



# Strategic Leadership Course

**Dr Dennis Vincent MBE**

8 – 12 September 2025

[www.cranfield.ac.uk](http://www.cranfield.ac.uk)

# Session Aim and Scope

- Aim: To introduce the course and share some thoughts on leadership.
- Scope:
  - Introductions
  - Course design and conduct
  - Some thoughts on leadership

# Introductions

# Dr Dennis Vincent MBE

## ***Senior Lecturer in Leadership & Management Cranfield University***

- Leadership
- Military Ethics
- Strategy and Strategic Management
- Culture and Leading Change
- Conflict Resolution and Negotiation

## ***Professional Activities***

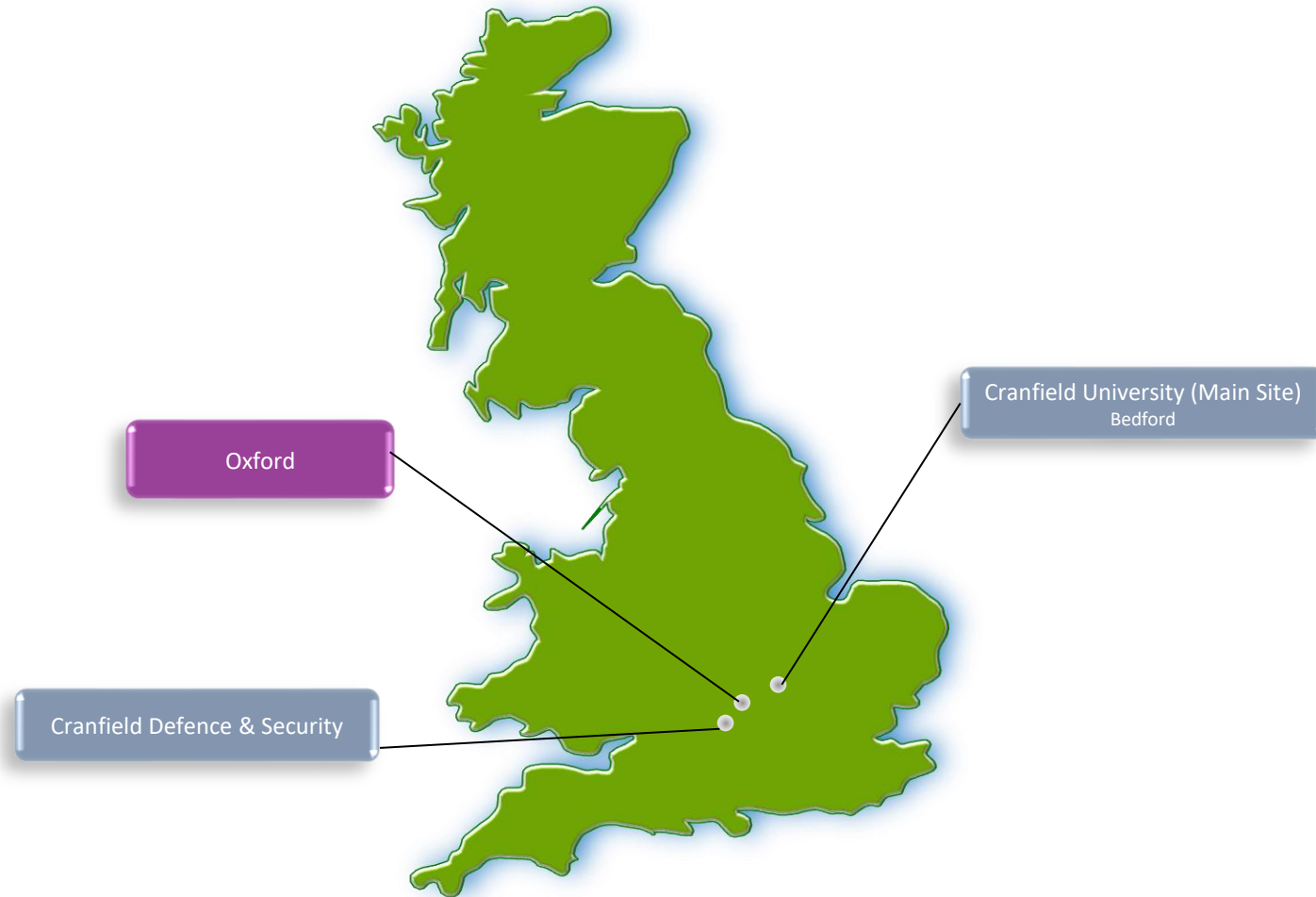
- Thirty Years as a British Army Infantry Officer, last role as Colonel Training at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst
- Awarded the MBE for leadership on operations
- Head of CABS at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst
- Course Director: Defence Leadership and Management MSc
- Award winning author: *The Forgotten General*, *The S-CALM Model*

## ***Education***

- PhD in Military History & Leadership Studies
- Masters in Defence Studies (Military Ethics)
- Masters in Leadership and Management
- Chartered Manager, Fellow of the Chartered Management Institute and Fellow of the Higher Education Authority



# Cranfield University



# Defence and Security

- Just over 15% of our Defence and Security learners come from outside the UK, representing 37 nationalities.
- In partnership with the Defence Academy, we deliver professional Defence and Security education to over 20 countries annually.
- Our series of annual symposia bring together military and civilian delegates and exhibitors representing hundreds of government agencies, companies and academic institutions to provide a forum for the exploration and exchange of experience and knowledge.



