



Public Sector  
Commission

# Learning and Development Guide

for Senior Executive  
Service Members

June 2024



# A guide for Senior Executive Service members

**Leadership today is more complex than ever before. In a rapidly changing world, leaders' thinking must be equal or superior to the complexity of the environment in which they are operating.**

[Building Leadership Impact](#) sets the scene of what is expected of public sector leaders including Senior Executive Service (SES) members who play a critical role in developing a [future enabled](#) public sector.

As a SES member, it is important for you to grow your abilities intentionally and deliberately by committing to continuous learning, development and self awareness. This guide helps you maximise your learning and development so you are better equipped to deal with the increasing complexities of your role. It focuses on the areas which collectively define the multi-faceted role of SES members. These areas support the shift to strategic alignment and sustainability, and the adoption of a whole of agency mindset.

The guide provides information about the needed foundational skills as a starting point for all SES members. Importantly, it acknowledges that SES members should not forgo their own development.

## Using this guide

The opportunities in this guide are recommended for all SES members and fall into 2 categories:

- Development offered by the Commission specifically for the WA public sector SES
- Development identified by the Commission as highly desirable to build capabilities and to be sourced by the individual and agency

In addition to the development in this guide, you should regularly review your learning and development needs and source opportunities to build your unique capability requirements.

**Contact:** [leadership@psc.wa.gov.au](mailto:leadership@psc.wa.gov.au)

Development offered by the Commission	Development sourced by the agency
<p><b>Only available for CEOs and SES members:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SES Spotlight (p. 3)</li> <li>• Leading and Influencing for Change (p. 3)</li> <li>• Using Policy to Shape WA (p. 4)</li> <li>• Walking in 2 Worlds Together (p. 4)</li> </ul> <p><b>Available sectorwide with tailored versions for senior executives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development Maps (p. 5)</li> <li>• Leadership Conversations (p. 5)</li> </ul> <p><b>Available sectorwide:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness (p. 6)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Induction with your chief executive officer (p. 7)</li> <li>• SES partnering (p. 7)</li> <li>• Coaching and developing others (p. 8)</li> <li>• Cultural competence (p. 8)</li> <li>• Disability awareness (p. 9)</li> <li>• Financial acumen for non-finance executive leaders (p. 9)</li> <li>• Integrity (code of conduct) (p. 10)</li> <li>• Know yourself (p. 10)</li> <li>• Presentation skills (p. 11)</li> </ul>

## Development offered by the Commission

### SES Spotlight

**Understand the broader government agenda and priorities, and the expectations for delivering government commitments.**

The SES Spotlight is a twice yearly forum that brings together all SES members to explore themes and issues aligned to building a [future enabled](#) public sector.

The forum supports a collaborative approach and mindset for the senior strategy, policy and managerial group in the sector for strong and cohesive leadership.

**Available:** CEOs and SES members only

**Time:** Half day forum twice a year

**Next steps:** Invitations sent by Public Sector Commissioner

#### Related expected behaviours from Leadership Expectations

Lead collectively  
Think through complexity  
Dynamically sense the environment  
Deliver on high leverage areas  
Build capability  
Embody the spirit of public service  
Lead adaptively

### Leading and Influencing for Change

**Identify ways to build a high performance culture to lead, influence and achieve change.**

Part of the Commission's SES Development Series, this bespoke program helps you establish high performance approaches while fostering seamless collaboration both in your agency and across multiple agencies.

It enhances skills for driving and executing transformative change while optimising public value.

**Available:** CEOs and SES members only

**Time:** 2 day workshop

**Next steps:** Visit [SES Development Series](#)

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## Using Policy to Shape WA

**Understand the interactions between government, policy and a citizen centric environment in the WA context.**

Part of the Commission's SES Development Series, this bespoke program emphasises the importance of evidence based approaches and evaluation for shaping future policy endeavours.

It helps guide you to strike a balance between risk and innovation, and gives you tools to apply sound governance practices and identify potential gaps that may pose risks to your agency.

**Available:** CEOs and SES members only

**Time:** 2 day workshop

**Next steps:** Visit [SES Development Series](#)

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## Walking in 2 Worlds Together

**Discover how to foster a leadership approach and workplace environment that are inclusive of First Nations cultures, traditions, values and beliefs.**

Part of the Commission's SES Development Series, this bespoke program helps you cultivate meaningful working relationships with First Nations staff.

It also helps you enhance the leadership pipeline for First Nations people while creating a culturally safe workplace.

**Available:** CEOs and SES members only

**Time:** 2 day workshop

**Next steps:** Visit [SES Development Series](#)

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## Development Maps

**Access a curated array of learning and development to enhance leadership behaviours in the public sector leadership contexts.**

Leadership at the [Executive Leader](#) context is about shaping complex initiatives covering multiple business areas as well as having responsibility in corporate governance.

Development Maps explore [Executive Leader](#) concepts including strategic decision making, effective collaboration, and driving a culture of development and leading through uncertainty.

There is an abundance of topics for you to explore, each with a variety of mediums (such as articles, videos and podcasts), resources and activities to guide reflection and embed learning.

Designed for every [Leadership Expectations](#) context, there is learning designed specifically for the SES related to your current context.

