

# Professional verifier's role

## Into Headship programme

Updated July 2019

For Scotland's learners, with Scotland's educators

# Advice for professional verifiers

Professional verifiers (PVs) are headteachers, or may on occasion be local authority (LA)/Scottish Council of Independent Schools (SCIS) personnel with senior leadership experience, who are currently employed and have completed training to enable them to carry out professional verification.

A key principle of the Into Headship programme is a model of professional learning in which practice-based learning sits as a 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: engaging in the processes of learning and learning improvement, engaging with cohort peers, staff in school, colleagues in partner schools and agencies.

Practice-based learning embraces a range of dimensions, among them: academic and professional learning; the integration of theory and practice; school improvement; and building capability and capacity. Practice-based learning is facilitated through a network of relationships formalised through a number of support roles, including the professional verifier.

The training for professional verification will be provided by the higher education institutions (HEIs). Professional verifiers, who will be selected by the LA co-ordinator or SCIS personnel, may be from the same LA as the participant, unless there is a potential conflict of interest or capacity issue. Professional verifiers may work across LAs and sectors. Education Scotland will retain a database of all trained PVs.

The core of the programme is practice-based learning where participants demonstrate their achievement of the Standards for Leadership and Management (Standard for Headship). Therefore, a dimension of assessment has to be about the quality and impact of the participant's leadership practice in school/community through demonstrating competence in the professional actions. A vital element in the Into Headship programme, the professional

verification process is an opportunity to verify the school/education community-based element.

Professional verification takes place in the final stages of the programme once the participant has submitted the final assessment for Into Headship Course 2 which sets out a long term strategic change programme.

PVs and HEI tutors may consult prior to the visit to draw up an agenda of points for discussion based on the assessment material submitted to the HEI. Professional verifiers visit the participant's school as part of the summative assessment of Course 2 of the programme.

A range of ethical and procedural issues arise in relation to the collegial assessment process within the Into Headship programme. These have important implications for all verifiers and assessors. It is therefore essential that all verifiers and assessors should commit themselves to observing the following principles:

- Confidentiality is of the utmost importance and should be respected at all times.
- To ensure objectivity and consistency of assessment procedures, all verifications must be based on evidence that is directly related to the criteria provided. Verifiers should concentrate on the evidence provided and observed on the visit.
- Due consideration should be given by verifiers to the school context within which each participant is working. Again, this must be done consistently and with sensitivity.
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Detailed guidance on the procedures, criteria and reporting format will be provided by the HEI tutor with whom the PV will work.

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