



CAMBRIDGE
International Education

Cambridge Professional Development

Cambridge International Certificate

Syllabus

Cambridge International Certificate

Educational Leadership 5883

For examination in 2025 to 2030



Why choose Cambridge?

Cambridge Professional Development Qualifications (PDQs) provide a strong framework to support the effective continuing professional development of candidates (leaders).

They help candidates to:

- engage critically with relevant concepts, principles, theories and best practices from around the world
- apply new ideas and approaches in reflective practice in their own educational context
- formatively evaluate experiences to plan further development
- transform the quality of teaching and school leadership to improve the outcomes of learners.

Cambridge PDQs are designed to be integrated into schools' professional development planning, activities and culture. They help schools to improve through cost-effective, sustainable programmes that benefit teachers and their learners. They demonstrate to parents, the school community and stakeholders that the school values and nurtures staff development.

The Cambridge International Certificate in Educational Leadership is for candidates with leadership roles in schools, or who are leaders (or aspiring leaders) in other parts of the educational system with direct responsibilities for teachers or leaders who want to:

- inform their understanding of educational leadership through an introductory study of contemporary international theories and research
- research findings and insights about effective leadership practice from their own educational context and from international studies
- apply their leadership learning to their own leadership role and practice through critical reflection, mentoring and peer feedback
- identify their priorities for professional development and create a development plan to present to their own leadership or governing body
- develop foundational skills in academic study, professional reflection, collaborative enquiry and academic writing as a basis for further study.

Leadership learning is based on the twin concepts of active learning and reflective practice. Candidates increase their knowledge of relevant theories and research findings to inform and deepen their reflections. The qualifications aim to strengthen the ability of practising leaders to learn from experience. They do this through the opportunities provided to reflect, analyse and self-evaluate their actions. Alongside face-to-face sessions and seminars, work based learning is not only encouraged but expected.

Leadership learning is not only experiential, knowledge based and informed by theory. It is also concerned with ensuring the effectiveness of the teams, departments and organisations that leaders lead. The qualifications are designed to enhance the contribution leaders make to the performance of their teams and schools.

School feedback: 'The Cambridge PDQ in Educational Leadership has given educational leaders or aspiring educational leaders in Qatar a space to not just learn more about the intricacies involved in Educational Leadership but room to debate and discuss educational leadership in our young country and countries from around the globe. The resources and case studies allowed rich discussion which was not only meaningful but impactful and gives deeper understanding of educational leadership in all its complexities.'

Feedback from: Tammy MacNeil, Head of EMC, A Part of Al Muftah Education Group; Education Division

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1 Introduction

Purpose of this document

This syllabus sets out the details of the Certificate in Educational Leadership. This is a Cambridge Professional Development Qualification (PDQ) offered by Cambridge International Education.

The syllabus focuses on the learning outcomes and related scheme of assessment. For further guidance on the design principles and features of programmes leading to these qualifications please see the resources for Cambridge Professional Development Centres.

These are available at www.cambridgeinternational.org/pdq

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Quality

Cambridge PDQs are benchmarked to the Framework for Higher Educational Qualifications (FHEQ) for England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Cambridge PDQ Certificates are benchmarked to FHEQ Level 4 and Diplomas to FHEQ Level 5.

This means that teachers and leaders achieving a Cambridge PDQ are well prepared for their next step in the professional development pathway and their Cambridge PDQ has value as they progress to relevant Level 6 and 7 programmes.

School feedback: ‘Through the Cambridge PDQ and the structure of the Programme PDQ Centers are able to not just give the learning opportunity but also connect leaders with other leaders giving better understanding of different leadership styles and a forum to discuss current educational leadership challenges. The PDQ provides the tools to assist professional growth creating stronger school leadership in turn stronger schools.’

Feedback from: Tammy MacNeil, Programme Leader CfBT Education Services, India

2 The Cambridge School Leader

Cambridge International programmes and qualifications develop not only subject knowledge and skills but also attitudes, ways of thinking and behaviours.

There are five Cambridge School Leader attributes. Cambridge School leaders are:

- **confident** in their role of leadership, taking into account the vision, mission, culture and priorities of their school, and in exercising the knowledge, understanding, skills and qualities that their leadership position requires
- **responsible** within the scope of their role for the well-being, progress and achievements of all learners and the professional practice, well-being and development of their staff
- **reflective** in their own professional practice, seeking continually to improve their leadership through feedback from colleagues, personal research and self-reflection
- **innovative** in applying their knowledge, understanding and personal and professional skills to leadership tasks and challenges
- **engaged** in the improvement of learning and in securing the best educational outcomes for all their learners, through the professional development of all their teachers.

More information about teaching Cambridge at your school can be found at:

www.cambridgeinternational.org/support-and-training-for-schools/leading-learning-and-teaching-with-cambridge

Leadership matters: it makes a difference to the quality of learning and teaching and the performance of schools. Today, we can identify the key ingredients of successful leadership. We can learn from educational research, including studies of school leaders in action in different countries and in high-performing school systems. We can also learn from research and experience outside education.

Cambridge School Leader and Teacher Standards

Our Cambridge Teacher and School Leader Standards define what we believe to be key characteristics of effective teaching and leadership. They focus on supporting teachers and leaders, and they offer an opportunity for self evaluation which helps them to understand their professional learning and development needs.

