



National College for
Teaching & Leadership

Leadership Curriculum Evaluation

Final Report

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Executive Summary

CFE Research was commissioned by DfE and the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) to undertake a three-year formative and summative evaluation of the Leadership Curriculum. The evaluation focused on gaining knowledge and an understanding of the successes and areas for development in the early stages. It explored satisfaction with the qualifications whilst also examining the self-reported impact of the Leadership Curriculum on participants and their school. It focused exclusively on the model of the programme operating in March 2013.

About the Leadership Curriculum

In 2012, NCTL designed a new Leadership Curriculum comprising a set of leadership development qualifications and modules. A range of new qualifications were introduced (including NPQSL and NPQML) while NPQH (an existing qualification) was redesigned to form a flexible Leadership Curriculum which supports leaders at each stage of their career, including their transition into headship:

- Level 1: National Professional Qualification for Middle Leadership (NPQML)
- Level 2: National Professional Qualification for Senior Leadership (NPQSL)
- Level 3: National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH)

The Leadership Curriculum aims to raise the standards of teaching and leadership by improving the leadership development of middle and senior leaders in schools so as to bring about improved outcomes for pupils.

Methodology

The evaluation employed a mixed method approach designed to ensure both breadth and depth of data capture; this included:

- A longitudinal telephone survey of trainees on the three Levels of the Leadership Curriculum across two sampling points. 766 survey responses were received at Sampling Point 1 (SP1 - on completion of the qualification) and 752 survey responses were received at Sampling Point 2 (SP2 - 12 months after completing the qualification). 359 participants were interviewed longitudinally across both sampling points;
- Semi-structured depth interviews with trainees. Across the 3 qualifications, 19 interviews were undertaken at SP1 and 27 at SP2;
- Semi-structured depth interviews with Line Managers. Across the 3 qualifications, 11 interviews were undertaken at SP1 and 19 at SP2;
- 10 semi-structured paired interviews with Licensee representatives;
- An online survey of representatives of Licensees. 49 responses were received, representing views from 22 licensed providers;

- An online End-of-Module survey was designed and administered by NCTL. 4,445 responses were received (1,905 responses for NPQH, 1,382 for NPQSL and 1,158 for NPQML);
- An online End-of-Qualification survey was designed by NCTL and disseminated by CFE. 2,876 responses were received (492 responses for NPQH, 1,236 for NPQSL and 1,148 for NPQML);
- Analysis of 45 participants' final assessment tasks, which they completed as part of the qualification. 15 participants were selected for each qualification and all relevant tasks were coded.

Satisfaction with the Leadership Curriculum

The findings suggested high levels of satisfaction with the Leadership Curriculum at both the level of individual modules and overall qualifications.

They are very likely to recommend the qualifications and modules to their colleagues	Overall, the qualifications received a mean score of 4.1 and the modules 4.4 out of 5 ¹ in terms of the likelihood of participants recommending them to colleagues. NPQH participants were most likely to recommend the qualification and modules when compared to their counterparts on NPQSL and NPQML. 73% of participants rated the overall delivery of the qualifications as 'excellent' or 'good', whilst 84% said the same of the individual modules. The overwhelming majority of participants considered the modules to be challenging, engaging and up to date.
They 'completely' or 'mostly' met the expectations and leadership development needs of nearly all participants	86% of participants stated that the modules 'completely' or 'mostly' met their expectations and 85% suggested they 'completely' or 'mostly' met their leadership development needs. Across all levels of the Leadership Curriculum, most elements were scored highly in terms of whether they enabled participants to develop their leadership skills.
The induction process is well received...	All but one element of the induction process received average scores which were above the midpoint (4) of the satisfaction scale (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree). With this said, however, NPQSL participants consistently expressed slightly lower satisfaction levels.

¹ Participants were asked whether they would recommend the Leadership Curriculum qualifications and the individual modules to their colleagues. A mean score was calculated by assigning numbers to the five star categories (from 'not at all likely' = 1 to 'definitely' = 5).

...but more information about the assessment process would be welcomed	The clarity of requirements for the final assessment received an average agreement score from participants of 3.9 out of 7 (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree). Some participants criticised Licensees for not being able to clearly articulate or demonstrate the procedures for undertaking the assignments, whilst others wanted examples of the style and content of a good submission. Satisfaction with this appeared to affect participants' overall satisfaction with the qualification.
Face-to-face sessions are the most well received element...	Participants rated the face-to-face activities highest (5.7 out of 7) as enabling them to develop leadership skills (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree) across all three qualification levels. They were also cited frequently by participants when asked what they value about the modules. They enable participants to explore key issues, share ideas and experiences, and facilitate the prompt handling of queries by course tutors.
...practical tasks and the school placement are also valued...	NPQH participants rated their school placement opportunity highly with an average score of 5.8 out of 7 as an effective vehicle for putting theory into practice. Activities and tasks in their home school were also rated highly by all participants at 5.6 (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree).
...whilst online elements could be improved	Online Licensee-facilitated discussions received the lowest mean score, with 3.9 out of 7 (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree). Participants wanted a website that is easier to use, as this would provide a better online experience. That said, they scored the online content higher (5.0) indicating that although they have faced difficulties accessing it, the content nevertheless meets their requirements. Indeed, there was evidence of the impact this has had on developing their leadership skills.
Awareness of the flexibility of the Leadership Curriculum is low	Across all levels of the Leadership Curriculum, less than half of all participants were aware that they could study a standalone module that would count towards a full qualification. 6 out of the 10 Licensees who took part in a depth interview reported that they offer standalone modules. Those who did not indicated that demand is low and it is not cost effective.
High levels of recruitment	Across all Licensees, a total of 31,676 participants were recruited onto Leadership Curriculum qualifications over four years.

Perceived impact of Leadership Curriculum

The findings highlighted that participants believe the qualifications have had a positive impact on their leadership knowledge, skills and attributes.

Participants

Skills and competencies

NPQH participants now feel more ready for headship	On average, NPQH participants increased their self-reported readiness for headship whilst completing the qualification by 2.4 points on a 7-point scale, from 3.9 to 6.1 (1=not at all ready, 7=very ready). Interviews indicated that the qualification has increased participants' confidence and provided them with greater independence of thinking and decision-making – both of which have contributed to others perceiving them to be strong leaders.
NPQSL and NPQML participants also believe they improved the skills required for their leadership roles	NPQSL and NPQML participants were asked to rate their own knowledge, skills and attributes on a 7-point scale for the middle/senior leader role before starting the qualification and on completion (1=I do not have the skills needed, 7=I have all of the skills needed). Participants on both qualifications self-reported around the same average ratings for their leadership skills after completing the qualifications (at 6.1 and 6.0), although the uplift between the two points for NPQML trainees was slightly greater (+2.2 versus +1.6) due to them giving a lower starting score.
All three qualifications lead to competency level increasing...	All three qualifications saw participants report, on average, an increase in their own self-reported competency levels after finishing the qualification (rated on a 7-point scale).
...with holding others to account seeing the greatest uplift	Holding others to account saw the greatest self-reported increase in improvement across all three levels, thus indicating the importance of this aspect of the Leadership Curriculum. Participants discussed how they have been equipped with the skills needed to monitor and challenge underperformance, celebrate success, and ensure that staff understand their individual responsibilities and targets.

The qualifications are equipping participants with the skills to drive school improvement	Whilst completing the qualification, and across all levels of the Leadership Curriculum, participants reported an average increase of between 1 and 2 points (on a 7-point scale, 1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree) in their ability to drive improvement both across their school and the team they lead. NPQH and NPQSL participants referred to strategic initiatives to drive whole school improvement, while those on NPQML discussed changes at the departmental level, including projects to maximise team building and improve outcomes.
Qualification plays a vital role in developing leadership skills	Participants across all three qualifications attributed almost half of their leadership development whilst undertaking the qualification to the Leadership Curriculum itself; in addition, smaller proportions attributed this to work experience and other training. Participants recognised the value of the qualification and the role it plays in developing their skills. Participants reported how the content of online modules and case studies enabled them to learn theory and understand different leadership styles. They reported how their self-awareness and confidence were further developed through reflection activities, coaching and engaging with others on the course.
Projects and placements (for NPQH) are key to putting theory into practice	The interview findings emphasised the important role that the projects, particularly for NPQSL participants and NPQH placements, play in developing the leadership skills of participants. Participants described how they enabled them to put into practice the skills and theories they learnt and discussed.

Career progression

Participants reported that the Leadership Curriculum has had a positive impact on their future leadership intentions.

Increases motivation to become a head	NPQH participants believed that the qualification increased their motivation to become a head through increasing their confidence. They reported an average score of 5.7 out of 7 in relation to the impact NPQH had on their motivations (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree).
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Enables NPQH participants to become heads	<p>Nearly half (49%) of those surveyed one year after completing their qualification held the position of headteacher. This was a new role since starting the qualification for the majority (84%) of participants; some had already been a headteacher and had landed a headship in another school, whilst others had never been a headteacher and were moving into a headship position for the first time.</p> <p>Participants agreed that NPQH contributed to them gaining their new role, with an average score of 5.2 out of 7 (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree). Participants described how they were motivated to undertake NPQH to gain a headship, and that the qualification gave them the confidence to apply.</p>
Enables middle and senior leaders to gain new roles	<p>Over half of NPQSL (53%) and NPQML (50%) participants had moved into new roles since completing the qualification, with around two-thirds reporting that they had been promoted in their current school and one-fifth stating that they had landed a promotion in a different school. They generally agreed that the qualifications had contributed to this (scoring them at 4.9 and 5.2 out of 7, respectively) by equipping them with new skills, which they were then able to demonstrate to other members of staff in their school.</p>
Motivates middle and senior leaders to apply for promotion and take on additional responsibilities	<p>Many NPQSL and NPQML participants were also planning to apply for a promotion within the next year (43% and 34% respectively), while half of middle (40%) and senior leaders (45%) expressed a wish to assume additional responsibilities within their current role. With a mean score of approximately 5 out of 7, the participants agreed that the Leadership Curriculum influenced these intentions (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree).</p>
The qualifications encourage further leadership development	<p>On average, one-third of participants across all levels of the Leadership Curriculum stated that they have undertaken further learning or leadership development since completing their qualification. The majority of these participants agreed that this had been influenced by them taking part in the Leadership Curriculum. Moreover, there was also evidence that those who have not yet undertaken further leadership development plan to do so. Indeed, just under half (46%) of NPQH participants and under two-thirds (59% and 56% respectively) of NPQSL and NPQML participants stated that they plan to undertake training in the future.</p>

Wider impacts

Participants suggested many impacts had been achieved through undertaking the qualification on their school, other schools, and the local community.

Participants across all three qualifications report impacts on their schools...

Participants were asked whether taking part in the Leadership Curriculum has enabled them to make sustainable changes in their school. Participants and Line Managers believed that the greatest impacts have been in relation to helping to develop their colleagues' abilities, raising teaching and learning standards, and improving attainment for pupils. They also stated that the most common way in which they have helped their colleagues is by improving their teaching and learning as a result of coaching, mentoring, teamwork or continuing professional development. Participants have achieved this by implementing different activities and strategies, including:

- Introducing lessons observations;
- Establishing new systems to improve assessments;
- Sharing good practice across the school;
- Encouraging reflection of teachers.

“The culture of the school has changed significantly due to the impact that [trainee name] has had, specifically around staff engaging in professional dialogue to reflect on the learning processes.”

They reported that, for some, these changes have had a positive impact on pupils' attainment. The impacts seen included:

- Improved exam results;
- Improved levels of pupil progress;
- Closing the attainment gap.

“...this has led to increased pupil engagement and improved reading and writing ages (91% of students

exceeded their CASPA² targets for reading and 82% for writing.”

These impacts were achieved by improving the teaching and learning in the school at the teacher level, and by implementing school-wide initiatives or focusing on a small group of students in a school. Impacts were still being reported one year after participants had completed the qualification.

...but NPQH participants self-report stronger impacts as a result of the qualification

NPQH participants gave higher average scores across different impact statements than those taking the NPQSL and NPQML qualifications. The divergence between the impacts cited by NPQH participants and their counterparts was also evident in the interview findings and reflects the different roles that participants play in a school. NPQH participants self-reported long-term changes in providing whole-school approaches to raising expectations and changing staff behaviours; they also cited an increased focus on pupil attainment, and changes in the overall school ethos to make it a happier working environment for staff and pupils. NPQML participants self-reported changes in the teams they lead.

...and also report an impact on placement schools

NPQH participants believed that the qualification has also enabled them to have a positive impact on their placement school. The interview findings suggested that NPQH participants feel they have had a wide range of impacts, from improving teaching and learning methods and processes, to sharing leadership skills with other teachers. These impacts were also reported by placement headteachers who described the potential for this to have a positive impact on their pupils.

School improvement tasks are instrumental in bringing about impacts

Participants reported that school improvement tasks undertaken as part of their final assessment had a range of impacts on colleagues within their own schools and pupil attainment. Almost half of the tasks undertaken had a specific focus on improving the attainment of pupils.

² Comparison and Analysis of Special Pupil Attainment

Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

CFE Research was commissioned by DfE and the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) in March 2013 to undertake a three-year formative and summative evaluation of the Leadership Curriculum. The evaluation ran concurrent to the design and implementation of the Leadership Curriculum and focused on gaining knowledge and an understanding of the successes and areas for development in the early stages, prior to an assessment of the overall impact of the Leadership Curriculum on participants. It focused exclusively on the model of the programme operating at the time the evaluation was commissioned. This final report sits alongside and complements a number of shorter thematic summaries on emerging findings.

About the Leadership Curriculum

In 2012, NCTL designed a new Leadership Curriculum comprising a set of leadership development qualifications and modules. A range of new qualifications were introduced (including NPQSL and NPQML), and NPQH (an existing qualification) was redesigned to form a flexible Leadership Curriculum which supports leaders at each stage of their career, including their transition into headship:

- Level 1: National Professional Qualification for Middle Leadership (NPQML)
- Level 2: National Professional Qualification for Senior Leadership (NPQSL)
- Level 3: National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH)

The Leadership Curriculum aims to raise the standards of teaching and leadership by improving the leadership development of middle and senior leaders in schools in order to bring about improved outcomes for pupils.

The Leadership Curriculum is delivered via a licensing delivery model so as to ensure that it is made available to the profession at the greatest value for money. The licensed providers are groups of schools, universities and private organisations who work together to deliver the qualifications. There are 33 Licensees nationally delivering 1 or more Levels of the Leadership Curriculum. Licensees have been delivering the Level 3 modules and qualifications since 2012, while Levels 1 and 2 have been provided since February 2013. Licensed providers are awarded their license and quality assured by NCTL.

One of the envisaged key benefits of the Leadership Curriculum is that it allows leaders the flexibility to access both individual modules across levels as standalone modules or to complete a qualification at a specific level. Each module includes c50 hours of leadership development; this may include face-to-face meetings and workshops, online

learning, in-school work and time for self-reflection, all with a view to creating a blended learning approach.

Each qualification requires the completion of essential and elective modules:

- NPQH: 3 essential modules and 2 elective
- NPQSL: 2 essential modules and 2 elective
- NPQML: 2 essential modules and 1 elective

It is anticipated that leaders will take between 6-12 months to complete Levels 1 and 2 of the Leadership Curriculum, with Level 3 taking between 6-18 months (the ideal time is 1 year for completion). All qualifications require an assessment prior to completion. The Level 3 qualification also requires an entry 'gateway' assessment and includes a school placement as part of the qualification.

Changes to the Leadership Curriculum implemented during the evaluation

In May 2014, NCTL announced a series of changes to its national qualifications and the NCTL membership website. As a result, changes were made to the way the Leadership Curriculum is designed and run. The key areas of change are highlighted below:

- NCTL stopped the design, development and refreshing of leadership programme materials in September 2014 and schools/Licensees became responsible for developing and maintaining material content;
- NCTL would not renew the existing licenses in March 2016 when they were due to expire, however, these have since been extended until September 2017, to allow the school system to mature and to allow time for a review of the current approach to take place;
- The online platform was decommissioned and transferred to a light touch platform accessible by Licensees (this included the content for online modules);
- The NCTL membership scheme ceased;
- It was decided that scholarships provided to support participants undertaking the programme would be reduced by 5% per annum, before ceasing completely in March 2016;
- Licensees decide who should be accepted onto their programmes and who passes, including NPQH. The NPQH entry assessment process was revised in 2015 with the face-to-face assessment day being reduced to a half day event. From March 2016, NCTL is to have no direct involvement in the NPQH gateway assessment.

In addition:

- NCTL revised the final assessment for:
- National Professional Qualification for Senior Leaders, merging the two assessment tasks into one overarching assessment where the participant has to demonstrate embedding a “Closing the Gap” activity at whole-school level;
- National Professional Qualification for Headship; the Situational judgement test was removed and the competencies previously assessed by this test were incorporated into the presentation element of the face-to-face interview.

Whilst it is unlikely that participants in the evaluation will be directly affected by the majority of the changes to the National Professional Qualifications over the past 24 months, they could – if they have deferred from the programme – potentially be affected by the final assessment, as well as changes to the online platform.

Research aims and objectives

The longitudinal evaluation was designed to provide NCTL with data regarding both the implementation and short- to longer-term outcomes and impacts of the Leadership Curriculum structured around a number of key research objectives:

- Success in engaging participants to take part in the Leadership Curriculum;
- Gauging the opinions of leaders regarding the structure of the Leadership Curriculum, how they are accessing it, and levels of satisfaction with the delivery model;
- Short- and longer-term outcomes and impacts of the Leadership Curriculum, including the extent to which it is meeting leaders’ development needs;
- Opinions on the licensed delivery model;
- Assessment of the cost of the Leadership Curriculum.

This was designed to provide NCTL with knowledge and an understanding of the successes and areas for development arising from the licensed delivery of its new Leadership Curriculum. In addition, it was also hoped that this evaluation would allow NCTL to develop a clear understanding of whether the licensing approach is working well.

Method

The evaluation employed a mixed method approach designed to ensure both breadth and depth of data capture; this comprised:

- A longitudinal telephone survey of trainees on the three Levels of the Leadership Curriculum across two sampling points: SP1 (766) and SP2 (752);
- Semi-structured depth interviews with trainees (46);
- Semi-structured depth interviews with Line Managers of trainees (30);

- Semi-structured paired interviews with Licensees (10);
- An online survey of representatives of Licensees (49 responses);
- An online End-of-Module survey (4,445 responses);
- An online End of Qualification survey (2,876 responses);
- Analysis of 45 participants' final assessment tasks.

Longitudinal telephone survey

The longitudinal telephone survey was undertaken at two sampling points with a cohort of participants on Levels 1-3 of the Leadership Curriculum. Respondents at Sampling Point 1 (SP1) were randomly selected from a database of individuals who successfully obtained the qualifications at final assessment. A small number of participants who withdrew from the qualification or were unsuccessful were also included in the sample. Participation in the survey involved responding to a series of questions (these were primarily closed questions and therefore principally generated quantitative data) delivered via a computer-assisted telephone interview which lasted, on average, 15 minutes. The survey content was broadly similar for all three levels of the Leadership Curriculum although it was nuanced to reflect the differences in relation to the aims and objectives of the qualifications, delivery arrangements and competencies. The survey was undertaken approximately **1-2 months after completion of the qualification** and was designed to provide a snapshot of participants' skills, capabilities and future aspirations at that time. The sample comprised those who completed qualifications between January 2014 and April 2015. All participants were longitudinally tracked and invited to participate in an interview **12 months after completion of the qualification** at Sampling Point 2 (SP2) between February 2015 and April 2016. In cases where participants refused or were unable to take part in the second telephone interview, an alternative participant was randomly selected from the same sampling point. The final numbers achieved are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Sample sizes

Qualification	Numbers achieved at SP1	Numbers achieved at SP2	Numbers tracked longitudinally at SP2
NPQH	266	282	145
NPQSL	258	240	111
NPQML	242	230	103
Total	766	752	359

The full profile of the respondents is set out in Appendix 4³.

³ Published as a separate document: Leadership Curriculum Evaluation - Appendices

Telephone depth interviews

Telephone semi-structured depth interviews were undertaken with participants and Line Managers⁴ across the three levels of the Leadership Curriculum. These were based on a semi-structured interview schedule which was adapted depending on their telephone survey responses. A selection of individuals were contacted for interview approximately 1-2 months after completing the telephone survey. The interviews were approximately 45-60 minutes in length, generating rich qualitative data. Interviews were completed across two sampling points, with SP2 interviews primarily focusing on the impact of the qualification.

Table 2: Telephone depth interviews

Qualification	SP1		SP2	
	Trainees	Line Managers	Trainees	Line Managers
NPQH	9	7	8	4
NPQSL	5	4	11	6
NPQML	5	0	8	9
Total	19	11	27	19

10 paired interviews were also undertaken with Licensee representatives. These were semi-structured depth interviews undertaken by telephone and lasting 45-60 minutes.

Licensee survey

The Licensee survey was designed to explore the views of a range of respondents working at Licensees. The questions sought to gauge their opinions on the Leadership Curriculum before changes were made to the delivery model in August 2014. The survey was launched at the end of May 2015 and conducted over a period of three weeks. The survey was emailed to the main contacts at each of the 30 licensed providers. These individuals were asked to complete the survey and also forward it to others working at their Licensee so as a wider range of perceptions could be captured. In total, we received 49 responses, representing the views of 22 licensed providers.

End-of-Module survey responses

The End-of-Module survey was designed and administered by NCTL. On completion of a Leadership Curriculum module, participants received a link to an online survey. Participants were invited to answer a number of closed questions related to the likelihood of them recommending the modules to others, the extent to which the module met their needs and expectations, and the quality of its content and delivery. The survey also included a number of open response questions pertaining to what participants liked about the module and any suggestions they had for improving it. The number of respondents

⁴ During the original telephone survey, leaders were asked if they would be willing to take part in further research and if we could contact their Line Manager. Contact details were then sought.

per question in the complete End-of-Module survey dataset varied greatly due to all but the first question being optional.

The total sample included 4,445 participants:

- 1,905 responses for the NPQH;
- 1,382 for the NPQSL;
- 1,158 for the NPQML.

The End-of-Qualification survey

The End-of-Qualification survey was designed by NCTL and disseminated by CFE Research to all participants who successfully completed their qualification. Participants were invited to answer a number of closed questions related to the likelihood of them recommending the qualification, the extent to which the qualification met their needs and expectations, and the quality of its delivery. The survey also included a number of open response questions pertaining to why they would recommend the qualification, and the skills they thought it had and had not developed. The surveys were launched in December 2014 and were issued until April 2016.

The total number of responses received was:

- 492 responses for the NPQH (55% response rate);
- 1,236 for the NPQSL (42% response rate);
- 1,148 for the NPQML (33% response rate).

Analysis of final assessment tasks

All trainees are required to complete projects in their home school and NPQH participants also undertake a project in a placement school. Final assessment tasks are undertaken as part of this in order to evidence the work undertaken. Qualitative analysis was carried out across 45 participants' final assessment tasks to examine the impact achieved through their projects. The number of documents and tasks analysed differed by qualification, with this outlined in Appendix 2⁵. The final assessment tasks were randomly selected by the delivery provider, thus ensuring a mix of respondents by gender, Licensee, school phase and number of pupils on roll (a full list of the tasks coded can be found in Appendix 2 along with a description of the types of tasks participants completed).

⁵ Published as a separate document: Leadership Curriculum Evaluation – Appendices

This report

All differences in findings were tested for statistical significance so as to ensure that they are genuine, robust and generalisable to the population from which they were drawn and are not a side-effect of sample selection. **Throughout the report, we only discuss findings which are statistically significant, unless otherwise stated.** Where findings are not statistically significant, these are included because we consider them to be of potential interest to the National College. These are clearly marked on charts and graphs in the description section.

Following this introduction chapter, the remainder of the report is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 2:** Motivations and experience of the qualification;
- **Chapter 3:** Impact on participants;
- **Chapter 4:** Impact on career and further leadership training;
- **Chapter 5:** Wider impacts;
- **Chapter 6:** Gaps in provision and challenges;
- **Chapter 7:** Conclusions.

