

# Cambridge Professional Development Qualifications

A guide for school leaders

Cambridge  
Professional  
Development



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# Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Section 1 • <i>Get ready</i>: introducing PDQs into your school</b> .....	<b>4</b>
– Integrate PDQs into your school development strategy .....	4
– Make the most of PDQs to develop a culture of professional learning .....	7
<b>Section 2 • <i>Get set</i>: starting PDQs in your school</b> .....	<b>11</b>
– Plan the programme logistics .....	11
– Select your PDQ programme team .....	14
– Select your PDQ candidates .....	18
<b>Section 3 • <i>Go</i>: supporting the PDQ programme to achieve success</b> .....	<b>20</b>
– Encourage and enable everyone involved .....	20
– Evaluate and embed the programme .....	21
– Build momentum .....	22
<b>Checklist: do’s and don’ts</b> .....	<b>23</b>
<b>Reminder: PDQ essentials</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	<b>27</b>

Before you read this guide, please read and reflect on the information in our Cambridge PDQ brochure, downloadable from [www.cie.org.uk/pdq](http://www.cie.org.uk/pdq)

# Introduction

Around the world school leaders like you are introducing Cambridge PDQs to support teacher and leadership development, strengthen the culture of professional learning and transform classroom practice. This guide will help you to understand what you need to consider and put in place in order to establish PDQs in your school. It gives you practical guidance so that you can *'get ready, get set and go'* with success.

## Terminology

**We use the following terms in the guide:**

- **PDQ:** Cambridge Professional Development Qualification
- **Learner:** the teacher or leader participating in the PDQ programme
- **Programme leader:** the person accredited by Cambridge to design and lead the PDQ programme
- **Mentor:** the experienced teacher or leader assigned to provide mentoring support to the learner
- **Cambridge PDQ team:** The staff in Cambridge International Examinations dedicated to supporting Cambridge Professional Development Centres



“ Principals in schools with thriving professional learning programs involve the entire faculty in co-creating a shared vision for the school, and they also communicate clearly and frequently that all of the adults in the school are expected to work together to enhance student learning and growth...”

(Murray, 2014: 28)

# Section 1

## Get ready: introducing PDQs into your school

### Integrate PDQs into your school development strategy

Make your vision and purpose in introducing PDQs clear to all stakeholders. PDQ programmes introduced speculatively or as 'add-ons' do not work well; they fail to raise interest, and have little positive impact. Introducing PDQs demands strategic thinking and action. When you launch PDQs in your school, your staff will want to know why the PDQs are important and their value. You will need a ready and compelling answer to the question 'why?' as well as a convincing and encouraging picture of the kind of professional learning you are looking for.

#### Align PDQs with your school mission and vision

PDQs are at the heart of Cambridge's Professional Development services. They are designed to focus and energise the approaches to teaching and learning that Cambridge promotes (e.g. in the Cambridge learner and Cambridge teacher profiles and our guides *Implementing the Curriculum with Cambridge and Developing your School with Cambridge*<sup>1</sup>). The mission and vision statements of Cambridge schools typically aim to enhance the quality of student learning and this is the ultimate purpose of the PDQs.

#### Include PDQs in your school improvement strategy

To build school capacity systematically, planning for school development and improvement is vital. This typically involves an overall strategic plan (e.g. with a five-year timespan) supported by action plans which go into detail for each of those years and in the various strands of the strategy, e.g. improving teaching and leadership.

School leaders are making continuing professional development pivotal to their strategy for school improvement, and many are using PDQs to raise the standards of learning through better teaching and leadership.

#### Use PDQs as a measure of quality

Typically, school leaders use a quality assurance (QA) framework to measure the standard of teaching and of leadership in their schools. QA frameworks have *indicators* of excellence against which learning and teaching are evaluated in the classroom, analysing dimensions of teaching and leadership that the school does effectively and those that need to be developed. You can position PDQs clearly inside this framework, as a base for judgements, by providing, for example, evidence of quality improvements in practice, learning and reflection.

Knowing what the school development plan looks like in practical terms (your vision) can help the school's planning team to identify more clearly key performance indicators, and help the finance office allocate funds for those indicators to be realised. The budget for PDQs then becomes integral to the school's development plan.

The questions that follow will help guide you. We have also given you quick insights into the ways in which successful PDQ programmes have addressed these questions, including testimonies from school leaders.

<sup>1</sup> You can download these from [www.cie.org.uk/teaching-and-learning](http://www.cie.org.uk/teaching-and-learning)

Ask yourself:	In successful PDQ programmes:
<b>Vision and mission</b>	
How can the PDQs support my school in reaching its vision and mission?	The aims and objectives of the PDQs are closely aligned with the school's staff development priorities. School leaders have used the PDQ aims as a framework with which to audit, challenge and where necessary revise the school's expectations of staff development.
What do my school's current aims and objectives tell me about our attitude towards staff development?	
How, where and when is my school's vision communicated and to whom?	
<b>Development planning</b>	
Does my school have a written, shared, comprehensive and coherent development plan spanning the next several years? How is it used?	Staff professional development is an essential element in the school's development plan. The professional development of teachers and leaders is emphasised, both in nature and purpose. PDQs are both a key means of achieving strategic goals and also a measure of development.
What are the strategies, either explicit or implied, being used to action our development plan?	
<b>Quality</b>	
<i>Leadership</i>	
What is my school's vision of quality education?	Implementing and embedding the PDQ programme helps leadership and the teaching faculty develop a whole-school culture of quality, not only helping to clarify vision but to strengthen the school's criteria for determining effectiveness of teaching. For example, embedding formative assessment, active learning and meta cognition into classroom practice.
How does our quality assurance (QA) framework guide teachers in becoming better and more effective teachers?	
<i>Teaching</i>	
To what extent do our teachers understand the concept of quality?	The PDQs provide a shared space for all concerned with the school to discuss and define what quality in teaching, learning and leadership can mean. Professional learning becomes part of school life and this involves a change of mind-set from conceiving professional development as something outside of and separate from the school.
How is quality perceived among the school's various stakeholder groups?	
How do our teachers perceive the need for continuing professional development? What challenges and opportunities do their perceptions bring?	
<i>Learning</i>	
How will my school use the PDQ programme to model the Cambridge learner profile to the community?	The PDQs embody the Cambridge teacher profile. So schools demonstrate through the PDQs that their teachers are learning, in the same way as their own students are developing the attributes of Cambridge learners. Schools ensure that the PDQ programme challenges and changes thinking and practice.
How will my school embed best practice, such as Active Learning, Assessment for Learning, Teaching for Deep Understanding and Metacognition, in the PDQ programme?	