The Standards are based on the latest international research into effective teaching and school leadership, taking into account a wide range of international practices and advice from education experts around the world.

Cambridge School Leader Standards

The Cambridge School Leader Standards can be used to:

- evaluate current leadership practice
- help identify, prioritise and plan areas for professional development
- review and identify the development needs of your senior team
- help illustrate a school-wide leadership framework and expectations to your school board, governing body and parent community.

How to use the Standards

The Standards can be used to evaluate teaching or school leadership by asking key questions and looking for examples from practice. By using our self-reflection survey leaders can identify where they are now and which areas they need to improve. This would be a really useful exercise to undertake while planning a PDQ programme. It could also be used again to evaluate the programme's impact.

You can download the Standards, self-reflection survey and online guide from:

www.cambridgeinternational.org/support-and-training-for-schools/professional-development/professional-development-qualifications/school-leader-teacher-standards

3 Syllabus overview

The PDQ Programme Leader

Every Cambridge PDQ Centre appoints a Programme Leader who is responsible for designing and managing the programme. The Programme Leader is pivotal to the quality and success of the Cambridge PDQ programme. The role is wide-ranging, from designing and developing the programme to liaising with mentors, school leadership and Cambridge International. Being an effective Programme Leader is about shaping and supporting professional learning to have an impact on the quality of teaching and leadership in schools.

Programme Leaders evaluate their professional development learning programme as part of their commitment to professional development. Due to the level of support they are required to give candidates during the programme, Programme Leaders are not permitted to compile their own portfolio of evidence and submit it to Cambridge International as part of their own PDQ Programme.

The revised Certificate has been designed to help leaders develop their professional thinking and practice, and enhance their:

- knowledge, skills and understanding of effective leadership
- leadership practice
- school and its effectiveness.

The Certificate syllabus

The Certificate is grounded in the idea that leadership learning is an active process. Practising leaders do not passively receive information and knowledge, but construct it for themselves and examine ideas and insights in the light of their own experience and behaviour. The content explored in the qualifications is used to stimulate thinking, to challenge candidates' assumptions and to shape their leadership practices. The Certificate and Diploma (5884) qualifications place strong emphasis on increasing candidates' knowledge and understanding of effective leadership. This will improve their own practice and the performance of the schools in which they work.

The Certificate is for those who have a leadership role (or are aspiring to a leadership role) in schools, school districts, regional centres or other parts of the educational system.

The qualification is inclusive and relevant to leaders in all teaching and learning contexts: from primary and secondary general education, to adult and higher education. It helps leaders to explore and apply new ideas in their own context, integrate new approaches in their own practice, and demonstrate their professional development as reflective practitioners.

These qualifications help practising leaders to study what is known about successful leadership; to focus on the key ideas and challenges, leadership theories, strategies and actions of highly effective leaders; and to develop their reflective practice as leaders. They encourage leaders to:

- increase their knowledge and understanding of successful leadership
- develop their leadership skills
- self-evaluate their approaches to leadership
- reflect on their leadership practices
- enhance their performance as leaders.

The programme involves a spiral of professional learning, each stage being a cycle of experiential learning and reflective practice following on from the previous cycle and leading on to the next. Areas of learning are revisited systematically within the programme so that the candidate can engage with these in more depth and detail, and acquire related knowledge and skills.

The spiral of professional learning in a Cambridge PDQ programme depends particularly on three processes:

- research
- reflection
- learning with and from mentors.

These processes work together. It is crucial that candidates receive feedback to inform their continuous reflection on their learning experiences. Research and reflection are much more effective with the support of a mentor.

The mentor develops a learning relationship with the candidate, supporting them during their work-based learning to make the most of the learning experience and to achieve the Cambridge qualification. The mentor understands the essential principles of the Cambridge PDQ, and provides helpful advice to their candidate, sharing their own experiences and knowledge.

Eligibility

Candidates **must**:

- have a leadership role in a school, or
- have a leadership role in other parts of the educational system, **or**
- be an aspiring leader in a school or other part of the educational system,

and

- have direct responsibility for teachers and leaders,

and

- be able to try out, in practice, in their workplace, what they learn during their study

Candidates who do not meet the above criteria cannot make an entry for this syllabus.

School feedback: ‘Having the continued support and guidance of mentors throughout the PDQ course has been invaluable for both our candidates and the mentors themselves. We have seen an improvement in reflective practice and an increase in willingness to experiment with best practices. The candidates find they have a safe space to collaborate, share their experiences and ask for advice. This has empowered and made them more open to developing their practice.’

Feedback from: Melissa Alberts, Professional Development Officer, GenEx Institute, Cape Town, South Africa

Language requirements

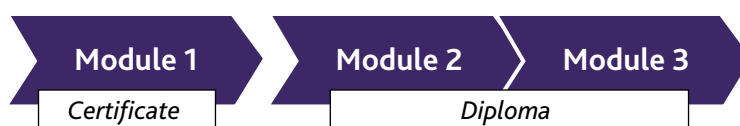
To take part in the Certificate programme candidates are required to have sufficient competence in English. All candidates should have English language competence comparable to **Level B2** in the **Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)**. This framework is provided by the Council for Europe. Further details can be found on the Council's website at [http://coe.int/t/dg4/education/elp-reg/cefr grids EN.asp](http://coe.int/t/dg4/education/elp-reg/cefr%20grids%20EN.asp)

We recommend a minimum requirement of 5.5 on the International English Language Testing System. See www.ielts.org/ for more details.

