



National Professional Qualifications

2026 - 27



Department
for Education

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Introduction to NPQs

National Professional Qualifications (NPQs) are designed to support teachers and leaders at all levels and deliver improved outcomes for young people. They have been designed with professionals in mind, using the latest and best available evidence, can be completed flexibly around existing commitments.

‘Doing the NPQH course has removed a barrier I had put up to prevent me applying for Headships’

NPQH participant, Autumn 2025

How to choose the right NPQ for you

Use this Ebook as a comprehensive guide to help you identify the most suitable National Professional Qualification (NPQ) for your development goals. Each NPQ offers a unique pathway to strengthen your leadership skills, develop your pedagogical practices, and contribute more effectively to school improvement.

1. Align your NPQ choice with your school's strategic priorities to maximise impact.
1. Explore each NPQ option to find the one that best suits:
 - Your leadership aspirations
 - Your area of expertise (e.g. behaviour, teaching, curriculum leadership)
 - The skills you want to develop to support your school's improvement
1. Choosing the right NPQ can boost your effectiveness and support your professional growth.

Contact us for personalised advice and support:

enquiries@albantsh.co.uk

NPQ in Leading Teaching (NPQLT)

Who is it for?: Teachers aspiring to lead teaching in their schools.

Content Overview: Create a culture of high-expectations, supporting colleagues, subject expertise, and pedagogy.

Benefits: Enhance classroom practice and improve student outcomes.

Eligibility and Funding: Free for eligible schools.

Duration: 12 months

This course will:

- involve an average of 1 to 2 hours of study each week
- be a mix of self-study and group sessions
- involve a written assessment

More details

[Click here to register](#)

[Leading teaching guidance](#)

[Expression of interest](#) form for the next cohort (if applications are not currently open)

NPQ in Leading Teacher Development (NPQLTD)

Who is it for?: Teachers leading professional development initiatives.

Content Overview: Effective Professional Development, pedagogy, curriculum and assessment.

Benefits: Support colleagues' development and improve teaching quality.

Eligibility and Funding: Free for eligible schools.

Duration: 12 months

This course will:

- involve an average of 1 to 2 hours of study each week
- be a mix of self-study and group sessions
- involve a written assessment

More details

[Click here to register](#)

[Leading Teacher Development guidance](#)

[Expression of interest](#) form for the next cohort (if applications are not currently open)

NPQ in Leading Behaviour and Culture (NPQLBC)

Who is it for?: Those leading behaviour and culture strategies.

Content Overview: Developing safe and supportive school environments, enabling conditions for good behaviour for pupils and ensuring colleagues are supported in their approaches.

Benefits: Build effective strategies for behaviour management.

Eligibility and Funding: Free for eligible schools.

Duration: 12 months

This course will:

- involve an average of 1 to 2 hours of study each week
- be a mix of self-study and group sessions
- involve a written assessment

More details

[Click here to register](#)

[Leading Behaviour and Culture guidance](#)

[Expression of interest](#) form for the next cohort (if applications are not currently open)

NPQ in Leading Literacy (NPQLL)

Who is it for?: Teachers who want to lead literacy teaching across a school or specific key stages, focusing on developing pupils' literacy skills.

Content Overview: Evidence-based approaches to literacy, curriculum planning, assessment, and strategies for improving literacy outcomes.

Benefits: Enhance literacy instruction, improve reading and writing skills school-wide, and lead effective literacy interventions.

Eligibility and Funding: Free for eligible schools.

Duration: 12 months

This course will:

- involve an average of 1 to 2 hours of study each week
- be a mix of self-study and group sessions
- involve a written assessment

More details

[Click here to register](#)

[Leading Literacy guidance](#)

[Expression of interest](#) form for the next cohort (if applications are not currently open)

NPQ in Leading Primary Maths (NPQLPM)

Who is it for?: Teachers who want to specialise in primary mathematics and lead maths teaching across a school or phase.

Content Overview: Mastery approaches, curriculum development, assessment strategies, and leadership in maths teaching.

Benefits: Gain expertise in primary maths education, improve maths outcomes, and lead effective maths teaching practices.

Eligibility and Funding: Free for eligible schools.

Duration: 12 months

This course will:

- involve an average of 1 to 2 hours of study each week
- be a mix of self-study and group sessions
- involve a written assessment

More details

[Apply here](#)

[Leading Primary Maths guidance](#)

[Expression of interest](#) form for the next cohort (if applications are not currently open)

NPQ in Senior Leadership (NPQSL)

Who is it for?: Aspiring or current senior leaders.

Content Overview: Strategic leadership and improving outcomes.

Benefits: Drive school improvement and lead impactful change.

Eligibility and Funding: Free for eligible schools; apprenticeship route available.

Duration: 18 months

This course will:

- involve an average of 1 to 2 hours of study each week
- be a mix of self-study and group sessions
- involve a written assessment

More details:

[Apply here](#)

[Senior Leadership guidance](#)

[Expression of interest](#) form for the next cohort (if applications are not currently open)

NPQ in Headship (NPQH)

Who is it for?: Aspiring or new headteachers.

Content Overview: Leadership vision, curriculum and assessment, professional development, behaviour, governance, and school improvement.

Benefits: Lead effectively and sustain high standards.

Eligibility and Funding: Free for eligible schools; apprenticeship route available.

