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National College for  
Teaching & Leadership

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## Designation review criteria

System leader and teaching school designations will only be reviewed for one of the following reasons:

- [eligibility](#)
- [professional misconduct](#)
- [delivery](#)

### Eligibility

A system leader or teaching school no longer meets the required designation eligibility criteria.

- [National leader of education \(NLE\) and national support school \(NSS\) eligibility criteria](#)
- [National leader of governors \(NLG\) eligibility criteria](#)
- [Teaching schools eligibility criteria](#)

System leaders are encouraged to take on headship and positions at the most challenging schools in the most challenging areas. If a system leader moves to a school that is judged to require improvement or be in special measures, the system leader will retain their designation pending a review 18 months after the move. At that time, they will be expected to demonstrate improvements to that school in order to retain their designation.

## Professional misconduct

An individual associated with a designation behaves in a way that brings the role or the NCTL into disrepute.

The Review of Designation team will seriously consider complaints that allege that a system leader has engaged in professional misconduct. The preliminary stage of any complaints review will determine whether there are grounds for a review of designation.

The Review of Designations team broadly defines professional misconduct as:

- failure to act as an ambassador for the national leader of education (NLE), national support school (NSS), national leader of governance (NLG), teaching school programme and the NCTL. This includes, where reasonable, not promoting the programme
- failure to behave in a way that upholds the reputation of the NLE, NSS or NLG role and the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL)

Examples of behaviour and practice which may lead to de-designation under the misconduct criterion, include, but are not limited to:

- withdrawal from a commitment (contractual or otherwise) to provide support to a school, without just cause and reasonable notice
- actively campaigning against government policy
- failure to meet terms and conditions laid out in the NLE/NSS or NLG conditions of designation including conditions related to past or present grant funding
- withholding or misrepresenting any information in the NLE/NSS or NLG application in such a way that it may have materially affected the original designation decision
- failure to take appropriate action to deal with any reports from client schools or local authorities in relation to inappropriate conduct of the NSS staff providing support
- a system leader being involved in behaviour, including that outside of their work as an NLE or NLG, that has or could call into question their integrity or probity. Where an NLE, headteacher or member of senior leadership of a teaching school has been suspended from their post pending investigation by an external body, the designation will automatically be frozen until such point as the investigation has concluded.

This information is specifically related to the system leader designations.

Any other cases of alleged serious misconduct of a teacher can be reported to NCTL through [teacher misconduct: referring a case](#).

## Delivery

Failure to provide school-to-school support within the last 12 months.

Exemptions to this may include the:

- system leader is suffering long-term illness
- system leader is on maternity leave
- system leader is on paternity leave
- system leader's school undertaking conversion to academy status; amalgamation, federation or other significant structural change (grace period of 6 months allowed)

For teaching schools this means they have failed to demonstrate that, at its annual review or at any other time, it has delivered the teaching school role effectively. Failure to meet the minimum objectives and reasonable expectations referenced in both the teaching schools handbook and the teaching school's own annual action plan.

## The review of designation process

The review of designation process consists of 4 stages:

1. [Identification](#): ongoing activity within NCTL utilising published performance data, Ofsted outcomes and information submitted from schools may mean that a potential issue is identified
2. [Notification of review](#): NCTL will inform a school or system leader that a review is required with clear guidelines and timeframes
3. [Supporting statement](#): schools can address queries and evidence the impact they are having with their designation
4. [Review of designation panel](#): a panel consisting of teaching school leaders who review the available evidence

Change of circumstances: Whenever there is a change in a system leader's or teaching school's circumstances, such as a system leader moving to another school or headteacher retirement, then the system leader or teaching school are required to contact [designation.review@education.gov.uk](mailto:designation.review@education.gov.uk) to discuss and agree the next steps.

