



Guidance on the mandatory requirement to hold the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH)

Date of Issue: January 2004

Ref: DfES/0087/2004



This publication contains guidance on the statutory requirement for first-time headteachers in maintained schools and non-maintained special schools to hold the NPQH from 1 April 2004.

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Related documents:

- DfES/NCSL consultation document: *Proposals to introduce a mandatory requirement for first-time headteachers to hold the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH)* (March 2002)
- NPQH Regulations (reference 2003/3111 laid 5 Dec 2003)
www.legislation.hmsso.gov.uk/si/si2003/20033111.htm
- Advice for Governors on appointing a headteacher
www.governornet.co.uk/laurencepollock

Further copies

Further copies of this guidance are available from:
DfES Publications, Prolog (see back cover for address)
quoting DfES/0087/2004.

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Executive Summary

- A.i From 1 April 2004 the procedure for applying for headship posts in the maintained sector and at non-maintained special schools will change.
- A.ii The National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) will become mandatory for all those applying for their first headship post at a maintained school or non-maintained special school in England. From 1 April 2004, all new headship applicants to such schools will need to hold NPQH or be working towards it.
- A.iii The requirement does not apply to applicants taking up post at CTCs, Academies, PRUs, in the independent sector or in the Further Education sector.
- A.iv This booklet explains the responsibilities for headteachers, aspiring headteachers, governing bodies, diocesan bodies, trustees of non-maintained special schools, and LEAs when recruiting for headship posts.
- A.v There are five parts:
- Part One describes what the requirement means for the main stakeholders.
 - Part Two contains background on the NPQH and on the National College for School Leadership (NCSL).
 - Part Three contains answers to some frequently asked questions about the mandatory requirement.
 - Part Four sets out the text of the draft Regulations.

- Part Five contains the contact details for the regional NPQH Centres and NCSL.

Notes

1. In this document, references are made to Governing Bodies. For those in non-maintained special schools, please read 'trustees'.
2. Section 9 sets out what the NPQH mandatory requirement means for LEAs. For some church schools, similar functions may be carried out by the diocesan body.

Introduction

- B.i The National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) is delivered and developed by the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) through regional centres. NPQH is a practical, professional qualification, underpinned by the National Standards for Headteachers, which provides effective preparation and professional development for teachers aspiring to headship (*for more information on the programme see pages 22-25*).
- B.ii The NPQH was introduced in 1997 and, as at September 2003, there were over 11,300 graduates and over 6,600 candidates studying on the programme. The content of the NPQH was reviewed in 1999 and the revised NPQH is popular and well regarded.
- B.ii The Government is committed to high quality leadership development and preparation for headship and first set out its commitment to make NPQH mandatory in the 1998 Green Paper *Teachers: meeting the challenge of change*. Since the Green Paper, the Government has established the National College for School Leadership, which has been running the NPQH since April 2001.
- B.iv In the summer term of 2002 the Department carried out a wide-ranging consultation exercise on the proposals to make NPQH mandatory. Over 650 responses were received and there was general agreement to the proposals (a summary of findings is available on the DfES website at www.dfes.gsi.gov.uk/consultations). The main outcomes of the consultation, which were announced by the Department on 24 October 2002 were that:
- From 1 April 2004 it will be mandatory for all those appointed to their first headship post in the LEA-maintained sector, including nursery schools, and in non-maintained special schools, to hold the NPQH or

be working towards it. The requirement will not apply to the headteacher of a school, including an independent school, in the United Kingdom or abroad who was appointed prior to 1 April 2004;

- For the first five years, transitional arrangements require new headteachers to hold NPQH, or be 'working towards' it. 'Working Towards' means that appointees must have a confirmed place on the NPQH programme prior to their headship appointment. Once in post, they must gain the qualification within four years of their appointment. The time for completion of NPQH will vary according to the route, but should not normally extend much beyond two years except where there are exceptional circumstances requiring a deferral. The 'working towards' arrangement is a transitional measure aimed to ease in the mandatory requirement and will be in place for the first five years only from 1 April 2004. Thus from 1 April 2009 the mandatory requirement will be that all those appointed to their first headship post in an LEA-maintained school or in a non-maintained special school will need to hold the qualification. Once awarded, the NPQH is valid for the whole of a teacher's or headteacher's career;
- The requirement to hold, or be working towards the NPQH, will not apply to someone who is appointed as a headteacher in the maintained sector, in a non-maintained special school, or in the independent sector before 1 April 2004, nor to those appointed as acting headteachers;
- Holders of headship qualifications or standards in the other countries of the UK will be recognised as being equivalent to the NPQH in England;
- Serving headteachers and aspiring headteachers working outside the UK will be treated in a consistent way to those in the UK.

B.v This guidance and the draft Regulations were consulted on as part of a technical consultation with the professional associations, LEAs and other representative bodies in the summer term of 2003. 49 responses were received, and the guidance has been updated to take account of comments that were made.

B.vi Regulations to make NPQH mandatory, made under section 135 of the Education Act 2002, were laid before Parliament in December 2003.

DfES

January 2004

Summary

Who needs to have NPQH from 1 April 2004?

- Anyone who is applying for a headship post in a maintained school (or a non-maintained special school) in England, and meets either of these criteria:
 - it will be their first headship
 - it will be the first time they have held a headship at an LEA-maintained school (or non-maintained special school)*.

(* = One of the outcomes arising from the consultation in 2002 about the arrangements to make NPQH mandatory was that an agreement was reached in respect of serving headteachers in the independent sector. Those appointed before 1 April 2004 do not need to hold the NPQH if they wish to move to the maintained sector once the Regulations are in force. This part of the requirement affects only those whose initial appointment as a headteacher in that sector took place on or after 1 April 2004. Their subsequent move to the maintained sector would require them to hold NPQH, or be working towards it).

Who does not need to have NPQH?

