

Date: 28 February 2023

Education Bureau Circular No. 1/2023

Certification for Principalship

【Note: This Circular should be read by

- (a) Supervisors and Heads of government, aided (including special schools), Caput and DSS schools - for necessary action; and
- (b) Supervisors and Heads of private independent schools and Heads of Sections - for information.】

Summary

This is to inform schools of the updated arrangements for the Certification for Principalship (CFP), including the revised application fee and the updated points to note for preparation of the professional development portfolio. This circular supersedes Education Bureau Circular No. 2/2019 dated 28 February 2019.

Background

2. Education Bureau Circular No. 31/2002 dated 17 July 2002 sets out the requirement that from the 2004/05 school year, aspiring principals have to attain CFP in addition to complying with the appointment conditions in force at the time, before they could be considered for appointment to principalship in public sector or DSS schools¹.

¹ For serving principals of private independent schools who have not previously received any formal professional training for newly appointed principals organised by the then Education Department/ Education and Manpower Bureau, they need to comply with the CFP requirement before they can be considered for appointment to principalship in public sector or DSS schools from the 2004/05 school year onwards.

Eligibility for Participation in the CFP Process

3. With effect from 1 September 2010, in addition to having at least five years of teaching experience, aspiring principals must also possess a recognised teacher training qualification² if they wish to apply for participation in a maximum two-year CFP process comprising a needs analysis (NA), a preparation for principalship (PFP) course and a professional development portfolio. While the Education Bureau informs teachers and schools of the details of the NA and the PFP course from time to time, requirements of the professional development portfolio are detailed in the Guidelines on Professional Development Portfolio for Aspiring Principals in Annex A.

Application for CFP

4. After successful completion of the NA and the PFP course, aspiring principals can apply to the School Leadership and Professional Development Section of the Education Bureau for CFP by submission of the professional development portfolio in duplicate under cover of the application form (Annex B)³. CFP applications should be submitted by hand or registered mail during the first ten working days of each month. The time required for processing CFP applications is about three months from the date of submission but depends very much on the number of applications received in each exercise.

Certification Requirements

5. To attain CFP, aspiring principals must satisfy the following criteria within a two-year CFP process⁴:

- (a) Successful completion of the NA;
- (b) Successful completion of the PFP course; and
- (c) Fulfilling requirements for the professional development portfolio.

² A recognised teacher training qualification refers to a local Teacher's Certificate, a local Post-graduate Diploma/Certificate in Education, a local Bachelor of Education degree or equivalent.

³ You may also apply through the e-form system on the EDB webpage (<https://eformss.edb.gov.hk/eformss/Login>). Please read the important notes on the e-form website carefully before completing the form.

⁴ The start date of the CFP process refers to the first day of attendance to either the Needs Analysis or Preparation for Principalship Course, whichever is the earlier.

Assessment

6. The Committee on Certification for Principalship set up under the Education Bureau oversees the assessment of CFP applications, which is conducted by the School Leadership and Professional Development Section with the support of a group of assessors comprising veteran principals, academics, representatives of school sponsoring bodies and lay persons.

Validity

7. The validity of the CFP is five years counting from the expiry of the two-year period for the CFP process or the issue date of the CFP, whichever is the later. For example, if an aspiring principal completes the whole CFP process within one year, the validity of the CFP will be six years. This applies to the applications received on or after 1 May 2005.

Appointment of Principals without CFP

8. Under exceptional circumstances, the Permanent Secretary for Education may approve a school sponsoring body/ school management committee/ incorporated management committee to appoint a principal without CFP on an acting basis. The acting principal so appointed must fulfill the CFP requirement within two years from the date of appointment before his/ her principalship can be confirmed, effective from the date of CFP conferment.

Exemption

9. There will be no exemption from the needs analysis and the professional development portfolio. The PFP course consisting of six modules and an action research component is holistically designed for aspiring principals in Hong Kong. Seen in this light, courses such as the M.Ed., Ed.D. and school management course will not be taken as its equivalent.

10. An applicant for principalship will not be required to attain CFP if he/ she once served as a principal in a public sector or DSS school and has left the post for less than two years.

