



Department
for Education

National Professional Qualification (NPQ): Leading Literacy Framework

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Summary

About this guidance

This publication provides guidance from the Department for Education (DfE). It sets out the knowledge, skills and behaviours that will be developed by teachers when they participate in the National Professional Qualification for Leading Literacy (NPQLL).

Who is this guidance for?

This guidance is for:

- teachers applying for, or participating in, this NPQ
- school leaders who are encouraging staff to undertake this NPQ
- organisations developing and delivering NPQs.

Introduction

Transforming the support and development offer for teachers and school leaders throughout their career

Teachers are the foundation of the education system – there are no great schools without great teachers. At the heart of great teaching and great school leadership is a shared, evidence-informed understanding of what works.

Delivering on the commitments set out in the [Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy](#), we have transformed our training and support for teachers at all stages of their career.

We revised our Initial Teacher Training (ITT) Core Content Framework in 2019 and, through the implementation of the Early Career Framework (ECF), are now supporting teachers in the first years of their career with a structured two-year induction into the profession.

Building on this, our priority is to help all our teachers and school leaders continuously develop their knowledge and skills throughout their career so every child in every classroom in every school gets a world-class start in life.

The National Professional Qualifications (NPQs) provide training and support for teachers and school leaders at all levels, from those who want to develop expertise in high-quality teaching practice, such as behaviour management, to those leading multiple schools across trusts. We are also now expanding the suite of NPQs to include early years.

The NPQ frameworks continue the robust method of design and development, building on the evidence base and expert guidance already established in the ECF and the ITT Core Content Framework. They complete the golden thread, running from initial teacher training through to school leadership, rooting teacher and school leader development in the best available evidence and collective wisdom of the profession.

The frameworks reflect the [Teachers' Standards](#) and [Headteachers' Standards](#) to ensure coherency with the requirements already used by the teaching profession.

The 2021 suite of National Professional Qualifications

NPQs are a set of prestigious professional qualifications, already widely recognised by the sector. They are voluntary and are designed to support the professional development of teachers and school leaders at all levels, across primary and secondary schools.

Three existing NPQs in Senior Leadership, Headship and Executive Leadership have been reformed to ensure they are underpinned by the latest and best evidence. Our NPQ in Middle Leadership has been replaced with three new NPQs for teachers and school leaders who want to broaden and deepen their expertise in specialist areas.

The 2021 NPQs comprise the:

- **National Professional Qualification for Leading Teacher Development (NPQLTD)** – for teachers who have, or are aspiring to have, responsibilities for leading the development of other teachers in their school. They may have responsibilities for the development of all teachers across a school or specifically trainees or teachers who are early in their career.
- **National Professional Qualification for Leading Behaviour and Culture (NPQLBC)** – for teachers who have, or are aspiring to have, responsibilities for leading behaviour and/or supporting pupil wellbeing in their school.
- **National Professional Qualification for Leading Teaching (NPQLT)** – for teachers who have, or are aspiring to have, responsibilities for leading teaching in a subject, year group, key stage or phase.
- **National Professional Qualification for Senior Leadership (NPQSL)** – for school leaders who are, or are aspiring to be, a senior leader with cross-school responsibilities.
- **National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH)** – for school leaders who are, or are aspiring to be, a headteacher or head of school with responsibility for leading a school.
- **National Professional Qualification for Executive Leadership (NPQEL)** – for school leaders who are, or are aspiring to be, an executive headteacher or have a school trust CEO role with responsibility for leading several schools.

Reforming the National Professional Qualification content frameworks for 2021

In collaboration with an Expert Advisory Group, we consulted extensively with the sector to design the reformed suite of NPQs for 2021. This work gathered invaluable input from teachers, school and trust leaders, academics, and experts.

The frameworks set out two types of content. Within each section, key evidence statements (“Learn that...”) have been drawn from current high-quality evidence from the UK and overseas. This evidence includes high-quality reviews and syntheses, including meta-analyses and rigorous individual studies. In addition, the NPQ frameworks provide practical guidance on the skills that teachers and school/trust leaders should be supported to develop. Practice statements (“Learn how to...”) draw both on the best

available educational research and on additional guidance from the Expert Advisory Group and other sector representatives.

