



Department
for Education

National leader of education and national support school tranche 25 application guidance

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Summary

This publication provides non-statutory guidance from the Department for Education. It has been produced to help school leaders apply for national leader of education (NLE) and national support school (NSS) designation.

Expiry or review date

This guidance will be reviewed before November 2018.

Who is this publication for?

This guidance is for school leaders wishing to apply for national leader of education designation.

Main points

The purpose of this document is to provide details on how to complete the online application form for national leader of education designation and to ensure applicants fully understand the expectations of the role.

Particular attention should be paid to the 'application sections' section within this document, which details the application questions and associated look-fors. Using this guidance will support applicants in structuring their application to document their track record evidence.

Clarification of terms

The terms listed below are used throughout the application process. The use of terms is solely for ease of readability, and does not in any way imply that our assessment process does not take into account the different contexts of organisations that are eligible to apply.

School	represents academy, free schools, nursery, infant, primary, middle, secondary, all-through, special, sixth-form College, University Technical College (UTC), faith, independent, General Further Education Providers and Colleges (GFE), Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) and short-stay schools.
Governing body	is the body appointed to be accountable for the management of the school, federation or trust, including the board of trustees or equivalent.
Headteacher	includes principal, chief executive or executive Headteacher who are on headteacher's terms and conditions and accountable for the school they are applying with.
Accounting Officer	is the person with overall responsibility for the larger organisation such as a Multi-Academy Trust or chain of academies.
Small School*	is a mainstream school comprising up to 250 pupils.

When the guidance refers to the application requesting information about 'you' or 'your school', it means information about the Headteacher applying to be a national leader of education and the school that is applying for national support school designation.

Contact information

If you have any questions about the application process, please contact us at NLE.application@education.gov.uk or via the helpdesk 0800 0850984 (open Mon – Fri 9am – 5pm).

Before you begin

Read the information on applying

Information on the national leader of education (NLE)/national support school (NSS) role, funding and support can be found on the NLE web pages at <https://www.gov.uk/national-leaders-of-education-a-guide-for-potential-applicants>.

We recommend that you read this information carefully and familiarise yourself with the role and what will be expected of you and your school if designated.

Please read the eligibility criteria under the [‘Who can apply’](#) section of the web page to assess whether you/your school are ready to apply for NLE/NSS designation.

You should also familiarise yourself with the application guidance document, paying particular attention to the assessment criteria which the assessors will mark your application against.

[Annex A](#) shows a flow chart of the process to help applicants understand the assessment that their application will go through. The process goes through numerous stages of assessment and can take several months to complete, we endeavour to notify you of your outcome as soon as possible but we do not specify dates that you will receive notification.

Talk to your teaching schools council regional representative

The teaching schools council are a group of teaching school heads who have been elected regionally to represent teaching schools and national leaders of education nationally and internationally. They play a key role in the strategic development of the school-led system to improve outcomes in all schools and will support schools to become national leaders of education. Further information can be found at www.tscouncil.org.uk along with how to contact your regional representative.

Talk to all stakeholders

Becoming a NLE/NSS requires a significant commitment from all stakeholders. It is imperative that you have discussed this with them and agreed to proceed with the application. DfE will contact selected stakeholders to ensure that they are aware of the application and understand the role that they are being asked to undertake.

Staff	Being a NSS can provide highly valuable continuous professional development opportunities for your staff, involved with the work to support others and should be clear about what is expected of them.
Governors	You are required to confirm that you have discussed your application with your governing body and it supports your application to become a NLE/NSS.

	As part of the application process, DfE will contact your chair of governors to ensure that they are happy to proceed with the application and understand what the role entails.
Accounting Officer	If you are part of a multi academy trust or academy chain, you are required to confirm that you have discussed your application with your accounting officer and that they support your application to become a NLE/NSS and agree to the declaration.
Referees	Applications must also be supported by a referee from a senior educational professional (listed in the application guidance).

Targeted application rounds

Application rounds are targeted to focus on areas of greatest need to ensure that all schools can access effective support for schools in challenging circumstances.

As part of the targeting process, a specific number of required national leaders of education (NLE) / national support schools (NSS) have been identified from the list of target areas and applications may be prioritised on strength if there are more applications than required.