Chapter 2: Motivations and experience of the qualification

This chapter of the report covers:

- Levels of satisfaction with recruitment of participants onto the Leadership Curriculum;
- Motivations of participants and Line Managers to complete the Leadership Curriculum;
- Experience of the induction process;
- Views of the Leadership Curriculum, including meeting leadership needs, satisfaction with the delivery and content, if it accurately reflects the participant role, if whether participants would recommend it, and views on value for money;
- Views on the delivery methods (e.g. face-to-face and online delivery);
- Support received on the Leadership Curriculum;
- The extent to which Leadership Curriculum delivery is flexible and accessible.

Recruitment

Across all Licensees, a total of 31,676 participants were recruited onto the Leadership Curriculum over the four-year period.

Table 3: National recruitment figures for the Leadership Curriculum qualifications.

	NPQML	NPQSL	NPQH	Total
Total of participants recruited	14,622	12,630	4,424	31,676

Overall, Licensees reported that they were satisfied with their ability to recruit participants onto the Leadership Curriculum. In the online survey, Licensees were asked to rate the extent to which they were satisfied with their recruitment on a scale from 1 to 7, where 1= 'strongly dissatisfied' and 7= 'strongly satisfied'. The mean score for Licensees' satisfaction with the recruitment of participants (across 49 respondents) was 5.4 for NPQH, 5.9 for NPQSL and 5.8 for NPQML, with no statistically significant difference between the two. During the depth interviews, Licensees mostly reported that recruitment had gone well, with a minority also reporting that they had a waiting list for places. One Licensee highlighted how they had struggled to meet the targets set by NCTL but that they were able to meet their own internal targets.

During the interviews, most Licensees discussed their marketing initiatives. The most successful marketing tool reported was word-of-mouth. However, Licensees were aware that their reputation had to first be established for this to be successful. Indeed, the Licensees reported that reputation building and initial marketing lead to success, with many of them also investing resources in their website presence. A minority of Licensees reported that networking and relationship building with headteachers was important. Only one Licensee reported challenges in marketing the qualifications due to budgets.

We explored, with help from Licensees, the extent to which participants are clear about which qualification to apply for. Some did not raise it as an issue, whilst others reported some confusion for participants in relation to the boundaries and expectations of the NPQML and the NPQSL due to the different responsibilities in the school structures (primary or secondary) and school demographics. They described how they ensure flexibility for participants to change to a different qualification if necessary. Some Licensees described how, once an application has been received, they communicate with the school/participant to ensure that participants are on the right course.

Licensees also reported that they make it clear that participants need to have the right access in place for the different levels of the qualification to ensure they can adequately complete the assignment:

“We do try and signpost them as best we can but we often find that people switch between levels once they start a qualification. What we’ve done to try and clarify that is we do run briefing meetings, online and face-to-face, linked through the hubs, to clarify what the difference is and make it clear what the expectations are between the ML and the SL.”

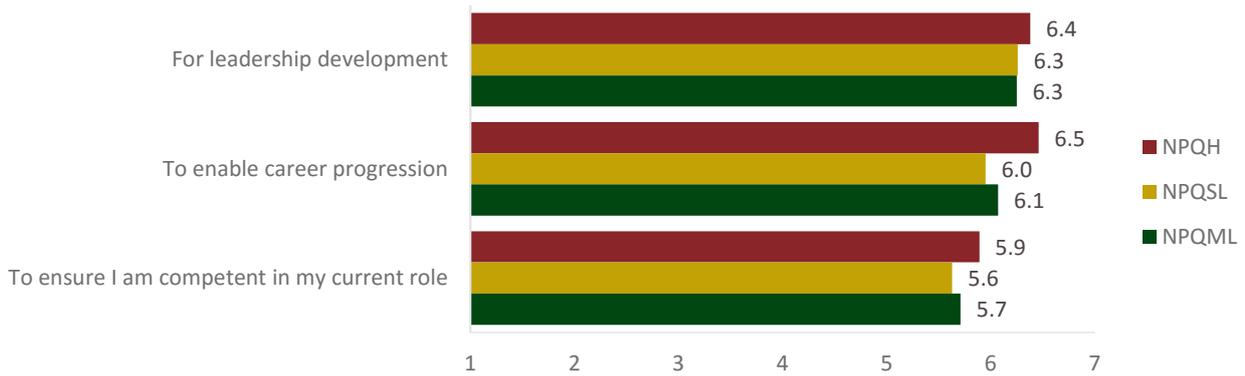
Licensee

Motivations for starting the Leadership Curriculum

During the telephone survey, participants were asked to respond to a set of statements about their initial motivations for undertaking the Leadership Curriculum qualification. Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed with the statements on a scale from 1 to 7, where 1= ‘strongly disagree’ and 7= ‘strongly agree’.

Motivations for undertaking qualifications on the Leadership Curriculum varied slightly across the three levels (see Figure 1). ‘Leadership development’ was the highest-rated motivation (6.3 out of 7, on average, across all qualifications). ‘To enable career progression’ was a similarly strong motivation (6.2), and was rated slightly higher by NPQH participants (6.5), as was to be expected due to the nature of this qualification in preparing individuals for headship. In contrast, ‘ensuring competency in current role’ was less of a motivating factor (5.7). This indicated that, overall, the **Leadership Curriculum qualifications are highly sought in order to further leadership or career progression rather than to develop competency in current roles.**

Figure 1: Mean ratings for motivations to undertake the qualification.



Bases: NPQH = 266; NPQSL = 258; NPQML = 242. Only career progression statistically significant: NPQH compared to NPQSL and NPQML.

The finding that participants were motivated to undertake the Leadership Curriculum qualification to progress in their career, ahead of improving competency in their current role, was echoed in the depth interviews. During the interviews, many participants, and particularly those taking the NPQSL and NPQH qualifications, identified the wish to develop and demonstrate that they had the skills and knowledge necessary to undertake a more senior role. With this said, however, some also wanted to be more effective in their current role.

“I work within a special school, which is a small school but it’s expanding. I was working as a head of department and then moved over to working as the head of our primary unit... So, it was partly for career development, but also to give me some additional information and skills that would help me to be more effective in my role.”

NPQSL participant

In terms of ‘leadership development’ being a motivation for undertaking the course, a number of interviewees suggested that feedback from Ofsted had been a key driver in undertaking the course. Several NPQML participants described how they had commenced the course in response to Ofsted identifying that middle management in their school needed to be strengthened.

Line managers reported that they believed participation would not only lead to development of the trainee, but that it would, in turn, have a positive effect on the overall leadership team and the whole school.

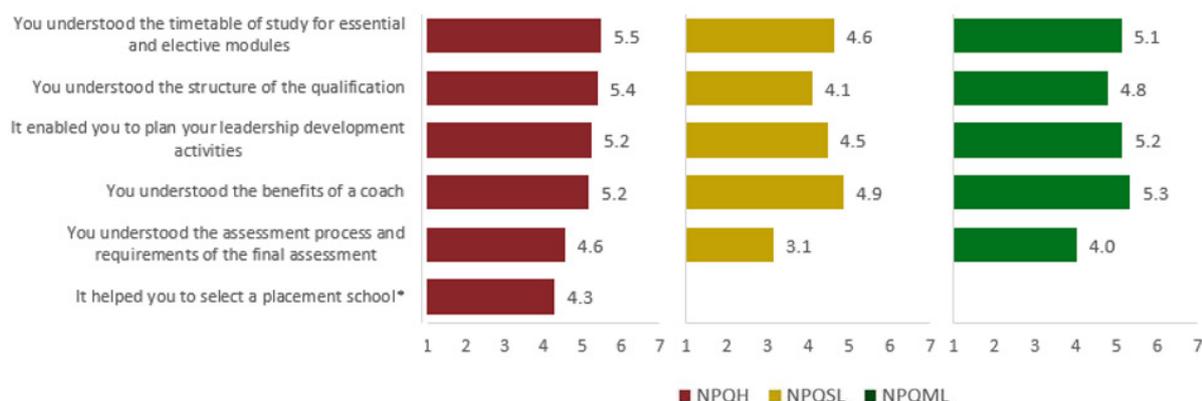
“Well, it was part of his performance management and appraisal, we were looking at how to enhance his experience, get him to think in different ways. I was most interested in just giving him some rigour in terms of process and time line for leading change in school.”

NPQSL Line Manager

The induction process

Participants were asked to what extent they agreed with a series of statements about their understanding of the qualification after the induction process, on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1= ‘strongly disagree’ and 7= ‘strongly agree’. **Overall, NPQH participants provided slightly higher responses for most questions, with NPQSL participants consistently the least satisfied** (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Mean ratings to indicate the extent of agreement with the induction process across a range of criteria.



Bases: NPQH = 266; NPQSL = 258; NPQML = 242. Understood timetable of study, Understood the structure of qualification & Understood assessment process: all differences by qualification statistically significant, Plan your leadership activities statistically significant: NPQSL compared to NPQH and NPQML, Understood benefits of a coach statistically significant: NPQSL compared to NPQML.

Only the **clarity of the requirements for the final assessment** received an average rating of less than the mid-point (of 4) across all qualifications at 3.9; this was driven by the lower score of 3.1 from NPQSL participants when compared to NPQH participants at 4.6 and NPQML participants at 4.0. More details on suggestions for improvement can be found in the final chapter of the report.

Views of the Leadership Curriculum

Delivery and content

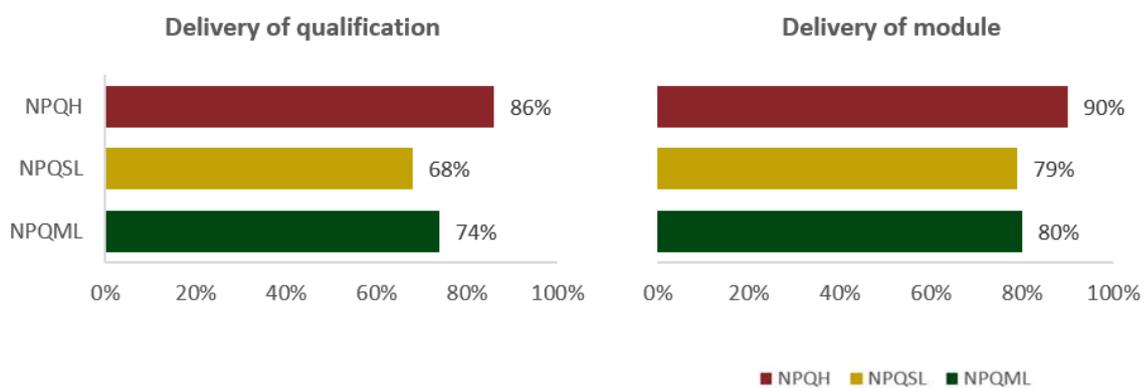
The **modules ‘mostly’ or ‘completely’ met the expectations of more than four-fifths of participants** (86%) as reported in the End-of-Module survey. Again, NPQH participants were more satisfied than NPQSL and NPQML respondents⁶:

⁶ Differences between NPQSL and NPQML are not statistically significant.

- NPQH – 92%;
- NPQSL – 81%;
- NPQML – 84%.

Participants were also satisfied with how the whole Leadership Curriculum and individual modules are delivered. Nearly three-quarters of participants (73%) answering the End-of-Qualification survey rated the overall delivery ‘excellent’ or ‘good’, whilst 84% of modules were rated by participants as ‘excellent’ or ‘good’. A higher proportion of NPQH participants again stated this when compared to NPQSL and NPQML respondents:

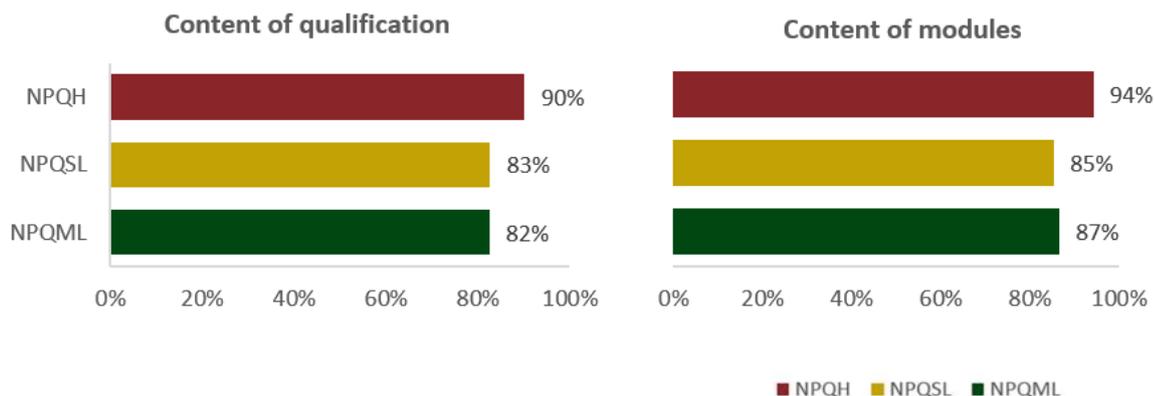
Figure 3: Proportion of participants rating the overall delivery of the NPQH/SL/ML, and delivery of the modules for each qualification as ‘excellent’ or ‘good’.



EQS bases: NPQH = 486, NPQSL = 1,225 and NPQML = 1,143. EQM bases: NPQH = 584, NPQSL = 449, NPQML = 369. All differences by qualification are statistically significant.

Participants viewed the content of the Leadership Curriculum positively, both when considering the modules individually and the qualification overall (see Figure 4). More than 8 in 10 respondents (84%) answering the End-of-Qualification survey and nearly 9 in 10 (89%) of those completing the End-of-Module survey rated the course content ‘excellent’ or ‘good’. The satisfaction ratings were again higher among NPQH participants.

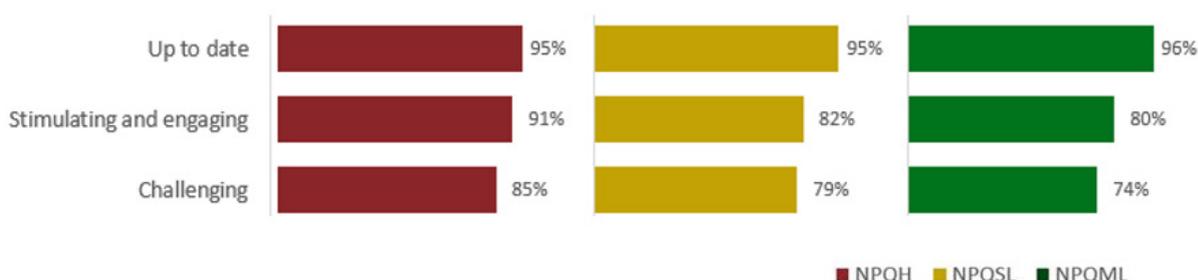
Figure 4: Proportion of participants rating the content of the modules ‘excellent’ or ‘good’.



EQS bases: NPQH = 490; NPQSL = 1,223; NPQML = 1,141; EMS bases: NPQH = 587; NPQSL = 449; NPQML = 372. Content of qualification and modules: NPQH statistically significant for NPQSL and NPQML.

The majority of participants were satisfied with the modules’ ability to challenge them, and be engaging as well as up to date. As shown in Figure 5, the modules across all three qualification levels performed well in terms of being up to date (95% were rated ‘completely’ or ‘mostly’). A slightly lower proportion stated that the modules were ‘stimulating and engaging’ (84%) and ‘challenging’ (80%). A higher proportion of NPQH modules were deemed to be ‘stimulating and engaging’, and ‘challenging’.

Figure 5: Proportion of participants selecting ‘completely’ or ‘mostly’ ratings for various aspects of modules.



Bases vary: NPQH ≈ 590; NPQSL ≈ 450; NPQML ≈ 370. Stimulating and engaging & challenging statistically significant: NPQH compared to NPQSL and NPQML.

Repetition

Overall, **repetition across the Leadership Curriculum modules and qualifications did not appear to be a concern for participants or Licensees.** Participants surveyed at SP1 and Licensees completing the online survey generally agreed that there was no repetition between the modules (giving mean scores of c.5.0 out of 7); moreover,

Licensees gave an average score of 4.8, thus indicating that there is no repetition between the qualifications themselves. Repetition was not raised as a problem by participants completing the NPQSL and NPQML qualifications. Only a minority of NPQH participants highlighted a problem with repetition across modules.

“They would deliver a module on, for example, leading change and it would be two full days...but it was pretty similar to another module you’d do a couple of days later, with a different title and yet, it was meant to be different.”

NPQH participant

During interviews with Licensees, a minority reported some areas of repetition across different modules. It was also highlighted that the structure of the assignments and the 360 assessment may appear repetitive at the outset of the qualification. However, through clear explanations about progression within and across the three qualifications, it was clear that the focus of these elements is different and not repetitive. One participant interviewee also suggested that repetition, in some instances, was a good thing, as it helped to consolidate the materials covered.

“In terms of theory, leadership theory and themes. I think rightfully so. Emotional intelligence occurs in all three programmes and is a crucial part of leadership. Also this data, and being able to engage with data effectively, the systems and processes in school, that’s important and rightfully so in all three programmes.”

Licensee

Licensees reported that they continually review the content of the modules on a regular basis to ensure that the quality of experience for participants is maintained and to ensure that there is minimal repetition.

“If you just deliver the modules as they are on the National College website then there’s absolutely some repetition, but if you get your facilitators to actually design something, to look at the learning outcomes and to look at the focus, then there isn’t.”

Licensee

Reflecting the role

Licensees and participants across all three levels of the Leadership Curriculum agreed that **the qualifications reflect the role for which they are training**. With a mean agreement score of 5.8 out of 7, there was little difference between the three levels of the Leadership Curriculum, as reported by participants. Licensee scores were similar, thus indicating that they feel the NPQSL and NPQML qualifications accurately reflect the relevant roles (both with a mean score of 5.8 out of 7) alongside the NPQH qualification (a mean score of 5.4 out of 7) (findings were not statistically significant).

This finding was also evident at the modular level, with the majority of participants considering the Leadership Curriculum modules to be relevant to their work; indeed, 89% rated them as ‘completely’ or ‘mostly’ relevant.

The survey findings were mirrored by the answers of the majority of participants and Line Managers interviewed, who highlighted that the different qualification levels reflect the different leadership styles and capabilities required. Several participants of different leadership levels, as well as some Line Managers, indicated that whilst a qualification can provide some insight into, and preparation for, a particular role, it is only by undertaking the position that you become fully knowledgeable of it. One of the Line Managers interviewed had supported a number of teachers on the Leadership Curriculum and was able to positively reflect on the extent to which the qualifications differed:

“They are definitely set at enhancing the middle leader to senior leadership, and enhancing the senior leader to more senior leadership. Then you’ve got your NPQH, I like that you’ve got a lovely, even step on the three.”

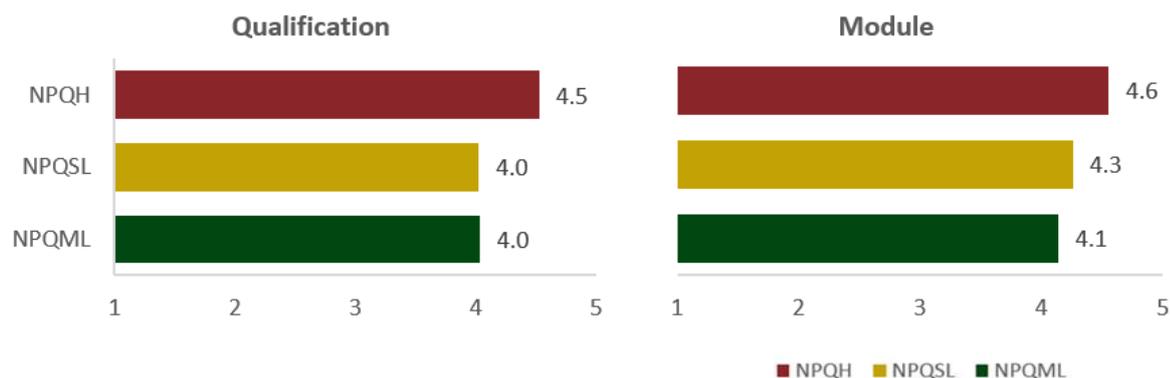
NPQSL Line Manager

In terms of the Licensee interviews, most who provided a response thought that the qualifications fit the relevant NPQML, NPQSL and NPQH roles relatively well. Facilitators who deliver the curriculum content are trained practitioners in the relevant leadership roles; indeed, this ensures that the content of the curriculum is enriched and pitched at the right level.

Recommending the qualification

Overall, **participants stated that they would recommend the Leadership Curriculum qualifications** and the individual modules to their colleagues. In our analysis of both the End-of-Qualification and End-of-Module surveys, we calculated a mean score by assigning numbers to the five star categories (from ‘not at all likely’ = 1 to ‘definitely’ = 5). Overall, the qualifications received a mean score of 4.1 and the modules 4.4 out of 5; this indicated that participants are very likely to recommend them to colleagues. NPQH participants were most likely to recommend the qualification (4.5) and modules (4.6) when compared to NPQSL and NPQML participants.

Figure 6: Mean recommendation ratings for the qualification and modules.



Bases vary: Qualification: NPQH = 488, NPQSL = 1,231, NPQML = 1,146. Module NPQH = 1,905, NPQSL = 1,328, NPQML = 1,158. Qualification level statistically significant: NPQH compared to NPQSL and NPQML. All differences by module are statistically significant.

In the End-of-Qualification survey, participants were asked to state why they had provided the score they had when asked the recommendation question. A wide range of reasons were provided by participants (and are explored throughout the report), with the most frequent reason being that it was “useful”, as reported by 14%. One-tenth (10%) of participants reported that they would recommend it as it was good for their CPD, CV and career progression.

“It stretched my knowledge and has put me in good stead for taking on a promoted post or moving to NPQSL.”

NPQSL – End of Qualification survey

Nearly one-tenth of participants (9%) stated that it developed their competencies, 7% would recommend it due to the networking opportunities, 7% would do so because it gave them an opportunity to reflect, 5% cited the face-to-face sessions, and 5% alluded to the fact that it is a recognised qualification.

“It is becoming more of a requirement for certain job applications, the content that candidates will learn is in depth, relevant and transferable.”

NPQML – End-of-Qualification survey

Although not frequently reported, a small proportion of trainees provided negative responses to the question of why they would not recommend the qualification, with NPQSL and ML participants most likely to report said responses. Those studying NPQSL and ML were nearly twice as likely to cite difficulties with time and being able to fit the qualification in alongside work. Nearly 10% of NPQSL participants reported that the assessment requirements were not clear, followed by 4% of NPQML participants and only 1% of NPQH participants.

All Licensees reported on the satisfaction levels across the qualifications and whether these differed during the depth interviews. Three of the Licensees did not report any differences in satisfaction levels and stated that tailoring bespoke sessions to individual

learning styles and the quality of the facilitators were seen as pivotal to the high levels of satisfaction across all three qualifications. The fact that the qualifications offer a balanced approach between theory and putting this into practice via different mediums, such as face-to-face events and online activities, was also seen as key to the high levels of universal satisfaction expressed by the majority of Licensees. Ensuring continual reflective practise and responding to feedback are crucial for Licensees' quality assurance.

Where differences were reported by a minority of Licensees, this was attributed to differing levels of 'buy-in' across the three qualifications. For example, NPQML participants are more frequently asked by their Line Manager to undertake the qualification and do not always have the necessary time or commitment required. Differences in satisfaction can also be due to different learning styles and linked to the experience and leadership maturity of participants. One Licensee stated that NPQSL participants can sometimes find the experience less satisfying due to time constraints and the pressures of their day-to-day job.

"The challenge for, I think ML is that when the head or head of school, or whatever, says, 'I think you should go on a middle leadership programme,' they may not choose themselves to be on it. So the commitment sometimes is less, and getting them to final assessment is more of a challenge."

Licensee

"I think in terms of taking a more subjective view, some, not all, but some SL groups can be slightly more challenging to deliver to than ML or NPQH. I think that's due to perhaps the nature of their role, the demands that are placed on them, there's often a wider spread around all the responsibilities in the group."

Licensee

Value of the qualifications

Licensees and participants, particularly NPQH trainees, stated that they consider the Leadership Curriculum to be good value for money (although it is not known whether or not trainees were required to contribute financially). In the online survey, Licensees and NPQH participants rated their agreement with this value for money statement as 6.0 out of 7 – higher than the scores of 5.4 and 5.3 from NPQML and NPQSL participants, respectively⁷.

