



National College for
Teaching & Leadership

Specialist leaders of education

www.education.gov.uk/nationalcollege/sle

Specialist leaders of education (SLEs) are outstanding middle and senior leaders who have the skills to support individuals or teams in similar positions in other schools. They understand what outstanding leadership practice in their area of expertise looks like and are skilled in helping other leaders to achieve it in their own context. SLEs can develop the leadership capacity of others, using coaching or facilitation support that draws on their knowledge and expertise.

The Schools White Paper (2010) introduced the concept of the SLE role to improve the quality of school leadership through school-to-school support and peer-to-peer learning, ultimately raising standards and improving outcomes for children.



1. Around 2,500 SLEs have already been designated, with the aim of building up to 5,000 by 2014–15, in line with the expansion of the teaching school model. In time, we anticipate 10,000 SLEs to be designated to ensure full national coverage.
2. While SLEs will be outstanding at what they do, they can come from any school, regardless of the school's Ofsted grade.
3. SLEs need to meet strict designation criteria, which can be found in full on our website.
4. SLEs have expertise in a specific area, for example, a subject area, early years, behaviour or school business management. A list of [areas of expertise](#) can be found on our website.
5. Teaching schools designate SLEs and broker their deployment into other schools.
6. The SLE role has a number of benefits, including:
 - offering credible peer support rooted in current practice and drawing on real experience
 - the sharing and development of outstanding, innovative practice
 - a collaborative, coaching approach, which helps develop other leaders to ensure long-term, sustainable improvement
 - a fresh perspective on specific challenges or issues, as well as specialist knowledge and expertise
 - the opportunity for leaders to learn about different school contexts and systems
 - contributing to continuing professional development (CPD), enhancing leaders' knowledge, skills and abilities in a variety of ways
7. Apply online at www.education.gov.uk/nationalcollege/sle.

What's involved as a specialist leader of education?

| Element | Details |
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| Allocation to a teaching school alliance | SLEs will need to identify and apply to their nearest or local teaching school, ensuring that their specialism(s) are on the list of the teaching school's priorities. A list of teaching school priorities can be found on our website during application rounds. Teaching schools are responsible for designating SLEs, brokering SLE deployment and providing ongoing support. |
| Core training day | This is a compulsory training day that all newly designated SLEs attend. It provides SLEs with essential information about the role and will equip you with the tools and techniques for effective school-to-school support. It also provides the opportunity to meet other SLEs. |
| Additional training sessions | A menu of optional training opportunities is also available to newly designated SLEs in the form of enrichment sessions. SLEs are entitled to attend up to two enrichment sessions paid for by the National College, although their school will need to cover any travel or supply costs. |
| Deployment to support other schools | <p>The core role of an SLE is to support leaders in other schools, helping them to develop leadership capacity that will ultimately improve outcomes for children. We know that this type of school-to-school deployment has benefits for all involved.</p> <p>Each deployment will be tailored to meet the needs of the supported school. Deployments may involve coaching, mentoring or facilitation skills – there is no set approach, but support will always focus on sustainable leadership development and school improvement.</p> <p>There is no pre-defined time commitment for SLE work because models and types of deployment vary.</p> |
| Access to ongoing support and training | Allocated teaching schools will ensure that there is support available for SLEs where required. The National College SLE team will also be on hand to answer any queries. |
| Additional opportunities | As well as supporting other schools, we expect that SLEs will also be able to engage with other opportunities and areas of work. This could include, for example, undertaking research activity on behalf of teaching schools and the College, or engaging with national policy-makers in relation to particular specialisms. |

SLE deployment may result in some funding for the SLE's own school, although this will be agreed by the schools involved and by their teaching school alliance.