continued over

Ask yourself:	In successful PDQ programmes:
<b>Decision-making</b>	
How will my school fund the PDQ programme?	School leaders dedicate and ring-fence sufficient funding for the PDQ programme within the school's budget, and make sure that funding is available to support PDQs within the long-term school development plan.
What are my own pre-requisites for programme implementation?	
Is the time right for implementing the PDQ programme?	
Are the teachers ready and do they have the time and inclination to engage with it?	School leaders, knowing their school and their colleagues, make sound tactical decisions about the timing and scale of the PDQ programme.
Who, ultimately, will make the decision to implement the PDQ programme in my school?	
What part do I play in the preparations for the decision-making process?	School leaders make a point of winning the active commitment and support of the school owner, school board, governors etc. They connect the PDQs to priorities which decision-makers value.
How will we know that the PDQ programme has been a success? What will we be looking for?	
<b>Managing change</b>	
What changes can we foresee happening?	Schools report that teachers become more confident, responsible, reflective, innovative and engaged. School leaders provide opportunities for their teachers to share and develop new ideas and approaches. The PDQ programme becomes a vehicle for change and development and a showcase for initiatives.
How will we manage the changes that will arise from our teachers' learning?	
How will we communicate our findings and development as a school?	

“ Talking regularly with my staff and knowing them well, I felt that we had a number of talented teachers and potential leaders who could, with professional development, make a tangible contribution to our school's effectiveness. With our business manager, I identified funding for a small group of teachers to pilot the programme so we could assess its viability and value. At a Board meeting I shared my reasons for wanting to introduce the PDQ programme. My Board asked some challenging questions – such as why we needed PDQs, why are they appropriate for us, can we afford them and what is their value? We had a lively discussion, and I got the green light and funding for the pilot. At the next staff meeting, I shared my vision for the pilot and encouraged as many teachers as possible to apply to take part. I explained the kind of people we were looking for – in terms of personality, dispositions, readiness. Happily all the teachers I had in mind did want to take part – and it was also great that there were others who came forward. So we have been able to start the programme with a lot of enthusiasm and a strong shared commitment...”

(Cambridge school leader)

## Make the most of PDQs to develop a culture of professional learning

### Nurture a professional learning community

The PDQ programme is not only about helping to improve student learning – it is also about valuing, supporting and being committed to professional learning so that the staff themselves become lifelong learners. Involving teachers, with their varied perspectives, in school development can yield innovative and productive ideas.

### Build professional capacity

Take the time to audit your faculty (your teacher team) to find out how broad and strong is the base of professional knowledge and skills; not only in terms of subject and age-group specialism but also particular teaching and leadership skills. Frequently you discover they have significantly more expertise than you first thought. Reviewing what expertise you already have among your staff is an important step as you consider the PDQ programme; it will help you identify existing strengths and also the challenges that the school faces.



You will need to decide which PDQs you will take up and at which level – Certificate and/or Diploma. Your decision here will align with your school's development plan. It is possible for a school to engage with more than one PDQ syllabus, if this supports school development goals and capacity.

“...throughout this guide we have emphasised the need to develop the teaching faculty of the school. This investment needs to be sustained over a long period of time. The main objective should be to improve classroom practice and student outcomes. Many successful schools achieve this by developing professional learning communities, or communities of practice among their teachers. These are gatherings of two or more teachers who share a common goal or interest, and which are characterised in the education context (adapted from Lee and Spillane 2008):

- open classrooms – teacher classroom practice made available for peer observation and critique
- open dialogue between colleagues, deeply reflecting on their practice
- a focus on student learning
- a high degree of collaboration in terms of, for example, curriculum and assessment planning, moderating and standardising the marking of student work, etc.
- sharing constructive norms and values.”

(Developing your School with Cambridge: 66)

## Include all stakeholders

Successful school leaders include all stakeholders in the planning and process of school improvement.

- *School Board*

Your Board chairperson (and/or owner) needs to be aware of the potential of the PDQs and support their introduction. This will be a significant long-term initiative that needs their sustained interest and support, beyond their initial approval.

With increased accountability in schools, Boards share their school's development path with their community and clearly communicate, and celebrate, the 'milestones' they have reached. PDQs will feature, as measures of commitment and progress, especially if supported by authentic examples of how PDQ learning has made a positive difference to student learning and achievement.

- *Teachers*

Involve your teachers – as much as possible their programme needs to be and feel teacher led e.g. forums, coaching, lesson study.

Identify the effects of the PDQ programme on your teachers that you want to see, e.g. innovation and creativity with clear purpose(s). Consider also what you expect from them as they participate in the programme and the roles they will play in making the programme work for the school as well as for themselves. How will they share what they are learning, apply this as a team and gain from the experience together?