**Available:** Tailored versions for SES members

**Time:** Self paced

**Next steps:** Assigned via agency learning management system

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## Leadership Conversations

**Be empowered by conversations on contemporary leadership topics delivered by thought leaders from across the globe.**

These learning experiences bring new ideas and perspectives, challenge mindsets and inspire excellence in the public sector.

[Leadership Conversations](#) are virtual and interactive workshops with activities and practical tools for you to embed what you learn into your workplace.

There are 12 conversations each year, with 4 specifically for senior executives.

**Available:** Tailored versions for senior executives

**Time:** Usually 2 hours

**Next steps:** Visit [Learning and development](#)

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## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness

**Increase awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, history and experiences to work in a culturally informed way.**

This online training increases knowledge and understanding of the world's oldest continuous culture.

It covers 4 key areas of family, education, country and work. Each area includes historical and contemporary information with audio and images to encourage reflection, and questions to reinforce understanding.

This training meets the mandatory requirement in [Commissioner's Instruction 29: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness Training](#) for all public sector employees.

**Available:** Sectorwide

**Time:** 30 minutes

**Next steps:** Complete training [online](#)

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## Development sourced by the agency

### Induction with your chief executive officer

**Get insights into key political nuances and the inner workings of your agency.**

This induction with your chief executive officer gives you an understanding of the broader context of working in government including the political complexity of senior leadership roles and the environment in which they operate.

**Next steps:** Contact your office of the CEO

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### SES partnering

**Partner with an experienced SES member to support you to explore concepts, ideas and observations – and to nurture your personal growth.**

You benefit from the partnership and your partner gets time and space to share their experiences and build peer capability.

Consider your development needs and aspirations and seek out a SES member whose strengths you admire.

Once identified approach the SES member to establish how this informal peer support relationship could work to assist with your development.

**Next steps:** Explore opportunities in your agency

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## Coaching and developing others

**Understand how to be an effective coach, and use on the job coaching to develop talent and meet performance goals.**

To be a true leader-coach, you must develop and motivate your direct reports. If they perform well, you perform well.

By developing your coaching skills you foster human centric leadership skills so you can lead with authenticity, empathy and adaptivity.

**Next steps:** Contact your learning and development team or equivalent

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## Cultural competence

**Develop cultural awareness and understanding so you can communicate and engage with people from all backgrounds regardless of cultural, religious and social differences.**

Diverse WA is training specifically designed by the Office of Multicultural Interests to improve your knowledge, skills and awareness to deliver better services to diverse communities and minimise prejudices in agency systems, policies and practices.

You may choose to source other training to help you ensure cultural competence in the workplace.

**Next steps:** Complete training [online](#) or email [DiverseWA@omi.wa.gov.au](mailto:DiverseWA@omi.wa.gov.au)

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## Disability awareness

**Improve your knowledge of disability inclusion and promote disability awareness in your workplace.**

The government has an aspirational [target](#) to increase the representation of people with disability employed in the public sector to 5%.

To improve your knowledge of disability inclusion, consider the [Introduction to Disability Awareness](#).

This online learning promotes awareness of disability and the impact of societal attitudes and inherent stigma and discrimination on the lives of people with disability.

**Next steps:** Complete training [online](#)

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## Finance acumen for non-finance executive leaders

**Explore how to manage finances, budgets and public value.**

Navigating the realm of financial management entails more than just balancing the books. It involves a keen understanding of financial cycles, recognising their inherent limitations, and strategically pitching proposals to the Department of Treasury for optimal resource allocation.

A grasp of key financial metrics is essential as they wield substantial influence over agency performance.

Furthermore, embracing commercial intelligence while procuring services supports informed decision making that aligns fiscal goals with operational needs.

**Next steps:** Discuss with your chief finance officer for appropriate providers

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## Integrity (code of conduct)

**Explore how to be ethical and act with integrity in everything you do, and take responsibility for providing integrity training to your staff.**

Each public sector agency must provide formal and planned integrity training on its code of conduct and ensure all staff (including SES members) and board members complete this training as well as refresher training.

These are requirements under [Commissioner's Instruction 40: Ethical Foundations](#).

Ensuring integrity practices and training are aligned with the functions, remit and risks of the work of your business areas is a key responsibility of executive leaders.

**Next steps:** Discuss with your integrity area

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## Know yourself

**Seek ways to explore and uncover the unconscious motivators that drive your actions, so you understand why your best self shows up in some circumstances and shadow is the default in other circumstances.**

One way to do this is through workplace personality assessments which are valuable tools to help you understand your own and your teams' attitudes and behaviours. Often coupled with a personalised debrief or coaching session workplace personality assessments can provide insight into knowing yourself on a deeper level.

These assessments are available from a variety of sources. When selecting a personality profiling tool consider:

- which tool fits your agency and workplace preferences
- whether the tool has been scientifically validated
- what outcomes the tool seeks to achieve and whether this fits with your needs
- expectations about contracts, outcomes, confidentiality and ethics.

**Next steps:** Contact your learning and development team or equivalent

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## Presentation skills

**Discover the nuances of impactful presentations and ways to enhance your delivery techniques.**

Engaging in executive presentation skills training empowers you to convey messages with precision, grace and influence.

This significantly contributes to cultivating your image as a dependable and authoritative figure.

**Next steps:** Contact your learning and development team or equivalent

### **Related expected behaviours from Leadership Expectations**

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Build capability

Embody the spirit of public service