Mastercard Emerging Leaders Cyber Initiative

For women & non-binary leaders shaping the future of Canadian cybersecurity

Year 4 (2025/2026)

The **Mastercard Emerging Leaders Cyber Initiative (ELCI)** is a leadership program from Rogers Cybersecure Catalyst at Toronto Metropolitan University. It is designed to empower women and non-binary leaders seeking to advance into executive-level positions in cybersecurity or related fields. Through the program, participants gain an in-depth understanding of organizational digital risks and mitigation strategies, enhanced leadership skills, and access to a supportive, high-impact professional network.

Rogers Cybersecure Catalyst is grateful for the continued support of Mastercard Canada, whose investment is supporting the development of a diverse community of cybersecurity leaders and growing the talent pipeline Canada needs to secure our nation's digital transformation. Through its contribution to the Catalyst, Mastercard is building on its commitment to supporting Canadian innovation and technology talent while also driving diversity in the cybersecurity sector

Why ELCI?

Individual Benefits

- Develop a strategic, executive-level understanding of cybersecurity risks and how to safeguard organizations against evolving threats;

- Strengthen your business acumen and leadership capabilities to drive cybersecurity strategy at the highest levels;

- Unlock your full leadership potential with executive training tailored for women and non-binary professionals in cybersecurity;

- Gain exclusive mentorship and build powerful connections with top industry leaders and decision-makers;

- Engage with experts who are shaping the future of cybersecurity and digital risk management;

- Become part of a network of cybersecurity leaders, with continued access to exclusive events and opportunities.

Organizational Benefits

- Strengthen your organizational leadership capacity;

- Enhance employee engagement and retention by investing in diverse, high-potential leaders within your organization;

- Deepen organizational knowledge of the latest digital risk mitigation practices and strategies

- Advance equity and inclusion by fostering a diverse leadership pipeline in cybersecurity.

"Programs like this are so important, especially in cybersecurity where threats are always evolving, we need to always be learning. If you can't communicate the risks of a cyber attack or the risk of a system going down, what does that mean in dollars, in operations. I think communication is really everything in this field"

Marilena Danelon (2023/24)

ELCI Advisory Group

The ELCI program has been developed under the guidance of a globally-focused advisory group made up of Canadian public, private, and academic sector leaders:
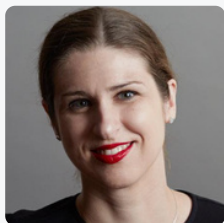
Dr. Atefeh Mashatan

Canada Research Chair;
Director, Cybersecurity Research Lab and Associate Professor,
Toronto Metropolitan University

Michèle Mullen

Director, Project Delivery Satellite Communications,
Department of National Defence

Kate Karn

Director, Public Policy
Mastercard Canada

Lloyd Komori

Board Director; Risk Management Expert;
Teacher

Robert W. Gordon

Strategic Advisor,
Canadian Cyber Threat Exchange

Seema Verma

Director of Cyber Security Programs
Rogers Communications Inc.

Cyber & Digital Risk:
Program Curriculum & Instruction

ELCI offers a comprehensive, executive-level curriculum designed to equip leaders with the skills and knowledge to proactively manage digital risks and drive cybersecurity excellence. The program is built on the philosophy that effective executive leaders must have a holistic understanding of the cybersecurity risks their organizations face—extending beyond their individual areas of expertise. To achieve this, ELCI provides in-depth explorations of a diverse range of critical cybersecurity topics.

Rather than focusing solely on technical solutions, the program addresses the full spectrum of cybersecurity considerations, preparing leaders to navigate the evolving challenges organizations face today—and in the future.

The core of ELCI's programming will be delivered through six instructor-led modules (final sequencing is subject to change). Each module will include Canadian-centric content, focusing on the operational context of learners' organizations (note: sequencing of modules is subject to change).

