

National Guidance Into Headship Programme

Leading to the award of
GTC Scotland Standard for Headship

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1. Background and context for Into Headship

This paper details the nationally agreed parameters of the *Into Headship* postgraduate programme.

Leadership development is a key area on the national policy agenda in Scottish education, with School Leadership being recognised as one of six drivers of improvement in the Scottish Government’s National Improvement Framework¹. While there is a clear commitment to the development of leadership at all levels within schools, the specialist role of headteachers is recognised. A consistent finding from school effectiveness and school improvement literature is the significance of headship in the development and performance of a school².

The Into Headship programme, first developed in 2015, is designed for suitably experienced teachers who are in the final stages of their development towards the role of headteacher. This preparatory stage is critical in building the capabilities necessary for strategic leadership. The purpose of the *Into Headship* programme is to further develop the skills, knowledge and understanding, professional values, abilities and commitment for participants to move into headship with the confidence to lead a dynamic school community. The *Into Headship* programme must enable participants to demonstrate their achievement of the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTC Scotland) *Standard for Headship* (GTC Scotland, 2021)³, as part of the process of being and becoming a headteacher. The Scottish Parliament passed legislation to make this a requirement of appointment to a headteacher post in local authority and grant-aided schools in Scotland from August 2020⁴.

Education Scotland works in partnership with seven universities, local authorities and other stakeholders to lead the ongoing development of the *Into Headship* programme, which includes a 60-credit postgraduate certificate at SCQF Level 11 and can form part of a Masters leadership pathway, for example, the Specialist Qualification for Headship Masters in Scotland. Into Headship can also be a standalone post-graduate certificate programme, or part of other Masters degrees.

An external evaluation of the *Into Headship* programme was undertaken by Professor Alma Harris and the report published in September 2022⁵. This report evidenced that “*Into Headship is a well-established and highly effective programme that prepares participants to meet the GTC Scotland Standard for Headship*” (Harris, 2022, p.11). The collaboration between all partners was highlighted as a significant strength of the Into Headship programme.

¹ [National Improvement Framework \(NIF\) - Schools - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/nif/schools/pages/default.aspx)

² For example: Leithwood et al (2019) <https://doi-org.uhi.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/13632434.2019.1596077>

³ [standard-for-headship.pdf \(gtcs.org.uk\)](https://www.gtcs.org.uk/standard-for-headship.pdf)

⁴ [The Head Teachers Education and Training Standards \(Scotland\) Regulations 2019 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2019/0110/engandscot/regulations/2019-0110)

⁵ [National Into Headship Programme \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/publications/into-headship/pages/default.aspx)

“The collaborative, partnership, approach to the delivery of Into Headship is an outstanding feature of the programme.” (Harris, 2022, p.8)

Into Headship programme participants

The programme is open to experienced teachers in a school setting who meet the following criteria:

- are fully registered with the GTC Scotland and have not been subject to an order of a GTC Scotland Fitness to Teach Panel that is still current and there are no unresolved (or pending) matters relating to them that are (or will likely be) subject to GTC Scotland’s Fitness to Teach procedures
- have demonstrated experience of significant leadership and management practice as appropriate in their sector context
- are endorsed by their employer as an aspirant headteacher
- have a supportive reference from their headteacher/employer
- have access to a suitable workplace environment to be able to undertake the practice-based components of the programme
- demonstrate readiness/potential for headship within the next 2/3 years.

2. Into Headship programme design

Into Headship design principles

Building on the strengths of previous accredited routes to Standard for Headship, the Into Headship programme was developed through a national design group. This group agreed on the design principles, overall structure and parameters of the programme. The national design group has continued to meet four times a year to oversee the ongoing facilitation and running of the programme, responsive to participant feedback and local and contextual needs.

Since the programme was developed, there has been consistency in the representation of all seven partner universities and representatives from local authorities. The Scottish College for Educational Leadership (SCEL), which had a lead role in the original programme development, became part of Education Scotland in April 2018, as the Professional Learning and Leadership Directorate (PLL) and has the leadership role in coordinating and developing the national programme.

The design of Into Headship is based on a set of principles of professional learning adopted in Scottish education since the *Teaching Scotland's Future* (Donaldson, 2011)⁶ reform agenda and endorsed by the evaluation report (Harris, 2022). These include:

- an understanding of professional learning as a collective and emergent activity
- the importance of critical self-evaluation to inform and shape the personal learning planning process
- leadership practices that are informed and critiqued through engagement with policy, research and academic literature
- demonstration of professional values: social justice, trust & respect and integrity and professional commitment which underpin relationships, thinking and professional practice in Scotland (Standard for Headship, GTC Scotland 2021)
- coaching and mentoring adopted as an integral part of building capacity and capability across the system.