Appeals Mechanism

11. CFP applicants who fail to meet the requirements may consider lodging an appeal against the assessment outcome if they so wish. The appeal shall be lodged within two weeks from the date of the announcement of results. These cases will be deliberated by an independent Appeals Committee comprising experienced principals, experts from tertiary institutions and lay persons.

Fee

12. Applicants are required to pay a non-refundable fee levied on each CFP application by the Education Bureau. Owing to an increase in administrative costs, the non-refundable fee will increase to \$1,311, effective from the issue date of this circular. Aspiring principals who fail can apply afresh for CFP and have to pay the non-refundable fee again at the new rate.

Briefing

13. To provide further support and information to aspiring principals, briefing sessions on CFP are organised regularly. Please see the Education Bureau's Training Calendar System for details.

Enquiries

14. For enquiries, please contact the School Leadership and Professional Development Section on 3509 7467.

Ms W P LEE
for Permanent Secretary for Education

Guidelines on Professional Development Portfolio for Aspiring Principals

1 Background

1.1 The Certification for Principalship (CFP) stems from the *Principals' Continuing Professional Development Framework*. It comprises three components:

- Needs Analysis
- Preparation for Principalship (PFP) Course
- Professional Development Portfolio

The three parts of the CFP process are complementary to each other. Together they provide an important part of the professional development for aspiring principals (APs), form a solid basis for their continuing education in leadership development and assess their readiness for principalship.

The three components work together in this way:

- The Needs Analysis enables APs to assess their suitability for principalship. It provides a basis for them to design personal professional development plans directed at improving leadership ability.
- The PFP Course helps APs understand the values, knowledge, skills and attributes required of school principals. (See [Appendix 1](#) for examples.) To ensure close integration of the Course and the real work situation, APs are required to do an action research project to demonstrate their application of knowledge and skills acquired from the Course in their school context.
- The portfolio provides a way for APs to present evidence of their continuing development and learning progress, as well as their growing preparedness for principalship.

1.2 The *Principals' Continuing Professional Development Framework* sets out six core areas of school leadership:

- strategic direction and policy environment
- learning, teaching and curriculum
- teacher professional growth and development
- staff and resources management
- quality assurance and accountability
- external communication and connection to the outside world

These six core areas of leadership are used to structure the PFP Course. More details about the framework are available on the Web, at

https://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/teacher/qualification-training-development/development/cpd-principals/PFP%20course%20framework_e.pdf

2 **What is a Portfolio?**

Portfolios are special documents. They attempt to reflect your capabilities in different aspects through summaries or succinct accounts of your learning process, and convey messages beyond surface information. In a nutshell, they demonstrate the depth and your understanding using a minimal amount of data.

3 **What Content Makes for a Useful Portfolio?**

- 3.1 Your portfolio must explain where 'you are now' in your professional career. Materials unlikely to be of contemporary relevance should be discarded.
- 3.2 Portfolios can be quite difficult to construct - particularly when demonstrating something as complex as learning growth and leadership understanding. No portfolio can explain fully a person's entire professional experience. There is a limit to the number of artefacts that can be presented - and adding more artefacts will not necessarily provide additional information. Careful selection of content is the key. Your portfolio should not be cluttered with materials irrelevant to its prime purpose - even if the materials say nice things about you.

4 **What Should this Portfolio Contain?**

- 4.1 Your portfolio must be true and accurate, and in compliance with the copyright laws. It should be your own work except for other sources duly acknowledged in it. Portfolios containing parts which are not your own work without proper acknowledgement may lead to your CFP application being rejected. Under such circumstances, a fresh CFP application will not be accepted by the Education Bureau until after a lapse of one year counting from the date of your last submission. It may also lead to more serious consequences (e.g. a review of your teacher registration status) depending on the severity of the matter. In this connection, you are required to sign a declaration in Annex B when applying for the CFP.
- 4.2 Your portfolio must cover all the six core areas of leadership. Since only principals are likely to have leadership experience in all of the six areas, your aim is to state your personal development and progress towards this goal. Your evidence will include reflections on your work experience and learning experience that you have developed through both the PFP Course and the action research project.
- 4.3 Your portfolio should be a self-contained explanation of your understanding of the six core areas of leadership and the extent of your readiness for principalship. As far as possible, use

relevant materials from your Needs Analysis and extracts from your PFP assignments for illustration.

