Oide

Guidelines for Providers

Endorsement of Leadership Professional Learning

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An Introduction

Oide, established September 1st, 2023, is a Department of Education schools support service formed from the integration of four existing support services, The Centre for School Leadership (CSL), Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT), The National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT) and the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST). Oide supports the professional learning of primary and post-primary teachers and school leaders in all DE recognised schools and centres for education in Ireland. Oide aims to foster a culture of continuing professional learning among teachers and school leaders as part of schools' ongoing development, encouraging lifelong learning, reflective practice and enquiry-based practices. The work of Oide will contribute to school improvement by providing high quality professional learning experiences, supports and resources relating to curricular and leadership developments and broader educational goals and national priorities. Oide's vision is to support the professional learning needs of teachers and school leaders through the development of high quality, innovative and responsive professional learning that enables them to meet the educational needs of all learners in a changing world.

Oide's Leadership Division is charged with supporting the professional learning needs of school leaders, at all stages of leadership; teacher, middle, aspiring, newly appointed, established and system leaders according to the following schedule of supports:

Programme	Target Audience
Misneach	Newly Appointed Principals
Tánaiste	Newly Appointed Deputy Principals
Forbairt	Leadership Teams
Comhar	Middle Leaders (AP1s and AP11s)
Tuiscint	Newly Appointed Principals in Pre-Commencement Stage
Caidrimh	Principals and Deputy Principals of Special Schools
DEIS Support (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools)	Newly Appointed Principals and Deputy Principals and More Established Principals in DEIS Settings
SSE Support (School Self-Evaluation)	Newly Appointed Principals and Deputy Principals and More Established Principals and Deputy Principals
School Support (Once Off Advisory Visits or Sustained Support)	Open to All Principals to Apply

Mentoring (One-to-One, Group and Bespoke)	Newly Appointed Principals and Deputy Principals, Established Principals, Principals at Any Stage of Leadership who Request Bespoke Support
Coaching (One-to-One and Team Coaching)	Principals and Leadership Teams
Meitheal	Primary Established Principals
Líonra	Post-Primary Deputy Principals
PDSL (Post Graduate Diploma in School Leadership)	Aspiring Leaders at all Stages of Leadership
Endorsement	Stakeholders who Provide Professional Learning in Leadership
Leadership Research	All School Leaders
Leadership Collaboration	All School Leaders and All Stakeholders

Section A
Learning to be a School Leader in Ireland

An Introduction

The essential elements of professional learning for school leadership in Irish schools are set out in the diagram on page 2 (CSL, 2018). At the centre of the Model of Professional Learning is the moral imperative of school leadership, that of improving learning outcomes and wellbeing for students and school communities.The Model promotes the concept that learning to be a school leader must impact positively on both the person and the practice of the leader. The six circles represent the essential elements of effective professional learning. In addition, the model includes six hexagons which represent a continuum of leadership development from early leadership in the form of teacher leadership and middle leadership to senior and system leadership.

Providers are invited to explore how best they can use the model as a framework for the development of their programmes/activities.

These essential dimensions of effective professional learning are further expanded upon on pages 6 and 7 and the continuum is then briefly explained.

Learning to be a School Leader in Ireland

Core Elements of the Model of Professional Learning

Reflection on Practice

Reflective practice is the ability to reflect on one's actions so as to engage in a process of continuous learning. This involves paying critical attention to the values and theories which inform everyday actions, by examining practice reflectively. Reflective practice is an important tool in professional learning settings where people learn from their own professional experiences, often combining this with their process knowledge. Reflective tools such as learning journals, critical incident analysis as well as coaching and mentoring can be very effective in bringing together theory and practice.
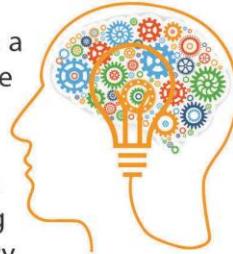
Relevant Experiential Learning

Experiential learning can be both formal and informal. It involves action as well as reflection. At an informal level, the learner may decide to make a change in a specific area in order to improve their leadership practice and knowledge. They will then try out the change and observe and evaluate the impact of the change on their practice and on learning outcomes for students. When experiential learning becomes more formal, it often takes the form of a strategic change project, working with the school community or a structured professional enquiry combined with action research. These approaches enable leaders to identify and address issues through gathering and using evidence to inform practice. In this context, work shadowing or leadership visits have the potential to enhance experiential learning.

