

## Lead for Life ('L4L') The HKU Character Leadership Programme

L4L is a four-year, transformational journey for HKU students to acquire the characteristics needed for lifelong leadership – leadership, which is life-enriching, life-nurturing (for leaders and group members) and a way of life. The purpose is to help students flourish during their time at HKU, and to equip them to build flourishing communities afterwards.

Built around the research on character-based leadership at Oxford University and the University of Hong Kong, the programme presents character leadership as acquirable and desirable as well as accessible to all personalities: quiet, outgoing or somewhere in between. The programme draws on deep, multi-cultural traditions of wisdom and virtue to enable HKU leaders to make a significant social impact locally and globally.

L4L's inaugural programme begins on October 9-10, 2021 and finishes in May of 2025. Graduates, however, will be encouraged to view their graduation as a 'commencement' of life-long leadership as well as to return and help lead in the ongoing programme. The programme's content will be developed and curated by HKU's Faith and Global Engagement (FGE) in partnership with CEDARS and eventually involve collaboration and participation across all HKU faculties.

It is envisioned that L4L will have 200 students in its first year, add 300 in both years 2 and 3 and then an additional 400 in both years 4 and 5. By the end of year 5, it is projected there will be some 1400 students in the programme. Mentors and service projects will be key to the transformational nature of the programme. In year one, the programme will require 40 mentors. Mentors will be working in pairs with groups of 10 students. Mentors would lead a group in one-year commitments. This allows students to experience four different mentors over their journey. Mentors and mentees will receive training throughout.

Base-line measurements will be taken at the start of the programme, and effectiveness evaluations will be taken annually as well as after each L4L event: course, retreat, service projects, speaker, etc. As this is a pilot programme, L4L will be continually evaluated with potential changes along the way.

The initial 'roadmap', however, would look like the following:

**START** The journey for the students starts with a two-day orientation based on HKU's motto: Wisdom and Virtue.

1. **Wisdom.** The orientation will draw on components of the core course, "A Life Worth Living" and apply them to the HKU experience. (Why am I here at HKU? What are the values of education at HKU? How do I flourish at HKU?)
2. **Virtue.** Uses components of Character Leadership Course (virtues as a distinguishing factor in good leadership) and establishes mentor groups with one student leader. The student leader position will rotate giving leadership opportunities within the group. Mentors will be trained, provided ongoing support and offered relevant courses to help sustain and train them to further integrate character leadership into their vocations. The goal is to create a context in which mentor groups develop organically and relationally.

**THE JOURNEY** To become a certificate member of L4L, students must meet the following minimum requirements (in addition to orientation):

1. **Mentorship.** Participate and engage fully (cannot be passive!) in their mentor group until graduation Year 4. Students are required to attend at least one mentor group event each semester (can be a gathering or outing or retreat as leader sees fit). The hope is that the activity will be much more, but there is recognition some terms/years will be busier than others.
2. **Service.** At least one group service project. This teaches the value of leaders serving their community. Students can choose from an inventory of possible projects, propose their own project or suggest one currently provided by another HKU or student organization.
3. **Courses.** At least one course from the Common Core Curriculum (which has been designated as an 'L4L' course), Mental Health First Aid, CEO Global, Well-Being or other L4L designated or designed courses in person or on-line.

**(Optional) Booster Modules** Throughout the four years there will be an array of 'lead for life' opportunities available to L4L members potentially in the form of Oxford Character Project events, HKGCC courses, book clubs, competitions, special pop-up events, online materials, etc.

**A "Leader of Character"** Just prior to their last year, all students active in the programme will be invited to apply and interview to receive the distinction of a "Leader of Character". The interview assessment will be based on the student's journey so far in the programme. Students will be required to have taken more than the minimal amount of courses. If the interview is successful, then the student will lead in the subsequent year's L4L activities. The student will receive career coaching as well as the "Leader of Character" distinction on her or his certificate and opportunities to interview for job internships/practicums.

**END/"COMMENCE"** There will be a celebratory graduation with a world-class speaker who embodies the 'spirit' of character leadership and 'leading for life'. All students successfully completing the programme will receive a 'Lead for Life' certificate - some with "Leader of Character" distinction. Students will be encouraged to keep on learning, leading and helping out with future 'Lead for Life' events such as orientations where others are just starting their journeys.