

NPQH Intake 3: INFORMATION FOR SUPPORTERS

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Foreword

Thank you for agreeing to support your colleague who aspires to be a headteacher and wishes to apply for the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH). You can provide crucial support by discussing the application with your colleague and writing a supporting statement.

There is no more important role than headship. We know that the quality of school leadership has a significant impact on the progress pupils make, their achievements and their life chances. Effective headteachers have high expectations and a clear vision for their school, which is developed and shared with its whole community. They set high standards for themselves and others whilst implementing this vision, and seek to learn and improve continuously.

As you will know, it is also clear that the context in which headteachers undertake their role is changing. Headteachers now lead and manage within complex, multi-agency partnership environments with increased autonomy and clear accountability frameworks. Headteachers need the capability and capacity to lead the personalisation of learning to improve outcomes, to engage parents and the community and to respond to future policy initiatives.

To enable aspiring headteachers to prepare effectively for this diverse and challenging role NCSL, working with the profession, has redesigned NPQH. Our ambition has been to create a more personalised flexible structure which will take account of a trainee headteacher's leadership and management expertise, his or her current context and headship aspirations. Trainee headteachers will be able to create their own personalised development pathways, access a range of national, regional and local development opportunities, undertake placements and learn alongside their peers. As the mandatory qualification for headship, NPQH is underpinned by the National Standards for Headteachers and individuals will have to demonstrate their capability in relation to these standards.

Should your colleague be accepted onto NPQH as a trainee headteacher you will have a really important role to play during his or her time on the provision, including agreeing appropriate development priorities, facilitating access to strategic leadership experiences, providing feedback through a 360 process and supporting his or her participation in a placement in (a different) another school context. So thank you for supporting your colleague's journey to headship.

Steve Munby
Chief Executive
National College for School Leadership

Part 1: Background and structure of NPQH

1.1 What is NPQH?

NPQH was introduced in 1997 as a national qualification, firmly rooted in school improvement, which thoroughly prepares individuals for their first headship post. On 1 April 2004 it became mandatory for all first-time headteachers in the maintained sector to hold NPQH or to have secured a place on the programme. From 1 April 2009 only those holding NPQH will be eligible for appointment to a first headship.

The qualification has recently been redesigned to reflect the changing role of headship and of school leadership in general. Headteachers today have new responsibilities and there are radical changes to the way schools interact with each other and other services.

NPQH will prepare aspiring headteachers for 21st century strategic leadership and management challenges. Through personalised provision designed to meet individual needs, NPQH will give trainee headteachers the confidence, skills and professional knowledge they need to deliver the best for pupils and all members of the school community in their first headship post.

NPQH puts trainee headteachers in the driving seat. They create their own flexible, personalised development pathway through the qualification that:

- takes account of their professional development needs, prior learning and achievements
- improves and develops further their strategic leadership expertise
- develops key leadership and management skills
- provides opportunities to work in different educational contexts
- gives them the confidence and competence to take up their first headship so as to make a positive impact on their school and the lives of children, young people and their families.

Trainee headteachers undertake personalised development in order to address their individual areas for development. This is detailed below in the section “How is NPQH structured?”

1.2 What are the National Standards for Headteachers?

NPQH is underpinned by the National Standards for Headteachers. The National Standards define, within six key areas, the associated knowledge and professional qualities that headteachers require. They provide the benchmark against which trainee headteachers will be assessed to determine whether NPQH may be awarded.

