



Applying for the Aspiring Principal Programme

Application process

There are several steps to apply for the Aspiring Principal Programme. They are:

- finding a referee
- securing your current principal's support
- completing the online application form
- your referee completing the online endorsement form, and
- if you are shortlisted, completing an interview with a Ministry Leadership Advisor.

Your answers to the three long-form questions in the application form make up 80% of your overall score while your referee's endorsement form makes up the remaining 20%.

Before you apply

Find a referee

Your referee will endorse you for the programme by completing an endorsement form. A referee could be your current principal, a previous principal you worked with or another professional. They must have relevant education sector and principalship experience and be able to assess your readiness for principalship and suitability for the programme.

Your referee must submit their endorsement by the application closing date or your application will be considered incomplete and will not be progressed for assessment.

Secure your principal's support

You need the support of your current principal for your application. Your principal will need to support you through the programme to complete programme requirements, including the context-based leadership inquiry. This is an in-school project.

How to apply

Complete the online application form on the [Education Workforce website](#). The following information explains the questions you will be asked in the form.

We recommend drafting your responses to the long-form questions in a separate document first, then copying them into the application form.

If you use the same device and browser, and do not delete your browser history or cache, your progress will be saved so you can complete it later.

Eligibility check

Confirm you are eligible for the programme.

Demographic and personal details

Provide your name, contact phone number, ethnicity and gender. Provide your Ministry of Education number and current role. Provide your school's number, name and your email.

Referee details

Provide a referee and include their name, email and role.

Career overview and aspirations

Answer the three long-form questions. You can write up to 350 words for each answer. Any content past the word limit will not be assessed.

When preparing your responses:

- draw on specific examples from your leadership experience
- make your role and contribution clear
- provide evidence of impact where possible
- reflect on what you learned and how your leadership evolved
- focus on influence, improvement and outcomes rather than describing the activities alone.

Leadership impact

Write about how you led improvements in teaching, learning, or student engagement/wellbeing/attendance that have had measurable impact beyond your own classroom, or across multiple classrooms (depending on your current role).

Your answer should:

- describe the improvement, initiative, or change you led
- describe the need, challenge, opportunity, or problem of practice it was designed to address
- describe how you led, influenced, and built the capability of others
- demonstrate leadership beyond your classroom, programme, or area of responsibility
- include the measurable impacts of your improvement or leadership on students, staff, teaching practice, wellbeing, engagement, attendance or school outcomes and the evidence demonstrating this
- show how you used evidence to refine or adapt your improvement or leadership approach.

This question is worth 40% of your application assessment.

Career-stage and readiness

Write about why you aspire to principalship and the experiences and actions you have undertaken to prepare for taking on this role in future.

Your answer should:

- explain your motivations for principalship and the values or beliefs that support your leadership
- describe the leadership experiences, responsibilities, professional learning, mentoring or other development opportunities that influenced your growth as a school leader
- show evidence of your readiness for principalship
- demonstrate the deliberate preparation you have undertaken for the breadth and depth of the role.

This question is worth 25% of your application assessment.

Learner outcomes and system leadership

Write about how you would lead a school to achieve equitable outcomes for all learners (especially underserved learners). Write about challenges you anticipate and how you would respond to them within and beyond your school.

Your answer should:

- describe your vision for student equity and excellence (especially for underserved learners) and how it would shape your leadership of the school
- describe how you would lead staff, students, whānau and the wider school community to improve learning, wellbeing, inclusion, belonging and achievement
- identify challenges you anticipate and how you would use partnerships, resources, collaboration and leadership within and beyond your school to address these and improve outcomes.

This question is worth 25% of your application assessment.

Attestation and Declaration

Read and agree with the statements declaring that the information in your application is true and correct, you can commit to completing the programme and agreeing to an interview if you are shortlisted. Submit your application.

We will send a confirmation email when we receive your application.

Referee endorsement

Your referee must complete and submit their endorsement form.

Your application is not complete without this and will not be assessed if we do not receive it by the closing date.

Interview

If you are shortlisted, you will have an interview with your current principal and a Ministry Leadership Advisor. The interview is approximately 30 minutes. It is an opportunity to share more about your motivation, readiness and commitment to principalship.

Once all interviews and final assessments are complete, we will email your outcome. You may be waitlisted or accepted into the programme.

Contact us

If you have any questions, we're here to help.

Email: principal.pathway@education.govt.nz



**Te Tāhuhu o
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