Duration: 18 months

This course will:

- involve an average of 1 to 2 hours of study each week
- be a mix of self-study and group sessions
- involve a written assessment

More details:

[Apply here](#)

[NPQ Headship guidance](#)

[Expression of interest](#) form for the next cohort (if applications are not currently open)

NPQ in Executive Leadership (NPQEL)

- **Who is it for?:** Aspiring or current executive leaders who oversee multiple schools or school trusts.
- **Content Overview:** Strategic leadership, governance, school improvement across multiple schools, and leading change.
- **Benefits:** Develop skills to lead a group of schools, manage resources effectively, and sustain high standards across settings.
- **Eligibility and Funding:** Free for eligible schools; apprenticeship route available.
- **Duration:** 18 months

This course will:

- involve an average of 1 to 2 hours of study each week
- be a mix of self-study and group sessions
- involve a written assessment

More details:

[Apply here](#)

[Executive Leadership guidance](#)

[Expression of interest](#) form for the next cohort (if applications are not currently open)

NPQ in Early Years Leadership (NPQEYL)

Who is it for?: Current or aspiring early years leaders who manage staff and oversee early years education.

Content Overview: Early childhood development, creating inclusive environments, constructive feedback to parents and carers, management and leadership in early years settings.

Benefits: Gain expertise in early years management, enhance child development outcomes, and build strong early years teams.

Eligibility and Funding: Free for eligible schools.

Duration: 18 months

This course will:

- involve an average of 1 to 2 hours of study each week
- be a mix of self-study and group sessions
- involve a written assessment

More details:

[Apply here](#)

[Early Years Leadership guidance](#)

[Expression of interest](#) form for the next cohort (if applications are not currently open)

NPQ in Special Educational Needs Coordinator (NPQSENCO)

Who is it for?: Teachers or leaders who are responsible for supporting and managing special educational needs in schools.

Content Overview: SEN policy and legislation, strategic planning for inclusive education, and specialist support techniques.

Benefits: Develop skills to lead SEN provisions, ensure compliance with policies, and improve outcomes for students with special educational needs.

Eligibility and Funding: Free for eligible schools.

Duration: between 18 and 22 months (18 months taught and 3 to 4 months assessment window)

This course will:

- involve an average of 1 to 2 hours of study each week
- be a mix of self-study and group sessions
- Involve a written assessment

More details:

[Apply here](#)

[NPQ SENCO guidance](#)

[Expression of interest](#) form for the next cohort (if applications are not currently open)

Funding Options for NPQs

To make NPQs accessible to as many schools as possible, there are several funding options available for schools to support staff professional development and increase staff retention by creating clear pathways for career progression within the school.

Fully Funded Places for Eligible Schools Autumn 2026

For schools with a higher proportion of students eligible for pupil premium (PP), NPQs can be fully funded. This funding ensures that teachers and leaders from disadvantaged areas have access to high-quality professional development without impacting school budgets.

Eligible schools can be found [here](#).

Apprenticeship Route

The apprenticeship route is a cost-effective and sustainable funding option. Through the apprenticeship levy, schools can access NPQs without additional out-of-pocket costs, allowing staff to pursue qualifications as part of an apprenticeship.

School-Funded Options

For schools that may not qualify for funding, NPQs are available at an affordable rate. NPQ programmes offer significant long-term value by fostering the development of skilled leaders, improving classroom practices and support teacher retention. Schools investing in NPQs benefit from a stronger leadership pipeline and higher-quality teaching, contributing positively to whole-school improvement.

Contact us with any questions or to discuss which funding option is best suited to your school's needs: enquiries@albantsh.co.uk

The Apprenticeship Route

- A sustainable and cost-effective option for schools.
- Supports talent retention and professional growth.
- Fully funded through the Apprenticeship Levy.
- Delivered in partnership with Best Practice Network

Applications are **now open for the** Leader and Specialist Apprenticeship with NPQs, a unique dual award programme that combines the Department for Education's flagship NPQSL, NPQH, NPQSENCO with a Level 5 Apprenticeship or NPQLT, NPQLTD, NPQLBC with a Level 4 Apprenticeship.

These programmes offer:

- In-depth, specialist development in school leadership through the NPQ
- Valuable cross-sector learning and support through the apprenticeship
- A fully funded pathway to leadership with no cost to the school

To register your interest click [here](#)

Our NPQ Providers

At Alban Teaching School Hub, we partner with two trusted NPQ providers: **National Institute of Teaching (NIOT)** and **Best Practice Network (BPN)**. Both are recognised by the Department for Education for their high-quality, evidence-based training that supports educators in advancing their careers.



Best Practice Network (BPN)

Best Practice Network (BPN) is one of the largest NPQ providers in the UK, with extensive experience in delivering professional development programmes across a range of subjects and leadership areas. BPN's courses are structured to be flexible and supportive, ensuring that busy educators can succeed without compromising their work-life balance.

Find more information on their website: www.bestpracticenet.co.uk



National Institute of Teaching (NIOT)

The National Institute of Teaching (NIOT) is a provider deeply committed to research-based practices and evidence-driven education. They focus on delivering high-quality NPQ programmes that support educators in their pursuit of excellence in teaching, leadership, and school improvement. NIOT's approach is centred around practical applications and strategies that make an immediate impact in the classroom.

Find more information on their website: www.niot.org.uk

How to Sign Up

Check the logo on the relevant course page to determine which Lead Partner you need to register with. This will be Best Practice Network or the National Institute of Teaching. When you register your interest or sign up you then need to select **Alban TSH** as your local delivery partner.

Contact Alban Teaching School Hub for more information:

- Email us: enquiries@albantsh.co.uk
- Visit our website to explore NPQs and funding options:
<https://albantsh.co.uk/>
- Expression of Interest Form:
<https://forms.gle/PLvrFZmD5DVFqcFYA>