Placement Guidance

National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH)

For candidates and placement schools

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Introduction

The National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) is part of the nationally recognised leadership curriculum. It provides a platform for leadership development and professional achievement for anyone in their early years of headship or aspiring to be a Headteacher. The qualification focuses on six key content areas that set out what a leader should know and be able to do. The six Content Areas are common to each NPQ level, but the knowledge and skills within them increases in sophistication, depth and breadth progressively throughout the NPQ levels. They are:

- Strategy and improvement
- Teaching and curriculum excellence
- Managing resources and risks
- Leading with impact
- Working in partnership
- Increasing capability

A candidate’s knowledge and skills in these six areas will be assessed through identified assessment criteria and assessment tasks. There is a specific task associated with a candidate’s placement school that has to align to the following two Content Areas and their associated criteria:

1. Managing resources and risks
2. Increasing capability

Candidates have access to high-quality online learning materials and accounts of practice from outstanding school leaders. They will reflect on their own leadership through discussion with peers and put theory into school based practice, while continuing to improve their own leadership skills and behaviours in order to have a greater impact within their work place. All learning areas focus on improving the effectiveness of leadership practice, whilst applying and extending the following seven leadership behaviours of - commitment, collaboration, personal drive, resilience, awareness, integrity and respect.

Placement purpose

Work based learning is a core element within the National Professional Qualifications. For final assessment, NPQH candidates are expected to complete two projects as assessed tasks – one in their home school and one in a placement school.

The placement is an opportunity for the candidate to develop leadership knowledge, understanding and competence as well as demonstrate they can undertake successful leadership activity within a contrasting school setting. The placement must consist of, but is not limited to, nine days spread across the academic year – to suit the needs of the candidate and placement school leaders’ priorities, as well as to provide the best possible leadership opportunities to complete the task and extend learning identified within each of the two the Content Areas’ criteria.

The placement enables candidates to:

- understand and apply their leadership skills in a new and different context
• contribute effectively to the placement school’s vision and strategic direction
• develop their leadership skills through the design of an action plan to meet the placement school’s resourcing and capability needs
• work with credible peers and build relationships within a contrasting setting

The placement task

NPQH candidates are required to design an action plan to meet a placement school’s resourcing and capability needs.

What are the current and/or projected resource and capability challenges? In terms of finances, staffing, teacher workload and educational resources?

Candidates must:

• **Undertake** a placement in a contrasting school to their home school (for example, by performance, pupil profile, geography etc.), lasting at least nine working days.
• **Research** their placement school’s current and/or projected resource and capability challenges, and **design** an action plan to address these.
• **Present** the plan to their placement school’s governing board and gather their feedback
• **Submit** a written account of the project, which aims to evidence the assessment criteria indicated below
• **Submit** supporting documents / material as evidence where indicated below. Supporting evidence must be concise and directly related to the candidate’s project and corresponding assessment criteria.
• **Not exceed** a total word count of **2,500**, excluding supporting documents or annexes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Area</th>
<th>NPQH Assessment Criteria</th>
<th>Supporting Documents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managing Resources</td>
<td>5.3.1 Analyses school’s resourcing challenges in terms of finances, staffing, teacher</td>
<td>Curriculum-led Budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and Risks</td>
<td>workload and educational resources, and designs plans to address these</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.3.2 Formulates a curriculum-led budget aligned to plans</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>5.3.3 Evaluates the effectiveness of school’s accountability arrangements for managing</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>resources and risks, recommending improvements where necessary to deliver plans success</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing Capability</td>
<td>6.3.1 Designs systems to evaluate, manage and reward staff performance effectively</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.3.2 Evaluates research into, and examples of, high-quality professional development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>within and outside of the school, and applies findings to own plans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.3.3 Analyses current and future organisational capability challenges and designs plans</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to address these.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Vital role of the placement school

With a placement schools support, completion of the assessed task to **design an action plan to meet a placement school’s resourcing and capability needs** will enable future and current school leaders to extend their practice, increase their effectiveness and help extend their learning and future succession.

Placement schools play a significant role in the development of NPQH candidates and their direct impact on school improvement. The project task to be completed by candidates in placement schools will contribute to the school, its vision and their direction setting as it will raise awareness of the critical leadership activity needing to be undertaken - forming an integral part of school evaluation and development.

