

Headteacher mentor specification

Into Headship programme

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For Scotland's learners, with Scotland's educators

An important aspect of the Into Headship programme is the combination of various perspectives based on a model of professional learning where practice-based learning sits as the central concept. This model includes four interdependent dimensions and is closely related to the [national model of professional learning](#):

- reflection on practice;
- cognitive development: building knowledge;
- experiential learning: learning through structured experiences including practice and peer learning processes; and
- social learning processes: engaging in the processes of learning and learning improvement, engaging with cohort peers, staff in school, colleagues in partner schools and agencies.

Underpinning the programme are sets of relationships that build a comprehensive process of professional learning necessary to demonstrate the Standards for Leadership and Management (Standard for Headship):

- academic and professional;
- theory and practice;
- school / community and programme;
- practice based learning and building knowledge;
- individual development and school improvement; and
- building individual skill and school / community capability.

These relationships are facilitated through a number of support roles, and the headteacher mentor is of particular importance.

Headteacher mentor responsibilities

The headteacher mentor has certain specific tasks and responsibilities in supporting the participant. Briefly these are to:

- have a good knowledge of the Standards for Leadership and Management (Standard for Headship);
- have a good knowledge of the Into Headship programme;
- ensure that there is a balance between the participant's workload and their Standard for Headship (SfH) commitments;
- ensure that other staff are aware of their colleague's SfH commitments;

- support the participant as they take forward the school / community based dimensions of the programme; and
- arrange a regular programme of formal and informal meetings with the participant to discuss the programme.

In working with the participant, the headteacher mentor should:

- be a critical friend to the participant by listening carefully, showing empathy and challenging appropriately;
- observe conventions of confidentiality when required;
- enable participants to have access to the resources required to undertake work-based learning tasks;
- offer encouragement through regular and meaningful professional dialogue;
- support the participant to critically analyse the local, national and global policy context and the implications for the school community and its context;
- support the participant as they engage with the school community to identify an issue to be addressed and build a vision for sustained improvement;
- support the participant in building a vision and strategic leadership capacity for sustainable long term improvement; and
- ensure that the participant can work across the full school community and work on issues related to long term school improvement.

The headteacher mentor should also ensure that:

- the participant has sufficient opportunities, through their whole school responsibilities and the work undertaken as part of the Into Headship programme, to meet the competencies of the Standard for Headship;
- the participant is encouraged to reflect, consider alternative courses of action, horizon scan, problem pose, review progress and work confidently towards meeting the assessment criteria;
- the achievements of the participant are recognised and celebrated; and
- consideration is given as to how to best utilise the participant's enhanced knowledge, understanding, skills and experience to the continued improvement of learning and teaching in their establishment.

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