## 2 Minute Introductions

- Your name.
- Brief background of experience.
- What you hope to get from this week?
- Is there anything in particular you would like focus on?
- One thing no one knows about you?

# Course Design and Conduct



# Strategic Leadership Course – Aim



*“To enhance your understanding of strategic leadership and strategic level issues across defence.”*

# Scope

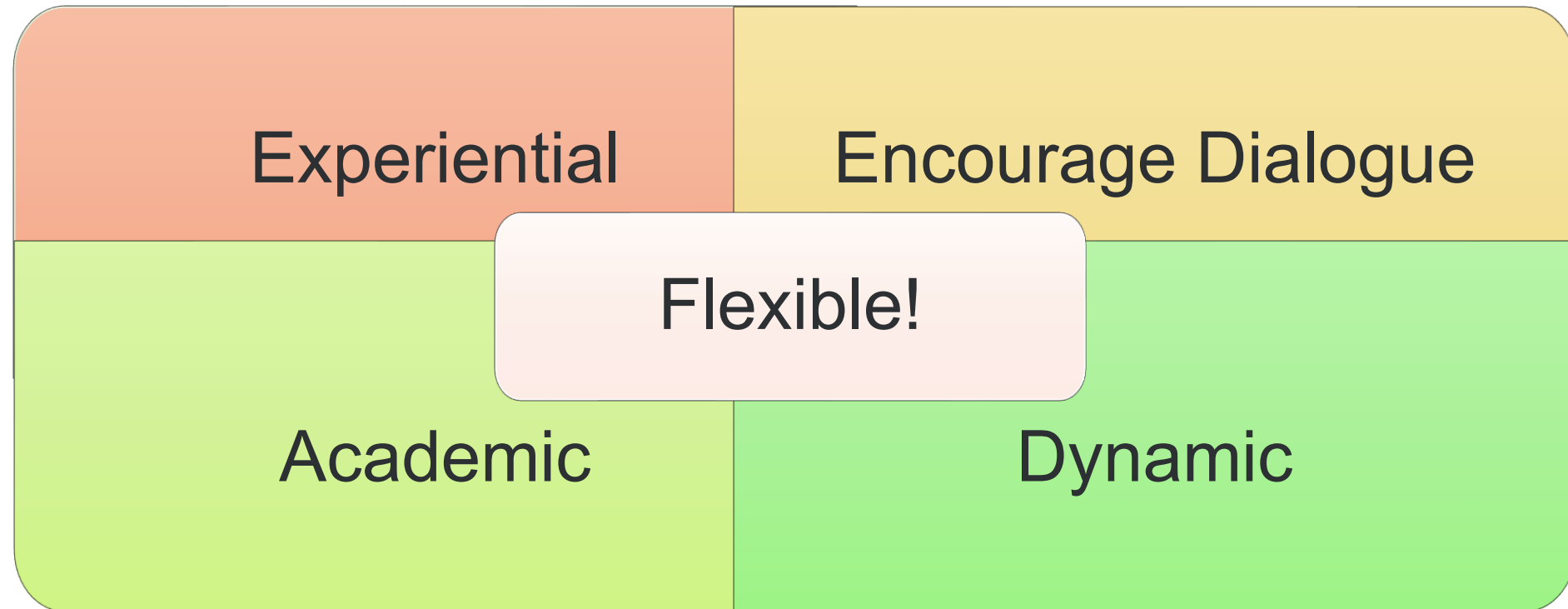
- Leadership Paradigms – CLM and Leadership Theories & Styles
- Leadership Experiences
- Exercise 1 - Leadership Model
- The Strategic Context
- Strategy Development
- Exercise 2 - Strategic Challenges
- Defining Problems and Adaptive Leadership
- Thinking Skills
- Organizational Culture
- Challenge of Change
- Exercise 3 – Challenge of Change
- Leadership Communication
- Toxic Leadership
- Ethical Leadership

