National Professional Qualification for Headship

Guidance for Applicants and Sponsors

Outstanding Leaders Partnership

Contents

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1. About NPQH

The National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) is designed for those who are, or are aspiring to become, a Headteacher or head of school with responsibility for leading a school. This includes those who are, or are aspiring to be, a head or head of school with cross-school responsibilities e.g. a National Leader of Education (NLE).

Successful applicants must be highly motivated to become a Headteacher, no more than 12 to 18 months from applying for headship posts, and, if not already in post, ready to take up a headship as soon as they graduate.

2. NPQH Content and Assessment Framework

Content Areas

There are six content areas for NPQH, which set out what a leader should know or be able to do. The six content areas are common to each NPQ level, but the knowledge and skills within them increases in sophistication, depth and breadth progressively through the qualification levels. They are:

- Strategy and Improvement
- Teaching and Curriculum Excellence
- Leading with Impact
- Working in Partnership
- Managing Resources and Risks
- Increasing Capability

Each content area contains a series of 'Learn how to' and 'Learn about' statements linked to specific assessment criteria. The Outstanding Leaders Partnership has developed provision that covers all of the knowledge and skills in the 'Learn how to' and 'Learn about' columns, for the NPQH. A trainee head's knowledge and skills will then be assessed through the corresponding assessment criteria and assessment tasks, covered below.

Leadership Behaviours

There are seven leadership behaviours, common to each NPQ level, which set out how the best leaders operate. They are:

- Commitment
- Collaboration
- Personal Drive
- Resilience
- Awareness
- Integrity
- Respect

OLP will help evaluate a candidate's strength against each of the behaviours at the beginning of the training, and help develop these behaviours during the course of study.

Leadership behaviours will not be assessed through assessment criteria or assessment tasks.

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3. The Qualification

OLP's NPQH training is designed as a blended learning experience, consisting of face-to-face events and online courses supported by individual research and development, and application of leadership learning. This will include leading a change programme in the candidate's own school and designing an action plan to address a placement school's current and/or projected resource and capability challenges (see below). Candidates will be assigned a personal coach for individual support. Candidates will need to be supported in their own school by a sponsor who will be closely involved in supporting the candidate's application to join the qualification, their subsequent development and in the final assessment process.

Through a partnership with the University of Chester, candidates will be able, should they wish, to use the NPQH to contribute to a Masters in Educational Leadership. To support this, the initial 360° diagnostic will link to assessment requirements and working at Masters Level (see below).

Progress will be tracked against key milestones to assist candidates in meeting the full requirements of the course and achieving the NPQH. An Online Tutor will track progress and provide an important point of reference for support and guidance throughout the qualification.

4. Assessment Criteria

For each content area, there are corresponding assessment criteria setting out the standards against which candidates will be assessed. These are listed by content area and by assessment task. OLP will assess against the NPQH assessment criteria, through a series of defined assessment tasks using the mark scheme provided by the DfE.

The mark scheme **will not** name individual pieces of research or examples that must be referred to; rather candidates will be expected to draw on the relevant bodies of research or examples that relate to the nature of their project(s).

5. Assessment Tasks

For NPQH, these consist of two projects, one of which must be based on the candidate's experiences during a 9-day placement in another school.

OLP will support candidates in the identification of a placement school to undertake their project work.

Whilst these tasks define the key parameters for a project (word count, duration etc.), OLP will work with candidates to agree an appropriate topic, based on their current school environment, and that of their placement school.

6. NPQH Assessment Tasks Description

Project Theme

1. Leading a whole-school change programme (4,000 words)
2. Designing an action plan to meet my placement school's resourcing and capability needs (2,500 words)

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Content Areas Assessed

Project 1 (Own school)	Project 2 (Placement school)
Strategy and Improvement	Managing Resources and Risks
Teaching and Curriculum Excellence	Increasing Capability
Leading with Impact	
Working in Partnership	

Task 1 – Candidates must:

- Lead a change programme at whole-school level, lasting at least 2 terms, to improve pupil progress and attainment.
- Present the plan to the governing board prior to implementation, and gather feedback.
- Submit a written account of the project, which aims to evidence the criteria indicated. This should cover the design, implementation and evaluation of the project.
- Submit supporting evidence where indicated. Supporting evidence must be concise and directly related to the candidate's project and corresponding assessment criterion.
- Not exceed 4,000 words, excluding supporting documents or annexes.

Task 2 – Candidates must:

- Undertake a placement in a contrasting school (for example, by performance, pupil profile, geography etc.), lasting at least 9 working days.

- Research the placement school's current and/or projected resource and capability challenges, and design an action plan to address these.

- Present the plan to the placement school's governing board and gather feedback.

