National leader of education and national support school – eligibility criteria
Tranche 25

January 2018
Summary
This publication provides non-statutory guidance from the Department for Education. It has been produced to inform potential applicants what the eligibility criteria is to become a national leader of education.

Expiry or review date
This guidance will be reviewed before November 2018.

Who is this publication for?
This guidance is for:
- School leaders who wish to apply to become a National Leader of Education and National Support School
- Other stakeholders involved in the application who wish to understand the criteria

Clarification of terms
The terms listed below are used throughout the criteria. The use of terms is solely for ease of readability, and does not in any way imply that our assessment process does not take into account the differing contexts of those organisations which are eligible to apply.

- **DfE**: represents the Department for Education
- **School**: also represents academy, nursery, sixth-form college, University Technical College (UTC), General Further Education Providers and Colleges (GFE) and Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)
- **Governing body**: also represents the body appointed to be accountable for the management of the school, federation or trust including the board of trustees or equivalent
- **Headteacher**: also represents principal, chief executive or executive headteacher employed on headteacher’s terms and conditions
- **Trusted commissioner of school to school support**: Regional Schools Commissioner
  - Teaching School Council member ([www.tscouncil.org.uk](http://www.tscouncil.org.uk))
  - Director of Children’s Services (DCS) or a relevant local authority officer in your own local authority or of a school you have supported
  - Senior diocesan representative
  - Sponsor of an academy, chain or trust (please note this does not include CEOs of the applicant’s own trust)
Eligibility criteria for national leader of education (NLE):

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<th>Criteria</th>
<th>How this should be demonstrated</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To be considered as a national leader of education, the headteacher must:</td>
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| 1. Have a track record of strong school leadership with at least 3 years headship experience¹ | • headteacher has been a substantive headteacher for 3 years or more (at point of application) in which time they have been legally responsible for the management of a school and accountable to the governing body, and  
  • headteacher is named on a recent Ofsted inspection where ‘Leadership and Management’ has been judged as ‘Good’ either at current school, or at previous school if the applicant has changed headship within the last 3 years and is yet to receive an inspection at current school. |
| 2. Have a track record of providing effective school to school support which has led to improved outcomes for pupils over a sustained period | • Clear evidence in your application and reference of providing support to another school which has led to improved outcomes for pupils.                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 3. Have the full support from the school’s Governing Body and a reference from a commissioner of school to school support | • Declaration within the online application that your chair of governors (or equivalent) supports the application, and  
  • A supportive reference from a commissioner of school to school support (refer to full list of referees above).                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

Eligibility criteria for national support schools (NSS)

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<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>How this should be demonstrated</th>
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<td>To be considered as an NSS, at least one school you are currently accountable for must:</td>
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| 4. Be judged to be at least good                                          | Your schools most recent Ofsted inspection² has judged the school to be:  
  • At least ‘Good’ for ‘Overall Effectiveness’, ‘Leadership and Management’ and ‘Teaching and learning’ or ‘Quality of Teaching’                                                                                   |

¹ Please see the Ofsted inspection criteria for substantive headship.  
² Please see the Ofsted inspection criteria for NSS.
5. Demonstrate sustained high pupil performance and progress over the last three years\(^3\)

- Department for Education performance data shows high levels of progress and attainment for all pupils and particular groups of pupils especially disadvantaged and low prior attaining pupils\(^4\), and

- Latest performance data demonstrates that the school is above the current floor standard\(^5\).

6. The capacity to support schools in challenging circumstances to improve

- Evidence that the school has strong senior and middle leaders with the capacity to provide support to schools in challenging circumstances for a minimum of 1-2 days per week\(^6\).

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**Eligibility criteria notes**

1. In exceptional circumstances, applications may be accepted from headteachers who have been in post for less than 3 years or are not named on the current school’s Ofsted report, if they can clearly demonstrate their contribution to improving their current or previous school. Applicants applying in this way will be dealt with on a case by case basis and DfE will verify the performance of the applicant’s previous school where applicable.

2. Ofsted inspections that will be considered are; Section 5, College Inspections, Independent School Inspections and School Inspection Service inspections. Monitoring inspections will not be considered.

3. ‘Consistently high levels of pupil performance and progress’ is broadly defined by DfE as attainment and progress measures being above the national averages in each of the last three years (validated results), and stable or rising. Pupils’ differing starting points will be taken into account and it is expected that disadvantaged pupils are also making and exceeding the expected progress compared with national figures.

4. Where a school is newly formed and has no public examination results by which to measure the school’s pupil performance and progress over 3 years, in exceptional circumstances newly formed schools may be eligible for designation. In such cases applicants will need to demonstrate that they meet all other criteria, and we may request further evidence regarding performance and progress.

5. Should the floor standards change during the application round; the new floor standard will be applied.

6. The ‘minimum time expectation’ for NLE deployment is between 1 and 2 days per week, however depending on circumstances and the type of support provided, it is common for the deployment to be more intensive. This could be up to full time for the NLE and/or NSS staff members, for a defined period of time, or permanent if the support leads to federation or academy sponsorship. Applicants will be required to outline their plans for engaging with and supporting other schools and demonstrate an understanding of the need for school to school support in their area.

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**Notes for independent school applicants**

Independent schools must have been judged ‘good’ by ISI or SIS in regards to:

- the quality of the pupils’ achievements
- their learning, attitudes and skills
- the contribution of teaching
- the quality of leadership and management

In addition, independent schools are required to cite evidence and/or show a commitment to collaborating with and supporting maintained schools.