All applicants are expected to provide sufficient evidence of what support they have already established in published target areas and what plans they have to address further need. This information will be assessed alongside the other criteria, by a panel of experts, to prioritise applications. DfE invites applications from those schools who can provide support into the target areas, even if they are in a different phase or location to those specified.

All NLE/NSS that are designated will be measured on the support provided into published target areas and this will form part of the condition of designation. Failure to provide adequate evidence could lead to a review of their NLE/NSS designation.

Please see the [web pages](#) for the full list of target areas.

Completing your application form section by section

Accessing the online portal

In order to complete the application you will need to log in to the online portal. If you are a new user, you will be required to register your details before you are able to access the application.

If you have an existing account and have forgotten your username or password, click on the 'Forgot your username or password?' link and follow the instructions to reset your account details. Once you have reset your password you will be able to access the first page of the online application by clicking on the original link via the [web page](#).

Once you have read all the information on the application home screen **and downloaded Part B from the 'Links to documents' section**, click 'Next' at the bottom of the page to confirm that you and your school meet the published criteria.

This will take you to a log in page (please see below). If you already have an account, you should login using your existing user name and password. Once logged in you will be directed to the first page of Part A.

Click the 'Sign Up' link below the 'Log in' button. This will take you to the 'Create an Account' page.

Please complete all registration fields on this page. After clicking on the 'Create Account' link at the bottom, you will be directed to the first page of Part A. If the email address you are using to create your account matches one already in the system, you should click the 'OK' button and navigate back to the log in page to reset your password using the 'Forgotten your username or password?' link.

If you are not able to progress in the online system after following these steps, please email NLE.application@education.gov.uk and one of the team will contact you to discuss the issue further. Please provide name, school name and contact details when emailing.

Application sections

Applications should be completed by the eligible headteacher only, not by others. It is the applicant that will be accountable for the national support school should they be successful.

The application is separated into two sections including your reference details.

Part A online application questions

Part A is online and asks for information about the headteacher and the applicant school. This part of the application may be completed in stages; your answers will be saved

within the online portal as long as you click 'save and exit'.

You should have the following information to hand when completing the forms:

- i. headteacher details including current headship and details of any other headships
- ii. headteacher's contact telephone number(s) and email address
- iii. School name, address, postcode and email address
- iv. Unique Reference Number (URN) for the applicant school (the six-digit number from Edubase, not your local authority or establishment code)
- v. Name and contact details for your referee

Ofsted or independent school inspection data

Using your URN, DfE will review the school's most recent inspection report and review it against the eligibility criteria. The inspection reports DfE use are your school's most recent section 5 Ofsted inspection, independent school inspection (ISI) or schools inspection service (SIS) report.

If you have been at the applicant school for less than the 3 years required and you are applying under the exceptions criteria, DfE will also check your previous school's most recent section 5 Ofsted inspection, independent school inspection (ISI) or schools inspection service (SIS) report. DfE will also consider the performance data of your previous school to ensure that you can demonstrate your contribution to improving your previous school.

Important note: If your school is inspected during the application process, please inform us by emailing NLE.application@education.gov.uk

References

You are required to input the name and contact details for your referee.

You will need to provide reference details for your chosen commissioner of school-to-school support who can comment on the position of your school and your school's track record and impact of supporting other school's track record over the past three years or more.

Referees must hold one of the following positions:

- Regional Schools Commissioner
- Teaching Schools Council member (www.tscouncil.org.uk)
- Director of Children's Services (DCS) or a relevant local authority officer in your own local authority or of a school you have supported
- Senior diocesan representative
- Sponsor of an academy, chain or trust (please note this does not include CEOs of the applicant's own trust)

Your chosen referees will be contacted by DfE to complete a reference survey electronically within a set deadline (normally 2 weeks from receiving the request). We

would advise that you have contacted your referees to confirm they are able to supply this reference as applications without a supportive reference provided may not be progressed.

Part B offline application questions

Part B requires you to download and complete questions in a Microsoft Word document format. This part of the application form contains questions about you and your school's track record of supporting schools in challenging circumstances and how you plan to support schools moving forward. Answers should focus on the what you do, how you do it and the impact of your work.

DfE may seek to verify the information in this section and reserve the right to contact those schools cited in the evidence provided.

