

## Principal Selection



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# Overview

School leaders, particularly school principals, are helping to build a world-class education system and transforming Victoria into the Education State. They have direct and profound impacts on the lives of children and young people. They affect teachers, education support staff, parents and the broader community in which their school is located. Leadership can bring great reward but it also brings great responsibility – the responsibility for equipping students with the capabilities to succeed in work and life.

Ambitious Education State 10 year targets have been developed to focus efforts on the range of factors that allow students to develop and achieve their best, leading to equity and excellence for all. There are targets in four areas: Learning for life; Happy, healthy and resilient kids; Breaking the link between disadvantage and outcomes; and Pride and confidence in our schools.

The Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO) has been developed to dramatically increase the focus on student learning in schools. Using the latest research on student learning and global best practice, FISO helps schools to focus their efforts on key areas that are known to have the greatest impact on school improvement, to create better outcomes for all students.

In order to prepare children and young people for the world beyond school, principals must create and sustain the conditions where high quality teaching and learning can flourish. The challenge for the principal is to create a collaborative culture and collective responsibility for student achievement, engagement and wellbeing, a culture that values both student and adult learning. They must connect teachers to professional learning communities and wider school networks to encourage sharing of best practice and ultimately improve their professional practice by learning from each other. Effective principals must support the learning and development of all staff, foster creativity and curiosity in teachers, and help them to imagine new possibilities for teaching and learning and encourage and support innovation. They need to ensure that resources are allocated strategically by putting teaching and learning at the centre.

Principals are critical for improving school and system performance. However, their impact on student achievement is mediated through other people, and organisational factors such as classroom practices and school climate. Effective principals distribute leadership responsibilities to those around them. As a result, leadership teams and middle level leaders have an essential role to play in creating the professional communities that motivate school staff towards more effective performance and create educational experiences that reach and impact on all students.

The Department has the responsibility to protect and provide for the welfare and safety of students and staff and to maintain the security of resources and assets by requiring and maintaining high standards of professional behaviour and conduct from employees. In order to meet its responsibilities, the Department must be satisfied that only those who meet the highest standards of integrity and suitability are employed. In addition, the Secretary (or delegate) must be satisfied that the prospective employee is suitable for child-connected work.

Rigorous, transparent and well defined selection processes are crucial for building and sustaining successful schools. Selecting the right candidates to leadership positions has a significant impact on effective school performance. Selection to a principal position is determined solely on the basis of merit assessed against the selection criteria for the position.

These guidelines bring together the key aspects of recruitment and other Human Resources policies and relevant legislation to assist school councils and principal selection panels in the selection of a principal of a Victorian government school.

# School improvement

The core task of the principal is to lead and manage ongoing efforts to improve teaching and school staff practice, school performance and ultimately outcomes for students.

**Fig: FISO Improvement Model**



Professional leadership is identified as one of the four statewide priorities in the FISO Improvement Model.

Research shows that great school leadership can have a significant effect on student outcomes because leadership affects the environment and conditions in which teachers teach and students learn.

Effective school leaders set the vision for their schools and foster the school's learning culture.

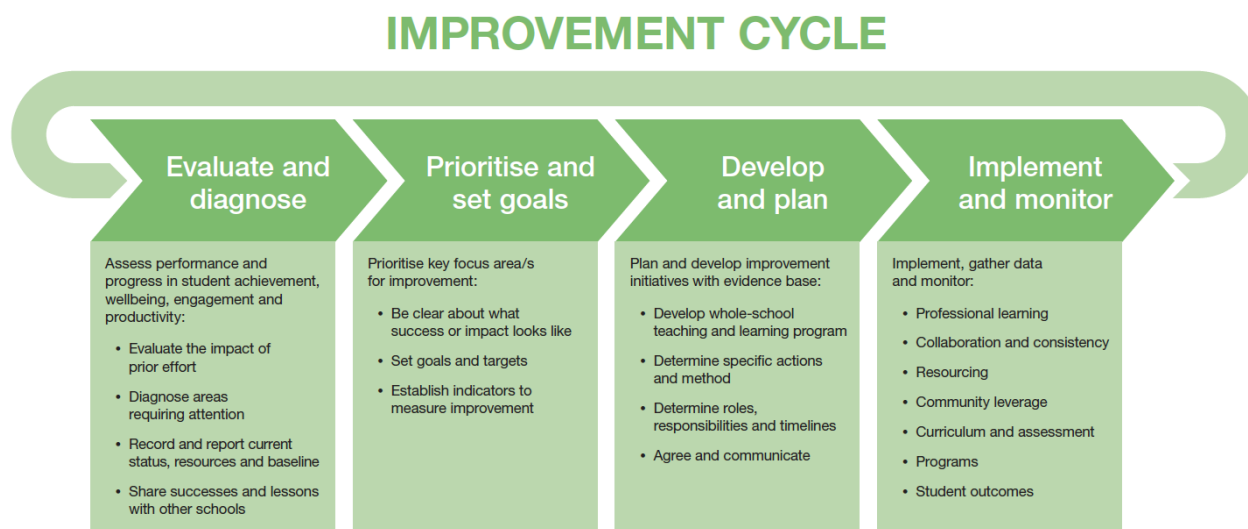
They set high expectations for student achievement, and actively lead and participate in professional learning to build the practice excellence of their staff.