The following approaches are central to the national programme. These offer each university the flexibility to draw upon them to reflect their unique context and local authority partnerships. The individual participant experience will vary within and across institutions in line with specific university processes and regulations.

⁶ [Teaching Scotland's Future - Report of a review of teacher education in Scotland \(ioe.ac.uk\)](https://www.ioe.ac.uk/teaching-scotland-s-future-report/)

Practice-based learning: the programme seeks to foster a strong link between the principles of strategic leadership and practice in schools and so a major focus is on 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 face to face or online sessions, with a focus on developing knowledge, understanding and critical analysis.

Directed self-study: the programme includes directed study components with structured reading, online study tasks, reflective activities and short school-based tasks involving critical engagement in an exploration of thinking and practice.

Social learning processes: collaborative learning and the building of networks form important elements in the development of aspirant and newly appointed headteachers. Accordingly, the programme includes collaborative tasks, for example, through workshops on taught elements and through participation in online forums.

Experiential pedagogies: an important outcome of this programme is the building of leadership capacity and capability. Specific tasks in the taught elements and directed study programme are designed to develop coaching and mentoring skills including opportunities for peer coaching and mentoring.

Into Headship programme design parameters:

The nationally agreed approaches are bound by a set of parameters that apply to all partners involved in the design and development of *Into Headship*:

- The national policy context in Scotland continues to inform the scope of the *Into Headship* programme, with a specific focus on the development of aspiring headteachers
- the focus of the programme is the specificity of headship preparation and the enhancement of professional practice within the participant's leadership context: where the role of the headteacher is to provide strategic leadership to ensure a culture of continuous improvement in learning for all
- the programme enables participants to develop their professional practice and fulfil all elements of the *Standard for Headship* (GTC Scotland, 2021)
- there is a central commitment from all partners to meet the identified needs of aspirant headteachers who would be likely to progress to headship within two to three years
- the *Into Headship* programme constitutes 60 Masters credits at SCQF level 11. There is clear articulation with the SCQF Framework at Level 11 in all aspects of the programme

- the programme sits within the structures and regulations for postgraduate programmes in each partner university
- the *Into Headship* programme is aligned to the national model of professional learning demonstrated in the Education Scotland website⁷
- there is a commitment from all partners to ensure, and monitor, equity of access for candidates who meet the programme entry requirements
- the programme is one element in a wider national development programme of building leadership capacity and capability across the system
- this programme utilises and builds coaching and mentoring methodologies as an integral part of building capacity and capability across the system.

Into Headship programme elements

Within these design principles and parameters, the *Into Headship* programme includes several elements, designed to provide a holistic approach to the strategic leadership development of the participants. (Illustrated in the diagram below)

