



Assessment Only route FOR QUALIFIED TEACHER STATUS

NOTES FOR APPLICANTS





WHAT IS THE Assessment Only route?



The Assessment Only (AO) route allows you to be assessed against the QTS standards over a 12-week period in school. It does not include any training and is not intended as an alternative for those people unable to find places on an initial teacher training course. The assessment will be tailored for each individual and could be completed in a term. The assessment is carried out by experienced mentors in school, and a tutor from The OAKS will assess through observations and guide you through the programme. The OAKS tutor will ratify the award, upon verification of your teaching files.

Applicants to the AO route are expected to come with a wealth of prior teaching experiences and will have usually been employed as unqualified teachers or higher level teaching assistants (HLTAs) who have considerable whole-class teaching experience. This experience should include responsibility for planning, teaching and assessment of whole classes or groups of pupils for at least two to three years.

The AO route can begin at any point in the year as long as a good quality teaching and assessment experience can be guaranteed. AO route applicants are expected to be working in a school on entry to the programme and will have the support of the school in the assessment process.



WHAT ARE THE ENTRY REQUIREMENTS?

- Preferably an honours degree (2:2 or above) or equivalent, ideally linked to your specialist subject
- Grade C or equivalent in GCSE English and mathematics (The OAKS organises alternative examinations in these subjects for those without the appropriate certificates)
- Two years' experience of teaching whole classes or groups in two different institutions

We welcome applications for all subjects at secondary. Applicants do not have to hold a degree in a specified subject as long as they can meet the *Teachers' Standards*. Applicants are expected to meet the subject and curriculum expectations of the *Teachers' Standards* and therefore a specialist degree would be desirable. The evidence folder must have a section for subject knowledge enhancement, which would include evidence of CPD, schemes of work, etc. All successful applicants accepted on to the AO route are required to hold an enhanced DBS disclosure before commencing the programme.

WHAT DOES IT COST?

Candidates will be charged £3,450 for this Assessment Only route. These costs are subject to annual review. Any additional guidance necessary as part of preparation for the AO route will be subject to a fee.

WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR IN A SUCCESSFUL APPLICANT?

You will:

- have the intellectual and academic capabilities needed to meet the required *Teachers' Standards*
- possess the appropriate qualities, attitudes and values expected of a teacher
- be able to read and use clear and accurate, standard English in order to communicate effectively in verbal and written form
- have met the requirements for health and physical capacity to teach
- be able to explain the reasoning behind your lesson planning
- show an understanding of curriculum issues related to your specialism
- be able to explain your thinking behind your use of assessment
- have an appreciation of whole-school issues

At interview you will need to make available a portfolio of evidence to show your current progress against the *Teachers' Standards*. If you are successful at interview, you will be offered a place on the Assessment Only route. You will complete an assessment action plan with your mentors in school and this will be approved by an OAKS tutor. In addition, an OAKS tutor will conduct an initial visit to your school to ensure that you have met all the conditions, and that the mentoring you are receiving is of the standard and quality expected by The OAKS. You will be observed and mentored regularly by members of the school staff and have a minimum of three observations by an OAKS tutor as part of your final assessment for QTS.

WHAT EVIDENCE NEEDS TO BE PROVIDED TO PASS THE ASSESSMENT ONLY ROUTE?

Obviously teaching experience will be a mixture of what you have done in the past and what you do over the 12-week assessment period. You will be teaching a half timetable at least. Your school mentor will observe lessons and help you record evidence of achievement against the *Teachers' Standards*. You will work together with your mentor to identify any additional evidence required to meet the standards. This will provide material for your commentary on your development which will be presented in a final portfolio.

The AO route portfolio will be in three sections as follows.

Section 1

Section 1 would be completed prior to the formal assessment period.

1. CV and personal statement
2. evidence of successful completion of the QTS tests
3. evidence for the second school placement:
 - timetable
 - information related to teaching tasks undertaken
 - document on school headed notepaper, signed by either the headteacher or professional tutor, as evidence of attendance
4. subject knowledge audit
5. examples of KS3 worked materials and KS4 GCSE examination papers (and KS5 GCE if appropriate), accompanied by evidence of moderation by subject specialists within the parent school
6. evidence of previous teaching experience within parent school:
 - copies of timetables
 - copies of mark sheets/assessment data
 - copies of lesson plans
 - copies of any formal observation carried out by staff within the parent school

Section 2

Nine sections related to each of the *Teachers' Standards (Parts One and Two)*.