All Line Managers interviewed across the qualifications believed that they were good value for money (although it is not known if this was a view held more widely across the education sector, as only those who had taken part in the Leadership Curriculum were asked). Line Managers highlighted the importance of selecting the right member(s) of

⁷ Differences between NPQSL and NPQML are not statistically significant.

staff to complete the qualification in terms of them being ready for it and having the drive to complete it. The Leadership Curriculum was seen as a credible qualification that leads to whole-school impact, and is hence good value for money.

“Yes, I mean, it’s not a cheap qualification, but it does everything it says on the tin, and I think that sometimes you’ve just got to accept that you’ve got to pay a cost for a qualification. You know, you could put a qualification together, say it’s all online, it’s only £295 per person, but, if it doesn’t do what you need it to do, which is getting theoretical learning and putting it into practice, that makes NPQH quite distinctive, and I don’t think that you’d get that without the cost.”

NPQH Line Manager

An issue highlighted during the depth interviews was that scholarships and bursaries significantly help to pay for the training. Participants stated that, if these were not in place, then it could become hard for schools and participants to finance training, and the value would be harder to see.

“I mean, we’re a small school so we got a discount. What we paid and what we got, I think we got good value for money.”

NPQSL Participant

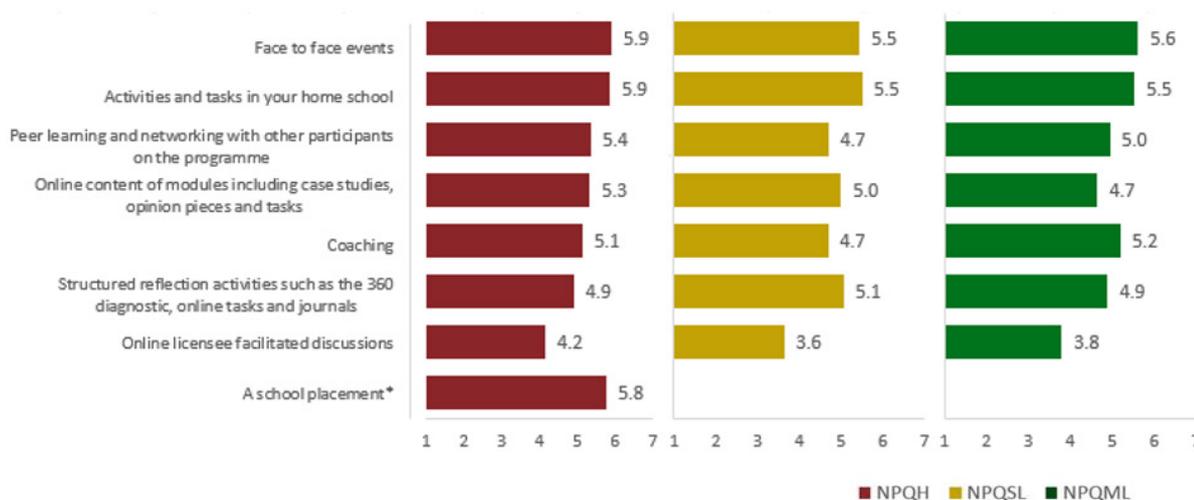
“Yes, with the grant that you get. If you were having to pay for them without that then they would be a big expense for schools to consider.”

NPQSL Line Manager

Views on the different delivery methods

Participants were asked to what extent they agreed that the various elements of the Leadership Curriculum had enabled them to develop their leadership skills (Figure 7). The elements which were **rated most valuable amongst participants were the face-to-face activities** (at 5.7 out of 7) and the activities and tasks based in their school (5.6). Only one element received an **average score below the mid-point: the online Licensee-facilitated discussions** (3.9). In addition, NPQH participants were satisfied with the school placement (5.8). Overall, NPQH participants gave higher ratings for most elements when compared with NPQSL and NPQML respondents.

Figure 7: Mean agreement ratings to indicate the extent to which various qualification elements enabled the development of leadership skills.



Bases vary: NPQH = 225-265; NPQSL = 234-254; NPQML = 211-242. Face-to-face events & Online Licensee-facilitated discussions statistically significant: NPQH compared to NPQSL, Peer learning & Activities and tasks in home school statistically significant: NPQH compared to NPQSL and NPQML, Coaching statistically significant: NPQSL compared to NPQH and NPQML, Online content of modules statistically significant: NPQML compared to NPQH and NPQSL.

Licensees’ views regarding the success of the various elements in enabling participants to develop their leadership skills mirrored those held by participants. The results of the Licensee online survey also suggested that face-to-face events are considered the most effective element (6.4 out of 7), followed by peer learning and networking with other participants, as well as activities and tasks in the home school (5.7 and 5.6 respectively). Similar to participants, Licensees believed that online facilitated discussions are less successful (4.7).

During the interviews, some Licensees reported that the blended learning approach (i.e. face-to-face and online learning) is a necessary delivery model to capture different learning styles and enable participants to consolidate knowledge at different stages of the process.

“I think that package is critical, both online, and face-to-face, because we're working with very different colleagues, with different learning needs.”

Licensee

Participants expressed a similarly positive level of satisfaction with the structure of the Leadership Curriculum. Over two-thirds of End-of-Qualification survey respondents (70%) considered the blend of face-to-face sessions, school-based work and online work as ‘excellent’ or ‘good’. Again, NPQH participants demonstrated the highest levels of satisfaction (83% thought it was ‘excellent’ or ‘good’) compared with 66% of NPQSL and 68% of NPQML participants.

“It gives you that opportunity to network with people in similar and different schools around the country, which was really useful. Getting their input, their thoughts, their take on things, how their school did it, sharing stuff, so that was really helpful. Getting the opportunity to be in another school within the local setting was really useful, because it just gave you, sort of, a different chance to work with different people and to put some of the stuff into practice. Also just the research that it gave you access to.”

NPQH participant

Face-to-face delivery

At the modular level, participants expressed satisfaction with the face-to-face elements of sessions, with 86% of modules rated ‘excellent’ or ‘good’ (with similar results across the three qualifications). **The face-to-face sessions were highly regarded** by participants across all three qualification levels during the depth interviews. Participants valued the face-to-face sessions for a number of reasons, including:

- Allowing further exploration of key issues;
- Enabling the sharing of ideas regarding the course content, as well as experiences of leadership issues and best practice for addressing them; and
- Having course tutors on hand to promptly respond to any problems or queries.

Throughout the depth interviews, Licensees also described how the blended learning approach made the face-to-face days successful. They explained how the sessions allowed for deeper critical thinking through the discussions and question and answer sessions, as well as the coaching and small-group work. These sessions allow participants to test and learn different approaches in a shared-learning environment.

“That’s where you see the light bulb moments. That’s where the discussions with each other develop. You hear other people’s experiences. You can test out theories and, as I say to people, what’s great about leadership is there is no right or wrong answer. You find your own way but you learn from each other and you can only do that properly in the face-to-face sessions.”

Licensee

Activities and tasks in own school

Participants explained how the projects they undertook in their own school were critical to the development of their leadership skills. Not only do participants learn the theory of leadership by undertaking the Leadership Curriculum, but **through the projects they also get the opportunity to put into practice the skills they have learnt**. It is this experience which many participants cited as being particularly valuable when explaining the ways in which they have developed as leaders. Participants noted that, by carrying

out their project, they had raised their profile within their school and had begun, for example, leading staff meetings and observing teaching practice in other classrooms. In other cases, the project had given participants a clear reason to stop, reflect on, and learn from their leadership actions. The project is an important vehicle for giving participants the opportunity to practice and develop their leadership skills.

“I think my standing within the school has definitely changed. I don’t think that’s a direct result of getting the qualification, I think it’s more a result of doing the project. I’ve led whole-staff meetings, I’ve, put myself forward. I’ve done lesson observations, I’ve developed a number of whole-school initiatives on the back of what we’ve been doing. So, I think having done the qualification has given me a vehicle with which to do these things.”

NPQSL participant

Peer networking

Three-quarters of participants in the End-of-Qualification survey (74%) rated the **opportunities the qualification gave them to learn with, and from, their peers** as ‘excellent’ or ‘good’. NPQH participants expressed slightly higher levels of satisfaction than NPQSL and NPQML respondents (83% compared to 70% of those on the NPQSL and 75% of those on the NPQML)⁸.

Participants were asked what they thought was most valuable about the module they were studying. In total, 892 participants provided a relevant answer to this open response question. The most frequently reported area (by 32% of participants) was being able to interact and discuss the course and their experiences with others. Participants found it useful and effective to speak to colleagues from other schools about how they address and overcome difficulties in their workplace.

“The opportunity to discuss and reflect on my experiences with others in similar settings and be allowed to discuss how we would and how others would develop their methods and approaches to solving such problems.”

NPQML, End of Module response

The **peer learning and networking opportunities on the programme were viewed positively throughout the depth interviews**. Similarly, the benefits reported were meeting other people working in similar contexts to share experiences, gauging one’s own progress, and discussing future opportunities such as, for example, new jobs or partnership working.

“I think the course mates on the NPQSL, they’re working at the local secondary school nearby. So, there are links there which wouldn’t have existed before.”

⁸ Differences between all qualifications are statistically significant.

In many cases, it was the face-to-face sessions themselves which enabled participants to work together and draw on the experiences of successful leaders.

Online learning

Participants expressed **lower levels of satisfaction with the online learning activities** at the point at which they complete their qualification; only 58% of participants rated them 'excellent' or 'good' in the End-of-Qualification survey. This trend was mirrored across the three levels, with 68% of NPQH participants giving these ratings compared to 60% of NPQSL and 53% of NPQML trainees. The individual modules received higher satisfaction levels, with online learning at 73%. The interview findings provided further explanation of the **average performance of the online module content**. Some participants felt that the online materials worked well, containing appropriate and relevant content to reflect theoretical concepts and case-studies.

"I think what I enjoyed was it was the first time I'd really done, sort of, academic reading since I'd done my training. So it was quite nice, the way that they were, sort of, academic, scholarly journals. Some of them were, sort of, case studies of schools, some of them were more pedagogical or theory-based. There was a nice mix of different styles of reading. They weren't too long."

NPQML participant

However, many participants cited a number of challenges. These included an over-reliance on online materials at the expense of face-to-face sessions with tutors and that the volume of online materials was too great. In addition, technical glitches made the online materials difficult to access at times. The problems experienced included not being able to access the website or sections of the website, the inability to download material and work offline, and challenges in identifying where certain materials were located on the site. Such issues resulted in participant frustration because they were not able to use their time effectively.

"You needed to have about nine windows open to access your element of the site and things like that. So I mean a couple of the evenings that we had together were help to find your way around the website, rather than working on a module. So you know we wasted a couple of evenings trying to figure the website out."

NPQML participant

Licensees reported that, when the NCTL online learning platform was disabled, this was also detrimental to the participant experience, as they were unable to access materials.

"We had a terrible situation when the National College platform was switched off, in the region of 5,000 links to resources were broken. We have been

saying to learners, ‘You won’t see any difference other than it will look a bit fresher,’ because we’ve spent money on repackaging the materials. Then within about three days all we were doing was fielding calls and emails from people who were saying, ‘I’m about to submit for assessment, I can’t get back into these resources, what on earth have you done?’”

Licensee

Licensees also stated that time to undertake the online learning and reading was a challenge for participants. One Licensee reported how they tried to allocate time during face-to-face sessions for participants to undertake key reading.

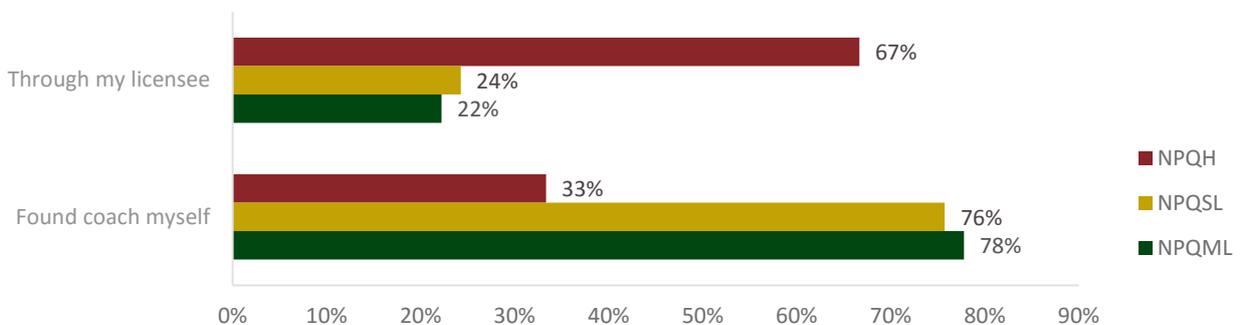
“If I’m being completely honest a lot of our delegates don’t like the online stuff... If they’re in senior leadership, they say, they’ve got so much to do, to actually make themselves sit down and work through it on their own.”

Licensee

Coaching

Most participants undertook some form of coaching as part of their qualification: 85% of NPQH participants had a coach, while this was true for 91% of NPQSL trainees, and 93% of those on the NPQML. Across the qualifications, most found a coach themselves rather than via their Licensee. However, the exception to this was for NPQH participants, with only 33% finding a coach themselves and 67% accessing a coach through their Licensee (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Percentages to illustrate mode of accessing a coach.



Bases: NPQH = 225; NPQSL = 235; NPQML = 226.

The findings from the depth interviews suggested that participants’ level of interaction and experience with their coach varies. There was no discernible pattern in responses by qualification, with a mix of experiences reported across all three levels. A minority of participants suggested that they had not needed to access their coach, whilst in some cases participants felt that the role of a coach was not clearly specified. However, most participants who had a coach utilised any support and guidance offered and were generally positive about the help they had received. The types of assistance provided by the coaches included encouraging participants to be reflective about the leadership programme, discussing project and assignment work, and offering general advice.

Self-reflection

Participants were satisfied with the way in which the Leadership Curriculum enabled them to self-reflect (86% rated it 'excellent' or 'good' in the End-of-Qualification survey). This was reflected in some of the depth interviews, where **participants welcomed the time provided in the face-to-face sessions for self-reflection with other people.** Being able to have dedicated time away from school with other colleagues encouraged participants to self-reflect and seek advice. A Line Manager also highlighted the benefits that undertaking the project has for participants in terms of them self-reflecting on their strengths and areas for improvement.

"I think it's forced me to be self-reflective more, because we've all got our faults. We've all got our, kind of, hidden weaknesses that you don't realise and it just forced me to, yes, be a bit more self-reflective and seek advice a little bit more from colleagues. 'What do you think of this?' 'Am I doing this in the right way?' Just to cover my blind spots really."

NPQSL participant

Online Licensee facilitated discussions

The online Licensee-facilitated discussions were, for some participants, a positive experience, as they were able to effectively discuss their course in forums with their peers and receive support from their facilitators. Several positive comments were received about attentive facilitators providing regular and insightful feedback and direction. However, a number of participants highlighted problems with this medium, which could explain the lower ratings this element of the qualification received overall. These included it being:

- An additional, and not always effective, use of their study time; and
- A more difficult and less enjoyable means of communicating with other participants and facilitators than on the phone or in person.

NPQH school placement

Participants and Licensees believed that the school placement element of the NPQH qualification is an effective way to develop leadership skills, as demonstrated by the high mean scores given in the surveys – 5.8 and 5.9 out of 7, respectively. Through the End-of-Qualification survey, NPQH participants also expressed high levels of satisfaction with the learning in their placement school (89% rated this 'excellent' or 'good').

In line with the quantitative survey results, the depth interview findings suggested that **NPQH participants found the school placements to be positive, and some considered them to be the most valuable element.** Similar to the projects they undertook in their own school, the placement gave participants the opportunity to put into practice the new skills and theories they had learnt on the course. The placement provided participants with an environment where the staff did not have any prior

knowledge or expectations of the individuals' leadership ability against which to make any judgements.

“I guess it gave an opportunity to go and lead and assist in a totally new environment where nobody knows you.”

NPQH participant

Participants were also very satisfied with the support they received from their placement schools, with a mean score of 6.2 out of 7. Analysis of the NPQH interviews suggested that key factors for supportive placements include:

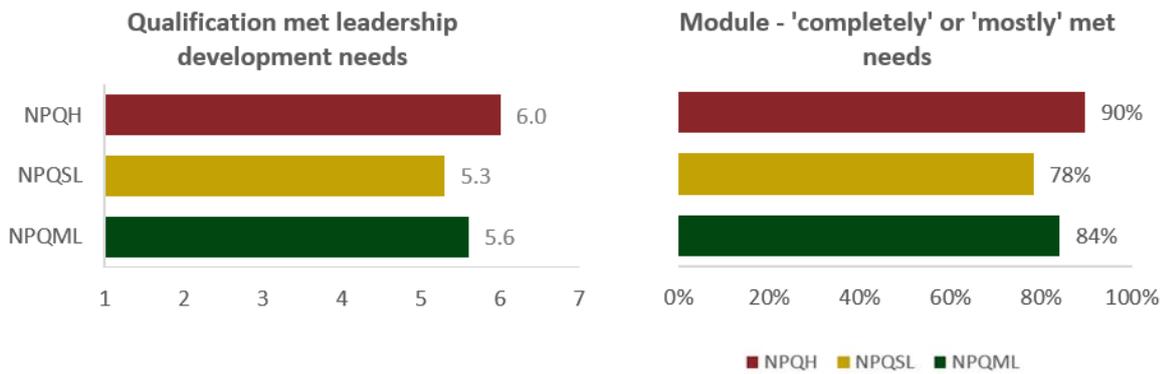
- Headteachers and senior management teams who are approachable and responsive to questions, whether in person or by email;
- Staff who are aware of and embrace the activity being undertaken by NPQH participants in their school;

Meeting leadership needs

The extent to which the Leadership Curriculum qualifications overall, and the modules themselves, met the leadership development needs of participants is illustrated in Figure 9. In the telephone survey, participants were asked to rate this on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1= 'strongly disagree' and 7= 'strongly agree'. There were only small differences between the three levels of the qualification, all with average scores between 5 and 6.

Findings from the online End-of-Module survey mirrored the overall qualification findings, with 85% of modules rated by participants as 'completely' or 'mostly' meeting their leadership development needs. Once again, reflecting the results at the qualification level, NPQH modules were rated higher than the other qualifications.

Figure 9: Extent of agreement that overall the NPQH/SL/ML, and the modules for each qualification, met leadership development needs.



Qualification bases: NPQH = 266; NPQSL = 258; NPQML = 242. Modules bases: NPQH = 595; NPQSL = 461; NPQML = 373. All differences by qualification are statistically significant.

Analysis was undertaken to explore whether there was a relationship between different demographic and school-based characteristics alongside survey responses and the extent to which they believed the full qualification met their leadership development needs. The modelling techniques⁹ revealed a link with a number of different characteristics for different groups of people.

The most significant aspects that positively affected individuals' score are presented below in order of their significance:

- Extent to which face-to-face events enabled them to develop leadership skills;
- Extent to which online content of modules, including case studies, opinion pieces and tasks, enabled them to develop leadership skills;
- Extent to which activities and tasks in home school enabled them to develop leadership skills;
- Extent to which coaching enabled them to develop leadership skills;
- Extent to which structured reflection activities enabled them to develop leadership skills;
- Extent to which peer networking enabled them to develop leadership skills.

No participants' or school level characteristics had a significant relationship with their overall score. **This highlights the importance of the different activities within the Leadership Curriculum and the blended learning approach, all of which had a positive effect on their overall score.**

⁹ Linear regression analysis.

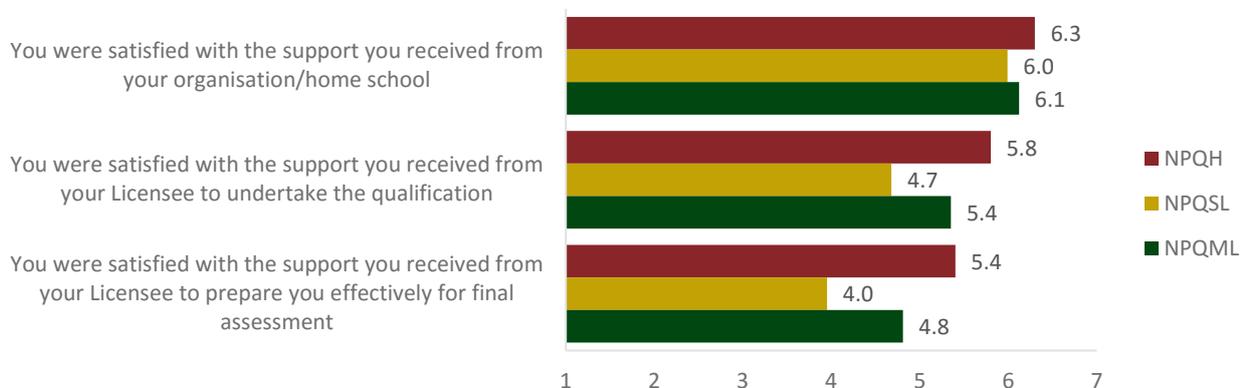
Support on the Leadership Curriculum

Nearly three-fifths of participants (59%) responding to the End-of-Qualification survey reported that the support they received whilst studying their qualification was ‘excellent’ or ‘good’. Over one-quarter (28%) reported that the support was ‘satisfactory’, whilst 14% stated that it was ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’. As seen elsewhere in the findings, NPQH participants reported a higher score, with 72% rating the support they received as ‘excellent’ or ‘good’ compared with 53% of NPQSL trainees and 59% of those on NPQML¹⁰.

At the module level, 71% of participants reported that they had received good guidance and support (rated ‘excellent’ or ‘good’). NPQH participants also expressed greater satisfaction (80% rated it ‘excellent’ or ‘good’) compared with NPQSL or NPQML participants (63% and 65%)¹¹.

During the telephone survey, participants were asked to what extent they agreed that they were satisfied with the support they received (Figure 10). **Participants reported higher satisfaction with the support received from their home school than from Licensees.** Overall, NPQH participants were more satisfied with the support received from Licensees than NPQSL and NPQML participants.

Figure 10: Extent to which participants were satisfied with the support they received when undertaking the qualification.



Bases vary: NPQH = 266; NPQSL = 257-258; NPQML = 239-242 Support from Licensee (both statements): All differences by qualification are statistically significant.

The depth interview findings indicated a number of factors which may have influenced NPQML and NPQSL participants’ lower ratings of the support they received from Licensees. Several interviewees spoke of certain challenges, including: Licensees’ lack of clarity about what was required of participants, particularly regarding the final

¹⁰ Differences between all qualifications are statistically significant.

¹¹ Differences between NPQSL and NPQML are not statistically significant.

assessment, and not being easily contactable with any queries about the latter once the face-to-face sessions had ended.

“What I found less positive was the support around the formal assessment... There was very little support. We were trying to figure out what it was that we needed to do. There was a sense that they weren’t quite that sure either.”

NPQSL participant

To explore this further, analysis was undertaken to determine whether there was a relationship between different demographic and school-based characteristics alongside survey responses, and the extent to which they were satisfied with the support received from their Licensee to undertake the qualification and to prepare them effectively for final assessment.

The most significant aspects¹² that positively affected individuals’ score for support to undertake the qualification are presented below in order of significance:

- Extent to which they understood the timetable of study for essential and elective modules;
- Extent to which they understood the assessment process and requirements of the final assessment;
- Extent to which they understood the structure of the qualification;
- If the participant had no previous leadership experience outside of the education system.

The most significant aspects that positively affected individuals’ score for support to prepare them effectively for final assessment are, in order of significance:

- Extent to which they understood the assessment process and requirements of the final assessment;
- Extent to which they understood the timetable of study for essential and elective modules;
- Those not undertaking NPQSL;
- Those in a primary or secondary school compared to others;
- If the participant had no previous leadership experience outside of the education system;
- Those in a school which has a higher proportion of FSM pupils.

These aspects indicate that **a trainees’ perception of the support they received from their Licensee to undertake the qualification and final assessment has a strong link with how much they understand the structure of the qualification and assessment**

¹² Linear regression analysis.

process. Very few demographic or school characteristics had an association with this score, thus showing that trainees had similar experiences of the support.

