

# **National Professional Qualifications**

## **Deferral and Withdrawal Policy**

**October 2025**

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| Date of last review | Owner             | Action                                                |
|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| October 2025        | Sebastion St John | Policy updated in line with new DfE deferral guidance |
|                     |                   |                                                       |
|                     |                   |                                                       |

## Introduction and Ethos

LLSE is committed to supporting all participants to complete their course and summative assessment within the original timescales for their cohort. LLSE and our partners support their course engagement and enjoyment by:

- having shared high expectations for professional development and partnership
- a thoughtful and carefully designed curriculum
- high quality professional development for facilitators and coaches
- the prominence of participant feedback in our bottom-up continuous quality improvement processes that ensure rapid improvements

There have been some key DfE policy changes (effective from November 2025) which are considered, form part of this policy and need to be understood by participants:

- New deferrals only permitted in extenuating circumstances (details below)
- Newly deferred participants (From November 2025) **must rejoin the next available cohort.**
- **Final deadline to return** will be the last viable cohort of this framework (expected to be November 2027). Please note – **no deferrals will be allowed in the November 2027 cohort.**
- Participants who have not returned by November 2027 will be withdrawn and will not carry their funding eligibility forward to a new NPQ commercial framework. These participants would need to apply for an NPQ in a future framework and check funding eligibility at the time of this new application.

We do however understand that there may be extenuating and exceptional circumstances which might affect a participant's ability to complete their course within the cohort timescale. The process of deferral or withdrawal is well-defined and must be formally supported by the participant's facilitator, their delivery partner and headteacher/chair of governors/trustees (for NPQH/EL) together with the relevant evidence.

A deferral may be available for those participants who have completed part of the course and need to defer the remaining part until a later date. If a participant is compelled to withdraw from the course altogether, current Department for Education guidance will not allow them to be funded for the same course again.

Participants may be able to interrupt (defer) their studies for the following defined extenuating or exceptional circumstances. Evidence may be requested if further evidence is required to consider the deferral request. **Those deferring will be expected to rejoin the next available cohort.**

## **Deferral circumstances:**

1. Bereavement
2. Long-term health or pregnancy related
3. Parental/carers responsibilities
4. Significant changes to employment e.g. Loss of job, change of school, instruction to defer by school leadership
5. Personal circumstances e.g. Family breakdown, housing instability, victim of crime

# NPQ Deferral and Withdrawal Policy

**Withdrawal circumstances** (participants will not receive funding for the same programme again):

1. Insufficient capacity to undertake programme
- 2a. Personal reason: maternity leave
- 2b. Personal reason: serious illness that would require the participant to take time off work and would impact of their ability to fully engage and complete the course within the original cohort timescale
- 2c. Personal reason: health related issues/long term illness that impacts on the participant's ability to fully engage and complete the course within the original cohort timescale
3. Personal reason: moving school
4. Personal reason: other, e.g., bereavement that would require the participant to take time off work and would impact of their ability to fully engage and complete the course within the original cohort timescale
5. Insufficient capacity
6. Change in career/development priorities
7. Change in school circumstances
8. Change in school leadership resulting in an instruction to the participant to defer/withdraw

Where the reasons for deferral are deemed not to be extenuating or exceptional, LLSE and the delivery partner will provide additional support to enable the participant to successfully continue with their studies e.g., delivery partners sourcing 'in-school' coaches from within their networks and partnerships, additional support from facilitators, workload et al. Evidenced exceptional and extenuating circumstances will be considered by LLSE and the participant's delivery partner on a case-by-case basis. The list provided as examples in this policy are not intended to be exhaustive. Participants should expect to receive a response within ten working days of submission of the request to defer or withdraw. Any reimbursements are calculated on a case-by-case basis and in line with the current DfE payment schedules.

# NPQ Deferral and Withdrawal Policy

## Processes

The choice to defer must be a well-considered one, because moving cohort may have unintended consequences on a participant's professional development. It may not be easy to integrate into the already-established community of practice of an existing cohort. Since those discussions support a significant proportion of a participant's NPQ learning, the impact should not be underestimated. LLSE curricula are intentionally designed to support the very best and most effective professional development; a process at the heart of which is expertly directed and challenged peer discussion and learning.

It is vital that a participant is supported to consider the options extremely carefully. It is crucial that those who are working with, and supporting, the participant is fully cognisant of their considerations and potential barriers to their learning.

# NPQ Deferral and Withdrawal Policy

**Table 1: Deferral process**

| Stages                                                               | Process                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Participant is starting to think about interrupting their studies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Discusses with facilitator to identify the issue(s) ·</li> </ul> <p>Delivery partner informed and kept up to date</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Consideration as to whether any of the issues are defined as extenuating or exceptional</li> <li>· Individualised facilitator support and guidance provided including clear instructions that a deferral will mean the participant returns to the next available cohort or there can be no deferrals of the November 2027 cohort.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 2. Participant is planning to interrupt their studies and defer      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Discusses with facilitator to identify the issue(s) ·</li> </ul> <p>Delivery partner informed and kept up to date</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Consideration as to whether any of the issues are defined as extenuating or exceptional (see form – appendix I)</li> <li>· Delivery partner provides the participant with deferral and withdrawal policy and discusses the options with the participant, supporting them to continue where possible</li> <li>· Participant discusses with headteacher (or Headteacher/chair of governors/trustees for NPQH/EL)</li> <li>· Participant signs declaration form (appendix I), citing the exceptional/ extenuating circumstance, providing evidence if necessary, and expected restart date. Returns form to their delivery partner.</li> <li>· Delivery partner/cluster administrator keeps coach and facilitator informed</li> <li>· Delivery partner discusses issues with the participant and offers further support/advice.</li> <li>· Delivery partner submits deferral request form to LLSE (<a href="mailto:enquiries@llse.org.uk">enquiries@llse.org.uk</a>)</li> <li>· LLSE deferral board meets to discuss the request.</li> <li>· Outcome shared with participant and delivery partner/cluster administrator within 10 days of the request</li> <li>· Delivery partner/cluster administrator informs headteacher, coach and facilitator</li> <li>· Records updated with dates and DfE informed by LLSE</li> <li>· One month before recommencement delivery partner contacts the participant to ensure that sufficient support is in place to ensure successful completion of the course.</li> </ul> |