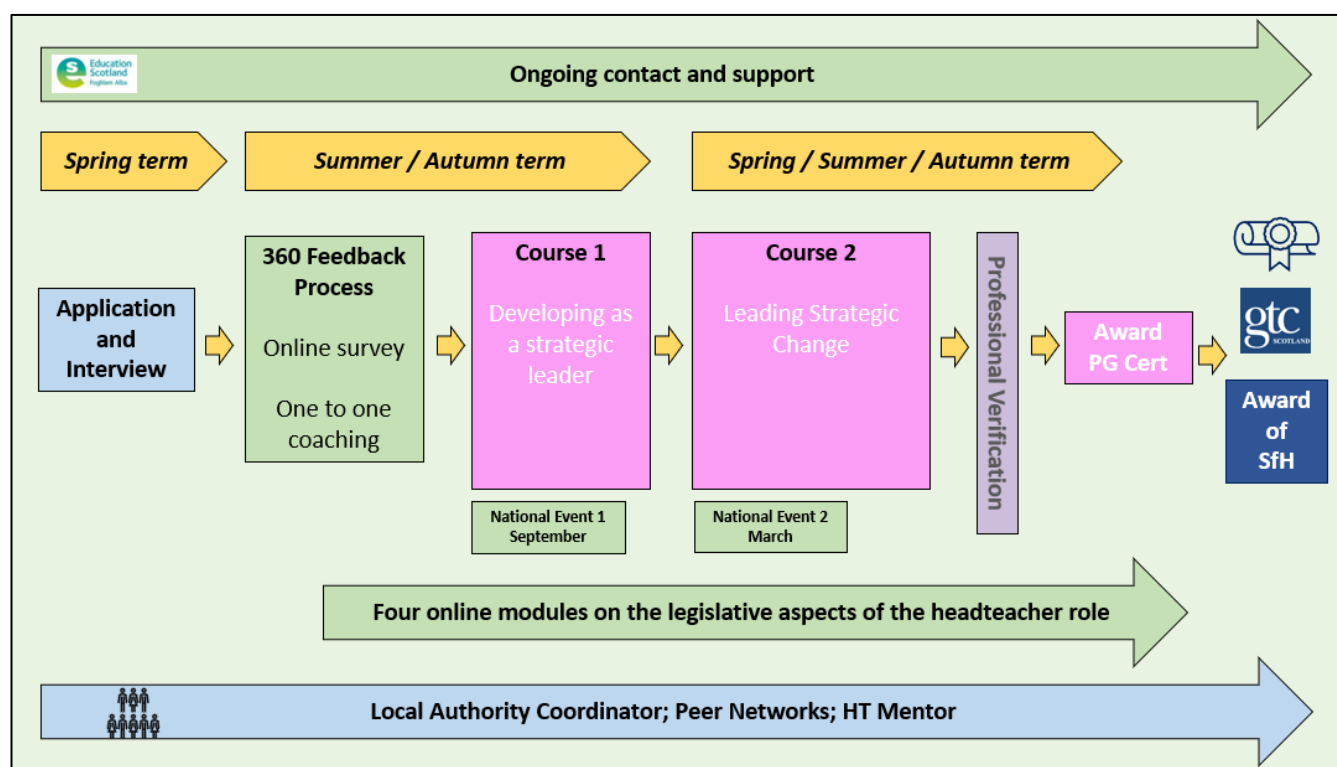


Diagram: *Into Headship* Programme Overview

⁷ [The National Model of Professional Learning \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot)

Participants engage in:

- a self-evaluation task against the GTC Scotland Standard for Headship
- a 360° feedback process with individualised coaching support
- Masters-level learning in the form of taught courses with one of seven university partners
- learning at events for the whole national cohort
- online supported study modules on the legislative and management aspects of a headteacher role
- professional verification visit from an experienced headteacher or local authority officer.

Throughout the programme, it is expected that participants will have the support of a headteacher mentor and for most, a local authority co-ordinator.

3. *Into Headship* programme aims and learning outcomes

The aims and learning outcomes for the *Into Headship* programme are integral to Education Scotland and all seven university providers. A strength of this provision is that these have been developed in partnership and are responsive to the needs of participants in their contexts. Each institution draws upon its specific research, professional expertise, scholarship and contextual knowledge in their design and implementation.

Into Headship programme aims

The overall aim of the programme is to enable participants to develop strategic leadership and management practices as outlined in the *Standard for Headship (GTC Scotland, 2021)* in Scotland to facilitate their transition into headship.

The specific aims of the programme are to:

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

Into Headship programme learning outcomes

The programme provides opportunities for participants to develop their competence for headship by demonstrating knowledge and understanding, skills, qualities and other attributes essential for this role. These outcomes directly inform the learning outcomes for all elements of the programme. By the end of this programme, participants will be able to:

- develop and justify a future-oriented approach to their analysis of the global educational policy context and critically evaluate the implications of policy by identifying the significant educational issues faced by their school community, using literature and research to support their stance

- assess critically through sound analysis of a range of data, their school’s capability and capacity for change and, through engagement with the school’s community, demonstrate emergent and responsive planning to generate a proposal for a future-orientated strategic change initiative using enhanced communication and presentation skills in a range of ways for a variety of audiences
- articulate and apply sound knowledge and understanding of strategic leadership and management theories and practices in scoping and initiating a first cycle of school improvement, exemplify practice in the use of critical enquiry and reflection to impact on practices, demonstrating substantial autonomy, initiative and decision-making including the ability to deal with complex issues and make informed judgments in the absence of complete data
- critically evaluate the initial phase of a future-orientated strategic improvement initiative designed to bring about sustained and embedded change, gathering a range of evidence and applying key principles from a synthesis of educational leadership and management research and literature
- critically analyse and evaluate their practice as a leader of strategic change management using a variety of data and drawing from a wide range of literature and research, reflecting on their own development against the *Standard for Headship*, generating relevant targets for ongoing professional learning.

Postgraduate Certificate

SCQF Level 11⁸ learning supports and develops critical thinking around key practices and issues pertinent to the delivery of high-quality learning, teaching and leadership.