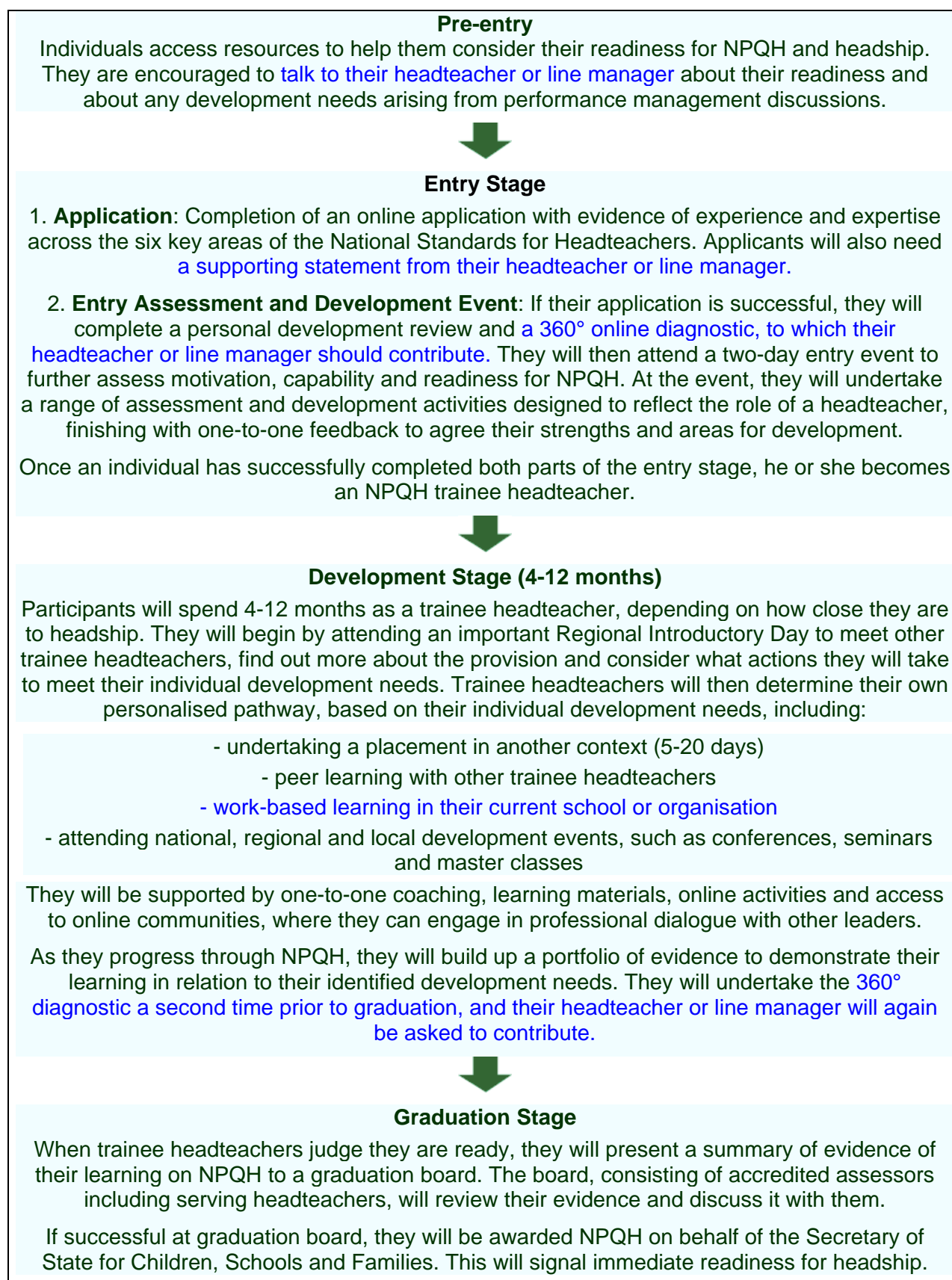
The National Standards describe six key areas of headship:

- Shaping the Future
- Leading Learning and Teaching
- Developing Self and Working with Others
- Managing the Organisation
- Securing Accountability
- Strengthening Community

The Standards were developed in consultation with teachers, headteachers, professional and subject associations, local authorities, Higher Education Institutions and others from both inside and outside education. You can access the National Standards for Headteachers on our website at www.ncsl.org.uk/npqh and you should read this document in preparation for completing the supporting statement.

1.3 How is NPQH structured?

NPQH is a personalised programme based on individual development needs, taking between 4 and 12 months depending on closeness to headship. The different stages are illustrated below.