What is the qualification structure?

Module 1 can be taken on its own as the Certificate. Candidates can then progress to Modules 2 and 3 to complete the Diploma.

The Diploma can also be taken as a standalone qualification.

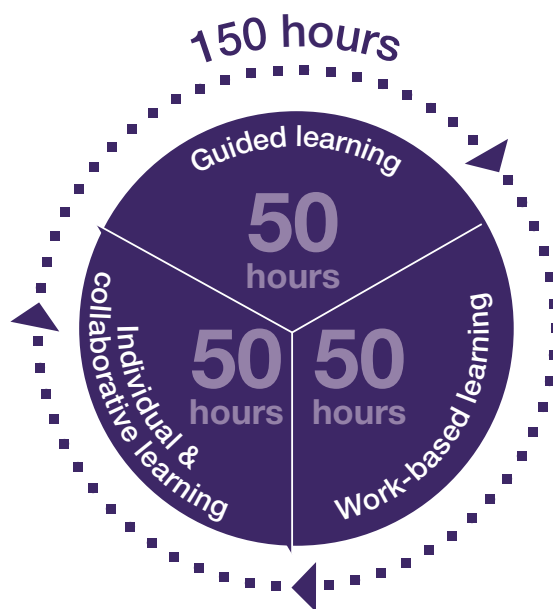


The table below shows what is involved in each module.

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Learning hours in preparation | 150 |
| Recommended programme duration | 4 months per module |
| Assessment | Portfolio of evidence of practice, learning and reflection |
| Evidence length | 3600 words with work-based records |

What does the Certificate involve?

A typical Certificate programme run by a Cambridge Professional Development Centre consists of a broad balance of activities, appropriate to the needs and circumstances of leaders and their schools. The programme is planned by the centre's programme leader and team as a coherent sequence of learning over time, with a variety of elements.



Centres must provide at least 50 hours of guided learning for each module. Candidates should integrate as much preparation time as possible into their day-to-day practice. They should allow time for background reading and discussion with their colleagues, to enrich their reflective practice.

In each unit, candidates engage with the required learning outcomes through a series of activities closely related to their everyday professional work. The activities and related reflections produce evidence for assessment.

The mentor plays a vital role in supporting a candidate. Through discussion and questioning, mentors encourage candidates to reflect on their learning and on what it means for their approaches to leadership. They also help candidates to demonstrate through examples and accounts of practice that they are:

- acquiring new skills
- learning how to use their new skills and knowledge
- linking changes in leadership practice to improvements in learner outcomes.

How is the Certificate assessed?

Candidates are assessed through a portfolio of evidence, submitted to a team of Cambridge International examiners. In their portfolio, candidates demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding of leadership in the context of their own work. Portfolio evidence includes:

- reviews of key concepts and theories of leadership
- evaluation of their job descriptions and their leadership contexts
- reflections on their leadership skills and practice and action planning for development
- interviews with experienced leaders and feedback from them
- analysis of the skills and practices of effective leaders
- analysis of their own leadership learning and feedback from peers and mentors
- a *Professional Development Plan* for their future leadership development.

School feedback: ‘We have utilised the Cambridge PDQ program to foster a rich, collaborative, Community of Practice that has helped to knit our school together with learners, teachers, and administrators identifying as being part of a supportive Learning Organisation in which everyone models a love of learning and support for others.’

Feedback from: Dr. Russell Hazard, Director of Teaching, Learning, and innovation – NIT Education Group

Evidence requirements

In their portfolio, candidates will use the relevant Cambridge International templates (*Forms*) to gather, organise and present their evidence to satisfy the assessment criteria.

In the introduction to the portfolio, candidates provide background information about their professional experience and role, and the context in which they work. This is their opportunity to indicate significant influences on their work and professional development. Although the introduction is not formally assessed or judged, it does help the examiner to understand the candidates’ context and interpret the subsequent assessment evidence. Please note, however, that a curriculum vitae is not required.

With written evidence, candidates should keep to the word limits and respond to the prompts in templates succinctly. The prompts indicate how to focus and shape explanations, reflections and other evidence. Candidates must also follow Cambridge International’s rules for the format and size of digital evidence, such as images and video.

Candidates’ reflections should provide references for other people’s ideas and experiences, whether these are in the form of academic publications, or posts to online discussion forums or blogs. All sources must be clearly referenced.

The Programme Leader can provide further guidance on academic honesty.

Reflective journal

Candidates will maintain a reflective journal throughout their programme of learning. By keeping a journal, candidates will evaluate more effectively their practice and develop reflective skills which will underpin their professional development.

For further support on reflective practice see:

www.cambridgeinternational.org/teaching-and-learning/getting-started-with/

School feedback: ‘Reflecting has become second nature to our candidates. With reflective practice being a vital part of the PDQ courses, the benefits and importance have become apparent, and there is no turning back. It is become part of everyday classroom practice and school culture, both for the educators and students.’

Feedback from: Melissa Alberts, Professional Development Officer, GenEx Institute, Cape Town, South Africa

School feedback: ‘The PDQ has provided the framework to articulate, formalise and enhance the things I was doing naturally as a teacher, it has encouraged me to be a reflective practitioner and to back my intuition.’

