



Future Leaders Applicant Information Pack

Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) is the major sponsor of Future Leaders.
The Sylvia Rodger Academy is an initiative of Autism CRC, which receives funding from the Australian Government.

March 2020



Australian Government
Department of Industry, Science,
Energy and Resources

Business
Cooperative Research
Centres Program

autismcrc.com.au

Table of contents

Introduction.....	3
Program activities.....	4
Online modules	4
Residential workshop	5
Practical experience	6
Mentoring	7
Graduation	8
Evaluation	8
Application process.....	9
Completing Part A (Online form)	9
Completing Part B (Selection questions)	10
Online form	10
PowerPoint	11
Video	11
Being offered a place	12
Additional information about the application questions	12
Is this program right for you?	15
Self-assessment checklist	15
What do you mean by leadership?	16
Find out more information.....	17

Introduction

Thank you for your interest in the Future Leaders. We are excited to be able to offer autistic adults from across Australia the opportunity to apply for our 2020 program.

This Application Information Pack is intended to:

- Explain the different activities which form Future Leaders
- Help you to determine if this program may be right for you
- Explain the application process.

Please refer to our website for other information regarding the program including its purpose and history.

<https://www.autismcrc.com.au/sylvia-rodger-academy/future-leaders>

Eligibility criteria

To be eligible to apply for the 2020 Future Leaders Program an applicant must:

- be an autistic adult
- be aged 18 or older (**with no upper age limit!**) on 1 June 2020
- live in Australia (as an Australian citizen or permanent resident)
- be willing and available to participate in all of the program activities, and
- have an interest in both
 - making a positive difference in their community
 - exploring and developing their leadership potential

Program activities

Online modules

The first part of Future Leaders which you will complete is a series of 4 online modules. The first one will start on **Monday June 8**. Each module will run for 2 weeks before the next module opens. Like the rest of the program, these modules have been designed in conjunction with autistic leaders.

If you haven't studied online before, **don't worry**. Future Leaders **isn't** a formal course. We won't ask you to write essays or memorise definitions for different kinds of leadership for a test. Instead, the modules are an opportunity to **start thinking about the leadership strengths you already have and how you might be able to grow as a leader and work towards your goals**.

What we will ask you to do is:

- **explore information** (articles, videos etc.) about different areas related to leadership
- **reflect on that information** (and who you are as a leader) through the **activities**
- **share your responses** to those activities and the thoughts you have about the topic with others in the group (if you feel comfortable doing so).

We estimate that you will need to allow approximately **2 hours a week** to work on the modules. There will be more content and activities available than you will be able to complete in this time, but not all of them are considered essential.

The resources and activities are broken into **three categories** to help you to choose what to focus on:

- **Required** – These are resources you need to look at or activities **you need to complete** before the residential workshop.
- **Recommended** - These are resources or activities we would **like you to complete if you can**. But you do not have to if you are not able to.
- **Extension** – These are activities and resources which are available **if you would like to explore the topic further**. We **do not** expect you to view or complete these

We will also have one **online discussion session** for each module, which you may choose to

attend via **video conferencing** software. This is another great opportunity to start getting to know other Future Leaders and members of the Project Team.

The 4 modules are:

- Self-discovery and goal setting
- Leadership
- Advocacy and influence
- Resilience and wellbeing

There will also be 2 weeks between the end of the 4th module and the residential workshop for you to catch up on anything you may have missed.

Here are some useful things to know about the modules:

- Each module includes a range of videos, reading and activities
- Sometimes you will be given a **choice** between a **written resource** and a **video resource**. This is to allow for the fact that people learn best in different ways
- Future Leaders are **strongly encouraged** to start discussing the topics and interacting online so they can start to get to know each other before the workshop
- **There won't be any tests or graded assessments.** We are just looking for people to show that they have engaged with the resources we have made available and thought about the questions and activities we have provided.
- Future Leaders will be able to go back and look at the modules later on in the program (or even after it finished) if they would like to

Residential workshop

The residential workshop will be held between **Friday August 28th** and **Monday August 31st**. You would arrive at the workshop venue on Friday afternoon and head home on Monday afternoon.

