

Supporting school leaders to improve education



Building capacity.
Strengthening systems.
Improving outcomes for children.

Too much advice. Not enough impact?

School leaders today are navigating unprecedented complexity. Accountability is high. Capacity is stretched. Expectations continue to grow.

At the same time, the quality of external support available across the system can be inconsistent. Advice varies. Approaches differ. Impact is not always clear.

This creates a real challenge:
How do you ensure that the support you receive, work alongside, or provide within your system, genuinely improves outcomes for children?



This matters.

The quality of support to a school influences the quality of leadership within it. And leadership is the single most important factor in improving outcomes for children. Increasingly, school leaders are not only recipients of support, but also contributors to system-wide improvement, working alongside others to share expertise and strengthen practice.

Yet many leaders are working within systems where:

- External advice is not always consistent or evidence-informed
- There is no shared standard for what “high-quality support” looks like
- Time and resource invested without securing meaningful impact.

This is not sustainable. Schools need access to credible, high-quality support. With a clear understanding of what effective practice looks like, to ensure improvement is meaningful and sustained.

The AoEA Approach

The Association of Education Advisers® (AoEA®) exists to raise the quality of support available to schools and trusts (in England)

We do this by:



Setting the standard

Our International Quality Standard for Education Advisers® (IQSEA®) defines what high-quality advisory practice looks like — ensuring that those supporting schools are credible, skilled, and impactful.



Building capacity

Through professional learning and accreditation, we support leaders and advisers to deepen their expertise and improve their effectiveness.



Connecting the system

We bring together a national and international community of system leaders, advisers, and education professionals to share practice, challenge thinking, and drive improvement.

What This Means for You

By engaging with AoEA, you can:

- Access and work with **high-quality, credible advisers**
- Strengthen the capacity of your **leadership team**
- Develop a clearer understanding of **what effective advisory practice looks like**
- Strengthen your ability to engage in and contribute to **system-wide improvement**
- Be part of a **trusted professional network** focused on impact

Associate Level

INTERNATIONAL
QUALITY STANDARD
FOR
**EDUCATION
ADVISERS**

An associate member would be expected to demonstrate the ability to intervene successfully in identifying and tackling school improvement causal factors, demonstrate a wide sphere of influence in a variety of organisations more widely than their own place of work.

Three core areas underpin the associate assessment:

Advisory Skills



Candidates will be required to demonstrate that they have a wide and up-to-date knowledge of educational issues, the skills required to use their knowledge and experience to support improvement and a track record of professional success.

School Improvement



A high-quality education adviser must possess the understanding and skills to have a positive impact on school improvement. Fundamentally, they must understand the causal factors that contribute to a school's performance and be able to work in concert with the school's leadership to achieve change and improvement.

Governance



An education adviser is required to have the necessary knowledge, skills and experience that allows them to effectively support and challenge the governance of an educational organisation regarding corporate oversight and impact on the development of the organisation.

Senior Associate Level

A senior associate requires sophisticated knowledge and skills to address system-wide and deep-rooted issues in groups of schools or organisations.

This will require evidence of knowledge in these three areas:



Organisational Development

To support leadership and the organisation in understanding their need and capacity to develop within a constantly evolving environment. A planned, systemic approach to improving organisational effectiveness – one that aligns planning, people and performance. Examining how to achieve the desired goals of high performance and competitive advantage through the involvement of people.



Change Management

Change can be viewed as an external threat and an opportunity. An organisation may also have strengths and weaknesses regarding its capacity to respond to change. The role of the change adviser is to support leadership and the organisational capacity to cope with the drivers which promote change.



Quality Systems

This programme focuses on quality management support, as well as systems leadership development. We expect the Senior Associate to have high level skills and knowledge of how organisations are transformed. New techniques and tools will be introduced during the programme

The Associate Accreditation Pathway

Application

Provide information on your professional experience

Complete a self-assessment against our criteria

Provide two referees

Complete our Phase 1 Evaluation

Professional Discussion

Discuss your professional background and experience with two of our assessors.

Online via Teams for 45-60 minutes

Seminar

Deepen your understanding of our criteria

Develop your portfolio ideas

Online via Teams or F2F for larger groups

Portfolio

Provide more evidence about your experiences in two case studies (3000 words in total) linked to our criteria

Complete Phase 2 Evaluation

Accreditation



Post Accreditation

0-9 months
Be an active member of our community

9 months
Complete Phase 3 Evaluation

The Senior Associate Accreditation Pathway

Self-Assessment

Provide a statement of your experience and self-assessment based on the 20 senior associate criteria.

Seminar

Seminars supported by optional development programmes covering change management, organisational development and quality systems.

Viva

Scripted presentation based on the senior associate criteria followed by panel interview and discussion.

