

The CIPFA CFO Leadership Academy

Overview

The CIPFA CFO Leadership Academy aimed at helping you if you are a serving CFO or aspiring to be one within 12 months. The CIPFA Leadership Academy was established in 2006, it was adopted in 2016 by the Canadian Federal Government as the basis of their CFO development and a variant operates in the financial services sector in the City of London. This impressive track record means we have been able to evolve the Academy to reflect the ever-changing needs of participants in this exciting, challenging and fascinating role.

Aims

The starting point for the CIPFA CFO Leadership Academy is you are a serving CFO or you are actively looking to be promoted to the senior position in the next 12 months. This means that you are already a proven financial professional with extensive technical and management experience.

As a busy professional you are looking to improve your personal leadership impact in the CFO role. You need to do this because as the CFO you have to make a full contribution to the strategic management of your organisation. To make a strategic contribution you need to develop your ability to manage relationships with political and executive decision-makers and powerful peers in operational parts of the business. It also means that you must bring new thinking to the complex problems that you face at senior levels to help you in decision-making.

The CIPFA CFO Leadership Academy will help you develop the thinking skills and behaviours necessary for you to have a high personal impact in the role of CFO.

In business case terms, this will help you in your career and it will help your organisation as you operate more effectively in the role and in your leadership of the finance function so, improving your organisations' financial outcomes.

Format – Input and Action Learning

The CIPFA CFO Leadership Academy is structured around three input-workshops and five Action Learning set meetings. The input workshops cover: personal leadership impact, decision-making and personal development. Experienced politicians, chief executives and CFOs are also invited to these sessions to add insights into what they expect from their CFOs and, in the case of the CFO's, what is the reality of the job.

In between the three input sessions we use a classic version of Action Learning in which you are expected to bring real-world work "problems" and through the skilful and insightful questions from your fellow participants, you begin to see different perspectives and different ways of managing your problems. In Action Learning the whole CFO Leadership Academy cohort is broken down into smaller "Sets" of 6-8 people who meet five times working with a facilitator. In between these Action Learning set meetings, you commit to the people in your Set to take action to move on the management of the problem you have worked on in the set. You then brief your Set on progress and what you think you have learned. This is a very powerful approach to learning for experienced senior managers as, in addition to your own self-motivation, you have the help of your Set-peers who encourage you to monitor your progress and to seek feedback on your thinking and actions.

Network

The strong relationships that develop on the Academy means that people keep in touch afterwards and often continue to meet in their Action Learning for months or years after. This bonding means

that the groups are good at sharing information (including technical aspects not covered on the Academy) and supporting each in tough times.

It is worth mentioning that we try to avoid the word “leadership” (except in the Academy title) as much as possible because it is used so widely it is hard to be specific about its meaning. Instead we focus on developing a specific area of leadership which is your personal influence and impact. This is associated with thinking and behavioural skills that can be learned and practiced.

Reflective practice

In addition to the workshops and action learning sets we expect you to keep notes on your learning, do some “field work” to try to understand your personal influencing impact you have in your own organisations and to take actions resulting from the Action Learning. None of this is very time consuming as most of it can be done as part of normal work.

Outline agendas

Workshop one – Personal power, influence and impact in the public sector (one day)

The workshop aim is to help you develop an accurate picture of yourself in terms of your leadership impact and influence in your organisation.

Outline content: -

- Introductions to the facilitators, colleagues, programme aims, learning outcomes and format.
- Identifying what power and influence means, how is developed and assessing your power and influence through having more effective conversations in your organisation and observational exercises.
- Identifying critical relationships for the CFO role and how to strengthen and use networks.
- Introduction to Action Learning, breaking into sets and feedback.

Two Action Learning set meetings of one day each

This is the main mechanism for developing practical knowledge and encouraging practical actions. The key word is “action” because it is in the actions that you take between set meetings that you really learn how to adjust your behaviours and apply new strategies that make you more personally powerful and influential.

Workshop two – Complexity, uncertainty and decision-making (one day)

This workshop’s aim is to review progress, maintain momentum and to examine the area of decision-making under uncertainty that CFO’s operate within.

Outline content: -

- Feedback on progress
- Models of complexity and ways to manage complex issues
- Insights into decision-making, irrational influences and practical implications for CFOs

Three Action Learning set meetings of one day each

You will have formed strong and effective sets at this stage and be very good at using thoughtful and insightful questions to really make each other challenge your thinking and approaches to dealing with complex real problems at work.

Workshop 3 – Resilience and personal development planning (one day)

The aim of the final workshop is to consolidate the learning and to look forward. At this stage you will have been working with your Action Learning set colleagues for at least 6 months and will have developed new ways of approaching problems and enhancing your personal impact and influence. The input in this workshop is designed to make sure that these gains are retained and that you have a roadmap for your own development as you mature in your role.

Outline content to include: -

- Review of individual and the group's learning
- Resilience, difficult short-term and long-term situations and how to manage them effectively
- Personal development planning

To book via the LGA offer

You can book directly with the course administrator Louise.Southall at Louise Southhall@cipfa.org 020 7543 5600 or discuss with CIPFA customer services customerservices@cipfa.org 0207 543 5600 (flagging your email or request "CIPFA/LGA CFO Academy") who will pass your request directly to Louise.