- Anyone appointed to become a headteacher before 1 April 2004 (either in the maintained or the independent sector, at a non-maintained special school, a CTC, an Academy or a PRU) who is either:
 - a serving headteacher applying for another headship
 - a returning headteacher who is not currently employed at a school (for example, someone on a career break or on secondment to an LEA), or
 - a headteacher who has served as a head at the equivalent of a maintained school or an independent school abroad.
- Those applying for acting headship posts;
- Those applying for posts as the leader of a PRU;
- Those applying for headships of Academies or CTCs;
- Those applying for headship posts in the independent sector;
- Those applying for posts leading sixth form colleges or FE institutions (although a principals' qualification is currently under development);
- Those applying for their first headship post in England (at a maintained school or non-maintained special school) who hold a national professional headship qualification from one of the other countries of the UK:
 - the NPQH in Wales
 - an accredited qualification which meets the Scottish Standard for Headship, or
 - the Professional Qualification for Headship in Northern Ireland (PQH:NI).

Part One: What does the requirement mean for the main stakeholders?

1 Why is NPQH so important?

- 1.1 The National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) is a well regarded professional qualification which provides teachers with an accurate and timely insight into what is involved in being an effective headteacher. Candidates have the opportunity to examine their current leadership style, learn about the demands and challenges of headship, and through face-to-face training, online learning and peer group analysis are able to make changes to their leadership style before they take up their first headship post. The training is thorough and demanding, and necessarily so.
- 1.2 Many candidates have commented that the course materials are an invaluable source of information and NCSL amend them annually to ensure that they cover all aspects of Government policy, and give aspiring headteachers access to up-to-date and relevant information. For candidates at maintained schools and in non-maintained special schools, the course fees are paid for by the National College for School Leadership.

2 When does the requirement take effect?

- 2.1 The Regulations come into force on 1 April 2004. This means that appointments made after that date are subject to the Regulations. It also means that those applying for their first headship post in the maintained sector or at a non-maintained special school after that date must have regard to the Regulations.

- 2.2 If applicants for such posts are appointed on or after 1 April 2004, they will need to hold NPQH, or be working towards it.
- 2.3 Conversely, if applicants are appointed to a headship post before the Regulations come into effect on 1 April 2004 they will not be required to hold or be working towards NPQH, even if the date they start their headship is after the Regulations are in force.
- 2.4 Appointment in this context means that an offer of a post has been made, and that this offer has been accepted by the applicant.

3 How will the transition to the new requirement be managed? (The 'Working Towards' arrangement)

- 3.1 The 'working towards' arrangement is a transitional measure aimed to ease in the mandatory requirement and will be in place for the first five years only. Thus from 1 April 2009 the mandatory requirement will be that all those appointed to their first headship post will need to hold the NPQH.
- 3.2 During the transition period, which will last from 1 April 2004 to 31 March 2009, applicants for first-time headship posts who do not hold the NPQH but who have successfully applied for a place on the NPQH programme will be eligible to apply for a headship vacancy. They will need to show governing bodies (or trustees) evidence that they have successfully applied for a place on the programme. This will usually be the letter confirming the applicant's place on the programme from the regional NPQH Centre. If the individual is subsequently appointed to the headship post, that individual will be required to complete and pass the qualification within four years of the date of their appointment. We expect that the majority of candidates will be able to complete NPQH in two years.

For clarification on the definition of 'appointment', see paragraphs 2.4 and 5.6.

- 3.3 From 1 April 2009 the mandatory requirement will change – holding NPQH will be a pre-appointment requirement for those being appointed to their first headship post in the maintained sector or at non-maintained special schools.

- 3.4 Those appointed under the transitional, or 'working towards' arrangements, up to and including 31 March 2009, will have four years from their appointment to gain the NPQH. Thus someone appointed in this way may have until 30 March 2013 to gain the NPQH. After 30 March 2013 the transitional arrangement will no longer apply.
- 3.5 Governing bodies and LEAs, as the employer, (or diocesan bodies for church schools, or trustees in non-maintained special schools) will wish to support the progress of the individual through the qualification to completion. The NCSL and the regional NPQH Centre will monitor progress and provide support and guidance. Normally, candidates on route 1 (the Access Stage) take up to two years to complete the qualification, candidates on route 2 (the Development Stage) take one year, and candidates on Route 3 (the Final Stage) take up to six months to complete the qualification, so the four year period makes provision for some extra flexibility in the case of deferment of progress towards the qualification, should the candidate need it, for example through sickness. The Regulations make provision for an extension to the four year period in the case of maternity, paternity, parental and adoption leave. In all other cases, requests for deferral are considered by the NCSL on a national basis. In such cases, NCSL would inform governing bodies and the LEA.

4. What happens if a headteacher appointed under the 'working towards' arrangements fails to gain the NPQH within the four year period?

- 4.1 This is unlikely to happen, as effective serving headteachers should have no difficulty in gaining the NPQH quickly. The time for completing NPQH should not in normal circumstances extend beyond two years. However, if a head failed to gain NPQH within the four year period, the governing body (or trustees) would need to review the position of the head. The legal position would be that the headteacher would be in breach of his/her contractual responsibilities and the governing body would therefore be under a duty to terminate their appointment as headteacher. It would be good practice to ensure that the governing body's annual appraisal of the headteacher under the performance management arrangements considered the head's progress towards NPQH if they were appointed under the 'working towards' arrangements.

5. What does the requirement mean for aspiring heads?

- 5.1 Teachers, assistant or deputy headteachers who plan to apply for a headship post will need to take into account the requirement to hold or be working towards NPQH in their career planning. If they are appointed to a headship post before 1 April 2004 they will not be required to hold or be working towards NPQH.
- 5.2 Those teachers, assistant or deputy headteachers who are appointed to a first-time headship post from 1 April 2004 will be required to hold, or be working towards, NPQH. Thus they will be ineligible to apply for a headship post after that date if they do not meet the requirement.
- 5.3 The requirement to 'hold the NPQH' means that the applicant must have successfully completed and passed the NPQH and been awarded the qualification by the Secretary of State for Education and Skills. The individual will receive a certificate and may use the letters 'NPQH' after his/her name. Once notified of the award, the General Teaching Council (GTC) will record the qualification in its register against the individual's name. Once awarded, the NPQH is valid for the whole of a teacher's or headteacher's career.
- 5.4 The requirement to be 'working towards the NPQH' means that an applicant for a first-time headship post must have successfully applied for a place on the NPQH programme. This means that he/she will have applied to a regional NPQH Centre during an NPQH recruitment round and will have been found eligible on either route 1, 2 or 3 of the NPQH and will have received a letter confirming his/her place from his/her regional NPQH Centre. This letter will provide evidence for the governing body. Recruitment to the NPQH takes place twice a year. Further details on recruitment dates are available from the NCSL website at www.ncsl.org.uk/npqh.
- 5.5 Those who gain a headship while 'working towards' NPQH may find that they have demands on their time to juggle induction for their new post with their existing NPQH commitments. NPQH is designed as a preparation for headship, and is usually completed prior to headship – indeed from 2009 it will be a pre-appointment requirement. Candidates may find it preferable to complete their NPQH, or at least complete school-based assessment before applying for a headship post.