- *Students*

Students will experience the effects of the new knowledge and skills gained by their teachers and school leadership through the PDQs. Keep them aware of what is being planned and why. Remember that students can also be actively involved in planning. You can learn much from student questionnaires and suggestions that focus on key aspects of school life, such as the quality of teaching, learning environment and curriculum offerings. Linking student needs and wants to the PDQ programme is more likely to result in success than otherwise.

- *Parents*

You may well want to make sure that parents are aware of:

- why the PDQ programme is being introduced
- how this is likely to affect teaching, learning and leadership
- what part the PDQ plays in the school's vision for their children.

- *Community*

Remember that there may well be professional development expertise within your local community and further afield that can play an active role in the PDQ experience. For example, local business leaders can be the experienced leaders in Unit 2 of the Cambridge International Certificate in Educational Leadership.

- *Other schools*

As a school leader, you are able to help your school connect and collaborate with neighbouring schools. In their design, PDQs provide many opportunities for such collaboration between schools, and between their teachers and leaders.





“ We were already doing a lot of professional development in the school, such as lunchtime seminars, as well as training events outside. But it didn't really come together – I often felt that there wasn't enough sharing of new ideas and approaches. I saw the opportunity to use the framework of the PDQ programme and portfolio activities to encourage collaboration. We've been able to design our programme within Cambridge's guidelines so we're confident that our staff are on the right path to gain the qualification. I know that the programme is covering the aspects that matter most for us as a school. Best of all, it's proving to be a great vehicle for bringing us all together with a shared purpose. ”

(Cambridge school leader)

Ask yourself:	In successful PDQ programmes:
<b>Culture of learning</b>	
<p>How will implementing and embedding PDQs contribute to the culture of learning in my school?</p>	<p>Colleagues share their ideas and experience in developing new approaches to the questions that matter most.</p> <p>Action research encouraged.</p> <p>Time allocated.</p>
<b>Capacity</b>	
<p>What is the range of professional knowledge, understanding, skills and dispositions among our teachers currently?</p> <p>How 'expert' are we when it comes to learning, teaching and leading?</p> <p>What are the collective skills we already have in our school?</p> <p>Where do we need to develop?</p>	<p>Everyone's strengths are acknowledged and everyone has points for development.</p> <p>Leadership team models continuous learning themselves.</p>
<b>Stakeholders</b>	
<p>How do we need to develop opportunities for the voices of teachers, students and parents to be heard and listened to?</p> <p>How can we involve our teachers actively in the shape of our PDQ programme?</p>	<p>School leaders bring the topic of PDQs naturally into ongoing discussions, ask open-ended questions and develop consensus. They develop an overall concept of what they think would work well and canvass feedback on the concept.</p>



## Section 2

### Get set: starting PDQs in your school

You may be thinking of:

- becoming a Cambridge Professional Development Centre and running an in-house school-based programme, or
- enrolling your staff on a PDQ programme offered by an approved Cambridge Professional Development Centre, or
- a combination of these (e.g. running your own programme for a Certificate leading on to a Diploma with an external provider).

You need to choose the option that promises to be most cost effective and manageable for your school, at this time, in your situation and with your priorities. You want to get the best value from investing resources in PDQs, and you are looking for an improvement on your current situation. Consider the following factors.

#### Plan the programme logistics

##### Timing

It takes several months to run a PDQ module programme from start to finish, so think about when would be the best time of year for your staff, and the impact this will have on the rest of the calendar (e.g. scaling back or moving other activities).

Consider which day(s) of the week and time(s) the guided learning in the PDQ programme will involve.

- If this is organised as a weekend activity this may have contractual implications if weekend working is not expected; however, the school 'climate' may well encourage a weekend 'Coffee-Club' culture which will appeal to some teachers, particularly if they are volunteering to take part in the programme.
- If PDQ guided learning sessions are run after classes during the week in the afternoon/evening, this may well extend the working day, which may or may not be manageable for participants, given their other responsibilities and life outside of school.
- When planning the school schedule and teaching timetable, if you can find opportunities to dedicate PDQ guided learning time for the participants as a group, this will make the programme more manageable and also emphasise its importance and relevance.

Identifying the best opportunities and timing for guided learning (if you are considering running your own programme in the school) demands confidence from everyone in establishing and keeping to sufficient and reliable times. All the elements within the programme need to be integrated into the rhythm of working life in the school. The programme needs to be of sufficient duration for participants to have time to make the most of applying what they are gaining from guided learning in reflective practice.

##### Participation

Another important decision to make is who will take part in the programme. If you are going to be selective, then make the selection process as systematic and transparent as possible. Other things being equal, you may well decide to be tactical in where and with whom to start. For example, which members of staff are respected by colleagues? If they take part and assuming that this goes well, will this help others see value in the programme and make them want to join in future?

So it is well worth considering:

- who are the most influential and active teachers
- who needs to be convinced that (any) professional development will be of benefit, considering their teaching experience and examination results
- if you target a particular section in the school, e.g. primary, how this will appear to other staff
- the benefits of mixing subjects and stages/sections, at least for part of the programme
- how you will phase further cohorts onto the programme so that as many staff as possible can participate and feel they matter.

Depending on the size of the school, and the investment being made, you may decide to enter all teachers and/or leaders into the PDQ programme. But please note that Cambridge does not expect or require this. Entry on a grand scale carries significant challenges, e.g. sustaining active interest and participation from everyone over several months; personal circumstances can change and become barriers to continuing the programme; organising mentoring for large numbers is difficult to manage with quality.

Think carefully and tactically how best to start with the most chance of successful outcomes and long-term sustainability. For example, you may be launching PDQs with a Certificate programme this year. Will these staff move on to Modules 2 and 3 and the Diploma next year? What about new and other staff who are not on the current Certificate programme – will they have the opportunity to do the Certificate next year?