Feedback from: Mrs Wendy H McCabe, Head of Art and Design, Head of Drama, Hebron School, Tamil Nadu, South India

4 Certificate in Educational Leadership

Introduction to the Certificate

Aims

In the Certificate, candidates will have the opportunity to:

- understand key leadership theories and ideas, from inside and outside of education, and apply these to thinking about their own practice
- draw on evidence from research and practice to develop knowledge with an understanding of what is known about effective leadership
- relate these to their own leadership context in planning actions
- develop their reflective practice skills to help them to evaluate and improve their own leadership practice
- learn collaboratively, supported by a mentor, to share insights, and develop knowledge and skills.

Programme content will typically include:

- key findings from effective leadership research
- major leadership theories
- implications of leadership theory for practitioners
- leadership in other contexts, countries and school systems
- lessons learned from their own practice as leaders
- leading teams
- developing their own effectiveness and that of others.

Structure

The Certificate comprises three units related to practice which together form Module 1: Exploring leadership.

| | |
|--------|---|
| Unit 1 | Understanding key concepts and theories of leadership |
| Unit 2 | Defining successful educational leadership practice |
| Unit 3 | Action planning for developing leadership |

Each unit is set out in terms of its learning outcomes, key questions, assessment approach and evidence requirements. Assessment criteria appear at the end of this section.

- Each **learning outcome** is a statement that defines the expected goal of a curriculum in terms of demonstrable skills or knowledge that will be acquired by the candidate.
- The **key questions** show professional learning related to each learning outcome. These questions will support the candidate as they explore the knowledge required to meet the learning outcome.
- The **assessment approach and evidence requirements** explain how candidates can show that they have achieved the learning outcomes.
- The **assessment criteria** are used by Cambridge International examiners in their judgements on the quality of the evidence presented. They specify what the candidate is expected to do in order to demonstrate that they have achieved a learning outcome.

Module 1 Exploring Leadership

Unit 1 Understanding key concepts and theories of leadership

Candidates will explain their understanding of the main ideas and theories related to leadership.

Learning outcomes

- A:** Explain their understanding of key concepts and theories of leadership.
- B:** Apply a new concept or theory of leadership to their own context.
- C:** Demonstrate an awareness of the contextual nature of leadership and the ways in which context affects leadership action.
- D:** Use a selection of the concepts and theories to reflect upon their own leadership role and context.

Learning outcomes and key questions

Learning outcome A: Explain their understanding of key concepts and theories of leadership.

- What did the concept of 'leadership' mean to you before you began to study for this unit?
- Has your previous development as a leader been influenced by leadership theories or by the example of other leaders?
- Of the new concepts and theories of leadership that you have studied, which do you think are important, and why?
- Which new concept or theory is most relevant to your school or school leadership?
- Which new concept or theory is most relevant to your own role and leadership development?

Learning outcome B: Apply a new concept or theory of leadership to their own context.

- What are the key insights about leadership in the new concept or theory that you have chosen?
- Why do you think these are relevant to your school's or your own leadership?
- What might be the key changes to your school's or your own leadership if your chosen concept or theory was applied in your context?
- What would be the challenges and the benefits in applying the concept or theory?
- Are there things about the concept or theory that might be inappropriate if applied in your school context?

Learning outcome C: Demonstrate an awareness of the contextual nature of leadership and the ways in which context affects leadership action.

- In what ways do the circumstances in which leaders find themselves affect what they are able to achieve as leaders?
- Do successful leaders adapt to their circumstances or change them?
- From your research, what are the distinctive features of your own educational context that affect what school leaders can do or how they do it?
- What are the key contextual factors that influence your own leadership?
- How have these factors affected your leadership practice or development?

Learning outcome D: Use a selection of the concepts and theories to reflect upon their own leadership role and context.

- In your study for this unit, what ideas have strengthened and supported your current practice as a leader?
 - What ideas have made you rethink your approach to the challenges you face as a leader?
 - What concepts or theories have given you new ideas about or perspectives on your role?
 - How could these ideas influence your understanding of your leadership role and context in the future?
 - How could these ideas influence the development of your leadership learning and practice in future?
-

The role of the mentor in Unit 1

The mentor will hold a discussion with the candidate using the *Leadership Professional Discussion Template* for guidance.

Assessment

Candidates will:

- create an annotated reading list based on their reading for this unit
- critically evaluate their job description based on their reading for this unit
- hold a discussion with their mentor during which they discuss their reasons for selecting specific areas of leadership practice and their developing understanding of successful leadership.

In the portfolio, candidates must submit the following:

Evidence of practice – This includes:

- an annotated reading list
- *Module 1: Unit 1 Job Description Evaluation Form*
- *Module 1: Unit 1 Leadership Discussion with their Mentor Form*

Evidence of learning (800 words)

A review of selected concepts and theories of leadership, explaining why and in what ways these are relevant to your own current leadership role, including a detailed critique of one of the concepts or theories.

Evidence of reflection (400 words)

An evaluation of the cultural and institutional context of your own leadership role, and how contextual factors affect and influence your own work as a leader in your current role.

Unit 2 Defining successful educational leadership practice

Candidates will explore contemporary research into successful educational leadership and the practices of successful leaders so that they can achieve the following learning outcomes.