Track record - what we are looking for

The expert assessors are looking for evidence that the proposed applicant and school has already acquired the experience, track record and credibility to deliver the NLE/NSS role. The assessors scoring the applications are NLE/NSS headteachers who understand what the role requires and has the knowledge of the current NLE/NSS network in their region.

They will assess and score your application answers against the following set of look-fors. Each look for is scored out of 5 and a total of 25. This scoring will be considered along the other criteria to make a judgement on whether you are suitable to carry out the role. The expert assessor will provide a summary to the designation panel about your application and the scoring.

School-to-School Support

TRACK RECORD School to School Support (StSS)

Summary: School to school support is defined as the way that schools use their own good practise to deliver bespoke support packages for schools in need, which leads to positive impact with measurable outcomes. It can bring a powerful focus to bear on an aspect of a schools practice that is unsatisfactory and this may mean the effective deployment of skilled staff to develop a shared understanding of quality and to accelerate the pace of professional learning in practice. StSS support occurs through leadership support for headteachers, senior leaders and governors. StSS support might include some of the following activities:

- An audit of need to critically analyse the issues
- Support/help to construct an improvement plan
- Devise bespoke solutions
- Foster joint practice development
- Support and challenge through firm, focused conversations
- Monitor progress against KPI milestones
- Build capacity and secure sustainability

National leaders of education/national support schools will be able to demonstrate that they have sustained evidence that:

- they are providing **formal** support to schools in challenging circumstances in order to improve outcomes (either in pupil attainment or Ofsted judgement) over the past 3 years
- the support involves senior leaders and can demonstrate capacity to continue this support, and
- that the support provided has had a positive impact both in the schools supported and in own school (such as impact on pupil performance or improved Ofsted judgements)

Question:	Look for:
<p>Please provide an overview of the support provided, including details of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • why the support was identified and how it was brokered • who was involved in providing support and for what period of time • how they secured the required outcomes • what the impact of the support was • what the impact was on your own school <p>(700 words)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evidence of providing support to schools in need over the past 3 years i.e. those below floor standards, those in/or at risk of Ofsted categories or those deemed as a coasting school. 2. Evidence that the support provided is of a formal nature in order to improve outcomes (for example leadership support for a school judged inadequate for 2 days a week) 3. Evidence that senior leaders and/or key stakeholders such as governors are aware of and involved in school-to-school support. 4. Evidence that this support has been well co-ordinated to provide high quality support e.g. how demand and supply was matched, including identification of key individuals with appropriate skills to provide the support required and that due diligence activities were undertaken. 5. Evidence that the support has had a positive impact in the supported school and own school; resulting in improved pupil performance i.e. progress and attainment (especially disadvantaged groups), Ofsted, rising attendance and behaviour.

Plans for delivery StSS	
Question:	Look for:
Please outline how you intend to support local and national priorities for supporting schools in need, including how you intend to diagnose and broker that support. (300 words)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evidence that the alliance has a good understanding of the school improvement needs of the locality including school improvement providers in the area (e.g. has completed an audit and understand priorities for improvement across local areas) and that they have plans to utilise the widest range of talent from across its alliance delivery partners. 2. Evidence of a considered approach to matching supply and demand within the alliance including identification of key individuals with management responsibilities for negotiating contracts and undertaking due diligence activities.

Once Part B is complete, you will be required to upload your document to the online portal. For guidance on how to upload your completed Part B, please see 'Uploading documents to the online portal' section later in this guidance.

Performance data

To minimise bureaucracy, DfE will obtain results for the last three years from the DfE published school performance tables. The table below details the measures assessors will use.

The eligibility criteria states that the applicant school should be able to demonstrate 'consistently high levels of pupil performance and progress'. This is broadly defined by DfE as attainment and progress measures **being above the national averages** in each of the last three years (validated results), and stable or rising.

Pupils' differing starting points will be taken into account and it is expected that disadvantaged pupils are also making and exceeding the expected progress compared with national figures.

We understand that results cannot be compared to previous years where the assessment process had changed, so the panel will take account of how the school has performed against the expected standards for each year.

Exceptional circumstances will be considered, for example if there has been a single-year decline in performance and in your application you provide valid, evidence-based reasons for the decline. In some cases where decline is in the most recent year, applications may be deferred pending the next academic year's data.

