National Professional Qualification (NPQ): Leading Teacher Development Framework

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The National Professional Qualification Frameworks were developed in consultation with the following members of an Expert Advisory Group[1] and in collaboration with a wide range of teachers, school leaders, academics and experts:

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The content of the framework and its underpinning evidence have been independently assessed and endorsed by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF).

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Summary

About this guidance

This publication provides guidance from the Department for Education (DfE). It sets out the knowledge, skills and behaviours that will be developed by teachers when they participate in the National Professional Qualification for Leading Teacher Development (NPQLTD).

Who is this guidance for?

This guidance is for:

- teachers applying for, or participating in, this NPQ

- school leaders who are encouraging staff to undertake this NPQ

- organisations developing and delivering NPQs.

Introduction

Transforming the support and development offer for teachers and school leaders throughout their career

Teachers are the foundation of the education system – there are no great schools without great teachers. At the heart of great teaching and great school leadership is a shared, evidence-informed understanding of what works.

Delivering on the commitments set out in the [Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy](#), we have transformed our training and support for teachers at all stages of their career.

We have revised our Initial Teacher Training (ITT) Core Content Framework and, through the implementation of the Early Career Framework (ECF), are now supporting teachers in the first years of their career with a structured two year induction into the profession.

Building on this, our priority is to help all our teachers and school leaders to continuously develop their knowledge and skills throughout their careers so every child in every classroom in every school gets a world-class start in life.

The National Professional Qualifications (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.

The NPQ frameworks continue the robust method of design and development, building on the evidence base and expert guidance already established in the ECF and the ITT Core Content Framework. They complete the golden thread, running from initial teacher training through to school leadership, rooting teacher and school leader development in the best available evidence and collective wisdom of the profession.

The frameworks reflect the [Teachers' Standards](#) and [Headteachers' Standards](#) to ensure coherency with the requirements already used by the teaching profession.

The suite of National Professional Qualifications

NPQs are a set of prestigious professional qualifications, already widely recognised by the sector. They are voluntary and are designed to support the professional development of teachers and school leaders at all levels, across primary and secondary schools.

Three existing NPQs in Senior Leadership, Headship and Executive Leadership have been reformed to ensure they are underpinned by the latest and best evidence. Our NPQ

in Middle Leadership has been replaced with three new NPQs for teachers and school leaders who want to broaden and deepen their expertise in specialist areas.

The NPQs comprise the:

- **National Professional Qualification for Leading Teacher Development (NPQLTD)** – for teachers who have, or are aspiring to have, responsibilities for leading the development of other teachers in their school. They may have responsibilities for the development of all teachers across a school or specifically trainees or teachers who are early in their career.

- **National Professional Qualification for Leading Behaviour and Culture (NPQLBC)** – for teachers who have, or are aspiring to have, responsibilities for leading behaviour and/or supporting pupil wellbeing in their school.

- **National Professional Qualification for Leading Teaching (NPQLT)** – for teachers who have, or are aspiring to have, responsibilities for leading teaching in a subject, year group, key stage or phase.

- **National Professional Qualification for Senior Leadership (NPQSL)** – for school leaders who are, or are aspiring to be, a senior leader with cross-school responsibilities.

- **National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH)** – for school leaders who are, or are aspiring to be, a headteacher or head of school with responsibility for leading a school.

- **National Professional Qualification for Executive Leadership (NPQEL)** – 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.

Reforming the National Professional Qualification content frameworks

In collaboration with an Expert Advisory Group, we consulted extensively with the sector to design the reformed suite of NPQs. This has included invaluable input from teachers, school and trust leaders, academics and experts.

The frameworks set out two types of content. Within each area, key evidence statements ("Learn that…") have been drawn from current high-quality evidence from the UK and overseas. This evidence includes high-quality reviews and syntheses, including meta-analyses and rigorous individual studies. In addition, the NPQ frameworks provide practical guidance on the skills that teachers and school/trust leaders should be supported to develop. Practice statements ("Learn how to…") draw on both the best available educational research and on additional guidance from the Expert Advisory Group and other sector representatives.

The NPQs have been designed around how to support all pupils to succeed. This includes those pupils identified within the four areas of need set out in the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice, and children in need of help and protection as identified in the Children in Need Review.

The EEF has independently reviewed the frameworks to ensure they draw on the best available evidence and that this evidence has been interpreted with fidelity. References for evidence underpinning each section are provided at the end of the framework.

The NPQ frameworks have also been reviewed by a wide range of sector bodies including unions and special educational needs and disability experts.

