

HLTA Status Assessment Route Only

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

Since 2003, HNAP (the HLTA National Assessment Partnership) has been the only awarding body for HLTA status in England. It oversees the quality assurance of assessments against national HLTA standards and approves partner organisations to manage and moderate assessments on its behalf regionally and nationally. Its current regional partners, managing assessments regionally, are HLTA North (Leeds Trinity and Northumbria Universities), Northampton University and HLTA South. Following the launch of the Level 5 Specialist Teaching Assistant Apprenticeship in 2025, the assessment only route is managed by NPAO, (the National Partnership for Assessment Only).

***Both the Regional Preparation for Assessment route and
the National Assessment Only Route lead to the award of HLTA Status.***

How is it of value?

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

How does it work?

HNAP currently supports two routes for candidates wanting to gain the National Status; regional preparation courses and an assessment only route for support staff who have successfully completed the Level 5 Specialist Teaching Apprenticeship. HNAP is the awarding body for HLTA status.

How is HLTA assessed?

Candidates on both routes submit a portfolio of work to an independent assessor appointed by an assessment partner followed by an online interviews that includes school staff. . To be awarded the status, candidates must demonstrate they meet **all** 33 HLTA Standards

Key info: eligibility and preparation

- To be eligible to apply for the Assessment Only Route, candidates will have achieved their level 5 Specialist Teaching Assistant Apprenticeship Award and successfully completed Gateway and End Point Assessment.
- When registering for the programme (via npao@hnep.uk) candidates need to supply evidence of L2 qualifications in maths and English (HLTA Standard 11) that have been verified by their headteacher or a headteacher representative.
- To prepare for their HLTA assessment, candidates need to cross reference all relevant evidence from their apprenticeship portfolio to the HLTA standards and signpost specific pieces of evidence to confirm the activity. They will submit this documentary evidence along with a signposting grid to their assessor. All the relevant paperwork and guidance materials are by NPAO when candidates register for the programme.
- The evidence will consist of a series of documents that reflect the training they have undertaken as part of the apprenticeship. It should show how they are putting into practice their skills, experiences and responsibilities when working with learners, teachers or other adults in and out of the classroom. There should be evidence that they are able to apply these skills to advance learning with the individuals, groups and whole classes that they teach. Whole class teaching should be undertaken on a planned and regular basis and should be without the presence of the assigned teacher. All documents will be deleted by assessors once the assessment has been completed, sent for moderation and the outcome confirmed.

The Assessment

- All assessments are carried out online over the course of one day, usually over a morning or afternoon. Assessors will negotiate date and times with individual candidates. The specific details will be confirmed in a letter from the assessor prior to the day of the assessment
- The duration of an assessment is approximately two - three hours to allow time for assessors to carry out the professional discussions and look at the candidate's documentary evidence. Scrutiny of the documentary evidence will be done before the assessment but may be discussed during the conversations on the day of the assessment.

The time allocation for online discussion is as follows:

First meeting (candidate):	20-40 mins
Second meeting (teacher or teachers):	20-30 mins (shared if more than one teacher)
Third meeting (headteacher or HT rep):	10-15 mins
Final meeting (candidate):	10-30 mins

These meetings mirror the requirements the national process for assessment used on the preparation for assessment route, to maintain the integrity of the status, with slightly amended timings to reflect the nature of the work already completed by the candidate. It is possible to reorder the 2nd and 3rd meetings if needed.

It is essential that those taking part in the discussions are familiar with the candidate's 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). In line with national protocols, the HT/ HT rep and the teacher must have QTS

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 from NPAO on behalf of HNAP, to:

- Confirm the threshold for meeting the standards has been achieved by the candidate
- Moderate the assessors' judgements and recommendations and confirm these are secure
- Ensure consistency of judgement between assessors

Approx 3 weeks after moderation, candidates receive an email and letter informing them of the result; this is followed by a 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. **Re-submission:** 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 specific number of standards, and the weaknesses in relation to these standards are modest in nature. NPAO will advise the candidate on the most appropriate next steps to fully meet the standards, and a partial reassessment of those standards is carried out at a later date.
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 candidate needs to undertake further training or development.

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

FAQs

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 time allocated for the 'teacher interview' is divided between them.

Do candidates need a HLTA mentor?

Candidates will most likely have had a mentor during their apprenticeship; this person would be well-placed to support them during their preparation for this assessment and may be the best person to represent them during the interviews.

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 and be a part of SLT.

What is the purpose of the interviews?

The interviews enable the assessor to confirm the information provided in the candidate's work. 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 but are more in line with a professional discussion about the candidate's work. Each question will focus on the standards and explore the candidate's work relating to those standards. 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 but may cover a range of standards. 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 discussion with the HT (or HT 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 work provided. 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 the 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, it is most likely that their main expertise will relate to the specialist modules completed as part of their apprenticeship. 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 to access the curriculum; to support their learning by using this expertise to contribute to the planning of learning activities; and to be able to use this expertise to plan their role when supporting learners.