



National College for
Teaching & Leadership

National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH)

Guidance for NPQH Sponsors

[November 2014]

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About NPQH

The National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) was redesigned in 2012 to reflect the changes within the educational landscape and the diverse role of headship and of school leadership in general. Headteachers today have new responsibilities and there are radical changes to the way schools interact with each other and other services.

NPQH provides trainee headteachers the confidence, skills and professional knowledge they need to deliver the best for pupils and all members of the school community in their first headship post.

Information on how NPQH is structured is given below.

NPQH is a self-directed programme with a range of essential and elective modules that trainee headteachers will complete on their journey to the final assessment. The programme is designed to:

- take account of individual's professional development needs, prior learning and achievements
- improve and develop their strategic leadership expertise
- develop key leadership and management skills
- provide opportunities to work in different educational contexts
- give individuals the confidence and competence to take up their first headship and make a positive impact on the school, the lives of children, young people and their families.

NPQH competency framework

NPQH is underpinned by a competency framework of sixteen competencies and the assessment process is competency-based. These competencies define the characteristics that are needed to be ready for headship, including knowledge (including specific technical knowledge), skills, motives and ability which are expressed in actions and behaviour:

- Knowledge is what a person knows about a particular area, for example, strategies for improving teaching and learning, ways of managing financial and human resources, and project management for planning and implementing change, performance management and legal issues relating to employment or child protection.

- Skills are things a person knows how to do well to achieve a goal, for example, collecting and analysing data, monitoring progress, using new technologies, planning, communicating, getting community feedback and carrying out accurate self-assessment.
- Motives may be expressed in a person's values such as what he/she believes in or what he/she believes it is important to do (for example, commitment to the pursuit of excellence, working in a collaborative way, insisting on a safe and healthy working environment or through preferences (such as achievement or affiliation), for example, a person with a strong achievement motive will continuously want to achieve and make things better.
- Ability covers both a person's ability to think and act rationally and to use their emotional intelligence, for example, identifying trends in performance, using school self-review to make sound decisions, and the ability to build effective teams. Ability can be affected through the working of the emotions and changed through self-awareness and self-management of these.

These competencies have been identified from research as those needed for successful headship and have been developed in consultation with key stakeholders. The competencies are grouped into three areas and provide the framework for assessment throughout NPQH (see Figure 1):

Strategic leadership: highly effective school leaders have a strong sense of direction: they have a vision for the school and a clear sense of how to achieve their vision. They can lead successfully in a highly autonomous and accountable system.

Educational excellence: highly effective school leaders have the leadership of teaching at the heart of their work: they can lead effectively in a self-improving system to deliver high-quality outcomes for all pupils and students.

Operational management: highly effective heads have very effective systems and processes that are consistently applied by all staff: they manage the school to ensure efficient and effective use of all resources and achieve a fit-for-purpose organisation.

Strategic Leadership	Educational Excellence	Operational Management
Self-awareness and self-management	Delivering continuous improvement	Efficient and effective
Personal drive and accountability	Modelling excellence in teaching	Analytical thinking
Resilience and emotional maturity	Learning focus	Relationship management
Conceptual thinking	Partnership and collaboration	Holding others to account
Future focus	Organisational and community understanding	Developing others
Impact and influence		

Figure 1: Three Areas of Competency

The six competencies tested in the written application are: self-awareness and self-management, personal drive and accountability, delivering continuous improvement, modelling excellence in teaching, learning focus and efficient and effective.

Descriptions of these competencies and statements of why they matter are set out in Appendix 1.

Who can apply for NPQH?

NPQH is the final stage on the pathway to a first headship. It is not for those just seeking really good professional development. Applicants should be highly motivated to headship, and be ready to apply for headship posts on graduation. In other words, when they apply for NPQH:

- **they should be no more than 18 months from being credible to apply for a headship post** and
- **their aspiration should be for their next job to be a headship**

Applicants do not have to be currently working in a school to apply for NPQH. Applications from those working in other organisations will be assessed in exactly the same way as others, and if the applicant is in this situation he/she should provide evidence of his/her capabilities that he/she considers to be transferable to the school context.

How do applicants know whether they are ready to apply?

If they are already working in a school leadership role, as part of their ongoing performance management applicants will be discussing their career aspirations with their headteacher, line manager or professional supervisor. They should also be seeking feedback from others and reviewing evidence associated with their performance management to help them to think about their achievements, strengths and areas for development in relation to the NPQH competency framework.

What part do sponsors play in NPQH?