A standalone post-graduate certificate programme, *Into Headship* can also be one component of a Specialist Qualification for Headship Masters pathway designed to prepare suitably experienced leaders in schools in Scotland for headteacher roles. For this *Into Headship* programme, participants must satisfy both the requirements of the academic award and of the professional qualification through which the *Standard for Headship* can be demonstrated.

Into Headship can also be part of other Masters degrees, in some instances, it may be possible to transfer SCQF credit points to other learning programmes⁹. The structures and regulations for postgraduate programmes within each of the universities will be taken into account. “Universities and other awarding bodies decide how many of the credit points can be transferred into their programmes. In all cases of credit transfer, it would be the decision of the accepting learning institution as to how many credit points could be transferred.”¹⁰

⁸ [Interactive Framework | Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework \(scqf.org.uk\)](https://www.scqf.org.uk/interactive-framework)

⁹ [Masters learning | Professional Learning | Education Scotland](#)

¹⁰ [About the Framework | Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework \(scqf.org.uk\)](https://www.scqf.org.uk/about-the-framework)

4. *Into Headship* programme provision - roles and responsibilities

The comprehensive process of professional learning necessary to demonstrate the Standard for Headship is underpinned by professional relationships and partnerships that ensures the holistic blend of approaches required by the design principles.

These relationships are facilitated through several key roles and associated responsibilities.

Education Scotland role and provision

Leadership and Governance

Education Scotland has overall responsibility for leading and coordinating the national programme, governed by the *Into Headship Strategic Oversight Board*. Independently chaired, the Strategic Oversight Board includes representatives from partners and stakeholder groups, including Scottish Government, ADES, the national Design Group, SCDE (Scottish Council of Deans of Education), GTC Scotland, SCES (Scottish Catholic Education Service), local authorities and previous participants. (Appendix 1)

The national *Into Headship Design Group* is chaired by Education Scotland and consists of representatives from all seven universities and local authority representatives. The group meets four times a year to oversee the ongoing facilitation and running of the programme, responsive to participant feedback and local and contextual needs. (Appendix 2)

Recruitment

Recruitment to the programme is through a nationally agreed application and interview process, administered through local authorities or an independent national panel. Applicants must be endorsed and supported by their employer to engage fully with the programme (Appendix 3). On successful recruitment to the *Into Headship* programme, participants are introduced to the programme by Education Scotland supported by university providers and local authorities. They undertake a 360-degree feedback process, followed by critical reflection of this with a dedicated coach.

Whole Cohort Learning

Education Scotland hosts two national events for the *Into Headship* programme, providing the participants with the opportunity to network with others from across the country and reflect on strategic leadership through keynote presentations from strategic leaders in their field and leaders from the Scottish policy context.

Online Learning Modules

Throughout the *Into Headship* programme participants' development is supported by a series of online learning activities on the operational and legislative aspects of school leadership within Scotland:

managing finance; education law, including additional support needs and parental engagement; employment law, including recruitment and employment legislation, equality and diversity; and health and safety. These areas are assessed formatively through self-assessment questions in the online environment and through the programme's formative and summative assessment processes where participants exemplify their learning.

University provision

Following the induction process, participants embark on the *Into Headship* 60-credit SCQF level 11 programme which is provided by university partners. There is a core programme structure (Diagram, p.7) focused on the specificity of headship to which each university partner commits. Delivery models vary across universities to ensure flexibility and equity of access and in relation to the needs of partner local authorities, for example, rurality and consideration of under-represented groups.

Working within the design parameters, the programme is guided by several factors:

- Flexibility: for some participants this may be their first postgraduate programme in educational leadership, while others may have previously completed a postgraduate certificate in, for example, middle leadership. The programme design will also facilitate the transfer of learning across institutions (p.10).
- Access: the programme is open to appropriately experienced and endorsed aspirant headteachers across Scotland and so adopts a blended learning approach combining taught elements, online learning and practice-based learning. This might include face-to-face or digitally mediated sessions
- Coherence: the different elements of the programme build progressively the professional values, knowledge, understanding, skill and commitment of participants required for the strategic leadership of a school (GTC Scotland, 2021)
- Relevance to practice: the programme design is aligned to the national model of professional learning¹¹ and consists of progressive sets of experiences through which participants apply ideas to practice and reflect critically on these experiences individually as well as through collaborative opportunities and mentoring
- Competence: the *Into Headship* programme comprises both a professional qualification and an academic award and so the demonstration of all aspects of the *Professional Standard for Headship* is embedded in both the programme elements and assessment processes.