The placement school head will play an active part in the planning and preparation process. The **action plan task** will require senior leader commitment and support in order to ensure the outcomes of the candidate’s leadership work contribute to the overall vision, and leadership and management of the school. It is not envisaged the candidate is in school to ‘do’, but more as a leader who will work with, and take the lead. This will benefit both the candidate’s NPQH journey and the school’s future development.

Placement school leaders will be expected to:

- ensure the placement activity and tasking led by the candidate runs smoothly and is effective, maintaining an ongoing dialogue with the candidate and communicating with the Outstanding Leaders Partnership (OLP) as appropriate
- negotiate and agree the leadership project schedule and agree the best way to undertake the school based task activity to review the current or projected resource and capability needs with the candidate
- provide information and direction to key materials, staff and documentation in support of the task completion
- act as a role model for the candidate during the placement and provide opportunities for shadowing where relevant
- engage with the candidate in their planning, presenting and evidencing of their leadership work as a sponsor
- support candidate engagement with their school leadership team and governing board

**Benefits of hosting an NPQH candidate**

Within the national landscape of school-led support, and leadership succession, the deployment of NPQH colleagues within local schools contributes to the way in which schools collaborate and take collective responsibility to ensure future school leaders are being developed effectively and are available to work within locality areas.

Placement schools will benefit from having an additional senior leader contributing to sustainable improvement and identifying next steps in relation to increased capability and resource management. Placement schools make an important contribution to developing the next generation of Headteachers - the next generation of heads will also provide an insight into future direction and development of placement schools.
Placement school eligibility

Placements should be at schools that have a minimum overall Ofsted rating of good for overall effectiveness. However in some circumstances a school with a lower rating can be used by agreement between the candidate, the school and the NPQH Lead Facilitator.

Arranging the placement

We take care to ensure the placement allocation process is as simple and effective as possible, for both the host school and the candidate with the support of the OLP management team. There are three ways a placement school can be identified:

1. candidate identifies their own placement school
2. placement school identified through their peer learning set
3. OLP identify a placement school for the candidate

Candidates will indicate the method through which they have, or wish to, identify their placement school following their ‘Induction’ event. Candidates will inform OLP of the approach they have taken, or are planning on taking, via the ‘Identify your placement school’ quiz found on the NPQH Learning Network.

The following flow chart outlines the placement identification and confirmation processes for each methods through which placement schools can be arranged:

1. Identifying own placement school

   1. Candidate provides placement guidance and link to online placement agreement form to their identified placement school
   2. Candidate provides OLP details of identified placement school via ‘identify your placement school’ quiz on learning network
   3. Identified placement school completes online placement agreement identifying the name of the candidate they are hosting
   4. Upon receipt of placement agreement OLP confirm placement to candidate and placement school
   5. Candidate contacts the school and arranges initial meeting with placement school headteacher
2. Placement school identified through peer learning set

Same as before, however, it is necessary for the candidate to liaise with the Headteacher of their peer’s school directly and not through their fellow NPQH candidate.

3. OLP to source placement school

Candidates based overseas are required to source their own placement school. Should overseas candidates wish to undertake their placement in England then a placement school can be sourced for them by OLP.

Placement agreement

All placement school headteachers must be provided with the following:

- NPQH Placement Guidance (Candidates are advised to use this guide as part of their initial discussion to gain agreement with heads to be a placement school) –

- The placement agreement form – http://bestpracticenet.co.uk/npqh-placement-school-agreement

The headteacher of the placement school must complete the online placement agreement form and submit this to OLP.
**Initial meeting**

Once the candidate and placement school are agreed, the candidate is asked to contact the placement head to arrange an initial meeting.

The purpose of this meeting is to:

- Confirm the nature and purpose of the task, Content Areas and criteria needed to be addressed to ensure successful completion
- Confirm the timescales and critical milestones needed for success of the task and HT (sponsor) verification prior to submission
- Consult and gain an insight into the context of the school and the type of information access that will be needed and staff who will be able to support/be involved in the three phases of the task
- Agree next steps towards completion of the task

**The Action Plan**

The action plan can align to any template and it may be better to use the placement school’s own framework, as governors and staff will be more familiar with this. A template has, however, been designed to provide a prompt for the action planning task activity to be undertaken (See Figure 1).

**Curriculum led budget planning**

As part of the research stage of the placement task candidates are required to formulate a curriculum led budget and present this supporting document as part of their submission for assessment. The outcomes of this planning activity will contribute to action plan evidence and completion.