The NPQs have been designed around how to support all pupils to succeed. This includes those pupils identified within the four areas of need set out in the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice, and children in need of help and protection as identified in the Children in Need Review.

The EEF has independently reviewed the frameworks to ensure they draw on the best available evidence and that this evidence has been interpreted with fidelity. References for evidence underpinning each section are provided at the end of the framework.

The NPQ frameworks have also been reviewed by a wide range of sector bodies including unions and special educational needs and disability experts.

National Professional Qualification available from 2022

From autumn 2022 two further NPQs will be available. They build on the new pathway for teacher and leader development and progression, accessible at all stages of a teacher or leader's career. The methodology for the development of the content frameworks for these NPQs remains the same as for the 2021 suite, and the EEF has once again independently reviewed them to ensure they draw on the best available evidence and that this evidence has been interpreted with fidelity.

The 2022 NPQs comprise the:

- **National Professional Qualification for Leading Literacy (NPQLL)** – for teachers who have, or are aspiring to have, responsibilities for leading literacy across a school, year group, key stage or phase.
- **National Professional Qualification for Early Years Leadership (NPQEYL)** – for leaders qualified to at least Level 3 with a full and relevant qualification¹ who are, or are aspiring to be, managers of Private, Voluntary and Independent nurseries, headteachers of school-based and maintained nurseries, or childminders with leadership responsibilities.

Professionals Leading Literacy

Leading literacy teaching is complex. Although the role varies, many phase leaders, key stage leaders, and heads of department (or similar titles) with responsibilities for leading literacy are considered to be part of the middle leadership team. They often contribute to

¹ "Full and relevant qualifications" are defined as qualifications that demonstrate depth and level of learning appropriate to specified outcomes of full early years, childcare or playwork qualifications. The qualification should have valid, reliable assessment and awarding procedures and must include an element of assessed performance evidence.

strategic school development, develop and lead a team of teachers, and their work is focused on supporting effective teaching of literacy across the school.

Literacy leaders need to have a deep understanding of the fundamental importance of literacy and recognise the influence it has on pupils' future academic achievement, wellbeing and success in life. An excellent literacy leader will have expertise across a number of specialist areas related to their role (e.g. developing pupils' spoken language) and a passion for literature that they want to share with the school community.

Literacy leaders also need to have a deep understanding of the school and wider community in which they work, enabling them to share their expertise effectively. They must understand how to prioritise professional development to ensure their colleagues have the knowledge, skills, understanding and professional support to teach reading and writing effectively. They must work with their colleagues, collectively enabling their school to keep improving (e.g. implementation). They must understand the relationship between these different domains, how they can change over time and how to contribute to a culture and conditions in which staff and pupils are able to thrive, all while maintaining the highest professional conduct as set out in the Teachers' Standards.

This framework is a codification of essential knowledge, skills and concepts that underpin successful leadership of teaching literacy. It sets out what those leading literacy teaching should know and be able to do within the specialist areas related to their role and in relation to putting new approaches into practice. Providers of this qualification will design a curriculum that draws on and blends sections from across this framework with the professional standards that sit alongside it, and which is responsive to the needs of the participants who are taking the course.

The course curriculum should aim to develop expertise that is flexible and allows participants to respond to the challenges they will encounter in a range of contexts. It should also provide fellow professionals with a network, common language and access to a continuous debate through which the collective expertise of our education system can grow and develop. For the National Professional Qualification for Leading Literacy, the use of subject-specific, phase-specific, or domain-specific exemplification materials should be embedded into the course content to enable professionals to develop expert teaching practice within their relevant context.

Updating the National Professional Qualification content frameworks

The NPQ frameworks will be kept under review as the evidence base evolves. As in any profession, the evidence base is not static and research insights develop and progress.



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National Professional Qualification (NPQ): Leading Literacy Framework

This qualification is for teachers who have, or are aspiring to have, responsibilities for leading literacy across a school, year group, key stage or phase

One – Teaching

Participants will be effective teachers who apply a range of knowledge and skills to teaching, including those set out in the [Early Career Framework](#).

