



National College for  
Teaching & Leadership

# **National Award for SEN Co-ordination**

## **Learning Outcomes**

FINAL

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## Introduction

The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (2013/14) requires governing bodies of maintained mainstream schools and the proprietors of academy schools (including free schools) to ensure that there is a qualified teacher designated as Special Educational Needs (SEN) co-ordinator (SENCO) for the school.

The Code of Practice envisages that the SENCO will provide leadership and professional guidance to colleagues and will work closely with staff, parents and carers, and other agencies. It challenges SENCOs to promote person-centred, inclusive, practice in which the interests and needs of pupils with SEN and/or disabilities are at the heart of everything that they do.

The SENCO should be aware of the provision in the Local Offer and be able to work with professionals providing a support role to the family to ensure that children with SEN receive appropriate support and high quality teaching, make at least good progress and achieve good outcomes.

Where a SENCO appointed after 1<sup>st</sup> September 2008 has not previously been the SENCO at that or any other relevant school for a total period of more than twelve months, they must achieve the National Award for Special Educational Needs Co-ordination within 3 years of appointment.

Schools must satisfy themselves that their SENCO is equipped for the role. They will decide how best to secure and fund appropriately accredited training within the rubric of nationally agreed learning outcomes that provide the framework within which to address key aspects of the SENCO role while taking account of the local context. At the same time, training providers are expected to use the learning outcomes as a basis upon which to develop, validate and deliver programmes that respond to schools' needs.

The Award must be validated at post-graduate level by a recognized awarding body. Since it was first introduced, approved providers have been required to validate the Award at masters-level and offer 60 credits. Experience to date suggests that it would be difficult to achieve the aims of the Award at a lower level.

The Masters degree characteristics (QAA, 2010) provide the benchmark that training providers use in designing masters-level programmes. In particular, the exemplar for a *professional/practice masters* suggests that graduates should typically have:

- i) Subject-specific attributes:
  - An in-depth knowledge and understanding of their profession, informed by current practice, scholarship and research, including a critical awareness of current issues and developments in the subject and the profession;
  - The ability to apply research to professional situations, both practical and theoretical;
  - The ability to use a range of techniques and research methods applicable to their professional activities.
- ii) Generic attributes (including skills relevant to an employment-setting) that include the ability to:
  - Use initiative and take responsibility;
  - Solve problems in creative and innovative ways;

- Make decisions in challenging situations;
- Continue to learn independently and to develop professionally;
- Communicate effectively, with colleagues and a wider audience, in a variety of media.

Master's-level programmes are typically delivered through a combination of methods best suited to the purpose of the programme and the student's particular circumstances and needs. However, evidence of what makes leadership development effective suggests most programmes will consist of a blended approach that involves some or all of:

- Workplace learning and practical activities;
- Face to face activity, including peer and facilitated learning;
- Reading and reflection;
- On-line learning;
- Projects or other pieces of work at Master's level

The learning outcomes have been developed in the context of the Teachers' Standards, which apply to SENCOs in the same way as other teachers and have been structured in a manner similar. However, they **should not be interpreted as professional standards**. SENCOs undertaking further specialist training will already be skilled teachers who have demonstrated the professional attributes, professional knowledge and understanding, and professional skills set out in the Qualified Teacher Status and the Teachers' Standards as a minimum.

Achieving the learning outcomes should enable new SENCOs to fulfill the leadership role set out in the Code of Practice, the key features of which are:

- Overseeing the day-to-day operation of the school's SEN policy;
- Coordinating provision for children with SEN;
- Liaising with the relevant designated teacher where a looked after pupil has SEN;
- Advising on a graduated approach to providing SEN Support;
- Advising on the deployment of the school's delegated budget and other resources to meet pupils' needs effectively;
- Liaising with parents of children with SEN;
- Liaising with other schools, educational psychologists, health and social care professionals, and independent or voluntary bodies;
- Being a key point of contact with external agencies, especially the LA and LA support services;
- Liaising with potential next providers of education to ensure a young person and their parents are informed about options and a smooth transition is planned;
- Working with the head teacher and school governors to ensure that the school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act (2010) with regard to reasonable adjustments and access arrangements;
- Ensuring that the school or maintained nursery keeps the records of all children with SEN up to date.

The learning outcomes are specific to the SENCO role and relevant to SENCOs in all schools but some aspects will need to be interpreted differently according to the phase,

size and type of school or other work setting such as a pupil referral unit, children's centre or other early years setting.

SENCO training must help SENCOs to demonstrate that they are able to meet the learning outcomes and providers must assure themselves that SENCOs meet all of the outcomes by the end of the programme in order to be awarded the National SENCO qualification (The National Award for Special Educational Needs Coordination).

The learning outcomes are structured in 3 parts:

- Part A The *professional knowledge and understanding* that SENCOs need of the legislative context for SEN and theoretical concepts that underpin effective leadership and practice.
- Part B The expertise and capabilities that SENCOs need to *lead and coordinate provision* effectively.
- Part C The *personal and professional qualities* that SENCOs need to make a positive impact on the ethos and culture in schools and other settings.

## Learning outcomes:

### Part A: Professional Knowledge and Understanding

The Award should enable SENCOs to know and understand the implications of:

**1. The statutory and regulatory context for SEN and disability equality and the implications for practice in their school or work setting**

- Guidance within the SEN Code of Practice and how it is interpreted locally;
- Mediation and the SEND Tribunal;
- The Local Offer;
- OfSTED Frameworks relevant to their school or work setting;
- New funding models, including the right to personal budgets;
- The policy and legislative context for health and social care, including safeguarding and the health and well-being agenda;
- Relevant guidance on data protection and confidentiality, health and safety, including governor accountabilities.

