

Dear Colleagues

Coronavirus

Colleagues continue to be affected by the impact of the closure and the reopening of their schools, and with inevitable consequences for NPQ tasks. During this period of disruption, we recognise that communication remains very important. It is also the case that information and advice may still continue to change regularly and that local situations may differ. The potential for confusion and mixed messages remains high. We ask for your patience and understanding during this extraordinary period.

We are committed to working together to maintain as much continuity of provision as possible. Things are, however, still different.

We have responded to and updated some of the more pressing questions below:

Will my work still be assessed?

Leadership East is working as usual, as far as staff health allows. If you are ready to, or close to being ready to submit for assessment, we suggest that you continue as planned and we will be ready to receive and assess submissions as usual.

What if my school closes again and I need my sponsor and head to sign off?

Where it has not been possible to collect a signature, please use one of two options:

- the signatory should scan or photograph their signature and send it electronically to you so that it can be pasted to the signature box on the submission form. Once you have done this, please ensure that you double-delete the email containing their signature and confirm with the sponsor.
- only in the very few cases where this is not possible, an email to assessment@cmatrust.net directly from the signatory would be acceptable. Emails **must** be named with the participant name as well as the sponsor/line manager name.

I can't get into school to complete my task. What should I do?

We are adopting, as far as we are permitted, a flexible and reasonable policy having consulted with the DfE. We already have a deferral policy ('Deferral form' accessible from the LMS). However, these are unprecedented times and our terms do not cover pandemic virus; if anyone has not been able to get into school to conduct their task/s for a prolonged period of time, it would be appropriate to apply to us for an extended timeline (which we are permitted by the DfE to consider) before deferral.

If you have an upcoming assessment window, and will not be able to meet the deadline, please send an email to assessment@cmatrust.net stating the reasons why, **we will need information about your particular barriers or difficulties, in order to account for any extended time given with the DfE.**

Please note that in the case of a deferral, it can be made retrospectively, and the 'clock stops' from when the deferral is granted. Please be aware that we can only authorise deferrals which will leave you time to submit, and re-submit twice if you fail, by 31st August 2022 as this is required under the current contract with the DfE.

NPQH Task 1:

Several participants have not been able to deliver and record their presentation to governors or equivalent and are otherwise nearly ready to submit in their booked assessment window. We advise you to arrange to conduct this using Zoom, or another suitable platform such as Skype. In the event that the virtual delivery of the presentation and the recording of it are not possible as evidence for criteria 3.3.3, the following options apply:

- give an account of the presentation that would have been given and how, up to that point, stakeholder views had been analysed and applied to your plans to communicate, negotiate or persuade. The sponsor should then verify this section.
- Email your presentation to the stakeholder group and receive emailed feedback. This should then be collated into one document to show responses and how you have used the feedback received.
- Record yourself giving the presentation (this can be uploaded as usual) and then seek feedback by emailing stakeholders.

NB: Given the word allocation, you may need to put this in the supporting documents rather than on the form and should add a note explaining that you were otherwise ready to submit, but this became impossible because of lockdown and the impossibility of accessing sufficient governors.

NPQH Task 2 (Placement):

If you have not been able to complete your 9-day placement for Task 2, this will not necessarily mean that you cannot submit for final assessment, although completion of both tasks is a requirement for the award of NPQH.

The DfE is aware of the impact that COVID-19 has had on NPQH participants' ability to complete task 2 in particular. Some flexibilities have been agreed with the National QA Agent: **NPQH participants will not need to undertake their 9 days placement face to face in school but will instead be able to undertake the entire placement activity relating to task 2 remotely.**

NPQEL

NPQEL participants can choose to focus their task 2 on coronavirus recovery, if they wish to do so. To that end, we have developed alternative criteria for sections 2.4.1–2.4.4 of the content and assessment framework to reference, which are available on the LMS.

As with NPQH, NPQEL participants can undertake what would usually be face-to-face activity remotely.

If any participant is still not able to complete their assessment task using these approved measures, they should contact assessment@cmatrust.net as soon as possible.

With other exceptional measures, you should note on the submission form that Leadership East has advised you to adopt this approach, and to the circumstances and manner in which you have completed your project, so that the assessor is fully aware of the context whilst they are assessing the submission. It should not be assumed that the assessor will use their professional judgement in your favour in these circumstances, unless you have been clear with them about the approach which you have taken, and why. **You can download the “accompanying note for assessment” form from the LMS homepage- <https://lms.cmat.training>. This note must be completed and submitted as a supporting document, if you have had to deviate from the expected requirements.**

N.B: The criteria for each content area must still be met in order to be successful at assessment. We can advise where you may be considering ways around the current challenges for your

assessment, and are likely to support and approve other approaches in consultation with the DfE and the National Quality Assurance Agent, as long as the criteria and framework for assessment are not compromised.

What is happening about Face-to-face days?

We are still keeping up to date with local situations, venues and national guidance, and as a result we have arranged for all sessions planned for the Autumn term to be conducted online. We are completing arrangements for these sessions and keeping in contact as our local delivery partners do the same. Your access to online materials is still available and we have uploaded some additional resources to support you. These can be found on the LMS, labelled as “workshops”.