Professionals Leading Teacher Development

Leading the development of other teachers is complex. Although the role varies, many of those leading teacher development who will take this qualification are considered to be part of the middle leadership team. They may indirectly manage a team of mentors or coaches and their work is focussed on supporting initial teacher training, early career teachers as well as the wider development of all colleagues across the school.

Those in this role need to have a deep understanding of their context, community and the pupils and adults they work with. They also need to have expertise across a number of specialist areas related to their role (e.g. designing professional development) and in approaches that, through working with their colleagues, enable their school to keep improving (e.g. implementation). They must understand the relationship between these different domains, how they can change over time and how to contribute to a culture and conditions in which staff and pupils are able to thrive, all while maintaining the highest professional conduct as set out in the Teachers' Standards.

That means developing expertise in teacher development is also complex. This framework is a codification of essential knowledge, skills and concepts that underpin successful leadership of teacher development. It sets out what those leading teacher development should know and be able to do within the specialist areas related to their role and in relation to how to put new approaches into practice.

Providers of this qualification will design a curriculum that draws on and blends together sections from across this framework with the professional standards that sit alongside it, and which is responsive to the needs of the participants who are taking the course.

The course curriculum should aim to develop expertise that is flexible and allows participants to respond to the challenges they will encounter in a range of contexts. It should also provide fellow professionals with a network, common language and access to

a continuous debate through which the collective expertise of our education system can grow and develop.

Updating the National Professional Qualification content frameworks

The NPQ frameworks will be kept under review as the evidence base evolves. As in any profession, the evidence base is not static and research insights develop and progress.

National Professional Qualification (NPQ): Leading Teacher Development Framework

This qualification is for teachers who have, or who aspire to have, responsibilities for leading the development of other teachers in their school. They may have responsibilities for the development of all teachers across a school or specifically trainees or teachers who are early in their career.

One – Teaching

Participants will be effective teachers who apply a range of knowledge and skills to teaching, including those set out in the **Initial teacher training and early career framework**.

Two – Designing Effective Professional Development

Learn that…	Learn how to…
2.1. Teaching quality is a crucial factor in raising pupil attainment.	**Select evidence-based approaches and design effective professional development by:**
2.2. Helping teachers improve through evidence-based professional development that is explicitly focused on improving classroom teaching can be a cost-effective way to improve pupils' academic outcomes when compared with other interventions, and can narrow the disadvantage attainment gap.	2.a. Ensuring any professional development is focused on a shared responsibility for improving outcomes for all pupils. 2.b. Involving colleagues (particularly school leaders) in the selection of professional development priorities and approaches to ensure alignment with wider school improvement priorities.
2.3. Effective professional development is likely to involve a lasting change in teachers' capabilities or understanding so that their teaching changes.	2.c. Diagnosing what teachers know and can do; starting professional development from that point and adapting the approach based on the teachers' developing expertise, and applying an understanding of the typical differences between novice and expert teachers.
2.4. Professional development should be developed using a clear theory of change, where facilitators understand what the intended educational outcomes for teachers are, and how these will subsequently impact pupil outcomes. Ideally, they should check whether teachers learn what was intended.	2.d. Identifying and focussing on the essential knowledge, skills and concepts of teaching a particular subject within a particular phase/domain and then planning activities that focus teachers' thinking on these essential components.
2.5. Whilst professional development may need to be sustained over time, what the time is used for, is more important than the amount.	2.e. Sequencing and revisiting components to ensure all teachers secure foundational knowledge before encountering more complex content.
2.6. More effective professional development is likely to be designed to build on the existing knowledge, skills and understanding of participants.	2.f. Anticipating teacher misconceptions (e.g. about how pupils learn or effective teaching).
2.7. The content of professional development programmes	2.g. Breaking down complex CPD objectives into constituent components and scaffolding tasks around them, whilst ensuring

should be based on the best available evidence on effective pedagogies and classroom interventions and aim to enhance capabilities and understanding in order to improve pupil outcomes.

2.8.   Teachers are more likely to improve if they feel that they working within a supportive professional environment, where both trust and high professional standards are maintained.

2.9.   Supportive environments include having the time and resource to undertake relevant professional development and collaborate with peers, and the provision of feedback to enable teachers to improve. They also include receiving support from school leadership, both in addressing concerns and in maintaining standards for pupil behaviour.

that teachers can reconstruct the components back into a whole through their understanding of the underlying principles behind a particular approach.

2.h.   Aligning professional development with subject, phase and domain specific curriculum materials to ensure generic components are applied appropriately across the curriculum.

