

How to Read the Global OD Directory

A signal-from-noise guide for prospective participants

Use the Directory to form your own judgement, not to outsource it. Programme brands, testimonials, social-media clips and confident faculty commentary can all be useful signals, but none of them establishes practitioner formation by itself. The central question is: what are you trying to become capable of doing, and what learning architecture would responsibly form that capability?

1. Separate eligibility from suitability

- Eligibility asks whether the provider will admit you. Suitability asks whether the work, life stage, learning demands and formation route fit what you are trying to become.
- An MBA, psychology, HR, consulting or leadership background can provide useful foundations without automatically implying readiness for OD practice.
- Ask whether you are seeking exposure, specialist capability, sustained practitioner formation, or supervised consequential client-system practice.

2. Treat popularity as a different signal from formation

- Large cohorts, prominent alumni, placement visibility and social-media enthusiasm may tell you about reach, identity or participant experience. They do not by themselves show how inquiry, Use of Self, supervision, client-system practice, evaluation and withdrawal are formed.
- Look for what the programme requires rather than what participants happen to enjoy or publicise.

3. Look for competency-based design

- Use MOST and the ODN OD competency model as lenses, not as league-table scores. Ask how social, technical and influence capability is developed and demonstrated.
- Selection should make sense in relation to intended capability: prior experience, reflective capacity, client access, group-work readiness and motivation may matter differently across programme types.
- Assessment should reveal development in judgement and practice, not only retention of frameworks.

4. Read India-context signals carefully

- In high-context and authority-sensitive settings, visible faculty stature, institutional legitimacy and peer endorsement may carry more weight than the educational architecture itself. Treat these as context signals, not substitutes for evidence.
- Ask how the programme handles hierarchy, sponsor power, participant voice, dependency, conflict, multilingual realities and local institutional norms.

- Where apprenticeship, mentorship or relational learning is important but poorly documented, ask directly rather than infer absence.

Questions to ask providers

1. What kind of practitioner is this programme principally designed to form?
2. What are the selection criteria, and what do they tell me about the programme's assumptions regarding readiness for OD?
3. Where does behavioural-science inquiry enter the learning process, and how is diagnosis or co-inquiry connected to intervention?
4. What is required rather than elective in contracting, feedback, intervention, evaluation and withdrawal?
5. What opportunities exist for supervised work with consequential client systems?
6. Who observes, supervises or mentors that work, and what OD preparation and practice experience do they bring?
7. How is Use of Self developed, challenged and assessed over time?
8. How do the learning activities develop social, technical and influence capabilities, and how are these demonstrated?
9. What does the programme deliberately not claim to form?
10. What evidence can I inspect before enrolment - curriculum, fieldwork requirements, supervision arrangements, assessment design and current faculty responsibility?

Questions to ask current or former participants

- What did you have to do, not merely attend or discuss?
- Where were you observed, challenged or supervised in practice?
- What changed in how you inquire before proposing solutions?
- Which parts of the programme were required, and which depended on your own initiative outside the curriculum?
- Where did you experience tension between institutional authority and participant/client-system agency?
- What capability do you now have evidence of that you did not possess before the programme?

Choice rule: narrow first by purpose and access, then by practitioner orientation, then by formation and consequential practice. Only after that should you inspect technical classifications. Treat unresolved evidence as a question to verify, not as a negative finding.