



# PRINCIPALS SCHOLARSHIP 2027

Step away from the urgent, work through a real problem from your own school with principals from around the world and come home with a plan built on what you know excellence to be



## Overview of Scholarship

The Principals Scholarship gives principals from Australian government primary and secondary schools the chance to step back from the day to day and undertake a short professional education program at the [Harvard Graduate School of Education](#) in the United States. It is an opportunity to reflect, refocus and recharge on a program built specifically for school principals.

The scholarship is funded by [Teachers Mutual Bank](#) and the Public Education Foundation. Teachers Mutual Bank is a member-owned bank founded to serve people working in education, and it has supported public education in Australia for decades. The Public Education Foundation exists to back the students, teachers and school leaders of the public system. Both organisations know that a principal who is given the time and space to think clearly about their leadership returns to their school with something their whole community benefits from. That is what this scholarship is for.

**Is this scholarship for you?** If you are a serving, school-based principal in an Australian government school with between three and 15 years in a substantive principal role, and you are committed to staying in public education, this scholarship is for you. If it does not fit your circumstances, PEF's [Eligibility Quiz](#) on PEF-Apply will match you to the scholarships that do.



## The Program

Recipients attend [Achieving Excellence: Leadership Development for Principals](#), a six-day residential institute at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Being a Principal means working through a seemingly endless run of urgent tasks, and that takes a toll on your resilience and your confidence. The program starts from a simple question: given those daily demands, how do you find the time and the space to picture a future for your school built on what you know excellence in education to be, and then build a plan to get there?

The institute is designed to give you room to step away from those daily challenges, look closely at your values as an educator and turn them into a concrete plan for your school community. It brings together new and experienced Principals from around the world, so much of the value comes from the conversations you have with peers who are wrestling with the same things.

Over the six days you will:

- examine leadership frameworks and build skills for leading highly effective schools and teams
- learn practical strategies for building a positive school culture and communicating well with your community
- deepen your understanding of the instructional core, and how to support and grow the teachers you have
- explore the science of trauma and resilience, and what it takes to create a school environment that supports students and adults alike
- think about the role families and communities play in education, and how to bring them into the work

You will bring a real problem of practice with you and take part in a consultancy exercise built around it, working in small groups with experienced principal facilitators and Harvard faculty. The intention is that you leave with an approach you can put into practice at your own school, and with a set of peer connections that outlast the week.

## Eligibility Criteria

To apply for the Principals Scholarship you must:

- be a current principal in an Australian government primary or secondary school
- currently be school based
- have served as a substantive principal for between three and 15 years
- commit to continuing as a principal in the government school system for at least five more years
- be willing to share your learnings widely through formal and informal channels, including conferences, social media and professional networks
- be willing to act as an ambassador for the Public Education Foundation and Teachers Mutual Bank on your return, including through media, conferences and social media

Please also note:

- eligibility criteria apply strictly. Principals who have served for less than three years or more than 15 years in a substantive role will not be considered
- you are responsible for obtaining the consent of your employer before accepting the scholarship and undertaking the travel
- previous applicants are welcome to apply again, provided they still meet the eligibility criteria
- you are not required to take up your scholarship in the first year
- you can hold only one Public Education Foundation scholarship at a time
- before applying, please read [PEF's Teachers, Principals and Executives Terms and Conditions](#)



## Selection Process

A selection panel reviews all applications against the selection criteria. The panel includes representatives of the Public Education Foundation and Teachers Mutual Bank, and a serving public school principal. The panel may invite several applicants to interview before making its final decision.

After considering all applications, the panel makes its recommendations to the Board of the Public Education Foundation for approval. All applicants are notified of the outcome once the Board has considered the panel's recommendations.

Applicants are assessed on:

- evidence of significant ability as a school leader, commitment to the values of public education and capacity for leadership into the future
- enthusiasm for furthering your own professional development and education
- an understanding of how the learnings from the course can be shared with colleagues through social media and professional networks
- other personal qualities and circumstances that would enhance your suitability for the scholarship

This scholarship is focused on the impact of public education in the community, meaning students, parents, teachers, other principals and the broader community. Please write your application with that wide audience in mind and avoid acronyms.



## Funding/Assistance

Each scholarship is valued at approximately \$15,000 and includes:

- all tuition fees for the residential program at the Harvard Graduate School of Education
- return airfares from your nearest capital city
- accommodation for the duration of the course
- travel insurance

Recipients book their own airfares and travel insurance and are then reimbursed the equivalent of a return airfare to Boston and travel insurance for the period of the course, up to an agreed amount.

Recipients are asked to provide a short written summary of the experience and how the learning is being applied on their return, along with photos or video where possible.



## Acceptable Use of Scholarship Funds

Recipients are responsible for their own:

- living expenses for the duration of the program
- airport transfers
- passport, visa and any associated costs
- any costs of travel beyond the course period

## Application Form

Before you start your application, it helps to have the following ready.

- Your details
  - contact details, years served as a government school principal
- Your school's details
  - total enrolment, student attendance rate, percentage of Indigenous students, percentage of EAL/D students, percentage of students with special needs, an outline of additional school funding
- Your written responses (maximum 250 words each)
  - about your school
  - challenges you have faced as a school leader
  - an achievement at your school that you are proud of
  - a personal statement about yourself, your commitment to public education and how this scholarship will contribute to the plans and goals for you and your school
  - how you would share your learning with your colleagues and community
- Attachments
  - a reference from the education sector, for example your supervisor or area director (maximum 400 words)
  - a reference from a community referee, for example your local Member of Parliament, local PCYC director or Rotary Club president (maximum 400 words)
  - a copy of your CV, including your educational qualifications, employment and teaching history, and any extra-curricular activities you have undertaken as part of your school duties or community roles (maximum two pages)



## How to Apply

Applications are made online through PEF-Apply, the Public Education Foundation's application portal.

- Go to PEF-Apply and create an account or log in if you have one
- Take the [Eligibility Quiz](#). It asks a short series of questions and then shows you every PEF scholarship you are eligible for, so you do not miss one that suits you
- Open the Principals Scholarship application and work through the form. Your answers save as you go, so you can come back to it

If you apply for more than one scholarship, your answers carry across to each scholarship you open. Answers stay with a single scholarship if you do not open the others, so it is worth opening all the applications you intend to submit early.

Give your two referees plenty of notice. Both references need to be attached before you can submit.



## Submitting Your Application

- Applications open: Monday 7 September 2026
- Applications close: 11:59 PM AEDT, Wednesday 27 January 2027

Once your application is complete, including both references and your CV, submit it through PEF-Apply. Check every section before you submit. Incomplete applications cannot be assessed, and late applications cannot be accepted.

## Further Information and Contact Details

If you have any questions about this scholarship or need help with your application, please get in touch. We are happy to talk it through.

- Email: [scholarships@publiceducationfoundation.org.au](mailto:scholarships@publiceducationfoundation.org.au)
- Phone: 02 7814 2806