# Course Programme

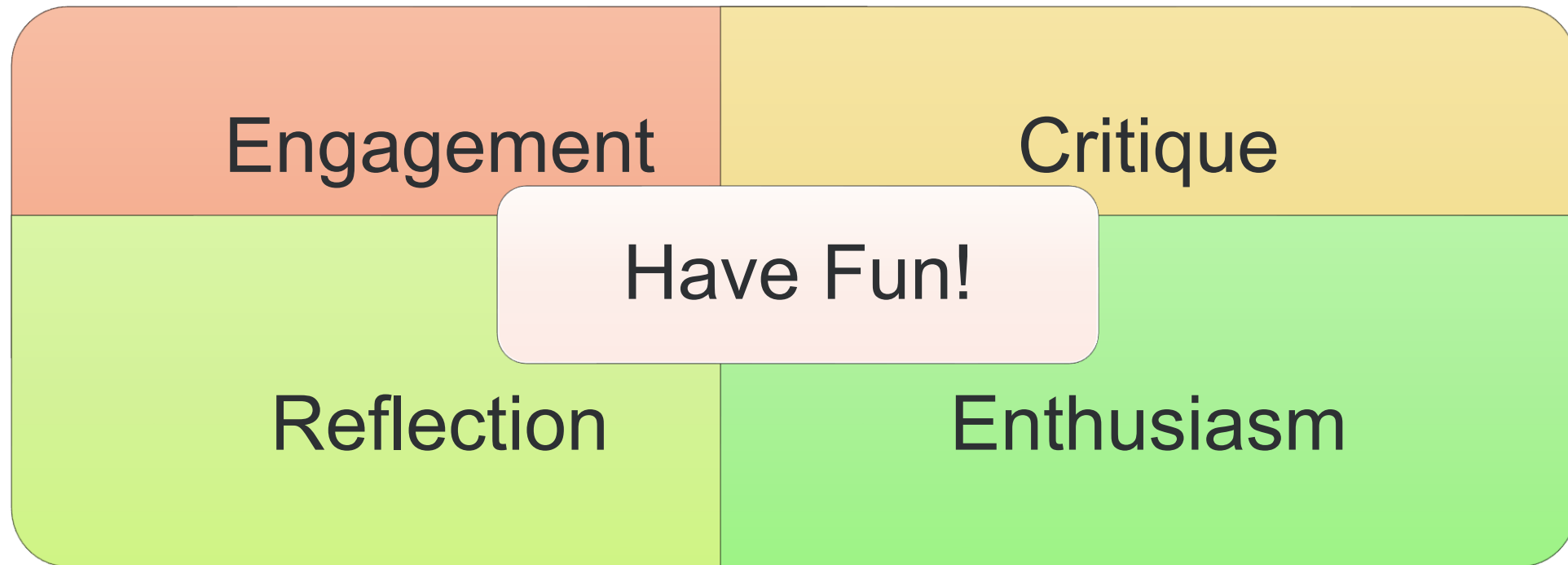
Timings	Day 1   Mon, 8 <sup>th</sup> Sep	Day 2   Tue, 9 <sup>th</sup> Sep	Day 3   Wed, 10 <sup>th</sup> Sep	Day 4   Thu, 11 <sup>th</sup> Sep	Day 5   Fri 12 <sup>th</sup> Sep ONLINE
Period 1: 0900-0945					
Period 2: 0950-1035	1. <b>1000-1035</b> Introduction (Presentation)				
1035-1100					
Period 3: 1100-1145	2. Leadership Paradigms: 1a – Command, Leadership & Management (Presentation)				
Period 4: 1150-1230	3. Leadership Paradigms: 1b – Leadership Theories & Styles (presentation)				
1230-1330					
Period 5: 1335-1420	4. Leadership Experiences (Presentation)				
Period 6: 1425-1510	5. Exercise 1 - Leadership Model (presentation & syndicate preparation)				
1510-1535					
Period 7 1535-1630	6. Leadership Model (syndicate preparation)				

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## What I will do this week



## What I would like from you



## Course Comments

- ‘Chatham House Rule’.
- Expose you to new ideas and reflect on familiar ones.
- Help you prepare for your next / strategic leadership position.
- Invitation for you to commit to doing something differently.
- I don’t assess you, but you assess me (Validation).

# **Some thoughts on Leadership**

## What is Leadership? (Mullins, 2007)

*“A relationship through which one person influences the behaviour or actions of other people.”*



Leadership is influencing people by providing purpose, direction and motivation; developing and evaluating the individual, unit and organisation; while achieving the mission.

Defence Forces, 2023



## What is Strategic Leadership (Hambrick, 1989)

- Demands a focus on both the **internal and external** environments of the organisation.
- Tends to involve the navigation of greater degrees of **complexity and ambiguity** than other levels.
- Is **multifunctional** and integrative in contrast to the more specialised tasks of operating management.
- Unlike leadership at the front lines, strategic leadership involves **leading through other leaders**.

