

# Erasmian Leadership Profile

Leading for impact,  
the Erasmian Way



# Introduction

Leadership at Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR) should be supportive of living and realising the mission<sup>1</sup>, strategy, and values<sup>2</sup>. This document defines the Erasmian Leadership Profile, which is designed and aligned with this purpose.

The Erasmian Leadership Profile comprises the foundation for leadership at EUR. The guiding principles, competencies, attitudes, and behaviours, serve to unify EUR by providing

a common framework on leadership. The profile provides an aspirational standard and a common language for a dialogue regarding leadership at EUR.

## Defining leadership

A **leader** is anyone who directs their energy and the energy of their followers to the achievement of a common goal.

**Leadership** is not about only about having and embodying a vision, it also requires encouraging people’s commitment to achieve shared objectives. Leadership emerges when a leader interacts with others to help achieve a vision.

An **Erasmian leader** strives to lead for impact the Erasmian way, meaning they are engaged with the Erasmian Values, they inspire and facilitate people to create positive societal impact across all areas of work, including education, research, operations, and engagement. They are positive role models, enable and engage others in their development and performance, and drive achievement effectively.

A **manager** at EUR is a formal role which contains many aspects of leadership. Management is about organising and facilitating resources, especially people, to effectively deliver results. Providing clarity on roles and responsibility, delegating, and effective feedback are also part of management. Management shares many commonalities with leadership.

# Erasmian Leadership Profile components

## Personal leadership Know and show your authentic self

It is widely recognised that good leadership begins with self-awareness. Thus, the Erasmian Leadership Profile starts with personal leadership. Leaders must first put work into reflecting on and understanding their own feelings, biases, behaviours, and ambitions, as well as on their outcomes, which provides a more solid basis for productive interactions with others and the environment.

## Leading others (e.g., a team, or supervising a PhD student) Focus on having a positive impact on others

A person takes on leadership when they influence and motivate others towards a common goal. Having mastered self-awareness is a prerequisite for leading others successfully, namely a team or a department. Leadership within a team is about mobilising ownership and commitment with others to jointly deliver a shared thought, inspiration, vision. Ensuring that one has a positive impact on others in any interaction and decision, is, in essence, successful team leadership.

## Leading an organisation (e.g., a faculty or service) Focus on having a positive impact on the organisation (and beyond)

Leaders at the top of organisational units (e.g., a faculty or service department) have an even greater responsibility, as their task is to balance their personal leadership, leadership of teams or groups of people as well as an added layer of responsibility for a broader group of stakeholders, and the ability to manage complex systems. Leadership of university units is about providing a framework of roles, processes, procedures, etc., to stimulate and guide the contributions of those people. Those leaders carry the additional duty of enacting and leveraging the universities mission “to create positive societal impact”.

The principles of the Erasmian Leadership Profile are inspired by the five Erasmian Values: open-minded, world citizenship, connection, entrepreneurship, and engagement with society.

The three levels of leadership map onto four principles supported by research<sup>3</sup>:

**Be a role model**  
A leader’s ability to be aware of their own values, to reflect on themselves and their actions, to lead with integrity, and to inspire with vulnerability and responsibility.

**Enable and engage others**  
A leader’s ability to care for and empower others, which they demonstrate by being trustworthy, open-minded, and compassionate towards others and their views. They engage in constructive dialogue, foster a psychologically safe environment, and empower others.