N.B. There are Cambridge candidate requirements, specified in the syllabus and candidate guide<sup>2</sup>. You need to be careful that the staff you select for the programme meet these requirements. Remember that to achieve the qualification, as candidates they will have to develop and submit their portfolios of evidence for marking by Cambridge. Apart from anything else they need to have sufficient time to be able to do this.

### Location

Do you envisage a teacher learning area with access to professional development library facilities? Identifying an area where the programme activities will take place – a designated space/base – itself encourages commitment and status for the programme. Accommodating the PDQ participants in a well-lit, well-ventilated and comfortable learning environment for their guided learning, equipped with necessities such as copying machines, printers and stationery along with drinks and snacks, will communicate effectively the importance your school places on teacher development.

### Funding

You will know by this stage the funds and resources you have available, and what you can afford. Will your school support candidates on the programme, and if so to what extent and with what conditions? How can you encourage motivation and incentivise active participation?

Schools have operated in recent years under increasingly tight budgets and smaller margins. With less of the budget available, school leaders and Boards have been developing compensation packages that do not rely on salary alone to attract and retain high-quality teachers. Schools offering enhanced professional development packages, such as an involvement in the PDQ programme, can attract more motivated applicants from a deeper pool of talent. Maintaining a role in the PDQ programme can help towards teacher retention.

Many schools will have their own academic and professional requirements of teachers eligible for professional development. For example, a school is unlikely to spend money sending a teacher to a faraway conference only for the teacher to leave the school at the end of the year. Most commonly, teachers will be starting or in the middle of a contract to be eligible for funding for their professional development needs. From experience, leaders in Cambridge schools advise that professional development funding for any individual adheres to carefully drafted policies and procedures that take expectations for 'payback' into account: in other words, individuals only participate in such professional development if there is an agreement that their learning will be put to good effect in school.

### Information

Everyone involved with PDQs in your school needs to understand the requirements set in the relevant Cambridge syllabus(es) and guides. Encourage everyone to be familiar and conversant with the PDQ requirements by yourself dedicating time to read the information thoroughly so that you can ask pertinent questions of programme leader, mentors and candidates.

See the 'Reminder' section later in this guide for a summary of the essential features of PDQs.

<sup>2</sup> The Candidate Guide will be uploaded to the Cambridge Secure Exchange

Ask yourself:	In successful PDQ programmes:
<b>Which option is best for our school?</b>	
<p>A small-scale programme to start with as a pilot?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– What are the benefits?</li> <li>– Who will participate?</li> <li>– How will we know whether the pilot has been a success – what are we looking for and where are we looking?</li> <li>– What will be the challenges if/as we move to a whole-school programme?</li> </ul>	<p>The study group can be a minimum of six participants. The participants are chosen with an eye to the future as well as on the basis of priority (their individual needs, school initiatives etc.).</p>
<p>A whole-school programme to include all relevant staff?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– What are the benefits?</li> <li>– How inclusive can we be?</li> <li>– How will we know whether the whole-school approach has been a success – what are we looking for and where are we looking?</li> </ul>	<p>The decision about whether to start their own programme or use a local provider is made by the school. The school leader judges the school’s capability and takes a realistic perspective – ‘let’s be honest’.</p>
<p>Running a programme ourselves or using a local provider?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Do we have sufficient resources to run our own programme?</li> <li>– Is there a local provider who can do what we need?</li> <li>– Which option is more likely to meet our priorities?</li> </ul>	<p>If the school leader decides to start engaging with PDQs through a local provider they make sure that the provider’s programme is going to meet the school’s needs.</p>

“Initially, I thought we wouldn’t be able to take on running our own programme. We’ve relied on sending members of staff on courses outside as much as we can afford. When I understood the way the PDQs work and surveyed my staff to gauge their interest, experience and so on I realised that starting our own programme was possible and would be worth the effort. I know that there are costs involved – just because we’re not paying for courses outside doesn’t mean that we are able to run the PDQ programme for free. It’s not only the candidate fees; there are other costs as well such as the time we need to find for the programme team and the teachers on the programme. But we’re getting a lot of value out of running the programme for ourselves and by ourselves. Overall I think it’s costing us significantly less than an external programme and it means that we can afford more of our teachers taking part...”

(Cambridge school leader)

## Select your PDQ programme team

### Your programme leader

The programme leader role is explained in our PDQ brochure (page 12). If you are going to run your own programme in school, your choice of programme leader is critical and you need to be systematic in your approach. They will be responsible for designing, managing, organising and running the PDQ programme. We stress the importance of having the right person in this position to help ensure that the programme is a success. If you are going to rely on a local provider for the programme, you can be sure that Cambridge similarly insists on and assures the quality of the programme leader there.

The programme leader role is challenging and multi-faceted – and very rewarding. Effective programme leaders need a range of qualities and skills. The Cambridge teacher attributes are a useful starting point in developing your person specification. We want the programme leader to model these attributes – not only to students but also to their peers, including the teachers enrolled in the programme.

Quality	Programme leaders model this, e.g. through:
Confident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• knowledge of the content of the PDQ syllabuses</li> <li>• understanding the PDQ application process</li> <li>• understanding candidates as professional adult learners and their need for support</li> <li>• communicating clearly with a range of audiences</li> </ul>
Responsible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• collaboration with and support of others</li> <li>• taking prompt and appropriate action when required</li> <li>• understanding that their actions influence others</li> <li>• integrity when dealing with sensitive issues</li> </ul>
Reflective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• seeing themselves as a learner</li> <li>• helping candidates to be independent learners</li> <li>• understanding their part in achieving the school's vision</li> </ul>
Innovative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a creative outlook and readiness to offer and listen to different perspectives</li> <li>• developing novel solutions to new and existing problems</li> <li>• flexibility and resourcefulness in challenging situations</li> </ul>
Engaged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• passion about their own and others' learning</li> <li>• sharing skills and knowledge</li> <li>• a strong sense of community involvement</li> </ul>

Your programme leader must have sufficient dedicated time to fulfil their responsibilities. On average a programme leader responsible for a school-based programme needs to spend **30 per cent** of their working week as programme leader. This will vary over time – for example, they will need more time in designing and starting the programme, and less time during the programme as/if not actually teaching guided sessions.

