

Accredited NPQ provider



Department  
for Education



## National Professional Qualification for Executive Leadership (NPQEL) Qualification Specification



## About NPQEL

The National Professional Qualification for Executive Leadership (NPQEL) 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.

OLP is accredited by the DfE to provide the National Professional Qualifications (NPQs).

NPQEL prepares candidates new to executive leadership to take strategic responsibility for leading across several schools.

### Entry requirements

NPQEL is suitable for colleagues aspiring to, or already in, leadership roles across more than one school. This includes headteachers, executive headteachers, chief operating officers, and directors of school improvement. NPQEL is for those who are, or are aspiring to become, an executive headteacher or CEO of a MAT with responsibility for leading across several schools.

Candidates will need to demonstrate experience of headship and where they have led work across schools.

### Benefits for candidates

- National and international networking
- Increased awareness and understanding of self and of the behaviours needed to lead across multiple organisations
- Time to reflect on leadership practice and ability to check learning and development needs
- Increased capability and capacity to take on a multi-school organisation - having the skills, knowledge and understanding to do the job more effectively

### Benefits for schools

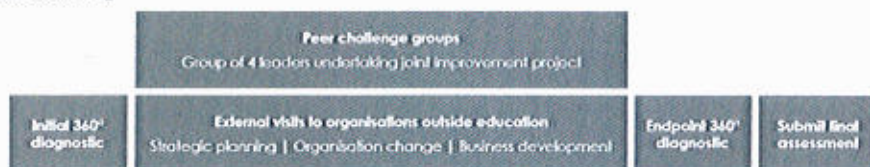
- Increased national partnership opportunities and insight into the systems, sectors and sources of effective leadership practice
- Increased commitment to build relationships with a range of stakeholders within the organisation and the wider community
- A professionally aware and informed leader who can make evidence-based strategic 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

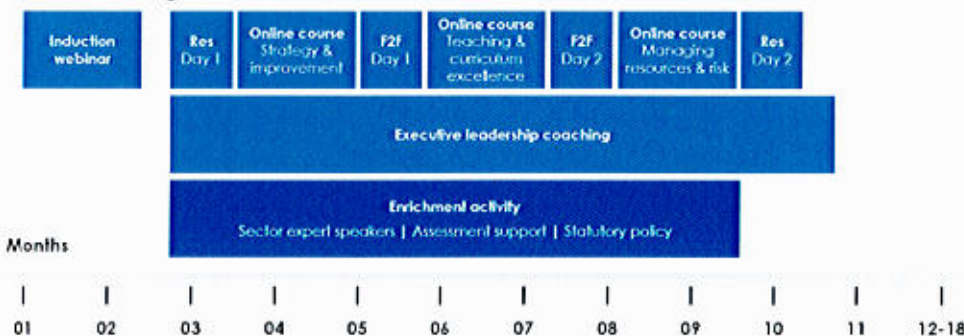
Component	Overview	Guided Learning Hours
360° leadership diagnostic	Work-based peer feedback at the start and end of the qualification, aligned to content requirements, providing 360° feedback on candidate strengths and areas for development.	3
Face-to-face events	2 residential events and 2 event days (6 days total) consisting of tailored practice tasks, guest speakers, group networking and self-managed learning interaction supporting powerful dialogue and leadership training.	48
Performance coaching	6 hours individual coaching and 3 hours coaching within peer challenge group focused on improving performance and developing leadership skills and behaviours.	9
Online courses	3 facilitated online courses each consisting of 4 modules covering: Strategy and Improvement, Teaching and Curriculum Excellence and Managing Resources and Risks. Each course includes a number of core and optional tasks.	60
Peer challenge groups	Self-managed group of candidates critical for powerful conversation, feedback, progress, and task completion. Peer challenge groups will contribute to the design, implementation and evaluation of an improvement project across their schools.	Peer led
Exec-led webinars	A series of online presentations by school and business executive leaders covering the key themes that underpin the strategy, culture and context of executive leadership.	6
Online briefings	A series of online briefings providing key qualification information, support, guidance and assessment insight.	6
<b>Total</b>		<b>132</b>

## Qualification schedule

### Self-directed learning



### Facilitated learning



## 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 facilitated events.

## Event content

Each day is facilitated by two experienced facilitators with support from experienced executive leaders.

