



National Professional Qualifications – Suitability and eligibility guidance

This document aims to provide further guidance to Delivery Partners assessing the NPQs and EHCO. Below you will find the following:

- > [NPQ Suitability](#)
- > [NPQ Eligibility](#)
- > [NPQ for Leading Primary Maths programme specific guidance](#)
- > [NPQ for Special Educational Needs Coordinators programme specific guidance](#)
- > [Useful links](#)

NPQ Suitability

This guidance is to support you in assessing the suitability of your applicants for each NPQ.

	Suitable for	Example roles	Not suitable for
<p>Leading Teaching (NPQLT) In 12 months, you will discover what outstanding teaching looks like and use this knowledge to become a high performing leader of teaching</p>	<p>Must be a candidate who has, or is aspiring to have, responsibilities for leading teaching in a subject, year group, key stage or phase. Participants must be in, or have been in, a teaching role.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Head of teaching development/CPD lead > Year group leader > Subject leader > Key stage/phase leader > Head of department > Assistant/deputy head > Headteacher > Head of ITT > Class teacher > LA supply staff <p>Participants must be in, or have been in, a teaching role.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Early Career Teachers (ECTs) > Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) > Non-teaching staff
<p>Leading Behaviour and Culture (NPQLBC) In 12 months, you will gain expertise in behaviour management and discover how to create a culture where staff and pupils can thrive.</p>	<p>Must be a candidate who has, or is aspiring to have, responsibilities for leading behaviour and/or supporting pupil wellbeing in your school. Participants do not have to be in a teaching role to do this NPQ. Those not in a teaching role who have no previous teaching experience may require extra support and further reading; see note below.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Head of teaching development/CPD lead > Year group leader > Subject leader > Key stage/phase leader > Head of department > Assistant/deputy head > SENCo > Pastoral lead > Headteacher > Head of ITT > Class teacher > LA supply staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Early Career Teachers (ECTs) > Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) > Teaching assistants

<p>Leading Teacher Development (NPQLTD)</p> <p>In 12 months, you will gain the knowledge to become a teacher educator and successfully support teachers in your school to expand their skills.</p>	<p>Must be a candidate who has, or is aspiring to have, responsibility for leading other educators to develop. You might support the development of all teachers in your school, trainees or those early in their career. Participants must be in, or have been in, a teaching role.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Head of teaching development/CPD lead > Year group leader > Subject leader > Key stage/phase leader > Head of department > Assistant/deputy head > Headteacher > Head of ITT > Class teacher > LA supply staff <p>May indirectly manage a team of mentors or coaches and their work is focused on supporting ITT, ECTs as well as wider development of all colleagues across the school</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Early Career Teachers (ECTs) > Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) > First time ECT Mentors > Teaching assistants
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<p>Leading Literacy (NPQLL) In 12 months, you will learn the essential knowledge and skills to effectively lead high quality, literacy development and teaching in your school.</p>	<p>Must be a candidate who has, or is aspiring to have, responsibilities for leading literacy across a group of schools, school, year group, key stage, subject or phase.</p> <p>Participants do not have to be in a teaching role to do this NPQ. Those not in a teaching role who have no previous teaching experience should have middle leadership responsibility to influence approaches to literacy teaching across the school, group, key stage or phase.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Head of teaching development/CPD lead > Year group leader > Subject leader > Key stage/phase leader > Head of department > Assistant/deputy head > Headteacher > Head of ITT > Class teacher > LA supply staff > Literacy co-ordinator > Literacy/ English Lead > MAT lead/ Director of subject <p>Participants must be in, or have been in, a teaching role.</p> <p>May lead subject networks across multiple schools/educational settings including early years and sixth forms.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Early Career Teachers (ECTs) > Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) > Teaching assistants
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<p>Leading Primary Mathematics (NPQLPM) In 12 months, you'll become an expert leader of primary mathematics and learn how to embed high-quality mastery maths teaching in your school.</p>	<p>Must be a candidate who has, or is aspiring to have, responsibilities for leading mathematics across a group of schools, school, year group, key stage, subject or phase. Candidates must have some maths mastery training via the Teaching for Mastery programme or a programme equivalent.</p> <p>Candidates must be in a primary school or responsible for educating primary aged pupils.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Primary Head of teaching development/CPD lead > Primary maths/ numeracy leader > Key stage/phase leader > Assistant/deputy head of primary or all-through school > Headteacher of primary or all-through school > Class teacher aspiring to lead mathematics > LA supply staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Early Career Teachers (ECTs) > Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) > Teaching assistants > Secondary school teachers and leaders
<p>Early Years Leadership (NPQEYL) This 18-month programme helps you develop expertise in early years leadership, helping to give all children up to the age of five the best possible start in life.</p>	<p>This qualification is for leaders qualified to at least Level 3 with a full and relevant qualification. They should be, or are aspiring to be, managers of Private, Voluntary or Independent nurseries, staff in school-based or maintained nurseries with leadership</p>	<p>Staff in a state-funded schools including school-based nursery, local authority nursery or staff in key stage 1. State-funded schools do not require a nursery to be an eligible organisation but should reflect on individual aspirations and experience of the EYFS framework.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Early Years/ KS1 phase leader > Assistant/deputy head > Assistant/deputy/ vice principal > Headteacher/ principal > Class teachers aspiring to and close to leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > ECT > Secondary school leaders > Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) > First time ECT Mentors > Teaching assistants > Childminders operating by themselves > Play assistant > Childminder assistant

