

National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH)

Application Guidance
(To be read by both applicants and sponsors)

August 2017

Table of Contents

- 1. INTRODUCTION 3
- 2. ABOUT THE NEW NPQH..... 3
- 3. GENERAL GUIDANCE - HOW TO APPLY..... 7
- Appendix 1 More Detailed Guidance 8
- Appendix 2 NPQH Content Areas10
- Appendix 3: NPQH Leadership Behaviours.....16

1. INTRODUCTION

Dear applicant,

Thank you for the interest you have shown in applying to join the National Professional Qualification for Headship. Leading Schools South West looks forward to working with you and this application process is an important part of the programme itself. In completing this form, you will need to work closely with the person who is to be your sponsor. Your sponsor should be your Headteacher, Principal or the person who has line management responsibility for you. It is their role to assist you in completing this application and to support your development as a school leader.

The application to join the NPQH is, in itself, a rigorous process and consists of five sections:

- Registration details and declaration;
- Self-assessment against the six NPQH content areas;
- Sponsor assessment of the applicant against the seven NPQH leadership behaviours;
- A reflective piece of writing on a school improvement or change management project which the applicant has led;
- The applicant's curriculum vitae.

Information from this application process will also be used throughout the programme and, particularly at its conclusion to evaluate the development of the applicants' leadership skills and readiness for Headship. LSSW would ask you to take great care when assessing your current level of knowledge, understanding and experience so that facilitators can best shape their provision to meet applicants' needs.

2. ABOUT THE NEW NPQH

The National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) is designed for those who are already a Headteacher, or are aspiring to become, a Headteacher or Head of School with responsibility for leading a school or Deputy Headteacher

Successful applicants must be highly motivated to become a Headteacher, no more than 12 to 18 months from applying for Headship posts, and, if not already in post, ready to take up a Headship as soon as they graduate.

NPQH will give you the confidence, skills and professional knowledge you need to deliver the best for pupils and all members of the school community in your first Headship post.

NPQH

- takes account of your professional development needs, prior learning and achievements.
- improves and develops further your strategic leadership expertise.
- develops key leadership and management skills.
- provides opportunities to work in different educational contexts.
- gives you the confidence and competence to take up your first headship so you will make a positive impact on your school, and on the lives of children, young people and their families.

The Levels and Qualifications Framework

The Levels and Qualifications Framework ensures that the reformed NPQs provide a coherent suite of professional development opportunities for aspirant and serving leaders at all levels of leadership within the school system.

The new NPQs are a set of four qualifications covering four levels:

Qualification	Level	Target audience
National Professional Qualification for Middle Leadership (NPQML)	Leading a team	Those who are, or are aspiring to become, a middle leader with responsibility for leading a team e.g. a key stage leader, a curriculum area leader, a pastoral services leader, a subject leader, a special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO), or a head of department. This includes those who are, or are aspiring to be, a middle leader with cross-school responsibilities e.g. a Specialist Leader of Education (SLE).
National Professional Qualification for Senior Leadership (NPQSL)	Leading across a school	Those who are, or are aspiring to become, a senior leader with cross-school responsibilities e.g. an experienced middle leader, an Assistant Headteacher, or other senior staff. This includes those who are, or are aspiring to be, a senior leader with cross-school responsibilities e.g. a Director of a Teaching School Alliance (TSA).
National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH)	Leading a school	Those who are, or are aspiring to become, a Headteacher, Head of School, with cross-school responsibilities e.g. a National Leader of Education (NLE).
National Professional Qualification for Executive Leadership (NPQEL)	Leading across several schools	Those who are, or are aspiring to become, an Executive Headteacher or CEO of a MAT with responsibility for leading across several schools

Content Areas

There are six content areas for NPQH, which set out what a leader should know or be able to do. The six content areas are common to each NPQ level, but the knowledge and skills within them increases in sophistication, depth and breadth progressively through the qualification levels. They are:

- Strategy and Improvement
- Teaching and Curriculum Excellence
- Leading with Impact
- Working in Partnership
- Managing Resources and Risks
- Increasing Capability

Each content area contains a series of 'Learn how to' and 'Learn about' statements linked to specific assessment criteria. Leading Schools South West has developed provision that covers all of the knowledge and skills in the 'Learn how to' section and has commissioned NPQonline to provide courses to cover the 'Learn about' section, for the NPQH. A participant's knowledge and skills will then be assessed through the corresponding assessment tasks, covered below. Further information on the NPQH content area is available at [Appendix 1](#).

