

## Redesign of NPQH: Advice to Secretary of State

### 1. Summary

In this submission NCSL proposes a revised model for the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH), and arrangements for the pilot intake. Compared to the current model this offers more rigorous assessment on entry, personalised routes to the qualification and a streamlined graduation process. Through its focus on enabling NPQH graduates to move rapidly to headship and improving the quality of these applicants, the revised model is designed to support our succession planning strategy. The proposed transition arrangements will secure continuity in the supply of new headteachers.

We are seeking approval for these plans from the Secretary of State so development work can continue and arrangements can be put in place for the pilot to begin in March 2008.

### 2. Introduction

2.1 In his remit letter of 10<sup>th</sup> April 2007, the Secretary of State said:

*"I look to the College to continue the work it has begun on the redesign of NPQH, taking into account the feedback it has received from, for example, its recent series of regional conferences. The revised NPQH can help develop school leaders' skills in such critical areas as financial management and management and development of human resources. The programme should also aim to provide more personalisation for candidates and, as part of that process, the College should consider how the possibilities for links with accreditation to other courses (e.g. MBA) might be developed.*

*I look to the College to maintain the good reputation of this flagship programme and to keep my officials in close touch with the proposals for its redesign, so that Ministers can take decisions about its future.*

*The College should aim to have up to 2,800 candidates on the NPQH programme in 2007-08. This total is made up of 1,800 new recruits and 850 continuing from 2006-07 on the existing NPQH, and up to 150 on the pilot of the new-style NPQH from March 2008. The details of the proposed pilot must be agreed with Ministers when the College comes back with its advice on the redesign of NPQH in April 2007".*

2.2 Headship has changed significantly since NPQH was last remodelled in 2000 - as the PwC report states the role has become more complex, challenging and diverse. Headteachers have to lead, manage and work within complex, multi-agency partnership environments with increased autonomy and clear accountability frameworks. Headteachers need the leadership capability and capacity to lead the personalisation of learning to improve outcomes, to engage parents and the community and to respond to future policy initiatives.

2.3 NCSL recognises the need for a redesigned NPQH to take account of 21<sup>st</sup> century strategic leadership challenges so that it can effectively contribute to achieving a self improving education system.

2.4 To support this the College is creating a more personalised, flexible, structure for aspiring headteachers which includes the recommendations from PricewaterhouseCoopers' report on Independent Study of School Leadership. As a key feature of the College's succession planning strategy, the proposed revisions to NPQH aim to make three main

contributions: improve the quality of applicants to headship; move graduates rapidly to headship; and improve conversion rates to headship. We believe these outcomes will benefit aspiring headteachers, schools and the system.

- 2.5** Through the redesign proposals the College plans to maintain and further improve the good reputation of this flagship programme. We also plan to link to the redesign of National Professional Qualification in Integrated Centre Leadership (NPQICL) and to take note of the Centre for Excellence in Leadership's (CEL) FE leadership qualification.
- 2.6** The proposals in this advice summarise the work NCSL, in consultation with the profession, has been undertaking since Spring 2006 (Annex 1: organisations consulted). This work included a series of national and international seminars, regional conferences and discussions with representative groups. Individuals from professional associations, schools, national organisations, local authorities and potential providers have been involved. Significant support was expressed for personalisation (provided it is accompanied by core elements) and a rigorous national assessment framework.
- 2.7** The proposed model was well received during consultation sessions in March 2007. Across all groups there was strong support for the clearer focus on aspiring headteachers, the entry assessment and development process, the emphasis on self assessment with 360° feedback and placements.
- 2.8** Concerns across groups varied. The professional associations and headteacher groups were positive about the proposed role of serving headteachers, whilst national organisations and LA groups expressed concern about workload. All groups recognised the challenge of making NPQH available to those not currently working in schools. Professional Associations raised the issue of accrediting prior learning. We have taken account of these concerns. The proposed model has weighed them carefully and provides a balanced position.

### **3. The redesign of NPQH**

The proposed model is outlined in Annex 2, with supporting learning principles in Annex 3. Annex 4 shows a comparison between this proposal and the current model. The revisions are designed to deliver personalised provision to meet the needs of school leaders and the diverse contexts in which they work. We recommend the model has the following features:

#### **3.1 A pre-entry stage to:**

- create an appetite for headship
- enable individuals to make decisions about their readiness for headship
- encourage serving headteachers and governors to support aspiring headteachers
- encourage individuals from diverse backgrounds to aspire to headship

#### **3.2 A more robust and rigorous entry assessment and development process to:**

- take more account of individual's prior learning (APL)
- allow those not currently in schools or in education to access NPQH, including non QTS
- recruit only those genuinely seeking headship - through sharper focus on motivation
- recruit individuals who demonstrate capability and readiness for headship
- identify a personalised development pathway for successful applicants as "trainee headteachers"
- provide developmental feedback to unsuccessful applicants

**3.3 A more personalised approach for trainee headteachers to enable them to:**

- improve and further develop strategic leadership expertise – building on strengths as well as addressing weaknesses
- develop key management skills (e.g. finance and budgeting skills; performance management)
- engage in leadership learning to meet contextualised development needs
- focus on particular areas of need (e.g. learning and teaching for non-educational participants)

**3.4 A core offering of key experiences critical for future headteachers through:**

- access to leadership and management materials, for example, use of data for school improvement; management and development of staff; financial management
- learning in self directed peer groups promoting collaborative, distributed leadership
- placements or work shadowing in different educational or work contexts
- challenge workshops and access to master classes
- engagement with the national policy and international research evidence

**3.5 A streamlined graduation process to:**

- enable individuals to demonstrate their professional knowledge, understanding and leadership effectiveness
- confirm immediate readiness for headship
- provide governing bodies with sufficient high quality applicants
- link to leadership development provision in early headship
- offer mentoring support, where appropriate, prior to headship
- provide work at masters level to accredit to higher degrees

**3.6 A capacity-building approach that:**

- requires serving headteachers to give NPQH colleagues support, challenge and feedback through the NPQH process
- draws on the expertise of highly effective headteachers by engaging them with:
  - *providing placements and work shadowing for other trainee heads*
  - *coaching trainees beyond their own school*
  - *serving on the graduation panel*

We will seek to achieve this without increasing the burden on serving headteachers, for example, by linking in with current systems like performance management.