They ensure a safe and orderly learning environment so that teachers and students can focus on learning.

Great leaders determine what teaching expertise and resources are needed to achieve student learning goals and source and allocate them accordingly.

Principals use the FISO Improvement Cycle to combine robust evidence with effective inquiry processes; highlight the school's areas of strength and the areas of existing practice that need improving; and plan the right improvement strategies.

Fig: FISO Improvement Cycle



The FISO Improvement Cycle supports strategic and annual planning, self-evaluation and school review.

Principals play a lead role in evaluating the school's performance against their 4-year School Strategic Plan (SSP) and Annual Implementation Plans (AIPs), which is tested and validated through a school review. The school review report informs the development of the next SSP.

The SSP outlines the strategic direction for the school, setting four-year goals and targets and key improvement strategies. AIPs monitor yearly progress against these and includes actions, success criteria and evidence of impact.

## Leadership

To positively influence school improvement, effective principals exercise a particular set of leadership capabilities, which are summarised in the Australian Professional Standard for Principals (the Standard). The Standard sets out what principals are expected to know, understand and do to achieve excellence in their work. It takes full account of the crucial contribution made by principals in:

- raising student achievement at all levels and all stages
- promoting equity and excellence
- creating and sustaining the conditions under which quality teaching and learning thrive
- influencing, developing and delivering community expectations and government policy
- contributing to the development of a 21st century education system at local, national and international levels.

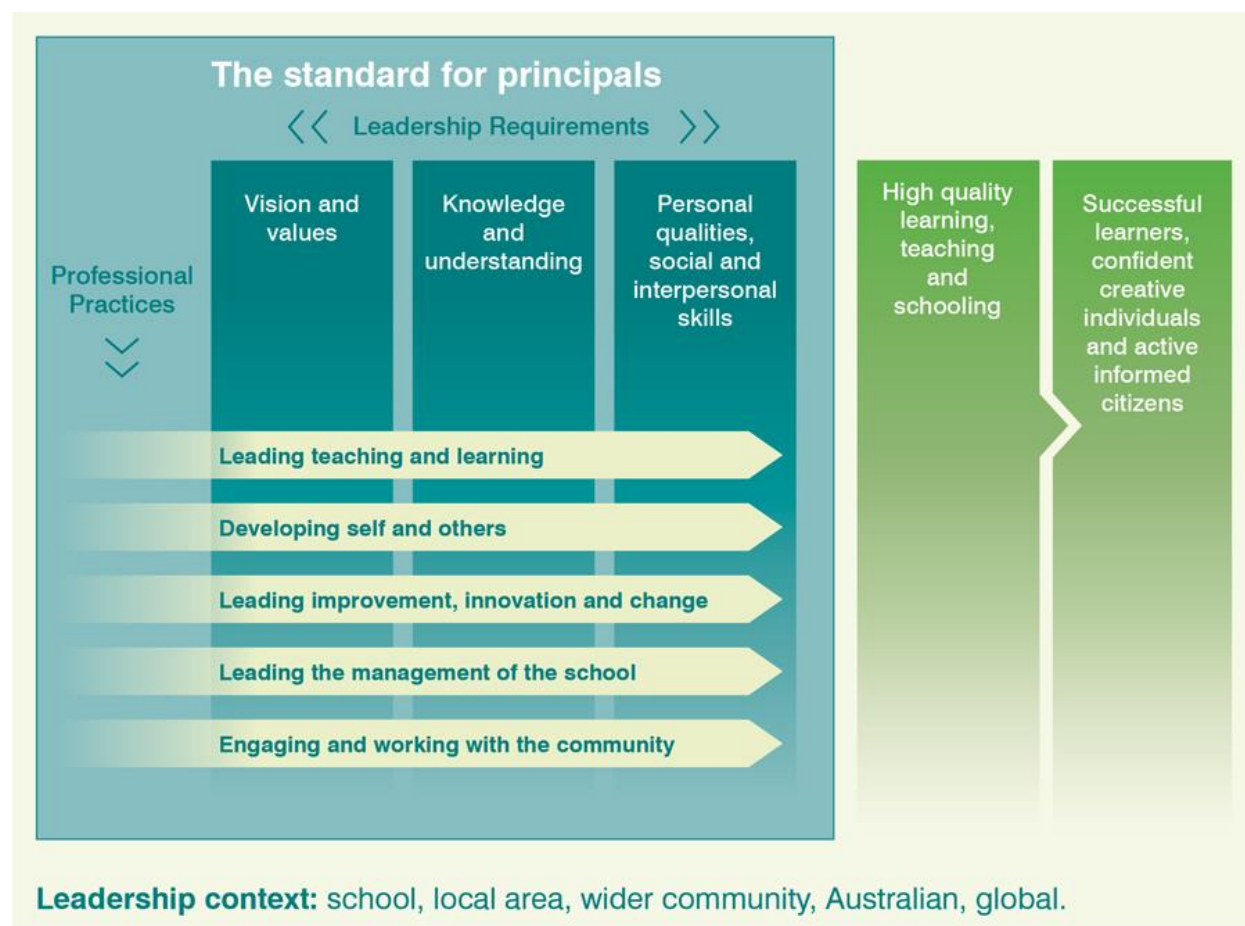
The Standard is based on three *leadership requirements*:

- vision and values
- knowledge and understanding
- personal qualities and social and interpersonal skills.