	<p>responsibility, staff in state-funded schools or childminders with leadership responsibilities.</p> <p>A Level 3 qualification is not mandatory and there may be some instances where it is appropriate for participants without this to take the NPQ. However, they must demonstrate are in a suitable role and organisation to access the programme.</p>	<p>Early Years Practitioners such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Childminders responsible for one or more staff > Room leader > Deputy manager > Assistant manager > Nursery officer > Lead practitioner > Senior practitioner > After school club manager > Childcare manager Play leader 	<p>Additional requirements for Early Years practitioners:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Registered on Ofsted's Early Years Register as Active unless part of a state-funded school/ nursery. 2. Applicants qualified to at least Level 3 or with a full and relevant qualification. A list of qualifications can be found here 	
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<p>NPQ for Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (NPQSENCOs) This 18-month programme helps you become an expert leader of special educational needs and learn how you can build an inclusive culture in your school where all pupils can succeed.</p>	<p>This is a leadership level qualification, primarily for SENCOs, school leaders or aspiring SENCOs.</p> <p>When awarding scholarships, you MUST prioritise current SENCOs who have not done the NASENCO.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Assistant headteacher/Associate assistant headteacher > Deputy headteacher/Vice principal > Head of faculty/ department/subject > Head of year > Head of key stage/early years > Headteacher/ Principal > SENCO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > ECT > Teaching assistants > Higher level teaching assistants
<p>Senior Leadership (NPQSL) This 18-month programme helps you develop your leadership knowledge and expertise to improve outcomes for teachers and pupils in your school.</p>	<p>Must be, or are aspiring to be, a senior leader with cross-school responsibilities. Participants must be at middle leadership or above currently.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Assistant headteacher/Associate assistant headteacher > Deputy headteacher/Vice principal > Head of faculty/ department/subject > Head of year > Head of key stage/early years > SENCO > Head of ITT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > ECT > Class teacher > Headteacher > Executive headteacher
<p>Headship (NPQH) Within 18 months, you will develop the knowledge that underpins expert school leadership apply it to</p>	<p>Must be, or aspire to be, a headteacher or head of school with a responsibility for leading a school. Participants must be</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Headteacher > Head of school > Director of teaching school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > ECT > Class teacher > Director of Learning for any subject/ Head of department/ Head of key stage > SENCO

