



Course Information Guide 2025

Graduate Certificate of Leadership and Management (Organisation Dynamics)

National Institute of Organisation
Dynamics Australia Ltd (NIODA)

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About NIODA

Thinking differently, creating possibilities, changing the world of work.

The National Institute of Organisation Dynamics Australia (NIODA) has grown from long traditions and practice in systems psychodynamics in Australia for over 40 years. NIODA was established in 2010 for the purpose providing education in systems psychodynamics and advancing the field through leading edge research and development for the improvement of organisations, community and society.

We are an international centre of excellence advancing systems psychodynamics and making an impact on the world of work.

NIODA's values of Openness, Collaboration, Respect, Dialogue, Reflection, Creativity and Rigour shape and inform all that we do. These values are of particular importance in informing our planning and are reflected and lived in implementation.

Registration and Accreditation

NIODA is an accredited Institute of Higher Education (registration no. 14039 in 2016). NIODA's Graduate Certificate of Leadership and Management (Organisation Dynamics) degree is accredited under the Tertiary Education Act.

NIODA's accredited courses and graduation processes are compliant with the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Levels, Criteria and Qualification Type, Learning Outcomes Descriptors and its Qualifications Issuance Policy.

Local and Global Professional Bodies

Group Relations Australia (GRA, www.grouprelations.org.au) is the professional body for systems psychodynamic practitioners in Australia, and the International Society for the Psychoanalytic Study of Organisations (ISPPO, www.ispso.org) is the international body.

Introducing the Graduate Certificate of Leadership and Management (Organisation Dynamics)

The Graduate Certificate of Leadership and Management (Organisation Dynamics) is designed for work-experienced professionals who wish to develop their capabilities through the application of systems psychodynamic concepts to organisational leadership and management. Ultimately, it is designed to support individuals to shape and to take up their work roles in ways that are more meaningful, values-based and that best serve the purpose of the organisation.

The course fosters analytic and academic skills aimed at deepening students' understanding of the unique demands of particular work systems and enhancing their appreciation of the professional, political, cultural, emotional and ethical nuances of organisational life. It provides industry-relevant, post-graduate education grounded in rigorous conceptual development and work experience.

Students can expect a course that:

- integrates work experience with academic theory
- uses international industry benchmarking to enhance course development, delivery and relevance
- provides opportunities for engagement with real-world learning in a social and global context
- facilitates connections across disciplines and contexts through an integration of psychological, sociological, anthropological and philosophical approaches to organisations.

Distinctive Design Features

The Graduate Certificate of Leadership and Management (Organisation Dynamics) is designed for learning to be problem-based within a conceptual framework for understanding organisation dynamics. It is only offered on a part-time basis to people with an appropriate level of work responsibility and experience.

The course is designed around cohorts of students learning together across time. It is a 'temporary' organisation within which students study the emerging classroom dynamics alongside the issues that concern them within their own organisations. Small student cohorts (fifteen or less) enter Year one and remain together as a learning group, as far as possible, across the one-year course. This cohort-based design seeks to maximise depth learning through the development of trust and familiarity with group members' work issues. As cohorts progressively deepen their capacities to explore and think together, the course content and student experience become more meaningfully interrelated. There is increased opportunity for students to venture into creatively applying their learning in the workplace.

Assessment reflects the focus on work-integrated learning. The assignments are practical in application whilst also requiring the use of rigorous theoretical concepts.

The course is a carefully designed learning experience that is tailored to support incremental learning that builds semester by semester across the course.

Course Outcomes

On successful completion of the Graduate Certificate of Leadership and Management (Organisation Dynamics) graduates have the following.

Knowledge

Establishment of the core conceptual frameworks spanning systems and psychodynamic dimensions.

Skills

Cognitive, technical and communication skills to be able to apply a 'mind' for systems psychodynamic thinking, which includes:

- viewing from a 'systems' perspective the management of connections, sometimes hidden or unconscious, between people, tasks, structure, technologies and context; to understand and manage the unconscious defences which impede work group functioning and task accomplishment
- recognising, evaluating and applying the conjunction of technology and human behaviour (socio-technics) as a principal feature of organisation design and the social architecture of work relations; to improve organisational culture
- establishing the capacity to think with, and to lead others purposefully, in the face of change and uncertainty
- establishing skills in the clarification of researching, thinking and writing for communication of systems psychodynamic concepts, through creation of working hypotheses, reasoned analyses and articulating research findings
- establishing an understanding of the ethics associated with the application of the discipline, including attention to principles of integrity and honesty.