Learning outcomes

- E:** Articulate their new knowledge and understanding of theories, definitions and research findings about successful leadership internationally and apply it to their own context and leadership roles.
- F:** Evaluate key features and practices of successful leadership and the impact of these features, identifying the implications of what successful leaders do for their own leadership role.
- G:** Apply their understanding of successful leadership to a research interview with an experienced leader in their own local context.
- H:** Evaluate their own leadership in the light of what they have learned about specific leadership features and practices, and identify areas for their own development.

Learning outcomes and key questions

Learning outcome E: Articulate their new knowledge and understanding of theories, definitions and research findings about successful leadership internationally and apply it to their own context and leadership roles.

- How do you define the key terms ‘successful’ and ‘effective’ as applied to the different roles and levels involved in school leadership?
- From your study, do you think that the way in which successful leadership is seen has changed over time, and how?
- What are the main emphases in current research about the priorities and values of successful leaders?
- In the research and case studies, do these emphases vary between countries?
- What are the key messages about success in leadership that are relevant to your school and your own role?

Learning outcome F: Evaluate key features and practices of successful leadership and the impact of these features, identifying the implications of what successful leaders do for their own leadership role.

- What does current research tell us about what leaders do in general that affects their success in their role?
- How do researchers measure the impact of leaders on the success of their schools?
- Which leadership practices are seen as being most effective in improving the quality of education in schools?
- How can leaders at different levels in schools adapt or apply the practices to achieve success in their roles?
- Which specific practices identified in your study are already a feature of your leadership?

Learning outcome G: Apply their understanding of successful leadership to a research interview with an experienced leader in their own local context.

- What are the similarities and differences between the view of successful leadership in the research, and the public view in your country?
 - Are experienced leaders in your country influenced by leadership research or are the expectations of others in their schools and communities more influential?
 - What do experienced leaders take into account when considering their own success?
 - To what extent do their criteria for success match the findings about successful leadership in the research?
 - What methods of professional development have been most effective in developing their leadership abilities, skills or practices?
-

Learning outcome H: Evaluate their own leadership in the light of what they have learned about specific leadership features and practices, and identify areas for their own development.

- In your role, what are the key leadership practices that would most contribute to your achievement of your own objectives?
 - Of those that are already a feature of your role, has your study shown you ways in which to develop these practices?
 - What new features or practices from your study would enhance your chances of success in your role?
 - Using one as an example, how would it contribute to the development of your role and what benefits might result?
 - What would be the challenges and risks of developing this aspect of your leadership?
-

The role of the mentor in Unit 2

The mentor will support the candidate in designing and carrying out the interview with an experienced colleague. The mentor will then hold a discussion with the candidate using the *Unit 2 Post Interview Discussion template* for guidance.

Assessment

Candidates will:

- plan, prepare and carry out an interview with an experienced leader
- review international leadership research
- discuss their findings with their mentor
- reflect on the relationship between context, culture and leadership actions.

In the portfolio, candidates must submit the following.

Evidence of practice – This includes:

- *Module 1: Unit 2 Interview Plan Form*
- *Module 1: Unit 2 Interview Outcomes Form*
- *Module 1: Unit 2 Post Interview Discussion Form*

Evidence of learning (600 words)

An analysis of what successful educational leadership looks like based on your understanding of contemporary research and your interview with an experienced leader. A critical evaluation of one of the key features of successful leadership that you have encountered in the literature, and which you have found challenging and interesting.

Evidence of reflection (600 words)

A reflective evaluation of the implications of what you have learned about the features of successful educational leadership and the practices of successful leaders for your own context and role. An explanation of how one of the practices would contribute to your own professional development as a leader.

Unit 3 Action planning for developing leadership

Candidates will explore the research concerning the strategies and skills used by educational leaders so that they can achieve the following learning outcomes.

Learning outcomes

- I:** Articulate their knowledge and understanding of the strategies used by successful leaders at different levels and the skills required to implement them.
- J:** Apply their understanding of the features, strategies and skills of successful leadership to an analysis of their own role and identify key priorities for their own self-development.
- K:** Develop and present to different audiences an evaluation of their leadership role, including a strategy for their own self-development that focuses on selected practices of successful leadership.
- L:** Evaluate the outcomes of the presentation to produce a short-term personal development plan for developing their own leadership skills and practices in order to improve specific outcomes in their area of leadership.

Learning outcomes and key questions

Learning outcome I: Articulate their knowledge and understanding of the strategies used by successful leaders at different levels and the skills required to implement them.

- From the research, how do successful leaders make priorities and develop strategies to achieve their objectives?
- What key strategies are associated with improving teaching and learning in a school?
- What sort of criteria do leaders use to evaluate whether their strategies are likely to succeed?
- What does the research say about the range of key skills needed for successful leadership?
- Does the level of individual leaders' roles within the school affect the strategies that they can use and the skills they need?

Learning outcome J: Apply their understanding of the features, strategies and skills of successful leadership to an analysis of their own role and identify key priorities for their own self-development.

- Having studied this PDQ certificate course, what aspects of your own leadership do you now want to improve?
- What strategies might you use to address each area of improvement?
- Which strategy is likely to be most effective, in terms of your existing leadership skills and context?
- How will you plan to implement your chosen strategies to bring about improvement in your own leadership?
- How will you monitor and measure the impact of any improvements you make to your own leadership?

Learning outcome K: Develop and present to different audiences an evaluation of their leadership role, including a strategy for their own self-development that focuses on selected practices of successful leadership.