- Submit a written account of the project to OLP for assessment, which aims to evidence the criteria indicated.

- Submit supporting documents/material as evidence where indicated below. Supporting evidence must be concise and directly related to the candidate's project and corresponding assessment criterion.

- Not exceed a total word count of 2,500, excluding supporting documents or annexes.

7. Readiness to Apply

The application process has been designed to help candidate's self-assess their readiness for NPQH in terms of the six content areas. Candidates are also asked to self-assess their experience, ability and impact on whole school improvement with regard to their two strongest content areas. Candidates will use sources of information such as performance management targets, discussions with their Headteacher and external professionals as appropriate in order to inform their decision about whether or not to apply for NPQH.

While the candidate's sponsor has to endorse the candidate's self-assessment in relation to the content areas, they must also assess the candidate against the seven leadership behaviours. It will be useful for

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candidates to complete this exercise themselves in advance of making an application in order to judge their readiness.

It will be for OLP to make an overall assessment of a candidate's readiness and to confirm acceptance on to the qualification. By taking themselves through the application process and discussing their professional readiness with their sponsor, candidates will get a feel for the requirements of headship and the qualification. This will help to establish a baseline for their professional journey towards NPQH. This will be further developed with the 360° leadership diagnostic that candidates will complete at the start of the qualification that will in turn help them to establish milestones against which they will be able to judge their progress towards the qualification.

OLP will deliver online briefings and workshops to assist candidates in assessing their readiness for NPQH and completing the application process.

8. Working at Masters Level

The 360° leadership diagnostic will include a section to be completed by those in a position to comment on a candidate's knowledge, skill and understanding. These are therefore likely to be their peers and seniors. This will cover judgements regarding:

- Commitment to research and self-management of non-facilitated leadership activity
- Critical review, analysis and evaluation
- Challenge: priority identification and clear articulation of learning
- Enquiry to support leadership decisions and judgments
- Application of learning to develop leadership practice
- Self-direction, originality, creativity and innovation in tackling and solving problems
- Critical understanding and knowledge of research techniques, current insights in to professional practice
- Dealing systematically and creatively with complex issues
- Use initiative and take responsibility
- Make decisions in challenging situations
- Communicate effectively with colleagues and a wider audience, in a variety of media

9. Who should be a Sponsor?

The nature and content of the leadership framework strongly suggests that a candidate's sponsor should be someone with a detailed and thorough professional knowledge of their work and professional characteristics as well as the demands of headship, the associated leadership behaviours and the requirements of the content areas.

10. Making an Application for NPQH

Applications for NPQH must be made online via the OLP website (**www.outstandingleaders.org/qualifications/npqh**). Candidates and their sponsors are required to complete an application form, that must uploaded and submitted alongside the candidates contact details and school information.

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Application form overview

1. Applicants are asked to self-assess their experience, ability, and impact in the six NPQH Content Areas using the following scale:

Little or no experience of the content area at whole school level	1
Developing experience of the content area through membership of senior leadership teams or external bodies and organisations	2
Developing direct experience and responsibility for the content area with clear potential to apply the 'Learn how to' and 'Learn about' statements to ensure maximum impact on whole school improvement	3
Substantial experience and proven ability and impact on whole school improvement in the content area	4

2. Applicants must then provide a brief outline of their experience and performance as a senior leader by selecting their two strongest content areas and outlining the impact and positive difference they have made. This must be supported by quantifiable evidence. This is particularly important as it will provide key information, verified by their sponsor, to help assess their readiness for NPQH.

3. The applicants sponsor must then assess the applicant against the seven NPQH Leadership Behaviours using the following scale:

The applicant has significant weaknesses in this leadership behaviour	1
The applicant needs to focus on some aspects of this leadership behaviour in order to develop into an effective Headteacher	2
The applicant has many strengths with regards to this behaviour with some aspects that need to be improved further in order to become an effective Headteacher	3
The applicant excels with regards to this behaviour	4

4. The applicant and their sponsor are required to sign a declaration at the end of the form.

What happens next?

Candidate applications will be scored using the assessment scales copied above. To be accepted on the qualification, applicants and their sponsors will need to demonstrate that the applicant has the capability to meet the requirements of the six content areas over the course of the qualification. The scoring will enable a judgement to be made as to whether applicants will be able to address any aspects of the leadership behaviours needed to be an effective Headteacher. Applicants will need the full support of their sponsor to be accepted onto the qualification.

