

South West Consortium (SENCOs) The National Award for SEN Coordination

Plymouth University and University of Exeter
in collaboration with the regional local authorities of
Bournemouth, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Plymouth, Poole, Somerset

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'The SENCO is much more confident about her role and responsibilities within school. She is able to lead initiatives, hold teacher meetings, and meet with outside professionals and parents demonstrating a very good understanding of our legal responsibilities, links with outside agencies and the paperwork involved. Because of her increased understanding and confidence, she is developing her leadership skills and is more confident about the need for accountability within the school setting'. [Headteacher]

National Award for SEN Coordination

The National Award for SEN Coordination is a DfE approved post-graduate qualification for teachers in the role of SENCO. [The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Regulations 2014](#) (Clause 49) set out the requirement for SENCOs in mainstream schools to obtain this qualification. SENCOs 'new to the role' have 3 years from date of appointment to obtain the award.

The SEND (0-25) Code of Practice reiterates these requirements:

*6.84 Governing bodies of maintained mainstream schools and the proprietors of mainstream **academy schools** (including **free schools**) **must** ensure that there is a qualified teacher designated as SENCO for the school.*

*6.85 The SENCO **must** be a qualified teacher working at the school. A newly appointed SENCO **must** be a qualified teacher and, where they have not previously been the SENCO at that or any other relevant school for a total period of more than twelve months, they **must** achieve a National Award in Special Educational Needs Coordination within three years of appointment.*

*6.86 A National Award **must** be a postgraduate course accredited by a recognised higher education provider. The National College for Teaching and Leadership has worked with providers to develop a set of learning outcomes..... When appointing staff or arranging for them to study for a National Award schools should satisfy themselves that the chosen course will meet these outcomes and equip the SENCO to fulfil the duties outlined in this Code. Any selected course should be at least equivalent to 60 credits at postgraduate study.*

South West Consortium

The South West Consortium has been offering the National Award for SEN Coordination (NASENCO) since January 2010 and is now working with its eighth cohort of SENCOs. The programme is a one year course and has run in five different geographical locations (Bodmin/Newquay, Plymouth, Exeter/Tiverton, Ilminster (Somerset) and Dorchester) in collaboration with seven south west LAs. The local tutors are mainly LA staff – for example, SEN advisers/advisory teachers – working in conjunction with University tutors. The course involves six face-to-face 'taught' days and four strongly recommended study/visit days with assessed Masters level assignments which combine theory and practice to offer 60 credits, as a Postgraduate Certificate.

Since 2010, more than 1500 SENCOs in the South West Consortium have been awarded the NASENCO. Our evaluative evidence from SENCOs, headteachers and our external examiners suggests that the Award is having a positive impact on practice, ideas and the achievements of schools and their pupils. One external examiner comments that it is a **first rate example of partnership** between the universities and the region.

Course aims

The course aims are:

- to increase the participation of children and young people with SEN and/or disabilities and raise their achievement, through developing SENCOs' professional attributes and improving their knowledge, understanding and skills.
- to prepare SENCOs to lead teaching and learning and the provision for children and young people in their school/college/educational setting who have SEN and/or learning disabilities.

- to provide opportunities for SENCOs to share good practice and reflect critically and actively on their own role and practice.

Fees

There is no further government funding for this course; all CPD funding is now devolved to schools. The fees for the SW Consortium NASENCO for 2018-19 are £2300.

2018-19

We are now taking expressions of interest for a September 2018 start and welcome interest from:

- New-to-role SENCOs in maintained mainstream schools, including academies and free schools (who must attain the Award within three years of starting the role).
- Experienced SENCOs.
- SENCOs in independent schools, special schools or PRUs.
- Leaders of SEND provision in FE Colleges. [please note you must have QTS or QTLS in order to gain the Award]

Teachers who are not SENCOs may undertake the course but may not be able to meet all the SENCO Learning Outcomes; they must have access to children and young people with special educational needs, be able to lead (at least some) aspects of SEN in the school/college/educational setting and have the support of the head teacher/principal.

The programme provides a first-rate professional development programme for SENCOs in the south-west of England ... The programme is exemplary in the way that the university works in partnership with regional/local area professionals (e.g. local authorities, schools/settings and knowledgeable/skilled education professionals).

[External Examiner November 2016]

We hope you find this information and update useful and interesting.

Yours sincerely

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<https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/pgcert-the-national-award-for-special-educational-needs-coordination>

<http://socialsciences.exeter.ac.uk/education/graduatestudies/sencoordination/>

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