



# Higher Level Teaching Assistant

Needs Analysis tool



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## Introduction

This easy to use tool will enable you to review your professional practice over the last twelve months and to identify your strengths, interests and development needs. The tool is based around eight themes, all of which you will recognise as being integral to your work as a teaching assistant.

Reviewing your strengths and development needs will help you decide how to move forward in your professional development and will help you to work towards HLTA status, i.e. to decide whether you are ready for preparation for assessment, or whether you need specific development or training activities first. If you believe you are ready for preparation for assessment, your next step will be to apply to a Provider of Preparation (PoP).

We recommend that you do not complete this review process in isolation, but that your self-review is discussed with a colleague in school or that you use the tool within a supportive group, either in your own school or at a workshop or course.

There are several benefits to be gained from undertaking this self-review process. These include:

- **Identification of your professional strengths** - we too often identify only our weaknesses or needs. By identifying strengths we can learn how to build on them to address areas where we are less confident or competent.
- **Reflection on job possibilities**, for example, for extending and enhancing your work roles. This will help you to think about job satisfaction and career progression. You may have skills and knowledge you are not currently using in your work, and undertaking this analysis will help you to pinpoint what these are and how they might be used in the future.
- **Comparison of your current strengths and achievements** with national standards for Higher Level Teaching Assistant Status. You may find you are ready to prepare for assessment or that you need development and training opportunities before doing so.
- **Identification of gaps in your experience** - are there aspects of these standards where you do not currently have the opportunity to develop your expertise? You can then begin to focus discussion with your line manager/colleagues in school on how you might gain this experience.
- **Identification of your professional development needs** - by undertaking this self-review process you will be able to see where you need to access development opportunities, for example, training, observation of other colleagues at work, discussion, observation of your own practice.

## Thoughts and suggestions to aid your reflections

Remember, there are many ways that support staff can make effective contributions to advancing children and young peoples' learning. For example, in some schools, for some colleagues, there are opportunities to meet with others who teach and support learning to share ideas and devise the best activities to meet learners' needs and curriculum objectives and to assess learners' work together.

For other colleagues meeting to plan is not easy. This does not mean that you cannot make effective contributions to planning - you might take a teacher's planning or planning from a national programme or scheme of work and adapt it to meet the specific needs of the children and young people you will support. There is no one way of making an effective input.

The key features of effectively supporting learning are that you are able to reflect on your experiences, identify your learning needs and take steps to improve in the areas you identify so that you will be able to make an increased impact on children and young peoples' learning.

## Approaching your self-review

For each theme there is a set of questions for you to ask yourself and a box where you can put a tick, cross or question mark to show if you think you do this. There is also space for you to record examples if you wish.

Think about your work in school within the past 12 months. What have you been particularly pleased with? Why did it go well? What was it about your approach that led to success? Try to remember those occasions and use them to inform the points you note in the self-review.

Use your colleagues as a reference point. Seek feedback from teachers and other colleagues with whom you work. Can they point to evidence of successes that you have missed? Can they help you identify the areas you need to work on in order to be more effective? If you disagree with them, can you point to evidence that shows you are more/less competent in these areas than they believe you to be?

At the end of each theme is a rating scale, for example;

### How confident and experienced are you?



... plot yourself according to your current confidence and experience.

## 1. Your literacy and numeracy qualifications - standard 11

To proceed to the HLTA preparation for assessment stage, you'll need evidence of English/literacy and mathematics/numeracy qualifications at level 2 of the national qualifications framework (NQF).

This is a requirement of standard 11, which is one of the higher level teaching assistant (HLTA) professional standards that teaching assistants working towards HLTA status are expected to meet. For further details download the 'HLTA Guidance on meeting Standard 11' information pack from

<http://tda.gov.uk/support-staff/developing-progressing/hlta/identifying-training-needs.aspx>

If you don't have evidence of level 2 literacy and numeracy skills, you can find out what level you are currently at by completing the online practice tests on the Move On website ([www.move-on.org.uk](http://www.move-on.org.uk)). You can also phone **learnirect** on **0800 100 900** to find out about adult literacy and numeracy courses (Skills for Life) in your area.

You can obtain a Level 2 qualification in literacy and numeracy by taking a course, entitled Certificates in Literacy and Numeracy (Scheme Number 3793), available via City and Guilds approved centres.

Do you have the certificates to demonstrate your achievement?

Details of how you can obtain proof that you passed tests or examinations you have previously taken can be found in the document mentioned above; the TDA's HLTA Guidance on meeting Standard 11.

### Are you confident in your own literacy?

Not at all	Fairly	Satisfactory	Mostly	Very
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### Are you confident in your own numeracy?

Not at all	Fairly	Satisfactory	Mostly	Very
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## 2. Planning and preparation of lessons/sessions

(including expectations and commitment to children and young peoples' achievement) - Standards 1, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21 & 32.

Have you made suggestions about activities for learners that are taken on board in the planning?

Do you understand how to set your expectations so as to raise the achievement of all the children and young people you work with?

Have you adapted teachers' planning/schemes of work suit the needs of the learners you work with?

Have you prepared and/or selected resources and activities to meet specific learner's interests and abilities?

Do you plan your own role in the activities and what you specifically will do?

Do you organise and manage safely aspects of the planned learning activities?

How confident and experienced are you in making an input to planning and preparation?