¹¹ [The National Model of Professional Learning \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot)

Local Authority support

A key partner in liaising between Education Scotland, university tutors and participants, the local authority co-ordinator role includes:

- coordinating the recruitment process
- forward planning, especially in projections for succession planning and headship recruitment
- liaising with the participants, Education Scotland and the university tutors to ensure the effective delivery of the programme
- supporting the participant cohort through organising events, opportunities and resources related to identified professional learning needs
- coordinating and supporting HT mentors

(Appendix 4)

Study days entitlement

The success of the Into Headship programme is built upon the partnerships between participants, universities, Education Scotland and local authorities as employers. The engagement in Masters level learning is a significant commitment for the participants that ultimately impacts positively on the leadership and outcomes for learners and school communities across Scotland.

As such, participants engaging in the Into Headship programme should be supported by their employer to maximise learning opportunities. As a minimum, participants should be released for one day per term to allow for study days in addition to the taught university days. Study days should be agreed in partnership between the participant and employer in line with the requirements of the programme. Employers may wish to consider supporting participants to take additional study days as required to enhance successful programme completion.

Headteacher Mentor role

There is a nationally agreed expectation that each participant benefits from the support of a dedicated mentor, usually their line manager. The headteacher mentor has certain specific tasks and responsibilities in supporting the participant.

The most significant of these are to:

- have a good knowledge of the Standard for Headship and the requirements of the Into Headship programme
- ensure that there is a balance between the participant's workload and their Standard for Headship (SfH) commitments
- support the participant as they take forward the school / community-based dimensions of the programme
- arrange a regular programme of formal and informal meetings with the participant to discuss the programme.

(Appendix 5)

Professional Verifier role

A vital element in the Into Headship programme, the professional verification process is an opportunity to verify the school/education community-based element of Into Headship. 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.

Professional verifiers (PVs) are headteachers, or may on occasion be local authority or 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.

(Appendix 6a & 6b)

5. University Course Structure

The university provision, as an integral part of the whole *Into Headship* programme, consists of two courses, leading to a 60-credit postgraduate certificate at SCQF level 11. However, all elements of the programme must be completed for successful award of the GTC Scotland Standard for Headship. This may be part of an overall Masters degree pathway.

“Credit points are a way of showing how much time it takes, on average, to complete a qualification or learning programme.

In common with other credit systems, the SCQF works on the basis that one credit point represents the amount of learning achieved through a notional 10 hours of learning time which includes everything a learner has to do to achieve the outcomes in a qualification including the assessment procedures.”¹²

Thus, 60 credits equate to a notional 600 hours of study.

The programme structure is designed to enable participants to explore the wider policy contexts and the implications of these for their school. Then, through leading and working with others, participants will build the vision and strategies for sustained long term improvement. At each stage of the process a key focus is on enabling participants to develop the necessary understanding, skills and personal qualities of a strategic leader, as outlined in the Professional Standard for Headship (GTC Scotland, 2021).

Assessment

The design of the assessment arrangements supports the principle that assessment in the *Into Headship* programme is an integral part of the continuing professional learning process of experienced senior professionals. Assessment in each of the courses is regarded as a developmental, participant-centred activity, enabling participants to critically reflect on their practice and learning. A range of assessment approaches are utilised, combining both academic and professional requirements, to impact on practice in the workplace. Furthermore, assessment is a critical part of learning and so in the programme design both formative and summative assessment tasks are included to enable participants to build progressively their understanding and skill in leading strategic change.

Formative feedback is an important and integral component of each course and can involve tutor, peer, headteacher mentor, Education Scotland coaches and self-assessment. Arrangements for formative feedback are contextualised and vary across providers and cohorts.

¹² [About the Framework | Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework \(scqf.org.uk\)](https://www.scqf.org.uk)

Summative assessment is nationally agreed and will ensure the quality of individual learning against clearly articulated criteria drawn from SCQF Level 11 and the *Standard for Headship* (GTC Scotland 2021), reflective of programme aims and outcomes.