1.4 Who can apply for NPQH?

NPQH is the final stage on an individual's pathway to his or her first headship. Applicants should be highly motivated in their progress towards headship, and be ready to apply for headship posts upon graduation. In other words, when they apply for NPQH:

- **they should be no more than 18 months from a headship post**
- **their aspiration should be for their next job to be headship.**

The redesigned NPQH has a rigorous and challenging Entry Stage, aimed at identifying only those who are serious about headship. As a headteacher or line manager, you have a critical role to play in encouraging and supporting those individuals who really will be ready for headship within 18 months.

NPQH is not for those just seeking good professional development. A number of other NCSL development opportunities are available for aspiring headteachers who are not yet ready to apply for NPQH:

- Leadership Pathways - a personalised programme for senior leaders in schools: www.ncsl.org.uk/leadershippathways
- Future Leaders - an initiative to identify and develop leaders to run challenging urban schools: www.ncsl.org.uk/futureleaders
- A range of resources for aspiring headteachers on our Tomorrow's Leaders Today webpages: www.ncsl.org.uk/tomorrowsleaderstoday

1.5 How do applicants know whether they are ready to apply?

If they are working in a school or other organisation, as part of their ongoing performance management, applicants will be discussing their career aspirations with their headteacher, line manager or professional supervisor. If aspiring to headship, they should be seeking feedback about their strengths and weaknesses in relation to the National Standards for Headteachers.

They should also look at the resources and activities available on the "Are you ready?" page of our website. We would encourage applicants' headteachers and line managers to look at these resources as well. To access this, go to www.ncsl.org.uk/npqh and follow the link on the right hand side of the screen.

This page includes:

- A short introductory video about the redesigned NPQH
- A link to the National Standards for Headteachers
- A self assessment diagnostic based on the Standards
- Guidance on action planning for potential applicants, including an action plan template

It also features some general resources that applicants may find useful in thinking about their readiness for headship:

- 'Go for it – reasons to be a headteacher' booklet
- Video presentations on stepping up to headship and gaining the right support in the headteacher role
- 'Career moves' – a range of practical guidance and resources to help individuals in their application for headship roles.

You may also wish to look at the "Application process" page of the website, which includes details of the evidence required in the application form.

1.6. What part do headteachers play in NPQH?

Headteachers play a critical role in encouraging those with leadership potential to aspire to headship. In NPQH there are a number of formal points of involvement for the headteacher:

- As part of the application process you are asked to provide a supporting statement
- If the applicant is successful at application stage and is invited to attend the two-day assessment and development event, you will be asked to contribute to a 360° review
- You will be asked to contribute to a further 360° review during the trainee headteacher's leadership development pathway
- At the point when the trainee headteacher presents him or herself for graduation, you will be asked to validate elements of his or her evidence

In addition to the formal elements outlined above, there is much that you can do to support individuals, both at application stage, and if they are ready for NPQH, during their personal leadership development pathway. The context of the school, and the individual's existing job description, will determine the starting point. Of particular help will be:

- Being an ambassador for the role: talking to potential headteachers in your school about what you do and sharing your experience and leadership expertise
- Identifying and encouraging those with headship potential through performance management
- Assisting potential applicants in reflecting on their readiness for headship - giving open, honest feedback about strengths and development needs
- Ensuring that potential applicants have the opportunity to become involved in all the key areas of headship as set out in the National Standards for Headteachers, and to carry out whole-school improvement activities
- Discussing and agreeing tailored development plans with trainee headteachers, and supporting and coaching them as they work through these plans
- Providing them with links to the school's governing body, to enable opportunities for working with governors
- Releasing them from school for a placement in another context (between 5 and 20 days) and for other development opportunities as appropriate
- Offering pastoral and professional support throughout their time on the provision

The commitment to undertake NPQH is significant. As the trainee headteacher attempts to balance the demands of professional development, personal life and job commitments there may be times of pressure and your support may be especially welcome.

1.7 Getting more involved in NPQH delivery

We are always keen to hear from serving headteachers who are interested in contributing to trainee headteachers' learning.

We would particularly welcome headteachers who are willing to present and discuss an aspect of their own experience or expertise, via our online communities. We regularly schedule one-hour online seminars or longer online discussions on a wide range of aspects of the headship role, and we are interested in hearing from both new and more experienced headteachers. Our online facilitator team will provide you with full technical support. If you are interested, please email npqh@ncsl.org.uk.

