



**Step** **up**  
to lead

**NPQ IN EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP**  
**YOUR PROGRAMME GUIDE**

Accredited NPQ provider

  
Department  
for Education

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# Welcome

## Welcome to your Teach First National Professional Qualification in Executive Leadership (NPQEL).

This guide, along with the Introductory course on Brightspace, will support you with the NPQEL programme and contains the information and policies you should familiarise yourself with now and refer back to during the course if needed.

Teach First is a charity that supports schools serving the most disadvantaged communities. We've been providing high-quality teacher and leadership training for nearly 20 years and currently work with over 3,200 schools across the country.

We're delighted to be one of a select group of national providers to design, deliver and assess National Professional Qualifications (NPQs). NPQs provide training and support for teachers and school leaders at all levels. Powerful school leadership is one of the most important factors in a school's success, supporting pupils to thrive in education. With precise, high-quality and research-informed development opportunities, alongside practical support and advice, we aim to help all school leaders to thrive.

Our NPQs refresh and fill gaps in knowledge, which allows for different levels of prior experience. Each programme focuses on both the 'how' and the 'what' - we've designed the learning to be relevant and practical through the use of real-life examples, case studies and best practice from a range of contexts specific to your role and level.

Most of the NPQ learning opportunities can be accessed online - meaning you can fit the programme around your schedule at a pace that suits you. You'll also attend live and in-person learning in small groups, where you'll consolidate your knowledge, prepare for the next stages and connect with other leaders on your programme. Our online resources and tools will help you reflect on and track your leadership development, all while tackling the issues impacting your school. We tailor the curriculum to each programme member's point, current context and workload. You'll have the opportunity to 'have a go' at applying learning throughout the programme in a manageable way.

While on the NPQEL programme, you'll build relationships with leaders who are working in similar roles to yourself from across the country.



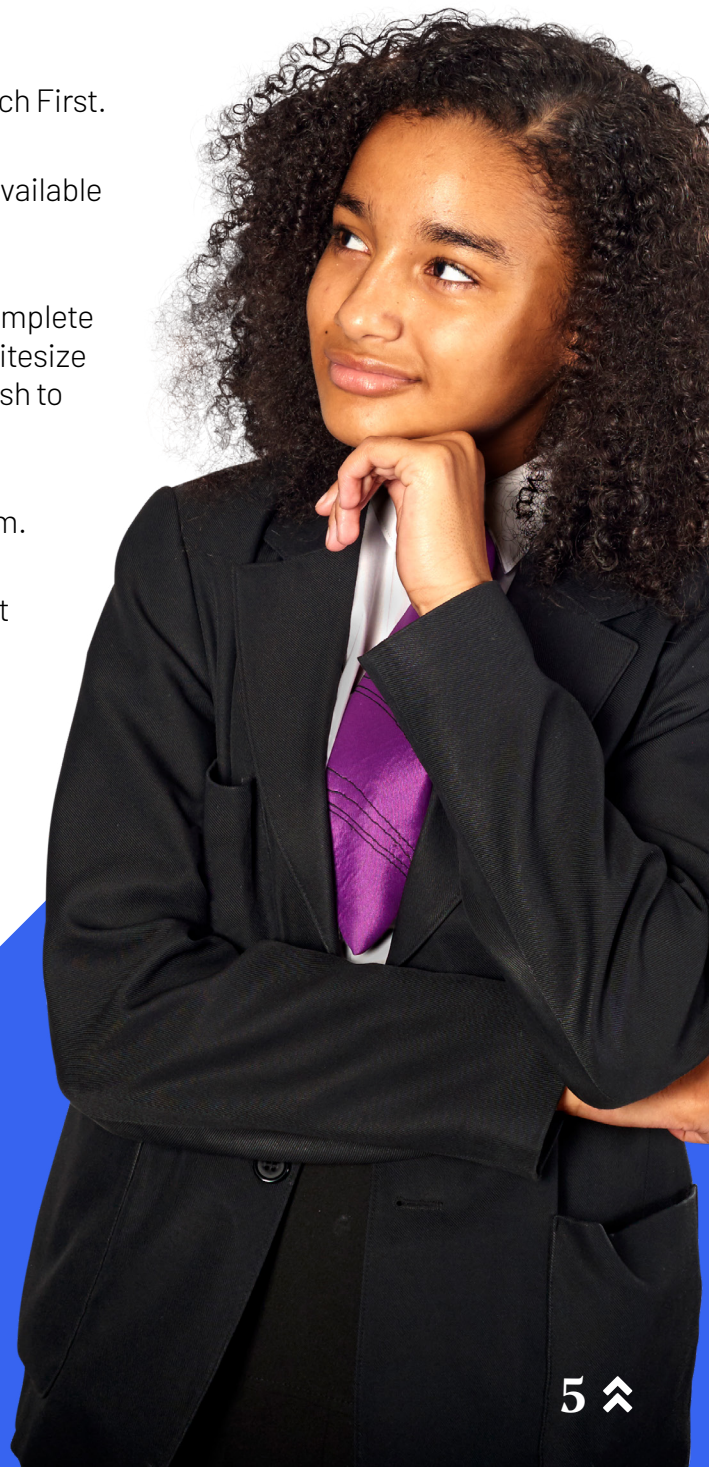
This is a valuable opportunity for you to strengthen your own professional network of peers, a group to share ideas with, learn from and offer support to. By looking outside your current school setting for these connections, you have the chance to bring fresh perspectives to your work. We encourage you to invest in these relationships, share contact details where appropriate and continue conversations with one another outside of the scheduled events.

