

A Crawford Fund Master Class in Agricultural Research Leadership and Management



Master Class introduction

This Master Class in research leadership will enable the improved management of publicly funded agricultural research systems that support the development needs of countries throughout the world. The Master Class will consider research leadership with a focus on the program level of integration. It is at this level that the demands of project management intersect with the strategic imperatives of the organisations within which the research, development and application are conducted. Participants will be exposed to state-of-the-art approaches, drawn from both the public and private sectors, to inform their practice.

A feature of the Master Class is the requirement that participants create an **Individual Development Plan**, negotiated and agreed with their parent institution, on completion of the course. Participants will be encouraged to create a strong Alumni network so that they can regularly share their progress as a result of participating in the Master Class.

Who should attend

The program is intended for staff in International Agricultural Research Centres, supported by the CGIAR and/or in National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) in developing countries, who are either:

- managing research programs;
- providing functional support for program management; or
- are responsible for capability building.

Learning objectives

At the completion of this Master Class, participants will:

- understand the key processes required to manage research programs
- understand and appreciate their roles as leaders in the research environment
- appreciate the demands of managing and leading research
- understand the importance of effective outputs to create desired impacts
- be able to apply processes
 - to identify priorities and establish strategies for agricultural research
 - to plan and evaluate activities
 - to manage finances and program logistics, and
 - to identify and access resources.
- understand the importance of people management, and associated HR processes.
- appreciate the need for effective communication
- have a clear understanding of their future development needs.

Individual Learning Plans

A feature of the Master Class is the requirement that participants create an **Individual Development Plan**, negotiated and agreed with their parent institution, on completion of the course. This process, including a

post-workshop follow-up, will be facilitated by the Master Class leader. It is anticipated that a strong Alumni network can develop, as participants regularly share their progress as a result of participating in the Master Class.

Program details

Intending participants should note that some parts of the program are still under development, so there may be some minor variation to the details provided for some of the topics. If participants have any specific issues or topics they would like addressed, they should contact the course leader three (3) weeks before the course and every effort will be made to address that request.

The Master Class will be led by Shaun Coffey, an experienced and successful leader of R&D organisations. He was formerly CEO of a leading NZ Crown Research Institute, Chief of one of the largest Divisions of CSIRO, and is Adjunct Professor of Strategy and Leadership at Victoria University of Wellington. He will be assisted by Colin Chartres, Director of Master Classes and Training at the Crawford Fund and formerly DG of the International Water Management Institute; and by others experienced in finance and HR management. The Master Class provides state-of-the-art learnings delivered from hands-on perspectives of experienced and successful practitioners.

Shaun Coffey can be contacted by email: ceo@shauncoffey.org.

Prior to the Master Class, a brief discussion paper will be circulated to participants. This paper will provide some context to help participants prepare for the Master Class and thus assisting in maximising the benefits that they will receive from attendance. The discussion paper will also provide some ideas about identifying further development needs, and creating the Individual Development Plan.

PROGRAM

Day One: Managing Research Programs within the Research Institution

Session One: Master Class introduction

The course organisation will be explained, and participants given the opportunity to discuss the outcomes and learning objectives to be achieved by the end of the week.

Session Two: introduction to Research Leadership and Management

The concepts of leadership and management will be discussed in the context of agricultural research, development and application. The session will briefly touch upon the relationship between managing research at the program level and the overall operation of the research institution, including the role of senior management and the Board. The discussion will include an examination of the role of agricultural research in developing countries. It will provide a framework to integrate all elements of the Master Class.

Session Three: strategy identification and planning

In this session, strategy will be considered from the viewpoint of management at the program level. It will discuss how to take into account a range of stakeholder perspectives, such as international and national drivers of change, industry needs and priorities to address compelling needs. It will attempt to answer the question:

how do we decide what to research? Discussion will explore the basis of decision-making, and how to translate the vision and mission of the organisation into a series of outcome focused impact statements.

Practical Exercise One: a hypothetical program management challenge

To help shape our thinking, participants will have the opportunity to briefly develop a strategy to incorporate adaptation to climate change into a program to improve farm productivity.

Evening Session One: the Individual Development Plan

This session will provide a further opportunity for participants to get to know each other by sharing personal experiences and expectations. During the discussion, a brief presentation will be made on how to create the Individual Development Plan.