4.4 When submitting evidence to describe experiences, consider the following:

- Evidence should be directly relevant to the experiences described and specifically relate to the appropriate core areas of leadership.
- Include only the relevant part, not the entire documents.
- Use a separate page for each piece of evidence.
- Do not include original documents. Use copies or photographs of certificates, minutes, reports, etc. Whenever necessary, approval for using the evidence must be sought from the authority concerned.
- Applicants should draw evidence within the recent *three* school years.

In [Appendix 2](#), you will find helpful guidance on the presentation format of the portfolio and the organisation of its contents.

4.5 A portfolio will not be fit for assessment if it does not contain the materials described below. These items are the basic content for you to consider from the outset:

4.5.1 *Educational vision*: The portfolio must include a statement describing your vision for the education of Hong Kong students and where you see yourself in bringing this vision to reality. Outcomes from the Needs Analysis can provide a starting point for explaining your goals, strategies and the progress you are making towards this goal. This is where you state your personal beliefs, your aspirations and your hopes. You can take the opportunity to explain how you will use the professional role of a school leader to realise your vision.

4.5.2 *Work and Course learning experiences*: How far your learning has advanced since commencing the Certification for Principalship process is one of the most important inclusions in the portfolio. It will be important to show how the interaction between the Course, the Course assignments, feedback from the Instructional Associate(s) and the related work experience is merging into an integrated whole - one which is proving useful in preparing you for future appointment as a principal.

This is the part of the portfolio which will benefit from the use of examples from your real work situation as you do your Course assignments. A capacity to objectively analyse your examples will significantly enhance the quality of your portfolio. Remember, in a portfolio, your opinion matters most of all; you are explaining your beliefs and your learning experiences, not someone else's.

4.5.3 *Reflections on the action research project done in the PFP Course*: The action research project is a focused activity in the PFP Course. It is important to describe the scope of the project in terms of the overall Course - which core area of leadership is pertinent, which part of your

education vision applies, the relationship between the project, Course learning and feedback from the Instructional Associate(s).

Reporting on your action research project conducted in the PFP Course is an exercise in professional reflection. Since the action research project may be completed or on-going, you should be able to reflect on both the processes and/ or the outcomes as appropriate - on the design, execution, successful components and/ or parts which might have produced better outcomes if approached differently.

4. 5.4 *Concluding statement*: It is important for a portfolio to contain a concluding, overall statement. This is the opportunity to say how the Course and its components have moved you forward in readiness to work as a school principal. A very important part of this statement relates to the future, especially professional development needs in each of the six core areas of leadership. The portfolio should include a professional development plan for the future and a rationale for the prioritisation of its components.

5 **Portfolio Assessment and Resubmission**

- 5.1 Assessment will be based on the information provided in the portfolio.
- 5.2 The Committee on Certification for Principalship (CCFP) set up under the Education Bureau oversees the assessment of CFP applications. The assessment is conducted by the School Leadership and Professional Development Section with the support of a group of assessors comprising veteran principals, academics, representatives of school sponsoring bodies and lay persons, based on the criteria endorsed by the CCFP.
- 5.3 Portfolio assessment will be based on coherence, reflection and readiness for principalship as demonstrated in different aspects of the portfolio. Details are given in [Appendix 2](#).
- 5.4 In the event that the portfolio does not meet the stipulated requirements in the first submission, the applicant will be given recommendations for improvement and can resubmit the portfolio for consideration. No fee will be levied for the second chance submission.
- 5.5 APs who fail can apply afresh for CFP and have to pay the non-refundable fee of \$1,311 again.

6 **Appeals Mechanism**

Applicants who fail to meet the requirements may consider lodging an appeal against the assessment outcome if they so wish. The appeal shall be lodged within two weeks from the date of the announcement of results. These cases will be deliberated by an independent Appeals Committee comprising experienced principals, experts from tertiary institutions and lay persons.