- How has your leadership learning in Module 1 affected your understanding of your own leadership role and objectives?
 - What has the research on successful leadership told you about your leadership strengths and skills?
 - What have you learned about ways in which you could be more effective in your role, with your current priorities?
 - What skills or practices of successful leaders will you need to develop to achieve these priorities?
 - What is your proposed strategy for developing these skills or practices?
-

Learning outcome L: Evaluate the outcomes of the presentation to produce a short-term personal development plan for developing their own leadership skills and practices in order to improve specific outcomes in their area of leadership.

- What did you learn about yourself and your leadership from giving the presentations?
 - Was the feedback on the presentations in line with your self-evaluation in terms of priorities, skills and practices?
 - How do you account for any differences and do you intend to change your self-evaluation accordingly?
 - How will the actions in your Personal Leadership Development Plan improve specific outcomes in your area of leadership?
 - Is the plan realistic and achievable in the time available?
-

The role of the mentor in Unit 3

The mentor will support the candidate in designing a presentation. The mentor will provide feedback on the presentation that the candidate delivers to his/her peers and will support the candidate in amending aspects of the presentation before they present to the leadership team. The mentor will help the candidate identify the key areas to be developed further in their Personal Leadership Development Plan.

Assessment

Candidates will:

- evaluate their learning from Unit 1 and Unit 2
- present to their mentor and peers on their understanding of what successful leadership is; and the implications of their learning on their own developing leadership
- revise their presentation based on feedback
- present the revised presentation to their school leaders and take feedback
- develop a personal development plan based on their learning and the feedback received.

In the portfolio, candidates must submit the following.

Evidence of practice – This includes:

- a copy of the initial presentation
- at least two copies of the *Module 1: Unit 3 Presentation Review Form* from the initial presentation
- a copy of the revised presentation
- at least two copies of the *Module 1: Unit 3 Presentation Review Form* from the second presentation
- *Module 1: Unit 3 Personal Leadership Development Plan Form*.

Evidence of learning (400 words)

An evaluation of selected strategies relevant to your leadership level or role, used by successful leaders, and of the skills required to implement them.

Evidence of reflection (800 words)

A review of the priority areas for the development of your own practices and skills in relation to current leadership responsibilities, based on an evaluation of current strengths and feedback from peers, school leaders and mentors, as a commentary on the development plan.

Assessment criteria

Candidates will be assessed for the Certificate according to the following criteria, applied to the portfolio of evidence as a whole:

- 1 Understanding educational leadership.
- 2 Developing thinking and practice in educational leadership.
- 3 Analysis and discussion.
- 4 Communication and presentation.

| DISTINCTION | |
|---|---|
| Understanding educational leadership | Demonstrates a well-focused understanding of relevant concepts and principles, with evidence of analysis of strengths and weaknesses. Applies relevant concepts and principles to own practice, with evidence of critical evaluation and limitations. |
| Developing thinking and practice in educational leadership | Evidences effective practice, with a well-focused understanding of relevant theories and principles underlying practice in educational leadership, and applied to own practice. Evidence of reflective evaluation of own practice, and identification of learning from experience. |
| Analysis and discussion | Analyses questions and issues arising from study, enquiry, discussion and experience, in a well-focused manner, supported by relevant and useful examples drawn from valid and reliable evidence. Evidence of a range of information sources to inform the analysis and discussion. Well-structured work. |
| Communication and presentation | Presents ideas, arguments and information in a well-structured and consistent manner. Professional approach to presentation of work, with opinions only given when justified and/or backed up by evidence. Academic conventions followed, with appropriate referencing to published work or other accepted sources of evidence. |

| PASS | |
|---|---|
| Understanding educational leadership | Demonstrates a broad understanding of relevant concepts and principles, and is able to apply these in a meaningful way to own practice. |
| Developing thinking and practice in educational leadership | Evidences effective practice, with a sound and largely accurate understanding of relevant theories and principles underlying practice in educational leadership. Some evidence of application of theories and principles to own practice. Some evidence of reflective evaluation. |
| Analysis and discussion | Analyses questions and issues arising from study, enquiry and experience in a sound and largely appropriate manner. Some use of relevant examples drawn from sound evidence. Use of some different information sources to inform discussion and analysis. Structured approach to analysis and discussion. |
| Communication and presentation | Presents ideas, arguments and discussions in an orderly and generally consistent manner. Professional approach to presentation of work. Opinions may be expressed at times without evidential or other accepted support. Academic conventions mostly followed, with attempt to reference appropriately. |
| FAIL | |
| Understanding educational leadership | Demonstrates inadequate or poor understanding of relevant concepts and principles. Application to own practice may be very limited, inadequate or inappropriately applied. |
| Developing thinking and practice in educational leadership | Little or poor evidence of linking effective practice with theories and principles. Limited or inaccurate understanding of relevant theories and practice. Little evidence of application of theories and principles to own practice. |
| Analysis and discussion | Descriptive accounts, with inaccuracies and misunderstandings in places. Opinions and views expressed, but without links to evidence and/or relevant examples. Work likely to be poorly organised and structured. |
| Communication and presentation | Work demonstrates significant weaknesses in presentation and may be poorly structured, not well organised and not presented in a professional manner. Opinions may be given at length without any attempt to provide support from other sources. |

5 Support and resources for PDQ programmes

We provide a wide range of practical resources, detailed guidance and innovative support so that Programme Leaders can give their candidates the best possible preparation for Cambridge PDQs.

