

Q: What is the value of Principal Certification to a principal?

A: Principal Certification recognises the central importance of educational leadership for quality student learning and quality schools. It provides professional and public recognition of principals who demonstrate the Australian Principal Standard in action. Principal Certification will allow principals to determine and drive their own professional learning in response to their professional context.

Q: What is not Principal Certification?

A: Principal Certification is not:

- principal performance management. Performance management is appropriately part of an employing authority's system for managing employee performance. Principal Certification focuses on the profession's recognition of a member who demonstrates the Australian Principal Standard
- a qualification that is awarded on completion of a course or a university degree. Such qualifications are valuable in their own right and contribute to a principal's professional learning. Principal Certification focuses directly on the Australian Principal Standard for the profession as its reference point
- managed by others. Principal Certification is managed by principals, for principals and for the ultimate benefit of the community

Q: How does Principal Certification relate to the Australian Principal Standard?

A: The Australian Principal Standard sets out what principals are expected to know, understand and do to achieve in their work, however in itself, the Australian Principal Standard is not able to identify a principal's professional capacity to deliver. Principal Certification is the opportunity for principals to provide evidence of how they demonstrate the Australian Principal Standard in action.

Q: How will Principal Certification assist and attract aspiring leaders?

A: It is acknowledged that career pathways are not linear. Principal Certification will assist and attract aspiring leaders by supporting them on a leadership pathway towards the principalship, aligned with the Australian Principal Standard. Principal Certification will show aspiring leaders that the principal profession is dedicated and committed to working together to drive professional learning that meets the needs of the profession and has a real impact on teacher efficacy, student achievement and whole school improvement.

Q: What is the incentive/purpose for principals to undertake Principal Certification?

A: Principal Certification represents the intersection of professional, personal and moral purpose. It provides a form of public and peer endorsed recognition for an individual's commitment to the Australian Principal Standard and to its operation in Australian schools. It provides recognition of a principal's individual status within the principal profession, as well as raising the status of the principal profession collectively. It provides a significant reference point for principals in their professional learning and ongoing development. Principal Certification enables a principal to prepare a portfolio of evidence of the Australian Principal Standard in action. Principals can use their portfolio to plan and build their career.

Q: How will Principal Certification raise the status of the principal profession?

A: Principal Certification is a form of recognition for principals for the important and central role they play as educational leaders, providing quality student learning and quality schools. It is formal recognition that principals' leadership directly impacts on the work of teachers and the conditions for learning in schools.

Federal and state/territory Ministers for Education have endorsed the Australian Principal Standard. A rigorous, independent and highly respected Principal Certification process provides professional and public recognition of principals who demonstrate the Australian Principal Standard.

Q: How does Principal Certification build the capacity of the principal profession?

A: Principal Certification will affirm and build on a shared understanding of what it means to demonstrate the Australian Principal Standard in action.

Q: Who will deliver the professional learning associated with Principal Certification?

A: Principal Certification is a process whereby a principal owns and drives their own professional learning and in applying that learning, generates evidence to demonstrate the Australian Principal Standard in action. Professional learning associated with Principal Certification could be delivered by a range of providers, depending on an individual principal's context and learning goals. To achieve Principal Certification, principals must demonstrate evidence of the impact of their professional learning on teacher efficacy, student achievement and whole school improvement.

Q: Will Principal Certification involve professional learning?

A: Portfolio assessment embraces complexity and situates candidates as the drivers of their own professional learning. Preparing Portfolio Initiatives for certification necessarily engages principals in "learning by doing" and in establishing research-informed evidence, consistent with the most effective modes of professional learning.

Q: What about professional learning undertaken prior to Principal Certification?

A: Principal Certification is based on evidence of a candidate's leadership impact within their school. It is not a modular study program, therefore specific 'credit' for previous formal study cannot be applied for candidates to exempt them from undertaking aspects of Principal Certification. Previous professional learning is likely to have contributed to candidates' leadership impact within their school and so in that way can be applied in the Principal Certification process.

Q: Will Principal Certification count towards hours of professional learning/professional development required for the purposes of maintaining Australian teacher registration?

A: This is a decision for local systems/sectors to make. However, it would seem likely that evidence gathered for Principal Certification would align well with professional learning required to maintain registration, as the evidence that a principal is collecting demonstrates how the professional learning they undertake impacts on student achievement and whole of school improvement.

Q: How will Principal Certification take into consideration the different contexts of schools and leadership?

A: Principal Certification is based on a principal being able to demonstrate the Australian Principal Standard in action. The Australian Principal Standard applies across all systems, sectors and contexts. Principal Certification will focus on a principal demonstrating leadership, learning and how they have made an impact on student learning and improvements across their whole school, so it is possible for a principal in any setting to be exemplary through demonstrating their achievements in these areas.

Q: Will Principal Certification require that principals undertake a specific higher education qualification such as a Masters or Doctorate, as is the case in some international jurisdictions?

A: Principal Certification will be a voluntary process, developed by principals, for principals and will be based on evidence to demonstrate how a principal puts the Australian Principal Standard into action. Principal Certification will not be prescriptive in requiring particular qualifications, nor will it be directly linked to requirements for recruitment and selection, career progression or performance management, which rightly rest with employing authorities.

Q: What support will be provided for principals working towards Principal Certification?

A: It is expected that a range of support will be provided, for example exemplars of evidence, mentoring/coaching and guidance for shaping professional learning goals.

Q: How will it be assured that principals retain ownership of Principal Certification?

A: Principals will retain ownership of Principal Certification through it being awarded by an independent Certifying Authority which actively and continuously consults with the profession. Principals will be actively involved in all aspects of the process of Principal Certification.

Q: How long will Principal Certification last/what is the tenure of Principal Certification?

A: The specific term or duration of Principal Certification is yet to be determined, but it is expected that a regular review and maintenance cycle will be established to ensure that Principal Certification is a quality assured and credible process.

Q: Will Principal Certification generate an extra workload?

A: Preparing for assessment of a portfolio of evidence will provide opportunities for a focused, intentional approach for gathering real and tangible examples of leadership impact in a school. Generating, analysing and documenting evidence and reflecting on practice will require intellectual work, but as it is intended to be based on actual initiatives a principal is undertaking within his/her school, it will be relevant and worthwhile professional learning. Principal Certification is intended to allow principals to own and drive their own professional learning, focusing on what is of most value to them individually, the students they serve and the schools in which they operate.