become an outstanding headteacher.	at senior leadership level or above currently.	> Deputy headteacher/Vice principal/Assistant headteacher	
Early Headship Coaching Offer (EHCO) In 12 months, this programme will help you to settle into your post by giving you access to one-to-one coaching and a toolkit of resources to help you thrive as a leader.	Must be a current headteacher in their first 5 years of headship. They must not have previously withdrawn from the ASO (previous name). Must have completed or be undertaking an NPQ for Headship.	> Headteacher > Head of school > Principal	> Deputy headteacher > Assistant headteacher > Class teacher > Acting headteacher/ Interim headteacher
Executive Leadership (NPQEL) In 18 months, you will develop the expertise you need to become an outstanding executive leader, leading change and improvement across your group of schools or multi-academy trust.	Must be a school leader who is, or is aspiring to be, an executive headteacher or have a school trust CEO role with responsibility for leading several schools. Participants must be in a headteacher role or above currently.	> Executive headteacher > Headteacher/principal > CEO (in first year) > Associate headteacher	> ECT > Class teacher TE > Head of ITT > Deputy Head > Assistant head

Important notes:

- > All participants must register with the DfE for their NPQ or EHCO.
- > Participants from Young Offenders' Institutions must contact the DfE at continuing-professional-development@digital.education.gov.uk to register for their NPQ.
- > Participants working across multiple schools (i.e. they do not work in one school or may be part of a trust central service team) **must be associated with a school** to be eligible for DfE scholarship funding. This enables Ambition Institute to match participants with the DfE NPQ register.

- > Applicable to NPQLBC and NPQLTD: Although we believe that all participants will benefit and gain value from completing an NPQ, the curriculum is designed based on participants being in a classroom. Therefore, participants not in a teaching role will need to do further reading or reflection to make the most of the content. It will also be necessary to speak to any non-teaching candidates to discuss extra support they may require throughout the programme.
- > Participants **do not need to have Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)** to complete an NPQ. Participants without a QTS must have a Teacher Reference Number (TRN) and can [follow guidance to get a temporary TRN](#).

NPQ Eligibility

This guidance is to support you checking applicant eligibility for DfE scholarship funding for each NPQ. You can check the eligibility of schools using [Ambition Institute's Scholarship Checker](#).

The Department for Education will provide full scholarship funding to applicants from publicly funded schools and 16 to 19 education organisations for four programmes: the **NPQ for Headship** and **Early Headship Coaching Offer**, the **NPQ for Leading Primary Maths** and the new **NPQ for SENCOs**.

For all other NPQs, funding to cover the full programme cost will be available to applicants from:

- > The 50% of English schools with the highest proportion of students who attract pupil premium funding.
- > 16-19 education settings identified as having high disadvantage.
- > Highly disadvantaged early years settings (for NPQ in Early Years Leadership only).
- > Accredited Initial Teacher Training providers (for NPQ for Leading Teacher Development only).
- > Returner teachers engaged with the RTTA Support Service can access funding for all NPQs. Applicants should contact Nathalie Guimon at continuing-professional-development@digital.education.gov.uk.

NPQ participants will only be eligible for funding if they meet the role suitability criteria described in Appendix: Table 1. Candidates MUST [register with the Department for Education](#) to confirm their scholarship funding if their organisation is eligible. If they do not register by the Place Accepted deadline, they risk having their scholarship status removed.

There are a limited number of scholarship-funded places. We advise candidates submit their applications as early as possible to secure a scholarship-funded NPQ place. Funding is only available once for each NPQ.

When awarding scholarships for the NPQ for SENCOs programme, you MUST prioritise current SENCOs who have not done the NASENCO.

Candidates who have previously withdrawn or already completed the NPQ programme they are applying to will not be eligible for funding.

Candidates who are not eligible for funding or wish to complete an NPQ where no scholarship-funded places are remaining and meet the role suitability criteria for the programme will be offered the opportunity to self-fund their place on the programme if they apply to join a cohort.

Schools outside of England are not eligible to complete any NPQ with Ambition or its delivery partners.

Local Authority staff must be in a direct teaching role (e.g. supply or peripatetic teachers) and excludes those in advisory or diagnostic roles even if they have a QTS.

See end of document for a full list of eligible organisations.

Programme specific guidance

This section aims to provide further guidance to you to assess the NPQ for Leading Primary Maths and NPQ for Specialist Educational Needs Coordinators as our two newest NPQs.