Prior to 2015/16:

Attainment¹	KS1: percentage achieving level 2 or above in reading, writing and maths
	KS2: percentage eligible pupils achieving level 4 or above in reading, writing and

¹ as part of our assessment for primary schools we will also consider the percentage of pupils achieving the expected KS1 phonics standard and for secondary schools we will consider the percentage of pupils entering and achieving the English Baccalaureate. In both cases we will consider the context of the school in doing so.

	maths (including all pupils and disadvantaged pupils)
	KS4: percentage achieving five or more grades A*- C at GCSE (or equivalent) including English and maths (including all pupils and disadvantaged pupils)
	KS5: percentage achieving 3 or more A levels (or equivalent) at A*-E
Progress	KS2: percentage eligible pupils making at least the expected level of progress in Reading/Writing/Maths between KS1 and KS2 (including all pupils and disadvantaged pupils)
	KS4: percentage of pupils making expected progress in English and maths (including all pupils and disadvantaged pupils)
	KS5: average point score per entry in academic qualifications

2016 onwards:

Performance measures¹	KS1: percentage achieving 'expected standard' in English reading, English writing and mathematics*
	KS2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> percentage of pupils achieving 'expected standard' in English reading, English writing and mathematics pupils' average scaled score in English reading and mathematics pupils' average progress in English reading, English writing and mathematics
	KS4: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress 8 Attainment 8 percentage of pupils achieving a grade C or better in English and mathematics <p>From 2017 onwards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> percentage of pupils achieving a strong pass (5-9) in English and mathematics
	KS5: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grade and points for a student's best 3 A-levels Achieving AAB or higher in at least 2 facilitating subjects Progress between KS4 and the end of their A level studies

¹ as part of our assessment for primary schools we will also consider the percentage of pupils achieving the expected KS1 phonics standard and for secondary schools we will consider the percentage of pupils entering and achieving the English Baccalaureate. In both cases we will consider the context of the school in doing so

Exceptional circumstances will be considered, for example if there has been a single-year decline in performance and in your application you provide valid, evidence-based reasons for the decline. In some cases where decline is in the most recent year, applications may be deferred pending the next academic year's data.

Within Part B of the application you are given the opportunity to provide a narrative about any performance results which are below average. This information will be considered by the designation panel when reviewing your application.

Special schools, PRUs and middle schools will be asked to provide evidence of progress in their application and asked to evidence that pupils are making outstanding progress against expectations, taking into account their starting points. This will be assessed,

alongside other evidence (such as Ofsted reports) by a DfE appointed special school representative, who is also an expert assessor.

Nursery schools will be asked to provide evidence on how:

- they meet the needs of the range of children who attend the school (through use of data, baselines, benchmarking)
- they are closing the gap for those children who are behind in their development typical for their age (chronological/age appropriate tracking of children and their outcomes)
- staff knowledge, qualifications, training, teaching observations and expertise impacts on practice and children's learning and development (evidence of planning for children's next stages of learning based on staff assessment and a secure knowledge of the key characteristics of learning and children's development)
- Additionally, to provide their Good Level of Development (GLD) scores for the previous 2 years

Closing the gap and pupil premium; there will be particular focus on how disadvantaged pupils are performing in comparison to their peers.

New schools and performance data

Where a school is newly formed and has no public examination results by which to measure the school's pupil performance and progress over 3 years, in exceptional circumstances newly formed schools may be eligible for designation. In such cases applicants will need to demonstrate that they meet all other criteria, and we may request further evidence regarding performance and progress.

Uploading documents to the online portal

Once you have completed all application questions you will proceed to the 'Attachments' page. Click on the 'Browse' button and search for the required document on your computer. Once found, click on the document to highlight it and click the 'Open' button.

You should now see the document listed. Finally click the 'I can confirm that I have uploaded parts B of my application' checkbox to confirm you have uploaded the required documentation. Click 'Next' to proceed to the final page of the application and save your attachments.

Please note that the application system will only accept documents in the following formats: .doc, .docx, .pdf, .xls, .xlsx

Declaration and final submission

By submitting your application form, you are declaring that all of the statements on it are

true. You will not be able to review or amend any of your answers once you have done this, and therefore are strongly advised to go back through the form and review all of your answers at this point. You must ensure that you have answered all of the relevant questions, **and uploaded Part B of the application form**, otherwise your application may not contain sufficient evidence to be assessed.

You must submit your application by **midday on Wednesday 28th February 2018**.

