

# Education Scotland Endorsement of Professional Learning and Leadership Programmes

## Application guidance for providers

*The Scottish College for Educational Leadership (SCEL), now the Professional Learning and Leadership team at Education Scotland, offers an endorsement process for professional learning programmes, to provide quality assurance for practitioners and providers.*

*We welcome endorsement applications from professional learning providers and look forward to working with you to make professional learning in Scotland world-leading.*

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Education Scotland

This document provides detailed information for providers about the Education Scotland endorsement process.

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## 1. Introduction

The [Scottish Government's Education Governance: Next Steps](#) in June 2017 outlines the vision and plans for a school and teacher-led system, recognising that to achieve this requires 'a world-class support system'.

With specific reference to professional learning, Next Steps confirmed that Education Scotland leads the renewed focus on professional learning and leadership, bringing clarity and coherence to the national landscape.

Within Education Scotland, the Professional Learning and Leadership team (formerly the Scottish College for Educational Leadership) has the strategic responsibility of providing quality assurance processes for the range of professional learning and leadership development opportunities in Scotland.

The endorsement process set out in this guidance is part of its work to meet that responsibility.

## 2. The national model of professional learning

Central to achieving the vision is the [national model of professional learning](#) which identifies the key principles and features of effective professional learning and offers strategic guidance for education professionals on how to support, structure and plan for professional learning.

The model offers a shared language and aspiration acting as a guide for professional learning providers to help evaluate and inform the nature and purpose of the professional learning offered.

It outlines the kind of learning that builds capacity, promotes collaborative practices and supports education professionals to be empowered, enabling them to meet the needs of all learners. It is central to the Education Scotland endorsement process.

A programme that has been endorsed by Education Scotland demonstrates that it is informed by the national model of professional learning and links effectively to the relevant professional standards and current policy context.

Programmes aligned with the principles of the national model of professional learning offer learning that is:

- Challenging, and develops thinking, knowledge, skills and understanding
- Underpinned by developing skills of enquiry and criticality
- Interactive, reflective and involves learning with and from others.

### **3. Benefits of endorsement**

Endorsement provides those who commission programmes, as well as those engaging in professional learning, assurance that endorsed programmes offer relevant, significant and sustained quality learning. Such experiences develop depth of professional learning, knowledge, skills and understanding which ultimately impacts on the quality of learning of children and young people.

Endorsed programmes have successfully passed through a robust set of criteria and feature on Education Scotland's Framework for Educational Leadership (hereafter 'the Framework')<sup>1</sup>, an online resource supporting professional learning for educational professionals at all stages of their career. The Framework will increasingly become the focus for schools and local authorities when planning and preparing their professional learning and development opportunities.

Endorsement offers professional learning providers an integrated support package to promote the programme which includes:

- The endorsed programme quality mark, including guidelines on its usage. This can be used on programme promotional materials for the period of endorsement (normally five years)
- Promotion of the programme through a range of marketing channels, including Education Scotland's website, newsletters and social media
- Detailed information on the Framework about the programme and how to apply
- Inclusion in the Framework's targeted search facility, which promotes the programme to the relevant education professionals
- The option to award certificates of completion featuring the endorsed programme quality mark.

There is no cost to providers in applying for or achieving Education Scotland endorsement.

### **4. How to apply for endorsement**

#### **4.1 Programmes seeking first endorsement**

There are three stages to the endorsement process (Figure 1) for programmes which do not hold prior endorsement either through SCEL or the GTCS:

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<sup>1</sup> The Framework: [www.scelframework.com](http://www.scelframework.com)

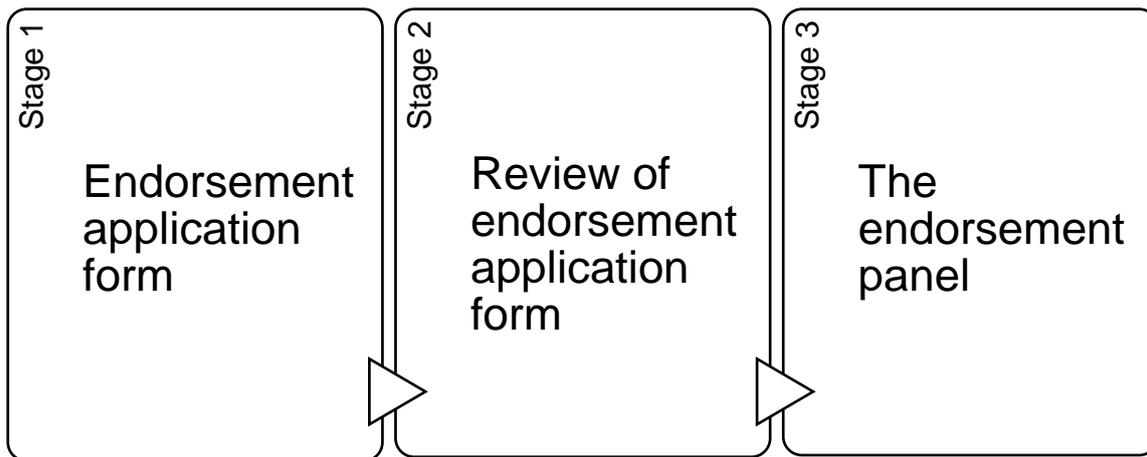


Figure 1: An overview of the endorsement process

### **Stage 1 - Completion of the endorsement application form**

A workshop is available to those wishing additional support in making an application. For details of workshop dates and locations, contact:

[edsp11@educationscotland.gov.scot](mailto:edsp11@educationscotland.gov.scot)

Please refer to the following notes when completing the endorsement application form:

#### **Section 1. Professional learning provider details**

Complete this section in full as requested. Incomplete forms will be returned and this may delay the endorsement process.

#### **Section 2. Professional learning provider background information**

Provide an introduction to your organisation (max. 300 words). This section should include the organisation's purpose, vision, size, location, reach and any further relevant information about its role in delivering professional learning.

#### **Section 3. Professional learning programme to be endorsed**

- a) Complete the programme title.
- b) Indicate whether the programme is new (yet to be delivered) or existing (has been delivered at least once).
- c) Provide an overview of the programme (max. 500 words). This section should include the relevant policy context, why the programme has been developed, who has been involved in its development, the learning outcomes, structure and duration.
- d) Tell us who the target audience is for the programme (max. 200 words). This could be, for example, local authority staff, headteachers, depute headteachers, middle school leaders, teachers or early years practitioners.

## **Section 4. Content, design and delivery of programme**

Provide detailed information on the content, design and delivery of the programme (max. 900 words), making explicit reference to the [national model of professional learning](#) and how programme elements relate to:

- Leadership of and for learning
- Professional standards and policy
- Learning-as-collaborative
- Learning by enquiring
- Learning that deepens knowledge and understanding
- Education professional as learner

You may wish to refer to the model poster with detailed information on the [key features and principles](#) of the model and/or attach programme information as supporting evidence (this will not be included as part of the word count).

## **Section 5. Quality assurance processes**

Describe your internal (and any external) quality assurance processes (max. 300 words). This section should include how you ensure equity of access, effective communication with participants before, during and after the programme, how you evaluate learning provision, collect and use participant feedback for continuous improvement and how you ensure the knowledge and skills of programme facilitators are developed.

## **Section 6. Impact of learning**

Provide one to three examples of positive impact resulting from the programme (max. 300 words each). These could be focussed on children, young people or adult learners; teacher learners; a whole school community or local authority.

If this is a new programme, tell us what you anticipate its impact will be and how you intend to monitor and evaluate this.

## **Section 7. Professional profiles**

Provide brief professional profiles (max. 200 words per person) of the key staff responsible for the delivery and quality assurance of the programme.

## **Section 8. Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice**

Provide details of your Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice. You may provide this as supporting evidence or insert hyperlinks to information that is featured on your organisation's website.

## **Section 9. Declaration**

Carefully read this section then sign and date the application where indicated.

## **Submitting the application**

Email your completed application form to [edspll@educationscotland.gov.scot](mailto:edspll@educationscotland.gov.scot)

If you wish to send supporting documents, please clearly label these with the number of the section they are intended to support and attach them to the email along with your application form. We will confirm receipt of your application by return email.

### **Stage 2: Review of endorsement application form**

Education Scotland reviews applications prior to submission to the endorsement panel to ensure that all sections are complete and that sufficient information has been provided.

Where further information or supporting evidence is required, the provider is notified and a date agreed by which the form and/or supporting evidence should be re-submitted.

Where, after re-submission, it is felt the programme described in the application form does not meet a minimum level and in particular does not reflect the [national model of professional learning](#), it will not go forward to stage 3.

If a programme does not go to stage 3, Education Scotland provides written feedback to the provider outlining the reasons for the decision. Following this feedback, the provider is eligible to re-apply for endorsement for the same programme on one further occasion, normally within a 12 month period.

Once application forms are reviewed and approved for stage 3, the provider is notified and invited to present at the next available endorsement panel meeting.

Education Scotland provides sufficient notice of the meeting date and time, along with guidance to enable the provider to prepare. Providers are required to confirm attendance and requested to arrive in good time.

### **Stage 3: The endorsement panel**

#### **Endorsement panel composition**

Endorsement panels consist of a minimum of three members drawn from a pool of internal and external experts selected for their significant knowledge and expertise of professional learning and leadership programme delivery. This includes a member of the Education Scotland Professional Learning and Leadership team, along with colleagues drawn from partner organisations, such as local authorities, a regional improvement collaborative, professional associations, further and higher education institutions and national professional learning networks.

## **Panel process overview**

Providers are required to give a presentation of no more than ten minutes to the panel about their programme. This can take whichever form the provider finds most appropriate.