**2. The principles and practice of leadership in different contexts:**

- The characteristics of highly effective leadership;
- Leadership and management processes and tools that support change in schools;
- The role of leadership and professional challenge in supporting and promoting a culture of continuous professional development linked to improvement;
- Their own leadership, including strengths and areas for development;
- The professional qualities of effective team leadership.

**3. How SEN and disabilities affect pupils' participation and learning**

- The breadth and complexity of the causes of under achievement;
- How children's development is affected by SEN and/or disabilities, including mental health needs, and the quality of teaching they receive;
- High incidence SEN and their implications for teaching and learning and inclusive practice;
- Planning provision for children and young people with more severe and complex SEN.

**4. Strategies for improving outcomes for pupils with SEN and/or disabilities**

- Theories of learning as the basis upon which to design effective interventions;
- Removing barriers to participation and learning for children and young people with SEN and/or disabilities;
- Addressing discrimination, stereotyping and bullying related to SEN and disability;
- The potential of new technologies to support communication, teaching and learning for children and young people with SEN and/or disabilities;
- Relevant theory, research and inspection evidence about effective practice in including pupils with SEN and/or disabilities.

## Part B: Leading and Coordinating Provision

The Award should enable SENCOs to:

**5. Work strategically with senior colleagues and governors to:**

- Advise on and influence the strategic development of a person-centred and inclusive ethos, policies, priorities and practices;
- Promote a whole school culture of high expectations and best practice in teaching and learning to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEN and/or disabilities;
- Ensure that the school's SEN policy is embedded within the school's performance management, self-evaluation and improvement planning;
- Establish systems to collect, analyse and interpret data, including Raise On-line, to inform policy and practice, raise expectations and set challenging targets for children and young people with SEN and/or disabilities;
- Commission, secure and deploy appropriate resources to reinforce the teaching of children and young people with SEN and/or disabilities, and evaluate and report upon their impact on progress, outcomes and cost-effectiveness.

**6. Lead, develop and, where necessary, challenge senior leaders, colleagues and governors to:**

- Understand and meet their statutory responsibilities towards children and young people with SEN and/or disabilities;
- Promote improvement in teaching and learning to identify, assess and meet the needs of children and young people with SEN and/or disabilities, within a person-centred approach;
- Model effective practice, coach and mentor colleagues;
- Lead the professional development of staff so that all staff improve their practice and take responsibility for removing barriers to participation and learning;
- Deploy and manage staff effectively to ensure the most efficient use of resources to improve progress of children and young people with SEN and/or disabilities.

**7. Critically evaluate evidence about learning, teaching and assessment in relation to pupils with SEN to inform practice and enable senior leaders and teachers to:**

- Select, use and adapt approaches, strategies and resources for assessment to personalise provision for children and young people with SEN and/or disabilities;
- Draw upon relevant research and inspection evidence about teaching and learning in relation to pupils with SEN and/or disabilities to improve practice;
- Undertake small-scale practitioner enquiry to identify, develop and rigorously evaluate effective practice in teaching pupils with SEN and/or disabilities.

## 8. Draw on external sources of support and expertise to:

- Engage with the Local Offer to develop effective working partnerships with professionals in other services and agencies, including voluntary organisations, to support a coherent, coordinated and effective approach to supporting children and young people with SEN and/or disabilities;
- Promote, facilitate and support effective multi-agency working for all children and young people with SEN, through, e.g. person-centred planning, 'team around a child or family', the Common Assessment Framework and the Education, Health and Care Plan;
- Interpret specialist information from other professionals and agencies and demonstrate how it has been used to improve teaching and learning and outcomes for children and young people with SEN and/or disabilities;
- Ensure continuity of support and progression at key transition points for children and young people with SEN and/or disabilities.

## 9. Develop, implement, monitor and evaluate systems to:

- Identify pupils who may have SEN and/or disabilities;
- Inform all staff about the learning needs, emotional, social and mental health needs and achievement of children and young people with SEN and/or disabilities;
- Set challenging targets for children and young people with SEN and/or disabilities;
- Plan and intervene to meet the needs of children and young people with SEN and/or disabilities;
- Record and review the progress of children and young people with SEN and/or disabilities;
- Make effective use of data to evaluate and report upon the effectiveness of provision and its impact on progress and outcomes for pupils with SEN and/or disabilities;
- Ensure appropriate arrangements are put in place for children and young people sitting national tests and examinations or undertaking other forms of accreditation.

## Part C: Personal and Professional Qualities

The Award should enable SENCOs to develop and demonstrate the personal and professional qualities and leadership they need to shape an ethos and culture based upon person-centred, inclusive, practice in which the interests and needs of children and young people pupils with SEN and/or disabilities are at the heart of all that takes place. This is evident when:

- There are high expectations for all children and young people with SEN and/or disabilities;
- Person-centred approaches build upon and extend the experiences, interests, skills and knowledge of children and young people with SEN and/or disabilities;
- The voice of children and young people with SEN and/or disabilities is heard and influences the decisions that are made about their learning and well-being;



- Family leadership is encouraged and parents and carers are equal partners in securing their child's achievement, progress and well-being.