Application of knowledge and skills

Establishing competency in utilising 'Participatory Action Research' methods for collaborative discovery and problem-solving in work settings.

Course Structure

The course is offered in part-time mode only. In total, completion requires two semesters of part-time involvement, or longer if undertaking one subject only per semester.

In 2025 subjects are taught in live interactive online weekly classes and full day sessions, with hybrid onsite opportunities in Melbourne.

Subjects and Progression

Core Units

Year One

MLM1 Organisations and Management through the Art of Metaphor (12 credit points)

MLM2 Unconscious Processes in Groups and Systems (12 credit points)

MLM3 'Through a Cultural Lens': collaborating with the 'other' at work (12 credit points)

MLM4 Systems Psychodynamic Consulting (12 credit points) **OR** MLM8 Leadership and Authority for Role and Task (12 credit points)

Subject Outlines

MLM1 – Organisations and Management Through the Art of Metaphor

Subject Content

The subject introduces a breadth of organisation and management theory and practice to support students in coming to understand their own primary 'taken for granted' theories of organisation and to explore alternative theories that may open up options for managing or conceptualising management.

A range of metaphors of organisation (Morgan 2006) are used as the primary vehicle for ordering and communicating organisation and management theory and practice. Each metaphor represents a distinct body of management theories that underpin particular assumptions about managing. Furthering the call of Morgan and other's (Mintzberg 2011; Needham 2014) for understanding and application of multiple perspectives in management practice the study of each metaphor is supplemented with ancillary readings which examine critically the strengths, weaknesses and case application of each perspective.

This design develops an art of metaphorical analysis that combines theory and practice to assist students in working with competing models of organisations as expressed in the management literature, their own experience, and the language of the organisations with which they currently work.

Student Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of MLM1 students will be able to:

- a. locate system psychodynamics and its core concepts in the field of organisation and management studies as understood through metaphoric analysis;
- b. critique organisational and management theory, both in the relevant literature and as observed in practice, by eliciting and examining the metaphors underlying mindsets and behaviours;
- c. apply qualitative research methods particular to the systems psychodynamic field by working on personal and organisational metaphors in small groups and individually;
- d. explore organisational and management practice using metaphoric inquiry; and
- e. apply selected metaphors of grouping and organising to design and work with change in organisations.

Assessment

1. A small learning group report, which compares and contrasts assumptions about organisational change as reflected in images/metaphors/narratives that guide the practice of two, selected organisational change agents. 2,500 words +/- 10%
2. Individual essay - An analysis of a case study set in the student's own organisation using socio-technical theory as the analytical frame. 4,000 words +/- 10%
3. Learning Journal - Students paired to undertake 6 peer reviewed journal entries

MLM2 - Unconscious Processes in Groups and Systems

Subject Content

This subject offers intensive exploration of small group dynamics through a 'study group' methodology. Across the semester the student group explore their own conscious and unconscious patterns of small and large group behaviour in the 'here and now' using group/system level analysis. This approach presents students with an in-depth opportunity to experience and analyse small group dynamics with reference to object relations and intersubjective conceptual frames.

Through these experiences, it is anticipated students increase their capacity to identify, analyse and manage workgroup dynamics; to appreciate the emotional labour of work, and to enable constructive leader-follower relations.

Student Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of MLM2 students will be able to:

- a. critically discuss systems psychodynamic approaches to understanding work group behaviours;
- b. outline object relations and intersubjective theory applicable to systems thinking;
- c. understand their own valency for the roles that they typically take up in groups;
- d. develop working hypotheses about unconscious dynamics in small and large groups, using observation, personal experience and patterns of role taking as data;
- e. investigate dynamics in groups and between leaders and followers that support or obstruct task performance, including identifying social defence processes in systems; and practice ways of working with uncertainty and paradox in groups.

Assessment

1. Individual essay – A Microanalysis of a self-selected experiential group event using object relations and intersubjective theory. 3,000 words +/- 10%
2. Small learning group essay – Analysis of an observation of an organisation work group using object relations and intersubjective theory as the analytical frames. 2,500 words +/- 10%
3. Learning Journal - Students paired to undertake 6 peer reviewed journal entries

MLM3 - Through a Cultural Lens: collaborating with the 'other' at work

Subject Content

This subject aims to encourage in-depth learning about the group phenomenon of culture. This is facilitated by an 'inside out' understanding of the complexities of culture and enculturation. To this end students are first encouraged to explore the impact of enculturation on their own work choices and practice and then to explore and analyse the culture developed within the 'here and now' of the class; the intention of these activities is to translate learnings to understanding and working with organisational culture.