Canadian & Geopolitical Landscape

An exploration of the breadth and depth of an organization's digital threat landscape. Learn about the current and emerging Canadian and global risks and how this can impact your organizations. Understand the Canadian cyber sector, including resources and support for ensuring resilience.

Law & Regulation

A deep dive into the organizational risks and obligations posed by cybersecurity, privacy and data protection laws. Understand the legal implications of cyber risk, including case law and regulatory landscapes. Emphasis on Canadian operational context and legal updates.

Business, Risk & Governance

Build a business case for cyber investment by assessing and articulating benefit, cost risk and ROI. Learn about governance, risk and compliance frameworks and their applications within your organization.

Supply Chain & Third Party Dependency

An in-depth look at an organization's third-party ecosystem. Gain an understand of supply chain dependencies and learn how to assess and mitigate these risks.

Leading Through a Crisis

Examine incident response planning and considerations, including crisis management, communications and recovery. Develop your capacity to prepare for and respond to major unforeseen events through experiential learning.

Emerging Technologies and the Future of Cyber

Delve into the key trends shifting the field, including digital assets, artificial intelligence and machine learning, quantum computing and resistance, industrial IoT and 5G edge computing.

ELCI is bringing together an expert team of instructors and faculty to deliver the cybersecurity and digital risk programming. Programming will be led by industry leaders, who will collaborate with the Catalyst team to guide the curriculum development and delivery. ELCI emphasizes the importance of learning from varied perspectives – as such each program module will include additional guest faculty, speakers and more. This transformational program equips participants with real-world strategies they can immediately apply to strengthen their organizations.

Schedule

A part-time, hybrid program, ELCI will run from September 2025 — April 2026.

In-person programming will be full days, including formal class time and social networking opportunities.

Module	Location & Dates
Module 1	In-person: Toronto | Brampton September 14 - 17, 2025
Module 2	In-person: Toronto | Brampton October 26 - 29, 2025
Module 3	In-person: Toronto | Brampton November 16 - 19, 2025
Module 4	Virtual Wednesday, January 14 / 28 & February 11 / 25, 2026 (2 hour timeslot)
Module 5	In-person: Toronto | Brampton March 22 - 25, 2026
Module 6	In-person: Toronto | Brampton April 20 - 22, 2026

Meet the Catalyst ELCI Team

Trish Dyl | Program Director

Director, Skills Development & International Programs
Rogers Cybersecure Catalyst

Trish leads the Corporate Training and Cyber Range team at the Catalyst, bringing experiential learning opportunities to public and private sector clients. With previous experience as a business development and policy leader in economic development with the Government of Ontario, Trish is able to bring her stakeholder engagement and program development skills to companies and individuals as they build their cyber resilience. She is also committed to ensuring that women excel in cybersecurity and take their place at the leadership table. Trish fosters strategic partnerships within the Canadian cybersecurity sector and the broader community, helping to advance the Catalyst's goals of bringing cybersecurity awareness to people and organizations alike

Serena Jerkovic | Program Manager

Lead, Training Programs
Rogers Cybersecure Catalyst

"Canada has a huge skills gap and a huge knowledge gap. ELCI is bringing together a diverse set of women and non-binary leaders to address that skill-set gap. We all have unique perspectives to bring when we are developing software and when we are assessing risks also associated with different tools online. They are constantly looking for opportunities to bring in other voices, opportunities to think about what harms we haven't considered and who might be able to highlight those harms."

Vanessa Thomas (2023/24)

Human Skills Development

ELCI recognizes the breadth of skills required to excel in leadership positions. The cybersecurity and digital risk curriculum is complemented by leadership and human skills programming designed to help you further develop the characteristics you need to succeed at executive levels. Engage in topics such as:

- Discovering your personal leadership style;
- Supporting personal and team mental health;
- Executive presentation skills;
- And more.

Through interactive workshops and discussions, learners explore and solidify a blend of concepts and practical skills.

The formal curriculum is supplemented with intimate fireside chats with leading women in the industry, providing a unique opportunity to learn from those who have blazed the trail before them.