Within these sections there will be examples of evidence against each of the *Teachers' Standards*. This physical evidence may include copies of lesson plans and lesson evaluations (standards 4/5), copies of a pupil's work, which may demonstrate assessment strategies (standards 2/6), and examples of formal observations carried out by subject specialists and/or senior management within the parent school.

It is expected that as a minimum there would be included at least one detailed lesson plan and formal lesson evaluation per class, per week, during the formal 12-week assessment period. It is also helpful if classroom observations provide some detail as well as an overview. Tick-box forms are appropriate for some summative judgments but for formative purposes, more detail is required. The mentor and AO route teacher should agree in advance about the focus of an observation and the report might describe all or part of a lesson. For example, an account of a section of a lesson involving question/answer tasks with examples of teacher and student exchanges would be helpful as evidence of good use of language and appropriate subject knowledge in action. ►

Some of the standards will require evidence collected from the entire duration of the 12 weeks assessment period (eg. how you set good targets for students over a term, how you assess progress). Some standards may be evidenced through good evaluations completed by fellow teachers, adults and students, to cover such experiences as parent consultation events, team meetings, school visits, tutorial and pastoral contributions. Witness statements and items such as minutes from department and staff meetings can also provide good evidence of contributions made outside the classroom.

There may also be notes from the subject mentor and/or senior management indicating development against *Teachers' Standards, Part Two: Personal and Professional Conduct*, linked to CPD undertaken and the contribution made to the wider life of the parent school.

Section 3

Evidence of subject knowledge enhancement throughout the 12-week assessment period. This could be in the form of:

- schemes of work/mini schemes of work
- sequences of lessons
- resources (devised by the candidate and shared across the department)
- subject-specific CPD (online course or in-school subject development through departmental meetings, etc.)
- lists of texts, journals or research papers that have been studied
- subject knowledge audit
- lesson observation and minutes from meetings/line management meetings

Section 4

A reflective commentary that will place the parent school in context and discuss progress during the previous school year, highlighting strengths and areas for future development.

WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE 12-WEEK ASSESSMENT PERIOD?

You are able to start your 12-week assessment period at any time during the school year, but it needs to be completed within a single academic year. We do not consider that an assessment period spanning two academic years to be appropriate.

During the 12-week period you will be observed formally three times by an OAKS tutor accompanied by a representative from the school. This person could be the professional tutor, head of department or the usual class teacher of the class you are teaching. These joint observations are considered essential to ensure that trainees passing through the AO route fully satisfy the requirements for those looking to achieve qualified teacher status (QTS) whatever route they undertake. During the joint observation both observers will complete an OAKS lesson observation pro forma, a copy of which will be provided to applicants once they are accepted on the programme, and this will form the basis for the post-lesson review and provide evidence against the *Teachers' Standards* to support the applicant's progress to QTS. All three of these observed lessons must be accompanied by a formal lesson plan using the OAKS lesson plan format and again a copy of this will be provided once acceptance onto the programme has been confirmed.

During the second observation visit, the OAKS tutor will review the portfolio being prepared by the AO route teacher and this document will be submitted for assessment on, or very soon after, the third observation visit.

Once you have completed the assessment period successfully The OAKS will recommend your QTS award to the Department of Education (DfE). You will then be contacted by the DfE with regard to QTS. You will be required to undertake a minimum NQT induction period of a term if you are already working full-time in school, but the actual length of induction will be at the discretion of the school.

A SECOND SCHOOL EXPERIENCE?

If your teaching experience currently has been in one school, you will need to arrange a placement in an additional school to add to your experience. Typically, this will be a minimum three- to four-week placement as a block or a one day a week experience over a term, prior to beginning any assessment period.

The second school experience provides you with the basis to compare school cultures and expectations, to assess the transferability of your skills and knowledge from one context to another and to gain additional teaching experience. You need enough time to build up a working relationship with a teacher and a class to allow for some collaborative teaching. A senior teacher from the second school should be able to provide a professional reference of your overall contribution without necessarily commenting on the detailed teaching.



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