Senior Accreditation



Our Impact in 8 Years



ACCREDITATION – BUILDING CREDIBILITY

1000+

- 972 case studies of school improvement and governance practice
- 44 vivas on organisational development, change management and quality systems

600+

- 600+ associate applicants engaged with the process
- 486 fully accredited

60+

- 65 senior associate applicants engaged with the process
- 46 fully accredited

We expanded across England, Northern Ireland, and Wales, and deepened international connections with the USA, Dubai, and Cyprus.

Sectors

Schools and Trusts

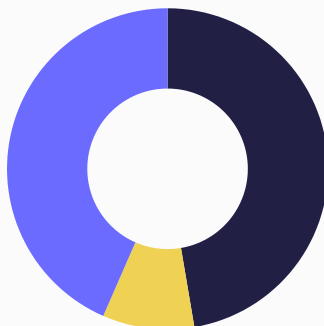
47.3%

Local Authority

43.4%

Independent Advisers

9.2%



Expertly tailored for

Senior leaders across all school settings engaged in school-to-school support and system-wide improvement

"The AoEA is a diverse network of educational professionals who provide support and challenge. In putting together a portfolio, I was able to reflect in a systematic way about how my professional experience fits into a much broader educational framework, and also how it might be relevant to other educational leaders. The training sessions are both structured and convivial, and the viva was enjoyable."

Helen Pike, Master of Magdalen College, Oxford

"Undertaking this course created space to meet with like-minded professionals undertaking similar roles, under similar constraints. The common goal for all is to embrace school improvement and be a champion for young people and the profession as a whole."

Niall Oliver, Principal, Dunclug College

"Relationships are the key to success; as is establishing effective communication. The completion of the assessment portfolio with the AoEA enabled me to reflect deeply on the improvements and changes that I made across different settings, and the impact this had on a personal and organisational level. I acknowledged the things I would change and the aspects I was proud of achieving. The work with the AoEA gave me the courage to deliver a presentation for the organisation, as through the projects completed, I was assured that my work was meaningful, impactful and research driven. I was pleased to see that my work had resonated with others, showing that I should have confidence in the approaches I took and be proud of the impact I had had in those settings."

**Lindsay Robertson, Headteacher
Willow Wood Community Primary School**

"We embarked on the accreditation process as a tool to recognise the skill and expertise of our school improvement staff. Staff enjoyed the opportunity to reflect on their individual work and how they have contributed to improvements. The kudos that comes from an external accreditation and the investment in their professional development has been welcomed by staff."

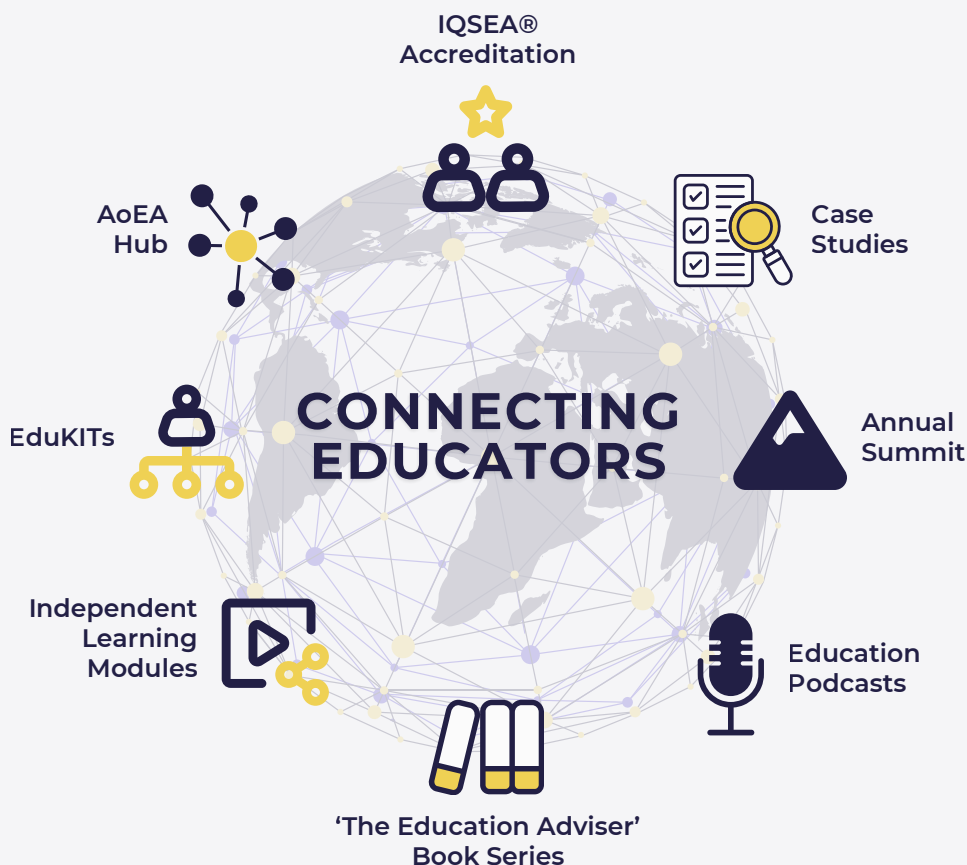
**Clara Seery, Director of Education,
Ivy Learning Trust**

Growing the Community



We knew that a standard alone would not raise quality at scale. Advisers need continuous learning, reflection, and professional dialogue.

