



**Ambition  
Institute**

**NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL  
QUALIFICATIONS:  
PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK**



# INTRODUCTION

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School leadership is important. The quality of the teaching that our pupils receive is probably the biggest lever we have for improving their outcomes and future life chances (Slater et al., 2012). School leaders play a similarly significant role – their impact is second only to classroom teaching in generating school improvement (Bush & Glover, 2014). This is because school leaders influence the quality of teaching by creating the conditions where teachers keep getting better.

However, school leadership is complex. There is lots to know and to be able to do well. The newly reformed suite of National Professional Qualifications (NPQs) are designed to support teachers at every level of leadership to build their expertise and confidence, to enable them to have an even bigger impact on the children they serve.

## ABOUT AMBITION INSTITUTE

As one of the Department for Education's lead NPQ providers, we are delighted to support you on your development journey.

At Ambition Institute our mission is to support schools tackling educational disadvantage to keep getting better and help their teachers and leaders to become more expert over time.

This is how we build an education system where every child can thrive, no matter what their background. To achieve this, we design and deliver professional development that draws on the latest evidence, the insights of expert educators across the country, and our experience of what works.



# PROGRAMME

## GOALS AND FEATURES

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Our NPQ programmes draw on the best available evidence, alongside the NPQ frameworks, to help craft a set of experiences that will help leaders keep getting better during critical periods and transitions in their careers.

Our design principles below provide the foundations of our programme design. They ensure our National Professional Qualifications are based on and deliver full coverage of the frameworks, whilst also creating the best possible conditions for learning to take place:

- > **Evidence-informed:** Both our content and programme design are grounded in the best available evidence from multiple fields
- > **Granular, frequent & sustained:** Our programme is broken down into bite sized chunks, covered in familiar ways across the programme to help build effective habits
- > **Supportively challenging:** We create experiences that help teachers to get better, but do so in ways that can become part of typical school routines
- > **Actionable:** Our content is organised around the key challenges that participants face in their role, and includes rich examples of what evidence looks like in practice
- > **Socially helpful:** We use structured opportunities for collaboration to create enhanced understanding and practice
- > **Flexible:** Programming is designed to fit with the busy lives of teachers, and school terms and timetables

To make the most of your NPQ, we recommend you:

1. **Carve out some time on a weekly basis:** Rather than big chunks of content, our NPQ programmes all take a 'little and often' approach and are designed for you to undertake a 50-minute input each week.
2. **Tailor it to your needs:** We have designed a comprehensive programme but also one that should be able to flex quite a lot and still deliver (Cordingley et al., 2015). If you consistently study on powerful ideas, improvement will follow. When and how you apply your knowledge matters less.
3. **Go with it:** It may not always be clear why a certain topic is in a certain place on the programme. However, we have thought carefully about the sequencing to ensure you come across the right ideas at the best times and revisit them lots to ensure they take hold (Dunlosky et al., 2013).
4. **Have an open mind:** the reformed NPQs are very different from previous ones. The new frameworks seek to map out what best practice means for school leadership, in a move that takes these NPQs towards a domain specific approach to leadership. Be open minded to this new approach – and try and drop any expectations you might have from previous leadership development programmes you have been a part of. We think it will pay off.

# KEY PEOPLE, RESPONSIBILITIES AND INTERACTIONS

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	YOU	YOUR BUDDY	THE FACILITATOR
ROLE	You will be in a role aligned to your specific NPQ.	You will work with a buddy throughout the programme.	Conferences and clinics will be led by expert facilitators.
RESPONSIBILITIES ON THE PROGRAMME	Learning and applying aspects of the framework throughout the programme.	Providing you with actionable feedback to keep getting better, supporting you to make sense of, and to apply, knowledge and holding you to account.	Ensuring that participants are able to engage with programme content and to support participants with their learning.