Cognitive Development

The renewed focus on the school leader as a leader of learning makes use of new knowledge and the engagement with new ideas and perspectives an important component of professional learning for leadership. Reading and research provide an alternative view and a different lens through which a leader can view his or her practice. The use of relevant research and theoretical material that challenges existing practice as well as outlining a pathway towards improvement in teaching and learning outcomes for students, is a core component of a quality professional learning activity for school leaders.
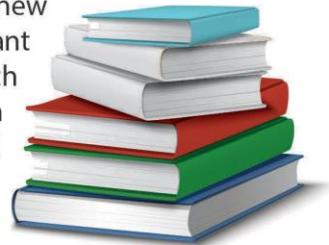
Flexible and Sustainable

Professional learning should be linked to the needs of the participants and should be responsive to the culture and context in which the school leader works. Indeed, research highlights the importance of the availability of professional learning relevant to specific need in promoting greater engagement. Building a national strategy for career long leadership development has to support the role of the individual practitioner in shaping their own professional development. It is important to ensure a balance between the system need for leadership capacity and the scope for the individual practitioner to shape their own professional learning. Therefore, professional learning should take into account variables such as career stage, priorities, motivation, professional context and the professional confidence of the learner. It should also be informed by feedback from the learner.

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Individual and Collaborative Learning

Individual learning has significant benefits and should be a part of all professional learning. It allows leaders to develop their own individual personalised pathway towards their specific goals. However, the deepening of reflection and experiential learning to sustain and improve practice depends upon collaboration. There is a need for a disciplined and purposeful approach to collaborating where there are clear purposes and identified outcomes with opportunities to co-construct possible strategies. The use of technology to enhance and enrich collaboration and learning can be very powerful. Networking, which focuses on the development of practice, problem solving and sharing, is also a powerful process. A genuine, structured collaborative process that involves leaders working together, identifying starting points, sharing evidence about practice and trying new approaches can be a powerful component of any leadership professional learning activity.

Professional Standards

The *Looking at Our School 2022 Framework for Leadership and Management,* published by the Department of Education Inspectorate, is designed for school leaders to use in enhancing the quality of leadership in their schools. This publication provides a common understanding of what constitutes high quality leadership practices. It is therefore important that those involved in developing professional learning programmes and activities use the standards and statements of practice as a basis for planning such learning.

A Brief Outline of the Continuum

The Model of Professional Learning identifies the six career stages of leadership on a continuum. The stages are:

- **teacher leaders** - those who are willing to work alongside others to build a better school community, to overcome challenges and obstacles and who desire to improve the learning for the students in their care
- **middle leaders** - those who have additional responsibilities outside of the classroom and play a formal role in the school's leadership team
- **aspiring senior leaders** - may be teacher/middle leaders, who in their schools hold either a formal or informal leadership role, and aspire to the role of deputy principal or principal
- **newly appointed senior leaders** - school leaders in the first three years of senior leadership
  established leaders - school leaders who have completed three years in the role
- **system leaders** - those who successfully lead in their own school or organisation, and work
- collaboratively to drive system improvement

Section B

An Introduction to Endorsement

1. The Purpose of Endorsement

Internationally, the continuing development of school leadership has become a cornerstone of many national policies (OECD, 2005; Schleicher, 2012)[1] and of systems level change programmes (Fullan 2016)[2]. An endorsement process also reflects Oide Leadership's strong commitment to the following functions and roles:

- To support the design, development and facilitation of quality continuous professional learning for leaders utilising innovative approaches with a proven record of success
- To foster a culture of engagement with professional learning among school leaders
- To ensure cohesion and consistency across programmes
- To ensure adherence with the DE Quality Framework for Primary and Special Schools (2022), the DE Quality Framework for Post-Primary Schools (2022) and the Teaching Council's Teachers' Professional Learning Framework (Cosán) (2016)[3]
- To devise an endorsement framework for provision in professional learning for leadership.

2. Aims and Principles of Endorsement

Aims

The central aim of the Endorsement Process is to provide those involved in programme design and facilitation with objective and evidence based information that will allow them and those funding the programme, to ensure the ongoing quality and enhancement of leadership professional learning.