**We're excited to be working alongside you over the next stage of your leadership journey. Together, we can make our education system work for every child.**



# Preparing for the programme

- ✓ Read this guide to understand how to access the programme, what to expect and how to complete it.
- ✓ Ensure you have registered for a National Professional Qualification on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) if you haven't done so already.
- ✓ Make sure the relevant agreement has been signed, either by your school (if you have DfE scholarship funding or your school has paid for the programme) or you (if it's self-funded).
- ✓ Log on to My Teach First and Brightspace when you get your log in instructions by email.
- ✓ Confirm your personal information details on My Teach First.
- ✓ Complete the Introduction module on Brightspace (available through My Teach First).
- ✓ Consider how you will set aside time each week to complete the online content. It's designed to be completed in bitesize chunks to work around your schedule, so you may wish to add these to a calendar or task list.
- ✓ Hold event dates in your diary as soon as you get them.
- ✓ Speak to your line manager or governing board about the programme and how you expect it will align with your development (we recommend mentioning the practical implementation to make sure there's support to plan or deliver an improvement in school, particularly if the programme you're completing is for an aspiring role).
- ✓ Read the important policy information at the end of this guide.



# Accessing the programme

Your programme will be delivered through a blend of online and in-person activities.

## In-person

There are two in-person conferences to attend. Dates will be shared in due course.

## Online

My Teach First is the online platform you'll use to access study materials and activities on our learning management system, Brightspace. Brightspace is used across all Teach First programmes. You'll get your login information by email at the start of the programme. If you have any technical issues, get in touch via the 'contact us' button on My Teach First or Brightspace. Our helpdesk is on hand to provide customer service support 7:30am to 6:00pm Monday to Friday.

## Seminars

Dates for seminars will be shared at the start of the programme.

## Accessibility for all

Inclusivity is at the forefront of our programme design, and we aim for all digital learning content and platforms to meet minimum accessibility standards. Information is provided in multiple ways where needed, for example alt-text on images, transcripts of audio or audio descriptions on video where required. This ensures content is accessible to the widest possible user base, regardless of disability or need. More detailed information can be found in our **Brightspace Accessibility Statement**.

Brightspace was launched as Teach First's learning management system in 2020, and we have acted on user feedback to ensure the navigation and layout of content is clear, consistent and intuitive. We have built testing and review into our design process to provide a streamlined user experience, and have established a contact centre to support you with any technical issues quickly and efficiently in order to limit impact on learning. We're mindful that busy programme members would appreciate indications of how long reading tasks may take so that they can plan their time effectively. We have added this where appropriate and tried to keep these as short as possible for the main content. We have also sought to use accessible and, where appropriate, relatively informal language in our materials to aid the readability.



# Programme overview and structure

Our NPQ programmes are designed in collaboration with subject-matter experts and schools. All content is based on high-quality evidence and research and will equip you with core and specialist knowledge. At times, we will repeat some elements of this knowledge to allow for spaced practice. We also have a particular focus on how to put learning into practice and will include concrete examples of this.