Flexible and accessible provision

Licensees were satisfied with their ability to engage different partners in the delivery of the Leadership Curriculum. In the online survey, Licensees awarded this a mean score of 5.9 out of 7 in the online survey, in terms of their agreement with it. Licensees were also satisfied with their ability to deliver a variety of elective modules to meet the needs of participants in a locality with them providing a mean score of 6.1 out of 7. Licensees and participants, particularly NPQH trainees, were also satisfied with the range of qualification modules which met their leadership needs. Licensees, in the online survey, and NPQH participants surveyed at SP1, rated this 6.0 out of 7, while NPQSL and NPQML participants rated it 5.6.

Licensees reported flexibility through the range of modules offered and the mode of delivery. Ensuring regular monitoring of provision has resulted in some Licensees adapting to the changing needs of participants.

“You’re able to update and adapt material to suit to current contexts. To the local settings as well as following the national agenda. So, there’s that flexibility there. Whilst remembering all the essential modules. They’re all underpinned by theory and research, which is still valid and current.”

Licensee

Feedback from Licensee interviews indicated that, overall, the NCTL resources have been positively received and instrumental in enabling them to provide a flexible and bespoke provision to meet local and regional requirements.

Some Licensees reported how the NCTL framework was a useful starting point, especially when starting to deliver the Leadership Curriculum; they also stated that they now have the confidence to develop their own bespoke provision to meet participant needs.

“Initially I would say we followed the rubric as guided by the National College. Of late we’ve been much more courageous and moved much more to an application to current scenarios... So we try to make it more contextual rather than repeating what’s in the modules, because they’ll do a lot of the theory online.”

Licensee

It was felt by most that these resources are now outdated (such as not covering the leadership of MATs) and Licensees have been tasked with developing their own provision. Some have viewed this positively, as it has given them a greater degree of flexibility and autonomy.

“We still use quite a lot of the resources that were provided at the beginning, which, considering the National College haven’t been able to update because of the way things have changed, I think that has been good. They ran a one-day workshop, about a year or eighteen months ago, which got people looking at sharing different ideas and different approaches. We’ve also taken a lead on developing new things, using new resources ourselves.”

Licensee

Licensees also stated that the level of input from NCTL into the Leadership Curriculum has decreased over the past three years due to wider changes. Further, the degree of support provided to Licensees with regards the taking of strategic and developmental decisions was seen as minimal; in contrast, support for procedural questions was deemed to be prompt and helpful.

“For me, I valued the fact that they are fairly hands-off because I like to be left to do things myself, in my own way. As long as we’re getting really good success rates and as long as our attendance remains high and that our own success criteria are being fulfilled, I’m much happier. I would hate to be constrained by the college.”

Licensee

Delivering standalone modules and accessibility

6 out of the 10 Licensees interviewed reported that they offer standalone modules for participants. Those not delivering them stated that this was due to low demand and it not being cost effective. Overall, they felt that most participants are interested in completing the whole programme, rather than standalone modules, and therefore demand for the latter is low. They reported that there were a minority of participants who will do a standalone module as a taster and then move onto the full programme. Standalone modules also offer a greater degree of flexibility for participants to meet their individual requirements.

Although standalone modules are offered, Licensees reported that demand is not high, and the marketing of standalone modules is not a priority. However, one Licensee did single out standalone modules as an area of business development, given the increasing demand.

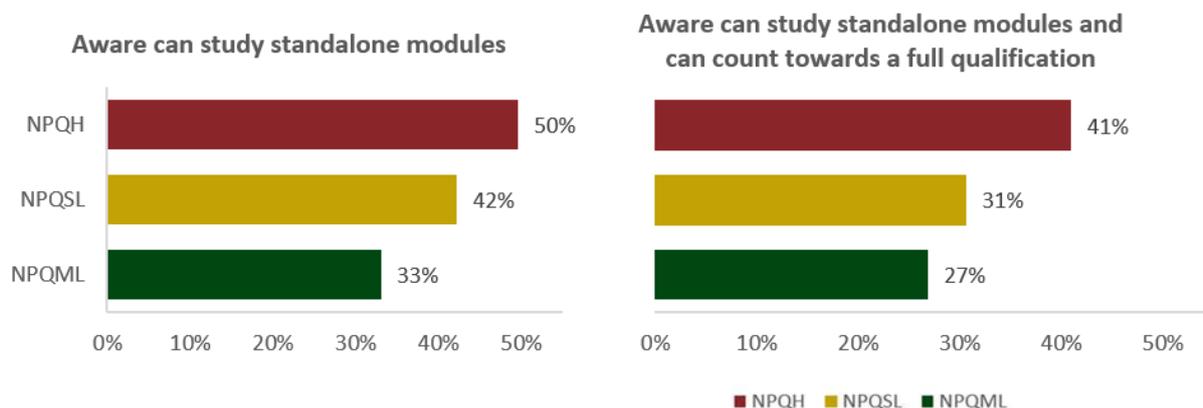
“Yes. It wasn’t a big focus for us to begin with, it’s more important that we establish the main programmes. A couple of years ago we started to offer them because we were getting requests for them. So, yes, we do standalone. Particularly middle leadership modular programmes.”

Licensee

Licensees reported that standalone modules can be difficult to schedule and facilitate due to the lower demand. One Licensee reported that the right IT platform needs to be in place before standalone modules can be adequately provided.

Figure 11 illustrates participants' awareness of their ability to study standalone modules. Across all three levels there was a greater awareness of the flexibility to study standalone modules than being able to study these and count them towards a qualification in the future. Overall, NPQH participants had a greater awareness of this than NPQML participants, although awareness across all was low.

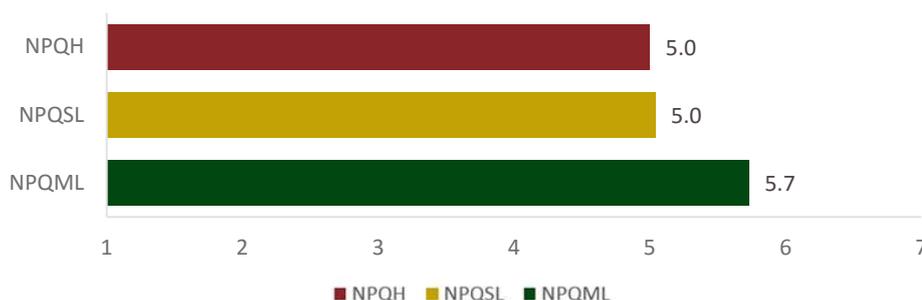
Figure 11: Proportion of participants aware of the qualifications' flexibility.



Bases: NPQH = 266; NPQSL = 258; NPQML = 242. Can study standalone modules statistically significant: NPQML compared to NPQH and NPQSL, Count towards a full qualification statistically significant: NPQH compared to NPQSL and NPQML.

Participants who were aware of the previous versions of the qualifications rated the extent to which they considered the Leadership Curriculum qualifications to be more accessible than previous versions (or similar) (see Figure 12). NPQML participants were most likely to view the current NPQML as more accessible than the former version (5.7 out of 7), with NPQH and NPQSL participants giving an average rating of 5.0.

Figure 12: Mean agreement ratings to indicate the extent to which the leadership curriculum version of NPQH/NPQSL/NPQML is more accessible than the previous version.



Bases: NPQH = 79; NPQSL = 84; NPQML = 41. NPQML is statistically significant for NPQH and NPQSL.

Chapter 3: Impact on participants

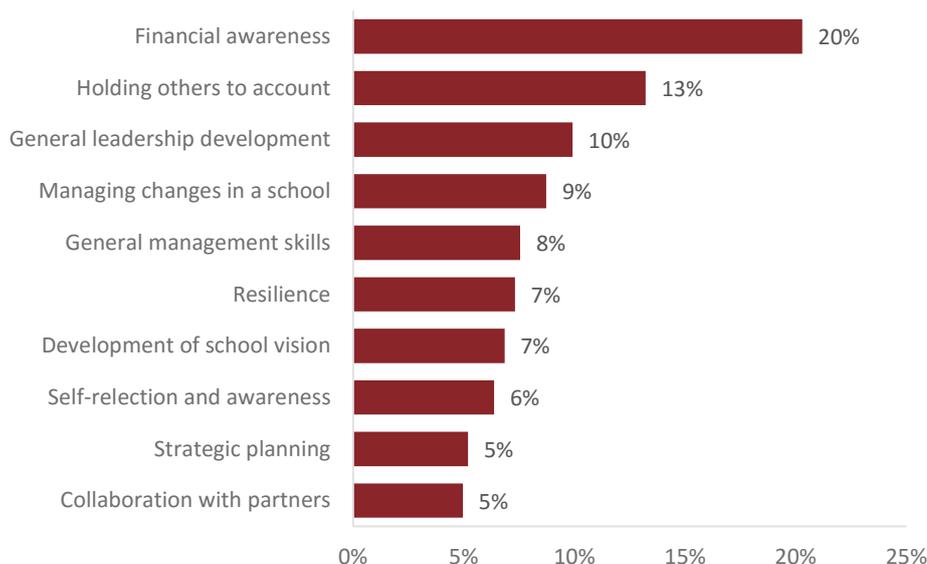
This chapter of the report covers:

- The skills participants reported developing whilst completing the qualification;
- Self-reported change in participants' competencies whilst undertaking the qualification;
- Self-reported change in participants' ability to drive school improvement whilst undertaking the qualification;
- The proportion of a participant's development which was attributed to the Leadership Curriculum;
- Self-reported change in participants' readiness for headship and NPQSL and NPQML participants' leadership capabilities whilst completing the qualification.

NPQH development of skills and competencies

During the End-of-Qualification survey, participants were asked to state which (if any) leadership skills and knowledge they had developed whilst studying for NPQH. **The vast majority of NPQH participants reported that it had helped them develop in at least one area**, with only 3 out of 424 stating they had developed no skills. Figure 13 shows the top skill areas reported by participants. The most frequently reported area was financial awareness (20%), followed by holding others to account (13%), general leadership development (10%), being able to manage change in a school (9%), and general management skills (8%).

Figure 13: Skills development through NPQH.

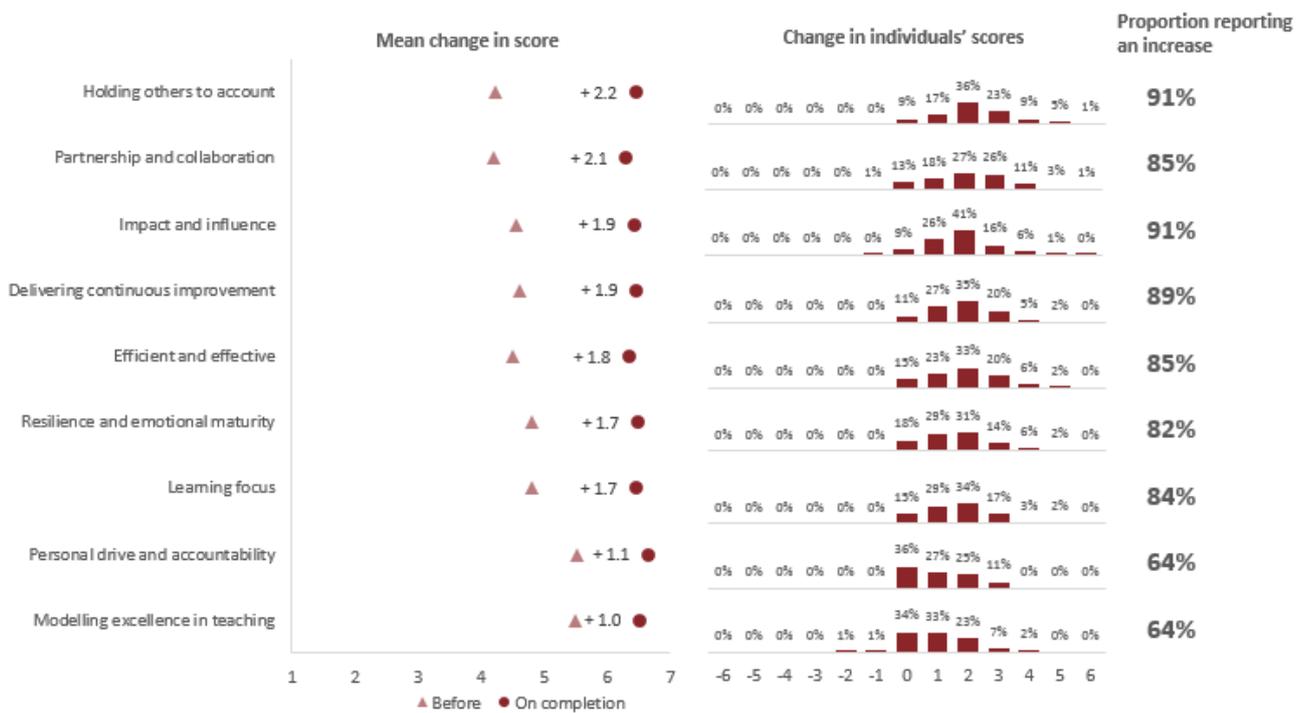


Base: 424. Only those options which were stated by more than 5% of respondents are included. Open response question coded.

To explore the extent to which participants thought they had progressed their skills under the competencies required for headship, they were asked to rate, on a scale of 1 to 7, a series of statements about their skill levels before starting NPQH and on completion, where 1= 'strongly disagree' and 7= 'strongly agree'. Only the competencies that participants were scored on at graduation were assessed. On average, **participants provided higher scores on completion than before.**

Although the different competencies started from different base points before the qualification, they finished at around the same high level (around 6.5 out of 7) when completing the qualification. Over 90% of participants self-reported an increase in their rating for 'holding others to account', with over one-third reporting an increase of '2' on the rating scale, and a further quarter reporting an increase of '3'. 91% reported an increasing in the competency 'impact and influence' and 89% in 'delivering continuous improvement'.

Figure 14: Mean agreement ratings to indicate a range of competencies before starting NPQH and now.



Base = 266 Differences are all statistically significant.

Participants were asked about before and after ratings at the time of completing their qualification, and therefore responses rely on recall.

The final assessment data showed that participants, Line Managers and placement headteachers demonstrated how participants met the competencies relating to headship (this included additional competencies not tested at graduation, as outlined above). The most commonly reported were:

- Being able to deliver continuous improvement through appraising the needs of their school when developing strategies, reviewing performance of strategies, and working with governors and stakeholders to support strategies;
- Impact and influence through listening to others and adapting approaches, building alliances with key members of staff to gain buy-in and building credibility;

“She listened to the views of others and used these to facilitate the formation of an achievable action plan... [trainee name] has been able to understand the dynamics of different groups, and gain both credibility and trust very easily.”

NPQH – Placement Head

- Modelling excellence in leadership of teaching and learning through leading by example, clearly communicating the vision and what is expected of staff, and sharing good practice and CPD;

- Learning focus by leading and participating in CPD for improved teaching and learning, applying theory and knowledge to improve teaching and learning, and creating a learning culture of high expectations for all pupils' aspirations and achievements;
- Partnership and collaboration with both external agencies/people (mainly with parents and other schools) and internal colleagues and governors;

“[trainee name] works relentlessly with parents and supporters of our students to help with issues that occur both within and beyond school to help students achieve their best. Student progress is consistently outstanding.”

NPQH Sponsor

- Holding others to account through monitoring and challenging underperformance and celebrating success while simultaneously ensuring that staff understand their responsibilities and targets.

The NPQH depth interviews illustrated that participants and Line Managers believe the qualification has enabled them to improve their competencies, with participants highlighting that they are now better able to influence staff members, work in partnership with their governing bodies and community partners, and hold others to account. Interview results suggested that the qualification has increased the confidence of participants which has, in turn, given them greater competency in these areas. **The combination of skills gained from the qualification and subsequent on-the-job experience was seen as making a significant contribution to improved competencies.**

“I think it’s both. I think it would be unfair to say that the course didn’t help with increased competencies, but obviously experience on the job helps with that phenomenally as well. The opportunity to do the placement helped, so I think it’s all meshed together.”

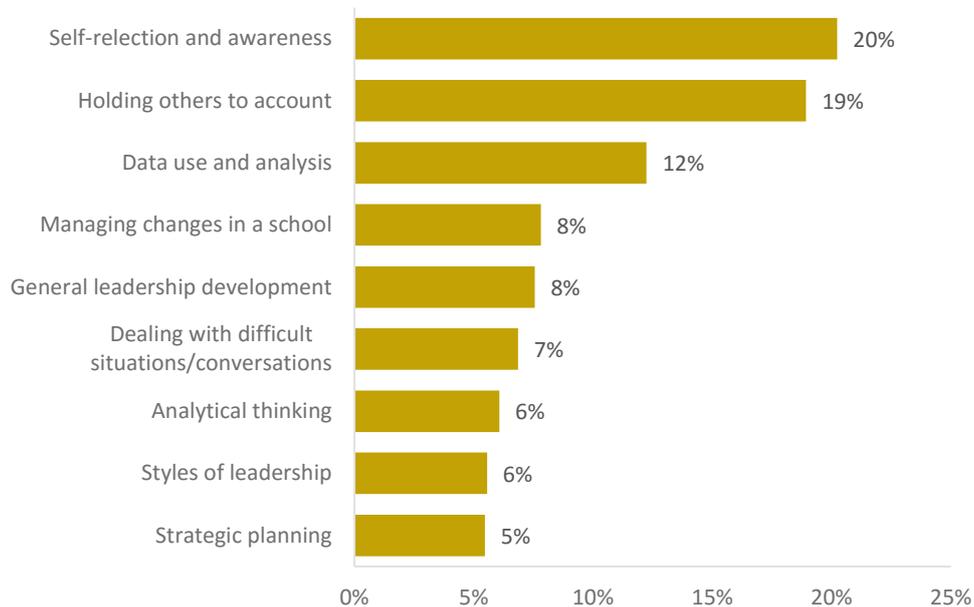
NPQH participant

NPQSL development of skills and competencies

During the End-of-Qualification survey, participants were asked to state which (if any) leadership skills and knowledge they had developed whilst studying for the NPQSL. **The majority of NPQSL participants reported that it had helped them develop in at least one area**, with only 7 out of 1,152 stating they had developed no skills. Figure 15 shows the top skills areas reported by participants. One-fifth (20%) of respondents reported developing their self-awareness, as demonstrated by a statement from one participant: *“I have become more aware of my strengths as a leader of people and how I can change my style for different individuals or groups in order to achieve the best results.”* A similar proportion (19%) reported developing the skills needed to hold others to account,

followed by data use and analysis (12%), managing changes in a school (8%), and general leadership development (8%).

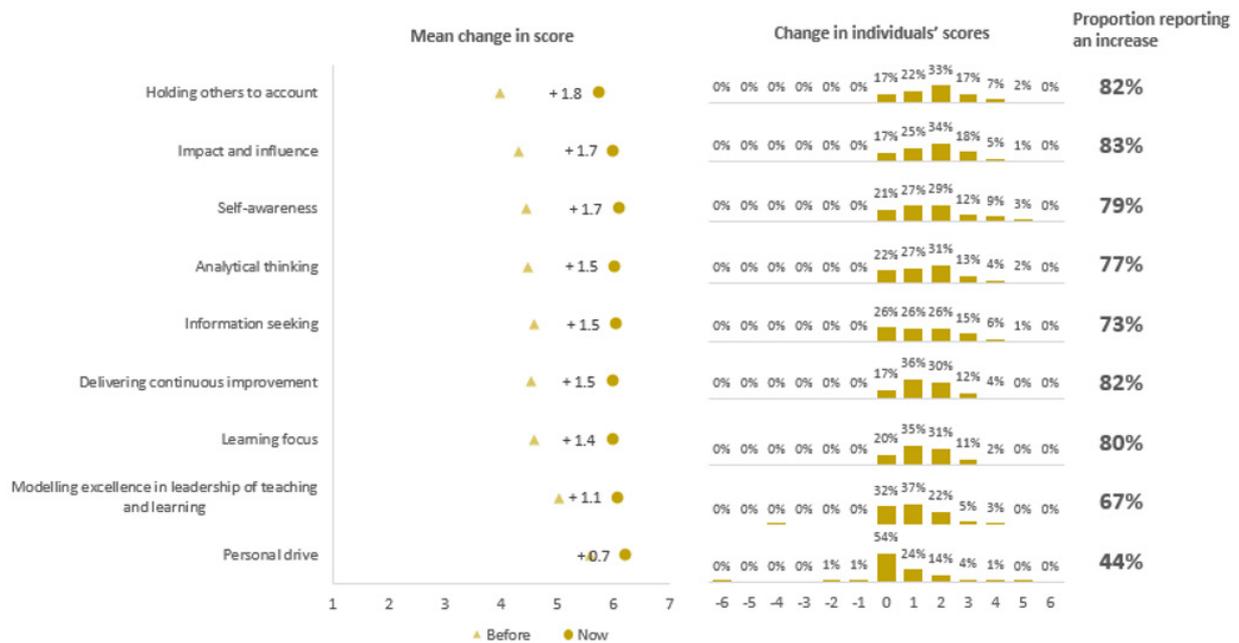
Figure 15 Skills development through NPQSL.



Base: 1,152. Only those options stated by more than 5% of respondents are included. Open response question coded.

NPQSL participants were also asked to rate their competencies, both before and after the qualification, on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1= 'strongly disagree' and 7= 'strongly agree' (Figure 16). **As with NPQH, there were increases in self-reported mean scores across all competencies.** 'Holding others to account' received the highest increase in mean score, closely followed by 'impact and influence' and 'self-awareness'. Across most of the competencies, between 70-80% of participants reported an increase in their scores.

Figure 16: Mean agreement ratings to indicate a range of competencies before starting NPQSL and now.



Base = 258 Differences are all statistically significant.

Participants were asked about before and after ratings at the time of completing their qualification, and therefore responses rely on recall.

The final assessment data revealed that the most commonly reported competencies for NPQSL participants were:

- Delivering continuous improvement through appraising the needs of their school when developing strategies, reviewing performance of strategies and through also having a better understanding of strategic leadership;
- Modelling excellence in leadership of teaching and learning through leading by example, clearly communicating the vision and what is expected of staff, and seeking out new learning theories to improve practice;

“[Trainee name] supported improvement in the quality of teaching through ensuring good and outstanding practice within the school was shared to ensure we learnt from each other. He also created local partnerships with a number of schools to allow teachers to share and learn from each other’s practice... he got in the classroom to teach and provide coaching. Such leadership drove improvement in this key priority area.”

NPQSL sponsor

- Impact and influence through tailoring their leadership style to get others on board, listening to others and adapting approaches, and using data to promote their vision;

- Holding others to account through monitoring and challenging underperformance and celebrating success whilst also ensuring that staff understand their responsibilities and targets;
- Information seeking through obtaining information to develop a deeper understanding of a situation and/or help solve an issue whilst also analysing data to identify trends;
- Analytical thinking through making links between issues or problems and creating plans to implement their project whilst also anticipating implications and obstacles;
- Learning focus through applying theory and knowledge to improve teaching and learning whilst also creating a learning culture of high expectations for all pupils' aspirations and achievements;
- Increasing their self-awareness.

“Throughout this course I have improved my self-awareness as a leader and as a researcher. This course has created opportunities for me to clearly reflect on my work and put in a constant cycle of reflection and action. During my own performance management I have to reflect on the strengths and limitations of my own work and I am challenged by the Principal about the areas of development that exist.”

NPQSL Final Assessment

The depth interviews with NPQSL participants and Line Managers reflected the survey and final assessment findings, with several participants emphasising the impact of information seeking and analytical skills on departmental and whole-school improvement initiatives.

“I would say, probably, the analytical side of things was quite crucial in terms of understanding a lot of the government-released materials, the Making Figures Speak, the RAISEonline in terms of using data to then pull apart to look at performance and patterns.”

NPQSL participant

“One of the things was around her use of data and her analytical thinking. I think sometimes when people are starting to use data they are, oh my god, numbers, data, it's all about numbers, it's not about people. Actually I think what she realised was if you use data in an intelligent and an efficient way then actually you can be really proactive about it. You can spot patterns, you can spot potential problems that are coming up, and you can act on them, almost sometimes prevent them from happening.”

NPQSL Line Manager

Holding others to account was also born out through both participant and Line Manager interviews regarding how this contributed to greater leadership capabilities and, in turn, improved staff performance.

