

National Professional Qualifications are a voluntary suite of qualifications provides training and support for teachers and school leaders at all levels, from those who want to develop expertise in high quality teaching practice to those leading multiple schools across trusts.

On 13 October, the Department for Education published on GOV.UK new content frameworks to support the reformed suite of National Professional Qualifications –

- National Professional Qualification for Senior Leadership
- National Professional Qualification for Headship
- National Professional Qualification for Executive Leadership
- National Professional Qualification for Leading Teacher Development
- National Professional Qualification for Leading Behaviour and Culture
- National Professional Qualification for Leading Teaching

The Department will shortly be inviting organisations to tender to deliver these qualifications, ahead of first delivery in September 2021.

Q&A

Why has the middle leadership qualification been removed?

- To decide what topics the NPQ suite should cover, DfE consulted widely with teachers and leaders across the sector to establish where there was need and demand to expand existing career pathways and development opportunities for teachers.
- These conversations with the sector suggested that, with the introduction of new specialist NPQs pitched at middle leaders, there would not necessarily be demand for a generic middle leader qualification.

How did DfE decide what topics the specialist NPQs should cover and what should be included in the frameworks?

- The DfE consulted widely with teachers, leaders, and sector experts to establish the areas of focus for the new, specialist NPQs. The discussions showed demand for qualifications at middle leadership level for teachers who wanted to specialise in: leading teaching or curriculum in their subject or phase; improving the behaviour of pupils and their wellbeing; supporting the professional development of other teachers.
- To draft the frameworks, DfE worked closely with a wide group of sector experts. You will see that they have also been drafted to ensure coherency with the Teachers' Standards and the new Headteachers' Standards.

What does this mean for people who have taken/are taking the existing NPQs?

- NPQs are a set of prestigious professional qualifications, that have been widely recognised by the sector for over 20 years. They were first introduced in 1997 with the NPQH, as part of a drive to professionalise the role of running schools, providing specific training for people wanting to become headteachers. Since then the DfE has regularly reviewed and updated the qualifications to ensure they reflect the changing contexts of schools and latest evidence of what works. Each iteration of NPQs builds on the success of the previous ones, always recognising the achievements and abilities of those who have already earned this qualification.
- The current suite of NPQs have been extended until 31 August 2022, to enable participants to complete their courses.

Where can I find the assessment criteria?

- The reformed suite of NPQs will also have a different approach to assessment. The DfE have said that more detail on the assessment of NPQs will be published in the invitation to tender.