

INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

**ASSESSMENT ONLY
QUALIFIED TEACHER
STATUS (QTS)**

ASSESSMENT ONLY (AO) IS A ROUTE TO ACHIEVING QUALIFIED TEACHER STATUS (QTS).

Are you an unqualified teacher and feel ready to achieve Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)?

This route is an option for experienced unqualified teachers to be assessed for QTS without the year-long teacher training.

For more information about the Assessment Only route, have a read through the following supportive guidance.

AO process at a glance

- 1 Application and check on eligibility
- 2 Initial visit and creation of AO plan
- 3 Compilation of portfolio
- 4 Final Assessment by University of Reading Assessor.

Application

Fill in our application form as fully as you can. Particularly important are:

- how long you have taught and where
- evidence of your qualifications
- the main age ranges of your teaching
- information about your mentor's experience in the role
- the agreement of your school/setting to support you in working towards QTS.

If you have questions about the application process, contact us (details below).

Eligibility

To be eligible you must:

- be employed in a school/ setting, and be supported by your school/setting
- be working within national frameworks (e.g. EYFS, Key stages, GCSE)
- be qualified: degree and GCSE Grade 4 equivalent in English and Maths (and science if primary).

If you cannot demonstrate the required GCSE subjects and levels, you may have to pass an Equivalence Test. We offer these in English and mathematics here at the University of Reading; contact

equivalencytesting@reading.ac.uk for further details. You may also wish to contact Equivalency Testing www.equivalencytesting.com or A Star Teachers <https://astarteachers.co.uk>



Schools and age phase

To gain QTS you must have taught in at least two schools. This experience may be drawn from the following settings:

- nursery setting
- a maintained school
- a non-maintained special school
- an academy
- an independent school
- a further education institution
- a sixth form college
- Pupil Referral Unit
- Special School.

You also need to specify your age phase:

- Ages 3–11 (primary)
- Ages 7–14 (middle)
- Ages 11–19 (secondary)

Typically, primary assessment will take place across the 3–7, 5–11, or 7–11 age ranges.

For secondary, assessment will typically take place across the 11–16 or 14–19 age ranges.

Evidence such as testimonials should be included in your application.

The fee

The total fee for Assessment Only (as of 1 September 2024) is £2500. This fee is to be paid to the University of Reading after the Initial Visit. This fee is payable to the University of Reading in two instalments.

The £2,500 fee covers the:

- first introduction/advisory meeting
- the initial visit
- the final assessment visit
- and the associated assessment and support you will receive.

The visits can be face-to-face and/or remote/virtual, as agreed by the university assessor and school/setting. The final assessment visit is often a virtual meeting.

£700 is payable after the first visit and is non-refundable should it be agreed after the visit and interview not to proceed. The remaining balance is payable at final assessment. We invoice for these

payments. An additional visit can be arranged at a further cost if this is agreed as necessary.

The £2,500 fee is based on two visits for schools/settings within a 25 mile radius of the London Road campus RG1 5EX or those who require a remote/online visit.

For those schools/settings who are beyond this distance, there is an additional charge **per visit** of:

- 26-50 miles - £100
- 51-75 miles - £200
- 75 miles + - cost on request

Fundamental skills

The University of Reading and the partnership school assess the English and mathematics knowledge of the Assessment Only teacher before QTS is awarded.

This will now form part of the portfolio.

The initial visit

The purpose of the initial visit is:

- observe you teach (joint observation with your mentor)
- see your original qualification documents
- interview you (focus to include subject knowledge for teaching)
- conduct a needs analysis, review your Standards audit, and agree your Assessment Only training plan
- meet your mentor (and possibly your Professional Tutor).

The timing of the visit is at mutual convenience. Usually the lesson observation precedes the discussion. It is possible, therefore, that you will need to negotiate cover for a lesson. The visiting tutor will initiate post lesson discussion between the AO teacher and mentor. Please make sure you bring all your original documents (degree, marriage certificate and GCSE equivalents) to this meeting. The tutor will also want to see that you have had the DBS check. Your mentor is asked to join this meeting.