Examples of Educational Values, Professional Knowledge, Leaderships Skills and Attributes in the Six Core Areas of Leadership

Educational Values	Professional Knowledge	Leadership Skills	Attributes
<p>Cultivation of values and nurture of people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to promote students' whole person development and to cultivate their positive values and attitudes <p>Learning-centredness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belief in learning as the focus of all that happens in school <p>Pursuit of excellence and Innovativeness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belief in new ideas/change as a means to school improvement <p>Lifelong learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belief in learning as a continuous and ongoing process <p>Education for all</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conviction that all students have the right to meaningful education <p>Service orientation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belief that school has to meet the diverse needs of its community <p>Empowerment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to meaningful participation of school members in the life of school <p>Equity and fairness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belief that all school members be treated with justice and integrity and their rights duly recognised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education policies • The law and its implications on education • Education trends • Change management • The latest development of the country • Civic Education, National Education, Constitution, Basic Law Education and National Security Education • Instructional leadership • Curriculum design and evaluation • Learning and teaching approaches • Coaching and counselling • Student assessment • Budgeting and financial management • Resource allocation and deployment • Quality assurance and accountability • Process and educational evaluation • Information literacy and application • Sustainable development knowledge and application • Trends in local, national and international education development • Personal health as well as emotion and stress management • Parental and community involvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritisation and goal setting • Planning and organisation • Self-reflection and self- evaluation • Critical and creative thinking • Effective communication skills • Giving constructive and quality feedback • Shared decision making • Delegation of responsibilities • Culture and team building • Negotiating • Motivating • Modelling • Supervision and monitoring • Appraising • Data collection and analysing • Promoting school image • Building learning communities for co-construction of knowledge • Leading curriculum development • Developing teachers' professionalism and maintaining collegial harmony • Engaging the community for school development and mutual benefit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a sense of national identity and social responsibility, as well as honouring the rule of law • Safeguard professionalism by making endeavour to safeguard the image and dignity of the education profession • Be committed to and responsible for achieving the goals of education and school policies • Constantly reflect and strive for improvements and enhance professional capacity • Be adaptable and responsive in decision making and managing people while retaining commitment to core values • Be confident in own abilities and actions while maintaining modesty in interacting with others • Respect the privacy of individuals • Be astute and courageous • Uphold probity, integrity and honesty in work and dealing with people • Have high moral character that can be a role-model to staff and students • Have a global and futuristic mindset • Care for students, respect diversity, be responsive to student diversity and embrace opportunities arising from a pluralistic culture • Be scholar-practitioners managing organisational knowledge effectively to build up intellectual capital of the school

			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be entrepreneurial and have a growth mindset positive to change
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Selective reference can be made to these examples in the preparation of the Professional Development Portfolio.

Adapted from:

1. Walker A, Dimmock C, Chan A, Chan W K, Cheung M B, & Wong Y H. (2000), *Key Qualities of the Principalship in Hong Kong*, Hong Kong Centre for the Development of Educational Leadership, Hong Kong.
2. Committee on Professional Development of Teachers and Principals (2018). *Professional Standards for Principals of Hong Kong (PSP)*. Hong Kong.
3. Education Bureau of the HKSAR Government (2022). *Guidelines on Teachers' Professional Conduct*. Hong Kong.

Information about Assessment Procedures, Organisational and Presentation Requirements of a Professional Development Portfolio

This Appendix offers information about how a portfolio can be organised and presented. The content requirements are listed under section C. Before submitting your portfolio, please check its format and contents against these guidelines.