## Why leadership is interesting and important?

- Leadership is about **People, Vision, Change**.
- Situationally dependent and **culturally sensitive**.
- Leadership is **critical** to organisations.
- Leaders are **accountable** for their actions and decisions.
- Importance of **ethics** and an understanding of toxic leadership.
- **Contemporary environment** makes leadership more demanding.
  
- Think about what sort of leader you want to be?

# What sort of leader do you want to be?

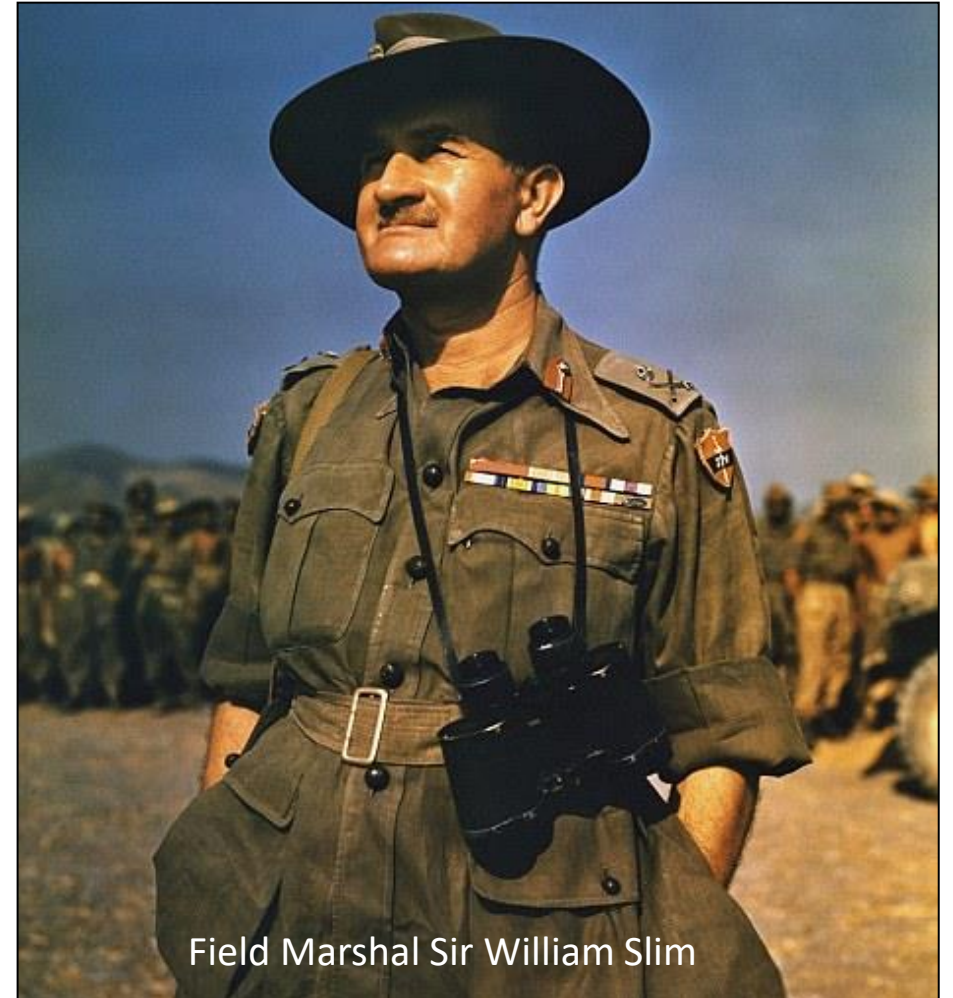
One that ...

- Is comfortable with **uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity and risk**?
- Is **aware** of their own strengths and weaknesses?
- Is honest and **sets a good example** to their team?
- Treats **change as opportunity** rather than threat?
- Is able to **set a vision**?
- Can **build teams** and accepts constructive criticism and challenge?
- Looks **up and out** *and* **down and in**?

Some thoughts as we start the course ...

## Importance of Thought and Practice

*“There is nobody who cannot vastly improve his (her) powers of leadership by a little thought and practice.”*



Field Marshal Sir William Slim

## Importance of Reflection

*“The single biggest problem of senior leadership in the Information Age is a **lack of reflection**; solitude allows you to reflect while others are reacting. We need solitude to re-focus on prospective decision-making, rather than just reacting to problems as they arise”.*



General Mattis

**THANK YOU**

**ANY QUESTIONS?**

# References

- Defence Forces. (2023). Defence Forces Leadership Doctrine
- Hambrick, D. C. (1989). Guest editor's introduction: Putting top managers back in the strategy picture. Strategic management journal, 5-15.
- Mullins, L. J. (2007). Management and organisational behaviour. Pearson education.