

Unlocking Potential: Principal Preparation

OVERVIEW

The Unlocking Potential (UP): Principal Preparation program is designed to significantly increase the pool of high-quality aspirant principals. Preparing principals for their first role is a 'strategic necessity'. [1] Despite the widespread belief that preparation and development makes a difference, there is significant evidence that many first time principals feel unprepared for the demands of the role. [2] The UP program is one of the key Education State School Leadership Initiative programs, and is being rolled out to a maximum of 160 aspiring principals each year from 2016-2020.

The Victorian Government has committed an investment of \$7.4 million over four years (2016-2020) and \$3.4 million ongoing into enhancing the UP program. This includes an extended internship of up to 60 days (an increase from 20 days) in another school, under the guidance of an experienced principal.

From 2017, the enhanced UP program included the new Graduate Certificate of Principal Preparation (Victoria) and individual coaching support for the duration of the program.

The design of the Graduate Certificate of Principal Preparation (Victoria) focuses on developing aspiring principals' capacity to collaborate, analyse, develop and implement improvement strategies and changes needed within their school to lift student outcomes.

Through the qualification, aspiring principals will gain skills in developing school improvement strategies, setting high expectations, and providing effective feedback on the quality of teaching and learning to teachers and education professionals within their schools.

Funding has also been assigned to establishing an assessment process to help make reliable assessments of aspiring principals' readiness for the principal role.

[1] Bush 2009. 'Leadership development and school improvement: contemporary issues in leadership development', *Educational Review*, 61(4), pp. 375-389.

EVIDENCE BASE

Branch, G., Hanushek, E., and Rivkin, S. (2013). 'School leaders matter', *Education Next*, 13(2), 62–69.

Hattie, J. (2015). 'High Impact Leadership', *Educational Leadership*, (February 2015), 72(5), 36–40.

Theory of Change – Unlocking Potential

If we expand the number of UP participants, extend their practical experience and establish an assessment process to make robust assessments of aspiring principals' readiness to move into principal roles

then we will increase the capacity and preparedness of future principals

so that we ensure that, a high-quality principal leads every school in the state.

KEY LINKS

For information on the Bastow Institute of Educational Leadership's Principal Preparation program, see: [Unlocking Potential – Principal Preparation](#)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is this initiative about?

This initiative enhances the existing UP program by increasing the number of places for aspirant principals (from 80 to 160 participants per year), extending the internship experience (up to 60 days) and providing up to 78 hours of coaching.

Consistent with exemplary principal preparation programs, the UP program is designed to significantly increase the pool of high-quality aspirant principals. The program develops

[2] McKenzie, Rowley, Weldon & Murphy 2011; Productivity Commission 2012.

the leadership capabilities and preparedness of aspirant principals before their first permanent principal role. The UP program is a 12-month program that incorporates an internship experience working alongside expert principals in schools.

The distinct character of the UP program is that it:

- facilitates a school leader's development of self, with and through others
- optimises a school leader's engagement with research and inquiry
- builds school leaders to lead learning through their engagement with community.

How are aspiring principals selected to participate in the program?

Aspiring principals apply to participate in the program via the Bastow website.

When applications open, Senior Education Improvement Leaders (SEILs) are approached (via Area Executive Directors) to encourage suitable candidates to apply for the program.

The three-stage selection process is as follows:

- I. written application (scored and moderated by a panel of past principals and SEILs)
- II. phone interviews (scored and moderated by a panel of past principals and SEILs)
- III. principal endorsement and commitment to support the aspirant in all elements of the program.

PROGRESS TO DATE

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| 2016 Intakes 1 and 2 of aspiring principals completed program | Sep 2016 |
| 2016 Intake 3 of aspiring principals commenced program | May 2016 |
| 2016 Intake 4 of aspiring principals commenced program | Oct 2016 |
| Design and development of assessment process commenced | Nov 2016 |
| 2016 Intake 3 of aspiring principals completed program | Dec 2016 |
| 2016 Intake 3 mid-term evaluation report received; strong participant engagement and outcomes indicated | Apr 2017 |
| 2016 Intake 4 of aspiring principals completed program | Jun 2017 |
| 2017 Intakes 1 and 2 of aspiring principals commenced program (conferred with <i>Graduate Certificate of Principal Preparation, Victoria</i> by Monash University) | Sep 2017 |
| Aspirant principal assessment process pilot commenced | Dec 2017 |
| 2018 Intakes 1 of aspiring principals commence program | Mar 2018 |
| Aspirant principal assessment process pilot concludes | Apr 2018 |
| 2017 Intake 1 of aspiring principals complete program | Apr 2018 |
| 2017 Intake 2 of aspiring principals complete program | May 2018 |
| 2018 Intakes 2 and 3 of aspiring principals commence program | Jun 2018 |
| Aspirant principal assessment process trial commences | Jun 2018 |

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| 2018 Intake 4 of aspiring principals commence program | Jul 2018 |
| 2018 Intake 1 of aspiring principals complete program | Sep 2018 |
| Applications open for Intake 1 2019 | Oct 2018 |
| Aspirant principal assessment process trial concludes | Dec 2018 |
| 2019 Intakes 1 and 2 of aspiring principals commence program | Mar 2019 |
| 2019 Intakes 3 and 4 applications open | Apr 2019 |
| 2018 Intake 4 of aspiring principals complete program | Apr 2019 |
| UPCOMING ACTIVITIES AND MILESTONES | |
| 2019 Intake 3 of aspiring principals commence program | Aug 2019 |
| 2019 Intakes 1 and 2 conclude the program | Oct 2019 |

