

THE ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FROM PROGRAMME APPLICANTS

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What are the reformed NPQs?

The National Professional Qualifications (NPQs) are a group of widely recognised professional qualifications designed to meet the needs of education leaders in England. NPQs provide extensive training and support for current and aspiring leaders at all levels.

Can I do an NPQ if I've already done one of the previous versions of the qualifications?

Yes. In fact, you can do more than one of the reformed NPQs. If you have previously been enrolled on an NPQ programme (either a legacy or reformed programme) and have withdrawn, you may not be entitled to scholarship funding and consequently self-fund or have it funded by your school.

Am I suitable for the programme?

Specialist NPQs have replaced the old NPQ Middle Leadership and are aimed at existing or aspiring middle leaders and senior leaders with a particular interest or responsibility related to each of the NPQs. For example, the NPQ Leading Teaching is suitable for those with responsibility for curriculum, teaching and assessment in a subject or phase.

Leadership NPQs are aimed at existing and aspiring senior leaders who wish to progress their career, improve outcomes for their organisation and reduce workload for their staff by developing their knowledge and expertise on the things that make the biggest difference within their zone of influence – the culture and climate required to embed the highest quality curriculum with a great teacher in every classroom.

How long to the programmes last for?

Specialist NPQs are 12 months long and leadership NPQs last 18 months.

What type of training will I need to engage with?

Programmes use a blended learning approach which is referred to as synchronous – live training sessions scheduled in sequence and asynchronous – self directed study which participants work through in their own time. Self-directed study is hosted on the Education Development Trust NPQ platform. Participants can engage with this little and often or in a way that best suits them. Units can be started and completed at a different time with no need to cover any self-directed study that they have already completed.

How much time away from school will be required?

The table highlights how the live training is organised. All webinars take place at the end of the school day and require no time away from school. Specialist NPQs have a conference at the start and end of the programme which will require you to be out of school for the day. Leadership NPQs have 4 x 4hr conferences over the 18 months of the programme which take place during the school day.

Participants taking part in an NPQ being led by their own MAT or locality cluster will follow a slightly different sequence of live synchronous sessions. These programmes involve 7 x 2 hr live sessions delivered across the 12 months and deliver partners /facilitators will confirm how they intend to schedule these.

	Leadership NPQs	Specialist NPQs	Notes
Face-to-face conference	4 x 4 hours	2 x 5 hours	Synchronous
Live Webinar	5 x 2 hours	4 x 2 hours	Synchronous

Is there a content overview that I can use to inform which NPQ I apply for?

The graphics below detail the content overview for each of the specialist and leadership NPQs. Content in all of the programmes is considered by DfE as the 'best available evidence' on teacher and leader development and has undergone a thorough review process by the EEF.

Participants will be familiar with some of the content which they may have seen featured in the Early Career Framework.

Further detail can be found in the NPQ content frameworks which can be accessed here: [NPQ content frameworks](#)

Leadership	Leading improvement	Culture	Conditions	Classroom
Senior Leadership	1. Leading improvement	2. Contributing to culture/ improving behaviour	3. Supporting decision-making/ management	4. Working with colleagues to improve teaching/ curriculum/ assessment
Headship	1. Leading improvement	2. Leading culture / behaviour across schools	3. Developing rigorous organisational management/ governance	4. Ensuring effective teaching/ curriculum/ assessment across school
Executive Leadership	1. Leading improvement at scale	2. Developing culture at scale	3. Overseeing effective organisational management/ governance	4. Sustaining effective teaching/curriculum/ assessment at scale
Early Years Leadership	1. Leading improvement	2. Leading culture/ behaviour across setting	3. Developing rigorous structures & organisational management across setting	4. Ensuring effective education & care in every learning environment across setting