Leadership Behaviours

There are seven leadership behaviours, common to each NPQ level, which set out how the best leaders operate.

They are:

- Commitment
- Collaboration
- Personal Drive
- Resilience
- Awareness
- Integrity
- Respect

LSSW will help evaluate a participant's strength against each of the behaviours at the beginning of the programme through a 360° diagnostic and will support the participant to develop these behaviours throughout the course.

The Qualification

LSSW's NPQH training is designed as a blended learning experience, consisting of face-to-face sessions, short on-line courses (including independent research and development) and the application of leadership learning through school-based improvement projects. This will involve leading a change programme in the candidate's own school and designing an action plan to address a placement school's current or projected resource and capability challenges ([see table over](#)). Participants should be supported in their own school by the sponsor who supported the application to join the qualification.

Through a partnership with the University of St Mark and St John in Plymouth, participants will have the opportunity to use the NPQH to contribute to a Masters in Educational Leadership. The University has agreed that the NPQH is worth 60 credits toward a Masters degree through the Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL).

Progress will be tracked against key milestones to assist participants in meeting the full requirements of the course and achieving the NPQH. An On-line Tutor will track progress

and provide an important point of reference for support and guidance throughout the qualification.

Assessment Criteria

For each content area, there are corresponding assessment criteria setting out the standards against which participants will be assessed. These are listed by content area and by assessment task in [Appendix 2](#). LSSW will assess against the NPQH assessment criteria, through a series of defined assessment tasks using the mark scheme provided by the DfE. Participants will be expected to draw on the relevant bodies of research or examples that relate to the nature of their two projects.

NPQH Assessment Tasks Description

Project Theme

1.	Leading a whole-school change programme (4,000 words)
2.	Designing an action plan to meet a placement school's resourcing and capability needs (2,500 words)

Content Areas Assessed

Project 1 (own school)	Project 2 (Placement School)
Strategy and Improvement	Managing Resources and Risks
Teaching and Curriculum Excellence	Increasing Capability
Leading with Impact	
Working in Partnership	

Task 1 – Participants must:

- Lead a change programme at whole-school level, lasting at least 2 terms, to improve pupil progress and attainment.
- Present the plan to the governing board prior to implementation, and gather feedback.
- Submit a written account of the project, which aims to evidence the criteria indicated. This should cover the design, implementation and evaluation of the project.
- Submit supporting evidence where indicated. Supporting evidence must be concise and directly related to the candidate's project and corresponding assessment criterion.
- Not exceed 4,000 words, excluding supporting documents or annexes.

Task 2 – Participants must:

- Undertake a placement in a contrasting school (for example, by performance, pupil profile, geography etc.). This project should last no more than nine working days in total, including research, planning et al.
- Research the placement school's current and/or projected resource and capability challenges, and design an action plan to address these.
- Present the plan to the placement school's governing board and gather feedback.
- Submit a written account of the project for assessment, which aims to evidence the criteria indicated.
- Submit supporting documents/material as evidence where indicated below. Supporting evidence must be concise and directly related to the candidate's project and corresponding assessment criterion.
- Not exceed a total word count of 2,500, excluding supporting documents or annexes.

3. GENERAL GUIDANCE - HOW TO APPLY

The application form should be completed by both applicant and sponsor and returned according to the instructions set out on the website. It is important that applicants adhere to the deadlines set out on the website.

