**The National Professional Qualifications (NPQs)**

**Description and additional information**

Strong school leaders are critical to ensuring that every child and young person, regardless of background, ability or need, receives a world class education that allows them to achieve their full potential.

We want to ensure that prospective and serving school leaders at all levels can access high quality leadership development.

Over the past fifteen years, NCTL and its predecessor bodies have sought to grow professional development opportunities for school leaders. In looking to ensure that its provision meets the needs of leaders throughout their career, NCTL has gradually moved away from large-scale, nationally commissioned programmes towards a more flexible, context-based and school-led approach to leadership development.

In 2012, the National College introduced a licensing approach to leadership provision, enabling the best schools, partnered with a range of other providers, to deliver a modular leadership development curriculum, linked to a suite of NPQs.

These qualifications – comprising the National Professional Qualification for Middle Leadership (NPQML), National Professional Qualification for Senior Leadership (NPQSL) and National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) – have sought to provide consistent standards for leadership development across the system.

The leadership landscape, however, is changing. There is now a wider range of leadership roles and responsibilities, requiring a different mix of knowledge and skills from our school leaders. In this changing environment, we want to support the system to develop a strong and sustainable pipeline of talented, motivated leaders at all levels – leaders who are ready to meet the challenges they face on a daily basis.

Last year, the DfE and NCTL convened leading experts to reform the NPQs to prepare leaders more effectively for the range of leadership roles in today’s school system.

The reformed NPQs will put the best schools and organisations in the driving seat of leadership professional development. Working within a flexible set of frameworks, accredited providers will design, deliver, and assess one or more of an extended suite of qualifications.

Our new frameworks comprise:

* a Levels and Qualifications Framework that identifies the range of qualifications that providers can choose to deliver
* a Content and Assessment Framework that sets out the core knowledge and skills that providers must teach as part of each qualification, and the tasks and criteria against which providers will assess their candidates
* a Quality Framework that sets out the standards of provision that providers must meet to retain accreditation

These new frameworks will ensure that school leaders are offered qualifications that are accessible, nationally-consistent, and high quality, whilst also giving providers the freedom and flexibility to offer bespoke provision that is responsive to the varied and changing contexts of school leaders.

While providers will be required to meet the expectations set out in the Quality Framework, including the provision of content that teaches the core knowledge and skills set out in the Content and Final Assessment Framework, they will have the freedom to:

* deliver any or all of the four qualifications at a national, cross-regional, regional, or sub-regional level
* develop and deliver bespoke, context-based teaching materials in or around the core knowledge and skills detailed in the Content and Final Assessment Framework, offering qualifications that are tailored to the particular needs of school leaders working in different contexts – this could be by phase or type, such as NPQSL for primary leaders or an NPQH for the headteachers of faith schools
* flexibly deliver their courses, contextualising their delivery approaches to best fit participants’ needs

In addition, accredited providers will benefit from the right to market their programmes with the NPQ brand, which is widely recognised as guaranteeing the leadership knowledge and skills of those seeking leadership positions

We want the best schools and organisations to apply for accreditation to deliver one or more of the NPQs.

Accreditation will be granted for a period of three years, subject to providers continuing to meet the requirements set out in the new NPQ Quality Framework.

We will be running a series of provider information events that will give potential providers the opportunity to learn more about our new approach to the qualifications, the provider accreditation process, and the significant opportunities that accreditation will offer to drive leadership development across the system. Full details of the events, including how to register attendance, can be found at:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/reformed-national-professional-qualifications-provider-information-events-tickets-31443182405>

Indicative timing is as follows:

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| Invitation to application launched  | February 2017 |
| Supplier events | February 2017 |
| Deadline date for applications | 6 Weeks following application launch |
| Start date | Starting in the 2017 to 2018 academic year |

START AND END DATES OF THE CONTRACT

Starting in the 2017 to 2018 academic year. A 3 year contract with yearly break clauses will be issued.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

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This PIN is not a binding statement of intent; it outlines the Authority’s intention to engage with the supply market on an open and formal basis to develop potential options for this new programme if that is what is decided.