This led to the creation of a rich professional learning programme built around the standard. Learning that is reflective, evidence-informed, and grounded in real contexts. In short, we built a learning ecosystem around the standard.



National Partners



"I commend the Association of Education Advisers for establishing this vital accreditation program for school improvement advisors working in the education system." (L. Earl Franks, Executive Director, NAESP)



"Nothing matters more than the quality of teaching and learning that our young people receive. Having agreed standards underpinned by robust accreditation is so vital for all consultants and advisers who support and enable school improvement." (Pepe Di'lasio, General Secretary, ASCL)



"We fully support the AoEA mission to raise the quality of support and advice that our schools and colleges receive. Ensuring that advisers and consultants are trained in how best to operate with colleges is an important ambition which we believe is of major importance." (David Hughes CBE, CEO, AoC)



"The ongoing CPD, accreditation and quality assurance of those providing school improvement services is incredibly reassuring for schools and trusts procuring services. Those supporting will have a proven track record in making a difference." (Emma Balchin, Chief Executive, NGA)



"Those who have been through AoEA Associate accreditation and have graduated have valued the experience and are proud of the achievement of gaining Associate status. The accreditation process is seen as independent, robust and rigorous." (Kevin Palmer, Welsh Government)

Our Professional Learning Offer

Our professional learning opportunities are related to our International Quality Standard and related to our Associate and Senior Associate criteria.

Our courses are designed to highlight specific skills which are necessary for school improvement in schools. They are a blend of full-day and half-day sessions, which can be conveniently delivered online or in-person. The most sought-after courses have pre-scheduled dates throughout the year online. For group bookings, we offer a flexible one-off cost based on the number of participants.

PROVIDING COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT FOR ALL



EDUKITS

Educational Keeping in Touch meetings (EduKITS) are for our members to listen to our own associates and world class speakers, share knowledge and best practice whilst also providing a forum for peer discussion & support. They occur monthly on Tuesday's between 4pm-5pm.

2025-2026
EDUKIT
SPEAKERS



Narinder Gill
One Year On: The
Call to Educators



Lindsay Robertson
Restoring Order
and Building Trust



Emma Jackson-Phillips
Building Adaptive
Capacity



AoEA
Book Launch -
Advising on
Organisational
Development



Dr Michelle Rainey
Improving Pupil
Outcomes



Lou DeLoreto
Transforming
School Systems for
Every Student

Held monthly on
Tuesday's from 4pm-
5pm

INDEPENDENT LEARNING MODULES

Our independent learning modules offer access to online videos and a learning resource in each of the AoEA® skill areas. Associates can access these and tailor them to support their own advisory work or use them for their own further professional learning.

Preparing for the Associate Portfolio Submission

Independent Learning Module

A O ASSOCIATION
E A of EDUCATION
ADVISERS



A O ASSOCIATION
E A of EDUCATION
ADVISERS

COURSES AVAILABLE

ADVISORY SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

- Building and Supporting Effective Partnerships / Collaborations
- Coaching Level 1: An Introduction to Coaching - What, How, Who, When and Where?
- Coaching Level 2: Applied Coaching for Advisers and Leaders
- Coaching Level 3: Advanced Coaching for Advisers and Leaders: From Individual to a Team Approach
- Coaching Level 4: Advanced Coaching for Advisers and Leaders: 'Culture eats strategy for breakfast'
- Coaching Level 5: Introducing a Coaching System
- How to Demonstrate Your Professional Credibility as an Adviser, parts 1 and 2

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

- Adviser Efficacy: Evaluating our Contribution to School Improvement
- Approaches to Effective Report Writing, parts 1 and 2
- Compassionate Curriculum for Thriving Communities: An Opportunity to Reconnect with our Vision for Learning
- Working in Concert with the School's Leadership Team

GOVERNANCE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

- How to Review, Evaluate, and Support the Effectiveness of Governance

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Assessing the Context for Organisational Improvement
- Effective Leadership of Curriculum and Assessment
- Evaluating the Impact of Curriculum on Pupils' Learning and Standards of Work
- Supporting Integrated Curriculum Financial Planning
- Using an Organisational Development Approach to School Improvement