Two – Developing Language

Learn that...	Learn how to...
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The secure development of pupils' language and vocabulary is a crucial factor in improving pupils' academic success, particularly in literacy. 2. Pupils from more socially disadvantaged backgrounds are disproportionately more likely to be affected by language difficulties when they enter school. 3. Regardless of subject specialism, all teachers can develop pupils' language skills. High-quality classroom discussion can support pupils to articulate key ideas, consolidate understanding and extend their vocabulary. 4. Collaborative activity that involves pair and group discussion can increase outcomes when it is carefully planned, well-designed and structured, and guided by teachers. 5. Teachers should be effectively supported to assess pupils' individual language needs and to identify appropriate interventions. 6. Short-term oral language interventions that boost spoken vocabulary can improve outcomes for pupils who require additional support, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds. 7. It is important to teach Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary incrementally from reception through to key stages 3 and 4. 	<p>Support colleagues to develop all pupils' language capability and wider understanding of language by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explaining how to model and develop high-quality pupil talk and listening and ensuring high-quality talk is prioritised in the classroom. ● Identifying pupils whose language learning difficulties might have a significant impact on their ability to access the curriculum and seeking specialised language support. ● Planning and modelling structured collaborative activities that allow pupils to articulate their understanding and teachers to probe and remedy their misconceptions. ● Providing scaffolds for pupil discussion to increase the focus and rigour of dialogue. ● Ensuring teachers use a range of structured questioning to improve the quality of class discussion (e.g. to check pupils' prior knowledge, assess understanding and break down problems). ● Embedding language development into the curriculum by ensuring that subject-specific vocabulary is planned across the curriculum, so that it is linked with prior knowledge, continually reinforced, and builds incrementally as pupils progress both within and between key stages.

Three – Developing Reading

Learn that...	Learn how to...
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reading comprises two broad elements: word reading and language comprehension. Both elements must be addressed to ensure pupils become skilled readers. Systematic synthetic phonics is the most effective approach for teaching pupils to decode, including older pupils struggling with decoding. 2. Pedagogical skills and content knowledge are important for teaching phonics; teachers should be supported using evidence-based professional development to teach early reading. 3. Fluent reading supports comprehension because pupils' cognitive resources are freed from focusing on word recognition and can be redirected towards comprehending the text. 4. Through regular, monitored reading, pupils' orthographic development improves, leading to fluency. 5. Motivation and engagement among pupils are important for progress in literacy. By creating a culture which puts reading and book discussions at the heart of every day teachers can develop persistence and positive attitudes to reading. 6. Introducing pupils to a wide range of texts supports the development of pupils' reading comprehension by extending both their knowledge and their skills. 7. Regular exposure to teacher-read high-quality texts that are above instructional level can help extend vocabulary 	<p>Support colleagues to develop all pupils' word reading by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensuring that the school uses systematic synthetic phonics taught with fidelity, when teaching early reading or when older pupils are struggling with decoding. ● Ensuring pupils are supported to read aloud accurately books that are consistent with their developing phonic knowledge and that do not require them to use other strategies to work out words. ● Ensuring pupils who have learnt how to decode develop fluency through regular and monitored reading, and texts are read aloud to pupils who are unable to decode. ● Promoting the effective use of assessment of reading across the school e.g. identifying where pupils are struggling in word reading, reading fluency or language comprehension and when pupils require additional targeted support. <p>Support colleagues to develop pupils' reading comprehension across the school by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Developing pupils' ability to read aloud with prosody to support the development of pupils' language and vocabulary. ● Supporting colleagues to improve reading comprehension (e.g. through the modelling of prediction, questioning, clarifying, summarising and activating prior knowledge). ● Promoting the importance of domain and contextual knowledge and the role of foundation subjects in supporting

development, especially when read with prosody.

8. Practice is an integral part of the effective teaching of reading; ensuring pupils have repeated opportunities to practise, with appropriate monitoring, guidance and support, increases success.
9. Background knowledge and vocabulary are essential components of reading comprehension.
10. Reading comprehension can be supported by modelling approaches that pupils can apply to both monitor and overcome barriers to comprehension.

reading.