National Professional Qualification in Leading Primary Maths programme

The NPQLPM is designed for Primary teachers and leaders with responsibility for leading maths across a key-stage or school, or those who want to have this responsibility. This programme asks participants to have a firm grasp of mastery approaches to teaching and embedding high quality mathematics in their school to engage in the programme.

In response to your feedback, we have made some changes to the NPQLPM application form to build greater clarity and try to reduce its length. Some of these questions have been determined by the Department for Education to meet eligibility criteria as set by them.

Eligibility for Leading Primary Maths

Eligibility is what is required to access DfE funding. A participant may enrol on an NPQLPM programme but won't receive funding if they're not 'eligible'.

To be eligible for the NPQ for Leading Primary Maths, the applicant must

- > Be in a state-funded school, other independent special school, virtual school (local-authority-run organisations that support the education of children in care), hospital school or young offender institution
- > Have an understanding of maths mastery approaches
- > Be based in a primary school or educate primary aged pupils if in an all-through school or school with an 'other' age range.
- > If an applicant is unsure they will be eligible for funding, they can reach out to continuing-professional-development@digital.education.gov.uk
- > When registering for their NPQ, the DfE will ask the participant relevant questions including:

Before you can register for this NPQ

You need to be able to demonstrate that you have an understanding of mastery approaches to teaching maths.

You can demonstrate this if you've taken at least one year of the [primary maths Teaching for Mastery programme](#).

Have you taken at least one year of the primary maths Teaching for Mastery programme?

Yes

No

You may be able to demonstrate your understanding of mastery approaches to teaching maths another way

Continue

How can you show your understanding of mastery approaches to teaching maths?

Your provider will ask you for details.

I've taken a course similar to the primary maths Teaching for Mastery programme

Another way
For example, a reference from a professional who has supported your mastery professional development.

or

I cannot show an understanding of mastery approaches to teaching maths

Continue

- > If the applicant selects 'I cannot show an understanding of mastery approaches to teaching maths' they will not be able to register for the NPQ for Leading Primary Maths. Ambition Institute's Admissions team will guide all applicants approved onto our NPQ Central cohorts how to register for the NPQ and encourage DPs to do the same.

Assessing approaches to mastery in mathematics

The NPQLPM application form and applicant guidance aim to support applicants to demonstrate their knowledge of mastery approaches to teaching mathematics in their application. This may be through the following questions:

Question: Tell us about the teaching for maths mastery training you have engaged with.

The applicant has the following options:

Option	Result
I have completed or started the Maths Hub Teaching for Master programme (coordinated by the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics)	Approve this applicant if suitable
I have completed a different teaching for mastery programme	Approve this applicant if suitable
I have received teaching for mastery training in my role or school	Approve if suitable/ review - This applicant needs to demonstrate suitable expertise in the following questions (see questions below).
I have not completed any teaching for mastery training	Investigate/ reject - This applicant might list some programmes or in-school training they have experienced which could have developed their mastery expertise. Look for demonstration of teaching for mastery knowledge in their answers below.

Question: Identify the features of mastery that you apply to your practice with some examples of their impact on pupil learning.

Explain the features of mastery you have a good understanding of. This may include (but is not limited to):

- An understanding of how to design curriculum that is coherent and sequences essential content to support sustained progression over time.
- Lesson design that links to prior learning to ensure pupils can access the new learning and can identify carefully sequenced steps in progression to build a secure understanding.
- Teaching through questioning, tasks, explanations, demonstrations, and discussions enables pupils to think, reason and apply their knowledge to solve problems.
- Use of precise mathematical language to enables all pupils to communicate their reasoning and thinking effectively.
- If a pupil fails to grasp a concept or procedure this is identified quickly and gaps in understanding are addressed systematically to prevent them falling behind.

Question: How have you sought to develop specialist knowledge for the teaching of mathematics? Please name any teaching for mastery programmes you have completed.

For example, any reading, ongoing professional development or working with a local maths hub. Similarly, if the applicant has used teaching for mastery expertise to support and develop their colleagues.