- 5.6 'Headship appointment' means the date an individual is appointed by a governing body (or trustees) to a headship post, rather than the date an appointee takes up that post. In effect, the requirement means that from 1 April 2004 individuals will need to hold, or be working towards, NPQH before they apply for a headship vacancy. In the event of 1 April 2004 falling between the time of an individual's application and the time of his/her appointment to a headship post, the individual will be ineligible to accept any offer of appointment if he/she does not hold, or is not working towards, the NPQH.
- 5.7 The LEA and diocesan authorities will have a strong interest in encouraging teaching staff to apply for the NPQH at an appropriate time in their career and thus to plan their move to headship properly. The LEA will also have a strong interest in ensuring that first-time headteachers appointed under the 'working towards' arrangements progress through the NPQH to timetable and work towards achieving the qualification within the four years permitted by the arrangement. The majority of candidates will be able to complete NPQH within two years. *For further details on the role of the LEA, see section 9.*

6. What does the requirement mean for serving heads?

- 6.1 The requirement to hold NPQH, or be working towards it, will not apply to serving headteachers who are appointed to a substantive headship post in the maintained, non-maintained or independent sector prior to 1 April 2004. The definition of 'headteacher' includes the head of a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) (*see section 10*).
- 6.2 Principals of FE Colleges and Sixth Forms are not included so will need to hold NPQH, or be working towards it, before applying for a post in the maintained sector or at a non-maintained special school (*see section 10*).
- 6.3 Former headteachers who return to headship after 1 April 2004 (e.g. after a career break or secondment) will not need to meet the requirement.
- 6.4 As the NPQH is for aspiring headteachers, serving headteachers will not need to take the qualification. However, if you are on the NPQH and gain a headship before you complete your studies, you must continue and complete the qualification.

7. What does the requirement mean for acting headteachers?

- 7.1 The requirement will not apply to those appointed as acting headteachers from 1 April 2004 as those appointments are temporary. However, if an acting headteacher then wishes to apply substantively for the post, or for another post as a substantive headteacher, then he/she will be required, from 1 April 2004, to hold, or be working towards, the NPQH.
- 7.2 Acting headteachers may wish to record their experience in the temporary role to help them in any future applications for NPQH.

8. What does the requirement mean for governing bodies (or in the case of non-maintained special schools, the trustees)?

- 8.1 Governing bodies (or trustees) are responsible for appointing headteachers to their schools. Thus this requirement will change the statutory duties of a governing body in relation to headteacher appointments.
- 8.2 When appointing headteachers from 1 April 2004, governing bodies will need to require those applicants for whom this will be their first substantive headship post to demonstrate that they have gained the NPQH, or have a confirmed place on the programme, before they may be considered for the headship vacancy.
- 8.3 This will be an essential requirement for first-time headteachers on the job/person specification. Care needs to be taken when drawing up the specification. If the specification is worded making the qualification essential, this could inadvertently rule out serving or returning headteachers. The wording should make clear that NPQH is essential for first-time appointees only.
- 8.4 Applicants who have gained the NPQH will need to state their achievement on their application form. Governing bodies should ask to see the original NPQH certificate (or certificatory letter) and may check details with the GTC which will record the award of the qualification upon notification by the NCSL. Applicants who are 'working towards' NPQH will need to provide evidence that they have gained a place on the programme. The letter from their regional NPQH Centre confirming their place on the course will need to be attached to their application form.

If appropriate, governing bodies may check the details against the records held by the regional NPQH Centre (the NPQH Centres are listed on the inside back cover of this document).

- 8.5 Applicants for headship posts who are currently serving or who have previously served as a headteacher in the LEA-maintained sector or in a non-maintained special school will not need to meet the requirement to hold or be working towards NPQH, so governing bodies will need to be clear when assessing applications about which applicants will be affected by the requirement and which will not.

Paragraphs 2.4 and 5.6 provide clarification of the term 'headship appointment'.

- 8.6 Those headteachers appointed under the 'working towards' arrangements are required by the Regulations to complete NPQH within four years. Governing bodies should be aware of the headteacher's progress through NPQH, and work with them to ensure they complete NPQH within the timescale. The majority of NPQH candidates complete the qualification within two years, but if a candidate fails one assessment, they must retake and pass it before progressing, which will add to the time it takes to complete NPQH.
- 8.7 The NPQH is a high quality benchmark based on the National Standards for Headteachers (*the section 'Background on the NPQH programme', sections 15-17, provides more information on the Standards*). Those who achieve the award have shown that they have the skills, knowledge and attributes for headship. Governing Bodies will, as now, determine who is the right headteacher for their school.
- 8.8 Governing bodies will need to make judgements around candidates' prior experience and knowledge of what headship entails. For example, they will have to measure the experience, achievements and track record of a serving headteacher, against the knowledge gained by the possession of the NPQH by prospective first-time appointees.

9. What does the requirement mean for LEAs?

- 9.1 LEAs have a clear interest in the recruitment of headteachers and, in community and voluntary controlled (VC) schools, have a power to make written representations to the selection panel if they consider that

the panel is short-listing an unsuitable person as headteacher (School Standards and Framework Act, schedules 16 & 17). LEAs will need to ensure that selection panels follow this guidance when appointing headteachers after the mandatory NPQH requirement comes into force. When governing bodies notify their LEA of the recommended candidate to fill a headship vacancy, the LEA must refuse to endorse an appointment unless the recommended candidate has met the requirements in respect of NPQH.