2.i.   Using assessment information to check whether teachers learned what was intended; are implementing the intended approaches; whether it is having the intended impact upon pupils; and whether curricula are being adapted and improved over time as a result, as aligned to school improvement priorities.

2.j.   Drawing on sources of external expertise alongside internal expertise – particularly where that expertise supports improvement in subject knowledge.

Avoid creating unnecessary workload by:

2.k.   Making use of well-designed frameworks and resources instead of creating new resources (e.g. sources of subject knowledge, the Early Career Framework and associated core induction programme for early career teachers, ITT Core Content Framework, suite of National Professional Qualifications).

2.l.   Ensuring that any professional development time is used productively and that colleagues perceive the relevance to their work.

Avoid common teacher assessment pitfalls by designing approaches that:

	2.m. Ensure formative assessment tasks are linked to intended outcomes. 2.n. Draw conclusions about what teachers have learned by reviewing patterns of performance over a number of assessments. 2.o. Use multiple methods of data collection in order to make inferences about teacher quality.

Three – Delivering Effective Professional Development

Learn that…	Learn how to…
3.1. Professional development is likely to be more effective when design and delivery involves specialist expertise from a range of sources. This may include internal or external expertise. 3.2. Teacher developers should choose activities that suit the aims and context of their professional development programme. Successful models have included regular, expert-led conversations about classroom practice, teacher development groups and structured interventions. However, these activities do not work in all circumstances and the model should fit the educational aims, content and context of the programme. 3.3. All schools with early career teachers undertaking statutory induction must adhere to the regulations and relevant statutory guidance. 3.4. School staff with disabilities may require reasonable adjustments; working closely with these staff to understand barriers and identify effective approaches is essential.	**Deliver effective professional development by:** 3.a. Providing clarity on where content fits into school improvement priorities and, where appropriate, a wider curriculum for professional development. 3.b. Choosing appropriate development approaches including modelling, explanations and scaffolds, acknowledging that novices need more structure, support and exemplification. 3.c. Narrating thought processes and debriefing experiences to build teachers' metacognition (e.g. narrating what the expert teacher is seeing, thinking and doing when they are planning or observing teaching). 3.d. Ensuring that time is protected for teachers to plan, test and implement new, evidence-informed ideas. 3.e. Developing and leading a team of colleagues who can facilitate a range of professional development approaches. 3.f. Ensuring that colleagues are able to continually develop specialist subject, phase and domain expertise. 3.g. Making reasonable adjustments that are well-matched to teacher needs (e.g. to content, resources and venue). **Plan, conduct, and support colleagues to conduct, regular, expert-led conversations (which could be referred to as**

	mentoring or coaching) about classroom practice by:
	3.h. Building a relationship of trust and mutual respect between the individuals involved.
	3.i. Tailoring the conversation to the expertise and needs of the individual (e.g. adapting conversations to be more or less facilitative, dialogic or directive).
	3.j. Using approaches including observation of teaching or a related artefact (e.g. videos, assessment materials, research, lesson plans), listening, facilitating reflection and discussion by asking clear and intentional questions, and actionable feedback with opportunities to test ideas and practise implementation of new approaches.
	3.k. Where appropriate, creating opportunities to co-observe a lesson segment, exploring and modelling what a teacher with a particular area of expertise sees and thinks.
	Play a formal role for trainee and early career teachers by:
	3.l. Applying, where relevant, an understanding of the Early Career Framework, the ITT Core Content Framework, the Teachers' Standards and the Standard for Teachers' Professional Development to the school's training and induction offer.
	3.m. Understanding the roles and responsibilities within the induction process and ensuring early career teachers access their statutory entitlements.
	3.n. Contributing to a programme of professional development for mentors, trainee and early career teachers that satisfies the statutory requirements and aligns effectively with other

	programmes of professional development activity within the school.

Four – Implementation

One of the characteristics of effective schools, in addition to *what* they implement, is *how* they put those approaches into practice. This section sets out some important principles of implementation: the process of making, and acting on, effective evidence-informed decisions. The principles and activities can be applied to a range of different school improvement decisions - programmes or practices; whole school or targeted approaches; internally or externally generated ideas. The statements should be treated as guiding principles and activities, rather than as a rigid set of steps.