These requirements are enacted through the following five key *professional practices*:

- leading teaching and learning
- developing self and others
- leading improvement, innovation and change
- leading the management of the school
- engaging and working with the community.

**Fig: The Australian Professional Standard for Principals**



Aspirants to principal positions may wish to undertake the Bastow Institute of Educational Leadership's Unlocking Potential which is the Department's principal preparation program for high potential leaders. The program gives participants the opportunity to broaden their understanding of professional practice areas aligned to the Standard. From 2017, participants will be awarded a Graduate Certificate of Principal Preparation (Victoria) on successful completion of the program. This formal qualification will be conferred by Monash University and will serve as a mark of excellence in school leadership.

## Managing Principal Vacancies

The Principal Class structure reflects the Department's commitment to excellence in educational leadership and management as a key factor in school improvement. The key leadership responsibilities include:

- the provision of quality educational programs and improved student outcomes;
- a focus on developing self and others, and on building collective leadership capacity;
- the development of effective partnerships with the broader community, other schools, key stakeholders and the Department's central and regional offices;
- the maintenance of efficient and equitable resources that support the school's strategic intent; and
- compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements, and Departmental policy and procedures.

### CLASSIFICATION

Unless otherwise approved, to be classified as a principal position the following three criteria must be met:

- responsibility for the delivery of a comprehensive curriculum;
- responsibility to a community through governance of a school council; and
- responsibility for the management of financial and human resources.

Principal positions are classified within one classification level with five remuneration ranges. The remuneration range for each principal position is determined by the Department, based on the school's Student Resource Package.

Principals have a clear set of accountabilities that distinguishes their work from other employees of the Teaching Service and the education community. These accountabilities are set out in detail in the contract of employment.

## LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

### Education and Training Reform Act 2006

Selection to an advertised principal position is determined solely on the basis of merit assessed in relation to the selection criteria for the position. Principal selection is managed under section 2.4.6 of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* which states:

- (1) In the case of a vacancy in the position of principal in a school, the Secretary must, in accordance with any Ministerial Order, take into account the recommendation of the school council of the school or, if there is no school council, the recommendation of a committee approved by the Minister as representing the local community, when deciding to employ to fill the vacancy.
- (2) In making a recommendation for the purposes of sub-section (1), the school council or committee (as the case may be) must proceed in the manner determined by Ministerial Order.

*Ministerial Order No. 1006* provides the selection framework for filling principal vacancies and specifies grounds for review in addition to the grounds set out in section 2.4.54(2) of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*. The Order contains the following three schedules:

- *Schedule 1 of Ministerial Order No. 1006* specifies the composition of the selection panel and selection criteria for an advertised principal vacancy in a school with a school council.
- *Schedule 2 of Ministerial Order No. 1006* specifies the composition of the selection panel and selection criteria for an advertised principal vacancy in a new school or an established school where there is no school council.
- *Schedule 3 of Ministerial Order No. 1006* sets out the procedures to be followed by a principal selection panel in making a recommendation for an advertised principal vacancy.

### Public Administration Act 2004

Part 2 of the *Public Administration Act 2004* establishes public sector values and employment principles to be applied by all Victorian public sector bodies. The employment principles underpin employment processes which apply to the Victorian public sector, which includes employees in the teaching service. Information regarding the employment principles, standards and associated guidelines is available on HRWeb at Victorian Public Sector Employment Principles and Standards.

### Other relevant legislation

A range of other laws may be relevant to recruitment and selection processes, including laws related to privacy, health records, misleading and deceptive conduct and equal opportunity. Further information regarding equal opportunity laws is set out under 'Selection' below.

## SELECTION CRITERIA

Selection criteria are designed to help make the most accurate match between the requirements of a position and the skills of an applicant. Six selection criteria have been developed based on the professional practices in the Standard. In addition, a community criterion may be included. School councils are encouraged to include a criterion informed by the specific context and leadership needs of the school.

The selection criteria are as follows, with the first six criteria being mandatory.

### Vision and values

Demonstrated capacity to create a shared vision, define and gain acceptance of school goals and set and communicate expectations for effective performance.

### Teaching and Learning

Demonstrated ability to manage the quality of teaching and create a positive culture of challenge, support and collaboration.

## Improvement, Innovation and Change

Demonstrated capacity to produce and implement clear, evidence-based improvement plans and policies and lead innovation and change.

## Management

Demonstrated capacity to ensure that the school's human, physical and financial resources are efficiently allocated and managed.

## Development

Demonstrated capacity to create a professional learning community that is focused on the continuous improvement of teaching and learning, supporting all staff to achieve high standards and commitment to their own learning and wellbeing.

## Engagement

Demonstrated capacity to develop positive relationships with students, parents/families and the local community and participate in and contribute to system-level activities.

## Community Criterion (optional)

The addition of a community criterion provides an opportunity for the school council (or committee if there is no school council) to frame a criterion informed by the specific context and leadership needs of the school.

## QUALIFICATIONS

Employment, transfer or promotion to a principal position requires a person to be four-year trained and have provisional or full registration from the [Victorian Institute of Teaching](#).