- 9.2 In the case of voluntary aided (VA) or foundation schools, the LEA is empowered to make representations to the selection panel and to the full governing body regarding the suitability of a recommended candidate.
- 9.3 The Regulations prevent LEAs from appointing as headteacher a person without the NPQH in a community or VC school and require them to advise the governing body of a foundation or VA school that they are similarly restricted.
- 9.4 The LEA will have a strong interest in ensuring that first-time headteachers appointed under the 'working towards' arrangements progress through the NPQH to timetable and work towards achieving the qualification within the four year timescale.
- 9.5 The LEA will also wish to encourage suitable teaching staff to apply for the NPQH and thus to plan their move to headship properly. This will be an important component of LEAs' strategies for continuing professional development (CPD), and for recruitment and retention. On that basis, LEAs will want to consider how CPD should be reflected in their Education Development Plans (EDPs) when they undertake the annual review of the EDP, guidance for which was issued in October 2002 and can be found at www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/lea/education/edpguidance/?version=1
- 9.6 LEA advisers or consultants who decide to apply for a headship from 1 April 2004 will need to hold NPQH, if they have not previously held the post of headteacher. For example, they may have worked in a school as a deputy head, taken a posting as an LEA adviser or consultant for a year or two, then wish to take up a headship. From Intake 7 onwards (those starting NPQH in April 2004), funding for the course fees for those applying from an LEA will be provided by the NCSL.

- 9.7 Those LEA advisers or consultants applying for headships from 1 April 2004 will not need to hold NPQH or work towards it if this will be their second or subsequent headship.

10. What does the requirement mean for schools?

LEA-maintained schools

- 10.1 The requirement applies to all LEA-maintained schools (infant, primary, junior, middle and secondary).

Non-maintained special schools

- 10.2 The requirement applies to non-maintained special schools.
- 10.3 A serving head at a non-maintained special school, who was appointed prior to 1 April 2004 will not need NPQH to move to a headship in the maintained sector.

Nursery schools

- 10.4 The requirement will apply to nursery schools. Following the Education Act 2002, the management and governance of maintained nursery schools has been put onto an equivalent footing with that for other schools.
- 10.5 We recognise that nursery schools have certain characteristics which are unique to their operation. As with other school specialisms, the NPQH, which is a generic qualification, contains case studies, online activities, school improvement work and school visits which are tailored to the needs of particular specialisms.

City Technology Colleges (CTCs) and Academies

- 10.6 The requirement will not apply to CTCs or to Academies. Those aspiring to headship in City Technology Colleges or Academies are, however, strongly encouraged to gain the NPQH. Funding for teachers who successfully apply for places on the NPQH from CTCs and Academies is available through the National College for School Leadership.

Pupil Referral Units (PRUs)

- 10.7 The requirement will not apply to PRUs. The heads of these institutions are not necessarily carrying out this role as headteachers – they may be doing so in a capacity as lead teachers. However, teachers working in

PRUs can apply for the NPQH and, if eligible, will be funded by the National College for School Leadership.

- 10.8 Experience of leading a PRU is taken into account when an applicant applies for a headship post in the maintained sector or at a non-maintained special school. In the way that serving heads do not need NPQH, applicants who have led PRUs would therefore not need to meet the requirements of the Regulations.

Sixth form colleges

- 10.9 The requirement will not apply to sixth form colleges because these institutions form part of the post-compulsory education and training sector, often known as the learning and skills sector.
- 10.10 The Department has now established the Centre for Excellence in Leadership, which will support leadership development in the post-16 learning and skills sector, including sixth form colleges, FE colleges, work-based learning providers and adult and community learning providers.
- 10.11 The Centre was officially launched on 8 October 2003 and began delivering programmes in November 2003. These include, in the first year, a senior leaders' development programme, an induction programme for new principals, and a modular management development programme for first and middle managers. In the first year these programmes are being offered as pilots, and will be evaluated and further developed in future years.
- 10.12 At the moment, those from the FE sector applying for their first headship post in the maintained sector, or at a non-maintained special school will need to hold NPQH, or be working towards it.
- 10.13 Once the senior leaders' programme being offered by the Centre for Excellence in Leadership has been fully developed, we will consider what common ground exists between it and the NPQH. We will also consider whether and how we can establish reciprocal recognition to ease and encourage movement between the schools sector and the learning and skills sector, and particularly between schools and sixth form colleges.
- 10.14 It is too early to say how these arrangements might work, as it will depend on the implementation, evaluation and further development of the senior leaders' development programme which is only just getting underway. Further guidance on reciprocal arrangements with the FE sector will be issued.

11. What does the requirement mean for independent schools?

- 11.1 The requirement to hold, or be working towards, NPQH will affect someone serving as a teacher in the independent sector who wishes to move to a headship post in a school in the LEA-maintained sector, or in a non-maintained special school, on or after 1 April 2004.
- 11.2 Serving headteachers in the independent sector, who were appointed before 1 April 2004 will not need NPQH to move to a headship post in the maintained sector.
- 11.3 However, the head of an independent school appointed to a headship post on or after 1 April 2004 will need to hold NPQH, or be working towards it, in order to move into a headship post in the maintained sector. Similarly, a teacher at an independent school, applying for their first headship post in the maintained sector, or at a non-maintained special school, from 1 April 2004 will need to hold NPQH, or be working towards it.
- 11.4 Those who return to the LEA-maintained sector from the independent sector, having already held a headship post in the LEA-maintained sector, will not be affected by the requirement.
- 11.5 Teachers in independent schools may apply for the NPQH but the NCSL is not able to fund their course fees and other associated costs of the programme. If, on completing NPQH, they subsequently take up their first headship in the maintained sector or at a non-maintained special school, the funding body of these candidates would be eligible to have their course fees refunded.