The application form has five sections:

Section 1:	Registration details must be completed by the applicant and countersigned by the Sponsor/Finance Lead.
Section 2:	A self-assessment against the six NPQH content areas where applicants are asked to draw on their experience, ability and impact in each area, verified by the sponsor (Appendix 2)
Section 3:	An assessment by the sponsor and agreed with the applicant against the seven NPQH Leadership Behaviours (Appendix 3).
Section 4:	<p>A short piece of reflective writing. This involves the applicant reflecting on a significant school improvement or change management project which they have led. In doing this, applicants are asked to reflect upon:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• why was the project needed?• what did the applicant do?• what impact did the project have on student progress?• what was learnt about leadership?• how would the applicant act differently, next time? <p>There is a maximum word count of 750 for this reflection. The applicant's Sponsor is asked to verify the reflective writing.</p>
Section 5:	The applicant's Curriculum Vitae.

Appendix 1 More Detailed Guidance

Section 1

Registration

Complete the relevant registration sections with your personal and contact details. A declaration will need to be signed by both the applicant and the sponsor.

Section 2

Applicant's Self-Assessment against the six NPQH Content Areas

Applicants are asked to self-assess their experience, ability and impact in each of the six NPQH Content (see [Appendix 2](#)) areas using the following 4 point scale:

Self Assessment Scale against each NPQH Content Area	
Very little experience at whole school level	1
Developing knowledge and experience through membership of senior leadership team	2
Developing direct experience and responsibility to ensure impact on whole school improvement	3
Substantial experience, proven ability and impact on whole school improvement	4

Sponsors are asked to countersign the applicant's self-assessment to verify judgements.

Section 3

Sponsor assessment of applicant's against the seven NPQH Leadership Behaviours (see [Appendix 3](#))

Sponsors are asked to assess the applicant against each of the seven Leadership Behaviours using the following 4 point scale:

Sponsor Assessment of Applicant's Leadership Behaviours	
The applicant has not currently demonstrated this leadership behaviour	1
The applicant needs to focus on some aspects of this leadership behaviour in order to develop into an effective Headteacher	2
The applicant has many strengths with regards to this leadership behaviour, with some development needed to become an effective Headteacher	3
The applicant excels with regards to this leadership behaviour	4

Section 4

Reflective Statement

The applicant is asked to write reflectively on a significant school improvement or change management project, which they have led. In no more than 750 words applicant's should:

- Analyse and describe why the work was needed
- Set out what was done by the applicant
- Evaluate the impact of the change on student progress
- Assess the impact on their own Leadership Behaviour
- Reflect on what was learnt and describe what they would do differently next time.

Sponsors are asked to verify the reflective statement and write in support of the applicant's suitability to join the programme.

Section 5

Applicant's CV

Applicants should attach a copy of an up to date curriculum vitae, detailing posts held and qualifications gained.

Submit your application

Please follow the instructions on the LSSW website.

Appendix 2 NPQH Content Areas

Strategy and Improvement

NPQH (Leading a school)			
Learn how to:	Learn about:	Assessment Criteria	Tested in
Anticipate changes in the external and strategic environment	Horizon-scanning and drivers of political, social, economic, technological, legal and environmental change	1.3.1 Analyses the implications of changes in the external and strategic environment and applies findings to own plans	Task 1
Develop an evidence-based organisational strategy, in collaboration with the governing board	Critical thinking, statistical and data analysis tools, techniques and concepts that support decision-making and strategy development	1.3.2 Deploys critical thinking and statistical and/or data analysis tools, techniques and concepts during the design of own plans	Task 1
	Data collection best practice, including the principles and recommendations identified by the Independent Teacher Workload Review Group and clarification of Ofsted inspection requirements		
	The role of the governing board in strategy development, including the benefits of working with a visionary and robust governing board	1.3.3 Collaborates with the governing board during the design and implementation of plans, describing the benefits of doing so	Task 1
Lead a successful whole-school change programme	Research into, and examples of, the effective leadership of change, drawn from a range of schools and non-school contexts	1.3.4 Analyses research into, and examples of, the leadership of change, drawn from a range of schools and non-school contexts, and applies findings to the design and own leadership of plans	Task 1

