Unlocking Potential: Principal Preparation

Candidate Frequently Asked Questions

Am I eligible to apply for the Unlocking Potential (UP) program?

To be eligible for the UP program you must:

- be an employee of the Department of Education and Training
- have a minimum of five years’ teaching experience
- aspire to principalship in the near future
- have the support of your school principal and community to apply for and participate in the program
- commit to attending and completing all components of the program (including residential, workshop days, assessment, professional coaching and a 20 to 50 day internship placement with an experienced principal).

How do I successfully address the selection criteria?

Your application will be reviewed based on your responses to the Key Selection Criteria.

A strong response to each criterion will:

- use concrete example(s) that relate to the focus of the question
- illustrate your achievements (past) and your potential (future)
- Use the SAO approach to create clear and concise answers: Situation (what was the initial context – your observations of the situation), Action (what you did and how you did it) and Outcome (what was the result of your actions)
- draw on appropriate evidence in relation to impacts/outcomes.

The most successful applications provide deep and detailed responses. Touching lightly on all the things that you do in your current role will not enable the assessor to score you highly against the rubric that is used in the shortlisting process. Focus on an example that illustrates your capabilities in an area and use that to convey the approach you use to all your work.

The selection criteria are derived from the AITSL Australian Professional Standard for Principals. You are strongly encouraged to familiarise yourself with the standard and take notes about the kinds of examples you could use in your application. The selection criteria have been derived from and directly correlate to the AITSL Professional Practices.
What are the AITSL Professional Practices?

The AITSL Professional Practices describe the key elements of the principal or school leader role. They are interdependent and integrated with the AITSL Leadership Requirements.

1. Leading teaching and learning
Principals create a positive culture of challenge and support, enabling effective teaching that promotes enthusiastic, independent learners, committed to lifelong learning. Principals have a key responsibility for developing a culture of effective teaching, for leading, designing and managing the quality of teaching and learning and for students’ achievement in all aspects of their development. They set high expectations for the whole school through careful collaborative planning, monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of learning. Principals set high standards of behaviour and attendance, encouraging active engagement and a strong student voice.

2. Developing self and other
Principals work with and through others to build a professional learning community that is focused on continuous improvement of teaching and learning. Through managing performance, effective continuing professional learning and feedback, they support all staff to achieve high standards and develop their leadership capacity. Principals support others to build capacity and treat people fairly and with respect. They model effective leadership and are committed to their own ongoing professional development and personal health and wellbeing in order to manage the complexity of the role and the range of learning capabilities and actions required of the role.

3. Leading improvement, innovation and change
Principals work with others to produce and implement clear, evidence-based improvement plans and policies for the development of the school and its facilities. They recognise that a crucial part of the role is to lead and manage innovation and change to ensure the vision and strategic plan is put into action across the school and that its goals and intentions are realised.

4. Leading the management of the school
Principals use a range of data management methods and technologies to ensure that the school’s resources and staff are efficiently organised and managed to provide an effective and safe learning environment as well as value for money. This includes appropriate delegation of tasks to members of the staff and the monitoring of accountabilities. Principals ensure these accountabilities are met. They seek to build a successful school through effective collaboration with school boards, governing bodies, parents and others. They use a range of technologies effectively and efficiently to manage the school.

5. Engaging and working with the community
Principals embrace inclusion and help build a culture of high expectations that takes account of the richness and diversity of the wider school community and the education systems and sectors. They develop and maintain positive partnerships with students, families and carers and all those associated with the wider school community. They create an ethos of respect taking account of the spiritual, moral, social and physical health and wellbeing of students. They promote sound lifelong learning from preschool through to adult life. They recognise the multicultural nature of Australia’s people. They foster understanding and reconciliation with Indigenous cultures. They recognise and use the rich and diverse linguistic and cultural resources in the school community. They recognise and support the needs of students, families and carers from communities facing complex challenges.