

Literacy and numeracy requirements for Higher Level Teaching Assistants



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Welsh Assembly Government

Introduction

This factsheet answers frequently asked questions on the literacy and numeracy requirements that candidates will need to meet as part of the assessment for the award of Higher Level Teaching Assistant status.

Frequently asked questions

What are the literacy and numeracy requirements of the Professional Standards for Higher Level Teaching Assistants?

Standard 11 of the Professional Standards for Higher Level Teaching Assistants requires candidates to have achieved a qualification in literacy and numeracy at level 2 or above of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

Why do the qualifications need to be on the National Qualifications Framework?

Qualifications accredited to the NQF are:

- based on agreed national standards;
- offered by awarding bodies meeting criteria agreed by the national regulatory authorities, WAG, QCA and CCEA (the regulatory bodies for England and Northern Ireland) to ensure quality and to protect the interests of candidates; and
- monitored by the regulatory authorities in accordance with criteria and codes of practice to ensure reliability, consistency and fairness across all awarding bodies offering similar qualifications.

More information on the NQF and accredited qualifications can be found at <http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/learningandqualifications/?lang=en>

Why do I need these qualifications?

Candidates wishing to gain HLTA status have been required to provide evidence of proficiency in literacy and numeracy since the standards were first introduced in 2004. This is a requirement for HLTA status that is common to England and Wales and ensures consistency of the standard in both countries. The consultations carried out in England (2007) and Wales (2008) on revised HLTA standards confirmed the need for this requirement to continue. It is also seen as beneficial for candidates – for reasons of portability and progression – for the Standard to require nationally recognised qualifications in these areas.

Which currently available qualifications are acceptable?

Qualification Type	Literacy	Numeracy
GCSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English or Welsh (1st language) A* - C 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mathematics A* - C
Basic Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certificate in Adult Literacy Level 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certificate in Adult Numeracy Level 2
Key Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication Level 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application of Number Level 2
ESOL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills for Life Qualification Level 2 	

Evidence of attainment of some level 3 qualifications may also meet Standard 11. Acceptable qualifications are:

Qualification Type	Literacy	Numeracy
GCE A-Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English or Welsh (1st language) Language English or Welsh (1st language) Literature English or Welsh (1st language) Language and Literature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of Mathematics Mathematics Further Mathematics Statistics
GCE AS-Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English or Welsh (1st language) Language English or Welsh (1st language) Literature English or Welsh (1st language) Language and Literature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of Mathematics Mathematics Further Mathematics Pure Mathematics Statistics Mechanics Applied Mathematics Discrete Mathematics
Key Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication Level 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application of Number Level 3

I left school before GCSEs were introduced. Do my qualifications count?

Certain older, nationally recognised qualifications, including GCE Ordinary-level passes and Certificate of Secondary Education (CSE) passes at grade 1, are also acceptable to meet Standard 11.

The Certificate of Extended Education (CEE) was introduced in 1976 and was conducted by a consortium of GCE and CSE boards. CEE grades I, II and III were certified as being equivalent to at least a grade C in the O-level examination. Passes at grades I, II and III in English and Mathematics are therefore acceptable in order to meet Standard 11.

Acceptable qualifications are:

Qualification Type	Literacy	Numeracy
GCE O-level Level pass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English or Welsh (1st language) Language English or Welsh (1st language) Literature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mathematics
CSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English or Welsh (1st language) Grade 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mathematics/ Arithmetic Grade 1
CEE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English or Welsh (1st language) Grades I, II and III 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mathematics Grades I, II and III

Note on terminology. Titles of mathematics and English/Welsh awards have varied across awarding bodies and across time. Mathematics titles included (but were not restricted to) ‘applicable mathematics’, ‘mathematics and theoretical mechanics’, ‘pure mathematics and probability’, ‘commercial mathematics’, ‘modern mathematics’, ‘technical mathematics’, ‘mathematics and statistics’ and ‘mathematical studies’.

For the purposes of Standard 11 therefore, O-level passes or CSE grade 1 in mathematics or arithmetic or variations thereof are acceptable. However, O-level/CSE subjects with some mathematical components, e.g. business/commercial studies or accountancy are not acceptable. Similarly, there may be some variation in the actual titles of English or Welsh awards.

How do I know if my O-level grade is a pass?

Before the summer of 1975, each O-level board had its own grading system; however, the certificates issued clearly state that the candidate has passed. Most certificates do not include the grade that was awarded; this was issued separately on a result slip. From the summer of 1975 onwards, all boards adopted the same system, with grades A to C equivalent to the previous pass grades. Candidates who took O-levels from June 1975 onwards will need to have achieved results at grade C or higher.

I went to school in Scotland. What about me?

Qualifications in Scotland are regulated by the Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA). The four countries of the United Kingdom recognise each other’s nationally accredited qualifications. Scottish qualifications, which meet the Standard, are:

Qualification Type	Literacy	Numeracy
SEB	Until 1985, C or better on the ordinary grade of the Scottish Certificate of Education. In or after 1986, grade 3 or better on the standard grade of the Scottish Certificate of Education. Higher grade English; C or better in Certificate of sixth year studies English.	Until 1985, C or better on the ordinary grade of the Scottish Certificate of Education. In or after 1986, grade 3 or better on the standard grade of the Scottish Certificate of Education. Higher grade mathematics: C or better in Certificate of Sixth year studies mathematics.

I have been told that I must meet Standard 11 before being accepted for HLTA assessment. Why is this?