The workshop will be attended by all 2020 Future Leaders and Project Team members. There may also be some guests and support staff from Autism CRC and/or Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect).

We consider attending the workshop to be an essential part of the Future Leaders experience.

Activities at the workshop may include:

- Presentations and discussions on leadership related topics

- Sessions with mentors to develop and refine leadership goals and planning
- Question and Answer sessions
- Optional social activities (such as a movie night or walk around the local area)
- Group and individual photos

The workshop is a flexible space. It is not compulsory to attend a particular session and people are free to position themselves in a way which makes them feel comfortable and able to participate (move about the room, sit in bean bags, colour in etc.) as long as it doesn't interfere with another Future Leader's ability to participate.

Important things to know:

- Meals, transport and accommodation will be provided
- The residential workshop will be held in Brisbane
- The workshop will take place at the same site as the accommodation to allow participants to use their rooms as a retreat space
- You will have the option to stay at the hotel with the rest of the group, even if you already live at the same city as the workshop
- If you would like additional snacks beyond the meals provided you will need to bring or purchase these yourself

Information about the workshop venue, including menus and photos (both of the venue and the people who will be there) will be provided in advance. As part of accepting your place in the program, you will be asked to complete an online form which asks you for your emergency contacts, dietary preferences and questions about how you best learn. You will also be given a **Preparation and Wellbeing Toolkit** to complete to help you to prepare for the experience.

Voluntary practical experience

The voluntary practical experience is an opportunity to further explore and develop your leadership skills and potential by undertaking a project informed by your leadership goals.

Throughout the Future Leaders Program, you will spend time developing and refining your goals as a leader in the community, and planning how to achieve these. This will be conducted with the support of an experienced mentor. The practical experience for this program includes a time commitment of a minimum of 50 hours working towards these leadership goals. **Everyone's practical experience will be different.** This is because it is based around your **goals** and the changes you want to see in your community.

The 50 hour placement component to comprise of activity that reflects your goals, and practical and personal skill development (a practicum, rather than placement).

Here is a couple of examples of how that may look:

- Mary wants to change autistic employment, as she knows there are many barriers. However, Mary hasn't been in the workplace for 20 years. They undertake a 40-hour placement with a corporate organisation to understand what the workplace is like these days.
- Elise wants to teach people about autism through public speaking but isn't yet confident. Her placement experience is to develop a presentation for corporate organisations, practice this, and then deliver it to 2 organisations in our network.
- Jack is often contacted by parents of newly diagnosed kids. They are passionate about giving them a strengths-based understanding of autism. They then do placement at their peak-state based autism agency to collate resources from web-based searches, then works with them to re-develop their resources for parents.

Mentoring

As part of the program, you will be mentored by an autistic leader or Project Team member during your voluntary practical experience.

You will be matched to a mentor during the online modules and will meet them during the residential workshop. During the residential workshop, you will conduct initial group mentoring sessions to develop and refine your leadership goals and plans. Your mentor will then arrange your first mentoring session **before leaving the residential workshop**.

During your practical experience you will be able to contact your mentor to ask questions or initiate more mentoring sessions. You will also have the option to have a final mentoring session once you complete the program to help you plan your next steps.

Please be aware that the mentoring sessions may not happen face to face. Your mentor may not live in the same town or city as you. You and your mentor will discuss the best way for you to connect with each other (face to face, skype, phone call etc.)

You will also be given a mentoring guide before you start being mentored. This will help to outline what the expectations are for the mentoring relationship (both for you and your mentor).

Graduation

After completing the program you will receive a certificate of graduation. At this stage there is no national formal graduation event planned for the 2020 program, though this may change in the future.

Evaluation

Future Leaders participants will be invited to take part in evaluation activities related to the program. This helps us to improve future programs and may include online surveys, focus groups and/or interviews. You would be provided with information sheets and asked for your consent before participating in any evaluation activities. These activities may take place at the start of the program, during the program, and after you have graduated.