CHANGE MANAGEMENT

- Supporting the Management of Change

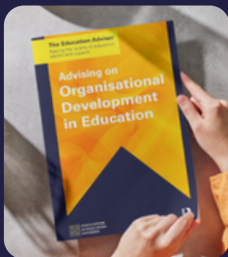
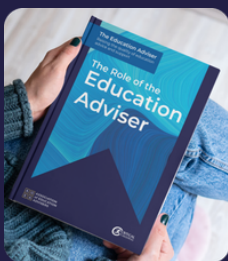
QUALITY SYSTEMS

- Using a Quality Systems Approach to School Improvement



“With its array of insightful authors sharing experience and offering advice,
**the ultimate benefit will
be to pupils in schools.”**

–Professor Mick Waters



Coming soon!

Coming soon!

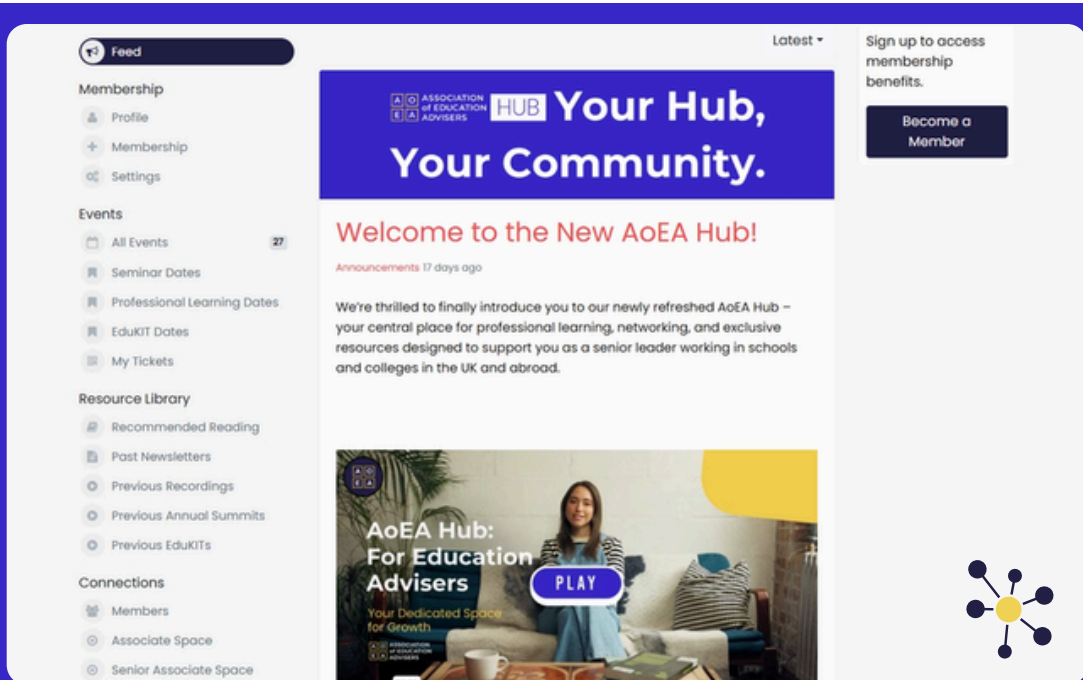
The Education Adviser series is a collection of six books designed to empower education professionals with the knowledge and skills necessary to drive meaningful change in schools and educational institutions. This series, meticulously curated and aligned with the AoEA® accreditation and professional learning programme, serves as a comprehensive guide for aspiring and practicing education advisers.

Order online to be delivered to your home or organisation!
Follow the link or QR code.



aoea.co.uk/book-series

The AoEA Hub is one of our newer member benefits. Particularly for anyone working in education seeking comprehensive support, professional growth, and community connection. The AoEA Hub provides seamless access to resources that enhance your advisory skills and knowledge. Members can quickly RSVP to EduKITs, professional learning courses, and seminars from the platform, ensuring they stay informed and engaged with the latest insights.



The Resource Library is another key feature of the AoEA Hub, offering a repository of past EduKIT and Annual Summit recordings, as well as newsletters and educational materials. For those looking to collaborate, the Hub's private spaces for Associates and Senior Associates enable a safe space for professional dialogue and networking. With direct messaging and an intuitive interface, the AoEA Hub is designed to streamline your experience, making it easier than ever to connect, learn, and thrive as part of the AoEA community.

Learn more: hub.aoea.co.uk/

Join a professional community committed to improving education.

Strengthen your leadership, build capacity across your organisation, and access high-quality, credible support to drive improvement.



- Explore how AoEA can support your school
- Engage with professional learning
- Connect with a network of peers



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