

National Professional Qualification in Middle Leadership (NPQML)

Application Guidance

(To be read by both applicants and sponsors)

August 2017

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1. INTRODUCTION

Dear applicant,

Thank you for the interest you have shown in applying to join the National Professional Qualification for Middle Leadership. 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 NPQML is, in itself, a rigorous process and consists of four sections:

- Registration details
- Applicant Statement
- Sponsor Statement
- Finance Agreement

2. ABOUT THE NEW NPQML

The National Professional Qualification for Middle Leadership (NPQML) is designed for 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).

NPQML 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 Middle Leadership post.

NPQML

- 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 Middle Leadership 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	<p>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.</p> <p>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).</p>
National Professional Qualification for Senior Leadership (NPQSL)	Leading across a school	<p>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.</p> <p>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).</p>
National Professional Qualification for Headteachers (NPQH)	Leading a school	<p>Those who are, or are aspiring to become, a Headteacher or Head of School with responsibility for leading a school</p> <p>This includes those who are, or are aspiring to be, a Head or Head of School with cross-school responsibilities e.g. a National Leader of Education (NLE).</p>
National Professional Qualification for Executive Leadership (NPQEL)	Leading across several schools	<p>Those who are, or are aspiring to become, an Executive Headteacher or CEO of a MAT with responsibility for leading across several schools</p>

Content Areas

There are six content areas for NPQML, 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 NPQML. A participant's knowledge and skills will then be assessed through the corresponding assessment tasks, covered below. Further information on the NPQML 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. (See Appendix 2)

They are:

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

The Qualification

LSSW's NPQML 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 participant's own school ([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 NPQML to contribute to a Masters in Educational Leadership. The University has agreed that the NPQML is worth 30 credits toward a Masters degree with the applicant submitting an additional, reflective statement.

Progress will be tracked against key milestones to assist participants in meeting the full requirements of the course and achieving the NPQML. 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 1. LSSW will assess against the NPQML 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 project.

NPQML Assessment Tasks Description

Project Summary

Working with my team to a) improve pupil progress and attainment and b) team capability (4,500 words)

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

Content Areas Assessed

Participants must:

- **Lead** an improvement project in their team, lasting at least 2 terms, aimed at improving pupil progress and attainment (part A) and the capability of their team (part B)*
- **Submit** a written account of the project to the provider for assessment, demonstrating how they have met the criteria set out below. This should cover the initiation, implementation and evaluation of the project.
- **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 (across both parts of the project) of **4,500**, 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 four sections:

Section 1 To be completed by the applicant	Registration details must be completed by the applicant
Section 2 To be completed by the applicant	Applicant Statement about their current role and areas of responsibility.
Section 3 To be completed by the sponsor	Sponsor Statement about the applicant's experience and suitability for the programme
Section 4 To be completed by the Business Manager/Finance Lead	Finance agreement to accept responsibility of payment of fees

Appendix 1 NPQML Content Areas

Strategy and Improvement

NPQML (Leading a team)			
Learn how to:	Learn about:	Assessment Criteria	Tested in
Manage and analyse performance data to evaluate progress, identify trends, define team priorities and develop improvement strategies (for example, in relation to disadvantaged pupils or those with particular needs)	Tools and techniques to manage and analyse performance data on progress and attainment at group and individual level (for example, databases, spreadsheets, formulae and graphs)	1.1.1 Deploys tools and techniques to manage and analyse data on pupil progress and attainment	Part A Supporting document required: Raw data analysis
	Statistical and data analysis concepts (for example, confidence intervals, statistical significance, sampling, correlation and causation)	1.1.2 Designs, evaluates and improves plans in light of data on pupil progress and attainment	
Implement successful change at team level	Tools and techniques that support change management	1.1.3 Deploys change management tools and/or techniques during the design and implementation of plans	Part A
	Examples of successful change management drawn from a range of schools		

Teaching and Curriculum Excellence

NPQML (Leading a team)			
Learn how to:	Learn about:	Assessment Criteria	Tested in
Grow excellent, evidence-based teaching in a team and a curriculum that develops pupils academically and prepares them for adult life	Research into, and examples of, domestic and international teaching strategies and pedagogical approaches with a proven impact (for example, the EEF evidence base on the effective use of Phonics or Mastery teaching)	2.1.1 Analyses research into, and examples of, domestic and international teaching strategies/pedagogical approaches and applies findings to own plans	Part A
	Research into, and examples of, different models of pupil assessment, including their use to set challenging targets, monitor progress and raise standards for all pupils, including those working below the national curriculum		
	The Ofsted School inspection handbook, particularly the clarification of inspection requirements in relation to lesson planning, marking, feedback and collection of pupil performance data		
	The benefits, characteristics and examples of knowledge-rich curricula (for example, a sequential maths curriculum)	2.1.2 Evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of curriculum taught by team, implementing improvements where necessary	Part A
Improve the progress, attainment and behaviour of all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or have particular needs (for example, Pupil Premium, SEND, EAL or the most able pupils)	Research into, and examples of, interventions targeted at improving the progress/attainment of disadvantaged groups or those with particular needs, drawn from a range of schools (for example, the EEF's teaching and learning toolkit)	2.1.3 Implements and evaluates an evidence-based project that improves pupil progress and/or attainment	Part A Supporting document required: Pupil performance data
	Research into, and examples of, the use of specialist provision for pupils with particular needs, drawn from a range of schools		
	The graduated approach to supporting SEND pupils, as set out in the SEND Code of Practice		