If successful, candidates will be notified and sent details of the next steps. If an application is considered to be borderline or not demonstrating readiness for NPQH, the application will be referred to a regional moderator who will contact the applicant's sponsor for further information, or clarification of issues as appropriate. The regional moderator will judge whether or not an applicant is to be accepted onto the qualification and they will be informed accordingly. If unsuccessful, applicants will be provided with developmental feedback to assist them with any future applications. Candidates will also be able to appeal the outcome of their application.

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Appendix 1: Content & Assessment Framework

Content Area 'Learn how to' and 'Learn about' statements linked to Assessment Criteria

Strategy and Improvement			
Learn how to	**Learn about**	**Assessment Criteria**	**Tested in**
Anticipate changes in the external and strategic environment	Horizon-scanning and drivers of political, social, economic, technological, legal and environmental change	1.3.1 Analyses the implications of changes in the external and strategic environment and applies findings to own plans	Task 1
Develop an evidence-based organisational strategy, in collaboration with the governing board	Critical thinking, statistical and data analysis tools, techniques and concepts that support decision-making and strategy development	1.3.2 Deploys critical thinking and statistical and/or data analysis tools, techniques and concepts during the design of own plans	Task 1
	Data collection best practice, including the principles and recommendations identified by the **Independent Teacher Workload Review Group** and **clarification of Ofsted inspection requirements**		
	The role of the governing board in strategy development, including the benefits of working with a visionary and robust governing board	1.3.3 Collaborates with the governing board during the design and implementation of plans, describing the benefits of doing so	Task 1
Lead a successful whole-school change programme	Research into, and examples of, the effective leadership of change, drawn from a range of schools and non-school contexts	1.3.4 Analyses research into, and examples of, the leadership of change, drawn from a range of schools and non-school contexts, and applies findings to the design and own leadership of plans	Task 1

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Teaching and Curriculum Excellence			
Learn how to	Learn about	Assessment Criteria	Tested in
Lead and grow excellent teaching in a school	Research into, and examples of, the leadership of excellent teaching, domestically and internationally, including **The National standards of excellence for headteachers**	2.3.1 Analyses a range of domestic and international research into, and examples of, the leadership of teaching and applies findings to own plans	Task 1
	The benefits of involvement in Initial Teacher Training in terms of teaching quality (for example, through extended mentoring opportunities)		
	Statutory curriculum requirements and examples of how freedoms have been used to improve pupil progress and attainment		
	The benefits, characteristics and examples of knowledge-rich curricula (for example, a sequential maths curriculum)		
	Tools and techniques to improve teaching quality across several schools (for example, through coaching and mentoring, designation as a Teaching School Alliance or the effective use of textbooks to support consistently high quality teaching)		
Support pupils of all backgrounds, abilities and particular needs in the school to achieve high standards, including Pupil Premium, SEND, EAL or the most able pupils	Research into, and examples of, whole-school improvement strategies in relation to progress, attainment and behaviour, drawn from a range of schools, including interventions targeted at disadvantaged pupils or those with particular needs (for example, the **EEF's toolkit on teaching and learning**)	2.3.2 Designs, leads, implements and evaluates an evidence-based change programme that improves pupil progress and/or attainment at whole-school level 2.3.3 Evaluates, monitors and responds to the needs and performance of all pupils in a school, including through provision for groups of pupils with particular needs	Task 1 **Supporting document required:** Pupil performance data
	The implications of the Equality Act 2010 for all pupils		
	The requirements on schools to publish a SEN Information Report		
	Best practice in planning, commissioning and monitoring Alternative Provision		

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Leading with Impact			
Learn how to	Learn about	Assessment Criteria	Tested in
Distribute responsibility and accountability throughout the school to improve performance	Research into the effectiveness of different leadership models or styles, including the distribution of responsibility and accountability	3.3.1 Analyses the effectiveness of different models of leadership, drawn from schools and non-school contexts, including the distribution of accountability and responsibility	Task 1
Be an inspiring leader in a range of different situations	Examples of how different leadership models or styles have been deployed to achieve different objectives (for example, in response to different stakeholders, time pressures or priorities), drawn from a range of schools and non-school contexts	3.3.2 Adapts or tailors their leadership style to lead effectively in different situations	Task 1 **Supporting document required:** Sponsor comments
Communicate and negotiate with different people effectively to make progress on objectives	Tools and techniques for gathering and analysing the perspectives, priorities and motivations of stakeholders	3.3.3 Analyses stakeholder views systematically and applies this understanding to communicate, negotiate or persuade	Task 1 **Supporting document required:** Presentation recording and feedback
	Research into negotiation and persuasion techniques/strategies		
	Examples of communications/stakeholder engagement strategies, including the use of media, drawn from a range of schools and non-school contexts	3.3.4 Evaluates different communications/ stakeholder engagement strategies and applies findings to the design and implementation of own communications/ stakeholder engagement strategy	Task 1 **Supporting document required:** Comms / Stakeholder engagement strategy