The Assessment Only training plan (Targets)

The elements of the Assessment Only training plan vary according to individual need. These elements might include:

- enhancement of subject knowledge by means of observation and research
- being observed teaching a particular topic or in a key stage/age range
- familiarisation with school/setting policies
- undertaking moderation of pupil assessments
- broadening the range of AfL activities employed.

Your e-portfolio

The portfolio provides evidence of meeting the Standards. There are several different ways of effectively organising your portfolio; be guided by your mentor in this. Electronic presentation of your e-portfolio is required.

Your portfolio should contain:

- a copy of your AO targets and development
- a copy of your FINAL report
- Reflections after each standard (300–500 words with an area for development)
- Action Research – Based on one of your Targets (1,500 words with at least 3 literature references)
- planning documents
- assessment documents
- self-evaluations
- lesson observations – minimum of 8 required
- your training plan and an outline of how it has been fulfilled
- a record of your mentor meetings
- Transition form (from AO (QTS) to ECT)
- Fundamentals skills audit
- Subject knowledge audit

Standards evidence

We will offer personalised guidance about evidence for meeting the Standards when we visit. Your mentor will be able to advise you on what counts. The bullet points within each Standard might usefully be seen as indicating the range of the Standard rather than a checklist of discrete elements.

Part 2 of the Standards (Personal and Professional Conduct, PPC)

In presenting evidence of meeting this section of the Standards:

- refer to overlapping evidence from high expectations (Standard 1) and wider professional responsibilities (Standard 8)
- refer to relevant training and CPD you have undertaken
- make sure your mentor makes reference to PPC in your final report.

The final assessment visit

At the assessment visit the assessor needs to:

- 1 Talk through the evidence collated in the e-portfolio
- 2 interview you – check subject knowledge, professional conduct; and,
- 3 interview your mentor and perhaps also your Professional Tutor, or Headteacher.

Usually the interviews follow examination of your portfolio since that will generate questions to ask. The interview questions are of a professional nature to explore ways in which you have met the Standards.



The role of the mentor

Briefly the mentor's responsibilities are these:

- 1 To offer guidance and advice about the ethos and working practices of the team and the school/setting
- 2 To meet you formally to review progress towards QTS
- 3 To discuss your progress with the assessor(s)
- 4 To observe you teach and to give oral and written feedback
- 5 To facilitate training opportunities in school/setting
- 6 To offer advice about your portfolio of evidence
- 7 To write your final report.

It is important that you meet with your mentor formally and regularly, which does not necessarily mean frequently. You will need 'quality time' to address professional issues and to receive guidance in the compilation of the portfolio. For this reason, we ask that a record of mentor meetings is included in the portfolio.

It is expected that your mentor will observe you teach. It is likely that other colleagues, such as members of the leadership team or representatives of the local authority, will also be involved in this process, but usually the majority of the written observations in the portfolio will be by your mentor.

Your mentor should have an understanding of the Standards and have experience of how to put together a portfolio of evidence.

Final report

This should be a summary of your experience and achievements against the Standards – an example and a template will be provided. Please put a copy in your portfolio.

Early Career Teachers (ECT)

The Assessment Only process leads to Qualified Teacher Status only, in other words you then have to undertake a period of statutory Induction; see

Induction for Early Career Teachers (England)

Useful links

For the governments' supporting advice on AO:

The assessment only route to QTS: criteria and supporting advice

For further guidance on evidence of meeting the Standards see, for example:

Suitable Evidence for Teachers Standards

For national mentor standards: **Mentor Standards Report**



Eligibility Criteria Checklist

I have achieved a standard equivalent to grade C / 4 or above at GCSE level in English and mathematics. Those intending to teach pupils aged 3-11 will also need to have achieved a standard equivalent to grade C/4 or above at GCSE level Science	
Hold an undergraduate degree from a UK higher education institution or equivalent qualification: 300 HE credits with at least 60 at Level 6	
Demonstrate that you are already a highly competent classroom teacher (at least 'Good' based on the Ofsted criteria for teaching) and you meet the QTS Standards across a minimum of two consecutive age ranges for your chosen teaching specialism in two schools. (Initial evidence may include lesson observations of your teaching from senior staff, Head Teacher references, and performance management documents.)	
Possess the intellectual and academic capabilities needed to meet the required QTS standards	
Have the ability to communicate clearly and effectively in standard English	
Have met the Secretary of State's requirements for health and physical capacity to teach	
Have been subject to and passed the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and criminal records and background checks	
Have undertaken significant teaching experience in at least two schools where you have had full responsibility for whole classes for at least 2 years. (Though we do take into consideration Teaching Assistant experience and PPA cover, you must have had significant experience being fully responsible and accountable for planning, teaching and assessing the same class/classes.)	
Have taught across two consecutive age ranges or Key Stages within chosen pathway	
Be employed in an education setting in a teaching role by the time you start the programme that is willing to support you through the process	
Your school will need to allocate you a mentor for the 12-week process to allow you time to be observed and assessed whilst also preparing your portfolio of evidence.	

What is the assessment only route?

The Assessment Only Route is an approach to the awarding of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). Applied over a 12 week period – applicants, with the support of their school, provide evidence of meeting the **Teachers' Standards** to the same robust and rigorous level applied to students studying on our Postgraduate Initial Teacher Education courses. The significant difference is that all applicants are currently employed as unqualified teachers in schools, with a minimum of two years. There are no taught academic sessions, and no training will be provided at the University of Reading for the Assessment Only Route. Applicants are assessed as meeting entry requirements (matched to PGCE and School-led provision) and can demonstrate meeting the Teachers' Standards.

How long should the assessment only route take?

The assessment only route must be completed within 12 weeks.

Who can apply?

Teachers who wish to gain the award of QTS through the Assessment Only route might include experienced graduate teachers who have experience of teaching across two age phases or Key Stages and ability settings in at least two school contexts and who are:

- currently teaching in schools trained to teach overseas
- trained to teach in the further education sector
- teaching in the independent school sector

When to apply?

Applications are accepted throughout the year as this is a rolling route into teaching.

The table shows example time scales from when you might apply to when you would subsequently start.

Is my teaching experience appropriate?

Applicants must be able to demonstrate meeting all the Teachers' Standards for the award of QTS as good or outstanding. Applicants must demonstrate that they have had the opportunity, in both of their school settings, to gain suitable and sustained experience in planning, teaching and assessing to a recognised national/ international curriculum; in examination syllabi; in recording and reporting to parents and in teaching pupils of all abilities across at least two age phases. Documentary evidence must be available.

A significant proportion of this teaching experience should be recent (within the last 12 months). The University of Reading will decide regarding the relevance of teaching experience based on individual circumstances.

My teaching experience is mostly in the Further Education sector – can I apply for the Assessment Only Route?

Applicants must show they have appropriate experience of teaching across two age phases or Key stages in at least two school/further education settings. For applicants predominantly based in further education settings they must demonstrate sustained and substantial opportunities teaching in key stage 4 age phase contexts.

My teaching experience is mostly in the special educational needs sector – can I apply for the Assessment Only Route?

Applicants must show they can meet the teacher standards across two age phases or Key Stages, encompassing a range of assessments and teaching and learning approaches. Applicants must demonstrate they have sufficient and appropriate experience in their chosen age phases. Applicants must have a second school experience in a mainstream setting to support their evidence for the Teachers' Standards.

Why must I have taught in a second school setting?

The Department for Education (DfE) requires all applicants to have worked in a minimum of two school settings before applying for the Assessment Only Route.

The University of Reading requires applicants to have undertaken a minimum of 15 days / three weeks teaching in their second setting prior to application. However, the applicant must also demonstrate that they have had enough experience to fully meet all the Teachers' Standards in that second setting. This may include opportunities to teach pupils from diverse backgrounds as well as gaining experience of different teaching and learning pedagogies, varying school organisations and distinctive leadership and management approaches.