It is suggested the presentation be made by one to three people with very good working knowledge of the programme and its intended delivery.

The presentation is followed by a professional discussion of no more than 30 minutes between the provider presentation team and the panel, based on the application form and the presentation.

Panel members then determine the outcome of the process, which is communicated to providers by email and followed up with more detailed written feedback.

In the event a provider is unable to attend the panel meeting having previously confirmed attendance, they will be invited to attend the next available panel meeting. It should be noted that this may incur a significant delay. Endorsement panels consider a maximum of three applications at each meeting.

## **Endorsement panel outcomes**

The panel has the discretion to make decisions about the suitability of the programme for endorsement.

The panel decision will be one of the following:

- I. Programme endorsed
- II. Programme provisionally endorsed with condition(s)
- III. Programme not endorsed

### **I. Programme endorsed**

For a programme to be endorsed the panel must be fully satisfied with the quality of the professional learning, its alignment to the national model of professional learning and the relevant professional standards, supported by evidence of impact.

Successfully endorsed programmes clearly demonstrate relevant, significant and sustained learning which develops depth of knowledge, skills and understanding.

A panel report is sent to the provider confirming endorsement, along with a programme information form to be completed and returned to Education Scotland. This form is required to ensure that information and search criteria entered on the Framework represents the endorsed programme accurately.

Endorsement is awarded for five years. After five years it is expected that a new application for endorsement be made. Providers have the option to begin the process of re-applying for endorsement up to three months before the current endorsement expires.

## **II. Programme provisionally endorsed with condition(s)**

Where the panel supports endorsement but identifies that minor changes are required, a panel report to the provider details the changes required. The provider is then invited to address the conditions to be met, and to submit a written report on how this has been achieved, within an agreed timescale. The panel must agree that all conditions have been met satisfactorily before endorsement. This may apply, for example, where a programme has not previously been run and is required to supply evidence of impact.

If the provider does not report on how the conditions have been met within the agreed timescale, provisional endorsement may be rescinded.

## **III. Programme not endorsed**

If a programme is not endorsed the panel provides a report to the provider outlining the reasons for the decision. Following this feedback, the provider is eligible to re-apply for endorsement, for that programme, on one further occasion, normally within a 12 month period.

### **4.2 Programmes previously endorsed by SCEL and/or holding GTCS Professional Recognition**

A programme endorsed by SCEL before April 2019 which is already included on the Framework continues to be endorsed by Education Scotland once a completed programme information form has been received.

The programme information form confirms and/or updates programme details so that information and search criteria on the Framework remain accurate.

There have been established processes for joint SCEL endorsement and GTCS Professional Recognition of leadership professional learning programmes since 2015. Building on this, programmes with GTCS Professional Recognition received prior to April 2019 are also endorsed by Education Scotland upon receipt of the programme information form. When submitting the completed form, a copy of the report from GTCS confirming the period of Professional Recognition must be included.

If changes have been made to the programme since SCEL endorsement and/or GTCS Professional Recognition, this must be indicated on the form and the provider will be contacted by Education Scotland to discuss the next steps.

### **4.3 Programmes holding GTCS Professional Recognition from April 2019**

For providers receiving GTCS Professional Recognition from April 2019 onward, Education Scotland endorsement is automatic upon receipt of the programme information form which is required to ensure that information and search criteria entered on the Framework represents the programme accurately.

When submitting the completed form a copy of the report from GTCS confirming the period of Professional Recognition must be included.

The programme provider is eligible to use the quality mark once programme details are confirmed/updated. Endorsement will be awarded for five years. After five years it is expected that a new application for endorsement will be made. Providers have the option to begin the process of having their programme re-endorsed up to three months before the current endorsement expires.

## **5. Quality Assurance**

Education Scotland conducts a sampling of endorsed programmes to ensure consistency of standards within the process. Providers can expect the endorsed programme to be sampled at least once within the five-year period.

Sampling may involve Education Scotland requesting evaluation data, other programme information from the provider or feedback meetings with or reports from the delivery team and \ or participants.

Providers agree to inform Education Scotland of any significant changes to their learning provision. This may include significant changes to a programme or changes in staff responsible for delivering learning. It is the responsibility of the provider to ensure that programme details are correct and up-to-date.

Education Scotland reserves the right to withdraw endorsement where there is evidence of significant dissatisfaction with the provision. In this case, the provider will be formally notified in writing and provided with the reason/s for the decision. The provider may be given the opportunity to address any arising conditions placed onto continued endorsement within an agreed timescale.

Quality assurance is in place for the endorsement process itself. Education Scotland has entered into a collaborative partnership with the National Academy for Educational Leadership in Wales and the Centre for School Leadership in Ireland. This will involve a supportive, reciprocal arrangement of peer review focused on identifying strengths and areas for improvement in each of the three processes.

### **Document Control**

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