12. What does the requirement mean for those who do not currently work in a school?

- 12.1 Funding for NPQH is only available for those in the following categories: those who work in a maintained school, those who work at a non-maintained special school, those working in a PRU, those in City Academies and CTCs and LEA-based employees from Intake 7 onwards. (see section 9 for information on LEA-based candidates). In the case of others who complete NPQH and take up their first headship in a maintained school or non-maintained special school, eligibility to have their course fees refunded would apply.

- 12.2 For the first five years of the requirement, the working towards arrangement will apply, so, for example, applicants would be eligible to apply for a headship once they have been accepted onto the NPQH and would be eligible to have their fees reimbursed once they obtain the qualification, provided their first headship post is in a maintained school, or non-maintained special school.

The roles of those involved

Who	Their role
Senior Teacher preparing for headship <i>or</i> A Principal in the FE Sector thinking of a move to the maintained sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs to build NPQH into their career planning. • Must hold NPQH, or be working towards it, if applying for their first headship post in a maintained school, or non-maintained special school from 1 April 2004. This means that he/she must have a place on the programme and a confirmation letter from his/her NPQH Centre.
Governing Bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to be aware of the Regulations. • They should understand the benefits of the NPQH so they can balance the skills and experience of those with the qualification, with those who have previous headship experience. • They should draft person specifications carefully, to include reference to the NPQH but only for new headteachers, so as not to exclude serving headteachers from those eligible to apply. • When sifting applicants for their post, governing bodies should check that applicants meet the requirement to hold NPQH, or be working towards it. • Should set in place a system to check that, if they appoint a head under the 'working towards' arrangements, the headteacher completes NPQH within the timescale. This might be done as part of the performance management arrangements.
LEAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should encourage good career planning for the aspiring headteachers in their area. • Should ensure that selection panels for community and VC schools meet the requirements. • Is empowered to make representations to the selection panel of VA and foundation schools regarding the suitability of a recommended candidate. • Should consider how CPD is reflected in their EDPs.
Serving or returning headteacher (that is, one who gained a headship before 1 April 2004)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not need to hold NPQH. • Should encourage good career planning for the members of their school workforce, in particular, for deputies, assistants, and senior staff.

13. Teachers/headteachers working abroad

- 13.1 Serving headteachers and aspiring headteachers working outside the UK will be treated in a consistent way to those in the UK. By 'consistent', we mean that they will be treated as if they were employed in that type of school in England. For example, those who work at the equivalent of a maintained school abroad will be treated in the same way as those who work at a maintained school in England.

Serving headteachers in the maintained sector abroad

- 13.2 A headteacher who has already been appointed as a headteacher at a maintained school abroad (appointed prior to 1 April 2004) will not need to hold the NPOH, to be appointed to a headship in the maintained sector or at a non-maintained special school in England.

Teachers and headteachers working in independent schools abroad

- 13.3 As with those working in independent schools in this country and in the rest of the UK, the same requirements will apply to those working abroad in the equivalent of independent schools. Thus serving headteachers at independent schools abroad appointed before 1 April 2004 would not need NPOH to move to headship posts in the maintained sector in England. The requirement to hold the NPOH, or be working towards it, will affect those appointed from 1 April 2004 as headteachers in independent schools abroad who move to work as headteachers in the LEA-maintained sector, or in non-maintained special schools, in England, who have not held such posts in the English maintained sector or at an English non-maintained special school before.

14. Arrangements in the four countries of the UK

Wales and Northern Ireland (NI)

- 14.1 Wales and Northern Ireland have their own versions of the NPOH, adapted to suit the context of their school systems.
- 14.2 In September 2002, the Welsh Assembly Government published its proposals to implement a mandatory NPOH qualification in Wales from September 2005. A national consultation conference held in February 2003 also provided additional opportunities for open consultation.

- 14.3 Detailed analysis of the response to the consultation has revealed that 81% of participants were in favour of proposals to move towards mandatory implementation in line with the proposed timescale. Further advice has now been submitted to the Minister for Education & Lifelong Learning outlining future development work in preparation for mandatory implementation.
- 14.4 Northern Ireland plans to make its version of the NPQH mandatory in due course.

Scotland

- 14.5 The Scottish Executive announced on 1 December 2001 its intention to make the Scottish Standard for Headship (the Standard) mandatory in Scotland from August 2005. At present, the only route to gaining the Standard is via the Scottish Qualification for Headship (SQH). By August 2005, the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) will have awarded professional accreditation to programmes designed to meet the Standard, and information on these programmes will be found at www.gtcs.org.uk at this time.

Reciprocal recognition

- 14.6 Holders of the Welsh NPQH, the Scottish Standard for Headship and the Professional Qualification for Headship in Northern Ireland (PQH(NI)) will be deemed to hold a qualification/standard which is equivalent to the NPQH.
- 14.7 From 1 April 2004, holders of these qualifications/standards who wish to apply for a first-time headship post in LEA-maintained and non-maintained special schools in England will need to present evidence that they hold, or are working towards, these qualifications/standards to the governing body when they apply for a headship post.
- 14.8 Serving headteachers working in Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland, who wish to move to a headship post in England, will be treated the same way as serving headteachers in England.
- 14.9 We are in discussion with the Welsh Assembly, Scottish Executive and the Department for Education in Northern Ireland about their providing reciprocal recognition of the English NPQH in their countries when their legislation requiring first-time headteachers to hold a headship qualification comes into force. These countries may have their own additional entrance requirements for headship. Applicants for posts in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are strongly advised to check the entrance requirements for those countries before applying.

Part Two: Background on the NPQH

- 15.1 The NPQH was introduced in 1997 as a national qualification to prepare teachers for headship. It is a practical, professional qualification, firmly rooted in school improvement, which offers candidates a thorough preparation before they take up their first headship post.
- 15.2 Following the early years of implementation, the programme was reviewed in 1999. A wide-ranging consultation with the profession was undertaken, the outcomes of which led to the further development of the NPQH which is now more streamlined, better structured and more accessible. The programme:
- is underpinned by the National Standards for Headteachers
 - draws on the best leadership and management practice inside and outside education
 - is practical, challenging and up-to-date
 - is focused on school improvement
 - sets rigorous standards, while building on previous achievement and proven ability
 - is based on supported self-study, suitable for busy professionals
 - uses e-learning, including online discussion communities, to maximise learning opportunities for candidates
 - provides a benchmark of achievement against the National Standards for Headteachers from which new headteachers can develop their leadership and management capabilities whilst doing the job.