Learn that…	Learn how to…
4.1. Implementation is an ongoing process that must adapt to context over time, rather than a single event. It involves the application of specific implementation activities and principles over an extended period (e.g. implementation planning, ongoing monitoring).	**Plan and execute implementation in stages by:** 4.a. Ensuring that implementation of professional development is a structured process where school leaders actively plan, prepare, deliver and embed changes. 4.b. Making a small number of meaningful strategic changes and pursuing these diligently, prioritising appropriately.
4.2. Successful implementation requires expert knowledge of the approach that is being implemented and the related area of practice (e.g. behaviour), which is shared amongst staff.	4.c. Reviewing and stopping ineffective practices before implementing new ones.
4.3. Implementation should involve repurposing existing processes and resources (e.g. governance, data collection) rather than creating a separate set of procedures.	**Make the right choices on what to implement by:** 4.d. Identifying a specific area for improvement using a robust diagnostic process, focusing on the problem that needs solving, rather than starting with a solution.
4.4. Effective implementation begins by accurately diagnosing the problem and making evidence-informed decisions on what to implement.	4.e. Providing credible interpretations of reliable data that focus on pupils' knowledge and understanding.
4.5. Thorough preparation is important: time and care spent planning, communicating and resourcing the desired	4.f. Examining current approaches, how they need to change

changes provides the foundation for successful delivery. Teachers and leaders should keep checking how ready their colleagues are to make the planned changes.

4.6. Implementing an approach with fidelity (i.e. as intended) increases the chance of it impacting positively on school practice and pupil outcomes. Any approach should specify which features of the approach need to be adopted closely and where there is scope for adaptation.

4.7. A combination of integrated activities is likely to be needed to support implementation (e.g. training, monitoring, feedback) rather than any single activity. Follow-on support (e.g. through high-quality coaching) is key to embedding new skills and knowledge developed during initial training.

4.8. Delivery of a new approach is a learning process – expect challenges but aim for continuous improvement. Monitoring implementation is an essential tool in identifying, and acting on, problems and solutions.

4.9. The confidence to make good implementation decisions is derived, in part, from confidence in the data on which those decisions are based. Reliable monitoring and evaluation enable schools to make well-informed choices, and to see how their improvement efforts are impacting on teacher knowledge, classroom practices and pupil outcomes.

4.10. A school's capacity to implement an approach is rarely static (e.g. staff leave, contexts change). Sustained implementation requires leaders to keep supporting and rewarding the appropriate use of an approach and check

and the support required to do so.

4.g. Adopting new approaches based on both internal and external evidence of what has (and has not) worked before (e.g. pupil outcome data and research-based guidance).

4.h. Ensuring it is suitable for the school context, recognising the parameters within which the change will operate (e.g. school policies) and where the school is in its development trajectory (e.g. addressing any significant behaviour problems would be an immediate priority).

4.i. Assessing and adapting plans based on the degree to which colleagues are ready to implement the approach (e.g. current staff motivation and expertise).

Prepare appropriately for the changes to come by:

4.j. Being explicit about what will be implemented, and the overall desired outcomes.

4.k. Specifying the elements of the approach that appear critical to its success (i.e. the 'active ingredients') and communicating expectations around these with clarity.

4.l. Developing a clear, logical and well specified implementation plan, and using this plan to build collective understanding and ownership of the approach.

4.m. Using an integrated set of implementation activities that work at different levels in the school (e.g. individual teachers, whole school changes).

it is still aligned with the overall strategy and context.

4.11. Implementation benefits from dedicated but distributed school leadership. Senior leaders should provide a clear vision and direction for the changes to come. At the same time, implementation is a complex process that requires feedback from staff and shared leadership responsibilities.

4.12. Implementation processes are influenced by, but also influence, school climate and culture. Implementation is easier when staff feel trusted to try new things and make mistakes, safe in the knowledge that they will be supported with resources, training, and encouragement to keep improving.

Deliver changes by:

4.n.   Managing expectations and encouraging 'buy-in' until positive signs of changes emerge.

4.o.   Monitoring implementation (including by clearly assigning and following up on the completion of critical tasks) and using this information to tailor and improve the approach over time (e.g. identifying a weak area of understanding and providing further training).

4.p.   Reinforcing initial training with expert follow-on support within the school.

4.q.   Prioritising the 'active ingredients' of the approach until they are securely understood and implemented, and then, if needed, introducing adaptations.

Sustain changes by:

4.r.   Using reliable monitoring and evaluation to review how the implementation activities are meeting the intended objectives and continue to align with school improvement priorities.

4.s.   Continuing to model, acknowledge, support, recognise and reward good approaches.

4.t.   Treating scale-up of an approach as a new implementation process (e.g. from one department to another).

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