Appointing a talented, yet very busy, teacher who already has a leadership and management role in your school and expecting them to take on programme leadership as an additional responsibility to be absorbed into their current time is not likely to be successful. The school is making a commitment to running its own PDQ programme; this commitment is borne out by making sure that the programme leader has dedicated time to fulfil their role.

So being a programme leader:

- is formal, not casual
- is a significant part of the person's dedicated school work time, not after hours or voluntary
- is an identifiable part of the salary package, not freely absorbed.

Since the role is challenging and requires time commitment, it is very unlikely that practically a school principal or equivalent could manage this as well as everything else. As a matter of principle, Cambridge

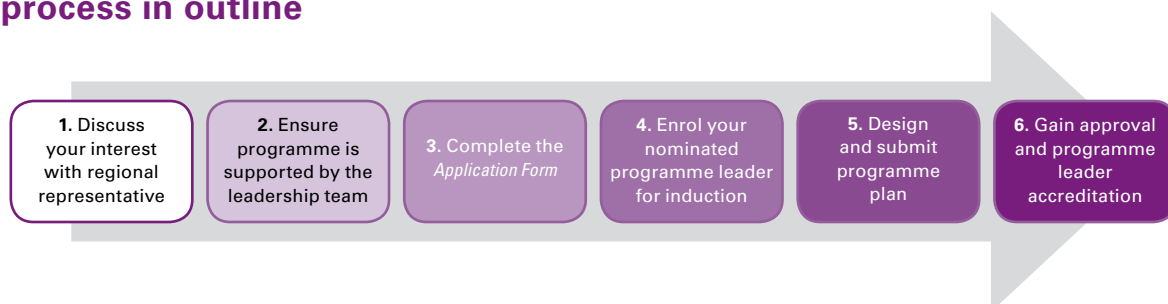
generally will not approve school principals to be programme leaders, because of possible conflict of interest. This actually helps school leaders, since it means that you can have time and scope to support the programme morally and practically. You know your staff and the prevailing conditions. You will want to use your authority and resourcefulness to make sure the path is cleared so that the PDQ programme has every chance of success.

You will find that our guide *Designing your Programme*<sup>3</sup> explains what we are looking for in the PDQ programme and gives practical advice to programme leaders; we encourage you to read through it, so that you have shared understanding with your programme leader. One of the great strengths of the PDQ design is that the Cambridge framework is clear and straightforward, allowing for flexibility in the actual design of the programme to fit the school context and priorities. The design stage is a particularly useful opportunity for school leaders and their programme leaders to share the process of turning their shared vision into reality.

Your nominated programme leader will need to apply to Cambridge for approval to offer the PDQ programme. The approval process usually takes four months and involves the six quality assurance steps which are explained fully in the guide *Becoming a Cambridge Professional Development Centre*<sup>3</sup>.

## The approval process in outline

There are six steps in the approval process.



<sup>3</sup> The guide to *Designing your Programme* and *Guide for mentors* are available on the programme leader community



We require that the *Application Form* is completed by the nominated programme leader, and authorised by the Head of School. We encourage Heads of Schools to do more than 'just' authorise. Cambridge school leaders help their programme leaders e.g. by asking direct questions and making key observations on the integrity of a particular process. With all your experience and breadth of view you can help your programme leader during step 2 to enhance, sharpen and polish the application. You can establish a strong relationship together, which is invaluable to the programme leader and the continuing success of the programme as it unfolds. You will have naturally chosen a programme leader who has the attributes you are looking for in being able to receive collegiate and constructive criticism. You will also be providing active leadership for learning in your school.

### Your trainers

As we also explain in the PDQ brochure, programme leaders are normally not alone in teaching the programme; they generally have a programme

team involving colleague(s) who as trainers can share the programme work appropriately. The time commitment will be less than for the programme leader. For example, particular colleagues can take the lead in designing and teaching particular guided learning session(s) in the programme, because they have specific expertise and experience in the session topic/focus.

### Your mentors

Every learner in every PDQ programme must have the continuing support of an experienced and trusted colleague, who acts as their mentor. Our *Guide for Mentors* explains what we expect. It is the individual candidate who finds their mentor, but we expect the programme leader to guide and the school leader to be aware so that the candidate is able to find the most appropriate person. You will want to be sure not only that the right people in your school are involved as mentors, according to your candidates' needs and preferences, but also that the mentoring involved in the PDQ programme contributes to the developing of mentoring and coaching in your school generally.



## Ask yourself:

## In successful PDQ programmes:

### Programme leader

Establishing the person in the role

- What are the key strengths of the programme leader?
- What are the likely challenges that the programme leader is likely to face? How can these challenges be met through support?
- What status does the programme leader have in school? Does it highlight the importance the school places on teacher learning?

School leaders have regular catch-ups with their programme leader to listen to how the programme is developing and to highlight issues that the school leader can help to address.



“ To begin with, we thought that one of the senior leadership team should act as programme leader for our programme. But then we decided that there was a lot of benefit in selecting a colleague who – although she has only been in our school for a couple of years – has already shown a lot of energy and initiative in setting up teacher-led activities in school and developed a really good relationship with her colleagues. The programme is going well, and I think that she is someone who will definitely be taking on middle leadership responsibilities in our school sooner rather than later... ”

(Cambridge school leader)

## Select your PDQ candidates

You will now be seriously considering the teachers and/or leaders you want to benefit from the PDQ programme, and whether you are going to invite, encourage or tell them to join the programme.