Course Content	Formative Assessment	Summative Assessment
<p>Course 1: Developing as a strategic leader</p> <p>Aim</p> <p>The aim of this course is to enable participants to understand their role as a headteacher in applying the principles and practices of strategic leadership to frame and conceptualise educational problems and issues.</p> <p>Content</p> <p>The starting point of Course 1 is a critical exploration of the wider local, national and global policy context. From this, consideration is given to the processes of identifying and framing a strategic educational issue based on evidence and educational argument. The course explores the use of the Standard for Headship (GTC Scotland, 2021) as a way of engaging in systematic self-evaluation and supporting the planning of ongoing professional learning.</p>	<p>An opportunity for formal formative feedback, supporting participants towards the summative assignment.</p> <p>Feedback (Education Scotland) provided coach) and reflection on 360-degree process</p>	<p>Critical analysis of policy context and justification of the educational issue</p> <p>Critical reflection on participant's self-evaluation and planning their development as a strategic leader</p>
<p>Course 2: Leading strategic change</p> <p>Aim</p> <p>The aim of this course is to enable participants to generate and initiate a collaborative change process with members of the wider school community and to map sets of long-term strategies to address the educational issue identified in Course 1.</p>	<p>An opportunity for formal formative feedback, supporting participants towards the summative assignment.</p> <p>Proposals and plans for building a vision for school improvement and</p>	<p>Evaluation of proposal and interim progress for long term strategic change</p> <p>Critical reflection on the participant's strategic leadership & management of this</p>

<p>This includes reviewing their own development as a strategic leader.</p> <p>Content</p> <p>The focus of Course 2 is on leading a process of building a vision for school improvement through engaging others from across the school community. Models of emergent and responsive planning are explored as a means of determining and achieving short-term objectives, towards a longer-term process of sustainable strategic change. Issues related to culture and to the management of change are examined in order to address the educational issues identified in Course 1.</p> <p>Course 2 is structured to support participants as they work through a first cycle of change and subsequently review progress towards a longer-term improvement strategy.</p>	<p>working with the school community</p> <p>Progress reports for long-term change including presentations and short papers</p> <p>Mentor discussions focussed on critical issues and development as a leader of strategic change</p> <p>Evaluation of interim progress and proposal for long term strategic change</p>	<p>change process against the Standard for Headship, providing evidence to support their claims</p> <p>Professional Verification</p>
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6. Award of GTC Scotland Professional Standard for Headship

As the independent registration and regulation body for teachers in Scotland, the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTC Scotland) awards teachers with the *Standard for Headship*, following successful completion of the accredited *Into Headship* programme. Education Scotland coordinates the process of ensuring that only those who have completed all aspects of the *Into Headship* programme are put forward to GTC Scotland. This process usually occurs in March, except in exceptional circumstances. This process is detailed below:

1. Universities inform Education Scotland of their participants' completion of the PG Cert programme, following ratification from their exam boards
2. Education Scotland then checks that participants have completed the online learning modules and participants verify that the details held by Education Scotland, including GTC Scotland registration number, are accurate
3. Education Scotland submit the names and GTCS registration numbers of the successful participants to GTC Scotland
4. GTC Scotland complete further registration checks and ensure that all aspects of current registration rules are met before awarding GTC Scotland Professional Standard for Headship
5. GTC Scotland communicates with the teacher using the contact details held on GTC Scotland systems and updates the teachers' records to provide evidence that the teacher holds the Standard for Headship. To allow communication to be sent to the correct address, teachers should ensure that their contact details are accurate and up to date on their MyGTCS account.

7. Quality assurance

GTC Scotland accredit programmes of teacher education that lead to the award of a professional standard. The GTC Scotland accreditation of the *Into Headship* programme confirms that the national *Into Headship* programme meets the criteria for participants being awarded the *Standard for Headship* on successful completion of the programme. Accreditation takes place every five years and the programme was last re-accredited in March 2021.

The national Strategic Oversight Board is in place to support delivery and ongoing national moderation, course monitoring and quality assurance for the *Into Headship* programme. This group is independently chaired, includes key stakeholders and supported by Education Scotland, meeting four times a year.

A key element of national provision also involves an Equality Impact Assessment undertaken by Education Scotland.

Education Scotland undertakes regular data analysis of programme participant lists, to gather information which includes; local authority participation rates, posts held, sector representation, diversity. The programme opportunities provided by Education Scotland, such as national whole cohort events and 360 feedback are evaluated through participant surveys. Participant surveys are collated at the end of programme participation and followed up after one year, to evaluate the impact of the overall programme.

In addition to the national aspects of the programme, each university also has their own external and internal quality assurance mechanisms in place, which form an essential part of the overall quality assurance process. Exemplification of internal quality assurance common to all university partners includes moderation of assessments, participant feedback and regular tutor team review meetings. Exemplification of external quality assurance includes exam board feedback, external examiner reporting and feedback from local authority partnership arrangements.

Quality assurance activity is summarised annually in an impact report, using an agreed proforma and reported to the national *Into Headship* Strategic Oversight Board at its first meeting each session and shared with GTC Scotland as part the accreditation process.