Support and resources

Programme planning and delivery

Syllabus

The Cambridge International Professional Development Qualification (PDQ) syllabus

Syllabus Support Guides

Exemplify the Learning Outcome and Assessment Criteria requirements for each PDQ syllabus

PDQ Programme Leader Community

An online community for Programme Leaders to share and collaborate

Portfolio creation and development

Sample Evidence

Examples of completed evidence with a commentary from the Principal Examiner

Getting started with...

Interactive resources which introduce and develop key areas of teaching and learning practice

Principal Examiner Reports

Annual reports completed by the Principal Examiner for each syllabus

Webinars

Recorded sessions looking at different aspects of the PDQ Assessment requirements

Training

PDQ Programme Leader Course

Training provided by Cambridge for aspiring PDQ Programme Leaders

Online Training

Introductory, Extension, Enrichment and Assessment courses, available online here:

www.cambridgeinternational.org/support-and-training-for-schools/professional-development

Support for Mentors

www.cambridgeinternational.org/Images/304230-a-guide-for-mentors.pdf

‘Getting started with mentoring’ is also available as an online enrichment course:

www.cambridgeinternational.org/support-and-training-for-schools/professional-development/enrichment-courses/online-enrichment

Continuing professional development

Education briefs

www.cambridgeinternational.org/support-and-training-for-schools/teaching-cambridge-at-your-school/education-briefs

Further study towards PGCE, MA or MBA

www.cambridgeinternational.org/support-and-training-for-schools/professional-development/professional-development-qualifications/teacher-development-journey

Note: Cambridge has secured this route into Higher Education study for all those that hold a PDQ Diploma. Cambridge Programme Leaders cannot claim credits towards this themselves, unless they also hold a PDQ Diploma, but the journey may still be of interest to them.

What is PDQ Connect?

PDQ Connect is the platform used by Cambridge International to support the delivery of PDQ Programmes, and where Programme Leaders can find resources, templates and forms. Use of the platform allows Programme Leaders to support candidates to collate, develop and enhance their portfolio evidence prior to final submission.

The ability to collect, reflect and connect aligns with assessment-as-learning principles. These cognitive skills are highly valued and promote lifelong learning and the development of reflective practitioners.

Final submission of the completed PDQ portfolio of evidence to Cambridge International must be made using the correct PDQ templates (*Forms*) as specified in each syllabus, and in accordance with the current submission guidance and series deadlines as laid out in the *Administrative Guide*. The *Administrative Guide* is for exams officers who are making the final submission of the portfolio to Cambridge for grading.

Cambridge International is committed to ensuring that all assessments are ‘fair, have sound ethical underpinning, and operate according to the highest technical standards’ (The Cambridge Approach 2009). Cambridge International expects technology to be used to enhance the assessment process in terms of reliability, validity, accessibility as well as efficiency, and not to dilute its quality (Craven 2009).

- **Validity:** Assessment should measure what it claims to measure and what it is important to measure; there must be a close fit between the assessment methods and the learning outcomes.
- **Authenticity:** All assessment practices must have processes in place to ensure that the evidence for assessment is the learner’s work.
- **Reliability and consistency:** Assessment should be capable of generating sufficient evidence for the target level.

6 Glossary

The following definitions apply throughout this syllabus.

| Word or phrase | What it means |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Achievement | measures the improvement in a learner's performance over a period of time as the result of a process of learning; this is reflected in their grades |
| Acquisition model of learning | learning is seen mainly as acquiring knowledge and skills through direct instruction |
| Active learning | based on the theory of constructivism where learners participate in a variety of activities that promote engagement with learning resources, ideas and other people; it then requires them to think hard in order to make sense of their new learning by linking it to their existing learning |
| Advance organisers | strategies that connect new learning to existing learning |
| Aim | a broad statement of intent indicating what the teacher must teach and the learners must learn during a process of learning |
| Analysis | process of studying or examining something carefully and in detail to learn more about it |
| Assessment | any activity in which evidence of learning is collected in a planned and systematic way and then used to make a judgement about what learners know, understand and are able to do |
| Assessment criteria | freestanding statements that specify the standard required to achieve a learning outcome or objective. |
| Assessment for learning | based on the concept of teachers embedding the strategies of questioning, formative feedback, peer and self-assessment, and the formative use of summative assessments in their classroom practice. Assessment information is then used by teachers to adjust their teaching strategies and by learners to adjust their learning strategies |
| Assessment of learning | an alternative term for summative assessment |
| Attainment | the level or standard reached by a learner at the end of a learning sequence or learning programme that is evidenced by test or examination results |
| Behaviourism | theory of learning based on the concept that all behaviours are learned through interaction with the environment to the near exclusion of innate or inherited factors |
| Candidate | the person following a Cambridge Professional Development syllabus |
| Cognition | process of acquiring knowledge and understanding through thought, experience, and the senses |

