

National Professional Qualification for Middle Leaders (NPQML)

➤ What is involved in the NPQML?

As a nationally recognised qualification of your leadership development and professional achievement, the NPQML is robust; you will require significant time and capacity to undertake it. It will help you to develop the skills, knowledge and confidence you need to lead. It combines a diagnostic assessment, face to face sessions, self-guided study and reflection and an improvement project, all supported by a designated coach in your own school.

The NPQML course summary and guided learning hours:

- 12 course modules – 24 hours
- Self-study intersessional tasks – 12 hours
- Coaching – 6 hours
- Online engagement with peers and through the Knowledge Hub platform – 12 hours
- Workplace learning and improvement project – 150 hours

The curriculum framework is built around six content areas and seven leadership behaviours, which are common to all levels of the National Professional Qualifications (NPQ). The knowledge and sophistication, depth and breadth develops progressively through the NPQ levels.

There are six content areas:

- strategy and improvement
- teaching and curriculum excellence
- leading with impact
- working in partnership
- managing resources and taking risks
- increasing capability

There are seven **leadership** behaviours:

- commitment
- collaboration
- personal drive
- resilience
- awareness
- integrity
- respect

Course structure and assessment

The course consists of twelve two-hour modules. In addition, each participant's development will be supported by a Professional Learning Journal, SSAT competency audit tools, intersessional tasks and a school-based coach. All participants will lead a school improvement project lasting at least two terms, aimed at improving pupil progress and attainment and the capability of their team. They will produce a 4,500-word written account and documentary evidence.

Face to face modules

Introduction to the NPQML

2. Vision, values and the moral purpose
3. Leading and managing innovation and change
4. Managing resources and risks
5. Data analysis for performance and progress
6. Evidence based teaching and learning
7. Leading strategic improvement
8. Developing your leadership approach
9. Building a high-performance team
10. Support and challenge – holding yourself and others to account
11. Developing yourself and others
12. Collaboration and partnership

Module objectives:

1. Introduction to the NPQML

Module one prepares delegates for the course and ensures they understand their own leadership development needs. By the end of this module delegates will:

- Understand the structure of the course and what is expected of them
- Be familiar with the online platform
- Have self-assessed against the leadership competencies and the NPQ leadership behaviours
- Have begun to identify possible school improvement projects
- Identified initial priorities for their first coaching session.

2. Vision, values and the moral purpose

Module two brings participants back to their leadership 'why'. They will consider their own vision for their area and how this aligns with the school's vision and priorities. By the end of this module participants will:

- Understand what a vision is and why it is important
- Have reflected on the values and moral purpose that guides and directs their behaviours
- Be able to anchor and sustain their leadership practice through connecting to their moral purpose
- Understand the role of education in addressing disadvantage

3. Leading and managing innovation and change

Module three explores the complex issues involved in leading and managing change. It includes practical tools for effective project management as well as how to handle the emotional aspect of change. By the end of the module participants will:

- Reflect on the theory and practice of leading change in order to lead more effectively
- Have considered the implications for middle leaders of leading in a period of constant change
- Understand the fundamentals of project management
- Reflect on the importance of innovation for strategic improvement – 'doing things differently in order to do them better'
- Apply their learning to leading their school improvement project

4. Managing resources and risks

Module four explores the important leadership responsibilities of managing resources and risks. This includes effective deployment of financial, staffing and educational resources, safeguarding, ensuring pupil and staff well-being. By the end of this module participants will:

- Understand key enablers in efficiently and effectively deploying resources to enhance pupil progress; including curriculum planning, project planning, forecasting and staffing
- Have considered the issues and impact of workload and well-being
- Be familiar with the legal requirements and statutory guidance for safeguarding and health and safety in schools
- Identify and mitigate risks in plans using a risk register
- Produce evidence of their ability to manage a budget, project plan and use a risk register

5. Data analysis for performance and progress

Module five develops participants' management and understanding of performance and pupil progress data at individual and group level, equipping them with practical tools and techniques for analysis. By the end of this module participants will:

- Be familiar with statistical and data analysis concepts (e.g. confidence intervals, statistical significance, sampling, correlation and causation)
- Understand how to evaluate progress, identify trends and define team priorities
- Deploy a range of techniques and tools to manage and analyse performance and pupil progress data (e.g. databases, spreadsheets, formulae, graphs)
- Use the data to monitor particular individuals and groups of learners at risk of underachievement, including disadvantaged learners
- Provide documentary evidence of raw data analysis

6. Evidence based teaching and learning

Module six encourages participants reflect on the importance of curriculum design and developing excellent teaching rooted in evidence. By the end of the module participants will:

- Have analysed research into pedagogical approaches shown to have impact, drawing implications for practice
- Understand the principles of curriculum design and different models
- Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum on offer and how effectively this meets the needs of learners.
- Have engaged with the research on models of pupil assessment and identified how this should inform current and future practice
- Be familiar with the Ofsted handbook for inspection and the clarification of inspection requirements in relation to lesson planning, marking, feedback and collection of pupil performance data

