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Higher Level Teaching Assistant

A new **status** for people
who **support** teachers

Higher Level Teaching Assistant

Teacher Training Agency
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Professional Standards for higher level teaching assistants

September 2003



Foreword

Schools are changing. Headteachers and teachers know that the school workforce needs to be able to take its part in leading this change.

In January 2003, local employers, school workforce unions and the Department for Education and Skills signed a National Agreement that paved the way for radical reform of the school workforce to raise standards and tackle workload.

This Agreement included proposals to introduce the role of higher level teaching assistants who would bring a distinct contribution to the work of schools. Support for these proposals was very encouraging and the DfES and the Teacher Training Agency are now able to publish a set of national Standards for higher level teaching assistants. This document sets out what is expected of those who are seeking to take on this additional responsibility. These new Standards will help to ensure that all higher level teaching assistants have the necessary skills and expertise to make an active contribution to pupils' learning.

This document has been prepared following a wide-ranging consultation and we are grateful to everyone who has taken part. It was encouraging to find widespread support for the contribution that higher level teaching assistants could make to the work of a school, both in terms of assisting teachers and in contributing to pupils' achievement.

This is an exciting time to be working in schools: standards are rising; there are more teachers employed and teaching quality has never been better; there is greater community involvement; and time is being found for teachers to focus more closely on their professional role. We believe these Standards reflect the high expectations the education sector has for all those who work in this role in schools, and that they will play their part in embedding the role of the higher level teaching assistant in our schools.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Miliband'.

David Miliband MP
Minister of State for School Standards



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ralph Tabberer'.

Ralph Tabberer
Chief Executive, Teacher Training Agency

Introduction

Support staff in schools make a strong contribution to pupils' learning and achievement. The National Agreement between Government, employers and school workforce unions has created the conditions in which teachers and support staff can work together even more effectively, in professional teams. In this context, some support staff – higher level teaching assistants (HLTAs) – will be able to undertake a more extended role. The professional Standards contained in this document set out the expectations of teaching assistants who are identified as able to work at this level.

Teachers' professional training, knowledge and experience prepare them to take overall responsibility for pupils' learning. However, they are not required to take sole responsibility for every aspect of each lesson that is taught. There are times when they will want to draw upon support from a wide range of other colleagues, including HLTAs.

The work of HLTAs complements that of teachers and the roles are not interchangeable. As more HLTAs are trained and assessed as having met the Standards, the range of support available to teachers and schools will be enhanced, allowing qualified teachers to make even more effective use of their time and their particular professional knowledge, skills and understanding.

HLTAs work in a range of different settings and with more autonomy than most other school support staff. Teachers and headteachers, working within the regulatory framework¹, will be expected to make professional judgements about which teaching and learning activities HLTAs should undertake and what support and guidance they should have. These Standards, and the associated training and assessment, are designed to provide an assurance to teachers, employers and parents about the quality of contribution to pupils' learning that HLTAs can be expected to make.

The Standards for HLTAs

These Standards set out what an individual should know, understand and be able to do to be awarded HLTA status. They are organised in three inter-related sections:

Professional values and practice

These Standards set out the attitudes and commitment to be expected from those trained as HLTAs.

Knowledge and understanding

These Standards require HLTAs to demonstrate they have sufficient knowledge, expertise and awareness of the pupils' curriculum to work effectively with teachers as part of a professional team. They also require HLTAs to demonstrate that they know how to use their skills, expertise and experience to advance pupils' learning.

Teaching and learning activities

These Standards require all HLTAs to demonstrate that they can work effectively with individual pupils, small groups and whole classes under the direction and supervision of a qualified teacher, and that they can contribute to a range of teaching and learning activities in the areas where they have expertise. They require all HLTAs to demonstrate skills in planning, monitoring, assessment and class management.

The Standards apply to HLTAs working in all phases of education and in all areas of school life. They have been designed to be applicable to the diversity of roles in which school support staff work to support pupils' learning. The Standards are also designed to support smooth progression to QTS for those HLTAs with the potential and interest to go on to qualify as teachers.

The Handbook

The Standards will be accompanied by a handbook of guidance, which will help to explain the knowledge and skills required by those seeking to demonstrate they have met the HLTA Standards. It will set out the kind of evidence that would show that the Standards have been met and the contexts in which this evidence is likely to be found. It will also outline the scope of each Standard, set out the range of experiences, knowledge and activities that an individual may need to cover before being able to demonstrate that a Standard has been met. Where relevant, the guidance will also indicate what falls outside the scope of a Standard. The guidance will be prepared to help those who assess individuals against the Standards, though it may be useful to headteachers and others with an interest in the work of HLTAs. The guidance will aim to promote consistency of interpretation of the Standards regardless of the context in which an HLTA trains and is assessed.

Training for HLTAs

HLTA training programmes will be available from April 2004. The training will relate to the Standards and will enable headteachers and teachers to be confident that HLTAs, working with qualified teachers as part of a professional team, are able to contribute to a wide range of teaching and learning activities and can assist and support the work of qualified teachers. The training will help HLTA candidates to demonstrate they can work effectively with individual pupils, small groups and whole classes.