School examples and expert content are included throughout the modules, including content from the [Key for School Leaders](#) as well as the [Chartered College Impact Magazine](#). This content is usually behind a membership paywall, but we have kindly been given permission to share this content. You may consider joining both of these organisations as a source of excellent, credible content to support your ongoing development as a leader.

Our programmes follow the DfE NPQ framework structure and are a blend of online modules and seminars and in-person content. You'll practise preparing for or delivering a small implementation cycle within the programme to ensure the learning has had an impact on you, your long-term knowledge and development, and your current school and context.



## Programme components

Our model is delivered through the following components:

### LEARNING MODULES

#### *Asynchronous, online*

Each module should take you around four hours to work through.

Example format:

- **Diagnostic activity** to help identify prior knowledge on which to build learning, and signpost how to engage with the content of the module.
- A number of units of content for you to work through, including **foundational or advanced content** and some choice elements to build knowledge, depending on your individual starting point. This includes exemplification of practice from school leaders and input from subject matter experts.
- **Formative tasks** that recognise the importance of school context and give you the chance to put some of your learning into practice.
- **Reflection on learning** (following seminar).

### SEMINARS

#### *Synchronous, online or in-person*

Led by delivery partner facilitators. These will usually consider scenarios and persistent problems leaders are likely to face and give you the chance to work through examples with the support of peers and an expert facilitator. These will build on the online content and link to the formative task.

Before your seminars, please make sure you complete the Formative Assessment task at the end of the corresponding online learning module or unit.

### Key terms

*Asynchronous* = flexible in your own time

*Synchronous* = in real time

### ONE-TO-ONE SUPPORT

In addition, programme members in schools in particularly challenging circumstances will have free access to Teach First one-to-one support. These are a series of virtual coaching calls focused on supporting you to contextualise your learning and implement changes in your school. If you are eligible for this one-to-one support we will contact you in a separate email.

### CONFERENCES

#### *Synchronous, in-person*

Each programme will include two conferences, designed to:

- build on knowledge acquired and provide a choice of practice activities, supporting you to move from novice towards expert and ensuring that actions become habitual for maximum application (for example simulating giving precise feedback after a lesson observation)
- bring insights from serving school leaders and subject matter experts
- provide opportunities for focused collaboration, supporting you to apply your learning but also build trust and engagement in the programme
- build relationships between peers that will support participation in the programme





## PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION

The practical implementation cycle occurs in the final term of the programme and takes place alongside an Implementation online course and live seminar. It is designed to support the learning outcomes of the Implementation section of the NPQ framework.

During the practical implementation cycle, you'll be required to put learning into practice and implement an improvement, or plan the implementation of an improvement, in your setting based on the NPQ programme you're working towards. The focus will be identified by you and must be level appropriate. This improvement should be a stretching professional development target within your current role. If you're an aspiring specialist or leader, your school or employer should support you to implement an improvement at the aspiring level.

Guidance will be provided on Brightspace.

## SCHOOL / TRUST VISITS

In terms 3 and 4 of your NPQ you will arrange a visit to a different trust which will broaden your experience and allow you to see good practice examples and other approaches. Guidance will be provided to help you arrange this.

The visits will:

- allow you to observe and understand expertise in a contrasting context (for example, observing a senior leader introduce a new policy to the school)
- be focused with accompanying guidance and prompt questions, driven by your needs. You can identify the school or trust and the focus of the visit that would benefit you most.



# Programme calendar

These are the calendars that we'll be using to schedule your programme content, including the 'go live' dates for online content. This will be made available at the start of the month in most cases.

Term	Month	Activities and tasks	Online content	Seminars and conferences
Spring 2023	January		Introduction	
	February	Introduction sessions	1 - Organisational management	
	March		2 - Governance and accountability	1 - Organisational management
	April		3 - School culture	2 - Governance and accountability
Summer 2023	May		4 - Behaviour	3 - School culture
	June			4 - Behaviour
	July		5 - Teaching	
Autumn 2023	August			Conference 1
	September			
	October		6 - Curriculum and assessment	5 - Teaching
	November		7 - Special educational needs and disabilities	6 - Curriculum and assessment
Spring 2024	December	Trust / school visits		7 - Special educational needs and disabilities
	January		8 - Professional development	
	February		9 - Working in partnership	8 - Professional development
	March	Practical implementation cycle	10 - Implementation	9 - Working in partnership
April			10 - Implementation	Conference 2
Summer 2024	May			11 - Group seminar
	June			
	July			
	August			
Autumn 2024	September	Assessment (12-19 September)		

# Completion and assessment

To pass the programme, you'll need to engage with at least 90% of the course and pass one summative assessment. The assessment process for all NPQs has been refreshed to reduce the workload burden on teachers while still providing an opportunity to apply their knowledge.