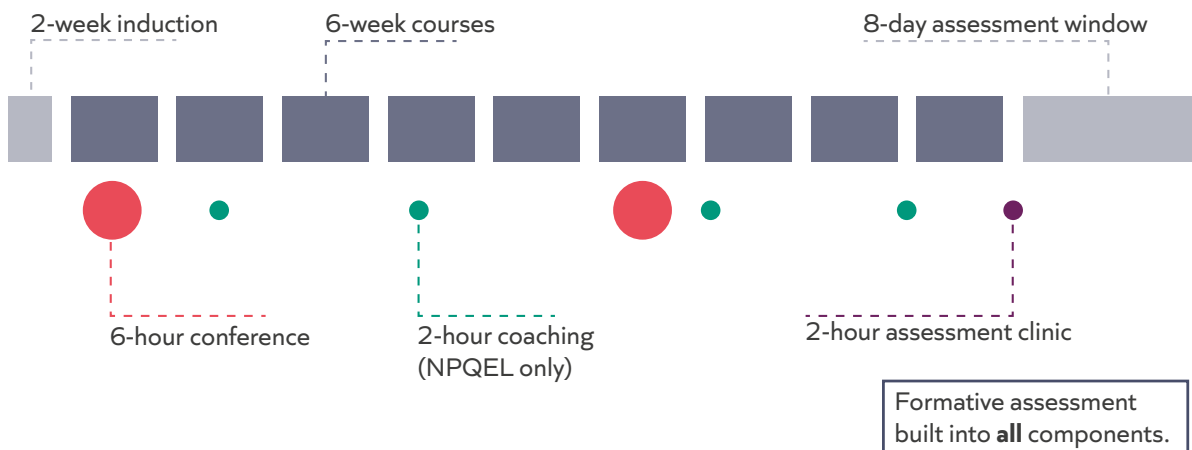
You will also be part of a **clinic group** and a **community** to leverage opportunities for collaboration, and to provide opportunities for you to build a network.

# PROGRAMME JOURNEY

## NPQLBC / NPQLT / NPQLTD



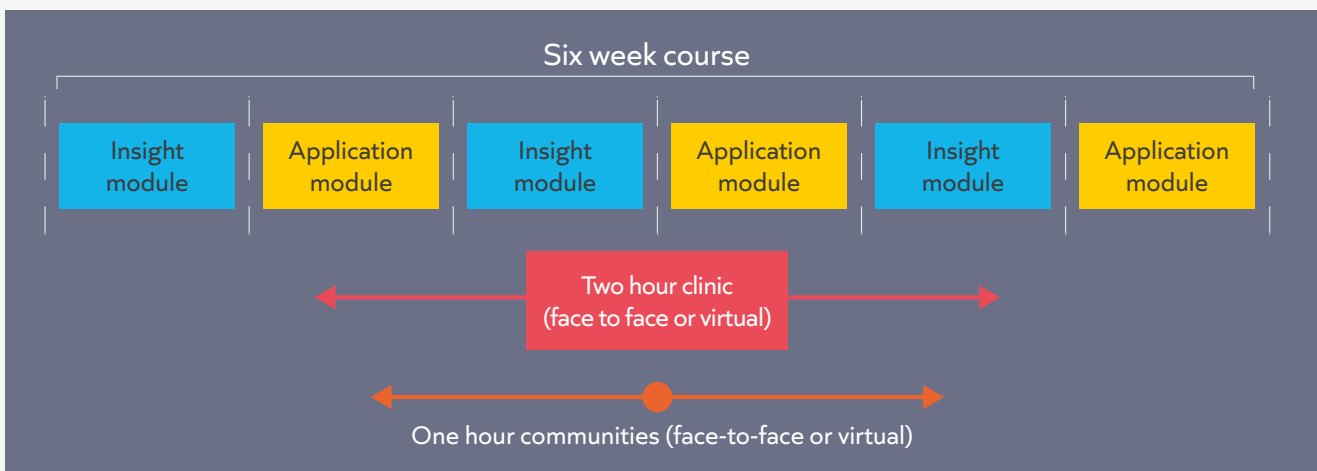
## NPQSL / NPQH / NPQEL



# CORE INPUTS AND TIMINGS

Our programme is designed for participants to engage in both synchronous (live, facilitated sessions) and asynchronous (modules that you can complete at any time) learning opportunities, to embed the necessary learning and application for school leaders. The programme journey varies between qualifications.

As you will have noted, our NPQ programmes draw from the same set of components:



COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION
Induction	All programmes begin with a 2-hour, online induction or 'orientation' on Steplab. Steplab is the online learning platform through which you will complete all asynchronous programme content. You will receive instructions for accessing Steplab when you are formally inducted to the programme.
Conference	A 6-hour face to face event. Specialist NPQs have one conference. Leadership NPQs have two conferences.
Course	Induction is followed by half-termly courses. Specialist NPQs are made up of 6 courses (because they are 12 months long and therefore have 6 half terms). Leadership NPQs are made up of 9 courses (because they are 18 months long and therefore have 9 half terms).

COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION
Module	<p>During each week of a course, you will complete either an insight module or an application module.</p> <p>Insight modules include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; An evidence summary which introduces the module and the underpinning evidence.</li> <li>&gt; Clear exemplification of the concept in question, for example through a video or a paper-based document.</li> <li>&gt; An opportunity to consolidate what has been learnt through quiz questions or reflective prompts.</li> <li>&gt; Application models provide the opportunity to apply what has been learnt during the insight module. They include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Diagnosis: where you will review previous actions you have set for yourself and what the focus of your application should be (you will have different activities to choose from).</li> <li>&gt; Model: where you return to the models you looked at to continue to analyse their features.</li> <li>&gt; Application: where you have a go at doing the thing you have seen modelled with a buddy (a peer on the programme) and receive feedback and practice again.</li> <li>&gt; Actions: where you agree what you will take forwards into your practice and how you will hold yourself and your buddy to account.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Clinic	<p>Clinics are 2 hours long. They vary in number depending on the qualification. They are facilitated and are an important opportunity for formative assessment of participants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; They start with an introduction, by facilitators, to set expectations.</li> <li>&gt; Insight: the facilitator introduces ideas, checks participant understanding and support participants as they make sense of ideas presented in the session.</li> <li>&gt; Case study: participants have time to read a case study independently. They answer prompt questions and prepare for a group analysis of the information. They have the opportunity to consider a specific element of the case study and how this relates to their own context.</li> <li>&gt; Analysis: the facilitators leads a discussion providing formative feedback to participants to support and challenge their understanding. This is also supportive of preparation for the formative assessment.</li> <li>&gt; To close, the facilitator summarises the discussion, provides any relevant feedback to the group and shares next steps for learning.</li> </ul>
Community	<p>Communities are 1-hour sessions underpinned by a problem-solving protocol designed by Ambition. They are flexibly organised groups to provide additional networking opportunities.</p>

COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION
Coaching (NPQEL and the NPQH Additional Support Offer only)	Coaching will be 1:1 and supported by a protocol designed by Ambition.
School visit (NPQH only)	You will have the opportunity to attend a school visit as part of the NPQH programme. This visit will focus on a particular topic area and will be delivered over the course of a day.
Assessment webinar	Each programme includes 2 x 30-minute asynchronous webinars designed to support the summative assessment.
Assessment clinic	Each programme ends with a facilitated clinic focussed on the summative assessment.
Assessment	All participants will complete the summative assessment within an 8-day window. This will be scheduled to take place following your 12 or 18 months on the programme and we will communicate the dates at the beginning of your programme. The assessment will be based around a case-study which will be released on the first day of the 8-day assessment window and you will submit a 1500-word response. The case study will assess various aspects of the programme and so it is important that all sessions, face to face, virtual and digital are completed. There is also a requirement for an attendance of above 90% for the qualification to be awarded.



# THE SEQUENCE

The programme is composed of courses. A course contains carefully sequenced content that a school leader will work through over the period of roughly a half term, aligned to the qualification they are undertaking. Each course has a core focus but includes relevant content from across the framework. Each course is composed of 6 modules. These are designed to be worked through

on a weekly rhythm, alternating between independent study in insight modules and paired practice in application modules. Learning from this independent and paired study is then consolidated during clinics.

Please see below the course titles for each qualification:

## NPQLBC

1. Teaching
2. Enabling conditions
3. Culture
4. Complex needs
5. Professional development
6. Implementation

## NPQLT

1. Culture and learning
2. Assessment
3. Instruction
4. Subject and curriculum
5. Adapting teaching
6. Teacher learning

## NPQLTD

1. Teaching
2. Teacher learning
3. The what and the how
4. Insight and behaviour
5. Enabling conditions
6. Implementation

## NPQSL / NPQH / NPQEL

### Principles of improvement

1. Implementation

2. Culture

### Leading teaching and learning

3. Teaching and behaviour

4. Professional development

5. Additional and special educational needs and disabilities

6. Curriculum and assessment

### Managing organisations

7. Working in partnership

8. Organisational management

9. Governance and accountability

# THE NPQH

## ADDITIONAL SUPPORT OFFER

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The 'Additional Support Offer' (ASO) is available to participants who are within the first 2 years of their first headship post. It can be completed alongside the reformed NPQH, or following the completion of an NPQH. In a programme of support lasting at least a year, the ASO enables new head teachers to diagnose and tackle a 'problem of practice' on a termly basis. Structured inputs across the term draw on the NPQH Content Framework so new head teachers better understand the problem and can plan effective solutions.

New head teachers are supported via 3 x 1-hour coaching from experienced headteachers. Alongside coaching, the ASO offer includes:

- > Pre and post-coaching activities
- > Carefully matched shadowing opportunities
- > Access to peer communities of practice from similar contexts

This enables new head teachers to tackle important problems within their school requiring additional support for mitigation. Communities of practice will operate in much the same way as communities on the NPQs will. They will be peer led and supported by a problem-solving protocol.

# SUPPORT

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Thank you in advance for your hard work to make our NPQ programmes a success in your school or trust. We look forward to working with you. For further support and guidance, please refer to your on-boarding materials for contact details specific to your programme.


## POLICIES

You can find all policies relating to your programme [on our website](#).

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