



Smurfit Executive Development  
UCD Michael Smurfit Graduate Business School



# LEADING HIGH-PERFORMANCE ORGANISATIONS WITH LEINSTER RUGBY



**FT** EXECUTIVE  
EDUCATION  
2025 RANKING

**1** IN IRELAND  
FOR OPEN ENROLMENT

**47** GLOBALLY  
FOR OPEN ENROLMENT

**56** GLOBALLY  
FOR CUSTOM PROGRAMMES

“We are excited to partner once again with the executive development team at UCD Michael Smurfit Graduate Business School to share practical insights about leading high performance organisations from our combined sporting and business worlds.

At Leinster Rugby we have to deal with the expectation of performing to a high level every week on the pitch. For that to happen we need to ensure the entire organisation plays their part in best preparing the team to showcase their abilities on any given weekend.”

**LEO CULLEN | LEINSTER RUGBY HEAD COACH**



## COURSE OVERVIEW: LEADING HIGH-PERFORMANCE ORGANISATIONS

Unlock the secret ingredients to sustained high-performance with *Leading High-Performance Organisations* — a distinctive three-day programme delivered in partnership with Leinster Rugby, one of Europe's most successful professional sporting institutions. This immersive experience, held at both UCD Smurfit Executive Development and Leinster Rugby's headquarters, offers rare behind-the-scenes access to Leinster's leadership, coaching staff, and players. Discover the culture, systems, and decision-making frameworks that underpin their sustained success. Guided by Smurfit faculty, participants gain practical tools, proven models, and data-driven insights to translate elite sports performance into powerful strategies for your own organisation. Explore key themes including collective leadership, performing under pressure, designing systems for sustained success and leading through complexity and change. The programme culminates in a special celebration, where you will receive your course certificate of completion during a networking lunch held in conjunction with a Leinster Rugby home match. Step into the world of high performance — and leave with the mindset and methods to unlock potential and drive business growth in your team and organisation.

### WHO IS THIS PROGRAMME FOR?

This programme is for ambitious leaders aiming to elevate their performance and drive success within complex organisational settings. It's ideal for:

- C-Suite Executives and Senior Leaders
- Commercial Leaders
- Divisional Leaders
- Heads of Strategy and Operations
- Heads of Transformation
- Entrepreneurs and Business Owners

If you are looking to implement innovative approaches, foster high-performing teams, optimise organisational dynamics to deliver business growth and scale your organisation, or harness data to deliver change, this programme is for you.

## LEINSTER RUGBY SPEAKERS AND PANELLISTS



**LEO CULLEN**  
HEAD COACH



**GUY EASTERBY**  
CHIEF OPERATIONS  
OFFICER



**MATTHEW DOWLING**  
CHIEF COMMERCIAL  
OFFICER



**JULIETTE FORTUNE**  
ASSISTANT ANALYST



**RACHEL SCANLON**  
HR BUSINESS PARTNER



**EMMA BURROWS**  
PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT  
MANAGER



## COURSE STRUCTURE & FORMAT

The programme offers unparalleled access to the inner workings of Leinster Rugby – including an experiential session with Head Coach Leo Cullen as well as practical workshops, guest speakers and panel discussions featuring senior leaders and key stakeholders from across the organisation, including the C-Suite, operations, commercial, data analytics and human resources.

You'll also gain unique behind-the-scenes perspectives, with current players, former players, and those transitioning from the game participating alongside you - offering authentic, lived insights into high-performance, leadership, and culture.

These rich experiences are complemented by practical, high-impact sessions led by UCD Smurfit Executive Development faculty, focused on translating elite sports principles into actionable business strategies. With a strong emphasis on peer learning, collaboration, reflection, and applied practice, this dynamic learning experience ensures you leave not only inspired, but equipped with the tools, frameworks, and strategies to drive immediate impact in your own organisation.

## KEY LEARNING METHODS AND APPROACHES



## COURSE CONTENT

## Unlocking High-Performance

- Explore what performance and high-performance means in elite sport, and how to contextualise it for your organisation.

## Leinster Rugby's High-Performance Fabric

- Experience Leinster Rugby's systems, culture, and recipe for sustained success.

## Strategy Execution in Sport and Business – The Connections

- Learn to navigate strategy execution through uncertainty, using confidence, ambition, and actionable tools from sport and business.

## Strategy Delivery and Teaming - How to Measure

- Dissect strategy execution through a sport and business lens. Apply tools and thinking to measure and model effective ways of working and interacting.

## Collective Leadership and Resilience

- Examine leadership dynamics, mindset shifts, and resilience in high-pressure, post-pandemic realities.

## Harnessing Data and Technology

- Examine the role of on-and-off-field data in elite sport and consider how what data you need to drive performance and decision-making.

## Winning Under Pressure

- Build a definition of winning for you and your team for 2025-2026.



"I recently completed the 3-day "Leading High-Performance Organisations" programme. It exceeded all my expectations. The programme offered a

powerful blend of academic insight and elite sports performance principles. The Programme Director, John O'Gorman, was outstanding both with his knowledge and engaging delivery. He was able to show the parallels between business and high-performance sport. The sessions with Leinster Rugby were also outstanding, showing us the inner workings of how they operate. I really enjoyed networking with my fellow participants, a group of high-performing professionals from diverse industries and backgrounds, who created an environment of mutual learning and growth. This course is a must for anyone leading teams in dynamic or performance driven environments. It's not just about leadership — it's about unlocking potential at every level. Highly recommended"

Marc O'Dwyer, Founder Big Red Book and Big Red Cloud, Chairman ISME

## COURSE FACULTY AND CONTIBUTORS

Smurfit's faculty bring actionable tools, models, and data to help translate insights from Leinster's elite sporting context into impactful strategies in an organisational and business context. The core faculty team includes Programme Director, John O'Gorman, and Leinster Rugby Head Coach, Leo Cullen.



John O'Gorman  
Programme Director



Leo Cullen  
Leinster Rugby Head Coach

## APPLICATION INFORMATION

### ADMISSIONS CRITERIA

Participants should be in a leadership role for a minimum of 5 years with experience leading complex organisational change, transformation, and projects. All candidates must apply to ensure a qualified, executive-level cohort experience. Participants must be able to attend the full three days of the programme which is delivered in-person at UCD Smurfit Executive Development and Leinster Rugby's Headquarters.

### TUITION FEES

The fee of €4,850 or \*€4,365 (\*UCD Business Alumni) is a comprehensive cost that includes your tuition, course materials as well as refreshments and meals for the duration of the programme. It also includes the post programme match day experience where participants will be presented with their certificates. Please note that fees must be paid in advance to secure a place.

### APPLICATION PROCEDURE

For more information visit the [Leading High-Performance Organisations](https://www.leadinghighperformance.org) website or contact our Business Development team at [exec.dev@ucd.ie](mailto:exec.dev@ucd.ie) to learn more.

A completed application form and digital photograph are required. To apply for any of our short courses please email [exec.dev@ucd.ie](mailto:exec.dev@ucd.ie) or contact a member of our team on +353 1 716 8889.

### CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION\*

This programme provides participants with a hard and soft copy of their "Certificate of Completion in Leading High-Performance Organisations" awarded by UCD Smurfit Executive Development.

\* Non accredited certification

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EXECUTIVE  
EDUCATION  
2025 RANKING

#### Smurfit Executive Development

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