

Charter



Updated July 2024

Systems Leadership Association

Charter

1. Context

Systems Leadership (SL) is a coherent and integrated theory of organisational behaviour developed over several decades by Dr Ian Macdonald, Dr Catie Burke, Karl Stewart and others building on work with Elliott Jaques. It is described in the book "Systems Leadership, Creating Positive Organisations - 2nd Edition" written by Ian Macdonald, Catherine Burke and Karl Stewart.

SL supports the leaders in an organisation to create the conditions where people at all levels willingly give of their best. It uses sound principles about human behaviour to create models of good leadership, organisational strategy, systems design and social process. Use of the SL has become and continues to be embedded in many organisations throughout the world.

The SLA is a not-for-profit organisation that exists for the benefit of its members. SLA acknowledges that there may be overlapping areas of interest with Macdonald Associates Consultancy and Systems Leadership Community Interest Company.

Membership of the SLA comprises a contemporary mix of individuals with a range of knowledge and experience in the use and application of SL who share a desire to develop that understanding and application.

2. SLA Purpose

The purpose of the SLA is to assist each other in the understanding and application of Systems Leadership.

3. Guiding Principles

The following principles are intended to guide the decision making, activities and behaviour of the SLA and its members:

- Consistency and integrity in application of SL in the form and operations of the Association and behaviour of its members as part of the Association.
- Upholding the integrity of use of the models through monitoring and control of what it does and is seen to endorse.
- Application of SL within the Association remains integrated, coherent and relevant to organisations – including organisations of the future.
- Provision of a forum for the discussion of SL and its application allowing free and open sharing of experience, ideas and insights with fair challenge and debate.
- Recognition that most benefit is achieved and contributed by members through active participation.
- Diversity of membership is a function of relevance to SLA activities and the interests of members and potential members.
- Young people are identified and encouraged to become members so SL knowledge and its effective application are sustained longer term.
- Growth of membership is only constrained by the Association's ability to achieve its purpose.
- Membership requires payment by members of an annual membership fee which is determined by the minimum sufficient costs to run the SLA in a manner consistent with its purpose and desired outcomes.

- A Secretariat is employed to undertake specific transactional administrative tasks required for effective operation of the Association. All other tasks associated with its operation are voluntary.
- Minimal complexity in form, structure and systems that shape and sustain the Association.
- Commercial issues related to the use of SL e.g. marketing to clients or potential clients, is outside the scope of SLA activities and purpose.

4. The SLA in Operation

While the SLA seeks to minimise complexity in form, structure and systems that shape and sustain it, some rules or guidelines are essential for its effective operation and the achievement of its purpose.

| Element | Guidelines |
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| 6.1 Structure | <p>The SLA is an association as defined by Robert Maclver, i.e. ‘an organisation deliberately formed for the collective pursuit of some interest or set of interests, which the members of it share’. While termed an association, the SLA has no legal or commercial status.</p> <p>There is no hierarchy of membership, all members are equal and have equal rights (notwithstanding the role of the Operating Committee).</p> |
| 6.2 Management | <p>Management of the association is based on the content of this Charter, an Operating Committee and related Guidelines.</p> <p>The Operating Committee consists of 6 to 10 volunteer members. The committee is renewed every 2 years and while there is no limit on how long an individual may serve on this committee, it is desirable that at least half change every two years. It is also preferable that the Association Chair and Association Secretary roles are each held for a minimum term of 2 years.</p> <p>A Register of current committee members is maintained by the Secretariat and listed on the Association website.</p> <p>Association decision making is led by the Operating Committee and authorised through members’ consensus or absence of objection.</p> <p>The Operating Committee is an enabler of the purpose rather than a service provider to members.</p> |
| 6.3 Membership | <p>a) Membership is voluntary.</p> <p>b) Membership is limited to individuals.</p> <p>c) New members may apply for admission via contact through the Association website, Secretariat or any member of the Operating Committee.</p> <p>New members are required to provide a brief overview of their background and interest in SL with their request which will be circulated to the current Operating Committee for consideration.</p> <p>Admission will be granted unless a legitimate and material objection is raised. In this case, the whole Operating Committee will review the objection (including discussion with both sponsor and objector) and then decide to admit or not.</p> <p>d) A list of current members and their contact details is kept and maintained by the Secretariat.</p> |

