Required Core Curriculum

Foundations
Designed to be one of the first courses that students take, Foundations introduces concepts and frameworks that can be used to anchor and integrate learning throughout the MSLOC program. The course will cover methods and tools applied in multiple organizational settings to solve problems and increase individual, group and organizational effectiveness. Individual feedback via several assessment instruments and one-on-one coaching from faculty help each student develop an individual learning plan designed to reflect his or her unique goals.

Accelerating Learning and Performance
This course addresses human performance at the organizational, team and individual levels and offers learning as a key lever for enhancing performance. In Accelerating Learning and Performance the focus is on defining the performance levers (leadership, organizational mission and strategy, culture, organizational processes and systems, team dynamics, skills, competencies, motivation), identifying models that can be used to diagnose performance gaps/enhancement opportunities and change readiness, and designing metrics to evaluate the effectiveness of performance.

Advancing Learning and Performance Solutions
This course will introduce students to methods and tools used in multiple business functions that are designed to increase individual, group and organizational performance. Using their knowledge of learning and performance, students will learn how to design effective solutions, evaluate those solutions, adapt and redesign them to improve their effectiveness. Learning will be defined not only as a specific role or function commonly associated with training but also as an implicit process within the structure and culture of competitive global organizations. This course will help students select and use tools to make that process more deliberate, systematic and applicable in a wide range of situations.

Creating and Sharing Knowledge
In this course, students will develop an understanding of how to define “knowledge” within organizational settings and – based on the perspective offered by different definitions – assess how knowledge is created, shared and leveraged in organizations. The course will introduce theory, concepts and frameworks to enable students to understand knowledge as it applies to individuals, to communities or networks of practitioners, and to organizations. Students will also learn the role of Web 2.0 technologies in enabling knowledge sharing and creation practices in organizational settings. Finally, students will learn to apply course concepts to current organizational issues through business cases and course projects.

Leading with Strategic Thinking
In this course, students will use learning and organizational change principles to assess the effectiveness of an organization’s strategic planning process and its resultant strategic plan. Through readings, class discussion and group dialogue, case study review and analysis, and case simulation, students will learn to design a functional strategy that aligns with an organization’s overall strategy. Expected outcomes of this course include developing learning and organizational change professionals who can contribute to an organization’s strategic planning efforts as well as the strategic plan’s subsequent execution.
Executive Strategic Change
In this course you will explore the nature of strategic business change and will discuss what enables strategic change to be successful or fail. We will delve into issues of leadership, sponsorship, organizational culture, change agent roles and key success factors for implementing sustained change. Emphasis will be placed on strategic change from a practitioner's frame of reference. Several models will be also introduced to frame the discussions.

Designing Sustainable Strategic Change
This course will focus on how strategic change gets designed, implemented and sustained. We examine change from the metaphorical perspective of the organization as a living organism, and will be exploring the elements of organizational systems using the lenses of design, change and learning. The course is a participatory exploration of how components of the design process and organizational change practices have been and are being integrated in order to create organizational systems that are more responsive to rapid and complex change. Topics covered will include an overall model of sustainable change, how the design process and design thinking integrate with organizational change principles and methodologies, using qualitative research to design change problems and build a case for change, participatory methods for strategic planning and large-scale systems change, “transition” vs. change, the power of alignment, gaining commitment to change, power/politics and coalition-building in the change process, dynamics of culture and change, and using prototyping in organizational change contexts.

Required Applied and Research Projects

Practicum
The MSLOC Practicum is a collaborative, project-based learning experience designed to field-test your ability to apply MSLOC course concepts. Each year the MSLOC Department works with business and nonprofit partners to identify critical problems they face in learning, change, knowledge management and strategy. The process yields challenging assessment and design projects that are addressed by student teams during the Practicum course. By working on a Practicum project, you will develop the ability to analyze organizational challenges in new and different ways, explicitly using models and skills learned in MSLOC; deepen your expertise in the practice of specific areas of interest from MSLOC courses; broaden your experience through exposure to different organizational settings; and become a more reflective practitioner. MSLOC master's students may choose to do a second practicum, which counts as an elective.

Capstone (Research Methods, Design and Measurement, Analysis and Interpretation)

Capstone 1: Introduction to Research Methods
Two critical competencies for individuals practicing in the areas of Learning and Organizational Change are the ability to apply research methods in service of learning, design and problem solving, and to think critically about literature built around research findings. The purpose of this course is to teach you how to effectively ask questions to guide your research and how to conduct a review of literature is support of answering your questions. You will learn how to read, understand and evaluate research as a practitioner. This course will introduce the language and key concepts of research. You also will learn the skills necessary to successfully launch your Capstone work, incorporating the other theoretical tenets and
methods you have learned in the MSLOC program associated with learning and performance, knowledge management, and strategic organizational change.