Specialist	Leading improvement	Underpinning principles	Developing others	Furthering your specialism	Embedding in practice
Leading Teacher Development	1. Leading improvement	2. Principles of effective teaching	3. Designing effective professional development	4. Teaching & adapting	5. Evaluation & continuous improvement
Leading Teaching	1. Leading improvement	2. Ensuring every teacher knows how pupils learn	3. Developing curriculum within your subject	4. Developing effective classroom practice across your team	5. Improving assessment/ feedback
Leading Behaviour & Culture	1. Leading improvement	2. Effective behaviour management	3. From classroom to school: enabling conditions	4. Complex behavioural needs	5. Working in partnership to deliver changes
Leading Literacy	1. Leading improvement	2. Effective teaching of literacy across the school	3. Contribute to PD linked to teaching, curriculum and assessment across the school	4. Support colleagues to develop language, reading and writing	5. Principles of implementation: making, and acting on evidence-informed decisions

Will the programme increase workload?

Reducing workload is everyone's responsibility and the effectiveness of individual teachers/leaders is the single biggest factor that reduces workload. The reformed NPQs form an important part of the DfE response to workload reduction. There is a strong evidence base underpinning this.

NPQ programme content is disproportionately focused on leaders spending more time doing the things that work for children and improve their learning. An example of this is how the content covers the evidence base on teacher development, effective design of professional development and implementation theory which helps participants to learn about the importance of identifying a small number of priorities and implementing them well.

In addition to the live training, participants will spend on average 30 mins per week on self-directed study that they can engage with flexibly. This does not mean completing a minimum of 30 minutes study every week. Participants are afforded the flexibility to engage in this when it suits them and focus their attention on other priorities at particular points in the academic year when they need to.

Is there a big project that I need to lead during the NPQ?

No. Unlike the legacy NPQ programmes, there is no requirement to lead a school improvement initiative as this can unnecessarily add to workload with limited impact on pupil learning.

There are a series of optional micro-implementation tasks that participants can use to apply theory in practice through direct leadership practice.

How much time will I need to commit to self-directed study?

Participants will spend on average, 30 minutes on self-directed study per week over the duration of the programme. This does not mean completing a minimum of 30 minutes study per week. The programme is designed to be flexible so that participants can engage with self-directed study at the most beneficial time for themselves and also turn their attention away from it at times in the academic year when they need to focus on other priorities.

Will I need to complete a log of my learning or provide written responses to any of the self-directed study?

No. The NPQ learning platform is intuitive and automatically logs the self-directed study that you have completed.

Each self-directed study unit will focus on a particular aspect of the best available evidence from the NPQ content framework. This is organized in the following sections: introduction; what the evidence says; applying theory to practice; checking your understanding. In some units there might be small tasks to engage with that require you to reflect and consider your existing practice but you are not required to make notes or submit any evidence of your learning. There is an optional notepad that you can type or paste anything you find useful but you are not required to do this if you do not wish to.

Does the NPQ take account of what I might already know or am able to do?

Yes. At the start of each block you complete a multiple choice baseline activity that provides you with feedback on your existing knowledge. Whilst the content is carefully organized in sequence in the self-directed study, this means that you can prioritise content that is most useful to you and spend less time on content where your existing knowledge is secure.

How will I be assessed?

During the programme there is no assessment of participants. Your engagement in live training and self-directed study is tracked to ensure that we can support you to benefit from the best NPQ experience and provide additional support as and when you might require it.

At the end of the programme you will need to have completed 90% of the programme to be eligible for the summative assessment. Those participants who do not achieve this simply continue to work through the course content towards the next summative assessment window. Following completion of the programme, participants have two assessment windows to meet the eligibility criteria. If this is not met by this point you will not pass the programme.

The summative assessment is a 1500 word response to a case study. You will be required to apply your learning from the programme to respond to the fictitious scenario and identify what you would do as a school improvement response.

This summative assessment takes place over a 10 day window (8 working days) and is a 'non-invigilated, open-book assessment'. This means that you have access to the online learning platform and all of the learning content in addition to being able to discuss your response with other participants.

Vantage TSH will prepare you really well for the summative assessment. This includes sharing exemplar case studies, modelling how to respond in a live webinar and sharing writing frames to help you construct your response.

We have an extremely high pass rate, for example 100% of our first cohort (75 participants) passed their NPQ.