| Element | Guidelines |
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| <p>6.4 Membership Fee</p> | <p>Membership of the SLA requires payment of an annual fee. This fee is set by the Operating Committee, reviewed every two years and determined by the minimum sufficient costs of running the SLA according to this Charter.</p> <p>Membership fees are intended to cover the costs of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretariat • Domain name and hosting of the library • Other initiatives consistent with this Charter and approved by the OC. <p>Members are expected to pay this fee within a month of being confirmed as SLA members (unless included as part of the annual conference fee) and annually thereafter on a date determined by the Operating Committee.</p> |
| <p>6.5 Members' Obligations</p> | <p>With membership of the SLA come the obligations to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat other members in a manner consistent with the universal values of Trust, Love, Honesty, Courage, Fairness and Respect, • Respect the material and rights of the Authors of SL, • Respect other material that is shared, and • Pay membership dues in a timely manner. <p>Members are also expected to contribute ideas, papers, case studies and their energy to support successful operation of the Association.</p> |
| <p>6.6 Size</p> | <p>Growth of membership is only constrained by the Association's ability to achieve its purpose and members' ability to know each other.</p> <p>On this basis and given the constraints inherent in the Association's form and management model, the Operating Committee will report on the suitability of this approach at each annual conference.</p> |
| <p>6.7 Location</p> | <p>There are no constraints on membership by location. SLA is a global entity.</p> |
| <p>6.8 Activities</p> | <p>A primary activity of the Association is an Annual Conference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Held annually at a location that allows maximum participation of members and guests. • Organising this conference is a primary task of the Operating Committee, supported by members on a volunteer basis. <p>The following are possible other events or activities considered consistent with the purpose and principles of the SLA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SL Master Classes. • Learning and Development activities (face to face or online) • Local forums or functions. • Writing, sharing and dialogue on SL related papers. <p>Organising these activities is undertaken on a volunteer basis.</p> |
| <p>6.9 Information Sharing System</p> | <p>A library (password protected section of the SLA website) has been established as the primary means for members to share information, communicate, store and access papers and other resources. Access to the library comes with SLA membership.</p> <p>Management of the library will be undertaken on a volunteer basis with</p> |

| Element | Guidelines |
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| | manageable support from the Operating Committee. The costs of administration and maintenance of the library (which are minimal) are covered by SLA membership fees. |
| 6.10 Operating Costs | <p>Costs outside those covered by the membership fee and related to the operation of the SLA will be on a 'user pays' basis. That is, members (and possibly guests) will pay costs or fees up front for activities, e.g. the Annual Conference or other events.</p> <p>Any excess of funds collected on this basis and not used for the intended purpose will be held in the Association bank account and used for legitimate SLA operating purposes, as approved by the Operating Committee.</p> <p>Excess funds will be kept to a minimum.</p> |
| 6.11 Administration | <p>Administration tasks as identified by the Operating Committee or others (and outside the scope of the transactional work of the Secretariat) are undertaken on a volunteer basis, i.e. members volunteer to complete them.</p> <p>Key administration related tasks include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining the SLA library. • Custodianship of this Charter. • Custodianship of other key systems such as the Operating Committee Guidelines. <p>Members are discouraged from volunteering to complete tasks if they are unsure of their ability to do so.</p> |

7. Control

The primary control on the SLA as defined in this Charter is through the obligations members have to each other for its successful and positive operation.

In the absence of members exercising these obligations, the SLA will cease to exist.

8. Audit

This Charter and its operation will be audited at approximately three-year intervals. The purpose of this audit is to assess if the SLA in operation is delivering its intended purpose.

This audit will be commissioned by the Operating Committee of the day and undertaken by a small team of members and possibly one or two non-members for peer review. A brief audit report including findings and recommendations will be produced for the Operating Committee who will distribute it to all members.