Facilitator Playbook

How to run a Launchpad cohort or module — the fellowship side of the doctrine. The college side has its own syllabus and modules; this playbook is for the facilitator who runs a room of fellows, professionals, or mixed learners through the same doctrine, live.

> **Who this is for.** If you are leading a cohort — a Launchpad fellowship cohort, an Ignite Curiosity boot camp, a professional workshop, or a single module in a training program — this is your operating guide. It assumes the module template as the session contract and the shared core as the spine, and it uses the practice layer (worked exemplar, practice bank, answer keys) as the engine of the room.
>
> **The stance.** You are a facilitator, not a lecturer. The doctrine is already written — your job is to get the learners *doing* it. The best session is the one where you talked the least and the room did the most.

---

1. The cohort model

A **cohort** is a fixed group moving through the doctrine together, on a schedule, with a shared finish line. The Launchpad fellowship runs cohorts through its ladder (Ignite Curiosity → L1–L5); a professional workshop runs a compressed version. Either way, the anatomy is the same:

Element	What it is	The default for a Launchpad cohort
The spine	The sequence of sessions	The shared core: six sessions, one per doctrine cluster.
The cadence	How often you meet	Weekly, 60–75 minutes per session, plus homework between.
The room	Who is in it	Fellows at mixed levels (that's normal and good).
The engine	What learners do between and during sessions	The practice bank + the worked exemplar.
The finish	The proof of learning	A capstone-style package built on a real, closed solicitation (see §6).

An **8-week cohort** plan is in §7 if you want a ready-made schedule.

---

2. Before the cohort: prepare the room, not just the slides

1. **Set the contract.** In the first session, state plainly: *concepts are durable, tools are swappable*; no product knowledge is required or tested; the practice is the point. (This is the whole ethos of doctrine/08.)
2. **Place your learners.** Give everyone the placement self-assessment before session one. Mixed levels are fine — placement tells you who needs what during the session, and it tells the learner where they start on the ladder.
3. **Open with the exemplar.** Have every learner read the worked exemplar before session one (or read it together in session one). It is the fastest way to show the whole discipline, so every later session has a shared mental picture to hang on.
4. **Read the answer keys before you teach.** You do not need to be the expert, but you must know where the answers live — the answer keys give you model answers for every self-check, comprehension check, and exercise in the space. If a learner asks a question you don't know, the honest move is "let's find it together" — not a guess.
5. **Pick a real, closed solicitation per learner.** Every learner should bring one published, closed RFP or NOFO from SAM.gov or Grants.gov to work on through the cohort. It becomes their personal capstone object.

---

3. The session skeleton (the module template, made live)

Every session follows the same five beats. Keep the times; they are the discipline.

Beat	Time	What happens
Open the question	5 min	Ask the session's driving question (each shared-core session has one). Capture guesses. Do not answer it yet.
Teach the concept	15–20 min	Walk the assigned doctrine chapter(s). Keep it short — the reading already did the heavy lifting.

Beat	Time	What happens
Apply it to a concrete case	20–30 min	This is the heart. Run the matching practice-bank exercises (see the mapping in §4), or apply the concept to the learners' own solicitation.
Discuss	10–15 min	Use the module's discussion prompts — the ones that force a decision or a defense, not recall.
Close with the assignment	5 min	State the homework (reading + a concrete deliverable) and preview the next session.

The rule that keeps the room alive: *the learners should be doing the discipline in the Apply beat.* If you are still talking at minute 25, you have lost the session. Hand them a compliance matrix, a score, an ORBITAL — let them get their hands dirty.

---

4. Practice mapping — which exercises, when

The shared core maps to the practice bank directly. Use this as your session engine:

Shared-core session	Doctrine	Practice bank to run in the room	Homework deliverable
S1 — Where the money lives	01	D01-E2, D01-E3	SC-E1 (money map)
S2 — The pipeline shape	03, 04	D03-E2, D03-E3	SC-E2 (pipeline placement)
S3 — Reading the documents	02	D02-E2 (on a real RFP)	SC-E3 (compliance matrix) + SC-E4 (strategy reading)
S4 — The ORBITAL skeleton	06	D06-E2	D06-E3 (build an ORBITAL)

Shared-core session	Doctrine	Practice bank to run in the room	Homework deliverable
S5 — Scoring and the call	05	D05-E2, D05-E4	SC-E5 (scored pursuit sheet)
S6 — Lifecycle and the loop	07, 08	D07-E2, D07-E3	SC-E6 (lifecycle apply)

For a **track** cohort (Strategic Initiative, MBA, MPA), add the track exercises (SI-E1–E3, MBA-E1–E3, MPA-E1–E3) in the sessions that match the track's accent. The module template and the track modules tell you which sessions those are.

On answer keys: in the room, learners work first and check after. Use the answer keys for a *debrief* — "here's the shape of a strong answer" — not as a reveal before they try. The exercises page says it plainly: the answer key is for checking, not for peeking.