NPQH sponsors play a critical role in encouraging those with leadership potential to aspire to headship. In NPQH there are a number of formal points of involvement for the sponsor:

Application:

- As part of the written application process you are asked to provide a reference and a statement of sponsorship declaring your support for the applicant. You are asked to verify the applicant's evidence and provide any relevant additional evidence against the NPQH competencies.
- If the applicant is successful at the first stage of the process and is invited to attend the half day assessment event, you will receive an e-mail containing a range of follow up questions about the leadership competencies, which you will be required to complete and submit to NPAP. These will be reviewed by a member of the assessment team and the evidence from this questionnaire will contribute to the decision making process.

Induction:

- Depending on the applicant's choice of licensee you may be asked to contribute to a 360° diagnostic review during the trainee headteacher's leadership development pathway.
- You will be encouraged to attend the induction event and will discuss potential whole school learning activities with the trainee headteacher.

Development stage:

- You will agree a strategically challenging project which addresses the school improvement priorities.
- You will work with the trainee headteacher and the placement school Head to agree school based learning activities in both schools.

Final Assessment:

- At the point when the trainee headteacher presents him or herself for graduation, you will be asked to validate elements of his or her evidence and provide additional evidence against the NPQH competency framework.

In addition to the formal elements outlined above, there is much that you can do to support individuals, both at application stage, and if they are ready for NPQH, during their personal leadership development pathway. The context of the organisation, and the individual's existing job description, will determine the starting point. Of particular help will be:

- Being an ambassador for the role: talking to potential headteachers in your school about what you do and sharing your experience and leadership expertise.

- Identifying and encouraging those with headship potential through performance management.
- Assisting potential applicants in reflecting on their readiness for headship - giving open, honest feedback about strengths and development needs.
- Ensuring that potential applicants have the opportunity to be involved in strategic activities within the school, to complete school-based activities relevant to the essential and elective modules, and to carry out whole-school improvement activities.
- Discussing and agreeing tailored development plans with trainee headteachers, and supporting and coaching them as they work through these plans.
- Providing them with opportunities for working with governors.
- Releasing them from school/organisation for a placement in different school context (minimum of nine days) and for other development opportunities as appropriate.
- Offering pastoral and professional support throughout their time on NPQH.

The commitment to undertake NPQH is significant. As the trainee headteacher attempts to balance the demands of professional development, personal life and job commitments there may be times of pressure and your support may be especially welcome.

NPQH Sponsorship

Your reference and statement of sponsorship

The reference and statement of sponsorship comprises a declaration and several short sections integrated into the application form. It is essential to the application process. The evidence that you provide will be considered alongside that submitted by the applicant.

Applicants are required to ensure their application has the sections comprising the reference and statement of sponsorship completed and are advised that, if they are currently working in a school, they should ask their headteacher to complete these parts of the form. Applicants working in other organisations should obtain this verification and support from their line manager or employer. Acting headteachers should ask the chair of governors to complete the relevant sections of the form.

The sections of the form comprising the reference and statement of sponsorship should not be treated as a confidential reference and you are encouraged to discuss and share this with the applicant before submission. Given the requirements of data protection and freedom of information legislation NCTL would be obliged to release the fully completed application form if requested.

If you are unable to verify and support the application you will need to contact the applicant to discuss the reasons with them as they will not be able to apply without your endorsement.

Completing your part of the application for NPQH

General guidance

To apply for NPQH an applicant needs to submit an application which includes a reference and statement of sponsorship by his/her NPQH sponsor, who will usually be his/her headteacher/line manager. A joint application is submitted using an online process, further details of which are provided later in this guidance. In outline the applicant will email their completed application form to you to enable you to:-

- Complete the reference sections of the application form
- Complete the statement of sponsorship

Applicants are asked to ensure that their completed application form is emailed to you as soon as possible, giving you the maximum time to complete your sections of the form before the deadline.

Sections 1-8 of the application form are to be completed by the applicant. Sections 1-7 contain an additional section for you to validate and verify their evidence and add any quantifiable evidence.

Section 8 is not assessed.

Specific guidance

Registration: you are asked to sponsor and support the applicant throughout NPQH. You will be asked to both validate and add to the evidence provided by the applicant and recommend him/her for NPQH. You are specifically asked to:

- Verify the evidence presented in the application form and provide any relevant additional evidence.
- Give your assessment of the applicant's achievements and the impact of his/her leadership, providing quantified evidence of the positive difference his/her work has had in the organisation and on meeting its goals.
- State that, in your professional opinion the applicant will be ready to take up a headship as his/her next post.
- Commit to supporting the applicant through NPQH, providing the necessary funding (if appropriate) and the time to undertake relevant development activities.
- Your evidence as a sponsor is equally important as it will be assessed alongside the applicant's evidence. **Without adequate supporting evidence from sponsors applicants may be unsuccessful in their application.**
- For your sections, you have a word limit of 200 words

As a sponsor, you are asked to verify the evidence provided by the applicant, provide any relevant additional evidence and give your assessment of the applicant's achievements and the impact of their leadership. Please provide **quantified evidence** of the positive difference their work has had in the organisation and on meeting its goals where appropriate.