There are a also number of ways in which serving headteachers can get involved in the delivery of NPQH via our regional providers. If you are interested in any of the following opportunities, please contact the NPQH providers in your region to find out more. Visit the 'provider details' page of our website at www.ncsl.org.uk/npqh for contact details. Opportunities include:

- Putting your school forward as an NPQH Leadership Development School, by acting as host for the placement of a trainee headteacher from another school. This opportunity is open to you if:
 - your most recent Ofsted inspection rated your school as good or better, both overall and in leadership and management
 - you are willing to host a trainee headteacher for a placement of between 5 and 20 days, providing them with the opportunity to work closely with you in your headship role
- Being trained and accredited as an assessor. Serving headteachers may become assessors for:
 - the entry stage: this involves assessing applications and acting as an assessor at the two-day assessment and development event
 - the graduation stage: this involves reviewing portfolios of evidence from trainee headteachers and then interviewing them as part of an assessment panel
- Being trained and accredited as a coach for local trainee headteachers. This could involve face-to-face, telephone or online coaching, depending on the needs of the individual trainee headteacher

To become involved in any of these areas please contact our regional providers.

Part 2: The supporting statement

2.1 The purpose of the supporting statement

Applicants are required to ensure their application has at least one supporting statement and are advised that, if they are currently working in a school, they should ask their headteacher to complete this statement. Applicants not working in a school are asked to approach their line manager or employer. Acting headteachers may find that their Chair of Governors or local authority adviser may be the appropriate person to ask.

The supporting statement is a short form which will be used to validate the information provided by the applicant and establish whether you support the application.

By completing the statement you will:

- confirm that, in your opinion, the applicant will be ready to take up a headship post within 18 months
- agree that, if the applicant gains a place, you will support them through NPQH, providing them with the necessary funding (if appropriate) and the time to undertake relevant development activity

The application and your supporting statement will identify the applicant's strengths as a potential school leader and address areas that he or she needs to develop. It is important that both you and the applicant are clear about the opportunities that he or she needs to exploit in preparation for headship and are committed to enabling these. If the applicant is deemed ready, he or she will be working with you to prepare and implement his or her development plan. **It is therefore important that you discuss the content of the application form and the supporting statement with the applicant** and that the dialogue is open and honest.

The supporting statement should not be treated as a confidential reference and we would encourage you to share the supporting statement with the applicant before submission. Given the requirements of Data Protection and Freedom of Information legislation, should applicants request sight of the form, NCSL would be obliged to release it.

2.2 Completing and submitting the supporting statement

When an applicant completes their application for NPQH, they will be asked to provide the name and email address of their supporter(s). This will then trigger an automated email to you from NCSL, inviting you to complete the supporting statement.

This email is very important as:

- it will contain a link to the supporting statement form
- you will need to return to this link in order to submit the completed document
- the email will contain a unique reference number which you will need to quote if you have any queries or problems

On receipt of the email from NCSL, please follow these steps:

1. Do not delete the email, as you will need to return to it later.
2. Click on the link in the email and read the on-screen guidance.
3. Click on the 'download the supporters template' link to open the supporting statement form. The form will open as a Word document.

4. Save the form to your own computer. You may wish to make a note of the place you saved it in.
5. Complete the supporting statement form. Read the sections below for guidance on completing the different sections. **Whilst completing the form, we would strongly advise you to save it regularly.**
6. Once you have completed the document, return to the email you received, and click again on the link contained in the email. At the bottom of the screen you will see an 'upload' section which looks like this:

Upload

Browse...

Upload

Click on the 'browse' button and search your own computer files to find your completed supporting statement. Double click on the file to select it. Then click on the 'upload' button. This will submit the form to NCSL. **It is essential that you follow this process carefully**, to ensure that the form is uploaded to our system and is matched to the correct application. You should ensure you set aside some time for this process.

7. You must ensure your supporting statement has been submitted before the **deadline of noon on 6 January 2009** otherwise the application will not be assessed. Once you have submitted it, there will be a message on screen confirming successful submission.