Teaching and Curriculum Excellence

NPQH (Leading a school)			
Learn how to:	Learn about:	Assessment Criteria	Tested in
Lead and grow excellent teaching in a school	Research into, and examples of, the leadership of excellent teaching, domestically and internationally, including The National standards of excellence for headteachers	2.3.1 Analyses a range of domestic and international research into, and examples of, the leadership of teaching and applies findings to own plans	Task 1
	The benefits of involvement in Initial Teacher Training in terms of teaching quality (for example, through extended mentoring opportunities)		
	Statutory curriculum requirements and examples of how freedoms have been used to improve pupil progress and attainment		
	The benefits, characteristics and examples of knowledge-rich curricula (for example, a sequential maths curriculum)		
	Tools and techniques to improve teaching quality across several schools (for example, through coaching and mentoring, designation as a Teaching School Alliance or the effective use of textbooks to support consistently high quality teaching)		
Support pupils of all backgrounds, abilities and particular needs in the school to achieve high standards, including Pupil Premium, SEND, EAL or the most able pupils	Research into, and examples of, whole-school improvement strategies in relation to progress, attainment and behaviour, drawn from a range of schools, including interventions targeted at disadvantaged pupils or those with particular needs (for example, the EEF's toolkit on teaching and learning)	2.3.2 Designs, leads, implements and evaluates an evidence-based change programme that improves pupil progress and/or attainment at whole-school level	Task 1 Supporting document required: Pupil performance data
	The implications of the Equality Act 2010 for all pupils	2.3.3 Evaluates, monitors and responds to the needs and performance of all pupils in a school, including through provision for groups of pupils with particular needs	Task 1
	The requirements on schools to publish a SEN Information Report		
	Best practice in planning, commissioning and monitoring Alternative Provision		
Systematically review the cumulative impact of initiatives on teacher workload and make proportionate and pragmatic demands on staff	Tools to assess and manage the impact of new policies or initiatives (for example, impact assessments and prioritisation techniques)	2.3.4 Assesses the impact of new initiatives on teacher workload, implementing options to minimise or mitigate this where necessary	Task 1

Leading with Impact

NPQH (Leading a school)			
Learn how to:	Learn about:	Assessment Criteria	Tested in
Distribute responsibility and accountability throughout the school to improve performance	Research into the effectiveness of different leadership models or styles, including the distribution of responsibility and accountability	3.3.1 Analyses the effectiveness of different models of leadership, drawn from schools and non-school contexts, including the distribution of accountability and responsibility	Task 1
Be an inspiring leader in a range of different situations	Examples of how different leadership models or styles have been deployed to achieve different objectives (for example, in response to different stakeholders, time pressures or priorities), drawn from a range of schools and non-school contexts	3.3.2 Adapts or tailors their leadership style to lead effectively in different situations	Task 1 Supporting document required: Sponsor comments
Communicate and negotiate with different people effectively to make progress on objectives	Tools and techniques for gathering and analysing the perspectives, priorities and motivations of stakeholders	3.3.3 Analyses stakeholder views systematically and applies this understanding to communicate, negotiate or persuade	Task 1 Supporting document required: Presentation recording and feedback
	Research into negotiation and persuasion techniques/strategies		
	Examples of communications/stakeholder engagement strategies, including the use of media, drawn from a range of schools and non-school contexts	3.3.4 Evaluates different communications/ stakeholder engagement strategies and applies findings to the design and implementation of own communications/ stakeholder engagement strategy	Task 1 Supporting document required: Comms/Stakeholder engagement strategy

Working in Partnership:

NPQH (Leading a school)			
Learn how to:	Learn about:	Assessment Criteria	Tested in
Use different models of partnership working to improve educational provision, sustain a culture of mutual challenge and learn from others (including parents/carers, the wider community and other organisation)	Different models of partnership working/ collaboration and why these have been adopted in different circumstances (for example, to develop or share best practice) drawn from a range of schools and non-school contexts	4.3.1 Analyses the school's strengths and weaknesses and initiates relevant partnerships/collaborations to improve school capability	Task 1
	Guidance and examples of best practice in the joint commissioning of services (for example, the SEND Code of Practice on commissioning across education, health and social care)	4.3.2 Analyses different models of partnership working/opportunities for collaboration and their relevance to own plans	Task 1
Lead an effective partnership which brings benefits to the school and wider education system, particularly in their school's area(s) of expertise or specialism	Opportunities to support other schools (for example, through sponsorship, working with/becoming a teaching school, NLE status and the identification and development of potential SLEs)	4.3.3 Exploits opportunities to support other schools, through collaboration and partnership in own school's area(s) of expertise	Task 1