Champion reading across the school by:

- Establishing timetabled, everyday reading practices in school, ensuring consistent, school-wide prioritisation of reading.
- Maximising opportunities for adults to read with and to pupils, and for pupils to read both aloud and quietly, as well as engage in paired and shared reading.
- Building a reading culture that promotes reading for pleasure and the reading of challenging texts at school and home.
- Ensuring the availability of appropriate and subject-specific texts (including a range of genres, informational texts and high-quality fiction that reflect the diversity of pupils' lives).
- Explaining the increasingly specialised and subject-specific nature of texts, and related reading, writing and talk as pupils progress through school, emphasising the importance of disciplinary literacy.

Four – Developing Writing

Learn that...	Learn how to...
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Considering purpose and audience can support pupils' writing; this can include pupils themselves being the audience to clarify and organise understanding. 2. Writing is complex and can place a heavy burden on working memory because it requires pupils to combine transcription skills, text generation and the use of executive functions (e.g. to plan and monitor their writing). 3. Promoting the transcriptional writing skills of spelling, handwriting and sentence construction that need to become automatic (e.g. writing simple sentences from memory dictated by the teacher) enables pupils to concentrate on writing composition. 4. To develop accurate spelling, pupils should be explicitly taught rather than simply tested. Teaching spelling that is related to current content being studied is likely to encourage active use of new spellings in pupils' writing. 5. Explicitly teaching accurate letter formation can improve the quality, length and fluency of pupils' writing. Focusing on the speed of pupils' writing as well as the accuracy is important as this improves handwriting fluency. 6. Regular and substantial practice is essential for improving handwriting fluency. Teachers can support pupils to practise purposefully by providing effective feedback and should ensure pupils are motivated and fully engaged in improving their handwriting. 	<p>Support colleagues to develop pupils' fluent written transcription and sentence construction skills by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensuring colleagues know both how to explicitly and systematically teach spelling (underpinned by phonic knowledge) so that pupils develop accuracy and automaticity, and how to teach pupils to understand the role of morphology and etymology and the relationships between meaning and spellings where these are relevant. ● Planning and modelling a range of spelling strategies including phonic approaches, analogy and identifying tricky parts of a word. ● Modelling to colleagues how to teach sentence construction to pupils in order to develop sentence-level mastery. ● Promoting the effective and careful teaching of letter formation and joined-up handwriting and ensuring pupils are taught incrementally and systematically. ● Ensuring pupils undertake regular, purposeful practice of letter formation and transcription (e.g. through dictating words to novice writers), and that colleagues give specific and accurate feedback and guidance to pupils on improving these skills. ● Promoting the effective use of assessment across the school, identifying where pupils are struggling in writing and when pupils require specialist writing support.

<ol style="list-style-type: none">7. Pupils can benefit from explicit teaching about the structure of texts. Through modelling structures of different types of texts teachers can support the learning of how texts are formed.8. Pupils' writing can be improved by teaching them strategies to plan and monitor their own writing.9. Scaffolding can support pupils while writing but should be gradually reduced as pupil expertise increases.	<p>Support colleagues to teach pupils to use strategies for planning and monitoring their writing by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Sharing approaches to improve pupils' writing, such as breaking down complex writing tasks, scaffolding, and combining reading and writing tasks.● Modelling the use of oral rehearsal to vocalise text, practise shaping sentences, support the process of composing text and co-constructing text to support pupils to develop their writing (including academic writing) in all subjects.● Ensuring pupils are given wide-ranging and purposeful opportunities for practising writing and spelling.● Supporting staff to teach planning, editing and reviewing techniques to achieve whole-text level and sentence-level mastery.
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Five – Professional Development