List of Appendices

Appendix 1: Governance: Strategic Oversight Board Terms of Reference

Appendix 2: National Design Group

Appendix 3: National Recruitment Processes

Appendix 4: Local Authority Support Role

Appendix 5: Headteacher Mentor Role

Appendix 6a: Professional Verifier Role

Appendix 6b: Professional Verification Process

Appendix 1: Governance: Strategic Oversight Board

Terms of Reference

The Into Headship Strategic Oversight Board is being re-established to support delivery and ongoing national moderation, course monitoring and quality assurance for the Into Headship Programme. Establishment of the Board was originally a condition of the Into Headship Programme gaining accreditation from the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) in 2015. The Programme was re-accredited by GTC Scotland in 2021.

The Strategic Oversight Board will consider the following areas and make recommendations to Education Scotland and all partners involved in the development and delivery of the Into Headship Programme on the outcomes of its considerations:

- *Overall engagement including participant numbers and rates*
- *Quality assurance aspects including Equality Impact Assessment*
- *Any issues, good practice arising and lessons learned which can inform future developments.*

Strategic Oversight Board Membership

In agreeing membership of the Strategic Oversight Board, the intention is to ensure that the Board includes suitably experienced members from stakeholders with a specific interest in the development of aspiring headteachers.

Secretariat

Secretariat will be provided by staff from Education Scotland who will co-ordinate meetings and papers to support the Board. To ensure sustainability and coherence it is proposed that a core membership be in place for a period of 3 years.

Liaison with Into Headship National Design Group

The Strategic Oversight Board will liaise closely with the National Design Group as part of ongoing quality assurance and development of the Into Headship programme, through a link member on both groups. (Appendix 2)

This liaison will include:

- *Reporting on outcomes of Quality Assurance activity*
- *Communication of effective practice, any issues and recommendations for further development.*
- *Group updates, for example minutes and action logs from meetings.*

Reporting Requirements

A minute of each meeting will be kept highlighting areas for development. The resulting actions will be shared with all those contributing to the development and delivery of the Into Headship Programme which includes Universities, Local Authorities and Education Scotland. A report from the Strategic Oversight Board will also be included with the regular updates to the Education Scotland Advisory Board as part of overall reporting on the Into Headship Programme.

Appendix 2: Into Headship Design Group

The delivery of the Into Headship programme is coordinated through a national Design Group which consists of representatives from Education Scotland, all partner universities and local authorities. This group meet four times in each academic session.

Through leading the national design group, Education Scotland ensures the overall coherence of Into Headship, facilitating collaborative practice across the partnership. This includes engaging effectively with all partners, working closely with universities on the overarching programme parameters, assessment structures and programme content, ensuring continuation of an established network of participant support for all Into Headship participants and overarching programme evaluation. This work was commended in the GTCS Reaccreditation of the programme in March 2021.

Appendix 3: National Recruitment Processes



Appendix 4: Local Authority Support Role

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 learning¹³.

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*
- *building individual skill and school / community capability.*

These relationships are facilitated through a number of support roles.

Local authority co-ordinator responsibilities

The local authority co-ordinator role in this programme includes:

- *co-ordinating the criterion-led selection process using nationally agreed documentation, informing Education Scotland and higher education institutions (HEIs) of the outcome, involving existing participants where appropriate*
- *supporting unsuccessful applicants*
- *forward planning, especially in projections for succession planning and headship recruitment*
- *liaising with Education Scotland on key developments, quality assurance and co-ordination of training needs*
- *liaising with the participants, Education Scotland and the HEI tutor to ensure the effective delivery of the programme*
- *co-ordinating and supporting HT mentors*
- *having a good knowledge of the Into Headship programme*

¹³ [The national model of professional learning | Professional Learning | Education Scotland](#)

- *arranging regular network meetings with their Into Headship cohort which will complement the networks created through the HEI cohorts*
- *building local and regional learning communities enabling and facilitating group discussion*
- *supporting participants to build a local knowledge of processes and practices of the management areas of the Standard for Headship including finance and legal frameworks for schools*
- *organising events, opportunities and resources related to identified professional learning needs of the cohort*

Appendix 5: Headteacher Mentor Role

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*
- *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.

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
- 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*
- *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*
- *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.*

Appendix 6a: Professional Verifier Role

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*
- *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.

Detailed guidance on the procedures, criteria and reporting format will be provided by the HEI tutor with whom the PV will work

Appendix 6b: Professional Verification Process

A Professional Verifier (PV) will be selected by the Local Authority/SCIS and will undergo training by the Higher Education Institution (HEI).

