



## HMC Pastoral Leadership Qualification, Scotland (PLQ) 2024-25, pilot year, Level 1

### 1. Overview

This document provides an overview of the *HMC Pastoral Leadership Qualification* (PLQ) Scotland. The PLQ is designed and delivered in partnership with the UCL/Institute of Education (IOE).

The PLQ is designed for pastoral middle leaders in HMC member schools in Scotland e.g. Heads of Year, Heads of Section, Heads of House (Boarding and Day), Heads of Pupil Support teams, Wellbeing Leads, Child Protection Coordinator etc. Whilst aspiring pastoral leaders may also take part, the training sessions and portfolio activities are primarily intended for those already in post, and HMCPD's 'Preparing to be a Pastoral Leader' is likely to provide more appropriate content. Colleagues who are not currently pastoral leaders should discuss in school whether the PLQ is an appropriate course for them. They are also welcome to contact HMC at [pd@hmc.org.uk](mailto:pd@hmc.org.uk) to discuss. Experienced colleagues beginning to think about promotion to deputy head positions may wish to consider HMCPD's 'Preparing for Senior Leadership' course.

### 2. Aims

The HMC PLQ Scotland aims to:

- Improve standards and build expertise in pastoral care within schools by providing training for pastoral leaders in the key practical skills that they need to perform their job
- Provide training that is bespoke to the educational system in Scotland
- Build the capacity for pastoral middle leaders to make effective decisions themselves where appropriate – e.g. through the development of problem solving and analysis skills
- Encourage the on-going continuous professional development of Middle Leaders in pastoral roles
- Establish best practice and define sector-wide standards in relation to these skills, and
- Provide a qualification that is understood by schools and is portable between schools

## Structure

The PLQ Level 1 is a modular programme taking a year to complete:

- **Level One**
  1. Establishing standards in day-to-day pastoral care
  2. Listening skills and managing difficult conversations with pupils, parents and staff
  3. Nurturing pupil wellbeing and mental health, part 1
  4. Technology and pastoral care: Opportunities and challenges

A level two PLQ is well-established and likely to be offered in Scotland in due course.

### Pre-requisites:

- Participants must have completed safeguarding training to the appropriate level required by their local Child Protection Committee prior to beginning the programme

## 3. Delivery

The PLQ programme comprises of training sessions relating to each module, completion of an electronic portfolio of activities undertaken during the school year, and support from an in-school mentor<sup>1</sup>.

**One Level 1 cluster is planned in Scotland for the academic year 2024-25.**

## 4. Portfolio Review

All portfolios which are submitted by the 15 July 2025 deadline will be reviewed to ensure that certificates of completion are only awarded to those who have completed the programme to a satisfactory level. A sample of portfolios will be moderated by the UCL / IOE as part of this process.

## 5. Delegate Fees and How to Book Places

Delegates fees are £650 per level for schools in membership of HMC, and £675 for other delegates for face-to-face courses.

*“The qualification helped me to reflect critically on the situations I face on a daily basis in pastoral leadership and exposed me to different approaches and practices. I feel that it has made me better prepared to face difficult pastoral situations and add greater value to my team.”*  
(PLQ L1 Participant 2017-18)

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<sup>1</sup> An in-school mentor, who may be an experienced pastoral leader or the Deputy Head Pastoral, is an essential part of the delivery of this course. **Mentors must have the capacity to meet with their mentees at least twice per term and should review their portfolios and add a supporting statement before they are submitted at the end of the year. Mentors must hold full registration with the GTCS.**

Fees include participant access to the training days / sessions for their cluster, an optional online training session for their mentor, online and distance-learning materials via Padlet, support for participants and mentors from HMC during the year, and review and moderation of the portfolio and certification.

Please visit the HMC website for information regarding cluster locations and to register online: [HMC - The Heads' Conference](#)

**Please see below for module content and activities.**

*"I would strongly recommend the PLQ levels one and two to those teachers who are looking to advance their careers. The PLQ is well designed with tasks which are both relevant and challenging. It encouraged me, as a middle leader, to engage with whole school issues which I would not otherwise have explored at this stage. I am beginning a senior leadership role this coming September. I am sure that this would not have been possible without the PLQ over the last two years." (PLQ L2 Participant 2017-18)*

