# Overview of the Advanced Certificate in School Leadership and Management

The South African national Advanced Certificate: Education (School Management and Leadership) is the product of an initiative spearheaded by the SA Department of Education in response to a concern that despite many educators being involved in or graduates of various school management and leadership programmes, there was little evidence of improved practice.

The national initiative sought to bring together a representative range of stakeholders from government to unions and from public institutions to NGOs to design and develop a programme that would bring about positive change. The vision, purpose and aims of the programme are set out below.

### Vision

To provide structured learning opportunities that, while recognizing the diverse contexts in which schools operate, promote quality education in South African schools through the development of a corps of education leaders who apply critical understanding, values, knowledge and skills to school leadership and management in line with the vision of democratic transformation.

### Purpose

To empower/enable these educators to develop the skills, knowledge, and values needed to lead and manage schools effectively and to contribute to improving the delivery of education across the school system taking into account the diversity of school types and contexts.

### Aims

The programme aims to achieve the following:

* Provide leadership and management to enable schools to give every learner quality education taking due cognisance of the nature of the school and its context.
* Provide professional leadership and management of the curriculum and therefore ensure that schools provide quality teaching, learning and resources for improved standards of achievement for all learners working in diverse contexts.
* Strengthen the professional role of principalship.
* Develop aspirant principals who are able to engage critically and be self-reflective practitioners.
* Enable aspirant principals to manage their organisations as learning organisations and instill values supporting transformation in the local and South African context.

### Curriculum overview

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| Fundamental | Develop a portfolio to demonstrate school leadership and management | 10 credits = 100 notional learning hours at level 5 |
| Additional module | Leading and managing effective use of ICTs in South African Schools | 10 credits = 100 notional learning hours at level 5 (Credit for this module can be gained through Recognition of prior Learning (RPL) |
| Core | Understand school leadership and management in the South African context | 10 credits at level 6 |
| Language in leadership and management | 6 credits at level 5 |
| Manage policy, planning, school development and governance | 20 credits at level 6 |
| Lead and manage people | 20 credits at level 6 |
| Manage organizational systems, physical and financial resources | 20 credits at level 6 |
| Manage teaching and learning | 20 credits at level 6 |
| Elective | HEI’s may supplement the fundamental and core modules with one or more elective modules that respond to particular national/ provincial/regional needs for example HIV/Aids, Gender.  The following electives have been developed as part of the national programme. |  |
| Lead and manage a subject, learning area or phase | 12 credits at level 6 |
| Mentor school managers and manage mentoring programmes in schools | 12 credits at level 6 |
| Plan and conduct assessment (pre-requisite for Moderate assessment but RPL can be obtained for this module) | 15 credits at level 6 (pre-requisite for Moderate assessment) |
| Moderate assessment | 10 credits at level 6 |

### Development and evaluation of the programme

The curriculum was developed in a series of national workshops. Initially the idea was that different public higher education institutions would take responsibility for the development of the different modules of the programme. However, tight timeframes for a pilot militated against this and instead a number of NGOs were invited to a briefing meeting and those interested to assist assigned to the development of the various modules. Drafts of the materials at key stages – module outline, introduction and first unit, first few units and first draft were made available for comment by the national team members.

Concurrently with the development of the draft pilot modules, the Department engaged with public higher institutions on their readiness to offer the programme. A key challenge for implementation was the requirement that institutions should be able to offer school-based support for core assessment tasks that required the design, implementation and evaluation of a variety of school improvement initiatives in a portfolio of evidence.

The Department of Education also took responsibility for development of the module on ICTs.

A pilot was run with a selected number of institutions that were able to meet the readiness criteria.

The pilot was subject to three evaluations:

* A comparative review of how institutions were actually implementing the national programme and its minimum requirements
* A review of the materials by critical readers with both disciplinary and distance education experience from a range of public higher education institutions
* A review of the overall curriculum, materials and implementation, including the collection and analysis of student feedback, by a dedicated task team under the leadership of an international consultant with a strong track record in educational leadership and management.

The three reports were tabled at a national workshop of stakeholders and on the basis of this some changes were made to the curriculum, the fundamental and core materials and the guidelines for implementation. There was much greater involvement of public higher education institutions in the preparation of the final versions of the learning resources.

### Saide’s role

Saide was appointed to coordinate the materials development process. This meant briefing writers on the development of materials geared towards a high level of independent learning, co-planning and managing timeframes and deadlines and providing initial editorial feedback in terms of style, approach, cohesion and coherence, language, progression etc. Saide also commissioned the artwork and was responsible for the desk top publishing of the materials.

A key requirement of the project funders was that the materials should be made available as adaptable open education resources. So the pilot and final materials were made available in both a PDF and an MSWord format.

In addition to managing the development process, Saide contributed content to some of the modules, developed a set of implementation guidelines and was responsible for the finalisation of the curriculum outline under the direction of the Department of Education.