**Capstone 2: Research Design and Measurement**
This course will focus on developing an understanding of research design and basic data collection skills. The purpose of this course is to teach students how to effectively design and conduct a non-experimental research study. The course will cover data collection using surveys, interviews/focus groups and observation. Using the questions you identified in Capstone 1, you will practice identifying and creating valid and reliable measures that can be used to answer those questions and create a plan for collecting necessary data.

**Capstone 3: Research Analysis and Interpretation**
Analyzing and interpreting both quantitative and qualitative data will be the focus of the Capstone 3 course. This course will cover basic interpretation and display of descriptive statistics and simple data analysis techniques for quantitative survey data. The primary focus will be on qualitative analysis and interpretation of interview data. You will apply thematic analysis and data display techniques to interpret the qualitative data you have gathered to answer the project questions identified in Capstone 1. Finally, because public presentation of your ideas and work is an important aspect of practice, you will be expected to create a concise and professional executive summary and presentation of your Capstone project that reflects the key insights from your study.

**Special Topics/Electives**

**MSLOC Elective: Social Network Analysis in Learning and Organizational Change**
The objective of this course is to prepare you to apply social network analysis (SNA) methods and tools to your work as a learning and organizational change practitioner and leader. You will learn the basic concepts, methods and tools necessary to plan and conduct a "real-world" SNA project designed to improve organizational effectiveness. You also will connect SNA to concepts, problems and opportunities introduced across the MSLOC curriculum, including learning and performance, knowledge management and strategic change.

During this course you will develop as a network-savvy leader, learning how to drive the management innovation needed to create organizations that naturally support informal networks. Finally, you will learn how to apply SNA to advance personal and professional development for yourself and other leaders. SNA will be framed in this course as a management innovation, not just a tool or application. You will be challenged to rethink the basic tasks of management and leadership in light of structural and human networks.
MSLOC Elective: Coaching for Learning and Performance

MSLOC Course Prerequisites: Accelerating Learning and Performance and Building Transformational Client Relationships

This course is designed for senior practitioners who are responsible for developing high-potential talent within organizations or providing one-on-one professional coaching or mentoring to managers or leaders. Grounded in theory and research on adult learning and instructional methods, this unique course will equip students with both a deeper understanding of how a variety of coaching techniques can improve individual learning and performance as well as the evidence-based knowledge necessary to design effective coaching/mentoring programs at the organizational level. Examining best practices, assessments, tools and methods used by professional coaches, the instructors will help students hone their consulting skills and learn how to adapt methods to meet the needs of diverse clients and contexts.

MSLOC Elective: Cognitive Design

This course will introduce students to the methods and tools needed to design organizational improvements and generate new product ideas that support and enhance the cognition of employees and customers. Cognitive design is devoted to understanding how people perceive, think, remember, feel and relate in real-world situations and using that understanding to drive innovations in products, processes, HR programs, change initiatives and other organizational improvements. Students will learn how to design organizational artifacts (e.g., new products, improved workflows, behavior change programs) that fit how the human mind works along both the intellectual and emotional dimension. This is a project-based course where students work in teams to model cognition, identify unmet needs and apply leading ideas of applied cognitive science to pressing design challenges in business.

MSLOC Elective: Building Transformational Client Relationships

This course will introduce students to advanced methods and tools used in collaborative coaching and consulting engagements. Using their knowledge of themselves and their subject matter expertise, students will learn and practice the fundamental competencies related to engaging clients, including how to build rapport; how to ask questions and leverage active listening to help clients determine the root cause of the problem (or opportunity); how to establish a trusting environment for the client engagement; how to collaboratively solve problems with the client; and how to maintain long-term relationships. The class takes an in-depth look at communication skills and how to adapt approaches for communication that may be necessary at the different steps in the client relationship.

MSLOC Elective: Independent Study

Independent Study projects are opportunities for exceptional MSLOC students to conduct in-depth research on a specific topic of interest under the direction of an MSLOC faculty advisor. Project proposals require approval of the MSLOC Program Director.
Additional Elective Choices

Students can choose electives that are available from programs offered through other graduate programs at Northwestern. Especially relevant schools/departments around the University include:

- School of Education and Social Policy, Learning Sciences
- Kellogg School of Management
- Medill School of Journalism, Integrated Marketing Communications
- McCormick School of Engineering, Master's of Engineering Management

Each school at Northwestern has different policies and practices for enrolling in elective courses. Students work with a MSLOC advisor to identify and select from those electives that are open to students from other degree programs.