## HMC Pastoral Leadership Qualification – Programme Content and Activities

**Level 1:** Level 1 consists of four modules.

<b>Module 1: Establishing standards in day-to-day pastoral care</b>	
Module 1 training sessions are delivered by experienced HMC pastoral deputy heads or HMC headteachers	
<b>Content</b>	<b>Portfolio activities</b>
<p>Module 1 offers an opportunity to explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What the best pastoral care provides for pupils and how to ensure it makes a real difference to pupils’ experience of day to day school life</li> <li>• The extent to which current tutor practice has the wellbeing and holistic development of pupils at its heart</li> <li>• The role pupils can play in supporting their peers</li> </ul> <p>This module enables participants to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the role and responsibility of the pastoral leader and how this links to whole-school approaches and processes including GIRFEC (Getting it Right for Every Child); HGIOS 4 ( How Good is Our School?), in particular 3.1: ‘Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion’, <a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-child-protection-guidance-2024/pages/child-protection-development-2024-national-framework.aspx">National child protection guidance - Child protection - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)</a> and the <a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-child-protection-guidance-2024/pages/child-protection-development-2024-national-framework.aspx">Child protection learning and development 2024: national framework - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)</a></li> <li>• Take away practical strategies and approaches for establishing expectations and building good relationships with parents, pupils and staff</li> <li>• Identify strengths and weaknesses in the pastoral team that contribute to, for example, effective and ineffective tutoring</li> <li>• Develop the skills to conduct effective observations of tutor periods and scrutiny of record keeping and give useful feedback, which reinforces and promotes best practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.1 Reflection on training session and looking after yourself</li> <li>1.2 ‘Communication with parents’ reflective case study</li> <li>1.3 Write/review a Tutor Charter/Calendar for your pastoral setting (alternative activities also available)</li> <li>1.4 ‘Knowing the pupils’ case study response</li> <li>1.5 Observation of tutorials and scrutiny of record keeping</li> </ul>

<b>Module 2: Listening skills and managing difficult conversations with pupils, parents and staff</b>	
Module 2 training sessions are delivered by experienced facilitators from the UCL Institute of Education	
<b>Content</b>	<b>Portfolio activities</b>
<p>How do I manage powerful dialogues that achieve the outcomes I want?</p> <p>Module 2 offers the opportunity for participants to explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The power of active listening and the role of trust</li> <li>• The tools that are needed for successful dialogue</li> <li>• Coaching</li> <li>• The leadership aspect to dialogue</li> </ul> <p>This module enables participants to explore how coaching approaches can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop their skills and capabilities as leaders to engage in successful and meaningful dialogue with colleagues, parents and pupils</li> <li>• Enable them to be proactive and confident in having ‘difficult’ conversations</li> </ul>	<p>2.1 Structured reflection on training session</p> <p>2.2 ‘Stimulating Learning Conversations’ (L Stoll): Stimulus questions</p> <p>2.3 ‘Body Language and Non-verbal Communication’ (UCL Institute of Education): Stimulus questions and observation activity</p> <p>2.4 Planning for a difficult conversation and post-conversation reflection</p>

<b>Module 3: Nurturing pupil wellbeing and mental health, part 1</b>	
Module 3 training sessions are delivered by experienced HMC pastoral deputy heads	
<b>Content</b>	<b>Portfolio activities</b>
<p>What is wellbeing?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does it mean for a pupil to be resilient?</li> <li>• How do I know when a pupil is/is becoming vulnerable?</li> <li>• How do we equip and support pupils?</li> </ul> <p>Module 3 offers the opportunity for participants to explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How the culture and curriculum of the school can best promote the positive wellbeing and mental health of pupils and ways in which this can be delivered</li> </ul>	<p>3.1 Structured reflection on training session</p> <p>3.2 Profiling attendance (choice from two activities)</p> <p>3.3 Profiling attainment (choice from two activities)</p> <p>3.4 Response to Barnado’s online materials</p> <p>3.5 Online wellbeing and mental health resources research</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategies for recognising when things are going wrong and ways to respond</li> </ul> <p>This module enables participants to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand the importance of nurturing pupil wellbeing and developing the resilience of pupils</li> <li>Identify the ways in which their own setting nurtures the wellbeing and mental health of its pupils</li> <li>Recognise the early warning signs that a pupil may be vulnerable</li> <li>Develop the skills to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respond rapidly and appropriately to early warning indicators</li> <li>Know when to refer up</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	3.6 Structured case study reflection
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<b>Module 4: Technology and pastoral care: Opportunities and challenges</b>	
Module 4 training sessions are delivered by experienced digital educational researchers and practitioners	
<b>Content</b>	<b>Portfolio activities</b>
<p>Module 4 enables participants to explore the challenges and opportunities presented by technology, including practical strategies for managing associated risks.</p> <p>Particular areas of focus include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The impact of technology on the day to day pastoral care of pupils and how to respond to the misuse of technology</li> <li>Digital Wellbeing</li> <li>Social media, sexting &amp; pornography</li> <li>Academic and pastoral monitoring tools and systems</li> </ul>	4.1 Structured reflection on training session 4.2 Managing the use and misuse of technology (choice of 3 activities) 4.3 Academic and Pastoral Monitoring Tools – reflection on current practice 4.4 Digital Wellbeing – Trialling the use of the Tech Control Digital Awareness UK lesson plan resources

### REGISTRATION

To register for our PLQ courses, please click [HERE](#) to visit the PLQ webpage with the booking links for each cluster