Learn that...	Learn how to...
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teaching quality is a crucial factor in raising pupil attainment. 2. Helping teachers improve through evidence-based professional development that is explicitly focused on improving classroom teaching can be a cost-effective way to improve pupils' academic outcomes when compared with other interventions, and can narrow the disadvantage-attainment gap. 3. Effective professional development is likely to involve a lasting change in teachers' capabilities or understanding so that their teaching changes. 4. Professional development should be developed using a clear theory of change, where facilitators understand what the intended educational outcomes for teachers are and how these will subsequently impact pupil outcomes. Ideally, they should check whether teachers learn what was intended. 5. Whilst professional development may need to be sustained over time, what the time is used for is more important than the amount. 6. More effective professional development is likely to be designed to build on the existing knowledge, skills and understanding of participants. 7. The content of professional development programmes should be based on the best available evidence on effective pedagogies and classroom interventions and 	<p>Contribute to effective professional development linked to teaching, curriculum and assessment across the school by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Aligning professional development priorities with wider school improvement priorities and focussing on a shared responsibility for improving outcomes for all pupils. ● Making use of well-designed frameworks and resources instead of creating new resources (e.g. sources of subject knowledge, the Early Career Framework and associated core induction programme for early career teachers, ITT Core Content Framework, suite of National Professional Qualifications,). ● Ensuring that time is protected for teachers to plan, test and implement new, evidence-informed ideas. ● Developing a team of colleagues who can facilitate a range of professional development approaches. ● Ensuring that colleagues are able to continually develop specialist subject, phase and domain expertise. ● Making reasonable adjustments that are well-matched to teacher needs (e.g. to content, resources and venue). ● Ensuring that any professional development time is used productively and that colleagues perceive the relevance to their work.

aim to enhance capabilities and understanding in order to improve pupil outcomes.

8. Teachers are more likely to improve if they feel that they are working within a supportive professional environment, where both trust and high professional standards are maintained.
9. Supportive environments include having the time and resource to undertake relevant professional development and collaborate with peers, and the provision of feedback to enable teachers to improve. They also include receiving support from school leadership, both in addressing concerns and in maintaining standards for pupil behaviour.
10. Professional development is likely to be more effective when design and delivery involves specialist expertise from a range of sources. This may include internal or external expertise.
11. Teacher developers should choose activities that suit the aims and context of their professional development programme. Successful models have included regular, expert-led conversations about classroom practice, teacher development groups, and structured interventions. However, these activities do not work in all circumstances and the model should fit the educational aims, content and context of the programme.
12. All schools with early career teachers undertaking statutory induction must adhere to the regulations and relevant statutory guidance.
13. School staff with disabilities may require reasonable adjustments; working closely with these staff to

Plan, conduct, and support colleagues to conduct, regular, expert-led conversations (which could be referred to as mentoring or coaching) about teaching by:

- Building a relationship of trust and mutual respect between the individuals involved.
- Tailoring the conversation to the expertise and needs of the individual (e.g. adapting conversations to be more or less facilitative, dialogic or directive).
- Using approaches including observation of teaching or a related artefact (e.g. videos, assessment materials, research, lesson plans), listening, facilitating reflection and discussion through the asking of clear and intentional questions, and receiving actionable feedback with opportunities to test ideas and practise implementation of new approaches.
- Where appropriate, creating opportunities to co-observe a lesson segment, exploring and modelling what a teacher with a particular area of expertise sees and thinks.

Avoid common teacher assessment pitfalls by designing approaches that:

- Ensure formative assessment tasks are linked to intended outcomes.
- Draw conclusions about what teachers have learned by reviewing patterns of performance over a number of assessments.
- Use multiple methods of data collection in order to make inferences about teacher quality.

understand barriers and identify effective approaches is essential.

Six – Implementation

One of the characteristics of effective schools, in addition to *what* they implement, is *how* they put those approaches into practice. This section sets out some important principles of implementation: the process of making, and acting on, effective evidence-informed decisions. The principles and activities can be applied to a range of different school improvement decisions - programmes or practices; whole-school or targeted approaches; internally or externally generated ideas. The statements should be treated as guiding principles and activities, rather than as a rigid set of steps.