### Identification: stage 1

Designations are identified for a review for one or more of the following reasons:

- eligibility: the system leader or teaching school no longer meets the eligibility criteria.
- misconduct: the system leader, or any member of staff associated with a school-based designation, has behaved in a way which brings the role or NCTL into disrepute
- delivery: the system leader or associated school has failed to demonstrate that it has met expectations in relation to delivery of the role at annual review or at any other time

### Notification of review: stage 2

When a designation has been identified for review, the accountable individual for the designation will be notified via email by the review of designation team. This email will also set out the timescales for the

review outlining next steps and invite the system leader to discuss the case with a NCTL representative should they wish to do so.

### **Automatic de-designation**

Decisions which result in the removal of a designation can only be taken by the review of designation panel, except where one or more of the following occur:

- a designation has been held for less than a full school term, and a change in circumstances leads to the eligibility criteria for the role no longer being met
- a full Ofsted inspection of the school associated with the designation results in a judgement of 'requires improvement' or below
- performance data drops to the floor standard or below

In the instances listed above, the senior official responsible for the programme has the authority to automatically remove the designation of an individual or school.

There is no right of appeal against automatic de-designation.

### **Right to withdraw**

To withdraw from the programme the accounting individual for the designation should email [designation.review@education.gov.uk](mailto:designation.review@education.gov.uk) stating that they are withdrawing themselves and/or the associated school. The withdrawal will take immediate effect from the date that the email is sent.

If a system leader or teaching school decides not to have their case reviewed by a review of designation panel then NCTL will respect their right to withdraw from the programme.

This will not affect any future applications should a chair of governors or headteacher and school meet the eligibility criteria and wish to re-apply for designation.

### **Supporting statement: stage 3**

Personal representation at the review of designation panel is not possible. However, the system leader or teaching school can submit an impact statement including any evidence that they wish to be presented to the panel. This is limited to 1,000 words.

### **Review of designation panel: stage 4**

The review of designation panel is made up of appropriate educational professionals that includes:

- 3 teaching school headteachers
- representatives from NCTL or the Department for Education
- a former Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI) representative

The panel will review all evidence submitted in support of the designation and make a final decision. The decision will be communicated to the system leader or accountable officer as soon as possible, but no later than 5 working days after the review of designation panel hearing.

In cases of misconduct where a complaint has been made, we will inform the complainant of the outcome at the end of the process once the system leader has been informed.

## Outcome of a review

There are 3 possible outcomes of a review of designation:

- [designation is retained](#)
- [designation is placed under review](#)
- [designation is removed \(de-designation\)](#)

### Designation is retained

The panel will make a decision to retain the designation and the associated activity should continue as before. No further action is required unless otherwise stated by the panel.

### Designation is placed under review

Designations is placed under review for an agreed time period. This will happen where there is a concern over:

- delivery of the role or alliance, but the panel feels there are opportunities to address the concerns
- the system leader's or teaching school's eligibility, for example, where pupil performance at the school has fallen when compared with previous high performance

In cases where designation is placed under review for an agreed period, usually one year, careful consideration will be given to whether the system leader is able to continue with its role during this period. Clear targets and a date for future review will be set by the panel to ensure clarity on how and when the review period may end, and what needs to be achieved to ensure that full designation can be re-instated. Prior to the case being considered again by the panel the system leader will have a further opportunity to submit a supporting statement.

### Designation is removed (de-designation)

The decision to de-designate a system leader is not taken lightly and the review of designation panel consider all evidence carefully. However, where ongoing designation is not possible the system leader will be given a period of time, to be agreed with NCTL, in which to complete any support to another school.

Where necessary, NCTL will review the funding implications of the de-designation decision; for example, it may be necessary to recover all or part of the annual bursary provided to system leaders.

There will also be [further implications to consider](#), for example, other designations and initial teacher training (ITT).

## Appeals

If a designation has been removed those individuals or the accountable officer are eligible to [appeal the decision](#).