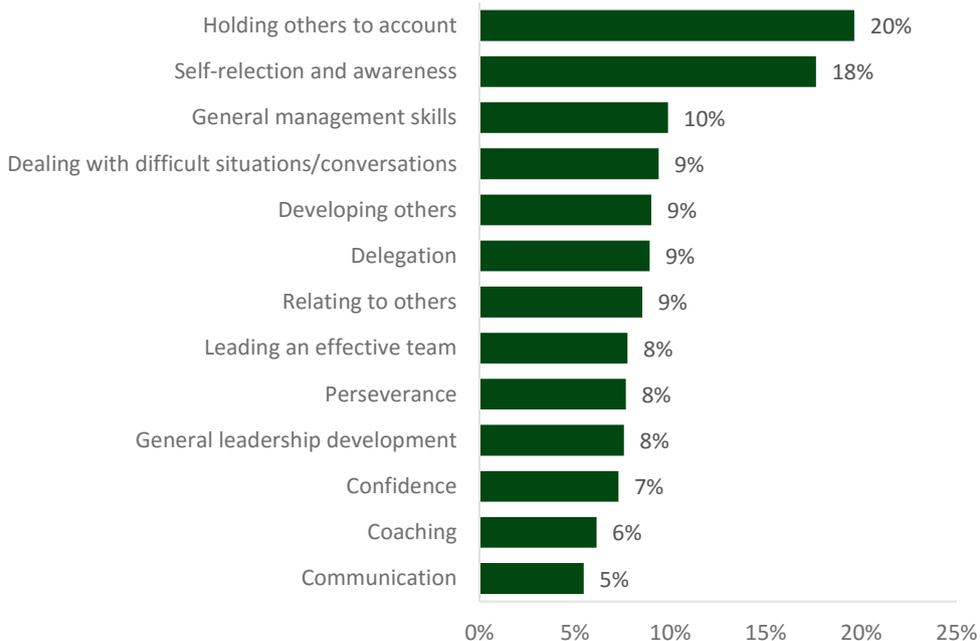
“Having, you know, read the information that was required throughout the course, you, kind of, feel, ‘Well, actually that’s a necessity in your job,’ and it’s required, but there are tactful ways that you can do that and I think that’s been one of the areas that we’ve learnt throughout the course as well.”

NPQSL participant

NPQML development of skills and competencies

During the End-of-Qualification survey, participants were asked to state which (if any) leadership skills and knowledge they had developed whilst studying for NPQML. Again, as with NPQH and NPQSL, **the vast majority of NPQML participants reported that it had helped them develop in at least one area**, with only 7 out of 1,004 stating they had developed no skills. Figure 17 shows the top skills areas reported by participants. Holding others to account was reported by one-fifth of participants (20%), followed by self-reflection and awareness (18%), general management skills (10%) and dealing with difficult situations/conversations (9%).

Figure 17: Skills development through NPQML.



Base: 1,044. Only those options stated by more than 5% of respondents are included. Open response question coded.

NPQML participants were also asked to rate their competencies both before and after the qualification on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1= ‘strongly disagree’ and 7= ‘strongly agree’. **As with those from NPQH and NPQSL, NPQML participants reported increases across all competencies** (Figure 18). As was the case with both other qualifications, the largest increase was experienced under the competency ‘holding others to account’ with a mean change in score of 2.4 out of 7, with 91% of individuals reporting an increase.

Figure 18: Mean agreement ratings to indicate a range of competencies before starting NPQML and now.



Participants were asked about before and after ratings at the time of completing their qualification, and therefore responses rely on recall.

The final assessment data indicated that the most commonly reported competencies for NPQML participants were:

- Increased self-awareness;
- Being able to relate to others through recognising the individual needs of staff and pupils and building relationships;
- Modelling excellence in leadership of teaching and learning through leading by example, supporting the sharing of good practice and CPD, and motivating others with initiatives;

“[Trainee name] worked with the Y4 team to ensure they understood the expectations and his regular monitoring of progress towards the objectives, both with and of the staff, gave clear messages about performance in term of achievements and next steps. Some difficult discussions were needed and these were managed effectively with individual staff held to account for underperformance, their own and the pupils', and clear guidance given about expectations for improvement.”

NPQML – Sponsor

- Holding others to account by ensuring staff understand their responsibilities and targets, monitoring and challenging underperformance, and celebrating success and delegating responsibilities;
- Developing others through delivering or introducing coaching or mentoring and understanding staff strengths and development needs;

- Learning focus through applying theory and knowledge to improve teaching and learning whilst also ensuring that learners are actively engaged and creating a learning culture of high expectations for all pupils' aspirations and achievements;
- Delivering continuous improvement through appraising the needs of their school when developing strategies and reviewing performance of strategies;
- Inspiring others by presenting a compelling vision to unite others around a shared goal and building credibility.

“[Trainee name] is very good at communicating his vision with others. This is one of his strengths and he does it in such a way to make it relevant to the audience he is speaking to. He always speaks clearly and with passion for reading and engages his audience. He often uses data to back up what he is saying and increase his credibility.”

Sponsor – Final Assessment

In line with the survey results, NPQML participants specifically referenced ‘holding people to account’ as the leadership skill which has most improved following the Leadership Curriculum qualification. In terms of the reason why this element of the qualification was perceived as having had such a noticeable impact, there seems to be a link to participants’ lack of understanding of this competency before undertaking the qualification. During interviews, the Line Managers also stated that they witnessed changes in NPQML participants’ ability to take leadership responsibility and hold others to account.

“I think it was probably holding others to account and, sort of, understanding how to do that in the professional setting. I probably wouldn't have known it before I started, but through doing the qualification.”

NPQML participant

Driving school improvement

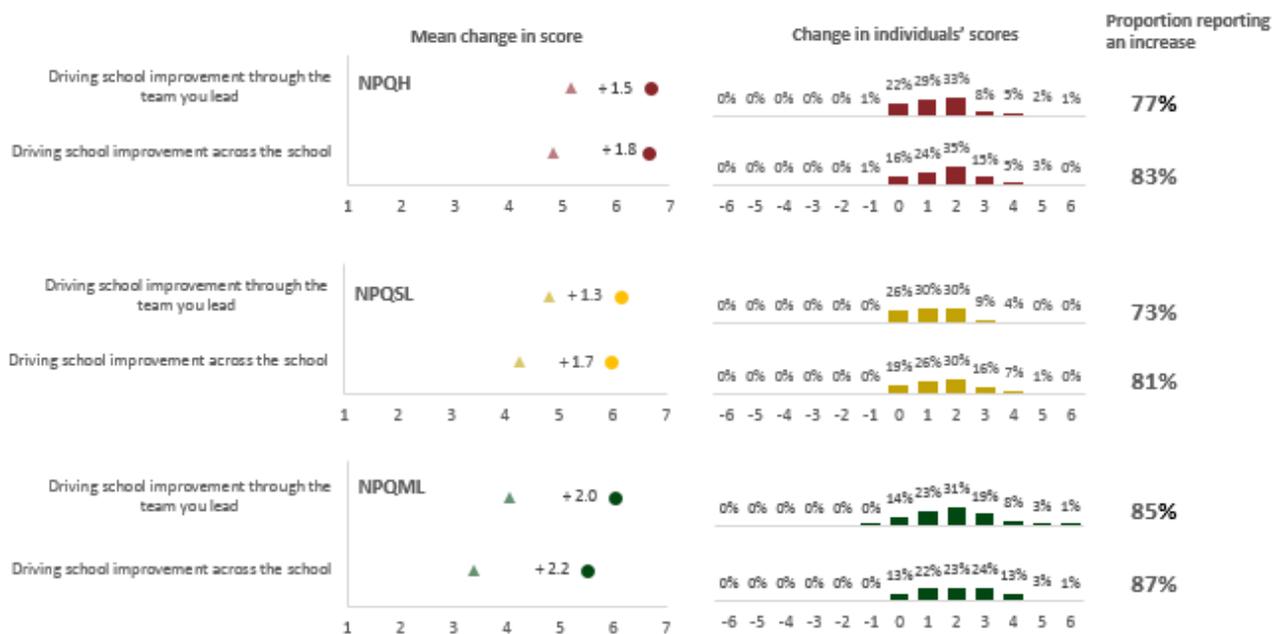
The extent to which participants agreed they could lead aspects of school improvement before and after the qualification was also explored on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1= ‘strongly disagree’ and 7= ‘strongly agree’¹³.

Participants **across all three levels reported a development in their self-rated abilities for both measures to drive school improvement following the qualifications**. The average ratings of these abilities increased by between 1 and 2 points on the 7-point scale (Figure 19). All participants reported greater increases in their ability to drive improvement across their school when compared with through the team

¹³ Headteachers/Principals/Executive Headteachers/Heads of School/Associate Headteachers or Acting Headteachers/Principals were not asked to rate the extent to which they could drive school improvement through their team as they are now leading the school.

they lead. The greatest increase was reported amongst NPQML participants, although their average ratings started from a lower base.

Figure 19: Participants' ratings of their abilities to *drive school improvement through team and drive school improvements across the school* before and after qualification.



Bases: NPQH = 266; NPQSL = 258; NPQML = 242. Differences are all statistically significant.

Participants were asked about before and after ratings at the time of completing their qualification, and therefore responses rely on recall.

The depth interviews highlighted that all NPQML and NPQSL participants and Line Managers believed that undertaking the Leadership Curriculum had enabled them to drive school improvement through the team(s) that they led. For NPQML participants, this included taking the lead during staff meetings, organising training, and focusing on projects to maximise team building and improve outcomes.

“I’ve led staff meetings and staff training. I’ve arranged for other staff to go on courses for them to get feedback, and selected several key messages that I’m just pushing through and driving those improvements all the time.”

NPQML participant

NPQSL participants reported that more strategically driven initiatives enabled their teams to drive school improvement.

“The team I took on hadn’t had a leader for almost two years, and the department was failing significantly, because my previous incumbent was removed from post. So it was a very weathered and worn department, you know, they were very disparate. The things we learned, both in terms of identifying skills, identifying people, using positive praise and then holding people to account where necessary, but through a phased process. That was

essential, because I had to build them up before I could start the accountability process.”

NPQSL participant

Whole-school improvement was alluded to more often during the NPQH and NPQSL participant depth interviews compared to those with NPQML participants. However, this fit with the role they are playing within a school. Again, this was linked to strategic changes and improvements being undertaken by participants with a view to achieving longer-term changes.

“I think through the training, I understood my role in much more of a whole school capacity and why the impact needed to be whole-school rather than being focused on one class or one area of the curriculum, so that was a key thing.”

NPQH participant

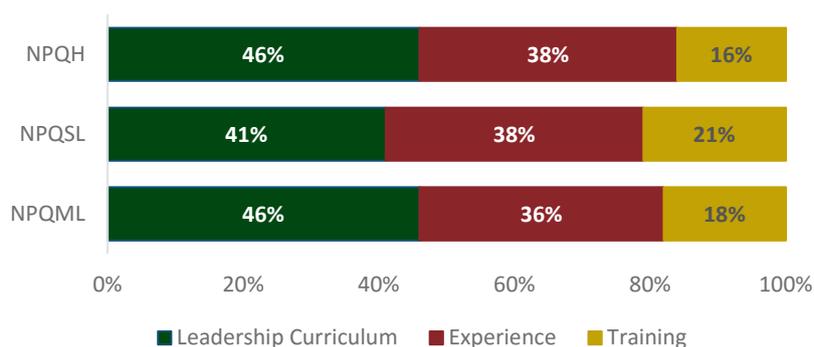
“There was an online module about accelerating pace of change through supportive peer coaching. That’s a model that I used. I offer a level of support, so we need to get all our vulnerable students five levels of progress. So I offer departmental-specific support, and then I offer individualised teacher support, so I go in and say, ‘We do X, Y and Z.’ By offering that level of support, they then implement it without me having to ask them.”

NPQSL participant

Attribution

To explore the extent to which participants attributed the development of their leadership skills and capabilities to the qualifications, they were asked to attach a percentage to the extent of development which can be directly linked to: the Leadership Curriculum, other training, and other experiences. Across all the qualifications, on **average, participants attributed a higher proportion of their development to the Leadership Curriculum training** (between 41% and 46%) (Figure 20). Work was the next most highly ranked contribution to leadership development, followed by other training. The differences shown by qualification were not statistically significant.

Figure 20: Percentage ratings for attributing development to the qualification, training and experience.



Bases: NPQH = 266; NPQSL = 258; NPQML = 242.

During the interviews, and as described in the previous sections of the report, participants described how undertaking the qualification had improved their skills and competencies.

Throughout the analysis of the final assessment data, although they were not required to, participants and Line Managers frequently described how the competencies they were developing were a direct result of undertaking the Leadership Curriculum. These comments most often related to the NPQSL and NPQML qualifications. Participants all reported how they developed these skills through a variety of different methods including:

- Through having time to reflect during the course using the 360 diagnostics, engaging with other leaders, and completing assessment tasks;
- Drawing upon lessons and learning from the module content, such as case studies and academic literature;
- Through undertaking projects within their school and placement schools;
- Through engaging with course leaders and school leaders in face-to-face sessions.

“I think the things that were strong, the things that were very helpful were the modules to do with the management of change, and leadership theory. The 360 review was probably one of the most powerful things that I’ve done as a teacher, let alone as a school leader and something that I’ve personally conducted twice since so I made my own and I did one at the end of my NPQH and I did one about three, four weeks ago here. I still consider them to be one of the most valuable things I’ve ever done.”

NPQH participant

The most frequently reported competency areas across the qualifications were:

- Self-awareness (reported more frequently by NPQSL and NPQML participants) was developed through various parts of the qualification. Reading module content and undertaking the project in their school were frequently reported as ways of enabling them to reflect on their skills and understand the importance of this

reflection. The networking and diagnostic tools also prompted them to reflect on their own skills and question themselves;

- Holding others to account (reported more frequently by NPQSL and NPQML participants and Line Managers) was most frequently reported as being developed through module content and undertaking of the task. Reading module content enabled participants to understand the leadership role and the importance of delegation whilst making sure there is clarity of understanding and that targets are set. The task enabled them to practice and develop this skill;
- Delivering continuous improvement (reported more frequently by NPQSL and NPQH participants). Module content was most frequently reported when stating how they had developed in this competency. Trainees often highlighted how this enabled them to understand the importance of good communication and gaining buy-in to make changes in a school;
- Impact and influence (reported more frequently by NPQSL and NPQH participants). Module content was again reported often, whilst NPQH participants also made reference to the placement they undertook. The placement (for NPQH participants) allowed trainees the chance to witness the work of another headteacher and how they make changes in their own school;
- Relating to others (reported more frequently by NPQSL and NPQML participants). Module content was deemed important by participants in terms of learning the importance of relating to others. Indeed, the task allowed them to experience this and improve their confidence in their ability to relate to others and be seen as a credible leader;
- Learning focus (reported more frequently by NPQML participants). Participants reported how, through module content, the importance of learning focus had been reiterated to them. This, as well as key lessons from case studies, influenced the strategies they implemented;
- Modelling excellence in leadership of teaching and learning (reported more frequently by NPQSL and NPQML participants). Module content and face-to-face sessions had shown them the importance of this and they were able to directly demonstrate this through their task;
- Information seeking (reported more frequently by NPQSL participants). Participants reported that the modules gave them an understanding of the importance of data analysis and information gathering in terms of informing decision making.
- Confidence (reported equally by all) was developed through different aspects of the qualification. They highlighted how the qualification enabled them to recognise the skills they have and learn through experience. Reference was made to the role of their sponsor and/or coach in improving this.

This again highlights the importance of a blended learning approach, whereby participants with different learning styles and needs can develop their leadership skills and capabilities through the Leadership Curriculum.

Follow-up Line Manager interviews provided further evidence that a diverse range of school improvement activities and projects have been implemented by participants as a direct result of taking part in the qualification. They highlighted how trainees were doing things differently as a result of participating in the qualification. The fact that some participants have approached activities differently and have gained deeper strategic insight has enabled Line Managers to see school improvement; indeed, this would not necessarily have happened in the absence of the qualifications.

“I have to go back to the data, it was something that she was nervous of. She didn’t necessarily probably give it the due attention it deserved. She probably thought it was more about numbers and not enough about the young people. So actually I think now she absolutely does understand the data and understands the benefit of it, and can use it to highlight issues and also resolve them.”

NPQSL Line Manager

“I think the qualification has helped, I think he’s more aware of having a period of detailed analysis - he’s more aware of the flow of how to go about doing a project change through a period, especially in terms of, first of all, analysing a situation, with stakeholders in order to really just get their views. I think that’s probably the biggest change, rather than jumping straight in, analysing what needs to happen and building an action plan. So, I suppose that was a big step for him, an area of expertise really that he had gained from the theoretical side of the qualification.”

NPQSL Line Manager

Respondents were asked to specify the type of training and experience they received to help them develop their leadership skills and capabilities (outside of the Leadership Curriculum). Across the three qualifications, respondents directly attributed the development of leadership skills to the Leadership Curriculum. The majority of the respondents across the three qualifications also indicated that their day-to-day school experience played a major role in helping them to further develop their leadership skills. Participants cited the practical school-based experience, and explained that it enabled them to put the leadership skills developed during the course into practice, which also made it possible to consolidate and self-reflect on their skills. School-based experience also exposed participants to a range of different challenges and new development opportunities through exposure to, and closer working relationships with, senior management teams.

Several different training formats were attributed to the development of leadership skills. The two most frequently cited training formats by NPQH and NPQSL participants were ‘leadership training’ and ‘National College or school-based training’. Ofsted and SEN/safeguarding training were also undertaken by an equivalent number of NPQH and NPQSL participants. NPQML participants attributed different training formats to the

development of their leadership skills, including coaching training, shadowing staff and working in partner schools.

Overall readiness for role

In the SP1 survey, NPQH participants were asked to rate, on a scale of 1 to 7, based on their leadership knowledge, skills and attributes, how ready they thought they were for headship when they started the qualification and how ready they thought they were on completion, where 1= 'not at all ready' and 7= 'very ready'¹⁴. Similarly, NPQSL and NPQML participants were asked to rate their leadership capabilities in terms of their knowledge, skills and attributes for senior/middle leadership both before and after the qualification on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1= 'I do not have the skills needed' and 7= 'I have all of the skills needed'.

Figure 21 shows participants' average self-reported ratings both before and after the qualifications. Overall, **participants across all three levels showed a marked increase in average scores**, with NPQH and NPQML participants showing the greatest increase. NPQSL participants reported a lower increase, although their ratings started from a higher average score of above 4 in the first instance. All three levels yielded practically the same average ratings after the qualifications. Across all qualifications, the majority of participants also reported an actual increase in their score.

¹⁴ Both were rated when participants had completed the qualification.

Figure 21: Mean ratings to indicate change between before and after participating in the Leadership Curriculum for readiness for headship (NPQH) and of knowledge, skills and attributes for NPQML/SL middle/senior leadership.



Bases: NPQH = 266; NPQSL = 258; NPQML = 242. Differences between sampling points for all qualifications are statistically significant.

Participants were asked about before and after ratings at the time of completing their qualification, and therefore responses rely on recall.

Further analysis was undertaken to explore whether there existed a relationship between different demographic and school-based characteristics alongside how participants rate their competencies, and the extent to which they rate themselves as being ready for headship/having strong leadership capabilities in terms of their knowledge, skills and attributes. Across all three qualifications, how individuals scored themselves on some of the competencies had a significant association with how ready they felt, although no significant relationship was found between demographic and school-level characteristics. Indeed, this indicated that the Leadership Curriculum is enabling participants to increase their readiness and capabilities in different schools.

During the depth interviews, most participants reported that this increase resulted from their undertaking of the Leadership Curriculum. **The majority of NPQH participants interviewed believed that the qualification had increased their readiness for headship.** The impacts they attributed to the Leadership Curriculum included increased confidence, greater independence of thinking and decision making, and others perceiving them to be a strong leader.

“I think it’s also increased my readiness for headship by giving me the opportunity to explore issues like finance a bit more. Which as a deputy I have a bit of a handle on, but on a day-to-day basis I’m not obviously responsible for the budget etc. So, those, sort of, key issues it’s helped me with, I think.... It now means that I am looking for headship, so that confirms to me that this is something I want to do, which is great. I think that’s probably the main thing that it’s done.”

NPQH participant

Judging by the answers from the majority of NPQSL participants interviewed, it appeared that the act of undertaking Leadership Curriculum assignments was the greatest contributory factor of the qualification in increasing their knowledge, skills, and attributes for the role.

According to the results of the in-depth interviews, **the value of the NPQML qualification varied amongst participants**. Many identified how it had helped them to develop leadership attributes, reflecting, for example, on appropriate responses to situations to ensure they act like a leader in front of their peers.

“That was probably the biggest thing that came out of it for me, was knowing, like, I’ve got to take the step back first. It’s like you can’t respond with the emotional, personal response. It’s actually your responsibility as a leader not to do that.”

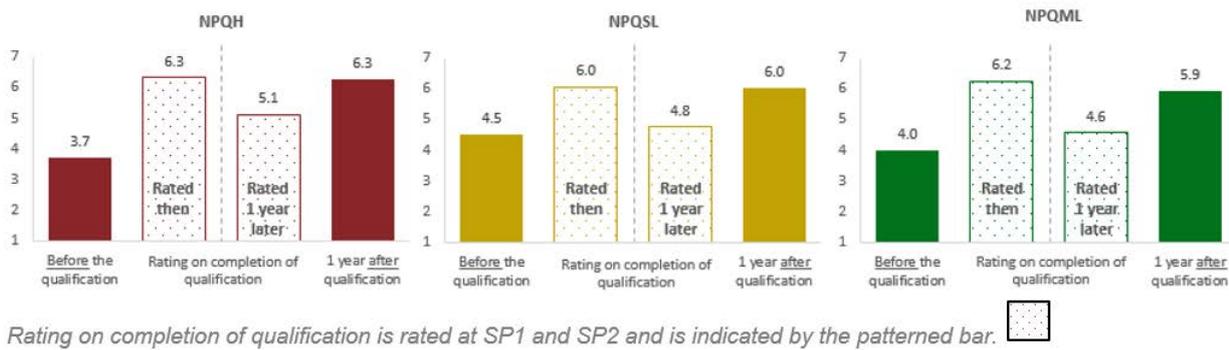
NPQML participant

Other NPQML participants reported that they had developed new skills appropriate to the role, such as data analysis. A minority of NPQML participants were less positive about the impact of the qualification on their leadership development, with one suggesting that it had provided no help and another indicating that it had been undertaken to provide professional recognition for the skills and experience they had already acquired.

Readiness one year later

During the SP2 survey, participants were asked to re-assess how ready they thought they were on completing the qualification and how ready they felt now. This was compared to how they rated themselves in the SP1 survey before starting the qualification and on completion. As can be seen, across all qualifications, participants rated their readiness and skills on completion lower a year later than when they completed the qualification.

Figure 22: Mean ratings to indicate longitudinal change for readiness for headship (NPQH) and of knowledge, skills and attributes for NPQML/SL middle/senior leadership.



Bases: NPQH = 146 NPQSL = 111; NPQML = 105. Differences are statistically significant between most sampling points except for where means are similar.

Participants were asked about before and after ratings at the time of completing their qualification, and therefore responses rely on recall.

The change in how they rated themselves at the same point in time but across two sampling points could, in part, be due to ‘response shift bias’ and them originally over-estimating their readiness directly after completing a qualification compared to a year later. Numerous research studies have explored this. People assess their own skill levels by comparing themselves to others – the ‘others’ often being those who make up their peer group¹⁵. Individuals therefore commonly overestimate their abilities. Following exposure to different individuals or a new work environment, they may realise they are less competent at something than they originally thought. This can lead to individuals reporting lower skill levels than previously, as their awareness and understanding of a task has increased.

Although participants reduced the score they gave themselves directly after completing the qualification in the SP2 survey, their scores for SP1 showed that they did believe that they had increased their readiness whilst completing the qualification. Moreover, the increase they reported for SP1 was larger across all qualifications than the increase for the year after they completed the qualification and were not studying on the Leadership Curriculum. Therefore, although trainees reported discrepancies in how they assess their own skills on completion, there was consistent evidence of an increase from prior to the course and on completion and one year later. The same findings emerged across all of the competency measures and how trainees scored themselves on their ability to drive strategic improvement through their team and across the school. It is clear from the

¹⁵ Alicke, Mark D.; Olesya Govorun (2005). "The Better-Than-Average Effect". In Mark D. Alicke, David A. Dunning, Joachim I. Krueger. *The Self in Social Judgment. Studies in Self and Identity*. Psychology Press. pp.85–106.

evidence summarised earlier in the report that participants and Line Managers do believe that the Leadership Curriculum has enabled participants to learn new skills and develop.