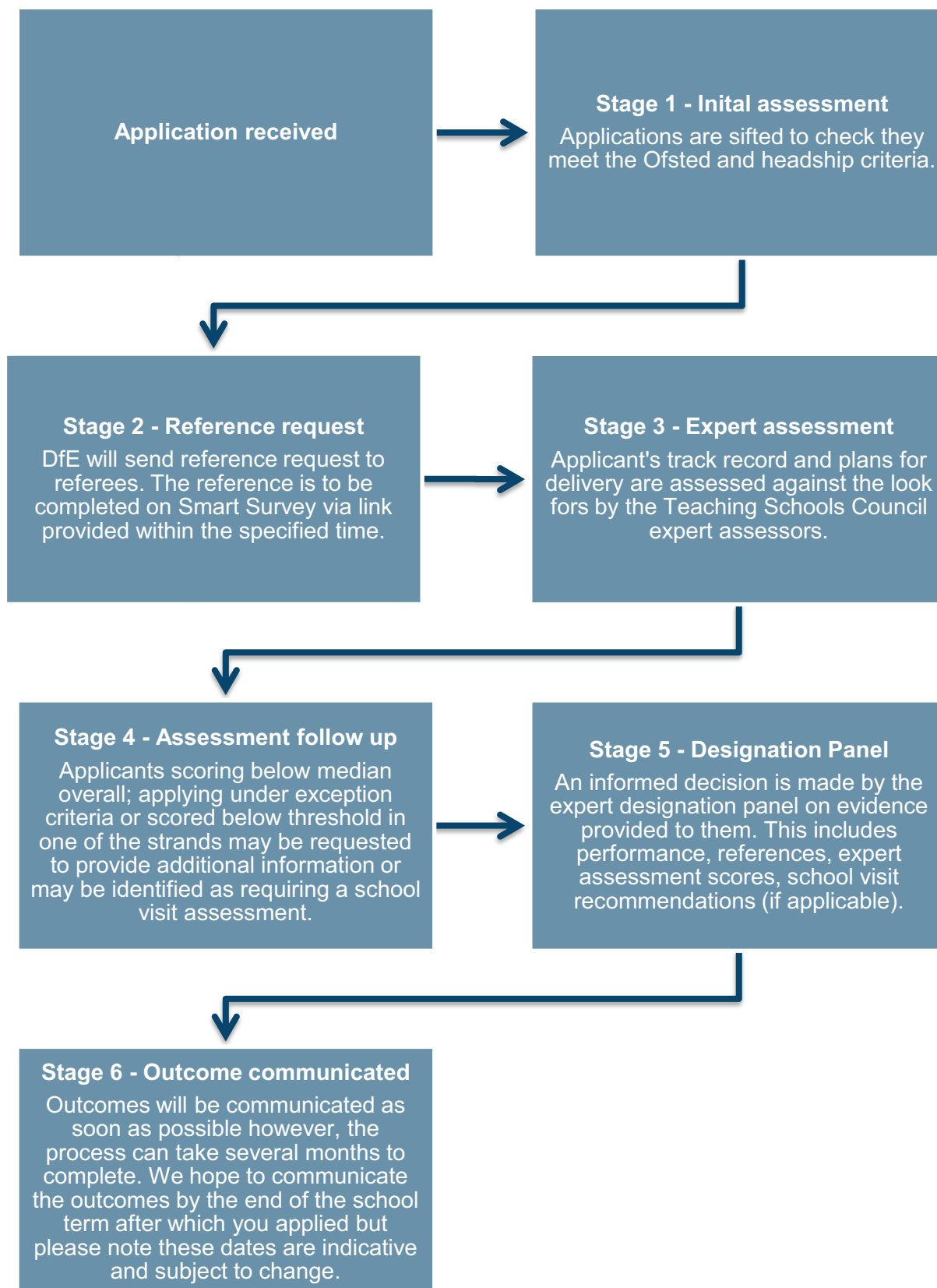
Before submitting your application, you will be asked to confirm that you have read and agreed to the declaration, which you will be directed to via the online application form.

Once the application has been submitted, you will receive an email to confirm this has been received by the System Leadership Team.

If any of the submitted information changes, please inform the team by contacting NLE.application@education.gov.uk

We wish you the best of luck with your application.

Annex A - Application assessment process



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