In addition, the Secretary (or delegate) may require particular qualifications and/or training for a specific position or class of positions. To date, the Secretary (or delegate) has determined that, unless otherwise approved in any particular case, applicants for principal positions of special schools and special development schools must hold an approved special education qualification relevant to the position.

If particular qualifications are required for a position, these will be included in the advertisement for that position.

## Role of the school council

For the majority of schools the school council is responsible for recommending to the Secretary a person to fill a vacant principal position. *Schedule 1 of Ministerial Order No.1006* sets out the role of the school council in the selection process.

Where a principal position becomes vacant or is about to become vacant, the regional director will approve the timing of the advertisement of the vacancy in consultation with the school council president. The regional director is responsible for nominating the Secretary's nominees to the selection panel (one of whom will be a practising principal with relevant experience) and advising the school council president of the names of the nominees.

## PRIOR TO THE ADVERTISEMENT

Following the regional director's approval of the timing of the advertisement, the role of the school council is to:

- prepare a school profile statement for inclusion in the position description. The purpose of the school profile is to provide potential applicants with information about the school and the school community. Examples of information that can be provided in the profile include the size of the school, geographic location, priority programs and the school's web address, where applicants can access additional information;
- prepare a community criterion (optional) for inclusion in the position description. The addition of a community criterion provides an opportunity for the school council (or committee if there is no school council) to frame a criterion informed by the specific context and leadership needs of the school. While the addition of a community criterion is not mandatory, it is strongly recommended. Any criterion developed must be clear, objective and relevant and must not contravene the requirements of any Ministerial Order, regulations or relevant legislation such as the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* and the *Public Administration Act 2004*;



- provide the school profile statement and the community criterion to the regional director. The regional director will notify the Schools Recruitment Unit of the details to enable the vacancy to be advertised on Recruitment Online; and
- establish the selection panel.

## ESTABLISHING THE SELECTION PANEL

The purpose of the selection panel is to recommend to school council the best applicant on the basis of the evidence available. The effectiveness of the decision making will ultimately rest on the panel's ability to objectively assess each applicant's skills, knowledge and capacity and to define, articulate and reach agreement about the nature of leadership required to lead their school effectively.

Major determinants of the credibility of any selection process are the attitudes, skills, and experience of members of the selection panel and their ability to bring alternative points of view to the selection process. When establishing the selection panel, consideration should be given to including members who between them can bring to the process:

- a comprehensive understanding of the school's profile and resource base;
- knowledge of the school culture and future directions;
- an understanding of the expertise, knowledge and attributes required to successfully undertake the role of principal;
- an appreciation of the contributions principals can make to the wider school system; and
- expertise in and an understanding of the selection process.

*Schedule 1 of Ministerial Order No.1006* sets out the composition of the principal selection panel. It is the responsibility of both the school council and the Department to ensure:

- at least one member of the panel is a person trained by the Merit Protection Boards in the principles of merit and equity;
- provision is made for gender representation; and
- unless otherwise approved, no panel member is an applicant for a principal position advertised at the same time.

Panel members are to avoid any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest in the selection process including the selection decision. A conflict may arise where it could be reasonably perceived that a panel member is influenced by the private interest of facilitating employment (for example the employment of a family member or associate). Where there could be a perception of possible favouritism and bias, to mitigate the risk the panel member should remove themselves from the selection process and/or selection decision. A panel member who considers they may have a conflict of interest must declare their conflict of interest and any steps taken to manage the conflict. Further information is available on HRWeb at: Conflict of Interest.

The school council president must inform all council members that any involvement in the selection process renders them ineligible to be an applicant for the principal position in that school or any other principal position advertised at the same time.

The school council president should ensure that each selection panel member receives a copy of this guide, *Schedule 3 of Ministerial Order No.1006* and arrange for the panel members to sign the *Selection Panel Confidentiality Statement*. The council may issue further instructions to the selection panel but such instructions must be consistent with those contained in *Schedule 3 of Ministerial Order No.1006*.

## CONSIDERATION OF THE SELECTION PANEL'S REPORT

On receipt of the selection panel's report, the school council is required to consider the recommendation of the selection panel at a school council meeting (either a regular or an extraordinary meeting), attended by members of school council and the principal selection panel. No applicant for the position, including non-shortlisted applicants, should be present at the school council meeting or that part of a school council meeting where the report is tabled and discussed.

All individuals present at the school council meeting at which the selection panel report is tabled should be requested by the school council president to sign the *School Council Confidentiality Statement*.

Following consideration of the selection panel's report the school council may:

- accept the selection panel recommendation and refer the recommendation to the Secretary; or
- refer the selection panel recommendation back to the panel for further consideration; or
- refer the matter to the Secretary indicating that there was no suitable appointee, the selection panel was unable to reach a majority decision, or the school council disagrees with the selection panel recommendation. Where the school council does not agree with the selection panel recommendation the school council should include the grounds for this disagreement.

The completed *Principal Selection Panel Report* should be emailed to [schools.recruitment@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:schools.recruitment@edumail.vic.gov.au) or mailed to:

The Manager  
Schools Recruitment Unit  
Department of Education and Training  
GPO Box 4367  
MELBOURNE 3001

Applicants should not be advised of any selection decision until the Secretary (or delegate) has considered the selection panel's recommendation and determined the selection outcome.

