



Department
for Education

Guidance

National professional qualifications (NPQs) reforms

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National professional qualifications (NPQs) are a national, voluntary suite of qualifications, designed to support the professional development of teachers and leaders.

A reformed suite of NPQs are now available. The reformed NPQs have been developed in collaboration with the sector and are informed by the best available research and evidence. NPQs are designed to provide training and support for teachers and school leaders at all levels and deliver improved outcomes for young people.

Reformed national professional qualifications

The reformed suite of NPQs is now available for teachers and leaders who want to develop their knowledge and skills in specialist areas of teaching practice. To develop this suite, we have:

- reformed the 3 previous NPQs in senior leadership, headship and executive leadership
- replaced the previous NPQ in middle leadership with 3 new NPQs for teachers and leaders who want to develop their expertise in specialist areas of teaching

practice

From autumn 2022, 2 further NPQs will be available:

- NPQ for leading literacy
- NPQ for early years leadership

What's involved

The specialist and leadership NPQs provide training and support for teachers and school leaders at all levels, from those who want to develop expertise in high-quality teaching practice, such as behaviour management, to those leading multiple schools across trusts.

They are part of a wider set of [teacher development reforms](#) which together will create a 'golden thread' of high-quality evidence underpinning the support, training and development available through the entirety of a teacher's career.

NPQs have been designed with teachers and leaders in mind using the latest evidence and can be completed flexibly around existing commitments.

Study can last between 12 and 27 months, depending on your chosen NPQ. Your provider will determine the course structure, content and method of delivery.

During this period of study you will:

- learn from the evidence-based curriculum of your chosen qualification, drawing on effective pedagogy, current research and international best practice - this will equip you with the knowledge and skills to either improve in your current role, or take the next step in your career
- partake in a mixture of face-to-face sessions, webinars, and self-directed study
- answer a short, assessed case study question (the summative assessment)

NPQs available

The 3 new NPQs in specialist areas of teaching have been designed with both classroom teachers and leaders in mind. They are:

- **Leading Teacher Development** - for teachers who have, or are aspiring to have, responsibilities for leading the development of other teachers in their school
- **Leading Teaching** - for teachers who have, or are aspiring to have, responsibilities for leading teaching in a subject, year group, key stage or phase
- **Leading Behaviour and Culture** - for teachers who have, or are aspiring to

have, responsibilities for leading behaviour or supporting pupil wellbeing in their school

The reformed leadership NPQs are:

- **Senior Leadership** - for school leaders who are, or are aspiring to be, a senior leader with cross-school responsibilities
- **Headship** - for school leaders who are, or are aspiring to be, a headteacher or head of school with responsibility for leading a school
- **Executive Leadership** - for school leaders who are, or are aspiring to be, an executive headteacher or have a school trust CEO role with responsibility for leading several schools

Each NPQ is underpinned by a new content framework. These frameworks set out what participants should know and be able to do after completing an NPQ, and providers have used these to design their courses.

You can access the NPQ frameworks at [national professional qualification frameworks: from autumn 2021](#).

In addition to the reformed suite of NPQs, we have introduced an [additional support offer for new headteachers](#) from autumn 2021. This is a targeted support package for teachers new to the role of headship.

Apply for an NPQ

[Registration for NPQs](#) starting in February 2022 is currently open.

Registration for NPQs starting in autumn 2022 is temporarily closed and will reopen soon. You can [get an email alert](#) when registration reopens.

Funding

As part of the government's long-term education recovery plan, £184 million of new funding for fully-funded NPQ training scholarships was announced on 2 June 2021 to be spent over the course of this parliament.

NPQ in Leading Teacher Development

Training scholarships for the NPQ in Leading Teacher Development are available to all teachers who meet the following criteria:

- have, or are aspiring to have, responsibilities for leading the development of other teachers in their school
- are employed in state-funded schools, as well as those employed in state-funded organisations that offer 16 to 19 places in England

NPQ in Leading Behaviour and Culture

Training scholarships for the NPQ in Leading Behaviour and Culture are available to all teachers who meet the following criteria:

- have, or are aspiring to have, responsibilities for leading behaviour or supporting pupil wellbeing in their school
- are employed in state-funded schools, as well as those employed in state-funded organisations that offer 16 to 19 places in England

NPQ in Leading Teaching

Training scholarships for the NPQ in Leading Teaching are available to all teachers who meet the following criteria:

- have, or are aspiring to have, responsibilities for leading teaching in a subject, year group, key stage or phase
- are employed in state-funded schools, as well as those employed in state-funded organisations that offer 16 to 19 places in England

NPQ in Senior Leadership

Training scholarships for the NPQ in Senior Leadership are available to those who meet the following criteria:

- are, or are aspiring to be, a senior leader with cross-school responsibilities
- are employed in state-funded schools, as well as those employed in state-funded organisations that offer 16 to 19 places in England

NPQ in Headship

Training scholarships for the NPQ in Headship are available for those who meet the following criteria:

- are, or are aspiring to be, a headteacher or head of school with responsibility for leading a school
- are employed in state-funded schools, as well as those employed in state-funded organisations that offer 16 to 19 places in England

Additional support offer for the NPQ in Headship

You are eligible for this targeted support package if you meet the following criteria:

- are in your first 24 months of headship
- are employed in a state-funded school, or are employed in a state-funded organisation that offers 16 to 19 places in England upon starting the training
- have either completed a national professional qualification for headship (NPQH) before taking up your first headship post or are currently taking the NPQH
- have not withdrawn from the additional support programme previously

The offer provides structured, unassessed face-to-face support based on the best available evidence about what makes an effective headteacher. While the exact content of this support will depend on the provider chosen, activities could include a combination of group coaching, one-to-one support discussions and peer network support.

You can contact your local teaching school hub, lead provider or other delivery partner to find out more.

NPQ in Executive Leadership

Training scholarships for the NPQ in Executive Leadership are available to those who meet the following criteria:

- are, or are aspiring to be, an executive headteacher or have a school trust CEO role with responsibility for leading several schools
- are employed in state-funded schools, as well as those employed in state-funded organisations that offer 16 to 19 places in England

Eligibility

Teachers and leaders employed in state-funded schools, as well as those employed in state-funded organisations that offer 16 to 19 places in England, can access fully-funded NPQ training scholarships to support teachers and pupils following the disruption to learning faced as a result of COVID-19.

Teachers and leaders will only be eligible for funding for one NPQ at a time, except for those undertaking the NPQ in Headship and the additional support offer

together.

Participants who receive scholarship funding for a reformed NPQ available from November 2021 and who then subsequently withdraw from, or fail, their programme will not be eligible for scholarship funding for the same NPQ in the future. If a participant is unable to continue with their NPQ, it is expected that providers will support participants to defer their programme and restart at a later date if appropriate.

Participants who received scholarship funding for a legacy NPQ (prior to November 2021) and who withdraw from their programme will be eligible for scholarship funding for the new reformed suite of NPQs.

Access to funding remains conditional on successful validation of participants' registration information against Teaching Regulation Agency records, so you must ensure that the information supplied to your NPQ provider matches your teacher record. You can check and update your record via the [Teaching Regulation Agency' teacher self-service portal](#).

If you are not eligible for scholarship funding, you can still undertake an NPQ and should contact your [local teaching school hub](#), lead provider or other delivery partners directly for more information.

NPQs available from autumn 2022

To ensure NPQs continue to offer the best possible support to teachers and leaders wanting to expand their knowledge and skills, we are introducing 2 additional NPQs which will be available from autumn 2022.

The 2022 NPQs comprise the:

- NPQ for Leading Literacy – for teachers who have, or are aspiring to have, responsibilities for leading literacy across a school, year group, key stage or phase
- NPQ for Early Years Leadership – for leaders qualified to at least level 3 with a full and relevant qualification^[footnote 1] who are, or are aspiring to be:
 - managers of private, voluntary and independent nurseries
 - headteachers of school-based or maintained nurseries
 - childminders with leadership responsibilities

You can access the content frameworks for the 2022 NPQs at [national professional qualification frameworks: from autumn 2021](#).

Further details will be announced in due course.

Participants undertaking NPQs prior to 2021

Participants undertaking an NPQ under the 2017 framework have until 31 August 2022 to complete their course. This includes submitting work for assessment and moderation.

For more information about the 2017 NPQs see [professional development for school leaders](#).

1. 'Full and relevant qualifications' are defined as qualifications that demonstrate depth and level of learning appropriate to specified outcomes of full early years, childcare or playwork qualifications. The qualification should have valid, reliable assessment and awarding procedures and must include an element of assessed performance evidence. [↵](#)

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