

Essay outline and structure

Below is one possible structure for your essay. The nature of the self-study allows some flexibility in the specific structure although the elements identified below must be included.

Section	Content	Estimated words
Introduction: Focus of self-study	<p>a) State the specific focus of your self-study and explain why. <i>Your focus may be quite general and aim to consider ‘who am I as a leader and how did I become like this?’ or ‘so, what kind of leader am I and why?’. You might wish to focus on a particular issue that is troubling you or is of specific interest to you, such as issues of gender in educational leadership or specific issues/aspects of leadership in your current context such as the process of facilitating professional development and reviews. Your focus might ask questions such as ‘what am I doing and why am I doing it in this way?’. Keep in mind that your self-study is about you – your practice, actions, beliefs, assumptions and values – so you must be a central point of the focus. You will have the opportunity to discuss your focus with peers and tutor.</i></p> <p>b) Provide relevant and pertinent information about your professional context and professional and relevant personal history. Include any specific details about role/responsibilities etc.</p>	500 words
Main body: critical discussion of who you are as a leader, your assumptions, beliefs, values and knowledge about educational leadership and policy.	<p>The self-study: your leadership story</p> <p>You might wish to view this section as your ‘leadership story’, although it is important to note that this is not a descriptive narrative of your experience to date. You are critically interrogating who you are/are becoming as a leader and exposing/challenging/discussing your own assumptions, beliefs and values about educational leadership and being a leader.</p> <p>You will need to consider issues relating to theories of educational leadership with a focus on issues pertinent to the ‘middle leader’. You will be writing about your developing understandings of educational leadership, the importance of context, policy influences and what leadership means for you in your context. You will be presenting a critical discussion of these and this should weave together with your reflections about self and practice. The self-study affords you the opportunity to</p>	2500-3000 (including the visual representation if in main body)

	<p>step back and consider the 'state-of-the-actual'; discussing your own assumptions, beliefs and values in relation to the literature. You are thinking about who you are as a leader and perhaps negotiating some of the conflicts, contradictions, tensions and challenges involved – who you want to be is perhaps different from who you are right now or who others want you to be as a leader.</p> <p>Remember that your critical discussion should always keep in mind the specific focus of your self-study, as identified in the first section.</p> <p>In order to conduct your self-study you will need to engage in systematic data collection and analysis to interrogate practice. This will involve the creation and analysis of visual representations and 360° evaluations as well as any other relevant data gathered such as observations/documentation of your own practice.</p> <p>Visual representation: you should include and discuss the visual representation of you as a leader you created as part of the course. You should explain the visual and discuss what this means in relation to literature about educational leadership. A photograph/image included in the main body of the text could count as 300-500 words. It should be included as part of the main text if it is necessary for the reader to see the image whilst reading the text and therefore not disrupting the flow by requiring the reader to turn to appendices. However it is also appropriate to include the visual representation as an appendix if it is easier for the reader to access and read the image.</p> <p>360° Evaluation: you should discuss the key issues emerging from your 360° evaluation. You will reflect critically on how others perceive you and discuss this in relation to your own assumptions and beliefs as well as the literature. The collated data and full analysis should be in appendix – only key issues are raised and discussed in the main body.</p> <p>Other evidence: there may be other forms of data that will help provide you with insights into your own practice and/or assumptions about leadership. Any evidence you collect and analyse should be included as an appendix and the key issues raised and discussed in the main body of the essay. Only include what is absolutely relevant and pertinent to the focus of your study.</p>	
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<p>Conclusion: Where now?</p>	<p>This final section should draw together your discussion and critical reflection of self. You should consider your next steps as a leader – where now?</p> <p>You should discuss what kind of leader you wish to be/what changes or developments you wish/need to make in the light of doing this self-study. You could use visual representation to illustrate and discuss this – perhaps drawing on metaphors or image.</p> <p>You may also consider in this section issues relating to educational leadership for what purposes with a more specific focus on your own context.</p>	<p>500 words</p>