Department for Education

OLP
Outstanding Leaders Partnership

National Professional Qualification for for Middle Leadership (NPQML)
Qualification Specification

About NPQML

The National Professional Qualification for Middle Leadership (NPQML) is accredited by the Department for Education (DfE). The qualification is delivered by the Outstanding Leaders Partnership (OLP), a collaborative partnership of schools, teaching school alliances and multi-academy trusts, managed and supported by Best Practice Network.

Entry requirements

NPQML is for those who are, or are aspiring to become, a middle leader with responsibility for leading a team such as a key stage leader, a curriculum area leader, a pastoral services leader, a subject leader or a head of department. This includes those who are, or are aspiring to become, middle leaders with cross-school responsibilities, for example Specialist Leaders of Education (SLEs).

In order to be accepted onto the qualification candidates must have their application endorsed by their Headteacher via a signed Headteacher declaration that is uploaded as part of the candidate's application.

Benefits for candidates

- Improved outcomes for pupils in candidate areas of responsibility
- Increased awareness and understanding of self and of the behaviours needed to lead a team
- Time to reflect on leadership practice and ability to check learning and development needs
- Increased capability and capacity to take on a leadership role - having the skills, knowledge and understanding to do the job more effectively
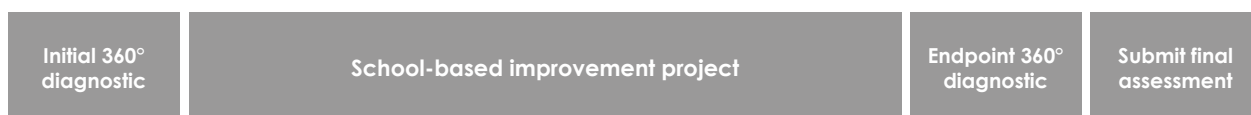
Benefits for schools

- Support the succession of school leaders and build cohesive, effective teams
- Evidence-based sustainable school improvement undertaken to improve pupil progress and team capability
- A professionally aware and informed leader who can make evidence-based decisions and approach new challenges in an effective and efficient manner
- The ability to review and evaluate practice in order to bring about change and get the best for young people and staff within the organisation
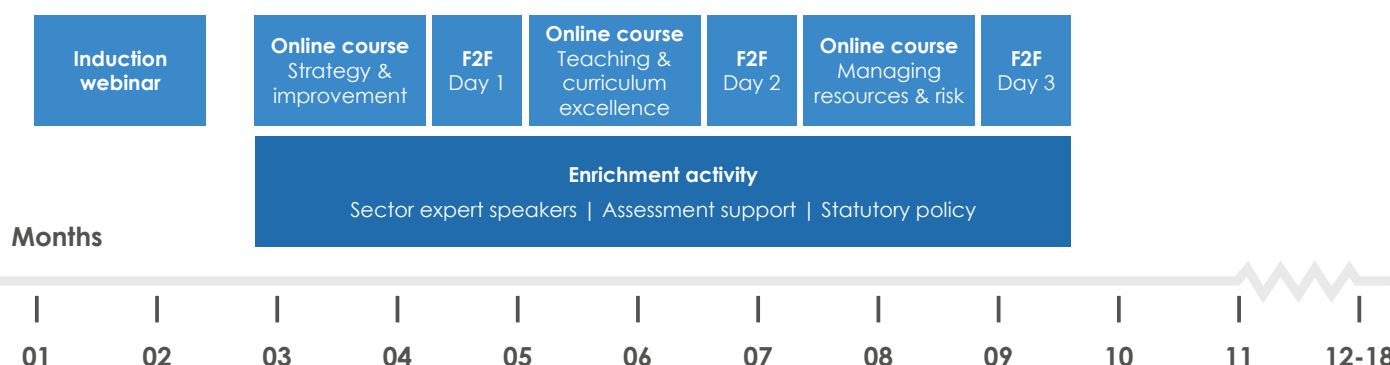
Qualification components

Component	Overview	Guided Learning Hours
360° leadership diagnostic	Work-based peer feedback at the start and end of the qualification, aligned to content requirements, providing 360° feedback on candidate strengths and areas for development.	2
Face-to-face events	3 event days consisting of tailored practice tasks, group networking and self-managed learning interaction supporting powerful dialogue and leadership training.	24
Online courses	3 facilitated online courses each consisting of 4 modules covering: Strategy & Improvement, Teaching & Curriculum Excellence and Managing Resources & Risk.	60
Online briefings	A series of online briefings providing key qualification information, support, guidance and assessment insight.	6
		Total 92