Learn that...	Learn how to...
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implementation is an ongoing process that must adapt to context over time, rather than a single event. It involves the application of specific implementation activities and principles over an extended period (e.g. implementation planning, ongoing monitoring). 2. Successful implementation requires expert knowledge of the approach that is being implemented and the related area of practice (e.g. behaviour), which is shared amongst staff. 3. Implementation should involve repurposing existing processes and resources (e.g. governance, data collection) rather than creating a separate set of procedures. 4. Effective implementation begins by accurately diagnosing the problem and making evidence-informed decisions on what to implement. 5. Thorough preparation is important: time and care spent planning, communicating and resourcing the desired changes provides the foundation for successful delivery. Teachers and leaders should keep checking how ready 	<p>Plan and execute implementation in stages by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensuring that implementation is a structured process where school leaders actively plan, prepare, deliver and embed changes. ● Making a small number of meaningful strategic changes and pursuing these diligently, prioritising appropriately. ● Reviewing and stopping ineffective practices before implementing new ones. <p>Make the right choices on what to implement by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identifying a specific area for improvement using a robust diagnostic process, focusing on the problem that needs solving, rather than starting with a solution. ● Providing credible interpretations of reliable data that focus on pupils' knowledge and understanding. ● Examining current approaches, how they need to change and the support required to do so. ● Adopting new approaches based on both internal and

their colleagues are to make the planned changes.

6. Implementing an approach with fidelity (i.e. as intended) increases the chance of it impacting positively on school practice and pupil outcomes. Any approach should specify which features of the approach need to be adopted closely and where there is scope for adaptation.
7. A combination of integrated activities is likely to be needed to support implementation (e.g. training, monitoring, feedback) rather than any single activity. Follow-on support (e.g. through high-quality coaching) is key to embedding new skills and knowledge developed during initial training.
8. Delivery of a new approach is a learning process – expect challenges but aim for continuous improvement. Monitoring implementation is an essential tool in identifying, and acting on, problems and solutions.
9. The confidence to make good implementation decisions is derived, in part, from confidence in the data on which those decisions are based. Reliable monitoring and evaluation enable schools to make well-informed choices, and to see how their improvement efforts are impacting on teacher knowledge, classroom practices and pupil outcomes.
10. A school's capacity to implement an approach is rarely static (e.g. staff leave, contexts change). Sustained implementation requires leaders to keep supporting and rewarding the appropriate use of an approach and check it is still aligned with the overall strategy and context.
11. Implementation benefits from dedicated but distributed school leadership. Senior leaders should provide a clear

external evidence of what has (and has not) worked before (e.g. pupil outcome data and research-based guidance).

- Ensuring it is suitable for the school context, recognising the parameters within which the change will operate (e.g. school policies) and where the school is in its development trajectory (e.g. addressing any significant behaviour problems would be an immediate priority).
- Assessing and adapting plans based on the degree to which colleagues are ready to implement the approach (e.g. current staff motivation and expertise).

Prepare appropriately for the changes to come by:

- Being explicit about what will be implemented, and the overall desired outcomes.
- Specifying the elements of the approach that appear critical to its success (i.e. the 'active ingredients') and communicating expectations around these with clarity.
- Developing a clear, logical and well-specified implementation plan, and using this plan to build collective understanding and ownership of the approach.
- Using an integrated set of implementation activities that work at different levels in the school (e.g. individual teachers, whole-school changes).

Deliver changes by:

- Managing expectations and encouraging 'buy-in' until positive signs of changes emerge.
- Monitoring implementation (including by clearly assigning and following up on the completion of critical tasks) and

vision and direction for the changes to come. At the same time, implementation is a complex process that requires feedback from staff and shared leadership responsibilities.

12. Implementation processes are influenced by, but also influence, school climate and culture. Implementation is easier when staff feel trusted to try new things and make mistakes, safe in the knowledge that they will be supported with resources, training, and encouragement to keep improving.

using this information to tailor and improve the approach over time (e.g. identifying a weak area of understanding and providing further training).

- Reinforcing initial training with expert follow-on support within the school.
- Prioritising the 'active ingredients' of the approach until they are securely understood and implemented, and then, if needed, introducing adaptations.

Sustain changes by:

- Using reliable monitoring and evaluation to review how the implementation activities are meeting the intended objectives and continue to align with school improvement priorities.
- Continuing to model, acknowledge, support, recognise and reward good approaches.
- Treating scale-up of an approach as a new implementation process (e.g. from one department to another).

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