## Teaching schools: implication of de-designation

The decision to de-designate a teaching school is not taken lightly and the review panel will, wherever possible, consider all suitable options to retain the alliance. However, where this is not possible the teaching school will be given a period of up to 6 months in which to work with NCTL to explore the following 3 options:

1. Existing teaching school alliance continues under the leadership of another teaching school within the alliance; where the other teaching school remains in place. The identified school must make a successful teaching school application. The de-designated school can continue to work as part of the alliance, as a strategic partner.
2. A succession plan for the alliance is put in place where an eligible strategic partner is identified to take on the leadership of the alliance. This is only possible where the strategic partner is eligible to apply to be a teaching school and agrees to do so as part of the next application round. The de-designated school can, of course, continue to work as part of the alliance, as a strategic partner.
3. A transition plan for the alliance is put in place to merge with another teaching school (from another alliance) who will take over the leadership of the alliance with an objective to transition the work into their alliance. The de-designated school can, of course, continue to work as part of the alliance, as a strategic partner.

We appreciate the need for flexibility around the timeline of the plan, understanding that in some cases a commitment to a project or piece of work will need to be honoured, we would ask a de-designated school to reflect this in their plans.

We will review the funding situation in each case taking into consideration remaining commitments and transition requirements for the alliance.

## Implications for job-share teaching school alliances

In the case of job-share teaching school alliances the panel will give appropriate consideration to whether the other teaching school in the alliance will (i) continue to meet the criteria in their own right and (ii) have the capacity to continue to lead the alliance in the event of one of the teaching schools being de-designated. This will be picked up directly with the school and evidence of the continued capacity and eligibility of the remaining school should be referenced in the supporting statement.

Given that teaching schools in job-share alliances apply together, basing their delivery proposals on the leadership from 2 or more schools, it will always be necessary for a review to consider the implications that de-designation of one of the teaching schools may have on the other school's ability to lead the alliance. However, as already stated it is the intention of NCTL to retain the designation of teaching schools, and in particular the continuity of alliances wherever appropriate.

## Implications for other roles

### NLE

Where a headteacher is also an NLE and the teaching school is an NSS, these designations will be reviewed at the same time so there is minimal disruption to the individual and school. While

interconnected, the roles are separate and so removal of one role does not necessarily result in removal in the other.

## **Licensees**

Lead schools in NCTL licensing partnerships must either be a teaching school, or be judged by Ofsted to be 'outstanding' overall. Should this cease to be the case, then the partnership needs to discuss and agree arrangements to replace its lead school with the licensing team at NCTL.

## **Appropriate body status**

For those teaching schools who also hold responsibility as an appropriate body for newly qualified teacher (NQT) induction, where a decision results in the teaching school being de-designated, the school's role as an appropriate body will cease from the date of de-designation.

In such situations, NCTL will work with the teaching school to ensure that the continuity of an NQT's induction period is maintained, which will involve undertaking a re-allocation process to transfer duties to an alternative appropriate body in the locality.

## **School-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) accreditation**

Removal of the teaching school role does not of itself affect the accreditation status of that school as a provider of ITT. However, where a school has been judged less than 'good' as a result of an Ofsted Section 5 school inspection, the school might wish to seek migration of its accreditation to another school within the ITT partnership that is at least 'good'.

In the first instance the school as the ITT provider should read the [migration of initial teacher training accreditation process](#).

## **School Direct**

Implications for those teaching schools who are also a lead for School Direct, differ depending on the reason for de-designation. They are as follows:

- Ofsted moves school from 'outstanding' to 'good' – there is no impact on school's eligibility to be a School Direct lead school
- Ofsted moves school from 'outstanding' to 'requires improvement' or 'inadequate' – school to consider whether it has the capacity to continue as lead school
- the school is failing to meet its ITT objectives – NCTL to consider whether it has the capacity to continue as a lead school

If the school cannot or does not wish to continue as a lead school, NCTL would recommend it transfer responsibilities to another school in its partnership.

## **Specialist leaders of education (SLEs)**

An SLE's designation status will not be affected if their teaching school is de-designated. Every effort will be made to ensure that the SLE is retained within the system, and within their existing alliance if it has been agreed that the alliance can continue under the leadership of another teaching school. The de-

designated teaching school can continue with their SLE functions as a strategic partner within the alliance. Where this is not possible an SLE should be reallocated to another teaching school alliance.

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