More specifically, the process aims to:

- Provide assurance from Oide Leadership that the programme/activity is relevant, well - constructed and of high quality
- Be reflective of the Quality Frameworks for Schools (Leadership and Management) Build
- an understanding of and foster engagement with professional learning amongst the profession
- Reduce duplication in the system

Ultimately, this process aims to improve leadership practices so as to ensure quality outcomes for students and school communities.

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1   Schleicher, A. (2012), Ed. *Preparing Teachers and Developing School Leaders for the 21st Century: Lessons from Around the World*, OECD Publishing.

2   Fullan, M. (2016) 'Great to Excellent: Launching the Next Stage of Ontario's Education Agenda', Ministry of Education publication.

3   DE (2022) *Looking at Our School 2022: A Quality Framework for Primary Schools and Special Schools*.
    Available at: file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/232720_c8357d7a-dd03-416b-83dc-9847b99b025f%20(19).pdf
    DE (2022) *Looking at Our School 2022: A Quality Framework for Post-Primary Schools*.
    Available at: file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/232730_4afcbe10-7c78-4b49-a36d-e0349a9f8fb7%20(1).pdf
    Teaching Council (2016) *Cosán: Framework for Teachers' Learning*.
    Available at: https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/assets/uploads/2023/08/cosan-framework-for-teachers-learning.pdf

Principles

There will be mutual respect and trust between Oide Leadership and those who provide leadership programmes/activities, and consistency and fairness will underpin the endorsement process.

- There will be partnership and collaboration throughout the entire process
- The process will be informed by evidence as a means of ensuring high quality leadership programmes/activities
- Confidentiality will be maintained in relation to all information obtained during the process
- There will be clear communication of outcomes and feedback to those who provide leadership programmes

The process itself will be reviewed and evaluated on an annual basis. Oide Leadership is in a working partnership with the Professional Learning and Leadership Team at Education Scotland and the National Academy for Educational Leadership (NAEL) in Wales. The organisations will peer review each other's endorsement processes to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

3.   Benefits of Endorsement for Providers and for School Leaders

The benefits of the endorsement process for provision will include the following:

- Allow the programme/activity to carry a mark of quality which will support communication with school leaders and assurance that the programme/activity is relevant, well-constructed and of high quality
- Enable school leaders to select and engage in leadership development opportunities that are appropriate to their needs
- Encourage collaboration among providers and reduce duplication of provision

4.   Range of Leadership Development Provision

Oide Leadership is taking a broad view of leadership learning provision, and looks to endorse both programmes and those leadership learning activities that are not necessarily programmatic in nature but may be bespoke and/or local. Oide Leadership is aware that not all criteria are relevant to such provision, and therefore, Oide Leadership takes a proportionate approach to the process of endorsing this provision. Oide Leadership invites providers of existing provision which has been run once and subsequently evaluated and feedback gathered to cover all three themes of the Oide Leadership's Endorsement Criteria. Oide Leadership will therefore not accept new leadership provision.

5.   Endorsement Criteria and Supporting Evidence Required

An application form is available on the Leadership section of the Oide website **(www.oide.ie)** and is attached as Appendix 1 to this document.

The provider will introduce the application with an initial paragraph describing the leadership development programme they offer. This sets out an overview of rationale/aims, learning outcomes and career stage/specific context and focus.

The endorsement criteria are divided into three themes:
1. Professional Learning and Facilitation
2. The Process: Management and Administration
3. Evaluation and Impact

Providers are requested to write a statement of no more than 1000 words for each theme outlining how they meet the criteria. The statement may reference or signpost additional policies and documentation. Examples of further evidence should be submitted electronically in the sections provided throughout the application form.

If two or more providers are working together, then a group submission can be made for endorsement. Such an application should demonstrate evidence of strong governance of the partnership and of collaboration in the design, facilitation and evaluation of the programme/activity.

Section C
Criteria for Oide Leadership Endorsement Process

Providers will be expected to be cognisant of the Aims and Principles of the Oide Leadership Endorsement Process.