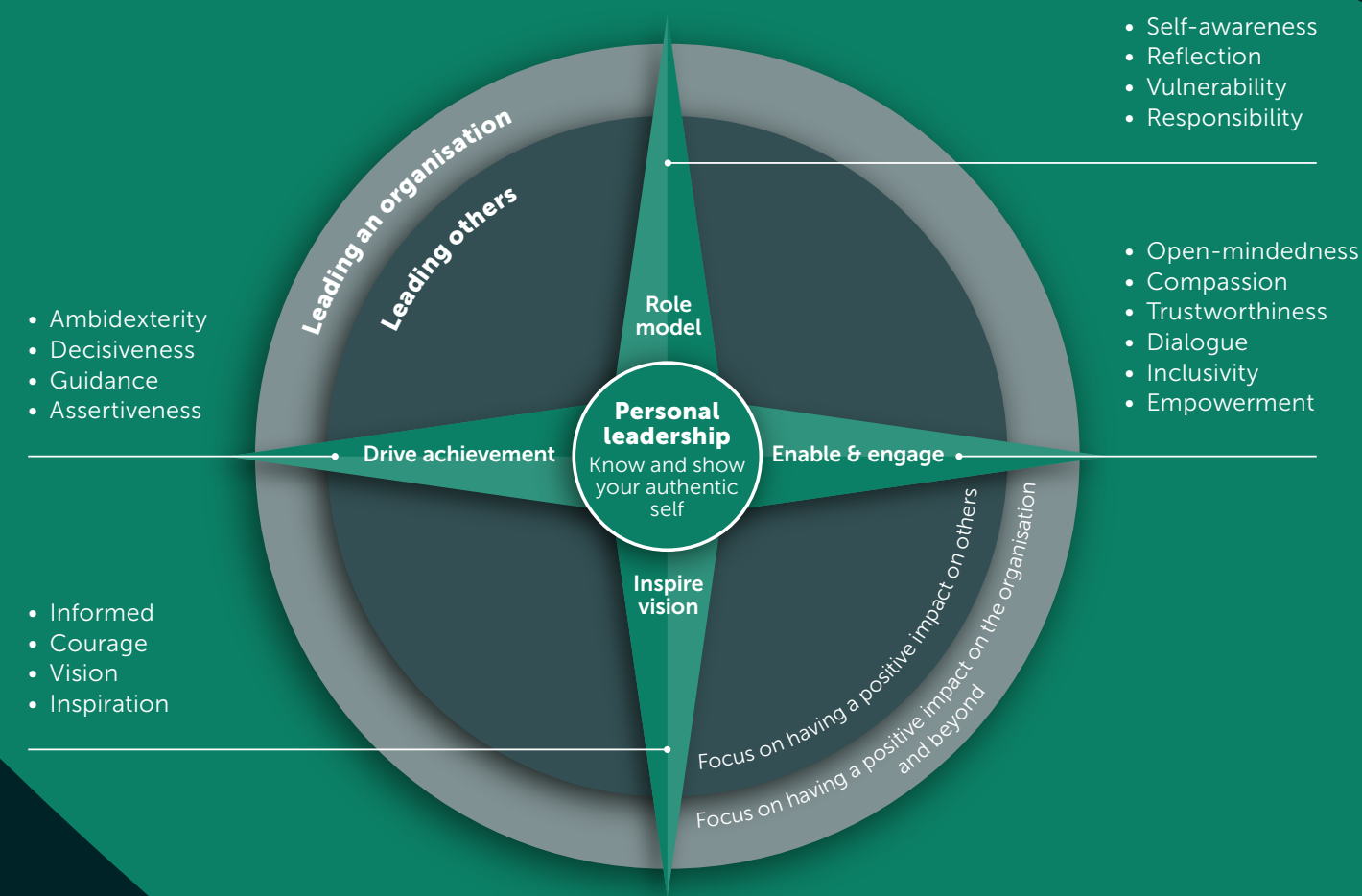
**Inspire vision**  
A leader’s ability to challenge the status quo and responsibly move the organisation, society, and science forward by generating an inspiring vision, based on informed and courageous ideas.

**Drive achievement**  
A leader’s ability to have a plan and guide others to make it happen by being decisive, setting boundaries, stepping up when necessary and by balancing the tensions of different contextual demands.

1 Mission: “Creating positive societal impact”.  
2 Erasmian values: “open-minded, world citizenship, connecting, entrepreneurship, and engagement with society”.

3 On ‘the Big X of Leadership’ by the Erasmus Centre for Leadership (performance [task]- people [relation]-, progress [change]-, and principle [ethics]-oriented leadership).

# Erasmian Leadership Profile



Erasmian leaders strive towards the exemplary attitudes and behaviours as displayed in the table below across the four leadership principles, starting with personal leadership and for leading others. Erasmian leaders in more senior positions also excel in attitudes and behaviours related to leading organisations. In addition, Erasmian leaders strive to uphold and display the Erasmian Values: 'open-minded, world citizenship, connection, entrepreneurship, and engagement with society'.

