpose, make thoughtful matching decisions based on development needs, participant preferences, and relationship conditions, and create enough structure and support for mentoring relationships to establish clear expectations, navigate difficulties, and change or end when needed. Learners also evaluate program health using evidence of relationship quality, development outcomes, sustainability, and equitable access.

1.1 Mentoring Program Purpose

Mentoring programs lose focus when they are launched without clarity about who they serve and what development needs or broader outcomes they are intended to support.

Develop learners' ability to define a clear purpose for a mentoring program before choosing program structures or matching approaches. Build learners' capacity to clarify who the program is intended to serve, what development needs or broader outcomes it is intended to support, what meaningful outcomes would look like, and how the program purpose should influence later decisions about participation, matching, support, and evaluation.

2.1 Matching Criteria and Relationship Fit

A mentoring match can look appropriate on paper and still fail relationally or developmentally. Matching based only on seniority, role, or shared background can overlook the goals, expectations, power dynamics, and conditions needed for a useful relationship.

Develop learners' ability to make thoughtful matching decisions based on the purpose of the program and the needs of the people involved. Build learners' capacity to consider development goals, relevant experience, expectations, availability, communication preferences, identity, power, psychological safety, potential conflicts or dependencies, and appropriate participant choice in the matching process. Reinforce that no matching process can guarantee chemistry or success, so matching should support fit without pretending to predict the relationship completely.

3.1 Mentoring Program Structure and Support

Matching alone does not create an effective mentoring relationship. Participants need enough structure, clarity, and support to establish expectations, navigate difficulties, and sustain useful development without making the program overly bureaucratic.

Develop learners' ability to design lightweight supports that help mentors and mentees create healthy, purposeful relationships. Build learners' capacity to consider onboarding and expectations, working agreements, role clarity, confidentiality, developmental goals, resources or prompts, check-ins, support when a relationship is struggling, and clear ways to pause, rematch, or exit. Keep program structures proportionate so they support the relationship rather than becoming compliance exercises.

4.1 Program Health and Equity of Access

A mentoring program can have strong participation numbers while still producing uneven relationship quality, development outcomes, or access to opportunity. Program health therefore requires looking beyond activity counts.

Develop learners' ability to evaluate whether a mentoring program is contributing to meaningful and equitable development. Build learners' capacity to examine relationship quality, participation and continuation, development outcomes, access to mentors and opportunities, representation in who participates and benefits, matching and rematching patterns, dropout patterns, and whether particular groups face barriers to entry or a lower-quality experience. Connect evaluation to the original program purpose rather than treating every possible metric as equally important.

Team Development

Team Development is a 2–4 hour Specialized Credential for professionals who want to support teams in becoming more capable and effective over time. Learners examine how a team's history, membership, roles, norms, relationships, trust, leadership, and changing conditions shape its development, including how those supporting or leading a team can influence its dynamics. Learners analyze team patterns without jumping too quickly to labels; design development responses that fit the team's current needs and build its own capability; and use behavioral, relational, and performance evidence to assess development over time.

1.1 Team Development Over Time

Teams develop patterns, norms, relationships, and ways of working over time. Their development is rarely linear, and changes in purpose, membership, leadership, or context can create new needs.

Develop learners' understanding of team development as an evolving process rather than a fixed sequence of stages. Build learners' capacity to consider how a team's history, purpose, membership, roles, norms, relationships, trust, workload, leadership, and changing conditions shape its development. Use stage or lifecycle models as optional lenses for sense-making rather than universal predictions of how every team should progress.

2.1 Team Dynamics, Trust, and Psychological Safety

Team dynamics become visible through patterns of participation, decision-making, disagreement, accountability, trust, and safety. Individual moments can be misleading when interpreted without enough context, and those leading or supporting a team may themselves influence the patterns they observe.

Develop learners' ability to observe patterns that influence how effectively a team works together without over-interpreting limited evidence. Build learners' capacity to examine participation, voice, trust, disagreement, decision-making, accountability, inclusion, and psychological safety; distinguish repeated patterns from isolated incidents; consider how context and power affect what team members are willing and able to contribute; and recognize how those leading or supporting the team may reinforce or disrupt these patterns.

3.1 Team Development Priorities and Responses

Teams do not improve through generic development activities. Different patterns and conditions call for different kinds of support, and addressing the visible symptom may leave the underlying development need unchanged.

Develop learners' ability to identify and prioritize team development needs and choose responses appropriate to the team's context. Build learners' capacity to distinguish underlying development needs from visible symptoms; consider responses such as role clarity, working agreements, trust-building, decision practices, conflict norms, accountability, relationship repair, and learning routines; and take appropriate action within their role and capability to strengthen team capability and shared ownership.