Take into account Cambridge's expectations of candidates. We expect candidates to:

- participate fully in the PDQ programme by attending the guided learning sessions
- engage in individual reading, research and preparation throughout the programme
- share learning with colleagues in the programme
- reflect critically upon their own and others' practice, assumptions and theories
- actively contribute to the teaching and learning opportunities on the programme
- submit authentic evidence in their portfolio that conforms with Cambridge regulations
- be punctual in handing in their portfolio and meeting other programme deadlines set by the programme leader.

We are very familiar with considering our students as learners; but it is as important to recognise that the professional – teacher or leader – is an adult learner having needs and characteristics that may be different in some respects to the learners we meet day to day in our schools. In his theory of andragogy Malcolm Knowles proposed that adult learners are typically:

- *self-directed*, expecting to make their own decisions about their learning
- *experienced*, with wide general knowledge and understanding to use to support their new learning
- *ready to learn*, in roles that demand the development of skills and understanding
- *needing knowledge* that will be *immediately useful*
- *motivated to learn*, intrinsically rather than depending on external rewards.

(Smith, 2010)

To varying extents your teachers will show these characteristics, and you need to manage their learning expectations in appropriate ways. For example, some teachers who are senior in years and experience may be resistant to change and may not fully appreciate the need for professional development, especially if this is something new to the school and they feel that examination results show that all is well.

You may well, eventually, want to include all your teachers and leaders in the PDQ programme. This will involve a wide range of colleagues in terms of their experience and existing qualifications; from teachers who have advanced teaching experience and credentials to teachers who are much less experienced and who may not have full formal teaching qualifications, but under local employment regulations are employable as classroom teachers and teaching assistants. All can benefit from being involved in the PDQ experience, in a relevant capacity; being a candidate for the PDQ programme may not be directly relevant to them. For example, experienced practitioners may prefer to act as mentors to less experienced colleagues, while teaching assistants will be able to play an active role in the classroom innovations and developments encouraged in the PDQs.



Ask yourself:	In successful PDQ programmes:
<b>Candidates</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is everyone going to take part or only some (and how will these be selected)?</li> <li>• Will we ask teachers to apply for PDQs? How will they apply? What are we expecting to see in an application? Will we have any applicants?</li> <li>• What are the adult learner needs of our teachers and leaders? Are we prepared for these?</li> <li>• How are we going to respond to colleagues who do not want to or will not be able to become candidates?</li> <li>• What entry requirements will we ourselves have, in addition to Cambridge's?</li> <li>• Should we use any initial assessments, e.g. language skills, to help us?</li> </ul>	<p>Enrolment is carefully managed so that the programme leader can be sure not only that the participants will meet Cambridge requirements, but that they are ready to make the most of the learning opportunity and that the programme is going to cater for their needs.</p>

“ We were very deliberate about the first group on the programme. We didn't want other colleagues saying 'well it's always these guys who go on professional development' but at the same time we didn't want to fall into the trap of 'well it's only relevant to that section of the school' or 'it's only for new teachers not for experienced like us'. So the programme leader and I did a lot of thinking about this and hand-picked a cross-section of teachers from different parts of the school. Yes, we did look for people who we knew were more likely to welcome the opportunity, but we also wanted people who would influence their colleagues – assuming that the programme went well... ”

(Cambridge school leader)

## Section 3

### Go: supporting the PDQ programme to achieve success

We have found from experience that the next most significant success factor for schools in implementing and embedding the PDQ programme – after the appointment of the right programme leader – is the way school leaders support the programme. It is not only **what** school leaders do to give their support, but also **how** public and timely they are – judging the moment, the situation and the colleagues involved. By making the programme and its importance to the school visible, the message to the school community is that professional development and student learning have real value in principle and practice.

#### Encourage and enable everyone involved

School leaders who have decided to implement PDQs will want to help ensure success by offering support and encouragement to **everyone** involved. School leaders will need to show and use 'soft skills' and emotional intelligence to support and encourage their colleagues throughout the programme.

- The PDQ programme should be an integral part of the school development plan and agenda so that the PDQ programme naturally features in discussion.
- The programme leader should regularly update the senior leadership team and the School Board.
- The whole school should be regularly updated through lively briefings and bulletins.
- Launch the programme with genuine and inspiring words. Let your colleagues (briefly) know the vision for the PDQ programme and the support of the school.
- Keep in touch with the programme, e.g. drop in to guided sessions which interest you, and take an active part in the discussion.
- Find about and engage with your colleagues' PDQ portfolio activities.
- As the programme unfolds over a period of weeks and months, celebrate particular milestones such as the award of Cambridge certificates to promote the programme.
- Showcase to the school community how the PDQ programme is having an impact on student learning, e.g. through news items, case studies, blog posts.

School leaders can really help professional development by:

- finding the opportunities to remind candidates of why what they are doing in the PDQs is creative and innovative and relevant to the 'big picture' of the school's development
- keeping aware of the practicalities and demonstrating support through providing time, space and resources
- engaging in the learning activities of their colleagues as a critical friend (not as a line manager)
- encouraging candidates to take responsibility and make their voice heard.

You will know what works best for you, your colleagues and your school, but be as lively and imaginative as possible in your approach; communicating routine 'interest' can be counter-productive and being managerial sends the wrong message about the nature of the learning experience you want to nurture.

## Evaluate and embed the programme

Embedding the PDQ programme means that it is not (seen as) a one-off event. Instead it becomes expected as an integral part of the school's culture. Running a successful PDQ programme year on year does not mean repeating the same routine programme. There should be a period of reflection and evaluation to learn from experience which, in turn, informs the preparation phases of the next programme, including improving the design of the programme.