The ELCI Human Skills programming is led by Sarah Lang.

Sarah Lang MA, PCC, CPCC

Executive Leadership and Communications Coach

Sarah Lang is a leadership and speaking instructor and an executive coach. She works globally as a partner with Google's Mastery Faculty community of facilitators and as a coach with corporate speech consultants. Closer to home, she is an instructor at the University of Toronto School of Continuing Studies, where she teaches Public Speaking and Leadership Presence. Sarah is a CTI-trained coach and a Professional Certified Coach (PCC). She obtained her M.A. from the Munk Centre for Global Affairs at the University of Toronto.

Programming & Supports

A range of programming and support complements core modules focused on strengthening the skills leaders need to become changemakers within the cyber sector.

Culminating Cyber Challenge Projects

Learners consolidate their program learning with a cumulative capstone project demonstrating newly developed digital risk management strategies, multi-disciplinary perspectives and executive communication skills. Working in assigned teams throughout the program, learners will be assigned a project based on a current / emerging cybersecurity challenge. The final program activity will be a presentation of these projects to an executive audience.

Access to Leads, Speakers and Industry Experts

Module leads and facilitators engage with learners one-on-one or in small groups on questions related to the program curriculum, career advancement and other topics.

Career Mentorship

Module leads and facilitators engage with learners one-on-one or in small groups on questions related to the program curriculum, career advancement and other topics.

Network Building

A significant focus of ELCI is building a supportive network. There are several opportunities for learners to work, socialize, and share ideas with each other. In addition, ELCI brings in expert guest speakers and hosts several networking receptions with senior industry leaders.

Alumni Community

Now in its fourth year, ELCI has cultivated a strong, engaged, and growing alumni network. Program participants gain exclusive access to alumni sessions, where they can connect with past cohorts, expand their professional network, and continue their leadership and cybersecurity learning beyond the program.

Who Are Our Learners?

ELCI is designed for women and non-binary leaders with oversight of organizational cybersecurity and related functions, who aspire to senior executive-level positions.

The ELCI cohort is composed of participants with a mix of technical and non-technical backgrounds. ELCI participants have, or have had, roles that take account of cybersecurity and digital risks across various business areas including, but not limited to:

- Strategy and operations,
- Finance,
- IT and cybersecurity,
- Information management,
- Law, privacy and data governance
- Risk management.

Successful candidates will possess the following qualities:

Professional achievement:
- Demonstrated expertise in their field with responsibilities that take account of digital risk.

Leadership experience:
- Proven track record of leading people and processes; 8+ years of related experience with job titles such as Senior Manager, Director, VP or equivalent.

Upward career progression:
- Successful organizational impact, with aspirations for an executive-level role.

Admissions Criteria

Applicants must currently reside in Canada and be a Canadian citizen, Permanent Resident or Convention Refugee.

Thanks to the generosity of Mastercard Canada, ELCI is offered at no cost to participants. However, participants will be responsible for their own travel and accommodation costs for the in-person residencies.

How to Apply

Step 1 - Initial application

Qualified women and non-binary individuals are invited to complete an online application, available at cybersecurecatalyst.ca/elci

Before applying please be sure that you are able to commit to the program schedule – including all five in-person residencies – as well as 8-10 hours/month outside of formal class time for group work, readings and mentor connections.

Applications are open April 30 - June 17, 2025

Note that applications will require:
- An updated resume
- A personal statement of interest (no more than 500 words)

Step 2 - Online interview & references

A shortlist of applicants will be invited to complete an **online recorded video interview** in Summer 2025. Names and email addresses of two references will also be requested at this time. References required will include:

- One professional reference: Current employer, former employer, career mentor or professor.

- One leadership reference: Someone you have managed or mentored, either formally or informally.

Step 3 - Decisions

Successful candidates will be notified by July 31, 2025.

Designed to empower women and non-binary leaders who want to shape the future of Canadian cybersecurity