Routes through the NPQH

15.3 There are three routes through the qualification. Route 1 is for candidates with relatively limited experience in senior management roles. This route starts at the Access Stage and takes up to 2 years to complete. Route 2 is for candidates with greater senior management experience and achievements. This route begins at the Development Stage and takes one year to complete. Route 3 is for those candidates who are very close to headship and can demonstrate significant expertise and achievements against the National Standards which are confirmed through School-Based Assessment. Candidates then move to the Final Stage. This Stage comprises a 48-hour residential and Final Assessment against the National Standards for Headteachers. The minimum time it takes to complete the NPQH is approximately six months (Route 3); the maximum study period is approximately two years (Route 1).

Content of the NPQH

- 15.4 The NPQH is a practical, 'hands on' programme and comprises a combination of delivery mechanisms including activities in school, self-study materials, school visits, a residential, face-to-face training sessions, tutorials and e-learning, including online discussion communities. A tutor works with the candidate throughout the programme, meeting face-to-face or online, and is available to discuss relevant issues over the telephone.
- 15.5 The support of a line manager (usually the headteacher) is important during NPQH. The candidate's headteacher will need to supply a supporting statement when the candidate applies, and allow the candidate time and resources to carry out a school improvement project during the programme. The line manager should also meet regularly with the candidate as the programme progresses.
- 15.6 The study materials for the Access and Development Stages are based on four modules. The modules cover the key areas of the National Standards for Headteachers.
- 15.7 Candidates may choose to complete all of the modules or only some aspects of them; the choice will depend on their previous experience, knowledge and skills. The two summative assessment points of the NPQH take place at the end of the Development Stage in school – School-Based Assessment – and at the end of the Final Stage at Final Assessment.

- 15.8 Candidates must be successful at School-Based Assessment before they can progress to the Final Stage and candidates must pass Final Assessment in order to be awarded the NPQH.
- 15.9 The online learning community for NPQH candidates - 'Virtual Heads' - offers candidates the opportunity to study the NPQH materials online, question national 'hotseat' speakers, and network and engage in professional debates with other candidates across the country. The hotseats also link to content components of the qualification.

Who can apply for the NPQH?

- 15.10 The NPQH is for those who aspire to headship and who expect to apply for a headship post within approximately two years.
- 15.11 Applicants need to demonstrate achievements in leadership at a whole school level, usually as a member of the school's leadership group or senior management team, and need to demonstrate their motivation and potential for headship, together with details of their achievement and expertise in the five key areas of the National Standards for Headteachers.

What are the National Standards for Headteachers?

- 15.12 The National Standards for Headteachers define the knowledge, understanding, skills and attributes required for the key tasks of headship. They underpin the training and assessment for the NPQH. The standards have been developed in consultation with teachers, headteachers, professional and subject associations, LEAs, Higher Education Institutions, and others both inside and outside education. The standards are available on the NCSL website at www.ncsl.org.uk/npqh. The Standards are currently being revised (2003-4).

Funding

- 15.13 Funding for the course fees for NPQH is available through the NCSL for successful applicants from LEA-maintained schools, non-maintained special schools, PRUs, maintained nurseries, CTCs and Academies, as well as appropriate staff currently working in LEAs (for example senior teachers in support services or consultants).
- 15.14 All other eligible applicants, such as those working in independent schools, need to provide their own funding for course fees and other associated costs. However, if on completing NPQH they take up their first

headship in a maintained school or non-maintained special school, they would be eligible to have their course fees refunded.

- 15.15 The course fees are differentiated depending on which route through the qualification candidates take. They are currently as follows:

Route 1: Access Stage, Development Stage and Final Stage £3620

Route 2: Development Stage (with training) and Final Stage £3070

Route 3: Development Stage (without training) and Final Stage £2270

- 15.16 Costs for candidates from special schools vary slightly as they have the opportunity to attend some national residential sessions with candidates from the same sector. The costs for special school candidates are as follows: Route 1: £3670, Route 2: £3120, Route 3: £2270.
- 15.17 From 1 September 2003, funding for travel, subsistence and supply costs is available through the NCSL for successful applicants from LEA-maintained schools, non-maintained special schools, PRUs, maintained nurseries, CTCs and Academies, where the school has fewer than 150 pupils of statutory school age. For all other schools, funding for these costs will not be available through NCSL.

Who runs the NPQH?

- 15.18 Originally run by the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) which established the qualification in 1997, responsibility for the programme transferred to the DfEE in 1999 when the content and delivery of the programme was reviewed. Following the launch of the new strengthened NPQH, the programme transferred to the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) which has been responsible for running the NPQH, together with the other national headship training programmes, since April 2001.
- 15.19 The NPQH is delivered by regional NPQH Centres across England who are contracted to the NCSL. A list of the NPQH Centres is on the inside back cover.

16. The National College for School Leadership (NCSL)

- 16.1 The National College for School Leadership was established in 2000 to provide a single national focus for school leadership training, development and support. NCSL's key responsibility is to develop and oversee a coherent national training and development framework for heads, deputies and others in leadership positions in schools, offering high quality, practical and professional support at all stages of their careers.
- 16.2 The Leadership Development Framework offers leadership learning opportunities throughout a teaching career, from emergent leaders to consultant leaders. The NPQH is a central component in that framework in the Entry to Headship stage.
- 16.3 NCSL's responsibilities with regard to the NPQH include: managing the twice yearly recruitment rounds to the NPQH programme; managing contracts with regional providers to run the NPQH across England; regulating the delivery of the NPQH, to ensure consistent high quality training and assessment across all regions; making recommendations to the Secretary of State as to who should be awarded the NPQH, and, working with the DfES, keeping the content of the NPQH programme up-to-date and relevant for our future school leaders. The College also liaises with the GTC to ensure that the GTC has an up-to-date record of who holds the NPQH, and the date of the award, on its database.
- 16.4 NCSL is committed to ensuring that the principles of equal opportunities are embedded in the delivery and content of the NPQH. Application and course materials are available in electronic and paper format and the National College makes arrangements for the materials to be available in appropriate formats for visually-impaired candidates. Supply cover is available to funded candidates in schools with fewer than 150 pupils of statutory school age.
- 16.5 NCSL also manages and reviews the appeals process for the NPQH. It is responsible for monitoring regional appeals and conducting the national appeals process on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education and Skills.
- 16.6 Further details about the National College for School Leadership can be found at www.ncsl.org.uk.