When you reflect on the PDQ programme after each cohort of teachers receives their certificates and diplomas, the key question is 'Did the programme do what we wanted it to do?' Evaluation should be ongoing, from the start of the programme, rather than left only to a summative evaluation at the end. You will want to check with your programme leader how this evaluation is designed into the programme. For example, it might well include surveying students (of the teachers on the PDQ in the Teaching and Learning Programme) and colleagues (led by leaders on the PDQ in Educational Leadership programme) for their feedback, and monitoring this programme by programme to gauge interest, engagement and effect as the programme becomes embedded.

The key performance indicator will be evidence of improved student learning which can be linked to PDQ learning. The definition of 'improved' and the approach to evaluation is for the school to determine. (See Developing your School with Cambridge Section 7: Planning and managing a whole-school professional development programme).

### Link PDQ learning with other professional development in the school

Cambridge encourages programme leaders when designing and running the programme to look for and make the most of opportunities to link other professional development opportunities into the programme, e.g. subject-specific training by Cambridge. We have designed the PDQs deliberately to provide an excellent vehicle for teachers and leaders to apply reflectively what they gain from other Cambridge Professional Development provision, e.g. Cambridge-led workshops, seminars and conferences.

### Be ready to listen and for change

PDQs can be a catalyst for positive change in a school, and successful PDQ candidates agents of this change. They can give voice to their experience, findings and ideas to help school leadership. The PDQs embody the spirit of innovation and portfolio activities encourage and enable candidates to experiment with purpose, based on understanding of relevant concepts and theories, and to reflect on principles and practice. So, for example, teachers will be exploring and developing practice in using digital technologies to support teaching and learning, or educational leaders will be seeking to initiate and carry out change initiatives in leadership for learning.

The PDQs are thus designed to give you and your school many opportunities to apply the outcomes of professional development for the benefit of the school and staff development. School leaders need to be ready for these outcomes. Ideally, you will know what you want teachers to find out and will have processes in place to welcome and respond to their feedback and recommendations.

## Build momentum

Assuming that your first programme has had positive outcomes, what next?

### Become a centre for learning

School leaders who have introduced PDQs report that their school gains reputation and recognition as a 'centre for learning'. Rather than being seen as an institution where students learn and teachers teach as routine, the emphasis shifts; the school is a place where all learners (including teachers and leaders) are engaged in learning, discovering and achieving. There is a real 'buzz'. The constructive approach in the PDQs helps this transformation to happen. With a more qualified and knowledgeable leadership and teaching team, the school gains from enhanced engagement with and understanding of the processes of learning.

### Document learning and development

Best practice in schools includes teachers and leaders compiling a portfolio of their own professional development. Cambridge bases the assessment of professional development for the PDQs on a portfolio of practice, learning and reflection. This evidence is not only valid for assessment but is valuable in developing the decision-making capital in the school; the growing evidence base of candidate portfolios developed by teachers and leaders in their school context contributes to the shared stock of knowledge in the school to support school development.

### Share your expertise with other schools

It is part of Cambridge's vision that as many Cambridge schools as possible will, when they are ready, open their doors to offer local teachers and leaders access to their PDQ programmes. By reaching out to other schools and sharing best practices in professional development, the community of Cambridge schools grows and sets a standard for teacher development.



# Checklist

## Top 10 do's and don'ts for school leaders concerning PDQs

Do		Don't	
✓	Make PDQs part of your school development strategy	✗	See PDQs as marginal to school improvement and teacher development
✓	Familiarise yourself with the features and benefits of PDQs	✗	Expect someone else to know what PDQs are about
✓	Dedicate sufficient resources – both time and budget	✗	Underestimate the effort that PDQs involve
✓	Select the right person as programme leader	✗	Leave this for someone to pick up in their spare time
✓	Critically engage with the application process from start to finish	✗	Simply wait to sign off the completed application form
✓	Engage with the programme regularly	✗	Forget it is going on
✓	Support the programme leader in solving issues	✗	Ignore the issues or assume they are being solved
✓	Celebrate achievement and progress at the highest level within the school and school group	✗	Ignore success or delegate recognition to lower management
✓	Champion the PDQ programme with the school stakeholders, particularly school governance and parents	✗	Miss opportunities to emphasise the relevance of the PDQ programme
✓	Identify and take opportunities to grow the programme	✗	Leave the programme to its own devices

# Reminder:

## PDQ essentials

The Cambridge PDQs are in-service professional development programmes involving practice-based learning. The qualifications are awarded by Cambridge, and recognised for academic credits by UCL Institute of Education (IOE). Candidates are assessed externally on the basis of their portfolios of evidence of practice, learning and reflection.

The PDQs are designed to help practising teachers and leaders to:

- engage critically with relevant educational thinking and international best practices
- apply new ideas and approaches in their own practice
- reflect on and share experiences and outcomes to plan further development
- improve the quality of students' learning.

PDQs are awarded at Certificate and Diploma level.

The Diploma consists of three assessed modules, with the possibility of the first module being taken on its own as the Certificate.

There are four syllabuses available:

- Teaching and Learning
- Educational Leadership
- Teaching with Digital Technologies
- Teaching Bilingual Learners.

The Cambridge PDQ syllabus defines the purpose, aims, learning outcomes, key questions, assessment and grading criteria for each PDQ<sup>4</sup>.

The PDQ learning programme is provided by an approved Cambridge Professional Development Centre. This can be a Cambridge school, a training organisation or a national authority. Every Centre must undergo systematic initial and ongoing quality assurance by Cambridge. Cambridge trains and accredits a programme leader in the Centre. The programme leader designs the learning programme and leads the teaching and management of the programme.