If the applicant is providing evidence from another school/organisation they are asked to make arrangements to put you in contact with someone who can verify their evidence to enable you to cover this in your reference. In such circumstances it would be especially helpful if you provide additional evidence of the applicant's demonstration of the competency in their current setting.

Applicants from other contexts

Applicants from other contexts who are currently not working as a school leader are advised that they should make use of these sections to demonstrate:

- how they have prepared for a transition into headship, for example, by citing examples of senior leadership work experiences where they have led at whole-school level. Such examples would be particularly relevant for the competencies of Delivering continuous improvement, Modelling excellence in teaching and Learning focus; and/or
- how the experience and competence gained from their work with schools, for example in an advisory or consultancy role, will be transferable to headship. In this context it would be advantageous to choose examples where there have been opportunities for leading or working directly with school staff over a sufficient period to demonstrate their positive impact in the school; and/or
- how the experience and competence gained in their own context will be transferable to headship, for example, for Efficient and effective if they have led on managing their organisation's resources, as well as demonstrating how they did this and their positive impact they should explain why this has equipped them to lead this aspect of school organisational management.

Help with completing and submitting the reference and statement of sponsorship

Once the applicant has completed their application for NPQH they will email this to you as their sponsor.

Complete the reference and statement of sponsorship follows:

Personal details section

The first section of the form is the personal details section. You are asked to provide:

- your name
- your role (eg headteacher, line manager chair of governors, school improvement partner/local authority adviser)
- your place of work (the name of the school or organisation that you work for)
- the length of time you have known the applicant

Sections 1-7

These sections are described in the applicants guidance and you need to provide your additional evidence within the 200 word limit.

Ensure anonymity: apart from the "sponsor details" please do not include the applicant's name or any other proper names, including names of schools, in the reference and statement of sponsorship because it will be assessed anonymously.

Word limits: The word limits are clearly marked on the form and must be strictly adhered to. Please indicate the number of words used at the end of each section in the space provided on the application form.

Applicants are advised that they should ensure that you have sufficient time to complete the sections of the form for which you are responsible. Although every effort has been made to ensure the process is as straightforward as possible, it is essential to allow sufficient time to meet with the applicant to discuss the application and to verify and support their evidence.

Submitting the application form: once you have completed the reference and statement of sponsorship sections of the document, return to the applicant who will then submit their own application .

You should note that the application will not be considered without the application form being complete including the sponsor's sections that comprise the reference and statement of sponsorship. Late submissions cannot be accepted.

Next steps

Application assessment: Applications will be assessed and submitted to rigorous national moderation procedures. Once these processes are complete, applicants will be notified whether they have been assessed as ready to attend the one-day assessment event which will take place between April 21st and June 12th 2015.

Assessment Event: If applicants are deemed to be ready for the next stage, they will be invited to attend a one-day assessment event which will further assess their motivation, competence and readiness for NPQH. For intake 6, these events will take place between April 21st and June 12th 2015. Prior to the applicant attending the assessment event, you will be contacted by one of our assessors to undertake a 30 minute telephone interview, this conversation will explore evidence based on the competency framework and will contribute to the decision on the applicant's readiness to begin NPQH.

Remember that applicants do not have a confirmed place on NPQH until they have successfully completed the assessment event.

Outcomes from the one-day assessment event will be communicated to applicants on June 22nd 2015.

Funding and scholarship

NCTL will fully fund the costs of the gateway assessment for all applicants, but will not fund any travel or subsistence for these elements of the programme.

NCTL will fully fund the cost of the final assessment for all trainee headteachers who receive a scholarship as a contribution to the licensee's programme fee for the maintained school sector with England, but will not fund any travel or subsistence for these elements of the programme.

In addition, it will award scholarships, as a contribution towards the cost of the individual trainee headteacher's development journey, which will be provided by a regional licensed provider.

The maximum scholarship will be aligned with the College's recommended retail price for the programme and will be £2495.

Scholarship values for Intake 4 will be £2,495 towards programme delivery for a full scholarship and £1,350 for applicants who are awarded a part scholarship. The R.R.P of the NPQH programme is £2,495 although this price is variable by licensee.