Leading with Impact

NPQML (Leading a team)			
Learn how to:	Learn about:	Assessment Criteria	Tested in
Anticipate other peoples' views or feelings and moderate your approach accordingly	Personal reflection and self-awareness tools	3.1.1 Exploits different leadership styles and justifies why these have been adopted	Part A
Adopt different leadership styles to ensure the team meets its objectives	Research into, and examples of, different leadership styles, including their associated benefits and risks		
Present, communicate or defend challenging messages confidently and positively to a range of audiences	A range of written and verbal communication and presentation styles, including why these have been adopted in different situations (for example, to communicate with pupils, parents/carers, colleagues and external parties)	3.1.2 Exploits different communication styles and justifies why these have been adopted	Part A

Working in Partnership

NPQML (Leading a team)			
Learn how to:	Learn about:	Assessment Criteria	Tested in
Realise the benefits of collaborating with others, including teachers, teaching assistants and non-teaching staff, other schools, parents/carers and other organisations	Research into, and examples of, effective partnership working, drawn from a range of schools, including the evidence base on effective parental engagement	4.1.1 Establishes relationships with others within and outside of own team, deploying appropriate structures and/or processes to mitigate against any barriers	Part A Supporting document required: Sponsor comments
	Research into, and examples of, the main barriers to effective collaboration within and across schools (for example, time, resources, aims, levels of commitment or operating models) and how these have been overcome		
Support their team to build and sustain relationships with others which develop and share good practice and improve performance	Research into, and examples of, structures and processes that support collaboration (for example, with teachers, teaching assistants and non-teaching staff, other schools, parents/carers and other organisations, drawn from a range of schools)	4.1.2 Designs and/or delivers plans in collaboration with others within and outside of own team	Part A

Managing Resources and Risks

NPQML (Leading a team)			
Learn how to:	Learn about:	Assessment Criteria	Tested in
Deploy staff, financial and educational resources within a team efficiently, to enhance pupil progress and attainment	Resource and project management tools and techniques, including budgeting, forecasting and project plans	5.1.1 Analyses the financial and staffing implications of own plans, during whole lifetime of plans, using a budget	Part B Supporting document required: Budget
		5.1.2 Defines the steps required to successfully implement plans, using a project plan	Part B Supporting document required: Project plan
Manage risks within a team effectively (for example, in relation to staffing, finances or teacher workload), using a risk register	Best practice in relation to managing risks, including the establishment and maintenance of risk registers, drawn from a range of schools	5.1.3 Identifies and mitigates risks in plans, using a risk register	Part B Supporting document required: Risk register
Deliver a safe environment for pupils and staff	Key legal requirements and statutory guidance in relation to safeguarding and health and safety in schools, including Keeping Children Safe in Education		

Increasing Capability

NPQML (Leading a team)			
Learn how to:	Learn about:	Assessment Criteria	Tested in
Hold others to account, line manage and evaluate performance effectively	A range of performance management techniques, including setting SMART objectives, collecting and giving feedback, coaching/mentoring, and professional development plans	6.1.1 Assesses individuals' performance and capability methodically and identifies appropriate, targeted professional development opportunities within and beyond the school to support them	Part B
	The Teachers' Standards and Teacher appraisal regulations		
Support all members of their team with appropriate, targeted opportunities for professional development, including newly-qualified teachers, teaching assistants, and stronger or weaker performers	The Standard for teachers' professional development and supporting guidance		
	Professional development opportunities within and beyond the school		
Recognise their own strengths and weaknesses and identify learning linked to their needs	Tools to identify own and staff development needs (for example, 360 degree feedback)	6.1.2 Assesses their own performance and capability methodically, identifying appropriate, targeted professional development opportunities for self	Part B
Evaluate the impact of professional development on teacher development and pupils outcomes	Tools to evaluate the impact and cost-effectiveness of professional development activities, particularly in terms of pupil outcomes	6.1.3 Designs and implements plans to evaluate the impact and cost-effectiveness of professional development in terms of pupil outcomes	Part B

Appendix 2: NPQML 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