The PDQ programme takes approximately four months for each module. Typically this fits around a school term or trimester. The programme leader and their team design a programme for the module, aiming for the best balance and sequence of learning activities and experiences.

Each module requires 120 hours of learning and preparation, comprising 40 hours each of the following:

- **Guided learning**  
Contact time with candidates, in sessions designed and led by the programme team, so that they have specific guidance to achieve the learning outcomes, e.g. workshops, seminars and tutorials.
- **Individual learning**  
Learning time spent by the individual outside of guided learning sessions, e.g. reading, research and reflective writing. Collaborative learning involves learning by groups of candidates outside of guided learning, and without supervision of a member of the programme team, e.g. discussions, peer observation and study lessons.
- **Work-based learning**  
Learning in school, focused on practice, e.g. mentoring, gaining feedback from colleagues, observing and interviewing colleagues, activities to help candidates complete their portfolio for assessment.

As you can see, even if your staff are enrolled on a local provider's PDQ programme much of their learning will take place in your school and be focused in your school context. If you want and can run your own in-house programme, then most of the programme time will be based in school.

<sup>4</sup> You can download the syllabus and other essential information from [www.cie.org.uk/pdq](http://www.cie.org.uk/pdq)

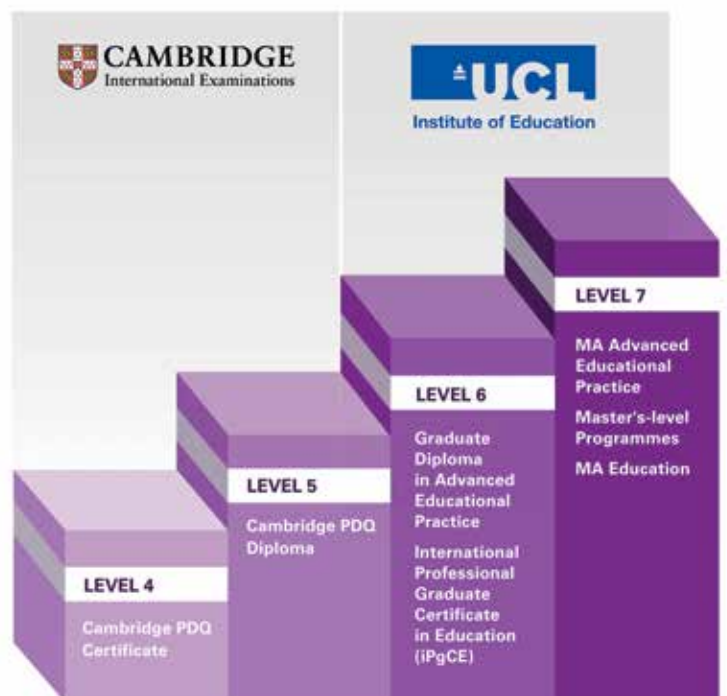




Cambridge PDQs are benchmarked to the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) for England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The FHEQ provides reference points for setting and assessing academic standards in higher education.

- Cambridge PDQ Certificates carry 60 academic credits at Level 4 of the FHEQ.
- Cambridge PDQ Diplomas carry 60 academic credits at Level 5 of the FHEQ.

Together, Cambridge and the IOE offer Cambridge schools a clear, step-by-step pathway of accredited professional development, leading from the Cambridge PDQ Certificate to UCL Institute of Education Master's. Teachers and leaders achieving a Cambridge PDQ Diploma can progress to relevant Level 6 and 7 programmes, including UCL's degree programmes such as the International Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (iPgCE) or the MA Advanced Educational practice.



## Conclusion

Research by the Teacher Development Trust indicates that school leaders have four core roles in enabling effective school-based professional development:

- **Developing vision**  
helping teachers believe alternative outcomes are possible and creating coherence so teachers understand the relevance of continuing professional development to wider priorities.
- **Managing and organising**  
establishing priorities, resolving competing demands, sourcing appropriate expertise and ensuring appropriate opportunities to learn are in place.
- **Leading professional learning**  
promoting a challenging learning culture, knowing what content and activities are likely to be of benefit, and promoting 'evidence-informed, self-regulated learning'.
- **Developing the leadership of others**  
encouraging teachers to lead a particular aspect of pedagogy or of the curriculum.

(Teacher Development Trust, 2015: 29)

In her meta-study of the dimensions of leadership that have most impact on student learning, Viviane Robinson (2011) identified the following as most important:

1. **Establishing goals and expectations.**
2. **Resourcing strategically.**
3. **Ensuring quality teaching.**
4. **Leading teacher learning and development.**
5. **Ensuring an orderly and safe environment.**

In this guide we have explained the aspects you need to think about and act on as school leader to support PDQ programmes, and these align with the roles and dimensions of school leadership highlighted by the Teacher Development Trust and Robinson. As a school leader considering a new programme for your school, do take this opportunity to further develop your understanding of the processes of change and the potential issues that you may meet on the way (e.g. initiatives in leadership thinking and practice led by Michael Fullan and Andy Hargreaves (2012)).

If you are going to run an in-house programme, all of the content of this guide is applicable; if you are going to rely on an approved professional development provider, it is still applicable, since you will still need to support your candidates in their school-based PDQ activities, make sure that they have mentors, and engage with the programme leader to make sure that the guided learning is relevant to your school and staff needs, and that your candidates are in safe hands, e.g. when it comes to preparing and submitting portfolios.

Remember that you can consult with your Cambridge schools development manager and the Cambridge PDQ team as you go through the approval process or as you look to engage with a local professional development provider.

We are delighted that you are interested to get ready, get set and get going with bringing PDQs into your school's life and development, and look forward to supporting you along the way.

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## See also:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=B204GZDSPRA&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B204GZDSPRA&feature=youtu.be)

[www.michaelfullan.ca](http://www.michaelfullan.ca)

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