Professional Verification Process:

1. Assignment submission and marking of assignment:
 - a. Candidate submits completed *Into Headship* Course 2 assignment to the university.
 - b. Candidate sends a copy of the agreed sections of the assignment to the PV and no more than five pieces of evidence which will be discussed during the PV visit.¹⁴
 - c. HEI tutor and PV read and consider the agreed sections of the candidate's *Into Headship* assignment including the evidence submitted to support the candidate's claims for competence in relation to the Strategic Change Initiative.
 - d. HEI tutor and PV may consult to discuss the agreed sections of the candidate's *Into Headship* Course 2 assignment and agree any questions arising for clarification during the PV visit.
2. Arranging the Professional Verification visit:
 - a. Candidate contacts PV and makes arrangements for visit in their setting and confirms with PV: during the visit the PV will meet the candidate, the Head Teacher mentor and two or three relevant members of wider school/education community¹⁵ who have been involved in the strategic change process.

The PV visit should last no more than three hours.

3. The Professional Verification visit:
 - a. The PV engages in professional dialogue with:
 - *the candidate;*
 - *their mentor and*
 - *relevant member/s of school/education community.*
 - b. The professional dialogue should focus on:
 - Exploring areas in which the candidate believes they have demonstrated the strongest professional growth. The PV will draw upon their reading of the agreed sections of the assignment and the evidence to structure the discussion.
 - The professional skills and abilities (GTCS Standard for Headship¹⁶) will be used to devise questions to frame the professional dialogue. For example, 'How...' or 'In what ways did the

¹⁴ The candidate will provide a brief narrative for each piece of evidence - one or two sentences - which explains how the evidence supports their claims for competence against the SfH (GTCS 2021).

¹⁵ Relevant members of school/education community: this selection depends on who was involved in developing the Strategic Change Initiative (SCI). This may involve colleagues (teaching and non-teaching), pupils, parents, members of the wider education community drawn from organisations such as Education Scotland, SQA, third sector.

¹⁶ [standard-for-headship.pdf \(gtcs.org.uk\)](https://www.gtcs.org.uk/standard-for-headship.pdf)

candidate/did you develop increasing capacity to lead and work collaboratively across the learning community, in relation to the following:

3.1 Curriculum, Pedagogy, Leadership and Strategic Vision

3.2 The Learning Context

3.3 Professional Learning

3.4 Self-Evaluation

3.5 Resources

- In addition the PV may ask any question/s for clarification identified by the HEI tutor and PV in relation to the submission.

4. The Professional Verification visit report:

PV submits a brief report to the HEI tutor on the verification visit using the agreed form provided. (see attached). There is no requirement for the reports to be shared with the participant but it can be requested.

- The process will be moderated in accordance with University regulations.
- Suggested Timeline (normally no more than eight weeks)

During the *Into Headship* programme the LA Coordinator confirms names and contact details of the Professional Verifier/s to the University tutor.

Suggested timeline for the Professional Verification Process:	
For example: <i>At start of stage one:</i>	Candidate submits completed assignment to university. Candidate sends an email copy of the agreed sections and no more than five pieces of evidence to the Professional Verifier.
<i>By end of stage one:</i>	Candidate contacts the Professional Verifier with suggested dates for the visit.
<i>At start of stage two:</i>	Candidate confirms arrangements for the visit with Professional Verifier, HT mentor and member/s of the school/education community.
<i>By end of stage two:</i>	HEI tutor and PV may consult to discuss the agreed sections of the candidate's Into Headship Course 2 assignment and discuss questions arising for Professional Verification visit.
<i>By end of stage three:</i>	Professional Verifier visit takes place.

<i>By start of stage four:</i>	Professional Verifier submits report to HEI tutor indicating whether the candidate has, in their professional opinion, demonstrated competence across the professional actions of the head teacher and met the Standard for Headship.
<i>By end of stage four:</i>	HEI tutor collates assessment feedback and PV report and prepares final assessment report on all aspects of the Course 2 assessment process and an overall grade for candidate (subject to ratification by the Board of Examiners).

In the event that a PV submits a report which indicates that, from the PV visit, the candidate has not sufficiently demonstrated and evidenced competence in relation to the professional actions of a Head Teacher as defined in the Standard for Headship (GTCS 2021), the candidate will be required to submit further evidence to the HEI tutor. A second PV visit will take place.

As a successful professional verification is integral to the assessment of *Into Headship* Course 2 a fail will result in the candidate not being awarded the *Standard for Headship*.



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