## SCHOOLS WITHOUT A SCHOOL COUNCIL

In new schools or established schools without a school council, *Schedule 2 of Ministerial Order No.1006* provides that the committee representing the local community shall be the selection panel. *Schedule 2* sets out the composition of the selection panel and sets out the procedures to be followed in making a recommendation to the Secretary. In this case the selection panel will undertake the tasks described above in accordance with *Schedule 2 of Ministerial Order No.1006*.

## Advertising vacancies

In general, principal vacancies will be advertised on Recruitment Online in the last week of each school term and remain open for not less than four weeks. Regional directors, however, have the discretion to advertise a particular principal vacancy at any time.

The Recruitment Online advertisement will include:

- the school profile statement;
- the role and accountability statement;
- the selection criteria (both mandatory and the community criterion).

Where a position is advertised in anticipation of a principal's resignation and the principal applies for that position before the principal's resignation has taken effect (for example a resignation at age 54 and 11 months), the vacancy must be withdrawn and can only be re-advertised after the effective date of the principal's resignation. Where the principal is an applicant for another position, the selection process may continue for that position. If the principal is the preferred applicant for the other position, the offer of employment should be delayed until after the principal's resignation has taken effect.

## Information for applicants

One of the objectives of the principal selection process is to proactively encourage applicants with the required profile to apply for principal vacancies. This objective has implications for the manner in which schools select, construct and disseminate information packages when a principal vacancy is advertised. Documentation that is made available to potential applicants provides a strong sense of what is important in the school, its values and its desired future. While the school profile statement, the role and accountability statement and the selection criteria are included in the advertisement on Recruitment Online, they do not provide the necessary insights, for example, into the current and future directions of the school or the school's capacity to implement new initiatives.

Applicants should be provided with appropriate information that allows them to gain a detailed understanding of the school's strategic priorities, annual implementation plan and human and financial resources. It is important that potential applicants understand the opportunities offered by the position, as well as the challenges, in order to make a realistic assessment of their own capacity to meet the requirements.

A lack of sufficient information can act as a disincentive for potential applicants to pursue the advertised position. However, a comprehensive outline of the school's profile and resource base in key documents can signal an invitation to aspirants that the school is encouraging them to apply. It also ensures that the successful applicant can be confident that information on the nature of the school, its profile and resource base is consistent with the information obtained during the selection process.

To enable potential applicants to form a comprehensive view of the school the following documents should be hosted electronically on the school's website at the time of the advertisement:

- School's Strategic Plan
- School's Annual Implementation Plan
- Annual Report to the school community.

Where a school does not have a website, arrangements should be made with the regional office to host these documents on the region's website.

In addition, shortlisted applicants may request other documents to ensure they have a more detailed understanding of the school's profile. These include:

- Student Resource Package
- Bank reconciliation
- Multi-year trend analysis
- Auditor's management letter
- Enrolment data and trends
- School self-evaluation report.

## Applications

All applications received by the closing date are to be considered by the selection panel. Applications should be lodged electronically through Recruitment Online by the advertised closing date. Applicants who are unable to access or use Recruitment Online may submit a written application (hard copy) which must reach the school no later than the advertised closing date.

Acknowledgement of the receipt of applications will be sent automatically to applicants who apply through Recruitment Online. Where applicants provide hard-copy applications only, the selection panel chairperson is responsible for ensuring that a letter acknowledging receipt of the application is sent promptly. The applications and accompanying materials become the property of the selection panel and are not returnable to candidates.

Late applications may be accepted at the discretion of the panel chairperson with the agreement of the panel. Factors that may be considered include the reasons as to why the application is late and the number of applications already received.

Where a late application is accepted, the selection panel must keep a record of the reasons for acceptance. When an application is received after the closing date and rejected, the applicant is to be advised in writing that, as the application was received after the closing date, it will not be considered.

Consideration may be given to contracting a search firm to assist in the identification of quality applicants. Search firms offer a degree of specialisation because they are able to draw from their data banks a pool of potential applicants in a relatively short period of time and undertake searches for 'hidden applicants'. This allows them to seek out potential applicants rather than waiting for them to emerge as a result of advertised positions. Confidentiality is assured through this process and is a major factor in the success of search firms in convincing candidates who already hold positions to make themselves available for other positions.

Unless otherwise approved, an applicant for a principal position is ineligible to be considered if that applicant is involved in the selection process for any principal position advertised at the same time.

## Selection

### OVERVIEW

The purpose of a selection process is to choose the applicant who will perform successfully in the advertised position and do so better than all other applicants. In order to reduce the risk associated with appointing an applicant before the person has demonstrated the capacity to do the job, the selection panel can use a range of instruments or selection tools designed to predict successful performance on the job. The selection panel should be able to demonstrate the rationale for the selection tools used to identify and assess the required competencies. A number of selection tools will be available to selection panels.

All principal vacancies must be filled in accordance with the Department's selection procedures set out in this guide and comply with *Ministerial Order No. 1006*. All information provided by applicants or obtained during the selection process is confidential.

