Victorian Aspirant Principal Assessment

Sample of Practice Guide

This guide is designed to assist you to prepare and provide a Sample of Practice as part of your application to undertake the Victorian Aspirant Principal Assessment (VAPA).

On completion of your Self-Assessment, you will receive an email invitation to provide an annotated sample of your practice against selected Performance Indicators from the *VAPA Leadership Framework*.

The Sample of Practice will be assessed by experienced retired principals to determine whether you proceed to the VAPA or whether you require further development.

The Sample of Practice comprises:

- a short biography
- concise annotations against five Performance Indicators.

When you receive your email invitation to provide a Sample of Practice, you will be asked to submit your biography and annotations through an online form.

You will not receive a copy of the answers you provide in the online form. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you complete and save your answers in the Sample of Practice template, and then copy and paste your answers into the online form when you are ready to formally submit.

The Sample of Practice template and the online form are worded identically and both list the Performance Indicators you are required to annotate against.

Biography

Your biography should include a description of your current role and a brief outline of your career (a career map). This section of your Sample of Practice should be no more than 300 words in total.

The information you provide should help the assessor understand who you are, what you are currently doing, and the context in which you work. The career map section of your biography should be listed in dot points and record the key positions (including dates) you have held throughout your teaching career. Figure 1 provides an example of a biography.

I am currently the Assistant Principal of a medium-sized suburban secondary school. I have been in this role for two years after gaining experience in the same role at a small inner suburban secondary school. My main role is to oversee curriculum and pedagogy, and to work with team leaders to measure the impact of instruction.

I have recently undertaken a role in the University of Melbourne Network of Schools program to devise methods for tracking measurement growth for every student in a school. Additionally, I liaise with student teams to review the school's teaching and learning programs using methods that include student voice in the school improvement process.

Career map:

- 2016: University of Melbourne Network of Schools Success Coordinator – implemented a network-focused approach to schoolwide improvement
- 2016: Assistant Principal (ongoing) – medium sized suburban school with two assistant principals
- 2015: Completed Master of Instructional Leadership, University of Melbourne
- 2014–2016: Assistant Principal – small inner suburban school with 250 students
- 2012–2014: Leading Teacher – supervised 15 faculty members with a focus on implementing a schoolwide collaborative team approach to school improvement initiatives (structural change to system)
- 2010–2012: Head of Department – supervised eight faculty members of the maths department to implement a peer observation program
- 2002–2004: Year Level Coordinator (Year 8) – liaised with six pastoral care leaders and the administration team to manage the communication of schoolwide goals for students' pastoral care
- 1995–2001: Maths teacher – taught Years 7–10 mathematics

Words: 240 (max. 300)

Figure 1: An example of a short biography

Annotations

As well as your short biography, you will be asked to provide annotations against five Performance Indicators from the *VAPA Leadership Framework*. These annotations form your Sample of Practice and should be concise, self-reflective examples that follow the Situation-Action-Outcome (SAO) method to show evidence of your current competence.

The Sample of Practice template provides the Levels of Proficiency you are required to address for each Performance Indicator to help you self-reflect and gauge the type of behavioural indicators the assessors are looking for.

You can use up to 300 words to annotate against each Performance Indicator, with up to 100 words to describe the situation, 100 words to describe your action(s), and the remaining 100 words to describe the outcome. Table 1 provides an overview of the SAO method.

Table 1 includes some useful prompts and questions that you should be asking yourself to help you write your Sample of Practice. You may be familiar with SAO from applying for teaching and leadership positions, or perhaps you have used a similar method known as Situation-Task-Action-Result (STAR). Although SAO and STAR are not dissimilar, we recommend using the SAO method for VAPA to provide a more succinct and compact framework for your Sample of Practice and to align with interview techniques used by Principal Selection Panels.

SAO	Description	Key prompts and questions
Situation	The situation you were faced with – be sure to describe where and when the situation took place.	• Describe a situation when … • What led to the situation? • Who was involved? • What was the problem? • What caused you to …? • What were the circumstances surrounding …?
Action	The action(s) you took to address the situation – describe what you did and (importantly) how you did it.	• What strategies did you use to achieve your goal? • Why did you decide on that course of action? • Were there any obstacles? • How did you overcome them? • How did you react? • Describe how you did that. • What did you say?
Outcome	The outcome of your actions – describe what result or impact your action had on the situation.	• What was the outcome? • What happened in the end? • What would you do differently next time? • How did it work out? • What feedback did you receive?

Table 1: The Situation-Action-Outcome method

Table 1 contains a long list of key questions. Although it may seem quicker and easier to answer these questions as dot points in your response, we would encourage you to avoid this approach. Instead, we recommend you write in prose to ensure your Sample of Practice is a compelling narrative of your first-hand experience revealing the core issues you faced and the steps you took to resolve them.

When you apply the SAO method to write your Sample of Practice, review your wording between each step to check for consistency and flow. Table 2 provides an example of the SAO method applied to *VAPA Performance Indicator 1.2*.

Sample of Practice	
Performance Indicator	**Annotations**
Please provide an example of a time when you gathered evidence/data on teaching and learning within the school. (VAPA 1.2) In the *VAPA Leadership Framework*, the Levels of Proficiency for this Performance Indicator are: 1. Identifies existing evidence/data sources 2. Seeks both formal and informal sources of evidence/data 3. Evaluates the quality of evidence/data	*What was the **situation** that you were faced with?* Before my appointment, the College had started a two-year curriculum design journey with an external consultant. After much time and money there was confusion among staff and little consistently documented curriculum. Teachers had documented the Australian Curriculum, but we needed to be ready for the Victorian Curriculum (VC), which was more significant for some learning areas than others. Words: 58 (max 100 words)
	*What **action** did you take to address the situation?* To address this situation, I collaborated with Leading Teachers and undertook PD relating to the VC to form a clear understanding of where the College needed to be for compliance and best practice. I organised VC PD sessions for key learning area teams and led discussions to collaboratively reach decisions on templates such as Unit Plan. I led staff PD to show how teachers could use existing work and not have to start again. I clearly communicated expectations for consistency of the documentation and assessment, as well as storage/publication, culminating in a viable documented curriculum for the College. Words: 98 (max 100 words)
	*What was the **outcome** of your action?* As a result, the College curriculum I developed is based on the VC, with documented and published scope and sequence, unit plans, Common Assessment Tasks and assessment rubrics using a consistent assessment scale. We are now focusing on the quality of the assessment rubrics and preparing for a review of our assessment scale. Words: 53 (max 100 words)

Table 2: An example of a Sample of Practice

Rules of evidence

Before submitting your Sample of Practice using the online form, you will be asked to declare that the information you have provided is true and accurate, and that you understand providing false or misleading information is grounds for exclusion from the VAPA. To ensure the information you provide is true and accurate, your evidence must be trustworthy, accurate and verifiable.

What do we mean by evidence? Although you will not be submitting artefacts for this application, please note that artefacts will be part of the VAPA. In the context of the Sample of Practice, evidence is your attestation that what you are saying did happen. Attesting to something is evidence of itself. Moreover, applying the rules of evidence to your Sample of Practice will strengthen the quality of your annotations. This is one of the mechanisms we use to assure the integrity of the VAPA process.