National Professional Qualifications framework review: call for evidence

Government response

July 2025

Contents

Introduction

National Professional Qualifications (NPQs) are a national suite of leadership qualifications designed to support the professional development of teachers and leaders. They are based on the best available evidence and best-practice of teaching and leadership in education. The NPQ frameworks can be found here: National professional qualifications frameworks - GOV.UK.

In 2021, the NPQ frameworks were reformed in collaboration with the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) who independently reviewed the frameworks to ensure they drew on the best available evidence and that this evidence was interpreted with fidelity.

However, evidence is not static, and insights evolve. The department is reviewing the frameworks to ensure they are based on the most up-to-date, best available evidence and best practice of teaching and leadership in education. Further information on the NPQ framework review can be found here: National professional qualifications framework review - GOV.UK.

As part of this process of reviewing the frameworks, the department launched a call for evidence on 27 March 2025, seeking recent, relevant and high-quality research that may inform updates to the following frameworks only: Headship (NPQH), Senior Leadership (NPQSL) and Executive Leadership (NPQEL).

Alongside the call for evidence survey, the department published guidance for respondents (27 March 2025) outlining instructions for submitting responses.

The department shared the call for evidence survey with a wide range of stakeholders, such as schools and unions. The department also publicised this call for evidence survey through a range of communication channels, including the weekly education setting update. The call for evidence closed on 16 May 2025.

Summary of responses received

The department asked respondents to complete a call for evidence survey form for each evidence source submission. Many responses included multiple sources which meant that the number of sources received exceeded the total number of responses.

The department received 159 individual submission responses. The 159 submission responses included 200+ different insights, which included a range of evidence studies and other sources of information.

A small number of studies were discounted for further consideration because they:

- Linked websites rather than specific sources.
- Included anecdotal or unverified sources.
- Repeated sources that are already included in the current NPQ frameworks.
- Contained duplicate submissions.

All insights received through this call for evidence will be taken into account when reviewing the NPQ suite. For those sources which are not considered for use in updating the frameworks they will still be recorded for consideration as part of our wider stakeholder engagement. Annex A includes a list of the 179 studies that were retained after the initial screening.

The department received responses from a wide range of organisations such as: school leaders and teachers, local authorities, multi-academy trusts, academic researchers and research organisations (e.g., universities and consultancies), pedagogy and education experts, What Works Centres and Think Tanks, education charities, and private organisations, and public bodies that commission and/or review education research.

Governance response and next steps

The department is appreciative and thankful to all individuals and organisations who took the time to formally respond and submit research studies for consideration.

The department is now working closely with the EEF and other external experts to review the responses which will inform decision making when updating the frameworks.

Your views matter and are important to the department at all stages of the formal review of the existing NPQ suite. This first call for evidence was an evidence gathering exercise and is one part of this review process. The department is openly engaging in multiple forums to ensure that a wide range of views are considered when reviewing and updating the NPQ suite. Examples of ongoing engagement include but are not limited to forums, focus groups and roundtables with individuals and organisations such as unions, NPQ providers, teaching school hubs and NPQ participants.

The department will continue with ongoing engagement throughout the review period. Engagement in Autumn will particularly focus on how well the specialist NPQ frameworks are supporting the needs of teachers and leaders. The department plans to hold further roundtable and focus group discussions. Further information will be made available in due course.

If you have any insights to share, or would like to request further information about potential opportunities for engagement, please get in touch with us through our mailbox: npq.insights@education.gov.uk.

The department will publish further details on the call for evidence for the remaining specialist NPQs in Autumn/Winter 2025.

Annex A: study list

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