



28th April 2021

Dear Colleagues

Coronavirus

Whilst colleagues have returned to school-based working, participants of the NPQs continue to be affected by the pandemic – and during this extended period of disruption, we know that communication remains very important for us all. It is also the case that information and advice may still continue to change regularly and that local situations may differ over time. We shall continue to update these FAQs and to send out communications as soon as we receive updates from the DfE with regard to the NPQs – and especially assessment. We are grateful for your patience and understanding.

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:

Assessment

Will my work still be assessed?

Leadership East is working as usual. 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.

Circumstances in my school are preventing me from getting my sponsor and headteacher signatures.

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?

If you have not been able to get into school to conduct your task/s for a prolonged period of time, please contact Leadership East **as soon as possible to notify us – assessment@cmatrust.net**
Please note, the current contract between the DfE and all providers for NPQ provision ends on 31st August 2022. This means that we cannot approve any deferrals or extensions which would involve submitting for assessment after March 2022.

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 for assessment.**



Assessment Flexibilities for ALL programmes:

The DfE understands that the ongoing restrictions as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19) have exacerbated the challenges faced by some participants in undertaking the requisite activity to enable them to satisfy the criteria for completion of their final assessment projects.

In response the Department has agreed to put in place flexibilities to ensure that participants are not disadvantaged because of the impact of COVID-19 on schools.

Optional flexibility has been introduced to support participants, please see attached document: *Alternative Covid Criteria - DfE Assessment Flexibilities Overview*. This document will also be uploaded to the LMS.

PLEASE NOTE: All assessment forms have been updated to include the alternative assessment criteria (See attached and uploaded to the LMS).

NPQML NPQSL and NPQH

Flexibilities apply to those who, due to current restrictions, are unable to obtain or access current data due to the cancellation of exams including SAT's and GCSEs in academic years 19/20 and 20/21. This is designed to ensure participants can use a range of alternative data sources to successfully complete their assessment projects. The majority of the original task criteria for NPQML, NPQSL and NPQH will still apply, with the exception of the criteria, as set out in the table in the attached document - *Alternative Covid Criteria - DfE Assessment Flexibilities Overview*. These adjustments have been made to incorporate the optional data flexibility, and outline that participants will be able to use a range of data, including current and/or most recent (2019) internal and external data available, to inform their project and its outcomes. NPQML, NPQSL and NPQH participants can use the optional flexibilities to demonstrate how the design and intended outcomes of their project, will have a positive ongoing impact on pupil progress and attainment. It remains important for the participant to show how the anticipated outcomes would be achieved. Participants should discuss any questions or concerns with their facilitators and mentor if they have one in advance of starting their task where possible, or contact assessment@cmatrust.net if their facilitator cannot answer a query.

NPQH ONLY

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, please see attached document: *Alternative Covid Criteria - DfE Assessment Flexibilities Overview.*

Participants may find it difficult to present hard data in terms of project outcomes due to the COVID 19 situation and can use data that is not formal or external, as long as they can demonstrate improvement over time.

We understand that gathering substantial evidence to show leadership across a number of schools could be difficult in the current climate. Eliciting such information in the spirit of collaboration could be used as evidence showing the support of consistently high-quality teaching across a group of schools. Alternatively, if this were not available, participants would need to confidently express how, what, and why their findings could and would be scaled up to support improved teaching and learning across other schools.

You can also find further information on this on the LMS in the Essential Tasks learning area.

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, in the Optional Additional Documents area, 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.

The closure of my school has meant that my project won'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. **(Please see above and attached information on assessment flexibilities)**. If you are in any doubt as to whether your project will run for the required length of time, please contact assessment@cmatrust.net

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.

Face to Face Sessions and online content

What is happening about Face-to-face days?

We have arranged for all sessions planned for the summer term to be conducted online. Any change to this will be in line with national guidance.

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".

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 continues to work remotely as much as possible.

General

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.