Leadership Principle	Leadership Competencies	Leadership Attitudes and Behaviours		
		Personal leadership <i>Know and show your authentic self</i>	Leading others <i>Focus on having a positive impact on others</i>	Leading an organisation <i>Focus on having a positive impact on the organisation (and beyond)</i>
Role model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Self-awareness</li><li>Reflection</li><li>Vulnerability</li><li>Responsibility</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Identify your core values and purpose</li><li>Know your strengths and weaknesses</li><li>Understand your ego, biases and other thought patterns/ feelings that govern your interactions with others</li><li>Reflect regularly on what (de)energises and touches you (positively &amp; negatively)</li><li>Reflect on your mistakes and learn from them</li><li>Proactively seek feedback from others</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Dare to be vulnerable (e.g., share uncertainty, when you don't have the answers, or when you make a mistake)</li><li>Seek feedback and work with it</li><li>Keep your promises (walk your talk)</li><li>Role model expected behaviours</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Operate from your personal and organisation's values</li><li>Bring your whole self to work</li><li>Consider the unintended negative consequences of your decisions</li></ul>
Enable & engage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Open-mindedness</li><li>Compassion</li><li>Trustworthiness</li><li>Dialogue</li><li>Inclusivity</li><li>Empowerment</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Trust towards others as a default attitude</li><li>Listen actively and be open and curious to different (generational/ cultural) perspectives</li><li>Build empathy to understand when and where others need help and act upon it</li><li>Regularly explore the perspective of the other</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Build a psychologically and socially safe environment in the team</li><li>Create space for others to contribute</li><li>Foster diversity and inclusion and cultural sensitivity</li><li>Develop team members to grow to their full potential</li><li>Delegate effectively and show faith in the capabilities of others</li><li>Facilitate that team members work in positions of strength as much as possible</li><li>Discuss failures respectfully and stimulate a collective learning culture</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Stimulate trust building throughout the organisation</li><li>Safeguard and promote psychological and social safety throughout the organisation</li><li>Pay attention to and invest in growing people in the organisation</li><li>Create synergies by stimulating and enabling collaboration across team and organisational boundaries</li></ul>
Inspire vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Informed</li><li>Courage</li><li>Vision</li><li>Inspiration</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Dare to think outside of the box</li><li>Identify the area where you can make the biggest impact in the organisation and take action</li><li>Experiment, learn and iterate</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Involve the team in creating the vision, and ensure everyone understands it and can contribute to it</li><li>Ensure structures and a culture wherein the vision is continuously reflected upon</li><li>Encourage entrepreneurial ideas from team members</li><li>Encourage team members to explore roles where they can make the biggest impact</li><li>Stimulate reflection on the progress within the team</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Model and radiate the organisational vision</li><li>Anticipate and scan the future demands on the organisation and adapt to changing contexts and demands</li><li>Identify opportunities for generating positive societal impact</li><li>Stimulate experimentation and innovation throughout the organisation</li></ul>
Drive achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Ambidexterity</li><li>Decisiveness</li><li>Guidance</li><li>Assertiveness</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Identify and clearly communicate positions of own responsibility</li><li>Set personal goals and take timely action towards them</li><li>Anticipate needs of others and tasks to come and adapt where necessary</li><li>Escalate issues in a timely fashion, if needed</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Set boundaries for the team/ department regarding what is priority and what not</li><li>Ensure the vision is broken down into achievable strategic objectives</li><li>Recognise and reward people appropriately for achievement</li><li>Provide clarity on the roles and responsibilities within the team</li><li>Provide timely feedback and coaching team members</li><li>Communicate relevant information up and down the organisation in a timely manner</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Work towards defining quality standards and communicate them clearly</li><li>Clarify expectations and assumptions with stakeholders</li><li>Benchmark with the external environment and scan for opportunities</li><li>Ensure adequate resources are available for reaching objectives within the organisation</li><li>Balance resources for innovation (change) with running the organisation (run)</li><li>Dare to make tough decisions (even when unpopular)</li><li>Create win-win situations</li></ul>