

The role of a Specialist Leader of Education (SLE) in the QEGSMAT

If you are an experienced middle or senior leader who is interested in supporting leaders in other schools, you may wish to apply to be a specialist leader of education (SLE).

Teaching schools and National Support Schools are responsible for the selection and placement of SLEs. We have SLEs that have been designated by a number of Teaching Schools. This is one part of the government's plan to give schools a central role in developing a self-improving and sustainable school-led system.

To become an SLE, you need to have been in a leadership role for at least 2 years – as a member of staff – either teaching or non-teaching. Your Headteacher/Head of Academy will be asked to confirm that you are in an appropriate role. You can be from any type or phase of school.

You don't need to be in an outstanding school or a school that is part of a [teaching school alliance](#), but your school will need to have the capacity to enable you to work with others from other schools. You must have at least 1 specialism from our areas of expertise, which are based on the 4 areas of focus for Ofsted.

Ofsted focus

Areas of expertise

Leadership and management	Academies and academy transition; assessment; leadership of continuing professional development; school business management and financial management; leadership of curriculum; leadership of Safeguarding; HR & IT leadership;
Pupil/student outcomes	Any subject area, any phase; closing the gap; early years; phonics; Sixth Form; personal, social and health education; character education; special educational needs; support for the most able pupils/students; provision for eligible students; improving and sustaining pupil/student progress;
Quality of teaching, learning & assessment	Initial teacher training, newly qualified teacher development & recruitment & retention of the very best staff; assessment in the classroom;
Personal development & well-being	Rewards, behaviour, discipline; attendance & standards.

To be successful in your application, you should have:

- a successful track record of working effectively within your own school/academy and/or across a group of schools, or working with a range of leaders within a single school
- evidence of successfully using coaching and/or facilitation skills to bring about sustainable improvements
- excellent communication and interpersonal skills
- an understanding of what constitutes 'outstanding' in your field of expertise and the ability and confidence to communicate this
- an understanding of how your specialism and skills can contribute to wider school improvement goals
- an analytical approach in identifying and prioritising needs
- the ability to set and establish new and innovative working practices
- the ability to grow leadership capacity in others

You can also provide supporting evidence gained from completing leadership development opportunities such as:

- the [National Professional Qualification for Senior Leadership](#)
- the [National Professional Qualification for Middle Leadership](#)
- the [SSAT lead practitioner accreditation](#)

There is no limit on the number of times a candidate can apply. There is no cost to apply. Candidates may apply to multiple teaching schools, but can only accept designation from one teaching school.

What an SLE does

SLEs focus on developing leadership capacity; developing other leaders so that they have the skills to lead their own teams and improve practice in their own school/academy.

This may be done through one-to-one or group support and could involve a variety of activities, such as:

- data analysis
- coaching
- facilitating and training
- joint action planning

If selected, you will be expected to provide evidence that your work has had a positive impact on outcomes for children and young people by developing leadership capacity in other schools.

Time commitment

The role lasts for 4 years, at which time there will be a review. The types of placements will vary. For example, one might be a 2 day diagnostic exercise, while another might require a 3 month, 1 day per week; others may require staff to come to observe you or meet with you in your setting. It is NOT about creating cover; it is not about the children or young people that you teach being disadvantaged because you are not there. It is about you benefitting as a professional; adding and developing expertise to your career as a professional. It may be project work within your own setting or MAT.

There is no minimum or maximum time commitment. You and your school/academy will need to think carefully about capacity and negotiate your availability together.

Payment

There may be payment for specific placements, either from schools receiving support or from other organisations using your services. Any payment will be agreed and managed by the Executive Headteacher of the MAT & Trustees; headteachers/Heads of Academy and governors of the schools concerned, in line with statutory guidance.

How the programme works

Allocation to a teaching school alliance	You will need to identify your nearest teaching school alliance that is recruiting for your specialism. You can check this by contacting the teaching school directly, checking the school's website or contacting your local teaching and leadership adviser.
Placements to support other schools	Each placement will be designed to meet the needs of the supported school. They may involve coaching, mentoring or facilitation skills – there is no set method, but support will always focus on sustainable leadership development and school improvement. You will need to keep your allocated teaching school informed of progress regularly.
Access to ongoing support and training	Your teaching school will ensure that there is support available for you, where required. Our team will also be on hand to answer any questions you may have.
Additional opportunities	As well as supporting other schools, we expect that you will also be able to engage with other areas of work – for example, research activity on behalf of teaching schools or working with national policy makers in relation to particular specialisms.

Appeals

There are 2 situations where you have the right to appeal:

- if your initial application is not successful
- if you become an SLE and, when reviewed, are judged to no longer meet the criteria

To make an appeal you should:

- read the [SLE appeals procedure](#)
- request an appeals form from the relevant teaching school
- submit the form to the teaching school within 10 working days of receiving the outcome you are appealing (if the outcome is received at the end of term, this period will transfer to the following term)

We encourage you to try to reach an informal resolution with the teaching school before making a formal appeal.