Key points to note:

- We would advise you to set aside around an hour to complete the form.
- The deadline for submissions is **noon on 6 January 2009**.
- Late supporting statements cannot be accepted.
- The application will not be considered without a supporting statement.

2.3 The supporting statement in detail

There are four parts to the form, as detailed below.

2.3.1 Personal details section

The first section of the form is the personal details section. You are asked to provide:

- Your role (e.g. headteacher, chair of governors, LA adviser)
- Your place of work (the name of the school or organisation that you work for)
- The capacity in which you know the applicant (e.g. as their line manager, or their SIP)
- The length of time you have known the applicant

You do not need to provide your name, or the name of the applicant. Your supporting statement will automatically be matched to the correct application form, if you follow the submission procedure that is outlined in the email you will receive. The application is therefore anonymised before it is assessed.

2.3.2 Applicant profile section

This section asks you to complete a table with your judgements of the applicant's key strengths and areas for development in relation to extracts from the National Standards for Headteachers. You should do this by entering 'X' in the relevant column/row. We will use this information to validate and provide further context for the responses given on the application form.

If a particular area is neither a key strength nor an area for development for the applicant, you do not need to enter anything.

2.3.3 Additional information section

In this section you are asked to provide additional information in response to three questions, as follows:

- What strengths will this applicant bring to headship?
- Should the applicant be successful, what are the key areas for development that this applicant should prioritise during the period of undertaking NPQH in order to prepare them for headship?
- What is the key evidence that has led you to believe that this applicant's next job will be a headship, within the next 18 months?

2.3.4. Commitment of support

By completing the form you are committing to the following:

- You are agreeing to provide him or her with time to undertake professional development activity in relation to NPQH (if you are the applicant's headteacher/line manager), should his or her application be successful
- You are saying that in your professional judgement, the applicant will be ready to take up a headship position within the next 18 months.
- You understand the funding requirements for NPQH (see next section).
- You know of no legal reason why the applicant should not become a headteacher.
- While the applicant is working towards NPQH, you will undertake to inform his or her NPQH provider of any relevant change in his or her circumstances which might disqualify him or her from becoming a headteacher, or of any capability issues or disciplinary actions of which he or she is the subject.
- You are certifying that the information in your supporting statement is correct.

Part 3: Next steps

3.1 What happens next?

Application assessment: Applications will be assessed and submitted to rigorous national moderation procedures. Once these processes are complete, applicants will be notified in late February 2009 whether they have been assessed as ready to attend the two-day entry Assessment and Development Event.

Two-day assessment and development event: If they are deemed to be ready for the next stage, applicants will be invited to attend a two-day assessment and development event which will further assess their motivation, capability and readiness for trainee headship. For intake 3, these events will take place between mid March and end of April 2009. **Remember that individuals do not have a confirmed place on NPQH until they have successfully completed the two-day event. (Please note:** If the number of successful applications is greater than the number of places on a particular intake of NPQH, we may defer applicants to the two-day assessment and development event stage in a future intake. The two-day events will be held approximately every three months.)

Introductory day: Applicants successfully completing the two-day event will be invited to a regional introductory day in May/June 2009. The introductory day marks the start of the 4 to 12 month NPQH pathway.

3.2 Funding

Payment of fees will be required following attendance at the regional Introductory Day.

Trainee headteachers from small schools (maintained schools or non-maintained special schools with 100 or fewer pupils of statutory school age) will be fully funded by NCSL. Some funding for travel and supply cover will be available to these schools.

Trainee headteachers from maintained schools and non-maintained special schools will be eligible for an 80% programme fee subsidy from NCSL. Trainee headteachers or their school/organisation will be expected to make a contribution of 20% of the full fee of £3800. This contribution will therefore be £760.

Those not employed in a maintained school or non-maintained special school will be non-funded and will be required to pay the full fee of £3800. However, if a non-funded trainee headteacher goes on to take up his or her first substantive headship in a maintained school or non-maintained special school, he or she will be eligible to claim back some or all of this amount from NCSL.

Full details of our charging and subsidy policy can be found on the 'costs' page of the NPQH web pages at www.ncsl.org.uk/npqh.