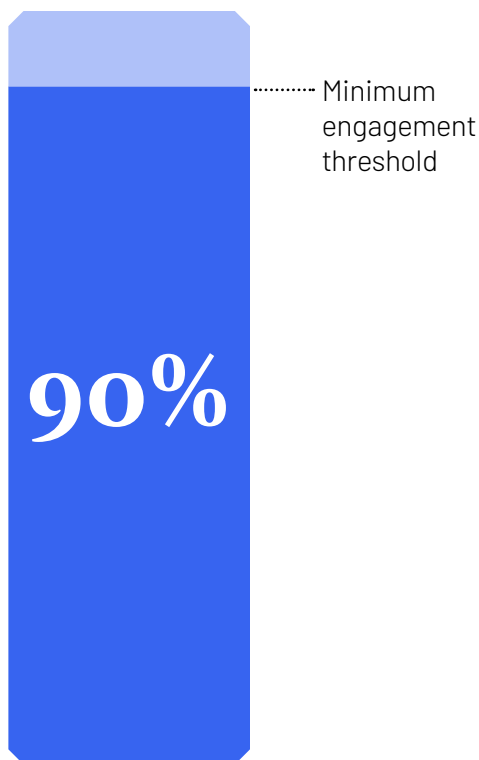
To track the 90% engagement, your participation in the programme will be monitored on an ongoing basis, including events attended (such as online and face-to-face conferences and seminars), diagnostic activity on Brightspace and reflection tasks. It is important to complete tasks on time. Please note: If you don't meet the 90% engagement requirement at the time of assessment submission, it will not be possible to submit an assessment and you will not pass the NPQ.

To ensure you complete the course you need to:

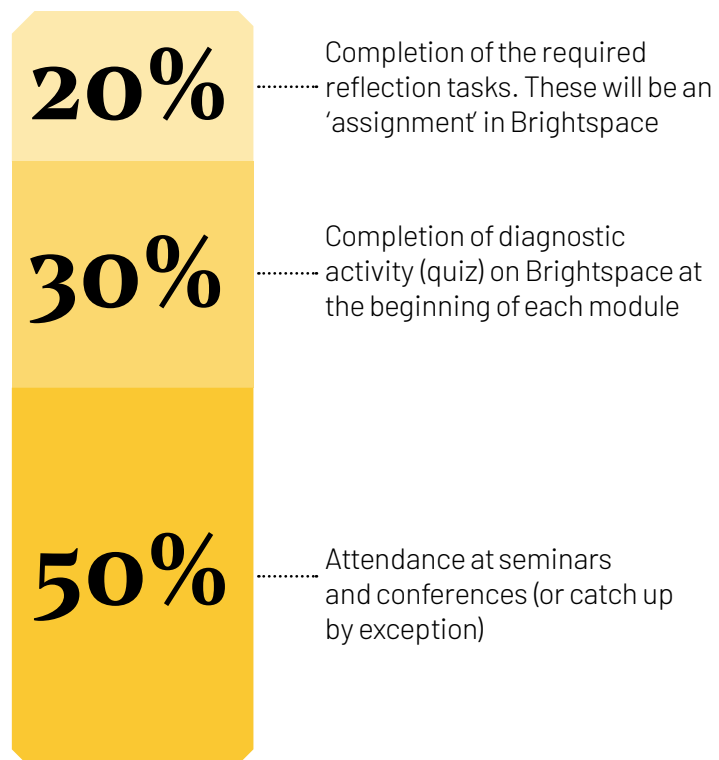
- attend seminars and conferences (or catch up in exceptional circumstances).
- complete the diagnostic activity on Brightspace at the beginning of each module.
- complete a reflection task at the end of each module. This is an 'assignment' in Brightspace.

Apart from these activities on Brightspace, you are free to dig into the content based on your prior learning and needs.

## PROGRAMME PARTICIPATION



## ENGAGEMENT WEIGHTING



The summative assessment task will consist of a written response to a school-based case study, which will outline an example context that draws on some of the content you've learnt throughout the programme.

