

Principal Residency Certification:

Things to Consider When Choosing a Principal Certification Program

The institutions listed below (in alphabetical order) have been approved by the Washington State Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) to offer a program that leads directly to a Washington State Residency Certificate for principals. If you are interested in entering the principalship, AWSP encourages you to earn your certificate through one of these institutions:

Central Washington University
City University of Seattle
Eastern Washington University
Gonzaga University
Heritage University
Pacific Lutheran University
Saint Martin's University
Seattle Pacific University
Seattle University
University of Washington-Bothell
University of Washington-Seattle
University of Washington-Tacoma
Washington State University-sites include Spokane, Tri-cities, Vancouver and Wenatchee
Western Washington University
Whitworth University

Most institutions listed above offer their residency certificate program at numerous satellite locations around the region. Some institutions offer online courses and at least one university offers a complete online program.

All PESB-approved preparation programs share the following characteristics:

1. Meets PESB and legislative standards specifically designed to address the needs of Washington school principals.
2. Is regularly monitored and evaluated by the PESB.
3. Recruits faculty who have extensive experience as P-12 school administrators in Washington state.
4. Is required to maintain an advisory council of P-12 practitioners and must respond to recommendations made by those practitioners.

Additionally, AWSP staff members meet regularly with directors of these programs to discuss program content, concerns and issues of mutual interest.

Additional things to consider:

When choosing the institution where you will pursue your Washington State Residency Certificate for principals, AWSP encourages you to ask several important questions. This is especially critical if you choose to pursue your residency certificate through a university or college *not* on the list approved by the PESB, whether it be online or in a traditional brick-and-mortar institution. As there are clear advantages to online degree and certificate programs, there are likewise cautions.

Questions you should ask out-of-state programs include:

1. Is this program approved for certification purposes by a state other than Washington?
 - a. If so, you may be able to obtain a Washington certificate via interstate reciprocity rules, but your application will be processed as an out-of-state candidate, and you will not be eligible for the state-funded internship grant.
 - b. If the specific program is *not* approved for certification purposes in another state, you will not be able to obtain a Washington principal certificate, nor be eligible for the state-funded internship grant. Many online educational administration programs lead to degrees but not to certification.
2. Is this program operated by an institution of higher education with regional accreditation?
3. Is this program approved by the Washington Higher Education Coordinating Board? (HECB approval is not necessarily required for online programs but does provide some basic quality assurances.)
4. Has this program been authorized by the PESB to place candidates in Washington schools for field experiences? While out-of-state programs can place candidates without having this status, school districts are increasingly becoming reluctant to offer placements for institutions that have not been authorized. NOTE: PESB “authorization” is *not* the same as PESB “approval” – “authorized” means programs have agreed to follow certain guidelines in placing intern candidates, but it does not involve the same degree of oversight and regulation as PESB “approval.”
5. What are the requirements of the internship in your program? (Among the requirements for programs approved by the PESB is an internship lasting at least 540 hours, with at least half of those hours completed when staff and/or students are present.)
6. To what degree will this program give me an understanding of issues, rules and procedures necessary for principals serving in Washington schools?

Questions you should ask of all programs you are considering:

1. Who will provide the guidance and supervision during my internship? What type of supervision will they provide? (In programs approved by the PESB, a university supervisor will provide on-site supervision and guidance. Additionally, the university supervisor will work with your building principal/mentor principal.)
2. How are the requirements of the program and internship expectations aligned with the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards?
3. What is the Washington state placement rate of graduates of your program?

You may also wish to ask some questions of your district and colleagues, including:

1. How does your district's superintendent or human resources department (or other districts in which you may wish to serve as principal) feel about a program taken through this institution?
2. Do you know any administrators who have gone through this program or are familiar with it? What advice do they have?

Some other points to consider in your search:

1. When it comes to professional training and certification, less is generally not better.
2. In order to be eligible to apply for the Washington State Principal Internship Grant, applicants must be enrolled in a program that has been approved by the PESB (see list above).

AWSP applauds your consideration of a career in school administration. For further assistance, we invite you to explore our website (www.awsp.org) or call our office at 800.562.6100.