

HLTA North

Information for head teachers, mentors and other colleagues involved in the HLTA process ASSESSMENTS

What is HLTA?

HLTA stands for Higher Level Teaching Assistant. The HLTA assessment programme is a national initiative overseen by the HLTA National Assessment Partnership (HNAP).

How is it of value?

Support staff who achieve the status of HLTA will be able to offer proven skills to support teachers and learners more effectively and make a valuable contribution to improving standards in schools.

How is HLTA assessed?

To be awarded HLTA status, a Teaching Assistant is assessed against 33 HLTA professional standards and must demonstrate they meet **all** of them.

What does the assessment process involve?

Candidates must attend a preparation course, complete a series of written assessment tasks, compile an electronic file of supporting documentary evidence and submit this to the assessor by an agreed date prior to the assessment

Assessment Tasks

Tasks 1 to 3 require candidates to describe and evaluate their experiences of working within everyday teaching and learning sessions with an individual learner (Task 1), a small group (Task 2), and a whole class without any qualified teacher present (Task 3)

Tasks 4 to 8 give candidates an opportunity to write about five situations or events that provide evidence for standards not already covered in the main tasks and an opportunity to strengthen standards already covered. These situations may relate to candidates' wider professional roles, experiences and responsibilities when working with learners, teachers or other adults in or out of the classroom, e.g. school trips or lunchtime activities

The tasks are written snapshots of the candidate's work in school and are completed on pre-set HLTA forms. Each account must include a description of the activity, the actions taken by the candidate, the impact of those actions and a brief reflection.

Supporting documentary evidence

This evidence supports the written tasks and can comprise lesson plans, assessment sheets, certificates from training, observation notes, pupils' work, resources etc. Preparers will advise candidates how to submit this electronically. Assessors will delete all documents from their devices following moderation.

The Assessment

All assessments are carried out online over the course of one day. This may be extended to two days to accommodate exceptional circumstances that may arise. The duration of an assessment is approximately three hours to allow time for assessors to carry out the interviews and look at the candidate's documentary evidence. Scrutiny of the documentary evidence can be done before the assessment or between interviews on the day of the interview, at the assessor's discretion.

The time allocation for online interviews is as follows:

First interview (candidate): 20-40 mins

Second interview (teacher or teachers): 30 mins (15 mins per teacher if two are interviewed)

Third interview (head teacher or Head teacher rep): 15 mins

Final interview (candidate): 30 mins

Assessors will negotiate times with individual candidates. The specific details will be confirmed in a letter from the assessor prior to the day of the assessment. It is possible to reorder the 2nd and 3rd interviews if needed.

It is essential that those interviewed are familiar with the candidate's tasks and every day working practice and can provide specific examples of occasions when the candidate has demonstrated each of the standards, including taking whole classes without the presence of a teacher (S31) and using their chosen area(s) of expertise (S10). At least one of the teacher colleagues (2nd interview) must have Qualified Teacher Status.

Assessment guidance

Who does the assessor speak to?

The candidate, the HT, or their representative and at least one teacher, nominated by the candidate.

Can the assessor speak to more than one teacher?

Yes - if the candidate has two supporting teachers. They must be interviewed separately, and the 30 minutes allocated is divided between them.

Do candidates need a HLTA mentor?

It is recommended that all candidates work closely with a colleague in school for advice and support throughout the programme. The mentor does not need to complete any paperwork but may choose to observe the candidate to be able to provide more effective support. The mentor can be nominated as the teacher colleague to speak to the assessor. If the mentor does not have QTS, then a teacher must also be nominated to speak to the assessor in the 30-minute interview in addition to the mentor. Each will have a separate interview.

In what circumstances would the assessor speak to a HT representative rather than the HT?

Sometimes it is more appropriate for the assessor to speak to a HT representative, e.g. in a large primary or secondary school or in a Foundation Unit. The HT representative can be another senior leader, a deputy head teacher, the SENDCo, a Key Stage Coordinator or a Head of Year. The HT representative must have qualified teacher status.

What is the purpose of the interviews?

The interviews enable the assessor to confirm the information provided in the candidate's tasks. They also give all those involved an opportunity to talk about other examples of the candidate's work in school. The interviews are question led, each question focusing on a specific standard, and the examples given provide additional details for standards that enable the assessor to make an informed recommendation for the moderator.

What type of questions will be asked?

In all interviews, questions are asked that explore the candidate's work and each question will always focus on a specific standard. The assessor will always ask for specific examples of the candidate's practice and will not be satisfied by assertions that the candidate 'always does this'. Teachers should be sufficiently aware of the candidate's experience and practice to be able to give specific examples of the candidate's work. During the interview with the HT (or representative) the assessor may explore broader aspects of the candidate's performance in school, for example, the candidate's contribution to the overall functioning of the school or their professional values and practice. There is no predetermined format of questions; assessors prepare questions in advance based on their reading of the tasks. The questions will, therefore, vary from candidate to candidate.

Is there anything else I need to know?

Teachers and headteachers are specifically asked to verify candidate's evidence in relation to whole class teaching without a qualified teacher present (S31) and candidate's expertise (S10).

The assessor will require confirmation and specific evidence from colleagues who have QTS that the candidate has taught whole classes without any qualified teacher present, that this is a 'normal' part of the candidate's role, or they have been given opportunities to do this on several occasions, and that during these lessons learning has been advanced for the children/students involved.

What is meant by the candidate's area(s) of expertise?

Candidates can select one or two areas of expertise, e.g. Maths, SEND, Early Years, Behaviour Management. Assessors require confirmation and specific evidence from a colleague with QTS that the candidate has sufficient knowledge of their area(s) of expertise to support the learners with whom they work.

It is important that colleagues who speak with the assessor are fully prepared with specific examples.

The Assessment Outcome

Candidates and school colleagues will **not** be given the outcome of the assessment until files are moderated. This is undertaken monthly by Senior Assessors on behalf of the Regional Provider of Assessment (RPA), HLTA North, and HNAP, the national awarding body, to:

- Moderate the assessors' judgements and recommendations
- Confirm the threshold for meeting the standards has been achieved by the candidate
- Ensure that assessors' judgements are secure
- Ensure that there is consistency of judgement amongst assessors

Approx 3 weeks after moderation, candidates receive an email informing them of the result of this moderation. This is followed by a letter and certificate. The outcome letter can be used as proof of HLTA status for current and future employers. There are three possible outcomes:

1. **Standards met:** all the standards have been met and the candidate is awarded Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) status.
2. **Partial reassessment:** some standards (up to a maximum of three) have not been fully met. This implies that the candidate is judged to have met all but a small number of standards, and the weaknesses in relation to these standards are modest in nature. The RPA advises the candidate on the most appropriate next steps to fully meet the standards and a partial reassessment of those standards is carried out.
3. **Standards not met:** there is insufficient evidence that all the standards have been met and the candidate is not awarded HLTA status. Potentially this could relate to just one standard if the evidence provided suggests the need to undertake further training or development.

Please note: In accordance with data protection legislation candidates' assessment files are retained for one year before being destroyed. A candidate's status is recorded on a database, using their URN (Unique Reference Number).