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Working in Partnership			
Learn how to	Learn about	Assessment Criteria	Tested in
Use different models of partnership working to improve educational provision, sustain a culture of mutual challenge and learn from others (including parents/carers, the wider community and other organisation)	Different models of partnership working/ collaboration and why these have been adopted in different circumstances (for example, to develop or share best practice) drawn from a range of schools and non-school contexts	4.3.1 Analyses the school's strengths and weaknesses and initiates relevant partnerships/collaborations to improve school capability	Task 1
	Guidance and examples of best practice in the joint commissioning of services (for example, **the SEND Code of Practice** on commissioning across education, health and social care)	4.3.2 Analyses different models of partnership working/opportunities for collaboration and their relevance to own plans	
Lead an effective partnership which brings benefits to the school and wider education system, particularly in their school's area(s) of expertise or specialism	Opportunities to support other schools (for example, through sponsorship, working with/becoming a teaching school, NLE status and the identification and development of potential SLEs)	4.3.3 Exploits opportunities to support other schools, through collaboration and partnership in own school's area(s) of expertise	Task 1

Managing Resources and Risks			
Learn how to	Learn about	Assessment Criteria	Tested in
Balance a school's strategic or educational priorities with financial efficiency	Strategic financial planning techniques, including curriculum-led budgeting based on a 3-5 year strategy	5.3.1 Analyses school's resourcing challenges in terms of finances, staffing, teacher workload and educational resources, and designs plans to address these	Task 2 **Supporting document required:** Curriculum-led budget
	Examples of how a range of schools and other organisations have generated additional income (for example, through additional site use)		
		5.3.2 Formulates a curriculum-led budget aligned to plans	
Implement accountability arrangements to manage resources and risks effectively and in line with statutory requirements (where applicable, fulfilling the Accounting Officer role as defined in the Academies Financial Handbook)	The benefits of strong accountability, including the importance of non-executive oversight	5.3.3 Evaluates the effectiveness of school's accountability arrangements for managing resources and risks, recommending improvements where necessary to deliver plans successfully	Task 2
	Examples of resource and risk management arrangements drawn from a range of schools, including internal controls (for example, schemes of delegation, tolerances and risk appetite, internal and external reporting and scrutiny)		
	The requirements of the financial accountability framework, as set out in the Academies Financial Handbook		
	A school's statutory requirements in relation to risk assessment, employment, procurement and safeguarding (including the Prevent Duty), and underpinning processes (for example, risk audits and assessment, collective bargaining, recruitment, redundancy and contract management)		

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Increasing Capability			
Learn how to	Learn about	Assessment Criteria	Tested in
Hold all staff to account for performance using performance management, appraisal, misconduct and grievance systems	Employment law, practice and processes for managing misconduct, grievances and redundancy (including the Teacher Appraisal Regulations)	6.3.1 Designs systems to evaluate, manage and reward staff performance effectively	Task 2
	Statutory requirements, flexibilities and supporting guidance on setting teachers' pay and conditions		
Create and sustain an environment where all staff are encouraged to develop their own knowledge and skills, and support each other	Sources of high-quality professional development within and outside of the school, beyond formal professional development programmes	6.3.2 Evaluates research into, and examples of, high-quality professional development within and outside of the school, and applies findings to own plans	Task 2
	The main barriers to effective professional development in a school (for example, time, quality and resources) and how these have been overcome		
Anticipate capability requirements or gaps in the school and design strategies to fill them	Workforce and capability planning tools and techniques, drawn from a range of schools (for example, in relation to the knowledge and skills of teaching and non-teaching staff, educational resources or school infrastructure)	6.3.3 Analyses current and future organisational capability challenges and designs plans to address these	Task 2
	Research into, and examples of, effective succession planning, drawn from a range of schools and non-school contexts		

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Appendix 2: NPQ Leadership Behaviours

Commitment	The best leaders are committed to their pupils and understand the power of world-class teaching to improve social mobility, wellbeing and productivity
Collaboration	The best leaders readily engage with, and invest responsibility in, those who are best placed to improve outcomes
Personal Drive	The best leaders are self-motivated and take a creative, problem-solving approach to new challenge
Resilience	The best leaders remain courageous and positive in challenging, adverse or uncertain circumstances
Awareness	The best leaders will know themselves and their teams, continually reflect on their own and others' practices, and understand how best to approach difficult or sensitive issues
Integrity	The best leaders act with honesty, transparency and always in the interests of the school and its pupils
Respect	The best leaders respect the rights, views, beliefs and faith of pupils, colleagues and stakeholders

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