**Presentation to Governing Board**

Part of the task includes candidates presenting their action plan to the placement school’s Governing Board (or equivalent) to gather their feedback and inform a written account of the project task to OLP for assessment. To support this part of the placement process it will be important to identify the relevant Board sub group and/or full Governing Board who will be aligned to this activity and to ensure that dates for consultation and presentation are set at initial stages of the placement.

**Assessing the candidate’s assessment task**

Following completion of the action plan and presentation to governors, candidates must submit a written account of the project, the action plan (See Annex 1) and curriculum led budget as supporting materials – evidencing the criteria indicated and within the 2,500 word limit. This submission will need to be **verified by the placement headteacher**. (See Annex 2) The submission will be assessed using the mark scheme provided by the DfE.

**Issues arising from the placement**

In the event the placement does not work out for the candidate or the placement school, please contact the support team via **cpd@bestpracticenet.co.uk** who will be able to advise and provide relevant support.
## Annex 1: NPQH Placement Project Action Plan

Once completed upload a copy of this action plan to your online tutor via the relevant assignment upload link on your learning network.

### Project task title

Design an action plan to meet my placement school’s resourcing and capability needs.

### Context and analysis summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why should a school leader review and evaluate a school’s resourcing and capability needs?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the current and/or projected resource and capability challenges/barriers in the school? E.g. In terms of finance, staffing, curriculum, resources and teacher workload?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>What is the evidence on which you have based your judgments above?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What are the key improvement areas the action plan will focus on for resource and capability challenges to positively impact on future direction &amp; development?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Action plan

**Improvement area and change focus - What are the key outcomes for improvement – what do you want to see improved?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority 1</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Priority 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Priority 3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**What needs to be achieved to bring about change in each priority area? - What do you need to achieve in order to see improvement outcomes expected – short and long term?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority 1</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Priority 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Priority 3</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Milestone 1</th>
<th>Milestone 2</th>
<th>Milestone 3</th>
<th>Milestone 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Timeframe: When / how will progress and outcomes be reviewed and evaluated?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Resources: What resources will be needed for each priority area?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What are the implications / challenges for effective school leadership and management of the action plan?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are your recommendations to the Governing Board on which you are seeking feedback?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Annex 2: Placement Project Assessment Submission Form

Project task for assessment
Design an action plan to meet my placement school’s resourcing and capability needs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate name</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Placement school name</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placement school Headteacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placement school address</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date(s) of placement school visits (at least 9 days)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name and roles of leaders, teams, individuals, including stakeholders, worked with</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials and resources reviewed as part of the research phase of the task</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use the phase boxes below to provide an account of your leadership practice

Written account of the project evidencing the criteria found in Managing Resources and Risks and Increasing Capability (2,500 words).

Criteria for Headteacher verification

The extent to which the candidate:

1. undertook the placement leading opportunities for development and completed the task and its criteria very effectively
2. undertook the placement leading opportunities for development and completed the task and its criteria effectively
3. undertook the placement leading some opportunities for development and completed the task
4. undertook the placement leading opportunities for development with limited progress in the task
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Research phase</th>
<th>Placement school head verification and additional evidence (Please rate 1 – 4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Design phase</td>
<td>Placement school head verification and additional evidence (Please rate 1 – 4)</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>3. Presentation phase</td>
<td>Placement school head verification and additional evidence (Please rate 1 – 4)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Supporting documents

Supporting documents / evidence must be concise and directly related to the candidate’s project task and corresponding assessment criteria. Supporting documents are excluded from the 2,500 word limit.

Candidates must upload the following supporting documents alongside their final assessment submission:

- Action plan
- Curriculum-led budget

If you are providing any further evidence (max 3 items) please detail these below with clear reference to the assessment criteria these support.

_E.g. Presentation to governors, Research outcomes of current and / or projected resource and capability challenges._

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document title</th>
<th>Assessment criteria supported</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

Candidate confirmation

A typed signature is not acceptable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate name</th>
<th>Candidate signature</th>
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<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

Placement school Headteacher confirmation

A typed signature is not acceptable.

By signing the below declaration I confirm that the information provided in this submission is accurate and verify all the evidence it contains.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Placement Headteacher name</th>
<th>Placement Headteacher signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>