This task takes place over a fixed eight-day window commencing 12 September 2024. Please note that there is no capacity to change or extend the eight-day window for the case study. If you're unable to complete it in that time, you would need to defer to a future cohort to complete your NPQ. Please plan ahead to ensure you are available to complete the case study. If you fail your case study assessment, you will have the opportunity to re-submit one additional time in the next cohort's case study window.

# Programme support and delivery

Seminars and most conference sessions will be delivered by facilitators specially selected by your delivery partner. These are experienced school leaders with extensive expertise in their respective fields. In sessions they will add contextual examples to the content and provide feedback so you can develop further.

Facilitators are regularly quality assured and undergo Continuing Professional Development (CPD) to maintain up-to-date sector expertise.

Teach First one-to-one support is delivered by expert former leaders through Teach First, for those in eligible schools receiving this.

## Evaluation

Teach First will distribute programme evaluation surveys directly to you at key points during your NPQ. These will be included within online learning modules.

Other surveys mandated by the DfE may also be distributed to you during the programme (timing and distribution mechanism TBC).

Teach First may also want to engage you in evaluation interview(s) and/or focus group(s), during the programme(s) (maximum twice per programme starting no earlier than term 2).



# Important information and policies

The following information should be read before starting the programme. This supplements everything set out in the programme agreement. It is all correct at the time of production but is subject to change.

## Part-time policy

Part-time programme members will be expected to complete the necessary content and associated activities to achieve the NPQ qualification. To ensure that the course is accessible for you, we are committed to:

- a blended learning approach with modules available online. This ensures you can work through content at your own pace at a convenient time
- high-quality catch-up resources for all seminars if they are scheduled on a non-working day. This ensures important content will not be missed – your delivery partner will make sure this is possible for the content they are delivering
- a dedicated point of contact to discuss progress and ensure work or time commitments are balanced effectively – your delivery partner will ensure they have a member of staff who can provide this support.

Part-time programme members do not get longer to complete the programme. You may be able to defer if you find it isn't feasible to complete the programme in the allocated time.

## Reasonable adjustments

Teach First is committed to making our ways of working, venues and premises accessible and we routinely make reasonable adjustments in accordance with legislation so that people with disabilities, health conditions or impairments are not unfairly disadvantaged. If you require additional adjustments in-year you are encouraged to share that with us as soon as you are able. This should be done via the 'contact us' feature of My Teach First.

## Extensions, deferrals, change of employment and NPQ type/level transitions

We understand that you may come up against issues that make completing the programme a challenge. We will support you with any difficulties you are facing before exploring an extension, withdrawal or deferral.

### EXTENSIONS

The DfE has agreed to an extension period for programme members undertaking the Early Headship Coaching Offer for up to six months from the start of the main assessment window. Because of the fixed nature of the assessment windows it is not possible for programme members completing other types of NPQ to be granted an extension. Instead, you would need to defer to the next cohort.

## DEFERRALS

If you're unable to complete the programme and/or submit for assessment in the designated submission window for your cohort, you can defer your place on the programme and pick it up again at an appropriate point in a future cohort. Deferrals are possible to any future cohort, not just the next cohort. For evaluation purposes we will collect information on the reason for the deferral, but this does not affect a deferral being granted. You will need to specify your return date when you submit your deferral request.

## WITHDRAWALS

If you want to withdraw from the programme you are able to do so at any time. For evaluation purposes we will collect information on the reason for the withdrawal, but this does not affect a withdrawal being granted. If you withdraw from an NPQ you will not be eligible for scholarship funding for the same NPQ again.

## CHANGE OF EMPLOYMENT

We appreciate that during the NPQ programme, you may face changes to your employment (either within your current school or setting, or moving to a new school or setting). Our overarching principle is to support all changes of employment where possible.

## NPQ TYPE/LEVEL TRANSFER

It will not be possible for you to change NPQ type once you have commenced on a programme. You would need to withdraw from the NPQ and reapply at the new level in a future cohort.

## COMPLAINTS

We're committed to providing the best service we can, but we recognise that our practices could always be improved. When we fall short of the high standards we set for ourselves, we would like to hear about it. We take all feedback seriously – both good and bad – and treat all feedback as an opportunity to develop. The Teach First complaints policy, including how to make a complaint, can be found [here](#).

## CONTACT

If you have any questions about anything in this guide or your programme, please contact your delivery partner.