A Organisation of Contents

You should organise your portfolio information in the following order:

- 1 Introductory information
 - Table of contents (with page numbers) and other appropriate indexes
 - Overview
- 2 Curriculum Vitae
 - Personal particulars
 - Academic qualifications
 - Professional qualifications
 - Professional experience
 - Copies of certificates for completion of the Needs Analysis and PFP Course
- 3 Statement of educational vision and implementation strategy
- 4 Reflections on work and PFP Course learning experiences
- 5 Reflections on the action research project
- 6 Concluding statement

B Presentation Format

Please adhere to the following format:

- 1 The portfolio should be submitted in bound hard copy and may take the form of a folder, an expandable file, or other suitable binding.
- 2 The main text in the portfolio may be in either English or Chinese, but not in mixed code. Quotations or citations in a language other than that used for the main text should be duly translated on an accompanying note. Yet, translation is not required for appendices written in either English or Chinese.
- 3 The main text in the portfolio should be typewritten in font size 12 or above, in single line spacing on A4 size white paper and with a margin of at least 25 mm on all edges.

- 4 Paragraphs of text should be organised under appropriate headings and subheadings.
- 5 The number of pages for the main text of the portfolio should not exceed 30 (excluding the action research project which should be submitted as an attachment).
- 6 To assist in the cross-referencing of evidence, each piece of evidence in the appendices should be presented on a separate page of A4 size paper with an appropriate heading. The number of pages for attachments of evidence should not exceed 30.

C Portfolio Assessment

The assessment requirements of the portfolio are set out below:

Basis of Assessment	Assessment Aspect	Requirement
Clear indication of purpose	(1) Table of contents and overview	The introduction includes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a table of contents with indexes for easy cross referencing ; and • an indication of the purpose and main content of the portfolio.
Coherence between vision and strategy	(2) Statement describing the AP's vision / personal beliefs on principalship	The statement should <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • depict the AP's personal vision/ beliefs/ educational values about the meaning of school leadership/ principalship in the current context of his or her school and the community; • demonstrate the rationale behind the vision/ beliefs; and • articulate an implementation strategy for the AP's own development towards his or her personal vision/ beliefs/ educational values.
Reflection	(3) Reflections on work and learning experiences in the six core areas of leadership	The reflections should <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate both the breadth and depth of knowledge in the core areas of leadership; • demonstrate coherence in thinking with regard to the AP's vision; and • cover all the six core areas of leadership.
	(4) Reflections on the action research experience in one core area of leadership	The reflections should be closely related to the core area of leadership specified, with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a description of the learning gained through the action research project; and • an indication of coherence in thinking with regard to the AP's vision.
Readiness	(5) Concluding statement on the AP's readiness for principalship and further planning on all six core areas of leadership	The statement should indicate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the extent to which the AP considers himself or herself to be prepared for principalship; • the AP's perception of his or her strengths and weaknesses in relation to the knowledge, skills, values and attributes as described in the six core areas of leadership; and • the AP's professional development needs in all six core areas of leadership, with planning and prioritisation for further professional development and related implementation strategies.

Ref No.: _____ (For office use only)

Annex B

Certification for Principalship (CFP) Application Form

[Please complete this form in block letters.]

Please submit the professional development portfolio (with action research project attached as an attachment) *in duplicate* together with this application form:-

- (i) by hand to the *Professional Development and Training Division, Education Bureau on 5/F, East Wing, Central Government Offices, 2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong.* (Please ring up the School Leadership and Professional Development Section on 3509 7471 at least 2 working days prior to the submission to facilitate the pre-registration for entry to the Central Government Offices); OR
- (ii) by registered mail to the *School Leadership and Professional Development Section, Professional Development and Training Division, Education Bureau, 5/F, East Wing, Central Government Offices, 2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong.*

Date of Submission: _____ / _____ / _____
day month year

Name of Applicant (<i>must be identical with that of the applicant's HK Identity Card</i>): (English) (Chinese, if applicable)	
Sex:	
Correspondence Address:	
Contact Telephone No.:	
(School / Office):	(Home / Mobile):
Fax No.:	E-mail Address:
HK Identity Card / Passport No.:	Registered Teacher / Permitted Teacher No.:
Name and Address of Applicant's School / Organisation:	
Type of School (if applicable):	i. Primary <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary <input type="checkbox"/> Special <input type="checkbox"/> ii. Government <input type="checkbox"/> Aided <input type="checkbox"/> DSS <input type="checkbox"/> Others (Please specify) _____