1. Professional Learning and Facilitation

The design and facilitation of the Professional Learning should:

- Reflect Oide Leadership's Model of Professional Learning

- Reflect the provider's articulated vision, mission and values

- Address the specific needs of leaders in Ireland taking culture, context and career stage into account

- Be provided by high quality personnel, committed to their own on-going professional learning and system improvement

- Reflect national priorities and policies including LAOS (2022), Cosán (2016), Circulars 03/2018 and 44/2019

- Have potential for collaboration with other providers, where appropriate

Examples of Additional Evidence

Providers may wish to reference the following:
- Examples of collaboration with other providers, if relevant
- An outline of facilitator selection processes, training, and on-going professional learning / support for them
- An overview of the facilitators' skills, attributes and experience
- Other examples related to the criteria above (providers should indicate the relevance of these examples)

2.   Process: Management and Administration

High quality professional learning requires effective management and administration. Provider(s) should:

- Have efficient and effective administrative backup to support the development, facilitation and evaluation of the provision

- Have an accurate and clear marketing plan which specifies learning impacts and outcomes

- Have a clear communication plan to address participants' needs throughout the course of the programme/activity

- Ensure there are systems to manage the systematic gathering, review and use of evaluation and impact data to support ongoing development

- Ensure ease of access for the target audience, through the use of a blended learning approach, as appropriate, and an adequate infrastructure to support this blended learning

- Provide opportunities for participants to engage through the medium of Gaeilge according to context, or when requested

Examples of Additional Evidence

Providers may wish to reference the following:
- Communication Strategy
- Evidence of the promotion and marketing of the programme/activity
- Evidence of how the programme/activity lay-out and timetable is conveyed to participants
- Details of booking systems and attendance records
- Details of geographical provision and criteria used to inform decisions
- Details of how the provision is enhanced by a blended learning approach
- Other examples related to the criteria above (providers should indicate the relevance of these examples)

3.   Evaluation and Impact

All professional learning should have a positive impact on outcomes for students and school communities.

The Professional Learning should:

> - Include a systematic and rigorous strategy to measure the impact of the programme
>
> - Enhance the participants' knowledge and understanding of the role of the school leader in Ireland
>
> - Have recognised impact on the school leader's practice, adding value to their leadership practice
>
> - Impact positively on the person of the leader by enhancing their personal attributes and interpersonal skills
>
> - Build and enhance collaboration both within and between schools
>
> - Have a positive impact on the learning experiences, outcomes and wellbeing for students and school communities

Examples of Additional Evidence

Providers may wish to reference the following:

- ✍ Providers' internal development and quality assurance processes
- ✍ Examples of evaluation surveys, questionnaires etc.
- ✍ Evidence of changes made as a result of feedback/evaluative practices
- ✍ Attendance and Completion statistics with destination statistics, if available
- ✍ Other examples related to the criteria above (providers should indicate the relevance of these examples

Section D
The Endorsement Process

What is being endorsed?
It is the specific provision of professional learning for leadership that is endorsed by Oide Leadership and not the provider. Providers can submit more than one programme for endorsement at any time.

What is the process?
Approval follows a three-stage process.

Stage 1: Written Submission

Assessment of the written submission is undertaken by the Oide Leadership Panel Members.

Following the written assessment at stage one, the provider may be asked to submit further evidence prior to meeting the Endorsement Panel at stage two.

If the provision does not reach a minimum level in meeting the criteria and in particular, does not reflect the aims and principles of the Oide Leadership Endorsement Process, the application will not go forward to stage two. Providers will be informed indicating where the application does not meet the criteria.

Stage 2: Endorsement Panel Meeting

The Panel Meeting is an opportunity for the provider to meet with the Endorsement Panel.

Time is allowed for a short presentation by the provider. Following the presentation, there is an opportunity for professional dialogue structured around the application and the presentation.

The panel members assess each submission using the stated criteria.

Stage 3: Decision on Application

Communication of the outcome of endorsement including feedback will be provided in a timely fashion.

Who makes the decision?
Oide Leadership Panel members make the decision. Membership of the Oide Leadership Panel is from a pool of external experts and associates, who have received training in the application of the Oide Leadership endorsement criteria.

What happens when provision is endorsed?
Providers will be informed and successful applications will be published on the Oide website. Providers will be able to use the Oide Leadership Endorsement Logo on their programme materials. Endorsement is for four years and is renewable after this four-year period.

What happens if provision is not endorsed?
Resubmission, subject to the advice of the panel will be facilitated.