A working description of 'culture' is 'that which has been absorbed by us (people like me) as the preferred means and ends for living and dying'. It is taken for granted that aspects of this absorption of culture will be in focus, since it is difficult to understand the cultural aspect of tensions with people who are 'not like us' (diversity) unless we can appreciate something of the social construction of who we, collectively, have become.

In keeping with the program's psychodynamic emphasis, we remind ourselves at times that the boundary between 'me' and 'you'/us' and 'them' is often created unconsciously to defend against internal; threats by attributing undesirable qualities to the 'Other'.

Student Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of MLM3 students will be able to:

- a. critique selected organisation/management/human resource literature on topics related to culture, diversity and inclusion;
- b. critically apply the concept of culture as a psycho-social process to identify conscious and unconscious factors that create and influence culture in organisations;
- c. identify and articulate the impact of enculturation on their own work choices and practices;
- d. describe the impact of intercultural dynamics on communication and collaboration in organisations; and
- e. use a cultural lens to identify covert or veiled factors that affect group and organisation effectiveness and outcomes.

Assessment

1. Individual essay- 'Who am I culturally, and how does this aspect of my being help and hinder my effectiveness in the workplace?' 3,000 words +/- 10%
2. Small Learning Group Assignment:
 - a. A report on a case study of Australian culture at work and its implications for collaborative management. 2,500 words +/- 10%
 - b. Small Learning Group presentation in class, based on the above research (Hurdle requirement).
Approx 45 mins
3. Learning Journal - Students paired to undertake 6 peer reviewed journal entries

MLM4 - Systems Psychodynamic Consulting

Subject Content

The purpose of this subject is to have students explore, understand and clarify varying assumptions about the technique of consulting, whether from a manager or specialist role, internal or external to the organisation, and to practice the skills of systems psychodynamic consultation.

Through its workshop design, the subject provides an intensive practical exploration of systems psychodynamic consulting by having students undertake a 'real-life' consultation to an organisation. Students are able to learn about systems psychodynamic consulting and to discover, through practical application, how much they have learnt from their first year of study.

In small learning groups students undertake a five-day consultation with an organisation, returning to the classroom at predetermined times to explore their experience of entry, contracting, method, client/consultant relations, working as a consultancy team and exit from the organisation. The classroom experience is also considered a 'temporary learning organisation' where internal dynamics are explored as potential data for what might be occurring at a deeper level in the organisation being consulted to.

Student Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of MLM4 students will be able to:

- a. identify consulting practices as an aspect of the manager's role and as a specialist role;
- b. articulate the distinction between various aims and types of consulting practices;
- c. describe the values and ethical issues for consultants, including sustainability and environmental awareness;
- d. integrate key theories and learning from previous subjects into their understanding of applied systems psychodynamic work;
- e. manage meaningful entry into organisations, inquire and negotiate collaboratively, contract to the central question/s of a consultancy, design effective interventions, and exit the organisation with integrity; and

- f. utilise system psychodynamic methods and analysis in consulting to an organisation to consider and address tensions in the client/consultant relationship as aspects of underlying problems.

Assessment

1. Consulting system (team) presentation of analysis of emergent dynamics between the consulting system and the client system, including pertinent data, efforts to contain emergent dynamics, and resulting insights, whether shared with client system or not. 20 minute recorded presentation
2. Individual essay – Reflect on the efficacy of your consultation efforts and, using appropriate theoretical frameworks, analyse the strengths and weaknesses of your consultancy team’s attempt to help the client. 3,000 words +/- 10%

MLM8 - Leadership and Authority for Role and Task

Subject Content

This subject is offered as a five-day ‘Group Relations Conference’. The conference aims to provide opportunities for students to study group, inter-group and organisational dynamics through direct experience. These experiences may be thought about and conceptualised, reacted to or acted upon, accepted or even unconsciously rejected. Students have a choice about how they might work with their experiences. The conference offers an opportunity for students to learn through their own ‘reflective practice’. That is, through observing, making decisions, taking up accountability and authority, exploring new roles, reflecting, taking action and through working with others. During the conference, learnings are discussed and linked to ‘back-home’ work roles through a consultancy and reflection group method.