While the Standards are generic, the training will provide opportunities for participants to build on and develop their prior specialist knowledge and experience, for example in behaviour management, pastoral care, early years, special educational needs or individual subject areas. Assessment will require participants to apply their training to their own situation and will take place in the context of their specific specialist area.

Some HLTA candidates may need little additional training to meet the required Standards. Their prior achievements, experience of working in schools² and previous training could provide a firm foundation for their HLTA work.

¹ For further details see the regulations and guidance under Section 133 of the Education Act 2002.

² In this document, the term 'schools' includes mainstream schools, Further Education and VI form colleges, Early Years settings, pupil referral units, and special schools where aspiring HLTAs can demonstrate that they meet the Standards.

Professional Standards for HLTAs

1. Professional values and practice

Those meeting the higher level teaching assistant Standards must demonstrate all of the following.

- 1.1** They have high expectations of all pupils; respect their social, cultural, linguistic, religious and ethnic backgrounds; and are committed to raising their educational achievement.
- 1.2** They build and maintain successful relationships with pupils, treat them consistently, with respect and consideration, and are concerned for their development as learners.
- 1.3** They demonstrate and promote the positive values, attitudes and behaviour they expect from the pupils with whom they work.
- 1.4** They work collaboratively with colleagues, and carry out their roles effectively, knowing when to seek help and advice.
- 1.5** They are able to liaise sensitively and effectively with parents and carers, recognising their roles in pupils' learning.
- 1.6** They are able to improve their own practice, including through observation, evaluation and discussion with colleagues.

2. Knowledge and understanding

Those meeting the higher level teaching assistant Standards must demonstrate sufficient knowledge and understanding to be able to help the pupils they work with make progress with their learning. This knowledge and understanding will relate to a specialist area which could be subject based or linked to a specific role (e.g. in support of an age phase or pupils with particular needs). Those meeting the higher level teaching assistant Standards must demonstrate all of the following.

- 2.1** They have sufficient understanding of their specialist area to support pupils' learning, and are able to acquire further knowledge to contribute effectively and with confidence to the classes in which they are involved.
- 2.2** They are familiar with the school curriculum, the age-related expectations of pupils, the main teaching methods and the testing/examination frameworks in the subjects and age ranges in which they are involved.
- 2.3** They understand the aims, content, teaching strategies and intended outcomes for the lessons in which they are involved, and understand the place of these in the related teaching programme.
- 2.4** They know how to use ICT to advance pupils' learning, and can use common ICT tools for their own and pupils' benefit.
- 2.5** They know the key factors that can affect the way pupils learn.
- 2.6** They have achieved a qualification in English/literacy and mathematics/numeracy, equivalent to at least Level 2 of the National Qualifications Framework.
- 2.7** They are aware of the statutory frameworks relevant to their role.
- 2.8** They know the legal definition of Special Educational Needs (SEN), and are familiar with the guidance about meeting SEN given in the SEN Code of Practice.
- 2.9** They know a range of strategies to establish a purposeful learning environment and to promote good behaviour.

3. Teaching and learning activities

The following teaching and learning activities should take place under the direction and supervision of a qualified teacher in accordance with arrangements made by the headteacher of the school.³

Those meeting the higher level teaching assistant Standards must demonstrate all of the following.

3.1 Planning and expectations

- 3.1.1 They contribute effectively to teachers' planning and preparation of lessons.
- 3.1.2 Working within a framework set by the teacher, they plan their role in lessons including how they will provide feedback to pupils and colleagues on pupils' learning and behaviour.
- 3.1.3 They contribute effectively to the selection and preparation of teaching resources that meet the diversity of pupils' needs and interests.
- 3.1.4 They are able to contribute to the planning of opportunities for pupils to learn in out-of-school contexts, in accordance with school policies and procedures.

3.2 Monitoring and assessment

- 3.2.1 They are able to support teachers in evaluating pupils' progress through a range of assessment activities.
- 3.2.2 They monitor pupils' responses to learning tasks and modify their approach accordingly.
- 3.2.3 They monitor pupils' participation and progress, providing feedback to teachers, and giving constructive support to pupils as they learn.
- 3.2.4 They contribute to maintaining and analysing records of pupils' progress.

3.3 Teaching and learning activities

- 3.3.1 Using clearly structured teaching and learning activities, they interest and motivate pupils, and advance their learning.
- 3.3.2 They communicate effectively and sensitively with pupils to support their learning.
- 3.3.3 They promote and support the inclusion of all pupils in the learning activities in which they are involved.
- 3.3.4 They use behaviour management strategies, in line with the school's policy and procedures, which contribute to a purposeful learning environment.
- 3.3.5 They advance pupils' learning in a range of classroom settings, including working with individuals, small groups and whole classes where the assigned teacher is not present.
- 3.3.6 They are able, where relevant, to guide the work of other adults supporting teaching and learning in the classroom.
- 3.3.7 They recognise and respond effectively to equal opportunities issues as they arise, including by challenging stereotyped views, and by challenging bullying or harassment, following relevant policies and procedures.
- 3.3.8 They organise and manage safely the learning activities, the physical teaching space and resources for which they are given responsibility.

³ For further details see the regulations and guidance under Section 133 of the Education Act 2002.