Selection for advertised principal positions is determined solely on the basis of merit assessed in relation to the selection criteria of the position to be filled. The following principles should be applied in the selection process:

- The applicant's skills, knowledge and abilities, relevant to the work to be performed, are fairly assessed
- Selection methods are relevant to the work to be performed
- Decisions and processes provide procedural fairness
- Decisions are documented and capable of review
- Confidentiality is maintained
- All applicants receive fair and equitable treatment without regard to age, breastfeeding, employment activity, gender identity, disability, industrial activity, lawful sexual activity, marital status, parental status or status as a carer, physical features, political belief or activity, pregnancy, race, religious belief or activity, sex, sexual orientation, an expunged homosexual conviction; personal association (whether as a relative or otherwise) with a person who is identified by reference to any of the above attributes.

Panel members should also be aware it is unlawful to discriminate against an applicant on the ground of a protected attribute, in contravention of the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* or federal equal opportunity legislation.

When assessing applicants, selection panel members must ensure that they do not directly or indirectly discriminate. Panel members should be aware of individual bias, assumptions and stereotyping which may impede the selection of the best applicant for the position. Panel members should be aware of the diverse pathways of experience and approaches which different candidates may bring to the interview and to the workplace, including people of different genders and from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This diversity should be viewed as an attribute and should in no way diminish the assessment of the applicant's suitability for the position.

Panel members should be aware that the Department has a positive duty under the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* to provide reasonable and proportionate measures to eliminate discrimination and a duty to provide reasonable adjustments for people with a disability. Further information is available on the Department's Disability web page.

Panel members should focus on abilities, skills, knowledge, potential and qualifications required for the position and not seniority, length of experience or familiarity with the position. This is important as to focus too much on length and continuity of experience may impact negatively on people who take career breaks for family reasons and on those who have not had an opportunity to 'act' in the position.

## RECEIVING AND DISTRIBUTING APPLICATIONS

Applications will be accessed by the person in the school with 'recruiter' access through Recruitment Online (normally the business manager). Where a person is occupying or acting in the principal position at the school, that person should not access the applications. The applications will be provided to the selection panel chairperson by the 'recruiter' after the closing date for the vacancy. The selection panel chairperson is responsible for distributing applications (either electronically or in hard copy) to the members of the selection panel.

## SHORTLISTING

Shortlisting may be used to identify those applicants who, on the basis of the information available, best meet the selection criteria based on the leadership domains and show evidence that their qualifications and experience are competitive with other suitable applicants.

Any experience and available evidence relevant to the selection criteria should be taken into account by the panel. Account may also be taken of an applicant's potential to acquire new skills. Specific job knowledge necessary to carry out the duties of a position can be less important where this knowledge can be acquired in a reasonable time.

Only nominated referees may be contacted at the shortlisting stage of the selection process.

A panel may decide that an applicant does not meet one or more of the selection criteria and not shortlist that person.

A record should be kept as part of the selection panel report of the qualifications of applicants and the reasons, in relation to the selection criteria, for not shortlisting applicants for interview.

## INTERVIEW

The selection panel should develop a set of questions based on the selection criteria and assess, at interview, each shortlisted applicant's ability to demonstrate the knowledge, skills and behaviours that best matches the competencies necessary to perform the role. The panel should develop a consistent and fair scoring mechanism to focus attention on the selection criteria and differentiate between applicants' responses.

The interview complements the written application and detailed referee checks. The interview assists the panel in the assessment of the relative merits of each shortlisted applicant. The performance of an applicant in an interview should be integrated with information provided in the application, referee reports and any other assessment tools used in the selection process.

Shortlisted applicants should be given adequate notice of interview time and location. Where an applicant is unable to attend for interview, other arrangements such as teleconferencing may be used. If such arrangements are not possible, the panel should judge the applicant on the best available information.

To ensure that all applicants are fairly considered interviews should have a similar structure, with each applicant being given the opportunity to respond to similar areas of questioning. Questions are to relate specifically to the selection criteria in the context of the role to be performed and should not be ambiguous or unnecessarily complicated. Before closing the interview, the selection panel is advised to provide an opportunity for the applicant to seek or give any relevant additional information that may not have been covered.

## REFeree REPORTS

Referee reports are a critical part of the assessment of the relative merits of short listed applicants who are in high contention for the position. Such reports allow for a rigorous checking of claims made by applicants and the gathering of evidence on work performance.

Referees are nominated by the applicants to clarify, verify and add information to what is learned in the interview and from other parts of the selection process. The use of non-nominated referees may assist the process by confirming particular perspectives or providing more balanced information. The main purpose of using referees is to elicit information from past employers/employees about the applicant's ability to perform the essential functions of the role and to verify an applicant's claims.

Referees should be invited to comment on the applicant in relation to all of the selection criteria. The selection panel may seek referee reports either verbally (by telephone, teleconferencing), in person or in written form. The selection panel should accurately record both written and verbal referee comments. Where referee comments are provided verbally, the comments should be noted and read back to the referee to confirm the comments.

Where an applicant nominates a panel member as a referee, any referee comments made by that panel member should be documented in the same way as other referee comments.

Selection panels may wish to contact persons other than nominated referees to assist in assessing an applicant's ability, capacity and suitability for a position provided that the applicant is advised of these extended inquiries prior to a selection panel taking any action to contact a person(s) not nominated as a referee. In such instances the applicant is to be informed at or after interview of the name of any person whom the panel intends to contact and provided with an opportunity to comment. The applicant is advised that in such situations information may be disclosed to unlisted referees relating to the application.