Managing Resources and Risks:

NPQH (Leading a school)			
Learn how to:	Learn about:	Assessment Criteria	Tested in
Balance a school's strategic or educational priorities with financial efficiency	Strategic financial planning techniques, including curriculum-led budgeting based on a 3-5 year strategy	5.3.1 Analyses school's resourcing challenges in terms of finances, staffing, teacher workload and educational resources, and designs plans to address these	Task 2
	Examples of how a range of schools and other organisations have generated additional income (for example, through additional site use)	5.3.2 Formulates a curriculum-led budget aligned to plans	Task 2 Supporting document required: Curriculum-led budget
Implement accountability arrangements to manage resources and risks effectively and in line with statutory requirements (where applicable, fulfilling the Accounting Officer role as defined in the Academies Financial Handbook)	The benefits of strong accountability, including the importance of non-executive oversight	5.3.3 Evaluates the effectiveness of school's accountability arrangements for managing resources and risks, recommending improvements where necessary to deliver plans successfully	Task 2
	Examples of resource and risk management arrangements drawn from a range of schools, including internal controls (for example, schemes of delegation, tolerances and risk appetite, internal and external reporting and scrutiny)		
	The requirements of the financial accountability framework, as set out in the Academies Financial Handbook		
	A school's statutory requirements in relation to risk assessment, employment, procurement and safeguarding (including the Prevent Duty), and underpinning processes (for example, risk audits and assessment, collective bargaining, recruitment, redundancy and contract management)		

Increasing Capability:

NPQH (Leading a school)			
Learn how to:	Learn about:	Assessment Criteria	Tested in
Hold all staff to account for performance using performance management, appraisal, misconduct and grievance systems	Employment law, practice and processes for managing misconduct, grievances and redundancy (including the Teacher Appraisal Regulations)	6.3.1 Designs systems to evaluate, manage and reward staff performance effectively	Task 2
	Statutory requirements, flexibilities and supporting guidance on setting teachers' pay and conditions		
Create and sustain an environment where all staff are encouraged to develop their own knowledge and skills, and support each other	Sources of high-quality professional development within and outside of the school, beyond formal professional development programmes	6.3.2 Evaluates research into, and examples of, high-quality professional development within and outside of the school, and applies findings to own plans	Task 2
	The main barriers to effective professional development in a school (for example, time, quality and resources) and how these have been overcome		
Anticipate capability requirements or gaps in the school and design strategies to fill them	Workforce and capability planning tools and techniques, drawn from a range of schools (for example, in relation to the knowledge and skills of teaching and non-teaching staff, educational resources or school infrastructure)	6.3.3 Analyses current and future organisational capability challenges and designs plans to address these	Task 2
	Research into, and examples of, effective succession planning, drawn from a range of schools and non-school contexts		

Appendix 3: NPQH Leadership Behaviours

Commitment	The best leaders are committed to their pupils and understand the power of world-class teaching to improve social mobility, wellbeing and productivity
Collaboration	The best leaders readily engage with, and invest responsibility in, those who are best placed to improve outcomes
Personal Drive	The best leaders are self-motivated and take a creative, problem-solving approach to new challenge
Resilience	The best leaders remain courageous and positive in challenging, adverse or uncertain circumstances
Awareness	The best leaders will know themselves and their teams, continually reflect on their own and others' practices, and understand how best to approach difficult or sensitive issues
Integrity	The best leaders act with honesty, transparency and always in the interests of the school and its pupils
Respect	The best leaders their respect the rights, views, beliefs and faiths of pupils, colleagues and stakeholders