

**Programme Endorsement**

**Application Guidance for**

**Learning Providers**

**For Scotland**

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**s learners, with Scotland**

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**s educators**

**November 2021**

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## 1. Introduction

The [Scottish Government’s Education Governance: Next Steps](https://www.gov.scot/publications/education-governance-next-steps-empowering-teachers-parents-communities-deliver-excellence/) report published 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](https://professionallearning.education.gov.scot/explore/the-national-model-of-professional-learning/) which identifies the key principles and features of effectiveprofessionallearning and offers strategic guidance for education professionals on how to support, structureand 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.



NATIONAL MODEL OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Professional learning must focus on the education professional as a learner and how this is related to and impacts upon the learning of children, young people and adults.

It is a key requirement of endorsement, that all programmes articulate with the model. Further information and guidance and examples of how to evidence this, can be found in section 4.

## 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 our website, an online resource supporting professional learning for educational professionals at all stages of their career. The website 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:

* promotion of the programme through a range of marketing channels, including Education Scotland’s website, newsletters and social media
* detailed information on our website about the programme and how to apply
* inclusion in the website’s targeted search facility, which promotes the programme to the relevant education professionals

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

## 4. How to apply for endorsement

There are three stages to the endorsement process:

* Stage 1 – Complete the application form and email it to edspll@educationscotland.gov.scot.
* Stage 2 – Lead Specialists will review the application.
* Stage 3 – You will be invited to attend a panel meeting.

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

Support is available to those wishing additional guidance in making an application. For details, contact: edspll@educationscotland.gov.scot. Please refer to the following notes when completing the endorsement application form. You must ensure that sufficient information and evidence is provided to meet each requirement.

Before you complete the application form, you should consider if the programme meets the minimum requirements for endorsement:

* learning is sustained over a period of time e.g. not a single twilight session or a one-off course
* the programme is aligned to the national model of professional learning
* the programme is delivered within the Scottish education and policy context
* the programme is aligned to the professional standards
* there is sufficient evidence to support the information provided within the application.

**Select your endorsement pathway as requested on page 1 of the application form**.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Standard Pathway | This pathway is suitable for a programme new to endorsement. You must complete all sections within the application form. |
| GTC Scotland Pathway | This pathway is suitable for a programme that has been awarded GTC Scotland Professional Recognition within the last three years. You must complete all sections within the application form. |
| Education Scotland Pathway | This pathway is suitable for an eligible programme funded by Education Scotland as part of a successful grant application. You must complete all sections within the application form. |
| Re-Endorsement Pathway | This pathway is suitable for a programme that has been previously endorsed by Education Scotland. You must complete all sections within the 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. This section must include the following information:

1. Name of the learning provider / organisation
2. Lead contact name
3. Job title
4. Address
5. Postcode
6. Email
7. Phone number
8. Website
9. Additional information

Additional information must be provided if you wish us to display a generic / shared mailbox or other contact details on the website. If you leave this blank, we will use your name and contact details on the programme listing.

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

Provide an introduction to your organisation (maximum 300 words). This section should include the following information:

* organisation purpose, vision, experience, size and audience reach
* operating location/s.

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

* complete the proposed programme title
* indicate whether the programme is new (not yet endorsed) or if it has already been endorsed in the past
* indicate whether the programme has GTC Scotland Professional Recognition
* indicate whether the programme is funded by Education Scotland
* programme descriptor – provide a brief overview of the programme. This information will be displayed on our website. This should be written for the target audience and the text should state the aim or focus of the learning (max. 100 words)
* detailed overview of the programme – this should consider the programme content, structure and method of delivery (max. 300 words)
* benefits of the programme – what will the programme offer, who is it for and are there any key dates? (max. 300 words)
* the learning outcomes – list the intended learning outcomes associated with the programme (max. 200 words)
* funding and costs – please indicate any cost implications for programme participants. Programmes with a cost attached can still be endorsed, but fees must be clear and appropriate and clearly stated
* equality and diversity monitoring – Education Scotland is committed to eliminating discrimination and promoting equality and diversity. Please provide details on how you monitor issues of equality and diversity during the application process and during programme delivery. This may be a URL linking to a policy document or a supporting statement (max. 300 words). For an example, review the [Education Scotland Policy on Equality and Diversity](https://education.gov.scot/education-scotland/who-we-are/policies-and-information/equality-and-diversity/).

