



Specialist leaders of education (SLE)

Application guidance for referees

Applicants for the SLE programme **must** have the support and agreement of their headteacher in order to be considered. The headteacher acts as the applicant's referee and should complete a reference section in the application form which includes confirming that the school has the capacity to release them. The headteacher will also need to provide a supporting statement showing evidence of how the applicant meets the criteria and how he or she has supported a middle or senior leader from another school or academy.

For more information on the SLE role please visit the National College website, <https://www.gov.uk/specialist-leaders-of-education-a-guide-for-potential-applicants>

You will need to provide a supporting statement on how you consider the applicant meets the following criteria.

- **Experience:** SLEs will be outstanding middle or senior leaders with at least two years' experience and excellent knowledge in a particular field of expertise.
- **Track record:** SLEs will have a successful track record, supported by substantial evidence of impact of working effectively within their own school and/or across a group of schools, or working with a range of leaders within a single school.
- **Capacity and commitment:** SLEs will have a commitment to outreach work, and the capacity to undertake such work.
- **Skills:** SLEs understand what constitutes 'outstanding' in their field of expertise and the ability and confidence to articulate this.
- SLEs will be supported in their application by their headteacher, and be able to be released from their school for a mutually agreed allocation of time.
- SLEs will have an appreciation of how their specialism and skills can contribute to the wider school improvement agenda.
- SLEs will have an analytical approach to identifying needs and ability to prioritise accordingly, including the ability to set and establish new and innovative working practices.

Submitting the application form

The SLE application form is a word document, and is to be obtained from the teaching school by the applicant. A PDF [example version](#) is available on the National College website prior to and during the application window.

- 1) The SLE application form has two sections. Section 1 is completed by the applicant and section 2 by the referee. Once the applicant has completed their section, they will need to email it to you to fill out the reference section.
- 2) Use the contact details provided by the teaching school at the bottom of the application form to return the completed application form to the teaching school.

Once this has been done, the SLE application process is complete and the application will be taken forward for consideration.

Incomplete applications or applications without references will not be considered so please ensure that the form is completed correctly.

General support

If applicants or referees have issues or queries regarding the process, please contact the SLE team at sle.enquiries@education.gsi.gov.uk