The depth interviews with participants at SP2 highlighted a slightly different picture compared to the survey findings. No participants across all three qualifications felt that they had overestimated their skills, instead stating that they had a realistic view of their skills, or had in fact underestimated their abilities when completing the qualification. Some participants, in particular those on NPQH, were more reflective in their accounts of their skillsets and stated that the course really helped them develop the skills necessary for headship and to distinguish between areas of strengths and those areas that required further development.

“I don’t know if I was any better doing that afterwards than I was before but it certainly helped to make me clear about myself and what my strengths were and what my areas for development were. I think it helps in that respect. What it has caused me to do is perhaps work on some of the areas that I needed to work on.”

NPQH participant

Chapter 4: Impact on career and further leadership training

This chapter of the report covers:

- The career changes that have been made by participants one year after completing the qualification, the role they believe the Leadership Curriculum played, and their future intentions;
- Further leadership training that participants have undertaken since completing the Leadership Curriculum and any further training they plan to undertake.

Career changes

NPQH

When completing the qualification, NPQH participants were asked to rate, on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1= 'strongly disagree' and 7= 'strongly agree', the extent to which the qualification had increased their motivation to become a headteacher. With an average score of 5.7 overall, it was clear that **the qualification is effective in motivating individuals to become headteachers**. Nearly two-thirds of participants (65%) gave a score of 6 or 7, while only 7% gave the lowest scores of 1 or 2.

“I think I was looking, sort of, a five-year plan, although probably three-year plan to move into headship, but within the, sort of, six months of doing the NPQH I applied for a headship and got it. So, it was accelerated, I think, because of the NPQH.”

NPQH participant

Across those who responded to the SP2 survey, nearly half (49%) were in a headship or executive headship role. Of those, most (84%) reported that this was a new role since starting the qualification¹⁶ and two-thirds (66%) were not in a headship role when starting the qualification. Of those who were in other roles, 41% reported that they had started this role since beginning the qualification.

Those participants who had changed roles were asked to rate, on a scale of 1-7, the extent to which they agreed that **NPQH had contributed to them landing this new role** (where 1=strongly disagree and 7=strongly agree). Across all NPQH participants they gave an above average score of 5.2 out of 7.

¹⁶ This could be a new role in an existing school or a new role in a different school. If the individual has moved schools, this “new” role could be the same position they previously undertook but in a different school (e.g. the same role but in a different school).

During the depth interviews, NPQH participants stated that they were motivated to undertake the qualification to gain a headship position and many highlighted that undertaking the qualification had developed their confidence to pursue headship positions. Some participants also reported that, although it is non-mandatory, holding NPQH is often “desirable” when it comes to job applications; moreover, some mentioned that NPQH should be a mandatory prerequisite to applying for a headship position.

“I think I’ve always been quite driven and I think it compounded the fact that I really wanted to be a headteacher and really wanted to lead a school. The fact that it felt like I understood some of the things that I know I hadn’t had experience of before I felt more ready to do it.”

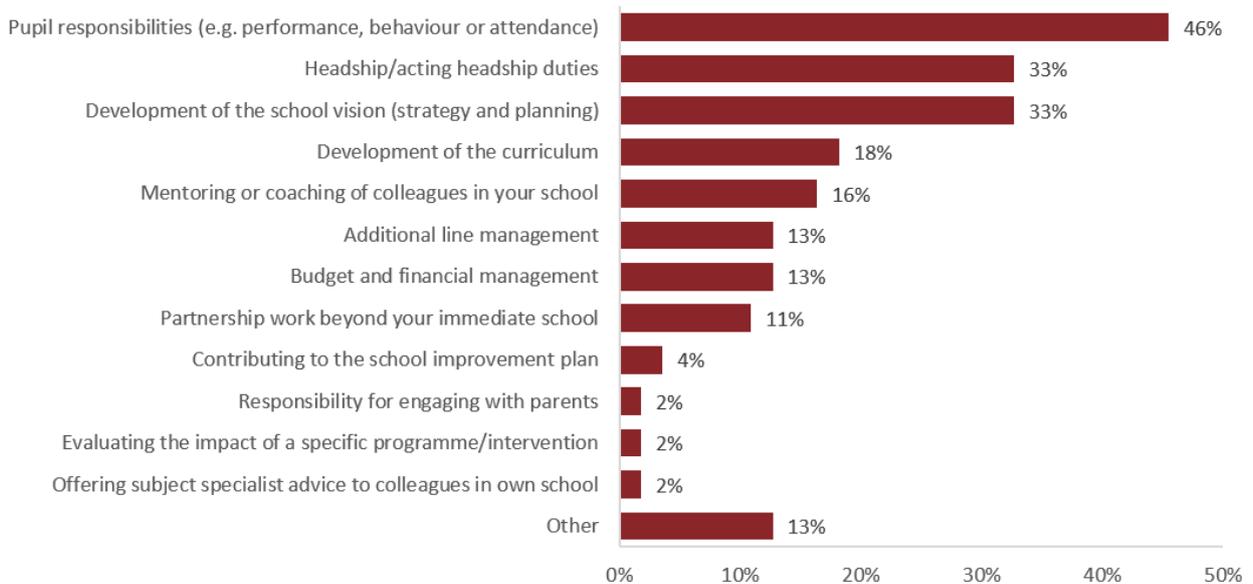
NPQH participant

“My primary motivation for doing it was that I wished to seek headship and in that respect it’s been very useful, regardless of the fact that you don’t need it I think it does still look good on people’s CVs, it’s something I look for when I’m recruiting deputies, I think it shows a commitment to personal professional development.”

NPQH participant

Amongst the 107 participants who had not started a new role, 51% believed they had **taken on additional responsibilities as a result of the NPQH**. As seen in Figure 23, which shows the percentages of participants who had taken on new responsibilities, the most common were pupil-related responsibilities (46%), headship or acting headship duties (33%) and the development of the school vision (33%). Of those with additional responsibilities, nearly three-quarters (71%) had been given those responsibilities formally (e.g. as part of their job description).

Figure 23: Additional responsibilities as a result of NPQH



Base: 55

Future intentions

Of those who were not in a headship position, **61% had started looking for a position**. Of these, over half (55%) had applied and attended job interviews, 23% had applied for a headship role, and 23% had searched for a role but not yet applied.

Those who had not yet searched for or applied for a job reported that this was due to a number of different reasons. The most common was that they no longer wanted to be a headteacher (reported by 13 out of 76 participants). Those who stated this were asked why they no longer wanted this role. The reasons given included: due to the current changes in education, the pressure/stress of the role, or due to them being happy in their current role. Other common reasons for why they had not searched for or applied for a headship included:

- Not currently feeling ready for a headship role and wanting to gain more experience or develop skills further (11);
- Change in personal circumstances which means they can no longer apply (11);
- Waiting to become the headteacher of their current school (8);
- Other opportunities have come up in current school or another role (7);
- Wanting to complete changes in current school (5).

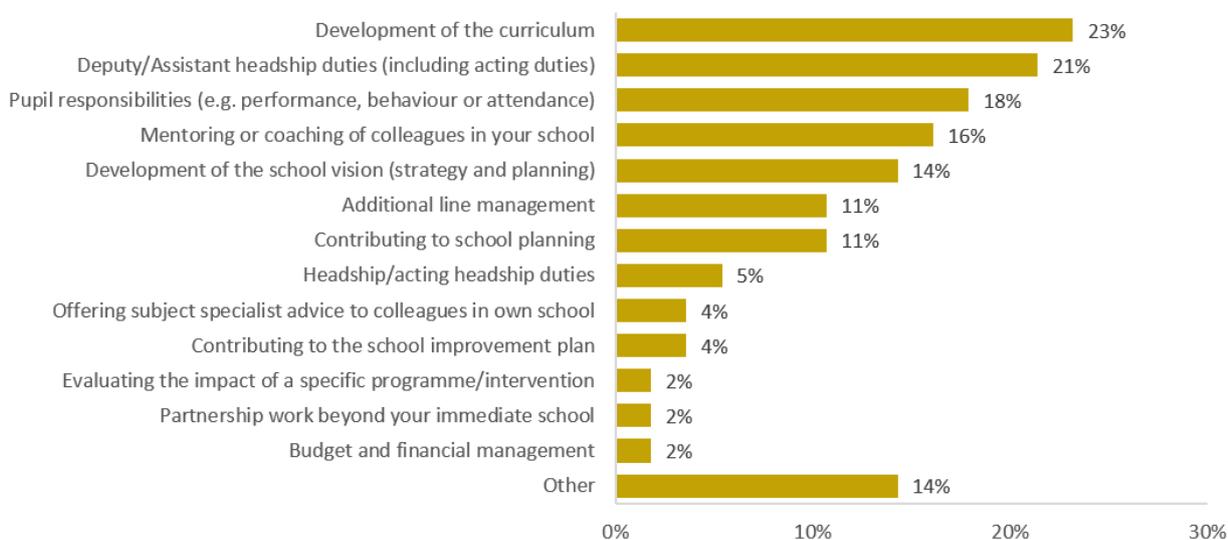
NPQSL

Over half of NPQSL participants (53%) had moved into a new role since starting the qualification. Over three-quarters (79%) reported that this was a promotion within their current school, and 17% stated it was a promotion in a new school. Across participants who had started a new role gave a mean score of 4.9 regarding the extent to which the

qualification had contributed to this new role; more than two-thirds (68%) scored this 5 or more out of 7.

Amongst the 114 participants who had not started a new role, 49% believed they had **taken on additional responsibilities as a result of the NPQSL**. Of those who had taken on new responsibilities, the most common were development of the curriculum (23%), deputy/assistant headship duties (21%) and pupil responsibilities (18%). Of those with additional responsibilities, nearly two-thirds (63%) had been given those responsibilities formally (e.g. as part of their job description).

Figure 24: Additional responsibilities as a result of NPQSL.



Base: 56.

Future intentions

Although the NPQSL qualification is less focused on progression to a new level of school leadership, **many of the participants who had completed these qualifications were planning to change roles in the next 12 months:**

- 43% – plan to apply for a promotion;
- 45% – plan to assume further/additional responsibilities as part of their current role;
- 27% – plan to pursue an opportunity in a different educational context, e.g. type or size of school.

Of those who wanted to apply for a promotion, nearly half (48%) had a desire to apply for a deputy headship, 26% for an assistant headship, and 19% for a headship. Over half (52%) had already started looking for this new role.

In the survey, participants were asked whether their stated intentions for the next 12 months were a result of completing the Leadership Curriculum qualifications. They were asked to rate this on a scale from 1 to 7, where 1= 'strongly disagree' and 7= 'strongly

agree'. NPQSL participants generally agreed, **with a mean score of approximately 5 out of 7, that the qualifications influenced their intentions to apply for a new role** (whether a promotion (5.0) or in a different education context (4.6), or to gain additional responsibilities (5.1)).

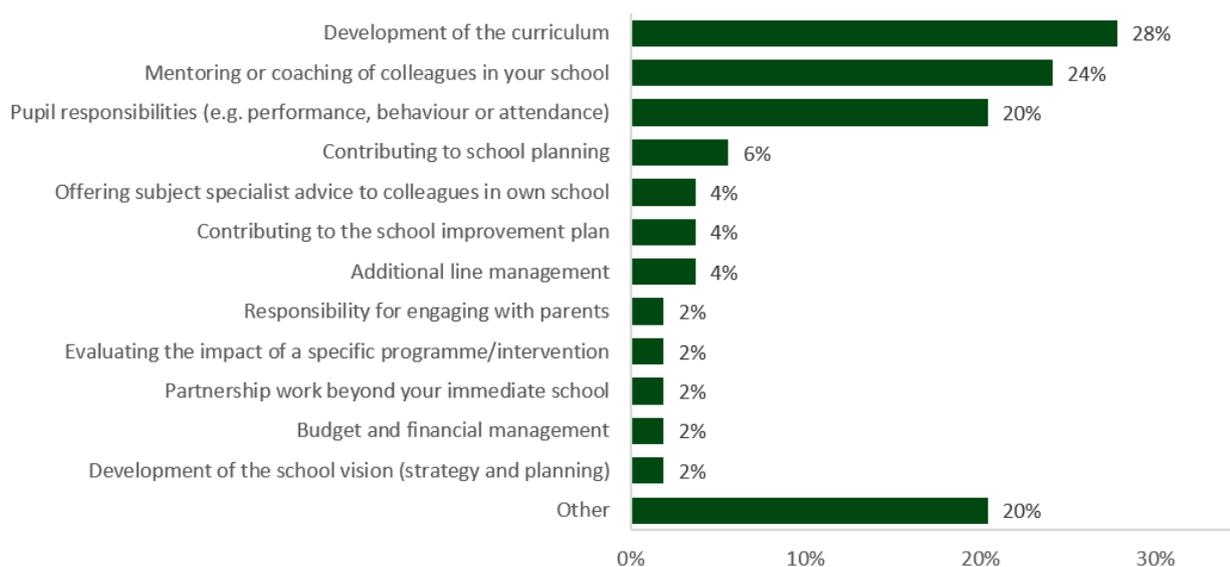
During the depth interviews, NPQSL participants described how the Leadership Curriculum contributed to their new roles, responsibilities and future aspirations. Some interviewees highlighted that the NPQSL was pivotal in them being able to undertake NPQH and others believed that NPQSL helped them to secure a deputy headship, assistant headship or senior leadership role. A minority of NPQSL participants conveyed that they did not wish to pursue headship in the future and would be happy to remain in a senior leadership role.

NPQML

Again, although less of a focus for this qualification, **half of NPQML participants (50%) had moved into a new role since starting the qualification**. Over two-thirds (70%) reported that this was a promotion in the school they were already working in, while 20% stated that it was a promotion in a new school. Those participants who had started a new role gave a mean score of 5.2 regarding the extent to which the **qualification had contributed to this new role**, with more than two thirds (73%) scoring this 5 or more out of 7.

Amongst the 114 participants who had not started a new role, 47% believed they had **taken on additional responsibilities as a result of the NPQML**. With regard to those who had taken on new responsibilities, the most common were development of the curriculum (28%), mentoring or coaching of colleagues in school (21%) and pupil responsibilities (20%). Of those with additional responsibilities, nearly two-thirds (61%) had been given those responsibilities formally (e.g. as part of their job description).

Figure 25: Additional responsibilities as a result of the NPQML.



Base: 54.

Future intentions

As with NPQSL, although the NPQML qualification is less focused on progression to a new level of school leadership, many of the participants who had completed these qualifications were planning to change roles in the next 12 months:

- 38% – plan to apply for a promotion;
- 40% – plan to assume further/additional responsibilities as part of their current role;
- 23% – plan to pursue an opportunity in a different educational context, e.g. type or size of school.

For those who wanted to apply for a promotion, nearly half (40%) had a desire to apply for an assistant headship, 15% for a deputy headship, and 12% for a head of department. Over half (51%) had already started looking for this new role.

In the survey, participants were asked whether their stated intentions for the next 12 months were a result of completing the Leadership Curriculum qualifications. They rated this on a scale from 1 to 7, where 1= 'strongly disagree' and 7= 'strongly agree'. NPQML participants generally agreed slightly more than NPQSL participants, **with a mean score of just over 5 out of 7, that the qualifications influenced their intentions to apply for a new role** (whether a promotion (5.3) or in a different education context (5.1), or to gain additional responsibilities (5.4)).

During the depth interviews, several NPQML participants stated that they believed the Leadership Curriculum contributed to their new roles or responsibilities. Interviewees suggested that completion of the qualification was viewed as evidence that they were capable of undertaking a middle management role such as head of department. In turn,

this provided the participant and/or their managers with increased confidence in their leadership abilities, demonstrating that participants are strong developing leaders. One NPQML participant had commenced a deputy headship role.

“I think there’s also, in the background to everything, just this general confidence. That, actually, I do know what I’m doing, I do have a purpose to this, I do know why I’m doing this. It just helps you appear more like a leader. I’m thinking perhaps more on the student side of things, perhaps not to other colleagues, because they would be supportive anyway. I think it’s more, yes, how the students would perceive my role now. That I’m more confident that, yes, I am a leader.”

NPQML participant

Further leadership training

Participants were asked to state the extent to which they agreed that there was clear progression through the Leadership Curriculum. This was rated on a scale of 1-7, where 1=strongly disagree and 7=strongly agree. Across the three qualifications, an above average score was provided of 5.3 out of 7 (NPQH and NPQML participants provided a score of 5.3 and NPQSL participants 5.2).

Most Licensees believed that the Leadership Curriculum **does offer a clear pathway for leadership development**. They described how, at the NPQML level, participants gain an understanding of what they need to develop to become a competent leader; Licensees also stated that the NPQSL level further challenges the participants’ leadership styles and impact, and by NPQH participants have a deep understanding of what leadership needs to look like to lead a school.

“We’ve had participants who have progressed through. Again, it is indicative that those participants have found that the programme has actually been beneficial to them because otherwise they wouldn’t have returned to engage with the next level of the programme.”

Licensee

Three Licensees highlighted areas where improvements could be made to the leadership pathway. Where the pathway is less clear, this is linked to the gap between NPQSL and NPQH. Two Licensees highlighted that the leadership pathway needs further development to offer training for headteachers who manage a multi-academy school trust, as this requires different leadership skills to those taught on the NPQH. In terms of the assessment framework, one Licensee stated that it is not being fully integrated into the leadership pathway. Indeed, the framework may appear repetitive to some participants, with the progressive nature of leadership skills not fully obvious to them.

“We’re working with a partnership, that are looking at putting something in place to support people prior to NPQH, I mean, that’s a small gap. The biggest issue in terms of pathway now, is post NPQH and what’s available for a head,

or head of school, if they probably more often than not will be now rather than a headteacher. Then in particular, the leadership, skills, competencies that are required of chief executives, of multi academy trusts as they grow.”

Licensee

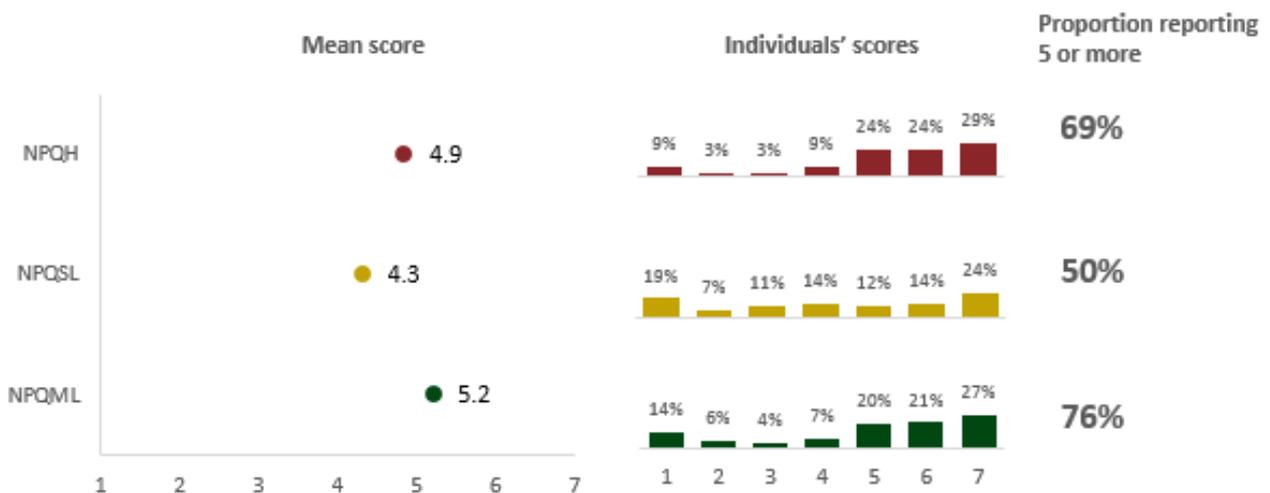
Training undertaken since completing

Participants were asked if, since completing the Leadership Curriculum, they had undertaken any further learning or leadership development. Around one-third of participants stated yes (differences by qualification were not statistically significant):

- NPQH – 34%;
- NPQSL – 38%;
- NPQML – 33%.

These participants were then asked to what extent they agreed that undertaking this further learning was influenced by them taking part in the Leadership Curriculum. This was rated on a scale of 1-7, where 1=strongly disagree and 7=strongly agree. Across the qualifications, those who undertook the NPQML reported a slightly higher mean score than NPQH participants (5.2 compared with 4.9), although only the difference in findings between NPQSL and NPQML was statistically significant.

Figure 26: Participants’ mean score and actual score given to agreement with the influence of the Leadership Curriculum on their decision to undertake further learning or leadership development.



Base: NPQH = 95, NPQSL = 92, NPQML = 76. Mean score for NPQSL is statistically significant for NPQML.

Table 4 shows the type of learning or leadership development that trainees undertook. Amongst those who had undertaken further learning or leadership development, 21% of NPQML participants and 10% of NPQSL participants had undertaken another Leadership Curriculum full qualification. A high proportion of participants indicated that they had undertaken ‘other’ further learning or leadership development since completing their qualification. An analysis of the responses indicated that participants had undertaken a

wide variety of training. Specialist leadership training was the most common training undertaken by NPQH and NPQML, although this proportion was still low in comparison to those shown in the table.

Table 4: Type of training undertaken.

	NPQH	NPQSL	NPQML
A Masters level qualification or higher	13%	10%	9%
Another formal qualification	13%	12%	7%
Another leadership curriculum full qualification	0%	10%	21%
Another leadership curriculum module	0%	7%	4%
A training course (with no accreditation)	27%	10%	18%
Informal learning from a colleague in own school	14%	11%	11%
Informal learning from a colleague in another school	7%	8%	4%
Training for SLE/NLE/LLE role	2%	3%	3%
Other	43%	38%	26%
Base	95	92	76

Depth interviews substantiated the above findings, with a minority of participants having started or completed the next qualification level; indeed, they reported that this was a direct result of completing the Leadership Curriculum.

“NPQSL has definitely directly impacted on me being able to get on to the NPQH, and then that in turn has really strengthened my leadership skills, and I guess NPQSL is almost like the foundation of me.”

NPQSL participant

Although most participants were aware of being able to accredit the Leadership Qualification with CATS points, the majority of Licensees reported that the uptake of gaining CATs points for the Leadership Curriculum has been very low. The principle barriers reported by both participants and Licensees were the associated costs of doing a Masters programme, and the time requirements. The uptake of seeking CATS points was higher when Licensees had stronger links with universities.

“With the best will in the world, the university system doesn’t allow direct transferability of the project, and so it means that people are having to rewrite, particularly around referencing and theoretical things, and they find that a bit of a strain.”

Licensee

Further planned training

Participants were asked if they planned to undertake any further learning or leadership development. Around half of participants answered yes, with a higher proportion of NPQSL and NPQML participants giving this answer compared to NPQH participants¹⁷:

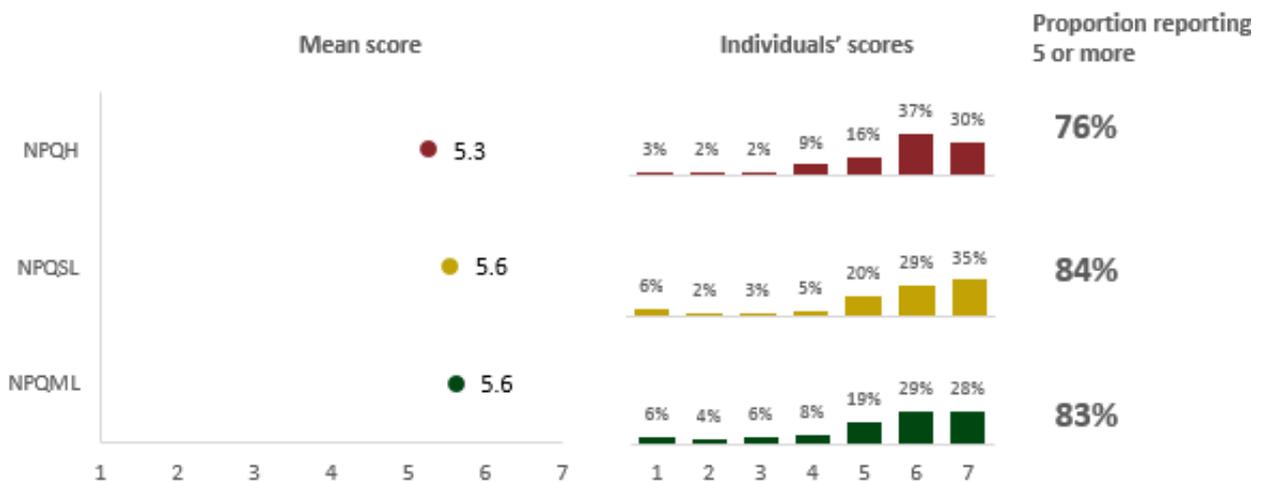
- NPQH – 46%;

¹⁷ Differences between NPQSL and NPQML are not statistically significant.