4.1 Team Health and Development Progress

Team health is better understood through patterns of behavior and relationships over time than through isolated events, activity levels, or team-member satisfaction alone.

Develop learners' ability to evaluate team health and development using multiple forms of evidence. Build learners' capacity to examine behavioral, relational, and performance indicators such as participation, trust, conflict quality, decision effectiveness, accountability, adaptability, shared ownership, team capability, and progress toward outcomes; identify patterns of improvement, stagnation, or regression when sufficient evidence is available; and avoid drawing conclusions from a single data point or measure.

Diagnosing Learning & Performance Needs

Diagnosing Learning & Performance Needs is a 2–4 hour Specialized Credential for professionals who want to move beyond taking training requests at face value and determine what is actually needed. Learners deepen their ability to investigate performance problems, distinguish learning needs from other performance barriers, gather and synthesize evidence, define meaningful success criteria, and communicate evidence-based recommendations to stakeholders. The credential builds a consultative mindset that helps practitioners recommend the right response, even when it differs from the training solution originally requested.

1.1 Diagnosing Performance Problems

Training is often requested before the cause of a performance problem is understood. Gaps may result from missing knowledge or skill, but they may also reflect unclear expectations, inadequate tools or resources, workflow constraints, incentives, environmental conditions, or other factors that training cannot resolve.

Develop learners' ability to investigate a performance problem before recommending a solution. Get learners to distinguish knowledge and skill gaps from other performance barriers, test assumptions about what is causing the problem, and use evidence to determine whether training is part of the appropriate response. Reinforce a consultative mindset in which learners question and clarify a training request rather than simply accept it by exploring root causes.

2.1 Evidence–Based Learning Needs Analysis

Once learning is identified as part of the response, its focus should be based on verified needs rather than assumptions. Learners, managers, subject matter experts, performance data, and other stakeholders may provide different or even conflicting perspectives on what is needed. AI can help organize information, identify patterns, and synthesize large amounts of input, but the quality of the analysis still depends on the quality of the evidence, appropriate use of data, and human interpretation.

Develop learners' ability to gather, compare, and synthesize evidence from relevant sources to define and prioritize learning needs. Get learners to distinguish stated wants from demonstrated needs, reconcile differing stakeholder perspectives, identify gaps between current and desired performance, and recognize where additional evidence is needed. Include appropriate uses and limitations of AI in needs analysis, including bias, privacy, incomplete context, and overconfidence in generated conclusions.

3.1 Defining Learning and Performance Success

Clear success criteria connects the original performance need to what learning should change. Without them, designers may optimize for course completion, participation, or learner satisfaction without knowing whether the intended capability or workplace performance improved.

Develop learners' ability to translate a diagnosed need into measurable success acceptance criteria before design begins, rather than treating measurement as an afterthought once the learning experience is already built. Learners should be able to take a diagnosed gap or need and define what success would actually look like. Success acceptance criteria clearly connects to that original need and its intended outcome so design decisions can be made against a concrete target from the start.

4.1 Communicating Diagnostic Recommendations

Diagnostic findings may challenge the original request, stakeholder assumptions, or preferred solution. Analysis only creates value when practitioners can communicate what they found, explain the implications, and help stakeholders make an informed decision about the appropriate response.

Develop learners' ability to communicate diagnostic conclusions with clarity and credibility, particularly when the recommendation differs from what stakeholders initially requested or expected. Get learners to connect recommendations to evidence, explain what training can and cannot address, surface trade-offs or uncertainties, and adapt the communication to the audience without overstating the certainty of the diagnosis.

Decision-Making Delegation

Decision-Making Delegation is a 2–4 hour Specialized Credential for professionals who want to develop their ability to determine who should make a decision, at what level of authority, and how to communicate that delegation clearly.

1.1 Delegation Foundations

Understanding the context and factors of a decision determines if the decision can or should be delegated.

Build learners' understanding of delegation as a deliberate choice about who decides, when, and how, and of what goes wrong when delegation is left implicit. Explore the elements of a decision, such as the stakes, reversibility, and complexity, that impact delegation.

2.1 Understand Delegation Readiness

A delegate needs the context to understand why the decision matters, the skill to reason it through, and the information to act on. Where one of those is missing, delegation is still possible with appropriate support.