The assessment-only route is for candidates who are considered to be ready for assessment against the HLTA standards and are therefore able to provide existing evidence of their ability to meet each standard, including Standard 11.

Will I need to produce my certificates?

The assessor will need to ensure that candidates have produced evidence that satisfies the requirements of Standard 11. All HLTA candidates will need to provide evidence of appropriate qualifications before the date of the school visit is confirmed.

Provisional result slips or letters are not acceptable as evidence as they are subject to change. You will need to show your assessor your certificates or the confirmation of results from your awarding body.

I can't find my certificates. What should I do?

Candidates who are unable to find their original certificates can apply to their awarding body for replacement certificates or a confirmation of results letter. Awarding bodies normally make a charge for this service. A list of awarding bodies offering current qualifications, including Key and Basic Skills, can be found at <http://www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk/index.aspx> . This database includes links to the awarding bodies' web sites where you will find contact information for replacement certificates.

Current GCSE awarding bodies are listed in Annex A. If your lost certificates relate to O-levels or CSEs, please note that some older examination boards may be subsumed within the current GCSE awarding bodies. Annex A gives the website link to each awarding body's procedure for obtaining replacement certificates, together with a list of former examination boards whose records they hold.

I was educated outside of the UK. Are my qualifications acceptable?

Yes, provided you obtain a letter of comparability from UK NARIC.

The National Recognition Information Centre for the United Kingdom (NARIC) (<http://www.naric.org.uk/>) provides a service for individuals seeking information on comparability between international and UK academic qualifications. UK NARIC is only able to assess overseas awards, which constitute national standards in the country of origin. A letter of comparability from UK NARIC is acceptable evidence for meeting Standard 11. Alternatively, if you have achieved qualifications outside of the UK which you feel have covered the level 2 literacy and numeracy requirements, you may wish to take the on-line Basic Skills practice tests. These can be found at <http://www.move-on.org.uk>. After trying the practice tests, you may decide that you are ready to take the tests without following a course of learning in preparation.

I have a UK qualification which is not listed, but I've been told it is equivalent to level 2. Why is this not acceptable?

Qualifications that are accredited by the National Qualifications Framework as meeting the national standards for literacy and numeracy provide secure and consistent outcomes and offer candidates national recognition of their achievement and opportunities for progression. Many other qualifications and training may cover some, but not all, of the knowledge requirements. Where candidates feel that they have achieved the requisite level, they can elect to take the tests only, without following an additional programme of learning. Practice tests can be found at <http://www.move-on.org.uk> to help you decide whether you are ready to take the tests.

I have an accredited qualification related to literacy (or numeracy) but it's not on the list. Why not?

There are many qualifications which have relevance to literacy and/or numeracy. However the focus of assessment for these qualifications is not on the candidate's literacy or numerical skills but on other areas such as their ability to support learning. Other qualifications – for example, accountancy or business studies – may require some demonstration of candidates' literacy or numerical skills but the full range of the national standards for literacy and numeracy are not assessed. Moreover, a weaker performance in literacy or numeracy could be offset by a stronger performance elsewhere, so that a candidate who does not meet the literacy and numeracy standards could still achieve these qualifications.

I have completed an Access programme for entry to initial teacher training (ITT). Why is this not acceptable evidence for Standard 11?

The entry requirements for Initial Teacher Training (ITT) require candidates to have a level of understanding equivalent to GCSE grade C or above in English or Welsh and Mathematics. In order to widen participation and offer routes into ITT for those who have not achieved national qualifications in these subjects, providers may, at their discretion, accept candidates who have completed appropriate Access courses; have achieved qualifications not accredited but seen as equivalent to level 2 of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF); or who have passed provider-devised equivalency tests. However, these alternative entry requirements for ITT are not part of the National Qualifications framework and so are not acceptable to meet Standard 11.

The exit Standards for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) ensures that the standard of successful candidates is consistent and secure on completing training. These Standards include the requirement to pass the National Skills tests in Maths, English and ICT, which are based on the professional practice of teachers. The ITT programme will identify and

address any areas where the candidate requires additional support to meet the exit Standards.

Awarding Body	Web Reference	Former Examination Boards
Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA)	http://www.aqa.org.uk/admin/p_records.php	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associated Examining Board • Northern Examinations and Assessment Board • South Eastern Regional Examinations Board • Southern Examining Board • South West Regional Examinations Board • Associated Lancashire Schools Examinations Board • Joint Matriculation Board • Northern Examinations Association • Northern Regional Examinations Board • North West Regional Examinations Board • The West Yorkshire and Lindsey Regional Examinations Board • Yorkshire and Humberside Examinations Board
Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment (CCEA)	http://www.ccea.org.uk/gcse.htm (follow "Replacement certs" link under 'Popular resources')	
Edexcel	http://www.edexcel.org.uk/Studying/StudyingEditorial.aspx?id=83064&ciid=176823	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of London Examinations Board • London Regional Examinations Board • Metropolitan and Middlesex Regional Examinations Board • East Anglian Examinations Board
OCR	http://www.ocr.org.uk/administration/certificates.html	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate • East Midland Regional Examinations Board • Midland Examining Group

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oxford and Cambridge Examinations and Assessment Council • Oxford and Cambridge Schools Examination Board • Southern Regional Examinations Board • Southern Universities' Joint Board for Schools Examinations • The West Midlands Examinations Board • University of Oxford Delegacy of Local Examinations
Welsh Joint Education Committee (WJEC)	http://www.wjec.co.uk/index.php?nav=44	

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