# NPQ Deferral and Withdrawal Policy

**Table 2: Withdrawal process**

| Stages                                                               | Process                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Participant is starting to think about interrupting their studies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Discusses with facilitator to identify the issue(s)</li> <li>· Delivery partner informed and kept up to date</li> <li>· Individualised facilitator support and guidance provided</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 2. Participant is planning to withdraw from the course               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Discusses with facilitator and coach to identify the issue(s)</li> <li>· Delivery partner informed and kept up to date by facilitator</li> <li>· Delivery partner provides the participant with deferral and withdrawal policy and discusses the options with the participant, supporting them to continue where possible</li> <li>· Participant discusses with Headteacher (or Headteacher/chair of governors/trustees for NPQH/EL)</li> <li>· Participant signs declaration form (appendix II) and returns form to their delivery partner.</li> <li>· Delivery partner/cluster administrator keeps coach and facilitator informed</li> <li>· Delivery partner discusses issues with the participant and offers further support/advice.</li> <li>· Delivery partner submits withdrawal request form to LLSE (<a href="mailto:enquiries@llse.org.uk">enquiries@llse.org.uk</a>)</li> <li>· Delivery partner/cluster administrator informs headteacher, coach and facilitator</li> <li>· Records updated with dates and DfE informed by LLSE</li> <li>· Participant will not receive funding for same course again</li> </ul> |

# NPQ Deferral and Withdrawal Policy

## Appendix I: Deferral Request Form

|         |  |             |  |
|---------|--|-------------|--|
| Name:   |  |             |  |
| School: |  | NPQ course: |  |

### Extenuating/exceptional circumstance - please tick to indicate

|                                                                                                                                                   |  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| 1) Bereavement                                                                                                                                    |  |
| 2) Long-term health or pregnancy related                                                                                                          |  |
| 3) Parental/Carer responsibilities                                                                                                                |  |
| 4) Significant changes to employment                                                                                                              |  |
| 5) Personal circumstances                                                                                                                         |  |
| <p>Please provide information about the extenuating or exceptional circumstance highlighted above. Evidence may be requested at a later date.</p> |  |



# NPQ Deferral and Withdrawal Policy

|                                                                                                                                                                                    |  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Next restart date (to be confirmed by delivery partner nearer the restart date):                                                                                                   |  |
| I declare that this information given above is a true account of my circumstance and that my Headteacher (or Headteacher, chair of governors/trustees for NPQH/EL) is fully aware. |  |
| Participant signature:                                                                                                                                                             |  |
| Date:                                                                                                                                                                              |  |

Please return to your delivery partner

## For LLSE office use only

|                                            |  |
|--------------------------------------------|--|
| LLSE recommendation                        |  |
| Elements of NPQ completed before deferral: |  |
| Additional notes/ comments:                |  |
| Date of individual's deferral:             |  |
| Date DfE informed:                         |  |
| Clawback amount:                           |  |
| Additional notes/ comments:                |  |

# NPQ Deferral and Withdrawal Policy

## Appendix II: Withdrawal Request Form

|         |  |             |  |
|---------|--|-------------|--|
| Name:   |  |             |  |
| School: |  | NPQ course: |  |

### Reason for withdrawal - please tick to indicate

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| 1) Insufficient capacity to undertake programme                                                                                                                                                                      |  |
| 2a) Personal reason: maternity leave                                                                                                                                                                                 |  |
| 2b) Personal reason: serious illness that would require the participant to take time off work and would impact of their ability to fully engage and complete the course within the original cohort timescale         |  |
| 2c) Personal reason: health related issues/long term illness that impacts on the participant's ability to fully engage and complete the course within the original cohort timescale                                  |  |
| 3) Personal reason: moving school                                                                                                                                                                                    |  |
| 4) Personal reason: other, e.g., bereavement that would require the participant to take time off work and would impact of their ability to fully engage and complete the course within the original cohort timescale |  |
| 5) Insufficient capacity                                                                                                                                                                                             |  |
| 6) Change in developmental or personal priorities                                                                                                                                                                    |  |
| 7) Change in school circumstances                                                                                                                                                                                    |  |
| 8) Change in school leadership resulting in an instruction to the participant to defer/ withdraw                                                                                                                     |  |

# NPQ Deferral and Withdrawal Policy

I declare that this information given above is a true account of my circumstance and that my Headteacher (or Headteacher, chair of governors/trustees for NPQH/EL) is fully aware.

Participant  
signature:

Date:

Please return to your delivery partner

## For LLSE office use only

|                                              |  |
|----------------------------------------------|--|
| LLSE recommendation                          |  |
| Elements of NPQ completed before withdrawal: |  |
| Additional notes/ comments:                  |  |
| Date of individual's withdrawal:             |  |
| Date DfE informed:                           |  |
| Clawback amount:                             |  |
| Additional notes/ comments:                  |  |