---

5. Facilitating well: the craft

- **Ask, don't tell.** The best prompts start with *"What would you do..."* or *"Defend a position..."* — the modules are full of them. If a learner gives a wrong answer, resist correcting; ask the question that makes them find the error.
- **Use the pipeline as the map.** Every discussion connects back to the pipeline (doctrine/03). When a learner asks "should we pursue this?", the facilitator's move is *"which stage is it in?"* — that is the doctrine working.
- **Make gates real in the room.** Run a mini gate on a learner's real solicitation: state the criteria, assemble the evidence, name the owner, make the call. Learners remember the doctrine far better after they have been the owner of a call once.
- **Mixed levels are an asset, not a problem.** Pair an L1 with an L3 for the apply beats. The L3 consolidates by explaining; the L1 learns from a peer. (This is also how the Launchpad ladder naturally works — L3s are coaching L1s.)
- **Protect the internal deadline.** Model the doctrine's own discipline: homework has a due time, not a due day, and an honest early warning beats a silent late submission. You are teaching the pipeline by running it.
- **Never let it become a lecture.** If you catch yourself explaining for more than ~20 minutes, stop and hand the room a problem.

---

6. Assessment for a fellowship cohort (no grades, just gates)

The college side grades (assessments and rubric). The fellowship side should run on **gates**, not grades — it is the doctrine applied to itself:

- **Self-checks** are for the learner, never the gradebook (doctrine/04).
- **Weekly deliverables** are the fellowship's "homework" — but assess them with a **readiness call** (Ready / Ready with conditions / Not ready) against the rubric's four criteria (correctness, completeness, doctrine use, clarity), not a letter grade.
- **The cohort capstone** is the real assessment: each learner presents a complete pursuit package (compliance matrix, ORBITAL, score, bid/no-bid, gate charter) on their real, closed solicitation, and defends it to the room. Use the capstone brief and its rubric as the contract — the cohort version just swaps the grade for a readiness call and a promotion decision on the Launchpad ladder.
- **The promotion gate.** A learner advances a level on the Launchpad ladder when their capstone clears the bar — the same way a pursuit advances a pipeline gate. That is the fellowship's version of "above the threshold."

---

7. A ready-made 8-week cohort plan

For a Launchpad fellowship cohort meeting weekly, using the shared core plus the practice layer:

Week	Session	In the room	Between sessions
0	**Kickoff + placement**	The doctrine in one hour (the exemplar read together); placement self-assessment; every learner picks their real, closed solicitation.	Read doctrine 01 + the literacy glossary.
1	**Where the money lives** (S1)	D01-E2, D01-E3 on learners' own companies.	SC-E1 money map.
2	**The pipeline shape** (S2)	D03-E2, D03-E3; run a mini qualify gate.	SC-E2 pipeline placement.

Week	Session	In the room	Between sessions
3	**Reading the documents** (S3)	D02-E2 on each learner's real RFP/NOFO; start the compliance matrix.	SC-E3 + SC-E4.
4	**The ORBITAL skeleton** (S4)	D06-E2; each learner fills the seven axes for their solicitation.	D06-E3 ORBITAL clean-up.
5	**Scoring and the call** (S5)	D05-E2, D05-E4; each learner scores their solicitation and makes a first call.	SC-E5 scored pursuit sheet.
6	**Lifecycle and the loop** (S6)	D07-E2, D07-E3; where is each learner's pursuit in the lifecycle?	SC-E6 + the exemplar's Step 6 post-mortem.
7	**Capstone workshop**	Each learner presents their full package; the room runs review gates (color-team style) on each other's work.	Final polish.
8	**Capstone + promotion**	Presentations and defense; promotion gate on the Launchpad ladder; post-mortem on the real awards.	—

That plan is the shared core, a capstone, and the practice layer welded together — no grading, no products, no slides required.

---

8. Common pitfalls, and how to avoid them

- **The lecture trap.** You talk for the whole session. *Fix:* set a timer; when it hits ~20 minutes, the room takes over.

- **The recall trap.** You ask questions people can answer by memory, so the room stays comfortable and learns nothing. *Fix:* use the decision/defense prompts; force a call and a defense.
- **The product trap.** Someone asks "how do we do this in [tool]?" — and the session slides into a tool tutorial. *Fix:* re-anchor on the doctrine. The tool is the accent; the concept is the language (doctrine/08).
- **The grading trap.** You give letter grades and the room starts optimizing for them. *Fix:* run on readiness calls and gates, per §6.
- **The fake-expert trap.** You feel you must know everything. *Fix:* you don't — you know where the answers live. The answer keys and the doctrine are the authority; model *"let's find it"* when you don't know.

---

9. The finish line

A cohort is done when every learner has produced and defended a complete pursuit package on a real, closed solicitation — and, ideally, done the post-mortem: looked up the actual published award and updated their score with what the outcome taught. That last move is the learning loop (doctrine/03, stage 9), and it is the whole point of the exercise. When your learners can do that alone, you have done your job.