If the evidence required is less extensive, then the Endorsement Panel receives the resubmitted evidence and makes the decision as to whether the provision can now be endorsed. There is only one opportunity to resubmit evidence through this process. If the evidence is still not sufficient after resubmission, the provider will be invited to begin the process of applying for the next round of endorsement.

Stage 4: Maintaining High Standards during the Period of Endorsement

Midterm Report

Providers are asked to submit a midterm report. The provider is expected to engage in a process of self-evaluation and to provide evidence of the evaluation and impact of the provision as part of this report. Every programme is different, so as part of the approval of the programme, Oide Leadership agrees with the individual provider as to the nature of the evaluation evidence. Oide Leadership will review this evaluation evidence.

The due date for the midterm report is agreed with the provider.

Oide Leadership reserves the right to rescind endorsement as a result of the review.

Examples of the type of evidence that may be requested as part of the midterm report includes but is not limited to:
•   Attendance statistics
•   Retention statistics
•   Destination statistics
•   Internal evaluation processes and outcomes
•   Participant evaluation processes and outcomes
•   External evaluation processes and outcomes
•   Impact of the changed leadership practice on outcomes for students
     and school communities

Re-Endorsement Programme

When a programme has been endorsed for a period of four years and a midterm report has been submitted in the interim, the programme may be re-submitted to Oide Leadership to undergo the Re-Endorsement Process. This process includes an update on changes in each section of the endorsement process and further engagement with an Endorsement Panel. The provider may be asked to submit further evidence at any stage of the Re-Endorsement Process. A dedicated form for this process will be sent to the provider from the Oide Leadership Office.

Application Process

Applications are submitted electronically and details and submission deadline dates will be available on the website.

What support will be available?
The criteria and guidance document will be available on the Oide website, **www.oide.ie** together with a list of FAQs which will be updated as the process continues.

Additional support can be accessed by contacting the Oide Leadership Office at **geraldine.mcnamara@oide.ie**

Appendix One
Oide Leadership Application Process

This will be available electronically on the Oide website at **www.oide.ie**

Name of Provider:..

Name of Leadership Programme:..

Main Contact Person:..

Email: ....

Telephone Number:..

Partner Organisation(s) (if applicable):...

Duration of the Programme:..

Mode of Facilitation: Face to face ☐ online ☐ blended ☐

Where on the Continuum are potential participants situated? *(more than one may be applicable)*:

Teacher Leader ☐ Middle Leader ☐ Aspiring Leader ☐

New Senior Leader ☐ Established Senior Leader ☐ System Leader ☐

Module Titles *(where applicable)* [ ]

Introductory Paragraph *(Maximum 600 words)*

Brief overview of the provision, its rationale/aims, learning outcomes, a short description of collaboration with another provider or providers (if applicable) and a statement as to why Oide Leadership endorsement is important to you.

Please submit a summary statement and signpost additional evidence showing how the provision meets the 18 criteria outlined in the three themes:

Professional Learning and Facilitation

The Process: Management and Administration

Evaluation and Impact

1.   **Professional Learning and Facilitation** *(Maximum 7000 words)*

This section to be used for links to additional evidence cited in support of the above statement. Examples of the additional evidence can be found in the Guidelines for Providers Endorsement Booklet page 10

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2. The Process: Management and Administration *(Maximum 1000 words)*

This section to be used for links to additional evidence cited in support of the above statement. Examples of the additional evidence can be found in the Guidelines for Providers Endorsement Booklet page 11.

3.   Evaluation and impact *(Maximum 1000 words)*
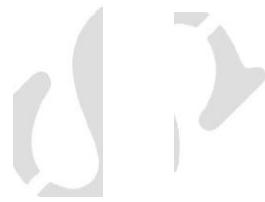
This section to be used for links to additional evidence cited in support of the above statement. Examples of the additional evidence can be found in the Guidelines for Providers Endorsement Booklet page 12.

Before submitting this application, please ensure that you have:

1.   **Completed all sections of the form.**
2.   **Not exceeded the indicated maximum word count in any section.**

On submission, you are certifying that all information provided is accurate and that you can, upon request, and if required, provide additional clarification to the endorsement panel.

You are also agreeing to keep Oide updated in writing of any changes to the programme.