<b>Residential (Day 1)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualification insights, qualification organisation, and development expectations</li> <li>• Navigating the transition from school leader to executive leader role</li> <li>• Characteristics and context of executive leadership</li> <li>• Reshaping self to meet the characteristics of the role in the light of the 360 diagnostic</li> <li>• Developing collaborative approaches to school improvement projects</li> </ul>
<b>Residential (Day 2)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding the range of organisational structures involved in complex organisations</li> <li>• Challenges for sustainability and growth: leaders' first years in executive leadership</li> <li>• Answering 2 big questions: what are the strategic challenges? Have we sufficient personal capacity/competence?</li> <li>• Effective workforce: creating a sense of belonging and identity with autonomy</li> <li>• Using informed research as an evidence base to guide strategic change direction</li> </ul>
<b>Strategy &amp; Improvement (Day 3)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Models of strategic school improvement emerging from multi school organisations motivating and uniting a wide range of people across organisations around visionary goals</li> <li>• Identifying and developing an organisational structure to achieve cross-organisation goals</li> <li>• Finding the right approach to raise and sustain standards: building a clear business development strategy</li> <li>• Creating strong partnerships beyond the organisation to drive improvement</li> </ul>
<b>Teaching &amp; Curriculum Excellence (Day 4)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embedding a well-articulated vision for school improvement</li> <li>• Trust wide data systems: tracking progress and performance, and reporting on the impact of provision on pupil outcomes</li> <li>• Using international research and evidence to create strategies for improving groups of schools</li> <li>• Quality assurance and accountability for provision excellence</li> <li>• Appreciative enquiry: maintaining positivity and creativity alongside accountability</li> </ul>
<b>Residential (Day 5)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial sustainability</li> <li>• Organisation accountability and governance</li> <li>• Managing and deploying talent: succession and capacity building</li> </ul>
<b>Residential (Day 6)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum modelling and efficient staffing structures</li> <li>• Maximising resources in support of organisational well-being</li> <li>• Risk leadership</li> <li>• Professional growth and executive leadership development</li> <li>• Project assessment readiness</li> </ul>

## Online course content

	<b>Strategy &amp; Improvement</b>	<b>Teaching &amp; Curriculum Excellence</b>	<b>Managing Resources &amp; Risks</b>
<b>Module 1</b>	Context for change & strategic development	Context for change - teaching & learning reality	Financial efficiency & effectiveness
<b>Module 2</b>	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
<b>Module 3</b>	Establishing credible relationships & effective collaboration	School to school support	Staffing recruitment, retention and performance
<b>Module 4</b>	Transforming the culture for improvement & impact	Transforming lives and opportunities for improvement and impact	Transforming schools through school led partnership and impact

## Assessment

### Task 1

Candidates must design a sustainable business development strategy for their organisation, analysing the benefits, costs and risks of different options. They must then present their chosen strategy to their governing board and submit a written account of the project covering the design, implementation and evaluation.

### Task 2

Candidates must lead a project to improve progress and attainment in several schools. They must present their plans to a group of relevant stakeholders and submit a written account of the project covering the design, implementation and evaluation.

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 the NPQEL candidates must:

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

### What's next?

Candidates that achieve the NPQEL may choose to continue their professional development through the completion of a master's degree in business administration (MBA). Professionally, NPQEL graduates may choose to apply for executive leadership roles such as CEO or COO of a MAT, executive Headteacher posts or similar.

### Masters accreditation

The qualification has been developed in collaboration with Liverpool Hope University (LHU) to be delivered at Masters level 7. Candidates successful in achieving the qualification have the opportunity to accrue credits towards a PG Cert and Masters Accreditation with LHU.

### 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/npqel](http://www.outstandingleaders.org/qualifications/npqel)

### Delivery locations

To minimise travel, our training groups are located according to the geography of the candidates that register.

### Further information

For further information regarding our qualification offer please contact the team via [cpd@bestpracticenel.co.uk](mailto:cpd@bestpracticenel.co.uk) or call us on **0117 920 9200**.

---

#### Contact:

[www.outstandingleaders.org](http://www.outstandingleaders.org)  
[info@outstandingleaders.org](mailto:info@outstandingleaders.org)  
0117 920 9200

