

The Into Headship Qualification

Leadership development is a key area on the national policy agenda in Scottish education and while there is a clear commitment to the development of leadership at all levels within school, the specialist role of headteachers must also be recognised. A consistent finding from school effectiveness and school improvement literature is the significance of headship in the development and performance of a school.

SCEL has led the development of the new Into Headship qualification. We established a Design Group to take forward the recommendations from the SCEL consultation on National Leadership Pathways and the new Into Headship qualification is designed to focus on the specificity of the role of head teacher and the strategic leadership role. The new qualification has been accredited by the GTCS and those who successfully complete the Into Headship qualification will also be awarded the Standard for Headship.

The new Into Headship qualification is a 60 credit postgraduate certificate qualification at SCQF level 11 which, longer term, will form part of a Specialist Masters leadership pathway.

Qualification aims

This new Into Headship qualification aims to ensure aspirant headteachers are supported to develop and continue to build the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding required of senior leaders. The Into Headship qualification is aimed at those teachers whose next post will be that of a headteacher, likely to be within 2/3 years. The qualification aims to enable candidates:

- To foster a future orientated strategic stance to initiate and lead change for improvement through engagement with the full school community
- To build and apply sound knowledge and understanding of strategic leadership and management theories and practices in the context of the role of the headteacher
- To develop an understanding of the place of values in leading a school community and explore ways of addressing some of the challenges this poses
- To develop practice in the use of critical enquiry and reflection to evaluate and strengthen the impact of their practices on the school community
- enhance interpersonal and personal skills, confidence and resilience for those preparing to move into headship.

How will the Into Headship qualification be delivered?

The qualification will be delivered by universities in partnership with SCEL and local authorities. The qualification has a two-course structure and will combine a number of delivery approaches to enable access across Scotland:

- Practice-based learning: the qualification seeks to foster a strong link between the principles of strategic leadership and practice in schools and so a major focus will be the practice-based element where participants identify an issue or problem facing their school and build a strategic change process to address this.

- Taught elements: through day and vacation schools, or through digitally-mediated taught sessions where the focus will be on developing knowledge and critical analysis and on building social and collaborative learning.
- Directed study: the qualification includes a directed study qualification with set reading, online study tasks, reflective activities and short school-based tasks involving exploring practice.
- Social cohort learning: collaborative tasks through workshops on taught elements and online, particularly through the use of forums. Collaborative learning and the building of networks are an important element in the development of aspiring and newly appointed headteachers.
- Experiential pedagogies: an important outcome of this qualification is the building of leadership capacity and capability.

Applying for the qualification

There is a nationally agreed application form which is available on the SCEL Into Headship webpage

<http://www.scelscotland.org.uk/leadershipdevelopment/intoheadship.asp>

You will want to discuss your potential application with your line manager and/or employer before completing the application form. The application will need to be completed by you and endorsed by your local authority/employer.

For further details on this new national Into Headship Qualification please contact Lesley Whelan lesley.whelan@scelscotland.org.uk