There are no formal lectures or seminars. Instead, students take part in developing the temporary organisation.

Student Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of MLM8 students will be able to:

- a. articulate the experience of group, inter-group and organisational dynamics and one’s contribution to their creation;
- b. identify small, medium and large group dynamics relating to organisational structure, culture, sentience and task using personal experiences as data about group, intra- and inter-organisational systems;
- c. integrate key theories and learnings from previous subjects to form a coherent base for applied systems psychodynamic work;
- d. demonstrate the capacity to continue to think amidst turbulent dynamics, identifying the impact of authority and leadership on role and task and the influence of purpose, value and meaning in human systems; and
- e. translate learnings from the experience of a group relations conference to their own work organisation and other work organisations through integration into their work practice.

Assessment

1. Individual annotated bibliography. A review of five articles selected from the readings for the subject. Each annotation is to include a synopsis of the author’s main argument, an essential critique of this argument and a comment on its relevance to the workshop experience. 2,500 words +/- 10%
2. Individual essay – ‘Examine the dynamics of authority and leadership in relation to role and task within two key incidents at the workshop. Integrate your observations and experience within a framework gained from your reading and make links between these learnings and your work role’. 3,500 words +/- 10%

Program Admission Requirements

Completion of a three year Bachelor degree or equivalent,
and
at least five years of relevant work experience.

Special Entry into the Graduate Certificate of Leadership and Management (Organisation Dynamics) may be granted to no more than 10% of the intake in any given year for those who have not completed a three year Bachelor degree or equivalent but who have other tertiary qualifications and relevant work experience or who have extensive relevant work experience.

Students entering this degree are required to have a minimum level of English language proficiency (details of these requirements can be found at www.nioda.org.au/policies).

Enrolment

Application forms are on the NIODA website www.nioda.org.au/academic-programs.

All successful applicants will be made a formal offer of place after which they are able to enrol online.

Recognition of Prior Learning and Credit Transfer

NIODA offers students the opportunity to apply for Recognition of Prior Learning or Credit Transfer. Enquiries about RPL or Credit Transfer need to be made at the time of the application interview. Policies and links to apply at www.nioda.org.au/policies.

Fees

In 2025 the fee is AUD \$3,600 per subject (AUD \$14,400 per year, if undertaking two subjects per semester). Fees are payable by the due date before each semester begins. There are no incidental fees charged for the course.

FEE-HELP is available for candidates meeting DESE criteria.
See the <https://www.studyassist.gov.au/help-loans/fee-help> for criteria.

With the exception of those accessing FEE-HELP loan assistance payment for all fees should be by direct deposit or credit card made payable to NIODA.

Fees must be paid in full at least two weeks prior to the commencement of the semester in which the student is enrolled.

A student withdrawing or taking Leave of Absence after the census date of the relevant semester will be charged full fees for that semester.

Fees are subject to a 5% annual increase. Fees are published on the NIODA website by October of the prior year.

Withdrawal or Cancellation

Fees will not be refunded after the census date for that subject.

Application for 'Leave of Absence' must occur prior to the first class in either semester.

Academic and Research Integrity

The National Institute of Organisation Dynamics Australia (NIODA) values excellence and rigour in delivery and learning that is achieved in an intellectual environment where integrity is highly valued and carefully upheld. All students and staff are required to uphold the highest standards of academic and research integrity. A range of policies addressing these requirements can be found on the NIODA website at www.nioda.org.au/policies.

Student Support Services

NIODA students have access to support services:

- Student Advice
- Student Counselling
- IT Support Services
- Library Support
- Student Resources Information webpage.

Staff

Dean

Professor Wendy Harding, M.Bus, PhD

Master's Course Lead

Thomas Mitchell, MLM(OD)

Academic staff

Dr Brigid Nossal, M.Ed, PhD

Seth Thomasson, M.App.Sci (OD)

Helen McKelvie, MLM(OD)

Rhianna Perkin, MLM(OD)

Kristina Karlsson, MLM(OD)

Administration Lead

Sally Mussared, MLM(OD)

Student Services Lead

Tilly Robertson, B.Paramedicine

See www.nioda.org.au for staff profiles



Further enquiries

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