- NPQSL – 59%;
- NPQML – 56%.

These participants were then asked to what extent they agreed that considering to undertake further learning was influenced by them taking part in the Leadership Curriculum. This was rated on a scale of 1-7, where 1=strongly disagree and 7=strongly agree. Across the qualifications, those who undertook NPML reported a slightly higher mean score than NPQSL and NPQH participants, although this was not statistically significant. Overall, only 76% of NPQH participants reported a score of 5 or more compared with 84% of NPQSL participants and 83% of NPQML participants.

Figure 27: Participants’ mean score and actual score given to agreement with the influence of the Leadership Curriculum on their decision to consider undertaking further learning or leadership development.



Base: NPQH = 95, NPQSL = 92, NPQML: 76. Mean scores not statistically significant.

Table 5 highlights the type of training that participants planned to undertake. **The most commonly reported amongst NPQSL and NPQML trainees was another full Leadership Curriculum qualification** (reported by 59% and 67%, respectively). Analysis of the ‘other’ learning or leadership development that participants suggested they planned to undertake in future indicates that NPQH participants are more likely than trainees of the other two qualifications to have selected this option, but that there is no common type of training being considered. The clearest pattern evident amongst the responses provided by NPQH participants was that they are willing to undertake a wide variety of training which enables them to continually improve their leadership skills.

Table 5: Training they plan to undertake.

	NPQH	NPQSL	NPQML
A Masters level qualification or higher	23%	19%	14%
Another formal qualification	9%	4%	9%
Another leadership curriculum full qualification	0%	59%	67%
Another leadership curriculum module	0%	1%	3%
A training course (with no accreditation)	13%	4%	0%
Informal learning from a colleague in own school	4%	1%	1%
Informal learning from a colleague in another school	2%	0%	0%
Other	44%	20%	15%
Other but don't know what yet	22%	14%	10%
SLE/NLE/LLE	16%	1%	1%
Base	129	141	129

Chapter 5: Wider impacts

This chapter of the report covers:

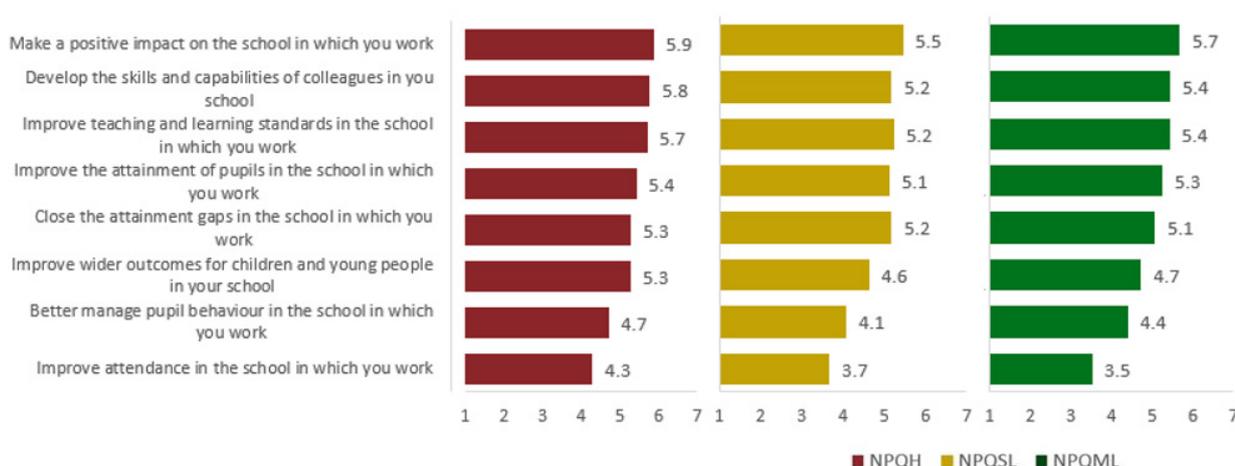
- The impact which participants and Line Managers believe taking part in the Leadership Curriculum has had on their own school;
- The wider impacts of the Leadership Curriculum on placement schools for NPQH and additional impacts experienced outside of participants own schools.

Own school

In order to assess the wider impacts of the Leadership Curriculum, during both the telephone survey and depth interviews, participants were asked to reflect upon the sustainable impact they believed the qualifications had had on their school directly after completing the Leadership Curriculum qualification.

In the survey, participants were asked to rate, on a scale from 1 to 7, where 1= 'strongly disagree' and 7= 'strongly agree', the extent to which the qualifications had enabled them to achieve a range of impacts on their school and colleagues whilst completing their qualification. The results, shown in Figure 28, revealed that the **highest average scores were for 'making a positive impact on the school'**. This impact was rated highest by participants from all three levels of the qualification. Approximately equal **second highest were 'developing the skills and capabilities of colleagues' and 'improving the teaching and learning standards in school'**. Across most impact statements (excluding improvements in attainment statements) NPQH participants gave higher scores that were statistically significant than NPQSL participants. They also gave higher scores for improving attendance and improving wider outcomes than both the NPQSL and NPQML participants.

Figure 28: Mean agreement ratings for the extent to which the qualification helped to achieve sustainable impacts in their school on completion.



Bases: NPQH = 263; NPQSL = 257; NPQML = 242. Positive impact on the school, Better management of pupil behaviour, Improve teaching and learning and Develop capabilities of colleagues statistically significant: NPQH compared to NPQSL, Improve attendance & Improve wider outcomes statistically significant: NPQH compared to NPQSL and NPQML.

Participants were also asked, a year later, to rate the extent to which the qualifications had enabled them to achieve a range of impacts on their school and colleagues. When examining those participants who were tracked longitudinally, it was clear that **one year later they still believed that taking part in the Leadership Curriculum has had an impact on their school**. As seen above, the impact statements were scored slightly higher by NPQH participants. Amongst NPQH participants, there was an increase in the mean score given one year after the qualification compared to when they completed the qualification across the statements: improving wider outcomes, improving behaviour and improving attendance.

Figure 29: Longitudinal mean agreement ratings for the extent to which the qualification helped to achieve sustainable impacts in their school.

Impact Statement	NPQH		NPQSL		NPQML	
	On completion	1 year after qualification	On completion	1 year after qualification	On completion	1 year after qualification
Make a positive impact on the school in which you work	5.9	5.9	5.6	5.7	6.0	5.8
Develop the skills and capabilities of colleagues in your school	5.8	5.9	5.4	5.3	5.8	5.7
Improve teaching and learning standards in the school in which you work	5.7	5.8	5.5	5.4	5.7	5.7
Improve the attainment of pupils in the school in which you work	5.4	5.5	5.2	5.2	5.4	5.6
Improve wider outcomes for children and young people in your school	5.2	5.5	5.0	5.2	5.1	5.4
Close the attainment gaps in the school in which you work	5.3	5.4	5.3	5.2	5.2	5.2
Better manage pupil behaviour in the school in which you work	4.8	5.2	4.3	4.4	4.9	4.9
Improve attendance in the school in which you work	4.3	4.8	3.8	3.9	3.8	3.8

Bases: variable. Differences by sampling point that are statistically significant: NPQH – change between on completion and 1 year later for statements, Improve wider outcomes, Better management of pupil behaviour and Improve attendance, NPQSL – None, and NPQML – make a positive impact on school.

Although impacts varied across qualification when this was examined further using modelling techniques, there was no clear relationship between the impact they thought the Leadership Curriculum had on their school and the participants' own or school characteristics (including the qualification they were studying). **This indicated that the**

qualification is enabling participants across all levels and school types to bring about an impact – although the nature of this may vary, as described below.

Depth interviewees revealed that, across the qualifications (one year after completion), participants reported that they had had a positive impact on the whole school as a result of completing the Leadership Curriculum.

“I’ve implemented lots of new things. I think it gave me a lot of strategic overview. I’ve done a lot changing the staff, working with the staff to make sure they’re more stable. A lot of environment change, working with children to re-evaluate their values and vision of the school, and the rules of the school.”

NPQH participant

NQPH participants and Line Managers reported long-term changes in providing whole-school approaches to raising expectations and changing staff behaviours across the school, an increased focus on developing their staff and pupils through coaching initiatives and changes in the overall school ethos, and improving the school climate to make it a happier working environment for staff and pupils.

“We’ve considerably raised the expectations and altered behaviours of staff and are continuing to do so.”

NPQH participant

Depth interviews with Line Managers of participants who had completed the NPQSL qualification highlighted the way in which the qualification had impacted the participants, particularly with regard to improvements in their leadership styles when dealing with staff. They had improved their communication styles, motivational strategies and initiatives, with a focus on improving teamwork amongst higher level teaching assistants.

“She hadn’t been a deputy before, where she’d come from, and doing the NPQSL, I think it helped her with her relationship with the staff, something that she hadn’t had much experience with. I think it helped in particular with some of the face-to-face sessions within that. It enabled her to have a better way of speaking to staff and she thought about the way she was leading as well.”

NPQSL Line Manager

NPQML Line Managers and participants reported a range of impacts which included the ability to hold staff to account, improving teaching and learning, and implementing training initiatives for teaching assistants and other staff.

“It’s helped me become better at identifying staff’s needs and training issues and addressing those.”

NPQML participant

Skills development of staff

The overwhelming majority of participants in the SP2 telephone survey suggested that they have helped to develop a wide range of skills and capabilities in their colleagues in

their own schools (from 93% of NPQH trainees to 85% of NPQSL trainees who provided a score of 5 or more for the impact question highlighted in Figure 28). The most commonly reported skills and capabilities across the three qualifications were:

- Improved teaching and learning, as a result of coaching, mentoring, teamwork or CPD;
- Leadership skills;
- Accountability for their own actions;
- Self-awareness to reflect on their leadership; and
- Analysing data.

The key difference across the three qualifications was that a higher proportion of NPQH participants (36%) suggested that they had developed leadership skills in their colleagues compared to their NPQSL or NPQML peers (20% and 11%, respectively). Trainees reported that these improvements in skills had led to changes in teaching and learning, as well as attainment.

Participants and Line Managers reported that school improvement tasks undertaken as part of their final assessment had a range of impacts on colleagues within their own schools. Again, the most commonly reported impacts related to improved teaching and learning outcomes. Participants reported a wide variety of ways in which they have helped improve the teaching and learning skills of their colleagues. These included:

- Introducing more rigorous lesson observations and reviewing sessions to improve the standard of teaching in classes;
- Establishing new systems to improve assessments and moderation and tracking of pupil progress so that interventions are more targeted and the impacts can be identified more clearly;
- Sharing good teaching practice and skills in order to, for example, improve pupil behaviour in class, thus creating an environment more conducive to effective teaching and learning;
- Drawing upon learning theories to help teachers reflect upon and improve their teaching and learning;
- Helping other teachers in their school to increase their knowledge of particular subject areas;
- Modelling good practice in the classroom for student teachers to observe and integrate into their own lessons; and
- Working with colleagues to review lessons and plans.

Project example NPQSL

The school had a high level of fixed term exclusions which had a negative impact on their educational attainment. The trainee introduced a behaviour management system and led a team of teachers to identify and intervene with problematic students at the earliest opportunity. The trainee worked with the team to explore new ways to improve the behaviour of students identified at risk of exclusion and assist them in implementing de-escalation strategies. As a result of the intervention, the number of days for fixed term inclusion declined and student interest and engagement in learning improved.

The means by which participants suggested they achieved the improved teaching and learning outcomes for colleagues differed according to which qualification was being studied. In general, the teaching and learning improvements reported for NPQH related to the introduction of approaches which have an influence at a whole-school level. These included, for instance, establishing a more collaborative relationship for sharing good practice across the staff body and using data to identify underperforming teachers whilst providing necessary training to improve their ability.

“The culture of the school has changed significantly due to the impact that [trainee name] has had specifically around staff engaging in professional dialogue to reflect on the learning process undertaken by all pupils, both in individual year groups, year phases and as a whole school.”

NPQH sponsor

The teaching and learning improvements alluded to by NPQSL participants often referred to the introduction of specific systems or policies to improve teaching. These included mapping SEND provision, training in supporting good pupil behaviour, or designing and implementing a pupil progress tracker to review performance and target support.

“[Trainee name] has ensured that provision for SEND is now effectively and efficiently mapped so that all stakeholders are aware of the support provided teamed with entry and exit assessment information to measure progress. This has not only contributed to improved progress of our learners but improved teaching as a result of robust planning and assessment procedures.”

NPQSL sponsor

On the other hand, NPQML participants and their sponsors identified teaching and learning improvements which are more narrowly defined and specific. The example statements frequently described either assisting a single teacher or introducing a specific technique.

“The student teacher in [names participant] class this year has received effective feedback and mentoring in order to help her improve. She has set her targets throughout the term and helped the student teacher to achieve them by modelling good practice.”

The other most frequently reported impact that participants felt they had on their own colleagues was fostering a culture of continuous improvement, and this was reported more frequently by NPQH participants. However, the examples provided by participants and their sponsors for this type of impact tended to refer to potential rather than actual impact, with changes having been introduced that will be built on and developed in the future.

“There was no formal structure to hold TAs to account to. She therefore developed a TA observation tool, with input from the TAs...She has successfully used this in the performance management of TAs and they have found this a valuable tool in identifying their own strengths and areas for development. It has been highly effective in holding TAs to account for what they should be doing in their role. This has led to all TAs improving their practice.”

NPQH sponsor

The most frequently cited ways in which participants positively affected the culture of their colleagues included:

- Instilling a culture of sharing good practice;
- Inspiring staff to continually improve their practice; and
- Increasing the extent to which staff feel accountable for their own teaching quality.

Impact on pupils' attainment and progress

Trainees' school improvement tasks had a range of impacts on pupils within their own schools. Almost half of the tasks undertaken had a specific focus on improving the attainment of pupils. The most commonly reported impact was improved educational achievement. The examples noted by participants and their sponsors included:

- Improved exam results due to better teaching following the setting of ambitious targets for underperforming teachers;
- Improved level of pupil progress when compared to national benchmarks due to higher quality teaching and learning;
- Closing the gap in attainment between groups.

Project example NPQML

Data analysis of pupils' attainment highlighted that a significant proportion of year 11 pupils were at risk of not achieving their GCSE grades. Mentoring was offered to those who were most at risk of not achieving their potential. The intervention helped pupils to improve academically and it also improved their behaviour.

In general, the breadth and depth of impacts reported differed according to the qualification level of the participants. NPQH participants were more likely to suggest that their tasks have influenced a larger number of pupils, such as whole year groups, and refer to positive changes in grades across the board.

“I timetabled literacy lessons for every class during lesson 1 each day this year so tracking data could be used to group students by reading age for phonics/literacy. This has led to increased pupil engagement (learning walks) and improved reading and writing ages (91% of students exceeded their CASPA target for reading and 82% for writing).”

NPQH Final Assessment participant

On the other hand, references in the final assessments to the impact of NPQSL and NPQML participants focused on positive results of interventions which have been targeted at a small group of pupils to help raise their attainment in a specific subject area.

Also mentioned were numerous other pupil-related outcomes which all levels of participants and/or their sponsors believed they had brought about in their own school. Indeed, these related to increasing pupil engagement and improving the behaviours for learning. The examples of greater pupil engagement included:

- Increased interest in a particular subject;
- Improved concentration in class;
- Improved behaviour;
- Greater enjoyment of a lesson, either communicated directly in feedback questionnaires or indirectly via teachers' comments; and
- Increased levels of independent learning.

A variety of projects and strategic objectives were implemented that resulted in these impacts. Examples included new subject interventions, improved standardisation methods to ensure parity across pupil outcomes, pupil reward initiatives, and positive behaviour reports. The impact also extended beyond specific project-based interventions to general overall improvements. Examples included improved pupil happiness and engagement, pupil attainment (e.g. improved SATs results), improved attendance and increased parental support.

“Yes it's not just like behaviour at break times that's improved, it is improved behaviours for learning as well. She's very often in classes supporting other teachers with behaviour.”

NPQML Line Manager

Further impacts

The trainees' school improvement tasks had other impacts on their schools, with the most commonly reported including:

- External recognition of improvements through, for example, Ofsted or the school improvement officer noting positive changes such as pupil behaviour or teaching and learning outcomes in the school; and
- Partnerships with other schools, such as improved collaborative relationships with existing or new partner schools.

The direct impacts of the partnerships with other schools on participants' own schools appeared to be potential rather than actual, as they were in the development stage.

A minority of depth interviews across all three qualifications and findings from the final assessment data made reference to the impact of the Leadership Curriculum on external recognition from Ofsted regarding school improvements. The examples highlighted included:

- Implementing measures across the school to improve the teaching and learning provision which subsequently resulted in lessons being judged as outstanding by Ofsted;
- Improvements in management that were rated positively by Ofsted and have led to the senior management regularly identifying individuals to undertake the Leadership Curriculum;
- Implementation of subject specific initiatives with rigorous assessment criteria that were positively viewed by Ofsted.

“We had an Ofsted that highlighted middle leadership as an area that needed development, so part of the drive for pushing that forward was to sign us up for the course. Yes, well we've been Ofsted inspected since and we got a good. Our middle management was highlighted as very good and our HMI now sends staff from other schools requiring improvement to us, so that we can train up middle managers.”

NPQML participant

NPQSL – Ofsted recognised improvement

One trainee reported how they had ensured consistent data analysis and marking across the whole school. Ofsted were impressed by the changes made and the HMI asked them to help other schools in the area.

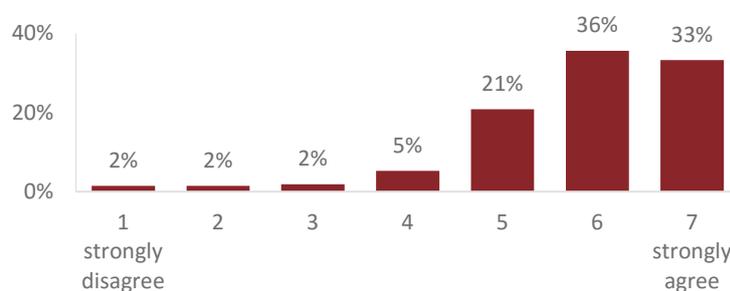
A headteacher from an Australian school also visited and asked them to visit the school to help instigate it there.

Wider impacts

Impact on NPQH placement school

Across the three qualifications, participants made reference to having an impact on pupil attainment, and new initiatives having benefited pupils. In the survey, NPQH participants were also asked to rate the extent to which they agreed that the work they undertook as part of their placement had a positive impact on the placement school. Over two-thirds (69%) of participants gave a score of 6 or 7 (Figure 30). The average rating was 5.8, indicating that the participants believed that the qualification had a positive overall impact on placement schools.

Figure 30: Mean agreement ratings for the extent to which the placement work had a positive impact on the placement school.



Base = 264.

The depth interviews supported the quantitative findings about the perceived positive impact on placement schools. All NPQH interviewees made reference to having a good impact on their placement schools. These impacts included:

- Introducing and/or improving processes by, for example, redesigning lesson observation forms to better measure the quality of questioning in teaching;
- Transferring skills learnt on the qualification and/or from experience such as, for instance, using the coaching and mentoring skills developed on the course. Participants also alluded to drawing on their own teaching and learning strategies from previous settings to help guide a senior member of staff to confidently communicate ideas to their colleagues; and
- Presenting new teaching methods, often drawing on tried and tested ideas from their home school, such as applying problem solving and collaborative learning techniques to maths lessons to raise attainment levels.

“The idea was to try and raise maths levels through the application of, sort of, problem solving and collaborative learning. So I introduced big maths, which is something we already do at our school, to their school and the other two schools in the federation.”

NPQH participant

“Yes. It went from teachers who refused to teach music to they're all teaching it by the end and all, sort of, between good and outstanding.

NPQH participant

Our analysis of the NPQH final assessments indicated that trainees' improvement tasks also had a number of impacts on their placement schools. The most commonly reported impacts in the placement schools again pertained to staff development and pupils. Placement headteachers were more likely to report an impact on staff than pupils (although they agreed there is potential for it to have this further impact).

“As a result of this work, TAs and other members of the TA team have a stronger understanding of how to support dyslexic students. [Names trainee] has also generated a partnership document for TAs and teachers which has already informed discussions within the teams across the school. I am sure that the longer term impact of our SEN students will be very strong. [Trainee name] has left us with very thought provoking and inspiring challenges.”

NPQH placement head

The impacts of the improvement tasks on colleagues in the placement school most frequently pertained to improvements in teaching and learning through:

- Assisting staff to better support pupils by providing differentiated support based on need;
- Introducing new techniques to improve teaching, such as marking processes and approaches to reviewing and monitoring data.

The examples used by trainees to demonstrate that the impact has already been achieved included increases in teachers' confidence and/or skills. Participants and placement headteachers also made reference to how the approaches introduced by trainees will be considered during future planning processes. They highlight how partnership and networking opportunities now exist for teachers from the participants' placement and home schools to potentially share and develop practice further.

“I believe that I have developed an on-going relationship with the placement school, beyond my NPQH placement. The headteacher and I intend to continue working in partnership in delivering continuous improvement in both schools through collaboration and partnership work.”

NPQH participant

The impact on pupils referenced by trainees in their final assessments most frequently pertained to educational achievement, followed by improved behaviours for learning. Several participants believed that their tasks resulted in improved attainment or progression for the pupils involved. These included more students securing a GCSE A grade, improving their speaking and listening ability, and showing progress in writing. One example of improved behaviours for learning was the introduction of a truancy

strategy by one participant in their placement school, which appears to have significantly reduced the number of truants and reduced the amount and extent of interruptions to classroom learning.

NPQH – example project improving pupils’ skills in placement school

The trainee worked with a small group of pupils and staff in their placement school to trial ways to improve pupils’ oral skills. The staff developed Super Speaker and Lovely Listening Rules to assist pupils in improving the quality of their spoken English. Initial results indicated that pupils were speaking more fluently and confidently by the end of the project. A staff member within the placement school took charge of championing the approach across the whole school.

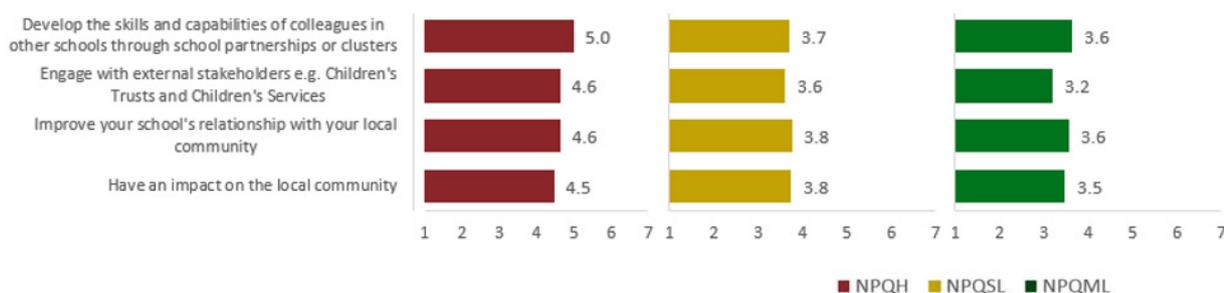
“The truancy strategy was a success. In the week before the initiative, there were over 400 incidents of internal truancy. After week 5, the truancy incidents fell to double figures and were recorded as 74 across the week for all year groups. Although these figures were still too high, a significant improvement was made...Pupils commented that their learning was not being interrupted as frequently. Pupils who had been caught truanting commented that ‘we can’t get away with it anymore!’”

NPQH participant

Other impacts

Participants were asked to rate a range of other impacts that they could have on their community through their school on a scale of 1 to 7. As was to be expected due to the difference in roles, NPQH participants gave average scores above the mid-point (4 on this scale from 1 to 7), whilst NPQSL and NPQML participants gave average scores *below* the mid-point for the wider impacts they have been able to achieve.