Application process

Applications for our 2020 program will open on Monday April 13, 2020 and will **close at 5pm AEST on Friday April 24, 2020**.

There are 2 parts to the application.

- **Part A** is an online form that will ask you questions about who you are and some of your experience.
- **Part B** is a series of selection questions that can be answered through your choice of an online form, PowerPoint presentation or video.

At the end of the online form you will also be asked some marketing questions (such as where you heard about Future Leaders). You will also be asked to confirm that you are eligible to apply for the program and that to the best of your knowledge everything you have recorded as part of your application is true and correct.

You need to submit **both parts** of your application by **5pm AEST on Friday April 24, 2020**.

Key dates for applications

Applications open	April 13
Applications close	April 24 at 5 PM (AEST)
Expected notification of outcome (via email)	May 29
Program starts	June 8

Completing Part A (Online form)

Part A is an online form which asks some general information about you and your experience.

The “**About You**” section asks you to provide information such as your name and your email address as well as things like where you live and your pronouns.

The information requested in the “**Your Experience**” section will allow us to understand more about your background and build a profile of your interests and experiences. This helps us understand where you have come from and what you are currently doing and provides us with information which may help us to match you to an appropriate mentor if you are accepted into the program.

You do not need to have experience relevant to every question in this section to be considered for this program. For instance, you do not need to be currently working, to have formal qualifications or to have had experience in formal leadership roles.

Completing Part B (Selection questions)

Part B is a series of five selection questions which can be answered in your choice of any one of the three different formats described in this section.

Please do not include any links to external websites or videos in your responses, as these will not be considered by the selection panel.

1. Why would you like to be part of the leadership program?

Hint: You might like to share what motivates you to develop and demonstrate your leadership skills.

2. Why do you think you are ready for this opportunity?

Hint: Think about how it might assist you to learn, grow and help others.

3. What are the 1 or 2 main areas (or issues) that you are most passionate about as a leader or change maker? Why are they important to you?

4. What are some of your plans or ideas for creating a positive difference in your community?

Hint: Your plans and ideas do not need to be well developed. We are looking people who would benefit from training and mentoring, to reach their leadership potential.

5. What would you see as the value in connecting with other Future Leaders?

Hint: Consider both what you might receive and what you might share or do to encourage other Future Leaders in the 2020 group

Part B Option 1 - Online form

The first option for addressing the five selection questions is using an online form. If you choose this option you will click the link to the Part A & B version of the Application Form from the website and write your responses to each of the selection questions after you complete Part A. You will have between **50 to 150 words** to answer **each** question.

Hint: Consider typing your answers into a Word document before filling out the online form, this will help you keep within word count and will allow you to save your answer in case of survey malfunction.

Part B Option 2 - PowerPoint presentation

The second option to answer the selection questions is to prepare a PowerPoint presentation. This method allows you to incorporate both writing and images into your responses.

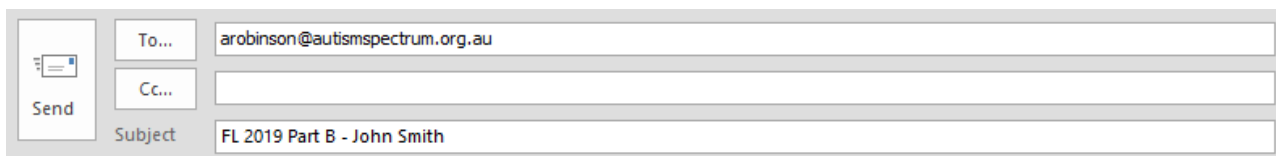
You will have up to 2 slides of content to address each question.

In addition to this, you may also have:

- a **title slide** at the start of your presentation, and;
- a slide showing each question (as long as those slides **do not contain any other text**)

Please use a minimum 20pt easy to read font (such as Arial) with no embedded video addressing the questions or additional notes beyond the slides. Any embedded video or additional notes included will not be considered by the selection panel.