Not at all

Fairly

Satisfactory

Mostly

Very

### 3. Supporting children and young people to access learning opportunities

Standards 5, 9, 19, 20, 26 & 27

Can you describe one or more examples where:

- You have shown learners that you have taken practical account of their backgrounds and circumstances?
  
- You have worked to promote children and young peoples' inclusion in learning/school activities?
  
- You have promoted positive behaviour, acting within the school policy?
  
- You have used effective behaviour management techniques?
  
- You have challenged an equal opportunities issue, e.g. stereotyping or bullying?
  
- You have worked in partnership with parents/carers, recognising their role in the children's/young people's development and well-being?

**How confident and experienced are you in supporting learners' inclusion?**

Not at all	Fairly	Satisfactory	Mostly	Very
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## 4. Communication

Standards 4, 5, 6, 26 & 33

Can you give examples of times when you have:

- Worked to establish good relationships with children and young people?
  
- Supported learners' through motivating and communicating well with them?
  
- Collaborated well with your colleagues?
  
- Asked a colleague for help or advice?
  
- Guided other colleagues supporting learning in the classroom?
  
- Communicated sensitively and effectively with parents/carers, showing that you respect their views and the contributions they make to their children's learning and development?

**How effectively and sensitively do you communicate professionally with others?**

Not at all

Fairly

Satisfactory

Mostly

Very

## 5. Your knowledge

Standards 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16

In what ways do you demonstrate your professional knowledge and understanding of:

- Your area(s) of expertise?
  
- The relevant curriculum, objectives and age-related testing frameworks?
  
- The special educational needs Code of Practice?
  
- School policies, statutory and non-statutory frameworks that affect your work - e.g. health and safety, child protection, anti-bullying, inclusion?
  
- ICT and how to use it support your own professional activities?
  
- The factors that affect how children and young people learn?
  
- How to contribute to effective personalised provision for the learners you support?

**Is your professional knowledge and understanding sufficient to advance the learning of the children and young people you work with?**

Not at all

Fairly

Satisfactory

Mostly

Very

## 6. Advancing learning in different contexts

(individual, group and whole class) - Standards 28, 29, 30 & 31

Do you have experience within the previous 12 months of:

Working with an individual pupil to advance their learning?

Working with groups (3+) to advance their learning?

Advancing the learning of a whole class, without a teacher present?

Using ICT to advance learning?

Are you confident and experienced in all three contexts?

Not at all

Fairly

Satisfactory

Mostly

Very

## 7. Assessment and monitoring learners' progress

Standards 22, 23, 24 & 25

Can you give examples of occasions when you have:

- Given learners feedback about their progress?
  
- Adapted an activity in response to the learners' progress on the tasks planned for them?
  
- Made different forms of assessment of learners' progress and fed these back to teachers?
  
- Noted and made records of learners' progress?
  
- Looked back over records and analysed the progress of particular learners?

**Are you confident and experienced in monitoring, assessing and recording children and young people's progress?**

Not at all	Fairly	Satisfactory	Mostly	Very
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## 8. Improving your professional practice

Standards 5, 6, 7 & 10

How effectively have you:

- Taken steps to increase your knowledge, for example of the curriculum or your area(s) of expertise?
  
- Learnt from observing other colleagues?
  
- Reflected on your own practice and used these reflections to improve what you do?
  
- Discussed your work with colleagues and learnt from these discussions?
  
- Benefited from discussions with parents/carers about how best to support their children's learning and development?

How well do you evaluate and improve your own professional practice?

Not at all

Fairly

Satisfactory

Mostly

Very

## Your next steps

You will now be ready to think about the best route to help you to gain HLTA status.

### Are you fully confident that you consistently meet all the HLTA standards?

Not at all	Fairly	Satisfactory	Mostly	Very
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If you are confident, you will be ready for the 3 day preparation route.

Preparation for assessment involves:

- Making sure that you understand the HLTA professional standards and how they relate to your work in school
- Preparing for the four assessment tasks, which are used to record your achievement against the standards
- Discussing your assessment tasks
- Preparing for the visit to your school by an assessor

If you have a number of areas where you feel uncertain, lack confidence or feel you would benefit from further knowledge and discussion of the issues involved, it is likely that you would benefit from some training and development activities to bring you to a point where you do feel confident that you consistently demonstrate all the standards.

If you feel ready for preparation and assessment, you can find a list of Providers of Preparation on the best practice network website [www.bestpracticenetwork.co.uk/hlta](http://www.bestpracticenetwork.co.uk/hlta)

## Training Providers

Courses to meet your training and development needs can be accessed from a wide range of sources - within your school, your local authority or from other organisations, such as training providers and higher education institutions.

Best Practice Network has developed modules to cover all the HLTA standards and can provide schools, groups of schools and local authorities with flexibly organised courses that meet individual participants' needs.

If you would like to work with Best Practice Network then please contact us to discuss how we can help you to meet your training and development needs. We work with individual schools, groups of schools and local authorities - whatever best suits your needs.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Best Practice Network, 111-117 Victoria Street, Bristol, BS1 6AX.

Email [hlta@bestpracticenetwork.co.uk](mailto:hlta@bestpracticenetwork.co.uk) or visit [www.bestpracticenetwork.co.uk](http://www.bestpracticenetwork.co.uk)