Figure 31: Mean agreement ratings for the extent to which the qualification helped to achieve sustainable impacts outside of their school on completion.



Bases: NPQH = 263; NPQSL = 257; NPQML = 242. Develop skills of colleagues, Improve school's relationship with community & Impact on local community statistically significant: NPQH compared to NPQSL and NPQML. Engage with external stakeholders: all differences by qualification are statistically significant.

A year later, participants were also asked to what extent the qualifications had enabled them to achieve a range of impacts outside of their school. It was clear that they still believed that taking part in the Leadership Curriculum has an impact on this. Moreover, across many of the statements for NPQH and NPQML, there were increases in these scores, thus highlighting a larger perceived impact after completing the qualification.

Figure 32: Longitudinal mean agreement ratings for the extent to which the qualification helped to achieve sustainable impacts outside of their school.

	NPQH		NPQSL		NPQML	
	On completion	1 year after qualification	On completion	1 year after qualification	On completion	1 year after qualification
Improve your school's relationship with your local community	4.5	5.1	3.9	4.2	3.8	4.3
Develop the skills and capabilities of colleagues in other schools	5.0	5.0	3.9	4.4	3.8	4.3
Engage with external stakeholders e.g. Children's Trusts and Children's Services	4.7	4.9	4.0	4.2	3.4	4.3
Have an impact on the local community	4.4	4.9	3.9	4.1	3.8	4.2

Bases: variable. Differences by sampling point that are statistically significant: NPQH – change between on completion and 1 year later for statements Improve school's relationship with local community, Engage with external stakeholders and impact on local community, NPQSL – None, and NPQML – All statements.

In the SP2 telephone survey, two-thirds of NPQH participants (68%) identified skills and capabilities they had developed in colleagues in other schools, compared with 55% and 43% of NPQSL and NPQML participants respectively (these participants reported a score of 5 or more out of 7). In terms of these key types of skills and capabilities, teaching and learning, particularly for NPQML trainees, as well as sharing good practice were reported by participants from all three levels of the Leadership Curriculum. Improving leadership skills was an area in which NPQH participants felt they had imparted knowledge to colleagues in other schools. Of particular note here is the impact of raising the attainment levels of students. Indeed, this was noted by NPQH and NPQSL trainees in the SP2 telephone survey as the most common impact of the skills and capabilities that participants imparted to colleagues in other schools. NPQML participants, on the other hand, were most likely to highlight improvements in teaching and learning.

A number of NPQH interviewees mentioned that the placement enabled them to work with senior teachers in other schools to help improve their colleagues' as well as their own leadership skills, and in some cases this support continued after the qualification had ended. A few NPQH participants also made reference, in their interviews, to increasing engagement with governors and parents through the project work they undertook for their qualifications.

The NPQSL in-depth interviews revealed a couple of examples of perceived impacts on schools other than the participants' home school. One Line Manager of an NPQSL participant reported they are now able and confident to coordinate meetings with senior leaders from their cluster of primary schools to discuss ways to address new assessment processes. A participant who undertook this qualification also explained how the literacy tools they had developed as part of their project had been shared with and taken up by other schools.

“So she’s done a lot of work, not just with our school, but within our local cluster of schools, trying to align how we’re going to assess without levels, how we can dovetail what we’re doing with our school with other primary schools. She has a key role in getting other deputies and assistant heads together and holding their own termly meetings so that they can support each other and share ideas. So yes, it’s had a really positive impact.”

NPQSL Line Manager

Further impacts reported by participants and Line Managers during the depth interviews and identified in the final assessments included more effective communication, partnership work with governors, and improved parental engagement.

“Governors, they have become much more aware of maths, focusing on that and I’ve been to a couple of governor’s meetings now to feedback and show them some of the bits and pieces. I’ve also invited them in when we have our maths days so that they can see maths in action and see what’s actually going on and what maths actually looks like in the school. I’ve had really positive feedback from them and they’ve found those days really useful so they know where the school is going and what maths looks like in school.”

NPQML participant

Chapter 6: Gaps in provision and challenges

This chapter of the report covers:

- Perceived skills gaps related to completion of the Leadership Curriculum;
- Challenges and issues encountered by participants in meeting the requirements of the Leadership Curriculum, and potential revisions to the content, structure and delivery of the qualifications to help address them in the future.

Skills gaps

Participants were asked if there were any leadership skills or areas of knowledge they had not fully developed whilst studying for their qualification that they considered important for a school leader to possess. Individuals at all three levels of the Leadership Curriculum reported skills gaps, with the nature of the gap varying depending on the qualification undertaken. In total, 501 out of 1148 (44%) participants cited a gap for NPQML compared to 566 out of 1236 (46%) for NPQSL and 258 out of 492 (52%) for NPQH.

At 19% for all participants who responded to our surveys (irrespective of the qualification undertaken), budgeting and finance remained the most frequently cited skills gap followed by holding others to account (11%). Other skills gaps included data use and analysis (7%), dealing with difficult situations (6%), self-reflection (4%), and a range of other skills mentioned by only a small minority of respondents. Notable differences were, however, evident when examined by qualification level, with almost two-thirds (59%) of NPQH participants identifying budgeting and finance as a gap compared to only 15% for NPQSL and 3% for NPQML. Other disparities included holding others to account (18% for NPQML and 11% for NPQSL compared to 0% for NPQH), data use and analysis (10%, 7% and 1%, respectively) and dealing with difficult situations (9%, 7% and 1%, respectively).

Challenges, issues and potential revisions

Participants of the Leadership Curriculum were asked to rate whether they would recommend the qualification to others, and to then provide a reason for that response. Across all of the qualifications in the open response text given, NPQSL fared least favourably, with 15% of all participants who gave an answer responding with a negative view of the qualification, compared to 14% for NPQML and just 5% for NPQH (irrelevant to the overall score given). The reasons provided indicated the challenges and issues participants face in meeting the requirements of the qualifications. Excessive workloads and difficulties in accommodating the demands of the modules was rated most highly at 7%, followed by unclear assessment requirements (6%), the time consuming nature of study (6%), poor administration and organisation (4%), and problems with the website (4%).

Time constraints

Evidence also emerged to indicate that **time to undertake the qualification** is a challenge for some individuals undertaking the Leadership Curriculum. On average, participants rated the time commitment as manageable at 4.8 out of 7 in the SP1 survey, with NPQML participants providing the highest mean score of 5.2 compared to 4.7 for NPQH and 4.5 for NPQSL¹⁸. However, in the End-of-Module survey, nearly 1 in 10 (8%) of those participants suggesting improvements indicated that more time to meet the requirements of the modules would be helpful. This was less of a concern for Licensees and Line Managers. When asked in the online survey the extent to which they agreed that the time commitment to undertake the qualification is manageable, Licensees gave a mean score of 5.5 out of 7. Moreover, during the interviews, Line Managers highlighted that they did not believe that the time required for the qualification was problematic or had a negative impact on the school. The comments from Line Managers suggested that the training time was **well planned, manageable and realistic**.

Content

At least half of the participants interviewed for each of the Leadership Curriculum levels made suggestions for improvements, primarily covering the content of qualifications. The most frequently cited gap in the programme for NPQH participants was **a lack of information and advice about financial management**. Several participants stated that they would like more detailed guidance and specific examples of effective budgeting methods. NPQSL and NPQML participants also suggested that the content of the qualifications would be improved if it included a **greater focus on the practical skills and knowledge required for key management tasks**, such as data monitoring, report writing, and leading meetings. The interview results indicated that an increase in course content on day-to-day management tasks could possibly be accommodated by reducing the coverage of the theoretical aspects of leadership, which some considered to be overly academic.

“A lot of it was quite academically heavy I would say. Some of the think pieces and things like that were more if you were doing a PhD looking at education sciences or something rather than leadership qualifications. So if I was designing the course myself I would maybe weight it more towards what would be useful day to day...”

NPQML participant

Some interviewees pointed out that the qualifications could be improved with a more tailored focus on primary and secondary school structures. It was felt by some participants that the content was, at times, too focused on the primary sector at the

¹⁸ Differences between NPQH and NPQSL are not statistically significant.

expense of secondary school contexts. Another, related, issue raised was to provide the opportunity to gain more practical experience in other school contexts so as to encourage shared learning and enable best practices to be subsequently implemented.

When asked about the suitability of the content, Line Managers instead stated that the Leadership Curriculum needed to be further developed to **accurately reflect the changing nature of leadership roles**. One Line Manager indicated that NPQH, in its current form, does not adequately equip headteachers to lead and manage multi-academy trusts and therefore does not adequately reflect the current educational landscape.

“The roles are changing. I know now that they’re talking how NPQH isn’t good enough for people that are going to be chief executives, and they need additional training on how to be an executive head.”

NPQH Line Manager

Licensees identified several areas where they felt that there were gaps in the content of the Leadership Curriculum, which may be reflective of the skills gaps identified by participants. Gaps identified included the public face of headship in terms of dealing with the media and professional associations, the ‘Academisation effect’ in relation to how the educational landscape is changing, and school business and finance modules that cover budget planning, finance and HR. Several Licensees identified that the broader context of the Leadership Curriculum must always be at the forefront. A continued reviewing process helps to ensure that leadership competencies are robust and fit with the relevant leadership roles, which in turn minimises the risk of skills gaps for participants.

Accessing materials

Participants who responded to our online surveys highlighted various ways in which the Leadership Curriculum could be improved. These were very wide ranging and, in most instances, applied to the qualification as a whole rather than specific modules. In terms of the responses from the 710 individuals who identified improvements, the most cited area was the website and overall experience of using the online materials (20%). Participants had experienced weblinks that did not work and wanted to be able to download materials in order to make them easier to read and study. Other criticisms of the website focused on the extent to which online information could be made more engaging and appealing, particularly in the absence of a facilitator to help guide participants. They also noted how the volume of the materials on the website could be overwhelming, thus making it difficult to identify which should be prioritised.

“The actual online aspect of the module could be improved by thinning it down a little. There is a huge amount of very interesting material on there, but it’s very time consuming reading through it all. It could have some guidance to help people choose sections which would be most relevant to them.

NPQSL participant

Structure

Participants stated that the timing and organisational aspects of the modules, such as administration, required improvement, and was also reported by Line Managers of participants undertaking the Leadership Curriculum. Also mentioned was a need for more practical project based work in different school contexts to enable participants to gain experience of different leadership styles.

“The only thing they slightly messed up on is dates. Obviously I know the providers are not really in the education thing so some of the dates they set were really badly timed, like, the week before SATs, which is not when a teacher needs to be out of class, or asking for projects when it’s report time in the summer. So kind of just needed a little bit of thinking about the general academic calendar and tying the dates up together.”

NPQML Line Manager

“He says that he would have benefitted from having a chunk of time and actually what he’s really benefitted from is being able to move from where he was in Poole to where he is now. Different heads, different styles of leadership, different approaches, schools in different contexts, and then being able to apply the theory in practice. And so, if that was part of the course, and I know that they’re financial implications around that. A chunk of time, not just a week or two, not just the odd day here and there whilst you’re doing a research project, which is beneficial of course, because it benefits you while you’re undertaking that research and developing your professional skills.”

NPQSL Line Manager

Some Licensees also pointed to issues with the structure of provision and consistently identified **the lack of formal coaching for participants** as particularly problematic. Although Licensees are able to offer coaching through the qualifications, for some this is done through someone in the participant’s school coaching them or through a limited number of hours being on offer to participants from a coach assigned by the Licensee. Therefore, the value of this in these instances was sometimes limited and not always utilised. Participants believed that coaching is essential from a supportive mentoring perspective, but also as a means of adding an element of challenge to the participant’s leadership development.

Assessment process

1 in 10 (10%) of the survey respondents who sought improvements in the Leadership Curriculum modules mentioned the need to clarify the assessment process.

This was supported by some depth interviews with both NPQML and NPQSL participants. Participants spoke about **not being fully aware of how they would be**

assessed not only during the induction process, but throughout the qualification.

One participant found that providers struggled to explain the process, whilst another believed the crux of the issue was that participants commenced the assessment tasks after their training sessions had ended and when there was less opportunity to raise any questions with the provider.

“I think it would have been better if the task writing had started when the sessions were taking place, because what essentially happened, we had these sessions and then the course ended and then people started thinking about which tasks they were going to do... A lot of people were very unclear about what they should be doing.”

NPQSL participant

Suggestions proposed by NPQSL participants to improve the support received from Licensees included clearer examples of the style and content of well-completed tasks, and tasks running concurrently with, rather than after, the learning sessions so advice could be sought more easily. This suggested that **dissatisfaction with the assessment process is having an impact on the overall views of Licensees**. In terms of the type of support participants valued from their home schools, the interview findings suggested this comprised a variety of informal assistance provided by their senior colleagues. This ranged from colleagues asking participants how their training is progressing, sharing their experience of the same or similar training, and offering to discuss the practical implications of leadership topics covered in the training for their school.

To try and help participants through the assessment process, the Licensees we interviewed described how they were trying to make it clear during the induction sessions that they need to have access to the school facilities in place so as to ensure they can adequately complete the final assessment. Support is provided in this process because if specific responsibilities and resources are not available for the participant to carry out a project, they cannot complete the final assessment and requirements of the module.

“What we’ve done more and more and more is front the final assessment at the beginning of our development programme. We were originally told final assessment is over there with the provider. Actually, that can’t work because all the work that they’re doing on the development influences what they do for their final assessment task... Sometimes what is given in guidance on the [provider’s] site isn’t as helpful as it should be. So people get very confused with paperwork.”

Licensee

Chapter 7: Conclusions

Satisfaction with the Leadership Curriculum

Recruitment

Across all Licensees, a total of 31,676 participants were recruited onto Leadership Curriculum qualifications. Overall, Licensees reported that they were satisfied with their ability to recruit participants onto the Leadership Curriculum.

Delivery

Overall, the induction process was rated positively across all three levels of the Leadership Curriculum, thus suggesting it is a strong foundation from which participants can proceed in planning and undertaking the qualification. Participants, especially those who undertook the NPQSL level, were less likely to agree that they understood the assessment process and requirements for final assessment. Although Licensees reported how they have tried to address these difficulties, participants reported that they are still problematic.

The findings highlighted high levels of satisfaction with the Leadership Curriculum at both the level of the individual modules and the overall qualifications with respect to both the delivery and content. Respondents believed that, overall, the programmes are up to date, stimulating and engaging, and challenging. Across all satisfaction measures, NPQH participants provided higher satisfaction scores than those undertaking NPQSL and NPQML. The majority of participants also stated that they would recommend the different qualifications to a colleague, thus further highlighting their satisfaction. The differences in satisfaction appeared to be linked with NPQSL participants being more likely to report a challenge with workload alongside completing the Leadership Curriculum. Their satisfaction with the support received whilst on the qualification was associated with their understanding of the assessment process and timetable of study. Licensee interviews also revealed a difference in initial buy-in to the qualification when comparing participants on NPQH with others.

Across the qualifications, the majority of participants and Licensees believed that the Leadership Curriculum accurately reflects the role which the trainee is working towards. However, this was also seen as an area which may need further improvement due to the changing landscape of education and the expansion, especially of Multi-Academy Trusts.

Across the surveys and interviews, there was clear evidence that participants value the different elements of the Leadership Curriculum. Licensees reported how the blended learning approach ensures that the Leadership Curriculum is able to meet the needs of different learners and enables participants to consolidate their learning. Participants across the qualifications agreed that most elements of the qualification have enabled

them to develop their leadership skills. Only online Licensee facilitated discussions received a lower score from participants, which Licensees agreed with. Across the remaining elements, the research found that they all play a part in developing the skills of trainees in various ways. Face-to-face delivery and peer networking enables participants to share ideas and learn from one another. Moreover, activities in their home school and placement school ensure that participants are able to put into practice the theoretical skills they have learnt through the Leadership Curriculum. Although online learning received mixed reviews, it was the delivery that was deemed to be problematic; participants often alluded to the value of the content of the modules that were available online in developing their theoretical understanding.

Participants stated that the qualifications met the leadership needs of those undertaking the Leadership Curriculum, with NPQH participants giving slightly higher scores. When this was examined further, analysis suggested that the extent to which the qualification met the leadership development needs of participants was driven by their satisfaction with most of the individual elements (e.g. face-to-face-learning) and not by any characteristics at the participant or school level. This again highlights the importance of the blended learning approach.

Overall, participants were also satisfied with the support they received on the Leadership Curriculum from their home school, Licensee and placement school (on NPQH). The depth interview findings demonstrated the important role senior colleagues play in influencing positive outcomes of the qualification for participants. Indeed, they do this by providing guidance and support within the home setting and exhibiting willingness and approachability in the environment of a placement. Further analysis identified that trainees' perception of support from their Licensee was driven by the extent to which they understood the qualification structure and final assessment during the induction process. The qualification an individual took did have a significant relationship with the score that they gave to the element of support to prepare for final assessment. Indeed, those not on NPQSL reported a higher score.

Licensees reported that they were able to deliver a flexible Leadership Curriculum which meets the needs of different participants. Across the analysis we undertook, no statistically significant differences were found by school size, type or phase. This indicates that they could meet the needs of different participants. Awareness of being able to study standalone modules was low amongst participants, alongside not all Licensees offering this. There was, however, a view that the Leadership Curriculum is more accessible than previous versions of the qualifications in the Leadership Curriculum.

Although there was satisfaction with the Leadership Curriculum, there were areas which participants and Licensees felt needed improving. Across the qualifications, participants identified common skills areas which they felt were not fully developed, including budgeting and finance (especially amongst NPQH participants), data use and analysis,

and dealing with difficult situations. It was these more practical skills and knowledge which participants thought could be developed further in the programme. Due to the changing nature of roles, it was the content of the Leadership Curriculum which many thought needed to be developed further to encompass these changes, including leading a Multi-Academy.

Areas not related to content which some trainees struggled with included time constraints, accessing online materials, and understanding the assessment process. Although it was clear that following the induction process was the area which participants were unsure about, this seemed to continue throughout the qualification and may have improved participants' overall satisfaction with the Leadership Curriculum.

Perceived impact of the Leadership Curriculum

The findings highlighted that the qualifications are perceived by participants as having had a positive impact on their leadership knowledge, skills and attributes as well as a variety of wider impacts on schools.

Participants

Skills and competencies

The vast majority of participants and Line Managers agreed that the Leadership Curriculum is improving the leadership skills and competencies of participants across all three levels of the qualification.

Participants reported developing a wide range of leadership skills and knowledge through the qualifications, including general leadership skills, being able to hold others to account, self-reflection and awareness, and how to have difficult conversations with staff. Financial awareness was reported by some NPQH participants, with data analysis and use reported by those who had taken the NPQSL qualification. Whilst on the qualification, participants reported an overall increase in the various competencies required for the individual roles. Holding others to account was reported as the most frequently developed across the qualifications. Conversely, it was concluded that participants have high levels of competency in modelling excellence in teaching and/or leadership of teaching and learning before starting the qualification, and there is only a minimal uplift in this competency on completion of the qualification. There has also been an increase in the extent to which participants believe they are able to drive school improvement through the team they lead and across the whole school.

Reflecting on the qualifications overall, participants were satisfied that these met their leadership development needs and attributed almost half of their leadership development to the qualifications; with this said, they also stated that other training and experiences remain important in the development of participants' skills. Participants reported that they have developed their leadership skills and knowledge through different Leadership

Curriculum elements, including the activities and tasks they undertake, the course materials, and the networking they can do. Participants recognised the value of the qualifications and the role these play in developing their skills. Participants also stated that the content of online modules and case studies enabled them to learn theory and understand different leadership styles. They were then able to put these skills into practice and develop them further through the tasks in their school and the placement for NPQH. Self-awareness and confidence were further developed through reflection activities, coaching and engaging with others on the course.

The majority of NPQH participants reported an increase in their readiness for headship since starting the qualification, while NPQSL and NPQML participants reported an increase in the knowledge skills and attributes they need for their role. NPQH participants also alluded to certain qualification-derived skills that had influenced their readiness for headship; these included increased confidence, greater independence of thinking and decision making, and others perceiving them to be a strong leader. NPQSL participants reported that undertaking the task in their school increased their skills and competence for the role. Although some NPQML participants were less positive about the impact of the qualification on their leadership skills, most reported that they had developed new skills which made them feel they had the skills needed for the role.

Career progression

In terms of career progression, results revealed that the Leadership Curriculum is effective in increasing the motivations of participants to move into headship, with the majority of NPQH participants reporting that the qualification had increased their motivation to become a headteacher through developing their confidence to perform the role.

One year after completing the qualification, nearly half of those undertaking NPQH were in a headship role and for most this was a new role since starting the qualification. They also agreed that undertaking the Leadership Curriculum had contributed to them gaining this role through increasing their confidence; they also alluded to the fact that holding the qualification was often a prerequisite on application forms. Of those who had not moved to a new role, half had taken on additional responsibilities which they believed were as a result of undertaking the NPQH. For a third of them, these roles included headship or acting headship duties. The majority of those not in a headship role were actively searching for a role, with only a small number stating they no longer want to be a headteacher.

Although it is not a stated aim of the qualification, across the NPQSL and NPQML, approximately half have moved into a new role, with most stating this was a promotion in their own school. They agreed, to some extent, that this was as a result of undertaking the Leadership Curriculum qualification, with some highlighting that completing the qualification had demonstrated to their school that they were capable of taking on this

role. Amongst those who had not changed roles, half had assumed additional responsibilities which they believed were a result of the Leadership Curriculum.

The interview findings underlined the important influence of the qualifications on leaders' acquisition of their new roles and responsibilities. Both the participants and their managers viewed the qualifications as evidence of their leadership ability and for NPQH participants, this was often a requirement of their new post.

Since undertaking the Leadership Curriculum, around one-third of participants had undertaken further learning or leadership development. More than half of participants also planned to partake in further learning or leadership development in the future. There was also evidence that participants are following the leadership pathway set out in the Leadership Curriculum, with a small proportion of NPQML and NPQSL participants have already started the next level of the Leadership Curriculum, and more than half planning to do so in the future.

Wider impacts

Participants believed that a variety of wider impacts have also been achieved through undertaking the qualification. They reported that the qualifications are enabling participants to bring about sustainable impacts in their school across all levels of the Leadership Curriculum, although the nature of that impact often varies; indeed, NPQH participants reported whole-school change, whereas NPQML participants reported changes to an individual, team or a specific learning technique in the school. Participants regularly reported that the project tasks as part of the qualification enabled them to bring about a wide range of changes in their school. The skills development of staff in their own school was frequently reported as having resulted from the Leadership Curriculum, which led to improvements in teaching and learning and leadership skills. The most common way in which participants impacted on colleagues was by improving their teaching and learning as a result of coaching, mentoring, teamwork or continuing professional development. Participants achieved this through different activities and strategies they have implemented, including:

- Introducing lessons observations;
- Establishing new systems to improve assessments;
- Sharing good practice across the school;
- Encouraging reflection of teachers.

This highlights that trainees who undertake the Leadership Curriculum are able to transfer some of the skills they have learnt to those in their school to drive school improvement.

Improving attainment in their school was a key focus of tasks for half of the participants, and as such there was often a focus on improving teaching and learning within their

school by drawing upon what they have learnt on the Leadership Curriculum. Many trainees believed that, through improvements in leadership, teaching, implementing learning interventions and monitoring pupil progress, they have had a positive impact on the attainment of pupils. Indeed, evidence of this can be found in exam results, alongside a range of improved pupil behaviours including increased aspirations, improved behaviour, and better concentration. Trainees also reported that there exists some evidence of Ofsted's recognition of these changes.

NPQH participants reported that the Leadership Curriculum is also effective in enabling them to have a positive impact on their placement school, with the majority indicating high levels of agreement on this measure. The findings suggested that the trainees implemented new processes in the schools they were placed, transferred leadership skills and improved teaching and learning within their placement schools. Placement headteachers did highlight that the work undertaken by the trainees had positively impacted on their staff, with a potential for this to positively affect their pupils.

There was also evidence that participants, and particularly NPQH participants, believe that they have had an impact on partner schools, the local community, and external stakeholders. There was self-reported evidence across all qualifications of trainees developing the skills and capabilities of colleagues in other schools by improving teaching and learning, sharing good practice, and improving leadership skills.



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