If you feel an applicant has not provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate teaching for mastery expertise, you may wish to contact them directly for more information before rejecting them. You could request this applicant to seek a letter from their local maths hub or the head of their maths department to confirm they have a good grasp of teaching for mastery in maths.

Question: Please explain briefly how your role allows you to access and practise the learning of the NPQ of your choice. Please name any teaching for mastery programmes you have completed.

This question is asked in every NPQ application form to help assess suitability (see 'Suitability for Leading Primary Maths')

Suitability for Leading Primary Maths

Suitability can be broader than eligibility criteria and can be up to the application marker's discretion to some extent. Suitability requirements are designed to ensure the participant will be able to access their NPQ. Assessing suitability should consider:

- > The applicant's role
- > Their ability to apply their learning to their role

If you feel an applicant has not demonstrated suitability, you may wish to contact them directly to request more information before rejecting them.

National Professional Qualification for Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators

Eligibility for Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators

- > Employed in a state-funded school in England
- > This is a mandatory programme for current SENCOs who have not done the National Award for SEN Coordination (NASENCO) and should be completed within their first three years in role. However, the programme remains open for any other applicants who are in suitable roles and interested in the NPQ.
- > Applicants already in the SENCO role **MUST be prioritised for scholarships.**

Suitability for Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators

Applicants should be:

- > A current Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
- > Aspiring to become a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
- > Line managing a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator

This means that the applicant may be in a wide variety of roles from headteacher to classroom teacher. You can find a list of suitable and unsuitable roles in [NPQ Suitability](#).

Assessing the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator application form

To support your assessment of NPQSENCO applications, the application form asks the following questions:

Question: 'What are your motivations for applying?'

Applicants are asked if they are a current SENCO, an aspiring SENCO or if they line manage a SENCO. This may help you prioritise applicants who are current SENCOs where the NPQSENCO is mandatory for them.

Question: 'How long have you been a SENCO?'

We ask this question for applicants who are current SENCOs. This will help you understand if completion of the NPQSENCO is mandatory for the participant.

Question: 'Have you completed or are you completing the National Award for SEN Coordination?'

As above, we ask this question for applicants who are current SENCOs. This will help you understand if completion of the NPQSENCO is mandatory for the participant and they will need to be prioritised for a scholarship.

Question: Please explain briefly how your role allows you to access and practise the learning of the NPQ of your choice.

We ask this question of all our NPQ applicants. It helps you understand your applicant's background, role and responsibilities in a bit more detail.

Useful Links

- > [Ambition Institute: DP Recruitment handbook](#)
- > [Ambition Institute: NPQ Applicant guidance](#)
- > [Ambition Institute: recruitment, selection, and admissions policy](#)

- > [Ambition Institute: NPQ Waitlist Policy](#)
- > [DfE: National Professional Qualification Framework \(from Autumn 2021\)](#)
- > [DfE: Guidance, National Professional Qualifications \(NPQ\) Reforms](#)
- > [DfE: Register for a national professional qualification \(NPQ\)](#)
- > [DfE: Funding for national professional qualifications \(NPQs\)](#)

Establishments eligible for DfE-funded NPQ scholarships	
Academy 16 to 19 sponsor led	Free schools special
Academy 16-19 converter	General Further Education College
Academy alternative provision converter	Hospital schools (includes settings not on GIAS)*
Academy alternative provision sponsor led	Local authority**
Academy converter	Local authority nursery school
Academy secure 16 to 19	Non-maintained special school
Academy special converter	Other Independent Special School
Academy special sponsor led	Pupil Referral Unit
Academy sponsor led	Secure units
Agricultural & Horticultural College (known as 'Land based' on GIAS)	Sixth Form College (General)
Art, Design and Performing Arts College	Sixth Form College (Voluntary Aided)
City technology college	Sixth Form College (Voluntary Controlled)
Community school	Special post 16 institution
Community special school	Studio schools
Foundation school	University technical college
Foundation special school	Voluntary aided school
Free schools	Voluntary controlled school
Free schools 16 to 19	Young Offenders' Institutions (includes settings not on GIAS)
Free schools alternative provision	