The closure of my school has meant that my project didn't run for long enough. What should I do?

If school closure prevented you from running a project for the full two terms, you may be able to refer to evidence from a period of time immediately before your project began. Where a project has not quite lasted for two terms, you may have suitable evidence to refer to from before your start date. If you have not quite finished your project, we advise that you include in your writing-up a forecast of how you expect your project to end, based on the evidence you already have. If your project falls significantly short of two terms, you should complete it from when you returned to school, unless you were able to continue remotely. The cancellation of public examinations should not prevent you from submitting, as long as you use, for example: forecasted data, teacher assessment; calculated grades; surveys conducted online.

NB: We are taking the school closure date of 20th March 2020 as the end of the spring term. This means that the period between the start of the spring term in January 2020 and Friday 20th March 2020 will count as a full term.

I had planned to complete my project in July and I started at a new school in September. What should I do?

This will largely depend on your project and how close you were to completing it when your school closed.

If you were close to completing your project and any remaining evidence to be collected relates largely to pupil outcomes and an evaluation of the project's effectiveness, we suggest that you use calculated grades, teacher assessments/forecast or contact your current school for the information you need when this is available.

I need my sponsor statement but cannot get hold of them. What should I do?

If your sponsor is not able to provide verification, you should ask any more senior person who knows your work well and can verify the project is your own.

For NPQH Task 2 (placement) this could be a senior person at your placement school, such as the deputy headteacher or Chair of Governors.

I have only just started the programme and attended 1 or 2 face to face days, will I still have to complete within the 18 months timeframe?

The DfE has permitted a **6-month extension** for later cohorts to enable you to work on your projects once schools have reopened. We have applied this extension as a matter of course for Cohorts 6 (Autumn 2019 start) and 7 (Spring 2020 start), and therefore **you will not need to apply for this extra time**. You will have received a communication confirming this.

Some additional resources to support you in the absence of face to face days last term are on the LMS labelled as “workshops”.

Will I need to tell you that I am working on the online materials?

No. We can see who accesses which materials and so you do not need to inform us of what other work you are doing.

How much work should I have been completing during school closure?

Your priority as a key professional is to keep yourself safe and well, and to assist your school and its students in these difficult times – particularly now that schools are open again. As school leaders, most of you will already have additional workload arising from the pandemic. Therefore, your priorities lie elsewhere, and we understand that. Do what you are able to do and let us support you and meet the challenges to your qualification that the current situation throws at us. We have a long track record of accredited delivery and remain in frequent contact with the DfE.

I can't log-on to LMS and/or LEAP. Who do I contact?

In the first instance, conduct the following basic checks:

1. Are you using the correct username and password?
2. Are the username and password being spelt correctly, with caps lock off?
3. Have you tried using Google Chrome as a browser?
4. Are you using the correct site or address?

If none of these fix the problem, please email training@cmatrust.net We anticipate being very busy, so please also consult your participant and assessment handbooks, which often contain the information that is needed.

During this period, our team continue to work remotely as much as possible.

Can I contact my facilitator?

We have contacted all of our team members and delivery partners to make sure that they are implementing plans to keep in touch and to be accessible for you. Cluster groups have their own arrangements, and further information may be provided by clusters regarding ongoing support such as mentoring, online contact etc. and group facilitators/mentors will be making contact with you.

We ask you, as our colleagues and as school leaders, to please be considerate of the considerable pressures Leadership East and your cluster teams may be facing, due to the pandemic. Be assured that we are doing our utmost to continue provision in the best way that we can. We welcome you using the LMS discussions facility to keep in contact with fellow participants and facilitators.

However, we would ask that any concerns about the current situation, its effect on provision, and Leadership East's measures taken, be directed to us centrally to ensure that communications to all can be clear and accurate. Please get in touch with us at the centre: training@cmatrust.net

I have heard that another NPQ provider is using a different approach. I don't understand why you can't do the same.

Please bear with us. The situation is unique, and we all will be learning a lot during this period about how best to work with you. We have based these decisions on the best way forward in the context of how Leadership East works. We have been monitoring good practice throughout this time and will contact you should alternative or new approaches be introduced. Some additional supporting resources are available on the LMS labelled as “workshops”.

How will you keep me informed?

Our website will remain a very important medium <https://leadershipeast.org/>. Both the Leadership East website and the LMS will be updated with information as often as possible, and we will use the

usual e-mail methods as well as updating our website. Please ensure that we have your up to date contact details. If we are using your school email address, please ensure that you still access your inbox and inform us if this is not possible.

At all times we continue to be guided by the latest advice from the government, Public Health England and the local authorities. Queries over email to administrative staff will be answered, but we cannot guarantee that responses will be as timely as we would usually be able to manage. Unfortunately, at busy times it may not be possible to reach us first time by telephone.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your continued patience and understanding. Together, I am confident that we will continue to navigate this difficult period effectively. As the national picture changes, the information in this newsletter will continue to be updated or changed to meet circumstances.

In the meantime, take care of yourselves.

Best wishes

The Leadership East Team.