### Prior knowledge

Members of the selection panel may know or have knowledge of one or more of the applicants. Rather than only disclosing this knowledge as fact in a statement to the panel, members contribute their perspective in order that the panel develops a richer understanding of a particular applicant's knowledge, skills and behaviours. Prior knowledge statements should be treated on the same basis as referee reports.

Referee reports must remain confidential.

## OPTIONAL SELECTION TOOLS

A range of other selection tools may also be used by the selection panel provided the use of the selection tool(s) is applied consistently to all applicants or shortlisted applicants. Examples of the selection tools that might be considered by a selection panel are listed below.

## Second interview

The selection panel may decide to conduct a second interview for a range of reasons. For example, the outcome of the first interview may indicate that it is difficult to differentiate between two quality applicants. The second interview allows the panel to tailor more specific questions or focus on particular criteria.

## Presentation to the selection panel

A presentation to the selection panel is a tool that provides supplementary information relating to skills that are difficult to assess in other ways. It also provides an opportunity to observe behaviour that can be used to predict future performance in similar work situations. Presentations are one example of simulated work tests. Other examples include written work, in-basket exercises, role plays and computer tests. These tests have high reliability and content validity since they are a sample of the actual work performed on the job.

## Informal meeting with the selection panel

After the interview process concludes and prior to a recommendation being made, the preferred applicant is invited to meet with the panel informally at the school. This social interaction allows the panel to observe behaviours that may not necessarily be evident during a formal interview situation. As the role and responsibilities of school leaders requires a high level of personal and social interaction, this meeting assists the panel in considering the applicant's suitability for their particular context.

## Use of external recruitment agency

In addition to identifying quality applicants during the application stage, contracting a search firm reduces the time spent by the selection panel in shortlisting applicants. However, it can be costly. While some search firms shortlist for the internal interview process, others provide a rank order of applicants. In either case the selection panel remains responsible for ranking the suitable applicants and making the recommendation to the school council.

## ASSESSING AND RANKING SHORTLISTED APPLICANTS

The selection panel must assess all shortlisted applicants against the selection criteria on the basis of their written application, interview, reports provided by referees and any other selection tool used by the panel. It is important that the selection panel does not make its assessment solely on the basis of interview performance. At the completion of the assessment the selection panel must rank all suitable applicants in order of merit.

In determining the priority order of suitable applicants, the selection panel should attempt to reach unanimous agreement on the ranking of applicants. If there is not unanimous agreement the selection panel should attempt to reach majority agreement on the ranking of suitable applicants. (for this purpose, a majority means at least three members of the panel).

On completion of the selection panel's assessment and ranking of suitable applicants, and subject to the suitability requirement set out below, the panel is to prepare a selection panel report to the school council as set out in *Schedule 3 of Ministerial Order No.1006*.

Where the selection panel is not able to reach either agreement or a majority recommendation, the panel should report to the school council that it was unable to recommend any applicant.

## SUITABILITY FOR EMPLOYMENT

The selection panel must be satisfied an applicant ranked as suitable who is not an existing ongoing Teaching Service employee is:

- suitable for child-connected work as defined in Ministerial Order 870; and
- a fit and proper person as required by Ministerial Order 1006.

This includes where a person is being employed for a subsequent period of employment where this information was collected more than 12 months previously.

Reasonable efforts are to be made by one of the Secretary's nominees on the selection panel to contact the immediate past employer of an applicant ranked as suitable who is not an existing ongoing Teaching Service employee and asked the following questions:

- Have you directly observed [applicant's name] work with children?
- During the period that [applicant's name] worked in your organisation, did you have any concerns about [applicant's name] behaviour or conduct when working with a child or children? If yes, what steps were taken to deal with these concerns? Were these concerns satisfactorily resolved?



- Do you have any concerns about [applicant's name] working directly with children?
- Has any disciplinary action been taken against the applicant in relation to inappropriate or unprofessional conduct towards a child?
- Were there instances where you had concerns that [applicant's name] did not always behave with integrity in their employment, such as not dealing with others in an ethical manner, not declaring or managing a conflict of interest appropriately or not dealing with sensitive or confidential information in an appropriate way? If yes, what steps were taken to deal with these concerns? Were these concerns satisfactorily resolved?

Where the responses to these questions raise any concerns with the Secretary's nominee in relation to the person's suitability for employment, before taking any further action in relation to finalising the selection report, the Secretary's nominee must seek advice from the Employee Conduct Branch.

## Approval

### DECISION

On receipt of the selection report from the school council, the Secretary (or delegate) will consider the recommendation made by the school council (or the selection panel where there is no school council) and either accept or reject the school council's recommendation.

In the event the Secretary (or delegate) approves the recommended applicant, the school council president (or the selection panel chairperson where there is no school council) should contact the recommended applicant to confirm whether that person remains interested in accepting the position.

In the event that the Secretary (or delegate) does not approve the employment, transfer or promotion of a recommended applicant, the Secretary or delegate will advise the school council of their decision and the course of action which may include:

- approving the employment, transfer or promotion of a person who was an applicant for the position but was not recommended by the school council or the committee as the case may be;
- referring the school council's or committee's recommendation back to the school council or committee for further consideration; or
- directing that the principal position be re-advertised.