If you choose this option you will click the link to the Part A version of the Application Form from the website. After you have completed and submitted Part A via the online form you will email your completed presentation to arobinson@autismspectrum.org.au by **5pm AEST on April 24, 2020** with “FL Application Part B” and your full name in the subject line.

A screenshot of an email composition form. On the left is a 'Send' button with a paper plane icon. To its right are three input fields. The first is labeled 'To...' and contains the email address 'arobinson@autismspectrum.org.au'. The second is labeled 'Cc...' and is empty. The third is labeled 'Subject' and contains the text 'FL 2019 Part B - John Smith'.

Please ensure you include your full name in both the email subject line and the title slide of your presentation so we can match it to your Part A responses.

It may take a few days for our Project Officer to respond to your email containing your PowerPoint to confirm we have received it (especially if you submit it over the weekend or on the closing date).

Part B Option 3 - Video

The third option for addressing the five selection questions is through a video.

This might involve you speaking to the camera directly or having a friend or family member interview you using the selection questions. You will have up to **60 seconds** of edited video to address each question. After filming your video you will need to edit it and upload it to either DropBox or as an **unlisted** YouTube video (we won't be able to access it if it is listed as private).

Instructions for uploading and sharing videos on both of these websites can be found online, including the examples listed below:

- <https://blogs.dropbox.com/dropbox/2015/05/share-large-files/>
- <https://blogs.constantcontact.com/how-to-upload-video-to-youtube/>

If you choose this option you will click the link to the Part A version of the Application Form from the website. After you have completed and submitted Part A via the online form, you will then need to email a link to your video to arobinson@autismspectrum.com.au by 5pm AEST on April 24, 2020 with "FL Application Part B" and your full name in the subject line.



Please ensure you include your full name in both the email subject line and the title/file name of your video so we can match it to your Part A responses.

It may take a few days for our Project Officer to respond to your email containing your video link to confirm we have received it (especially if you submit it over the weekend or on the closing date).

Being offered a place

You will receive an **email** to let you know whether you are being offered a place in the program sometime **between Monday May 25 and Friday May 29**. We cannot advise when during this period you are likely to hear.

If you are offered a place in the program you will have until **Wednesday 3 June** to respond to the email and confirm your acceptance. You will also be asked to complete another online form to provide things like your contact details (phone number and address), dietary preferences, accessibility needs and emergency contacts.

The first online module will start on **Monday June 8**.

Additional information about the application questions

This section is for people who have read the application form and the other information provided in this document but are **still unsure** about what they need to provide.

If you feel confident that you already understand what the questions are asking you do not need to read this section.

Part A Q6 Describe some of the ways you've been involved in making a positive difference in your community both now and/or in the past.

There are many ways you may have been involved in making a positive difference in your community. Some examples are giving presentations, being part of a committee/advisory group, collaborating with others in the community who are passionate about a particular issue, writing and blogging, giving radio or TV interviews, helping organize community events or advocating for yourself or others.

You may have lots of things to share here, or only a few things. If you have a lot of things to share you might need to choose the experiences which are most notable or relevant. You can also include experiences that are not directly related to autism or disability.

If you aren't sure which examples are most relevant to include you may want to ask a friend or family member for their opinion.

Part A Q7 Describe the skills and personal characteristics that you think give you potential to be a successful leader.

There are lots of different skills and personal characteristics that people can use in leadership. If you aren't sure what skills and personal characteristics to include, you might want to search online for examples of leadership characteristics. You could also ask a friend or family member for their thoughts.

Part B Q3 What are the 1 or 2 main areas (or issues) that you are most passionate about as a leader or change maker?

These areas may be **broad** (example: making education more inclusive) or **specific** (example: improving the accessibility of public transport in country areas).

Part B Q4 What are some of your plans or ideas for creating a positive difference in your community?

People will have different responses to this question, and have spent different amounts of time thinking about and working towards their goals.

One of the things that Future Leaders does is work with you to help figure out what your goals are and set a path towards reaching them. This means you don't need to have to have well developed plan of want to do and how you will get there.