17. How to apply for the NPQH

- 17.1 The National College for School Leadership runs recruitment rounds for the NPQH twice a year. For details of dates, see the NCSL website at www.ncsl.org.uk/npqh.
- 17.2 Applicants need to complete a form giving details of how they demonstrate suitability and aptitude for headship against the National Standards for Headteachers. It is important for them to demonstrate experience of leadership at whole school level. Those applicants not from the maintained sector will need to satisfy the application panel that they have comparable relevant leadership experience. Headteachers or line managers will need to complete a supporting statement form.
- 17.3 Application and supporting statement forms can be obtained by:
- phoning the Headship Information Line (0845 716 5136) or
 - downloading a form from the NCSL website at www.ncsl.org.uk/npqh.
- 17.4 The NPQH application form can currently be submitted electronically or in hard copy.
- 17.5 The application will be considered by a panel from your regional NPQH Centre, and will be scored according to the evidence provided against the National Standards. Applications are then moderated nationally before letters are sent out detailing whether or not the application for NPQH has been successful.
- 17.6 Further details about how to apply are available from the Headship Information Line (0845 716 5136), your regional NPQH Centre (see pages 35 and 36 for contact details) or from the College website at www.ncsl.org.uk/npqh.

Part Three: Questions and answers for quick reference

- A. How will the requirement apply to those who are already headteachers? Will they need to take up some form of 'retrospective' qualification?
- No. Serving headteachers will not be required to gain the NPQH. The requirement to hold, or be working towards, the NPQH will only apply to those appointed to their first headship post in LEA maintained schools and non-maintained special schools from 1 April 2004.
- B. Will there be enough places on the NPQH available across the country for all those who would like to study on the programme?
- The National College for School Leadership, through its regional NPQH centres across England, is confident that there will be sufficient places for all eligible candidates following each recruitment round.
- C. What will happen if I do not meet the standard at one of the assessment points in the NPQH – will I be allowed to retake the assessment?
- There are three summative assessment points in the NPQH: the application stage, school-based assessment and Final Assessment. If you are not successful at the application stage, you will be able to reapply during the next recruitment round or for any future intake of NPQH. You are entitled to ask for feedback on your application. Once you are on the programme, you may retake school-based assessment or Final Assessment if you do not meet the standard at your first attempt. NCSL will permit you one retake for each assessment free of charge. However, if you wish to retake a particular assessment a second time, you will be required to pay for the cost of that retake.

More details are available from the NCSL or your regional NPQH Centre (see pages 35 and 36 for contact details).

- If you are appointed as a headteacher from 1 April 2004 under the 'working towards' arrangements, you will need to take care that you keep track of your progress through NPQH, and complete it within four years of your appointment.
- D. I am employed as a headteacher abroad. Will I need NPQH to return to England to take up a headship post in the LEA-maintained sector?
- No. The requirement only applies to first-time headteachers appointed from 1 April 2004.
- E. What will happen if I want to move to another part of the UK to lead a school? Will I need to gain the Welsh, Scottish or NI headship qualification instead of, or in addition to, the English NPQH?
- We are currently in discussions with officials in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland with a view to reciprocal recognition of the relevant NPQH qualifications.
 - If you were appointed to your first headship post in a maintained school in England, you would need to abide by the English Regulations and hold NPQH, (or the Welsh, Scottish or Northern Irish equivalent NPQH) or be working towards one of them.
 - It is possible that Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland will have additional requirements that English NPQH candidates have to meet, when their requirements to hold NPQH come into force. Candidates will need to satisfy themselves that they know what these requirements are before they apply for posts in these countries.
- F. I want to apply for the qualification and have family commitments. Is it going to be difficult for me to undertake the course?
- Undertaking any qualification does require candidates to balance home, work and study. NPQH has been designed with self-study in mind. The National College for School Leadership, which runs the NPQH, is committed to ensuring that the principles of equal opportunities are embedded in the delivery and content of the NPQH. The programme is delivered through blended learning, comprising a mix of self-study, e-learning, including online discussion communities and networking, face-to-face training, tutorials and school-based learning and assessment. All candidates are required to attend a 48

hour residential which is a key part of the Final Stage of the programme. This will involve two nights away from home.

- The school is responsible for the funding of travel, supply and subsistence involved in the qualification. This is not the case where a school has fewer than 150 pupils of statutory school age. The subsistence element in the Final Stage residential is freely available to all candidates.
- G. What will happen if I gain the NPQH, but then decide to take a career break – would my NPQH qualification become out of date?
- No. The NPQH is a professional qualification which is valid for the whole of your career.
- H. I am not yet at the stage of applying for a headship, but am planning to do so within the next 5 years. What can I do to prepare myself?
- The NPQH is designed for those who aspire to headship and who expect to apply for a headship post within 2-3 years. Applicants need to demonstrate that they have some experience of whole school leadership and management. You will also need to detail your achievements and expertise against the National Standards for Headteachers and set out your motivation and potential for moving to a headship role.
 - In order to prepare yourself for applying for the NPQH, you might wish to seek out opportunities at school to take on some whole school projects. You might also wish to explore the training and development opportunities available through the National College for School Leadership's leadership development framework, such as the programme *Leading from the Middle*. The framework starts at subject and specialist leader level. Further details are available from the National College website at www.ncsl.org.uk.
- I. What will happen if I become seriously ill during the programme?
- The NCSL currently works within a framework which permits candidates, in exceptional circumstances, to request a deferral. This covers instances like long-term sickness, maternity leave and bereavement. NCSL will give careful consideration to the circumstances of individual cases when considering requests for deferral.