### NOTIFICATION TO APPLICANTS

At the completion of the selection process the successful and unsuccessful applicants are to be advised of the outcome of their application.

All applicants for a principal position may seek feedback on their application and/or performance from the selection panel. It is recommended that the selection panel agrees on a process for providing feedback to unsuccessful applicants prior to commencing the selection process. This may include nominating one panel member to manage requests for feedback. Selection panels should agree on the wording of such feedback prior to reporting to the school council.

Detailed feedback on the application and/or interview performance should not be provided until after the conclusion of the review process.

### INDIVIDUAL SELECTION REPORT

The selection panel should ensure that an individual selection report is prepared for all shortlisted applicants. Shortlisted applicants may request a copy of their individual selection report from the chairperson of the selection panel once the selection decision has been announced.

Each report should contain the position title, the names of persons contacted for referee comment, comments relating to each of the selection criteria and the date of the preparation of the report.

### RETENTION OF SELECTION DOCUMENTATION

All selection documentation, including copies of applications, interview notes, referee comments and selection reports, must be retained by the school for two years after confirmation of the selection decision. This material remains the confidential property of the school and may be destroyed two years after the confirmation date.

# Review/Grievance

Provisional appointments to advertised principal vacancies are subject to review by the Merit Protection Boards where an ongoing employee in the Teaching Service is transferred or promoted to the vacancy. Unsuccessful applicants who are ongoing employees may seek a review of a selection decision. A review cannot be sought in respect of the selection of a person who was not an ongoing employee at the time of selection. The grounds for review are set out in section 2.4.54(2) of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* and *Ministerial Order No.1006*.

The Schools Recruitment Unit in the Department is responsible for the notification of provisional appointments in respect of principal positions.

The details of a provisional transfer or promotion, including the closing date for lodging a review, will be available from the day after applicants have been notified through the Recruitment Online system of the selection outcome. The details will be accessible through the provisional appointments page for fourteen (14) calendar days for all applicants to view and determine their eligibility to seek a review.

A transfer or promotion is confirmed when the Merit Protection Boards advises either that no review has been lodged or that any review has been resolved.

# Employment

## OFFER OF EMPLOYMENT

Successful applicants for principal positions will be offered a contract of employment, prepared by the People Division.

Prior to making an offer of employment the Secretary (or delegate), must be satisfied that the person:

- is a fit and proper person and is suitable for child-connected work;
- has gained registration with the Victorian Institute of Teaching;
- meets the qualification requirements;
- meets the medical requirements;
- has not been the recipient of a Voluntary Departure Package in the past three years;
- has no employment or re-employment restrictions placed on them; and
- is an Australian citizen or a permanent resident in Australia under any law of the Commonwealth or entitled to permanent residency in Australia under any law of the Commonwealth; or will be resident in Victoria for sufficient periods to enable the person to undertake the duties of the ongoing position.

Successful applicants who are not employed by the Department will need to provide the following information prior to an offer of employment being made:

- the original or certified copy of qualifications;
- original or certified copy of birth certificate, extract of birth entry, passport, certificate of naturalisation or certificate of citizenship;
- evidence of current registration from the Victorian Institute of Teaching;
- a health declaration;
- evidence of citizenship or permanent residence status; and
- proof of identity and name change, such as marriage certificate or deed poll, where an applicant's name has changed since birth.

Documents can only be certified by a person authorised to witness a statutory declaration and must be sighted prior to confirming employment.

If the applicant is not an Australian or New Zealand citizen, a copy of the relevant pages from the applicant's passport showing the stamp which confirms the right to permanent residence is required. The applicant's name must appear on the copy. If the applicant is a British subject who migrated to Australia prior to 1974, evidence of residence in Australia prior to 1974 is required. New Zealand citizens are regarded as Australian citizens for employment purposes, but evidence of New Zealand citizenship is required. Further information about employment of overseas workers can be found on HRWeb at Visa Requirements for the Employment and Sponsorship of Overseas Workers.

The Secretary (or delegate) must be satisfied that the selected applicant satisfies the qualification requirements of the position.



In relation to any prospective employee, a suitability check will be undertaken to confirm that the person does not have a current employment restriction. Interstate applicants will be checked using the National Check of Employment Status procedures. Where a prospective employee is in receipt of ill-health benefits, the service provider will be notified of the offer of employment.

Employment, promotion and transfer are subject to the recommended applicant receiving a satisfactory criminal records check.

## Further assistance

Further information, advice or assistance on any matters related to Principal Selection is available by:

- accessing the A-Z topic list on [HRWeb](#),
- using the [related topics](#) list; or
- contacting Schools Recruitment Unit on 1800 641 943.

Further information, advice or assistance on professional leadership, is available at:

<https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edrms/project/fiso/SitePages/ProfessionalLeadership.aspx>

Further information about the Australian Professional Standard for Principals can be found at:

<http://www.aitsl.edu.au/australian-professional-standard-for-principals>

Further information about Bastow Institute of Educational Leadership's Unlocking Potential program can be found at:

<http://www.bastow.vic.edu.au/courses/unlocking-potential-principal-preparation>