Part B Q5 What would you see as the value in connecting with other Future Leaders?

An important part of Future Leaders is the opportunity to be part of a group of people who learn from and encourage each other. It's important to consider **both parts** of this question in your response.

For example things you might **receive** might include being able to spend time with other autistic adults (if you haven't had that experience before) or learning from others with more public speaking experience about how they write abstracts for conferences.

For example things you might **give** might include sharing examples of skills or experiences that you have had that others may not.

Is this program right for you?

Future Leaders are a diverse group of autistic adults. They come to the program with a broad range of types and levels of experience (both as people and as leaders). What they have in common is a desire to positive impact their communities and use their influence to make the world a better place for autistic people. They are also interested in exploring their potential as leaders to help them in their desire to influence positive change.

If this sounds like you, and you meet the eligibility requirement, we would encourage you to consider applying for the program.

Some of our Future Leaders graduates have shared their thoughts about they think would benefit from being part of the program, which you can view in a short video [here](#).

If you are still unsure if this is the right program for you. Our Project Team have also put together two other resources which you may use to help you work out whether to apply for Future Leaders.

Self-assessment checklist

The following dot points highlight some of the characteristics that would make you a suitable candidate for this program. You may identify with some of these attributes and not others and we don't expect anyone to relate to all of them.

We won't be asking you to tell us which dot points apply to you. Instead, they are intended simply to help you to self-assess whether this program is for you, and to help you to start thinking about what you might want to tell us about yourself in your application.

- I want to be a positive influence
- I am motivated to make a difference to my community
- I think about how the world could be more inclusive both for me and for others
- I could see myself in a leadership role
- I have been exploring my leadership potential
- I am involved in my community but would not currently describe my role as that of a leader
- I would like to collaborate with others to see change happen or improve my community
- I would like to learn more about what being a leader involves and how to get started
- I am passionate about seeing change in relation to specific areas or issues (public transport, community attitudes towards autism, bullying in schools, inclusive sport etc.)

What do we mean by leadership?

We asked members of a Project Team to share some of their thoughts about **what leadership is** and **who makes a good leader**. This is what they shared:

Different leaders have different skills and behaviours. Good leaders can have various communication styles and those who prefer sharing through writing or creative expression can be equally as effective as those who like giving large public presentations. Diversity is an important part of leadership and there no such thing as an ideal leader.

Leadership is about influence. It's about more than holding a specific role that gives you authority over other people. People who have lots of leadership potential may not yet have had the opportunity to be on a committee or lead a team of people.

Leaders make their impact in a variety of ways. Some leaders are naturally comfortable being up the front of a group of people. Other strong leaders may prefer to work in the background most of the time and encourage others and influence change by interacting with small groups or even one-on-one.

Leadership is about creating a positive difference for others. Personal goals and self-advocacy are both important, but they aren't the same thing as leadership. Leaders are passionate about seeing things change in their communities that would benefit others and not just themselves. Importantly, they want to be actively involved in seeing that change happen.

Find out more information

Please see [the Future Leaders page on the Autism CRC website](#) for more information about the program including answers to some of the questions you may have.

If the question you'd like to ask is not answered on the website (including the FAQs on the Applicant Page) or in this Applicant Information Pack, you can email Ainslie on arobinson@autismspectrum.com.au. Please note that Ainslie is part time and may take 3-4 days to respond to your email.

**Autism CRC**

The University of Queensland
Long Pocket Precinct
Level 3, Foxtail Building
80 Meiers Road
Indooroopilly Qld 4068
T +61 7 3377 0600
E info@autismcrc.com.au
W autismcrc.com.au



@autismcrc

Our values

**Inclusion**

Working together with those with the lived experience of autism in all we do

**Innovation**

New solutions for long term challenges

**Independence**

Guided by evidence based research, integrity and peer review

**Cooperation**

Bringing benefits to our partners; capturing opportunities they cannot capture alone



Australian Government
Department of Industry, Science,
Energy and Resources

Business
Cooperative Research
Centres Program