Full scholarships will only be available to small schools, this is currently 100 or less pupils on roll as indicated on the schools latest PLASC.

Scholarships assigned to all other eligible groups will be £1350 as a contribution towards the cost.

Independent and overseas applicants will be entitled to the fully funded costs of the gateway assessment, but will not receive any contribution towards either their development journey or their final assessment.

All eligible applicants who are entitled to some level of scholarship will be informed of the allocation in advance of attending the face to face assessment event, this is to ensure that those who have met the initial entry criteria but have not secured a scholarship can opt to self fund in advance of attending the assessment event.

Final scholarships will only be awarded following the successful completion of the assessment event and paid directly to the applicant's chosen regional licensee.

NCTL has awarded licences to a range of regional licensees, their details can be found on our website at <http://www.education.gov.uk/nationalcollege/college-licensees>.

Each licensee is entitled to set their individual programme fees for the development phase of NPQH and any outstanding balance after the scholarship has been awarded will be the responsibility of the trainee headteacher or his/her school or establishment.

Any payments by the trainee headteacher are made directly to the chosen licensee.

Appendix 1 NPQH competencies assessed in the application

For each of the competencies tested at the application stage there follows a description of what the competency looks like in someone ready for headship and a statement as to why it matters.

Self awareness and self management

Someone who is ready for headship is aware of their personal strengths, weaknesses and areas for future development and understands how their own leadership behaviour impacts on others and manages this effectively. They have knowledge of their own emotional triggers, ways to manage them effectively and behave consistently in line with professional and personal values and vision.

Why it matters

Headteachers need to understand their own strengths, weaknesses and areas for development and how their leadership behaviours impact on others so that they can maximise their impact as a leader.

Personal drive and accountability

Someone who is ready for headship is driven and focused on improvement. They are results orientated and seek to achieve the highest standards within their role through setting and striving to achieve their goals. They are self motivated, energetic and willing to take on new challenges to improve their performance. They are decisive, work for the best interests of pupils and account for their performance to the governing body and other stakeholders.

Why it matters

Headteachers need to be motivated to reach the highest possible professional standards, to deliver tough objectives and take on challenges in order to achieve and be accountable for high performance throughout the school.

Delivering continuous improvement

Someone who is ready for headship will have a clear vision of the central importance of leading teaching and learning in terms of driving and sustaining school improvement and creating improved life chances for pupils, their families and their community. They use their skills to quickly gain a full understanding of the overall performance of the school and make a judgment about what requires improvement. They work with the governing body and other stakeholders to successfully identify, strategically plan for and lead delivery of the necessary and appropriate improvement strategies.

Why it matters

Headteachers need to be able to develop vision and to identify the priorities which lead to improvements in teaching and learning and to implement these to achieve a high quality education to improve outcomes for all pupils.

Modelling excellence in teaching

Someone who is ready for headship will have a deep understanding of the characteristics of excellent/outstanding teaching, informed by current research and be able to articulate this effectively to others. They will have a systematic approach to monitoring, make sound judgements about the quality of the teaching and learning across the school, and develop and deliver a wide range of improvement strategies.

Why it matters

Headteachers need to be able to recognise excellence in teaching and be able to demonstrate how teaching can be improved and improvement sustained so that the learning and achievement of all pupils is maximised.

Learning focus

Someone who is ready for headship will be passionate about learning and will embed a culture of learning for all members of the school community and foster equality of access. They have an unswerving belief that schools have a crucial role to play in changing lives and improving life chances and will monitor learning systematically to ensure progress.

Why it matters

Headteachers must have the desire and passion to want to help others to improve themselves and those around them. They must be committed to improving the life chances of all pupils and work with others to ensure that every pupil has the opportunity to succeed.

Efficient and effective

Someone who is ready for headship will ensure that all systems and resources, including financial, human and environmental resources, are used efficiently and effectively to achieve the school's goals and in a way that maximises performance and secures value for money. They are attuned to opportunities that increase the resources available to the school and improve the way the school functions. They monitor the implementation of plans and the effectiveness of organisational structures. They take corrective action where necessary to secure required outcomes and account to the governing body and others for the school's performance. They have a broad understanding of the legal, political and technical knowledge that affect the running of a school and keep up to date with major changes.

Why it matters

Headteachers need to ensure that the school's goals are achieved through deploying resources in the best way and within the planned timeline. They also need to ensure that the school is a 'fit for purpose' organisation with the best systems and processes to achieve the school's goals and that these are kept under review and up-to-date. Headteachers have to take responsibility for the performance of the school and be able to account for this to the governing body and others.



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