7. Leading strategic improvement

Module seven focuses on the need for a strategic approach to leading improvement. Building on module three, participants will plan for the strategic development of priorities emerging from the data analysis of pupil progress and performance. By the end of this module participants will:

- Engage with the research evidence on improving progress and attainment, including of disadvantaged groups and provision for those with particular needs
- Have learned about the graduated approach to supporting SEND pupils, as set out in the SEND Code of Practice

- Be familiar with sources of research such as the EEF's teaching and learning toolkit
- Understand the principles of action research

8. Developing your leadership approach

Module eight looks at developing your leadership approach to improve effectiveness. It includes the importance of self-awareness and emotional intelligence as well as exploring leadership characteristics and styles. By the end of this module participants will:

- Have reflected on their own personalities, characteristics and behaviours so that they are more self-aware
- Have reflected further on the seven NPQ leadership behaviours: commitment, collaboration, personal drive, resilience, awareness, integrity, respect
- Be familiar with the research on emotional intelligence and understand the impact of behaviour on their teams
- Have explored the impact of different leadership styles and a situational leadership approach
- Have considered the importance of communication and communication styles in leadership, including presenting challenging messages positively
- Understand how their leadership contributes to the organisational culture

9. Building a high-performance team

Module nine looks at the key ingredients to building a high-performance team. By the end of this module participants will:

- Have explored characteristics of high performing teams and dysfunctional teams
- Have reflected on how failures can become powerful learning opportunities
- Have evaluated the effectiveness of teams they lead and considered how they can improve performance
- Be equipped to support a culture that builds strong teams and shares good practice

10. Support and challenge – holding yourself and others to account

Module ten addresses to role of accountability and performance management. By the end of this module participants will:

- Be familiar with the Teachers' Standards
- Understand their role in setting the team culture and expectations
- Have effective strategies and systems for holding others to account, line management and evaluating performance
- Have strategies for managing challenging conversations

11. Developing yourself and others

Module eleven focuses on the need for a growth mindset. We all have the potential to get better and learn new skills. Prioritising both our own development and the development of those we lead is essential in any healthy learning organisation. By the end of this module participants will:

- Identify their own and others' professional development needs
- Be familiar with The Standards for Teachers' Professional Development
- Have considered variety of professional development activities and their cost-effectiveness
- Identify appropriate, targeted opportunities for professional development for themselves and their team
- Be able to evaluate the impact of professional development on teacher development and pupil outcomes
- Have considered progression pathways for themselves and their teams
- Have reflected upon coaching and mentoring as vehicles for professional development

12. Collaboration and partnership

Module twelve recognises the importance of collaboration and working in partnership. This includes at individual, team, school and system level. By the end of this modules participants will:

- Have reflected upon the barriers and benefits to effective collaboration, partnership and team working
- Have an understanding of the research evidence that underpins successful collaboration
- Have considered stakeholder engagement, within and beyond the school – including parents
- Have greater awareness of wider networks of support including those at national level

Professional Learning Journal

The Professional Learning Journal will enable you to record your learning and reflections during the course and examples of how you have applied learning to your professional practice.

Intersessional tasks

Participants will be expected to complete intersessional activities to prepare them for, and follow up on key module content. This may typically involve pre-reading of research and evidence, action planning or scenario activities.

SSAT competency tool

At the beginning the course participants will complete SSAT's Leading Teams competency audit tool. This will inform the identification of priorities for development which will be followed up through the course and in mentor meetings. The competency tool will be revisited at the end of the course to reflect and evaluate on progress.

The NPQML assessment task

This consists of one project split into two parts:

Project summary

Working with my team to A) improve pupil progress and attainment and B) team capability (4,500 words)

Content areas assessed

PART A

Strategy and Improvement
Teaching and Curriculum Excellence
Leading with Impact
Working in Partnership

PART B

Managing Resources and Risks
Increasing Capability

Participant requirements

Participants must:

- Lead an improvement project in their team, lasting at least 2 terms, aimed at improving pupil progress and attainment (part A) and the capability of their team (part B)
- Submit a written account of the project to the provider for assessment, demonstrating how they have met the criteria. This should cover the initiation, implementation and evaluation of the project
- Submit supporting documents/material as evidence where indicated. Supporting evidence must be concise and directly related to the candidate's project and corresponding assessment criteria
- Not exceed a total word count (across both parts of the project) of 4,500, excluding supporting documents or annexes.

Coaching support

All participants will be supported and challenged by a designated coach which will be an appropriate member of the senior leadership team from their home school. Their coach will work through with participants identified strengths and priority areas for development. The competency audits and Professional Learning Journal will provide a catalyst and framework for structured reflection and ongoing conversation.