Professional Qualification(s)	Teacher Training (e.g. a local Teacher's Certificate or Post-graduate Diploma/Certificate in Education or Bachelor of Education degree or equivalent): _____ _____ Name of Awarding Institute: _____ Date(s) of Award: _____	
Teaching Experience	5 Years <input type="checkbox"/>	6 – 10 Years <input type="checkbox"/>
	11 – 15 Years <input type="checkbox"/>	over 15 Years <input type="checkbox"/>
Current Position in School / Organisation:		
Needs Analysis*:	Completion Date:	
Preparation for Principalship Course*:	Commencement Date:	Date of Award:

*Please attach *copies* of certificate(s) /certifying letter(s).

Declaration:

I declare,

1. that I have read and understood the Guidelines on Professional Development Portfolio for Aspiring Principals (Annex A);
2. that the personal data entered in my application form and all the factual information contained in my professional development portfolio for this application are true and accurate;
3. that the action research project mentioned in my professional development portfolio is the one I did in the Preparation for Principalship Course; and
4. that the professional development portfolio is entirely my own work except where I have duly acknowledged other sources and put the copied parts in quotations in the portfolio. The professional development portfolio is in compliance with the copyright laws[#].

Applicant's Signature:

Date:

[#]Please note that if your professional development portfolio is not in compliance with the copyright laws, it may lead to your CFP application being rejected. Under such circumstances, a fresh CFP application will not be accepted by the Education Bureau until after a lapse of one year counting from the date of your last submission. It may also lead to more serious consequences (e.g. a review of your teacher registration status) depending on the severity of the matter.

(Please print this page on a separate sheet)

Please fill in your name and address for correspondence:

Name: _____ Correspondence Address: _____ _____ _____	Name: _____ Correspondence Address: _____ _____ _____
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COLLECTION OF PERSONAL DATA

Purpose of Collection

1. The personal data provided by you in this form will be used by the EDB for one or more of the following purposes:
 - (a) Activities relating to the processing, authentication and counter-checking of the application for Certification of Principalship;
 - (b) Activities relating to matching of the personal data with the database of other relevant Government bureaux / departments in connection with the processing, authentication and counter-checking of the application mentioned in (a) above;
 - (c) Activities relating to matching of the personal data within the database of EDB for purposes of verifying / updating records of the EDB;
 - (d) Activities relating to training and development including invitation of participation in programmes / activities, applications for reimbursement of course fees, assessment of nominations, awards and scholarship, and monitoring of attainment progress;
 - (e) Activities relating to the processing and vetting of applications for, and disbursement of, funding / grants / subsidies, and conducting of audits;
 - (f) Activities relating to compilation of statistics, research and Government publications; and
 - (g) Activities relating to the administration and enforcement of rules and regulations including the Education Ordinance (Cap. 279), its subsidiary legislation (such as the Education Regulations and the Grant / Subsidised Schools Provident Fund Rules) and the Codes of Aid.

2. The provision of personal data required by this form and during the processing of this form is obligatory. In the event that you do not provide those personal data, we may not be able

to handle or further process the application.

Classes of Transferees

3. The personal data you provide will be made available to persons working in EDB. Apart from this, they may be transferred or disclosed to the parties or in the circumstances listed below:-
 - (a) other Government bureaux and departments for the purposes mentioned in paragraph 1 above;
 - (b) the school in which the form relates for the purposes mentioned in paragraph 1 above;
 - (c) personnel, agent, service provider or organizations, including Teacher Education Universities (TEUs), engaged by EDB to provide services or advice for purposes mentioned in paragraph 1 above;
 - (d) where you have given your prescribed consent to such disclosure; and
 - (e) where such disclosure is authorised or required under the law or court order applicable to Hong Kong.

Access to Personal Data

4. You have the right to request access to and correction of your personal data held by EDB. Request for access or correction of personal data should be made in writing to Senior Professional Development Officer (School Leadership and Professional Development)² at 5/F, East Wing, Central Government Offices, 2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong or email to spdoslpd2@edb.gov.hk.