**3.7** The proposed model will address supply by recruiting only those genuinely aspiring to headship and enabling graduates to move rapidly to headship. We propose to introduce recruitment quotas based on the needs of the system. Quotas, together with increasing conversion rates to headship, should allow NCSL, over time and in line with succession challenges, to reduce the annual intake from 2,800 to 2,000. Quality will be improved through personalised development, supplemented with national events, focused on improving leadership and management effectiveness.

**3.8** NCSL aims to ensure that those recruited as trainee headteachers are representative of the diverse workforce and school population. The model will enable aspiring headteachers from schools, other educational contexts and non-educational contexts to apply. Prior achievements and experience will be accurately acknowledged. All assessment tools and other processes will be systematically checked for potential bias.

#### 4. Arrangements for March 2008 intake

4.1 We are planning to recruit the first intake of 150 trainee headteachers to the revised NPQH model for March 2008. To prepare for the pilot and enable us to deliver the revised model, NCSL recommends a number of providers are commissioned and appointed to:

- deliver self assessment, online learning and career path tools
- manage applications and the 'entry assessment and development' process
- quality assure delivery of localised development and placement opportunities
- manage the graduation assessment process

4.2 With the Secretary of State's approval the arrangements for the pilot will be as follows:

The application process will start in December 2007 and the College will identify and publish criteria and quotas for the 150 places. To allow potential applicants to plan, NCSL will publish intake arrangements to March 2009, with intakes in March, June, September and December. NCSL quality assurance and evaluation will provide rapid feedback to develop subsequent intakes. We expect the pilot group to contain some who graduate within the minimum time (four months) and others who use the maximum time (one year) to address their particular development needs.

***The proposed arrangements for individual school leaders are:***

*Entry: February and March 2008*

Entry will be through an Assessment and Development session. An assessment framework which underpins the qualification and is drawn from the National Standards for Headteachers will be used during these sessions. Successful applicants will have a personalised leadership development plan and understand the NPQH support framework.

*Personalised pathway: from April 2008*

Regional introductory sessions are proposed for April and May 2008. In these inspirational sessions NPQH participants will meet with outstanding leaders, access potential coaches, form localised networks to establish collaborative peer learning sets and see how localised provision can meet their learning needs. We propose that each trainee receives a coaching entitlement and works collaboratively in a peer learning set.

Trainee headteachers will be able to access localised leadership development opportunities and negotiate a short placement in a different context. These opportunities, managed through a provider, will connect to NCSL's succession planning local solutions work. The proposal is to offer further opportunities for links with internationally renowned leaders, master classes to challenge thinking and workshops to explore next practice issues. Web based activities, including learning materials, management modules and online communities will be available. Content and materials will be regularly updated to reflect changing educational, research and policy contexts. To link across to higher degrees this work and its assessment will be at masters level.

*Graduation: available from July 2008 onwards:*

The trainees present themselves for graduation when, using assessment for professional learning processes, they can demonstrate their readiness for headship. We recommend that the graduation process is an in-depth panel interview to examine the leadership and management evidence presented by trainee headteachers. Panel recommendations will be subject to national moderation overseen by NCSL. NPQH will be awarded to

individuals who reach the required standard. Unsuccessful candidates will be permitted to resubmit.

## **5. Transition from the current model**

As requested by the Secretary of State, NCSL is planning to recruit 1,800 candidates for September 2007 (current model, Intake 14), plus 850 continuing from intake 13. The proposed assessment processes are different, so we suggest that the current and revised models operate in parallel until January 2009 when Intake 14 candidates are due to graduate. The existing NPQH regional centre contracts have been extended to this date. We wish to assure ministers that the College and the nine regional centres will work to maximise the return of deferred candidates into the current NPQH process. After January 2009 the College is proposing to contract with an organisation to enable any remaining deferred candidates to complete. A reasonable time limit will be put on this process. Through the proposed transition arrangements we aim to ensure that existing candidates are not disadvantaged by the proposed introduction of a revised model.

## **6. Financial Issues**

NCSL is planning to keep the overall annual budget for the revised NPQH at the current level (circa £14.7m). Schools with more than 100 pupils will contribute 20% of delivery cost (circa £740). Targeting the intake in relation to both commitment to headship and entry quotas to meet system needs will reduce entry numbers. Unit delivery costs can, therefore, increase. Detailed proposed costings for development and delivery are set out in Annex 5. We believe our proposal will deliver improved value for money by:

- ensuring NPQH candidates genuinely aspire to headship, rather than just engaging in very good professional development
- reducing intake numbers and improving the graduate conversion rate (currently 43%)
- identifying entry quotas (using criteria such as phase and geographical area) to ensure supply for governing bodies more closely matches demand
- through personalisation, improving the quality of graduates available for headships

## **7. Concluding comments:**

The sufficient supply of high quality leaders for first time headship posts in our schools is crucial to improving the standards and well-being of pupils across schools in England. NCSL believes the proposed changes to the NPQH will meet this requirement and so contribute to achieving educational priorities. We seek approval for these proposals and permission to proceed with the pilot.

April 2007