

Preparing for CEO Programme – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. Who is the Preparing for CEO Programme for?

Experienced Further Education and Skills leaders who are looking to step up to the role of CEO in the next 1-2 years.

2. What is the purpose of the programme?

Funded by the Department for Education, the programme is designed to strengthen strategic leadership across the FE and Skills sector.

3. What is the application process?

- Applications are open for one month closing 4th July 2026 and should be submitted via the embedded form on the Preparing for CEO Programme webpage and a letter of recommendation from your CEO sent alongside your application to leadership@etfoundation.co.uk.
- A joint panel from the Education and Training Foundation (ETF) and Oxford Saïd Business School will assess applications.
- Applicants will be notified in July.

4. What happens if I'm accepted onto the programme?

- You will be invited to formally book your place and pay the programme fee of £1,000.
- In September, you will be contacted by GatenbySanderson, who will guide you through the development centre component of the programme.

5. Is financial support available?

Yes. A limited number of fully funded places are available for those who meet the criteria outlined in the application form.

6. When and where is the residential?

- The residential module will take place on 26th -30th January 2026 at Oxford Saïd Business School.
- This is a core, in-person component of the programme and must be attended in full.

7. What are the expectations for the residential?

- Full attendance is mandatory.
- Participants are expected to fully engage and not schedule other commitments during the week.
- Accommodation and meals are included in the programme fee.
- Travel to Oxford is not included and must be arranged by participants.

8. What is the GatenbySanderson Development Centre?

This is the preparatory phase of the programme, focused on self-assessment and coaching.

9. What are the ETF Professional Standards?

These standards provide a framework for effective leadership in the FE sector. They underpin the entire programme and are used to shape the feedback and development planning during the GatenbySanderson process.