| Word or phrase | What it means |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Cognitivism | theory of learning based on the concept of how learners acquire new learning through perception, thinking, remembering, reasoning and judging |
| Collaboration | working with one or more colleagues for a particular purpose or to achieve a common goal |
| Competence | ability to repeatedly do something well |
| Constructivism | theory of learning based on the concept that all learners ‘construct’ their own unique meanings or understanding of experiences by reflecting or thinking about them |
| Cooperation | working together to accomplish shared goals |
| Critique | a detailed analysis and judgement, both positive and negative, of a person’s work or ideas |
| Criterion-referencing | describe the qualities of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do without reference to the performance of others |
| Critical evaluation | making judgements through a process of critical thinking and analysis |
| Critical thinking | careful goal-directed thinking; it is a way of thinking about any subject, content or problem by analysing the facts to form a judgement |
| Curriculum | academic content taught in a school or in a specific course or learning programme; it is usually presented as syllabuses for sequential stages of learners’ learning |
| Dialogic teaching | involves on-going talk between the teacher and learners; it provides learners with opportunities to contribute to classroom dialogue in extended and varied ways so they can explore the limits of their own understanding through the use of language |
| Didactic teaching | learning is seen as mainly acquiring knowledge and skills as the direct result of teaching |
| Differentiated learning | strategies used to accommodate the differences between learners so they all have the best possible chance of progressing their learning |
| Evaluate | to judge or determine the quality, importance or value of something |
| Experiential learning | process that involves learners engaging with a variety of experiences and then through reflection, creating links with existing learning to form new learning |
| Explore | think about an idea or topic in order to assess it carefully |
| Formative assessment | assessment methods used by teachers to check the learners’ understanding of the topic being taught at different stages of a lesson |
| Higher-order thinking skills | requires learners to use their analytical, evaluative and creative thinking skills in a range of activities to progress their learning |
| Humanism | theory of learning based on the concept that the development of the whole person is considered more important than the development of specific subject matter |

| Word or phrase | What it means |
|--|---|
| Inclusive learning | the learners' entitlement to a learning experience that respects diversity, enables participation, removes barriers and anticipates and considers a variety of learning needs and preferences |
| Key questions | indicate the professional learning related to a learning outcome |
| Learner | we use 'learner' in a general, aspirational sense |
| Learning objective | brief description of what the learners must know or be able to do as a result of their learning experiences |
| Learning outcome | brief description of what the learners must know or be able to do as a result of their learning experiences at the end of a course, learning programme, module or unit; it specifically relates to the learning that will be assessed |
| Lower-order thinking skills | requires learners to use their skills of remembering, understanding and applying their learning in a range of activities |
| Mentor | an experienced colleague who provides support, advice and guidance to help develop the personal and professional growth of a less experienced colleague |
| Metacognition | concept that requires learners to reflect or think about how they learn and then intentionally apply the outcomes of their reflective thinking to improve future learning |
| Motivation | a learner's willingness to participate in the learning process |
| Norm-referencing | comparing one learner's performance with that of everyone else being assessed |
| Participation model of learning | creating personal meaning by reflecting on shared experiences and then applying it in different situations |
| Pedagogy | the study and theory of the methods and principles of teaching |
| Practitioner inquiry | a collaborative four-stage cycle of planning, teaching, reviewing and reflecting designed to improve an aspect of a teacher's classroom practice and ultimately their learners' learning and achievement |
| Reflection in action | reflecting during an experience, it can also be thought of as 'thinking on our feet' and involves making decisions or changes to practice during the experience as the situation demands |
| Reflection on action | reflecting after the experience, can also be thought of as making decisions or changes to practice as a result of retrospective thinking |
| Reflective account | an account of an event or a process that is not simply descriptive; it addresses evaluative questions as well as how and why questions |
| Reflective journal | a document in digital or traditional book format can be used to record experiences; it is subsequently used to critically reflect on learning or practice in order to improve future learning or teaching practice |

| Word or phrase | What it means |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Reflective practice | learning through and from experience towards gaining new insights into self and practice |
| Reflective thinking | consciously thinking about analysing what you are doing, what you have previously done, what you have experienced, what and how you have learned |
| Reliability | how well a test consistently measures what it is supposed to measure; reliability exists if repeat marking of a single assessment by a second or third examiner produces the same outcome, or if the learner achieves the same outcome when taking a second version of the same test. |
| Scaffolding of learning | providing one or more learners with support from the teacher and/or peers when learning new concepts; the support is reduced as the learners become more independent in their thinking and ability to acquire new knowledge and skills |
| Scheme of learning | also known as a programme plan or scheme of work; an interpretation of a syllabus into a sequence of lessons |
| Self regulation | describes how learners monitor and control their cognitive processes |
| Social constructivism | theory of learning that stresses the fundamental role of social interaction in the development of cognition |
| Special education needs | refers to learners who experience learning difficulties that make it harder for them to learn than most children and young people of the same age |
| Spiral of learning | learning is structured so that concepts and ideas are initially taught at a simplified level and then re-visited at more complex levels later on |
| Success criteria | summarise the key steps needed for learners to successfully meet a learning intention by specifying the main things to do, include or focus on |
| Summative assessment | assessment methods used to evidence what the learners have learned at a given point in time, usually at the end of a course, module, unit, theme or topic |
| Teacher | this is used to refer to anyone holding the position of teacher; it could be the candidate's colleagues or used in a general sense |
| Tutorial | a short class conducted by a teacher for one learner or a small number of learners, usually focused on personal target-setting and reflection on the learners' own learning |
| Validity | how well a test measures what it is supposed to measure |
| Zone of Proximal Development | a learner's ability to perform learning tasks just beyond their current abilities with guidance and support from the teacher and/or peers |

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