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Guidance

National professional qualifications (NPQs)

Updated 9 June 2022

Applies to England

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National professional qualifications (NPQs) are designed to support the professional development of teachers and leaders.

A reformed suite of NPQs is now available which 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.

National professional qualifications

NPQs are available for teachers and leaders who want to develop their knowledge and skills in specialist areas of teaching practice. There are:

- 4 leadership NPQs in senior leadership, headship, executive leadership and early years leadership
- 4 NPQs for teachers and leaders who want to develop their expertise in specialist areas of teaching practice

What's involved

The specialist and leadership NPQs provide training and support for teachers and school leaders at all levels. This includes those who want to develop expertise in high-quality teaching practices,

such as behaviour management, and 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 a teacher's entire 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 18 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
- take part 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 4 NPQs in specialist areas of teaching have been designed with both classroom teachers and leaders in mind. They are:

- [Leading teacher development](#) – learn how to become a teacher educator and successfully support teachers in your school to expand their skills
- [Leading teaching](#) – learn how to lead the teaching and learning of a subject, year group or phase
- [Leading behaviour and culture](#) – learn how to create a culture of good behaviour and high expectations in which staff and pupils can thrive
- [Leading literacy](#) – learn how to effectively teach and promote literacy across the whole school, year group, key stage or phase

The leadership NPQs are:

- [Senior leadership](#) – develop your leadership knowledge and expertise to improve outcomes for teachers and pupils in your school
- [Headship](#) – develop the knowledge that underpins expert school leadership and apply it to

become an outstanding headteacher

- [Executive leadership](#) – develop the expertise you need to become an outstanding executive leader, leading change and improvement across your group of schools or multi-academy trust
- [Early years leadership](#) – develop expertise in leading high-quality early years education and care, as well as effective staff and organisational management

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. Providers have used these to design their courses.

As well as the reformed NPQs, we have introduced an early headship coaching offer for new headteachers. This is a package of structured support and networking opportunities for teachers early on in their headship role.

Early headship coaching offer

You are eligible for this package of structured support and networking opportunities if you meet all of these criteria:

- you are in your first 5 years of headship
- you are employed in England in a state-funded school or state-funded 16 to 19 organisation on starting the training
- you have either completed an NPQH before taking up your first headship post or are currently taking one
- you have not withdrawn from the additional support programme previously

The offer provides structured unassessed 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.

Apply for an NPQ

Teachers and leaders can now apply with 1 of 10 providers accredited to offer NPQs.

1. Speak to your employer about getting support to do an NPQ and for help choosing a training provider
2. Visit [Professional development for teachers and leaders](#) to find out more about which NPQs are available. You can also contact your local lead provider or [teaching school hub](#) directly for more information about the courses they offer
3. Once you have selected your course and provider, you will need to [register for an NPQ](#)

You should contact continuing-professional-development@digital.education.gov.uk to register if you are employed:

- in a virtual school
- in a hospital school
- in a young offender institution
- as a local authority-employed supply teacher

NPQ providers

NPQs are offered by the following lead training providers:

- [Ambition Institute](#)
- [Best Practice Network \(home of Outstanding Leaders Partnership\)](#) – does not offer NPQs for Leading Literacy or Early Years Leadership
- [Church of England](#) – does not offer NPQs for Leading Literacy or Early Years Leadership
- [Education Development Trust](#)
- [LLSE](#) – does not offer NPQs for Leading Literacy or Early Years Leadership
- [National Institute of Teaching](#) – only offers NPQ for Executive Leadership
- [School-Led Network](#) – does not offer NPQ for Executive Leadership
- [Teacher Development Trust](#)
- [Teach First](#)
- [UCL Institute of Education](#)

These providers have been chosen by a fair and open procurement process by the Department for Education. Delivery partners, including teaching school hubs, work with lead providers to provide training.

NPQ providers are subject to a quality assurance mechanism through Ofsted inspection to ensure the best support for schools and teachers.

Funding

As part of the government's long-term education recovery plan, it was announced in May 2022 that funding for fully funded NPQ training scholarships will be available in academic years 2022 to 2023 and 2023 to 2024.

Eligibility

From autumn 2022, the organisations eligible to access scholarships are:

- state-funded schools
- state-funded 16 to 19 organisations
- independent special schools
- virtual schools (local authority run organisations that support the education of children in care)
- hospital schools not already included in other categories of eligible organisations
- young offender institutions

Local authority employed supply teachers will also be able to access scholarships.

Teachers and leaders who are employed as above are eligible for training scholarships for the following NPQs:

- NPQ for Leading Teaching (NPQLT)
- NPQ for Leading Behaviour and Culture (NPQLBC)
- NPQ for Leading Teacher Development (NPQLTD)
- NPQ for Leading Literacy (NPQLL)
- NPQ for Senior Leadership (NPQSL)
- NPQ for Headship (NPQH)
- NPQ for Executive Leadership (NPQEL)
- NPQ for Early Years Leadership (NPQEYL)

NPQ for Early Years Leadership (NPQEYL)

Training scholarships for the NPQ for Early Years Leadership are available to those 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

And are employed:

- in a maintained nursery school in England
- in a pre-school class that's part of a school in England
- in a nursery that is registered on the Ofsted Early Years Register
- as a childminder and registered on the Ofsted Early Years Register, or with a registered Childminder Agency

Additional eligibility criteria

Participants will only be eligible for funding for each NPQ once.

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, providers are expected to support them 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 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.

Targeted support funding

From autumn 2022, state-funded schools and state-funded 16 to 19 educational settings with 1 to 600 pupils will be paid £200 for each teacher or leader they employ who takes an NPQ.

This is to help teachers and leaders in smaller settings who may find it harder to engage with professional development.

This funding will apply to state-funded schools and 16 to 19 educational settings in England that have between 1 and 600 pupils. It will be paid for each NPQ participant in these eligible settings.

Funding is not available for participants taking the early headship coaching offer unless they are also taking another NPQ course.

If you work in a school you can search the [Get Information About Schools \(GIAS\) database](#) to check how many pupils are recorded for your school.

If you work in a 16 to 19 education setting you can check a [list of 16 to 19 organisations eligible for targeted support funding](#) in the academic year 2022 to 2023.

Payments will be grant funded in arrears via existing Education and Skills Funding Agency (EFSA) channels the summer after NPQ participants begin their course. Eligibility for targeted support funding will be determined automatically as participants complete the registration process and there is no need to apply for this funding separately.

Contact continuing-professional-development@digital.education.gov.uk with any questions.

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](#).

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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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