Day Two: Managing the Research Program—An Integrated and Focused Group of Activities

Session One: understanding the principles of research programs

Research programs are more than just a collection of projects. They are a set of integrated activities that focus around a tightly identified objective. All activities should be designed to deliver on that objective. This first session on the second day will provide an overview of program management.

Session Two: planning and evaluation

Planning and evaluation are best considered as integrated processes. This session will be based on the “logic model”, and will aim to develop a clear understanding for participants of the differences between inputs, activities and outputs, and impacts or outcomes. Understanding these provides a way to identify and describe measurable outcomes from program activities.

Practical Exercise Two: a hypothetical program management challenge.

The exercise started on Day One will be continued, this time with a focus on distinguishing between outputs and outcomes, and trying to identify what would be possible for delivery in the context of a research program.

Session Three: organising and resourcing your program

There are many issues to be faced in organising a research program, and this session will provide an opportunity for participants to consider critical issues, such as, how to raise funds, meeting donor expectations, building teams, operating across organisational and national boundaries, and how to manage multiple stakeholders and multiple reporting requirements. This session will link with Day Three when logistics management will be discussed from a practical viewpoint.

Evening Session: You, the leader

The evening will be put aside for a brief presentation on what is expected from “You—the Leader”. Participants will then be free to consider this material either individually, or in group discussion during the evening. It will provide an opportunity for each participant to think about what they personally would like to achieve as leaders of research in organisations.

Day Three: Financial and Logistic management

Session One: financial management

In this session, participants will be exposed to the disciplines of financial management with particular reference to research, development and application. Included will be a discussion of factors that drive the research finance environment, and the relationship between strategic and operational plans. Participants will be shown how to understand balance sheets, and to understand corporate level financial reporting. Participants will have an opportunity to discuss how to assess research proposals and allocate research funds. Reporting mechanisms and monitoring processes will be outlined.

Session Two: project and program management obligations

Building from the session on financial management, project management will be discussed in the context of how to document projects to ensure that all accountabilities are met, how to manage and monitor the use of budgets and resources, and how to collect non-research data and information required for project reporting and assessment. The principles of delivery on budget, on time and on brief will be discussed. The management of facilities and field experimental sites will be considered in the context of both operational and capital budgets.

Evening Session: Q&A, a general discussion of the day's program

This is likely to be a challenging day so participants will be given the opportunity to participate in a question-and-answer session to further clarify what has been presented during the day. Included will be further time to think about your individual development plan.

Day Four: People and Communication

Session One: human resources management

Managing people is an essential component in the job of a program manager. This session will introduce the role of the HR professional in supporting program managers. It will cover topics relating to recruitment and appointment processes, staff evaluation and performance reporting systems, succession planning, learning and development strategies, and the management of poor performance. Gender and minority issues will be discussed.

Session Two: people management

To be effective in the program management, the program manager must be able to motivate and lead people on a day-to-day basis. This session will focus on the principles and tools for managing people, for understanding and using team dynamics and to consider how to manage multinational teams often operating over several sites and even countries. Some practical issues such as group facilitation and team building will be considered.

Evening Sessions: Master Class dinner

Day Five: Getting the Message Across

Session One: communication and extension

In this session the Master Class will provide an introduction to communication, innovation and adoption of technology. It will provide a brief overview of a range of topics that will include working with the media and with communication professionals. Ideas for communicating research findings to rural populations, stakeholders, donors, and the general public will be provided. Participants will consider how to develop a communication strategy for the program and how to build communication strategies into their project design.

A brief introduction will also be given on the importance of publication policies, and to effective scientific writing and presentation skills.

Practical Exercise Three: a hypothetical program management challenge

At this stage we will go back to our hypothetical on how to integrate adaptation to climate change into our program and consider what an effective communication strategy would be for that initiative.

Day Five: Concluding the Master Class and Finalisation of Individual Development Plans (IDP's)

Final Session: IDP's

The final afternoon will be put aside for participants to finalise their IDP's and for a general discussion on the Master Class and the material presented. The aim would be to finish by late afternoon, and to provide an opportunity for individual discussions between participants and course presenters if needed. Participants will be asked to discuss whether they would like to establish a formal process to keep in touch—such as a private Facebook page—and to form an Alumnus group. If so, participants should nominate a small task group to establish that process.

Following the course, the course leader will liaise with individual participants and, if necessary, assist them to negotiate an agreed IDP with their host organisation.