- However, if you are appointed under the 'working towards' requirement, you would still need to be aware of the need to complete NPQH within four years from your date of appointment. As the majority of NPQH candidates complete NPQH within two years, this should not be an issue.
- J. I am a member of the governing body. We have had difficulties recruiting. What's to stop us appointing a series of acting headteachers if we can't get anyone with NPQH?
- The best schools are those with strong leadership, and while some acting headteachers can bring those sorts of skills and do excellent work in a short space of time, it is likely to be detrimental for a school to be under acting headship in the long term.
- K. What happens if there isn't time for our preferred candidate to apply for the NPQH before the closing date for the post? From a governing body's point of view, can we appoint our preferred candidate as an acting head, and make that appointment permanent once he/she has got a confirmed place on the NPQH?
- We would hope that those considering headship would have the foresight to plan which NPQH round they will apply to and build that into their career planning. A post such as a headship should never be entered into without due consideration of what's involved.
 - Under the new Regulations, governing bodies will need to ensure that those applying for their first headship posts will need to demonstrate that they have gained the NPQH or have a confirmed place on the programme before they may be considered for a headship vacancy.

Part Four: Text of the Regulations

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

2003 No 3111

Education, England

Education (Head Teachers' Qualifications) (England) Regulations 2003

Made 29th November 2003

Laid before Parliament 5th December 2003

Coming into force 1st April 2004

In exercise of the powers conferred on the Secretary of State by paragraph 3 of Schedule 1 to the Education Act 1996^a and sections 135, 145(1) and (2), and 210(7) of the Education Act 2002^b the Secretary of State for Education and Skills hereby makes the following Regulations:

Citation and commencement

1. These Regulations may be cited as the Education (Head Teachers' Qualifications) (England) Regulations 2003 and shall come into force on 1st April 2004.

^a 1996 c.56

^b 2002 c.32; by virtue of the definition of "regulations" in section 212(1), these Regulations made by the Secretary of State apply only in relation to England.

Application

2. (1) These Regulations apply only in relation to England.
- (2) These Regulations do not apply to a person who before the coming into force of these Regulations has been appointed as the head teacher of –
 - (a) a school maintained by a local education authority or a special school not so maintained;
 - (b) an independent school^c; or
 - (c) a similar educational institution outside England and Wales.

Interpretation

3. In these Regulations “National Professional Qualification for Headship” means the qualification awarded by the Secretary of State to a person if he is satisfied that the person has successfully completed a course of training for the National Professional Qualification for Headship approved by the National College for School Leadership Limited.

Head Teachers’ Qualification

4. (1) Subject to regulation 5 a person may serve as a head teacher of a school maintained by a local education authority or a special school not so maintained only if he holds the National Professional Qualification for Headship, the National Professional Qualification for Headship in Wales^d, the Scottish Standard for Headship^e or the Professional Qualification for Headship in Northern Ireland^f.
- (2) This regulation does not apply in relation to a pupil referral unit.
5. (1) A person may serve as a head teacher without a qualification mentioned in regulation 4(1) if –
 - (a) he is appointed as a head teacher before 1st April 2009 and at the time he is appointed he has successfully applied for a training

^c defined by section 463 of the Education Act 1996. In accordance with section 212(2) of the Education Act 2002, the provisions of Education Act 1996 and of the Education Act 2002 are to be construed as one.

^d The National Professional Qualification for Headship in Wales is awarded by the National Assembly for Wales. No regulations have yet been made in relation to Wales.

^e The Scottish Standard for Headship is non-statutory and is currently achieved by undertaking the Scottish Qualification for Headship.

^f The Professional Qualification for Headship in Northern Ireland is awarded by the Regional Training Unit in Northern Ireland.

course for the purpose of gaining the National Professional Qualification for Headship; and

(b) a period of four years beginning with the date upon which he is appointed as a head teacher has not expired.

(2) The period of 4 years mentioned in paragraph (1)(b) shall be extended to take account of a period when a head teacher is absent from work in exercise of –

(a) her right to maternity leave conferred by section 71 or 73 of the Employment Rights Act 1996^g or conferred by her contract of employment or because of her pregnancy and has the right to return to work by virtue of the said section 71 or 73 or by virtue of her contract of employment;

(b) the right to parental leave conferred by section 76 of the Employment Rights Act 1996;

(c) the right to paternity leave conferred by section 80A or 80B of the Employment Rights Act 1996^h; or

(d) the right to adoption leave conferred by section 75A or 75B of the Employment Rights Act 1996ⁱ.

Acting head teachers

6. A person carrying out the functions of the head teacher of a school—

(a) pending the appointment of a head teacher, or

(b) in the absence of the head teacher,

is not serving as the head teacher of the school for the purpose of these Regulations.

David Miliband

Minister of State

29th November 2003

Department for Education and Skills

^g 1996 c.18.

^h Sections 80A and 80B of the Employment Rights Act 1996 were inserted by section 1 of the Employment Act 2002 (c. 22).

ⁱ Sections 75A and 75B of the Employment Rights Act 1996 were inserted by section 3 of the Employment Act 2002.

Explanatory Note

(This note is not part of the Regulations)

These Regulations make provision, from 1st April 2004, for first-time head teachers of maintained schools in England to hold the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) or its equivalent in Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland. The Regulations do not apply to persons who have been appointed as a head teacher before the Regulations come into force.

By virtue of regulation 5 a person may serve as a head teacher without holding the National Professional Qualification for Headship provided that he is appointed before 1st April 2009 and at that time has obtained a place on a training course with a view to gaining that qualification and a period of 4 years from the date when he is appointed as a head teacher has not expired.

By virtue of regulation 6, a person does not have to hold NPQH or its equivalent to carry out the functions of a head teacher pending the appointment of a head teacher or during the absence of the appointed head teacher.

Part Five: Contact details for the NPQH Centres and NCSL

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Nottingham NG15 0DJ.
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Textphone: 0845 60 555 60
email: dfes@prolog.uk.com

Please quote ref: DfES/0087/2004

ISBN:

PPAPG/D35/0104/53

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