Develop learners' ability to analyze a decision's elements alongside a delegate's readiness, so the delegation decision itself is evidence-based rather than assumed. Cover how delegation often breaks down because the decision's stakes, reversibility, or complexity were never weighed against the delegate's skill or experience. A high-stakes, low-reversibility decision handed to an under-prepared delegate, or a low-stakes decision over-controlled by the delegator both signal a fit problem, not a communication problem.

3.1 Engaging to Support Delegation

Delegating a decision does not mean disengaging from it. Stepping back risks the decision drifting from its intent, while staying too close takes the authority back.

Develop learners' ability to design ongoing engagement practices, such as reporting, validation, and escalation. These practices keep the delegator appropriately informed without eroding the delegate's authority. Cover the risk of not checking in and how decisions can drift from intent or the risk of over-monitoring and undermining the authority they granted.

4.1 Delegation Review Approach

Reviewing a delegated decision only by whether the outcome was favorable can hide unclear authority, scope creep, or a delegation level that didn't match the situation. Process review supports better delegation decisions in the future.

Develop learners' ability to assess the quality of a delegation process independently of the outcome of the decision it produced. Explain the risks of reviewing only the outcome of the decision. Cover how reviewing the process of the delegation (decision elements, delegate readiness, and delegation support) build the decision delegation skill.

Span of Control and Organizational Layering

Span of Control and Organizational Layering is a 2–4 hour Specialized Credential for professionals who want to develop their ability to make deliberate, evidence-based choices about how many people report to each manager and how many layers separate frontline work from senior leadership. Spans and layers are often inherited rather than designed, growing through years of individual hiring decisions rather than a deliberate choice about how the organization should be shaped.

1.1 Why Spans and Layers Matter More Than They Appear To

Span of control and layers aren't one-size-fits-all. They're design choices that should fit the work and the strategy.

Build learners' understanding that span of control and layering are often treated as defaults rather than deliberate choices. Help them see these as strategic organizational design decisions shaped by factors such as the complexity of work, cognitive load on the manager, required decision speed, and oversight needed.

2.1 Misalignment in Spans and Layers

Spans and layers that once fit the organization may become misaligned as work and teams change.

Build learners' ability to diagnose misalignment between organizational structure and the work that needs managing. Help them see that misalignment shows up as either wasted management capacity (too much oversight for routine work) or insufficient oversight (too little management for complex work).

3.1 Matching Spans and Layers to the Work

Standardized work can often support wider spans than complex, judgment-heavy work because it creates less cognitive load per report. Manager capability and available support also influence the appropriate design.

Develop learners' ability to design spans and layers based on work complexity, cognitive load, and available management capacity rather than fixed benchmarks. Cover the complexity of people reporting into more than one manager and approaches to manage this such as splitting capability leadership from delivery leadership.

4.1 Impact of Span and Layer Changes

A span or layering change can look successful on an organization chart while creating manager overload or slower decisions in practice. Evaluating the actual impact is necessary to know whether the change worked.

Build learners' ability to evaluate span and layering changes against intended outcomes such as decision speed, cost, and manager capacity. Help them understand that span and layering changes always have intended and unintended effects.

Impactful Feedback

Impactful Feedback is a 2–4 hours Specialized Credential that builds on the foundations introduced in the Communication Core Credential. This course equips practitioners with practical techniques for giving, receiving, and applying feedback constructively, in ways that support growth, build trust, and strengthen performance.

1.1 Why Impactful Feedback Matters

Feedback is one of the highest-leverage tools for improving performance and more. Yet, poorly delivered or defensively received feedback can erode trust and discourage people from asking for it again.

Develop learners' ability to build a working understanding of the importance of impactful feedback for supporting growth, building trust, and improving performance. Cover how to determine what separates feedback that strengthens from feedback that damages.

2.1 Preparing to Give Feedback

Situations calling for feedback differ and a default, one-size-fits-all approach that fits one situation well may cause damage in another.

Develop learners' ability to choose and deliver a feedback approach that fits the specific situation, such as praise, correction, or advice, rather than defaulting to one approach regardless of context.

3.1 Asking for and Receiving Feedback

People typically receive less candid feedback than they need, leaving blind spots that persist unless the person actively works to counter this.

Develop learners' ability to elicit feedback despite hesitations such as power dynamics, trust, fears, etc and to receive it without becoming defensive.

4.1 Practicing Impactful Feedback

Feedback skills discussed but never practiced tend not to transfer to real communication.

Develop learners' ability to build confidence and skill in using feedback skills. Provide techniques or approaches for noticing and dealing with human reactions such as nerves, power dynamics, and emotions that complicate giving and receiving feedback.

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