Qualification schedule

Self-directed learning

Initial 360° diagnostic	School-based improvement project	Endpoint 360° diagnostic	Submit final assessment

Facilitated learning

Induction webinar	Online course Strategy & improvement	F2F Day 1	Online course Teaching & curriculum excellence	F2F Day 2	Online course Managing resources & risk	F2F Day 3

Enrichment activity
Sector expert speakers | Assessment support | Statutory policy

Months

| 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12-18 |

Qualification content

The qualification covers 6 content areas which set out what a leader should know or should be able to do, and 7 leadership behaviours which set out how the best leaders operate. The content areas have been embedded within 3 online courses, with the leadership behaviours explored during the face-to-face events.

Event content

Each day is facilitated by experienced serving school leaders.

Event 1: Strategy & Improvement	• The qualification framework and assessment criteria • Outcomes of the 360° diagnostic • School improvement project planning • Analysing school data and identifying strategies for improvement • Effective leadership of change strategies
Event 2: Teaching & Curriculum Excellence	• Reflections on Teaching & Curriculum Excellence • Applying learning to PISA data 2015 • Considering Prof Robert Coe's questions about school improvement with impact • A US Navy model of leadership • Strategies for managing your own well-being
Event 3: Managing Resources & Risk	• Assessing individual performance and capability • Establishing relationships and structures and/or processes to mitigate against barriers • Analysing the financial and staffing implications of plans • Evaluating the impact and cost-effectiveness of professional development in terms of pupil outcomes

Online course content

	Strategy & Improvement	Teaching & Curriculum Excellence	Managing Resources & Risk
Module 1	Context for change & strategic development	Context for change - teaching & learning reality	Financial efficiency & effectiveness
Module 2	Creating the vision & strategic improvement environment	Creating the learning culture for effective teaching and learning and curriculum opportunity	Accountability & governance School-led partnership and impact
Module 3	Establishing credible relationships & effective collaboration	Growing talent and quality momentum	Staffing recruitment, retention and performance
Module 4	Transforming the culture for improvement & impact	Transforming lives and opportunities for improvement and impact	Transforming schools through school-led partnership and impact

Assessment

Leading an improvement project (4,500 words)

Candidates must lead an improvement project within their team, lasting at least two-terms, to a) improve pupil progress and attainment b) the capability of their team. A written account of the project covering the design, implementation and evaluation must then be submitted for assessment.

Project scripts and supporting evidence are assessed in accordance with a mark scheme provided by the DfE and are subject to national moderation.

In order to achieve NPQML candidates must:

- complete 3 online courses and associated core tasks
- engage with practice-based events
- pass final assessment within 18 months of starting the qualification

What's next?

Candidates who successfully complete NPQML may choose to continue their professional development through the completion of a master's degree in educational leadership or by continuing onto the National Professional Qualification for Senior Leadership (NPQSL). Professionally, NPQML graduates may choose to apply for middle or senior leadership roles within their school such as Key Stage Leader, SENCO or Assistant Head.

Masters accreditation

The qualification has been developed in collaboration with Chester University to be delivered at Masters Level 7. Candidates successful in achieving the qualification have the opportunity to accrue credits towards an MA in Educational Leadership with Chester University.

Course intakes

We have two qualification intakes per year; one in the autumn term and one in the spring term. For further information and for application deadlines please see our website **www.outstandingleaders.org/qualifications/npqml**

Distance learning

Candidates for whom time away from school or access to local delivery is not available have the opportunity to complete the qualification via a distance learning model. With distance learning, the three event days are each delivered flexibly over the course of two weeks through a combination of online briefings and candidate activity.

Delivery locations

Delivery venues are largely provided through our national network of teaching school and multi-academy trust partners. Candidates applying from one of our partner groups will be allocated to that group for the face-to-face events*.

In addition to partner groups we also have a number of groups located according to the geography of the candidates that register, helping minimise travel time for the majority of candidates.

Candidates not registering through a school partner will be allocated to their most geographically convenient group for the three training events and will be provided the opportunity to change group, or join our distance learning model, if their allocated group does not suit.

Our face-to-face groups take place across the country and we strive to ensure all candidates have access to local delivery.

* Subject to group viability

Further information

For further information regarding our qualification offer please contact the team via **cpd@bestpracticenet.co.uk** or call us on **0117 920 9200**.

Outstanding Leaders Partnership