

Academic leadership behaviours

Quality	Explanation	What does this look like in a leader?
(Summarised from the literature: the best predictors of future leadership capability)		Expanded and illustrated in discussion with University of Bath academic leaders
<b>Cognitive ability</b>	Can analyse a context and comprehend complex situations	Assessing the situation to determine a way forward, but able to see what really matter without getting paralysed by over-analysis. Having clear “big picture” ideas but also thinking through the implementation.
<b>Learning agility</b>	Motivation to pick up new skills and ways of thinking and applying them in new situations	Tapping into the knowledge, wisdom and imagination of others. Learning from that and from them and adapting your views. Getting yourself into positions to learn, and taking responsibility for disseminating what you’ve taken on board.
	Creativity and systems thinking: seeing and making opportunities beyond the immediate problem	Thinking through the wider ramifications of what you’re proposing, especially for operational colleagues who will be the people who make it happen. Crossing out of your home discipline: thinking of implications beyond your immediate sphere of influence.
<b>Social skills and emotional intelligence</b>	Forming relationships: getting along and getting support of colleagues	Forming trusting relationships through support and integrity; deliver what you say you will, keep confidences, have a consistent message. Being self-aware about your communication style and adapting your message and messenger depending on the audience. Putting disproportionate effort into individuals to solve difficult problems and therefore build for the future.
	A broad and cooperative network: connections they can access, quality as well as quantity	Being active and putting effort into maintaining cohorts and collaborations, not just with existing friends, allies and sympathisers. Ensure that influential individuals understand what you can deliver so that they can speak for you.
	Managing yourself: dealing constructively with adversity, acting with dignity and integrity	Staying open to people so that you can connect with them, while being able to take care of your own emotional reactions. This is not the same as a “thick skin;” you still need an emotional register. Understand you haven’t perfect knowledge. Raising difficult issues without being confrontational.
	Political skills: ability to read an audience, decode unspoken rules, find solutions that satisfy the often competing interests of key power brokers	Working out where the real power lies and making connections, taking time to work out the motivations of influential people. Being seen as your own person but make sure you listen and be objective about trade-offs between the personal and the organisational.
<b>Drive</b>	Determination to get the job done	Having analysed, be prepared to take action. Being focused on what gets you what you are looking for, but without prioritising your personal advancement and ambition.
	Willingness to take on more responsibility	Having a wish to be in there, grappling with complexity. Being keen to take it further: what did I add, what can I do next? Noticing what needs doing and taking it on. Listening to all the voices including your own, making a decision and then taking responsibility for seeing it through.
	Capacity for discomfort and sacrifice in pursuit of ambition	Taking responsibility e.g. challenging on behaviour and performance, despite personal anxiety. Be prepared to take hard decisions, especially about stopping things and allocating resources. Separate and isolate the most difficult people even when that puts you initially at odds with the prevailing narrative (toxic people can have fan clubs)
<b>In addition, we are seeking to develop as a priority for the University:</b>		
<b>Strategic mind set</b>	Seeing the world as complex and inter-dependent and working in an adaptive way	Looking forward and linking the work of your part of the University to the University strategy and priorities, and to the wider environment. Being able to form and articulate a compelling vision of progress while working positively with ambiguity and adapting plans as new challenges emerge.
<b>Business/ commercial acumen</b>	Taking responsibility for understanding the finances of operations and decisions	Asking questions of the financial situation of their work, taking it into account in decision making (along with other factors). Working with colleagues to understand how financial systems work and managing finances well. Giving senior leaders confidence that they can engage in discussions about the financial position and the exposure to risk.