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

Provide detailed information on the content, design and delivery of the programme, making explicit reference to the national model of professional learning. You should make clear references to aspects of the programme and how it aligns to the model. Support information is available on our website should you need more information.

* **Education professional as learner**

Consider the relationship between learners (the learning of children, young people and adults) and the educator’s professional learning. These are deeply interconnected through the learning feedback loop at the heart of the model.

* **Leadership of and for learning**

People are the drivers and enactors of change for improvement. Professional learning and development is the means by which this is put into action. As a priority, leaders commit to and invest in their own professional learning and development, creating the conditions where professional learning can thrive – space, time, culture and trust. Consider how this is reflected in the programme design.

* **Professional standards and policy**

Professional standards and educational policies both support and inform professional learning. It is important to examine and consider them in action and understand the connections and coherence across educational policies and the professional standards. Provide the policy context which underpins the programme, describing any professional standards that are met.

* **Learning-as-collaborative**

Consider how programme participants learn with and from colleagues, partners and learners as part of an active learning community.

* **Learning by enquiring**

There is an ethical prerogative to taking an enquiry stance, to try to improve outcomes for children, young people and adult learners. Consider how enquiry is integrated into the programme.

* **Learning that deepens knowledge and understanding**

Professional learning should inform, challenge and help to understand why we do what we do. Enquiry is the basis for reflective and strategic thinking (metacognition) about practice and becomes the methodology for professional learning. Consider how programme participants develop skills, expertise and experience.

You may find it helpful to read the national model of professional learning poster with detailed information on the key features and principles of the model when answering this section.

**Section 5. Quality assurance processes**

Describe your internal (and any external) quality assurance processes (max. 300 words). This section should include aspects of:

* diversity and equity
* effective communication with participants before, during and after the programme
* how you evaluate learning provision, collect and use participant feedback for continuous improvement
* how you ensure the knowledge and skills of programme facilitators are developed.

You may also reference other accreditation or quality assurances processes that are applied to the programme.

**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.

Note: All programmes are required to provide an impact report 12 months after endorsement.

**Section 7. Professional profiles**

Provide brief professional profiles (max. 200 words) of the key staff responsible for the delivery and quality assurance of the programme. You do not need to provide CVs. A statement on the profile of staff e.g. a person specification is acceptable. You need to provide a profile for each deliverer or facilitator and let us know if this changes during your period of endorsement.

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

Provide details of your Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice. You may provide this as supporting statement or insert a URL to information that is featured on your organisation 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

If we need more information from you, we will contact you prior to a decision and ask you to send us any relevant information. It is essential that you have used the space within the application form to articulate your programme.

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](https://professionallearning.education.gov.scot/explore/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. We will appoint a Lead Specialist to work with the provider should additional support and guidance be required.

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. On occasion, there may be additional panel members in the room, who take up an observation stance. This is for training and quality purposes and they do not participate in the discussion. If this is the case, the chair will point this out to the provider.

**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, however it should include aspects to cover:

* an overview of the programme
* the audience, scope and reach
* evidence of, or an outline on, expected impact
* articulation to the national model of professional learning and how this relates to programme delivery
* key features of the programme that the provider wishes to draw to the attention of the panel.

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.

**Important notice: from April 2020, endorsement panels will be held virtually via video conferencing. Details of the panel will be sent to you prior to the virtual meeting. If you anticipate a problem in accessing or using video conferencing, please let us know when you submit your application.** [**Panel dates and details on virtual meetings**](https://professionallearning.education.gov.scot/learning-providers/) **can be found on our website.**

**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:

* Programme endorsed
* Programme provisionally endorsed with condition(s)
* 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 before the current endorsement expires (usually within six months).

**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 will detail any actions that need to be taken before endorsement is granted in full. 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 does not fully meet all aspects of the national model of professional learning, and an adjustment to the programme design or delivery is required.

If the provider does not report on how the conditions have been met within the agreed timescale, endorsement may be rescinded and a new application will later be required.

**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.

We will appoint a Lead Specialist to work with the provider if additional support is required.

**5. Quality assurance and periodic review**

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.

**All learning providers must return an Impact Report twelve months after endorsement is granted.**

**Document Control**

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