Teaching experience in this second setting may be less recent than within the last 12-18 months (see section on 'is my teaching experience appropriate?').



What should my timetable look like?

Applicants must demonstrate that they can teach across the two age phases or Key Stages (consecutive) for which they are being assessed and their timetable for the period of assessment must show this. Applicants should teach the majority of an experienced teacher's timetable for the duration of the assessment period. Applicants must have the opportunity to work with adults other than teachers, pupils across the ability range within the school and in the pastoral setting of the school. Secondary applicants' timetables are expected to provide 80% of their teaching commitment to be in their specialist subject

ENIC

UK ENIC is the designated United Kingdom national agency for the recognition and comparison of international qualifications and skills. International applicants should request a statement of comparability through **UK ENIC**.

What support should my school be giving me?

The applicant should be provided with a reference from their current school. All schools will be asked to sign the Assessment Only Route Partnership Agreement which reflects the commitment of both University of Reading and the School. Schools must commit to providing a school-based mentor who has undergone ITT mentor training and who will hold weekly meetings with the applicant to support them in meeting and evidencing the Teachers' Standards) as well as providing supporting evidence through lesson observations.

Continuing professional development and your ECT induction years

All applicants who are recommended for the award of QTS become Early Careers Teachers (ECTs). This applies to those taking the Assessment Only Route. All Schools should note the ECT requirements before agreeing to support candidates for the award of QTS. Further information on the ECT induction years can be found on this [website](#).



APPENDICES

Appendix 1: The Teaching Standards

PREAMBLE

Teachers make the education of their pupils their first concern, and are accountable for achieving the highest possible standards in work and conduct.

Teachers act with honesty and integrity; have strong subject knowledge, keep their knowledge and skills as teachers up-to-date and are self-critical; forge positive professional relationships; and work with parents in the best interests of their pupils.

PART ONE: Teaching. A teacher must:

1 Set high expectations, which inspire, motivate and challenge pupils

- establish a safe and stimulating environment for pupils, rooted in mutual respect
- set goals that stretch and challenge pupils of all backgrounds, abilities and dispositions
- demonstrate consistently the positive attitudes, values and behaviour, which are expected of pupils.

2 Promote good progress and outcomes by pupils

- be accountable for attainment, progress and outcomes of the pupils
- plan teaching to build on pupils' capabilities and prior knowledge
- guide pupils to reflect on the progress they have made and their emerging needs
- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how pupils learn and how this impacts on teaching
- encourage pupils to take a responsible and conscientious attitude to their own work and study.

3 Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge

- have a secure knowledge of the relevant subject(s) and curriculum areas, foster and maintain pupils' interest in the subject, and address misunderstandings
- demonstrate a critical understanding of developments in the subject and curriculum areas, and promote the value of scholarship
- demonstrate an understanding of and take responsibility for promoting high standards of literacy, articulacy and the correct use of Standard English, whatever the teacher's specialist subject
- if teaching early reading, demonstrate a clear understanding of systematic synthetic phonics
- if teaching early mathematics, demonstrate a clear understanding of appropriate teaching strategies.

4 Plan and teach well-structured lessons

- impart knowledge and develop understanding through effective use of lesson time
- promote a love of learning and children's intellectual curiosity
- set homework and plan other out-of-class activities to consolidate and extend the knowledge and understanding pupils have acquired
- reflect systematically on the effectiveness of lessons and approaches to teaching
- contribute to the design and provision of an engaging curriculum within the relevant subject area(s).

5 Adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils

- know when and how to differentiate appropriately, using approaches which enable pupils to be taught effectively
- have a secure understanding of how a range of factors can inhibit pupils' ability to learn, and how best to overcome these
- demonstrate an awareness of the physical, social and intellectual development of children, and know how to adapt teaching to support pupils' education at different stages of development
- have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs; those of high ability; those with English as an additional language; those with disabilities; and be able to use and evaluate distinctive teaching approaches to engage and support them.

6 Make accurate and productive use of assessment

- know and understand how to assess the relevant subject and curriculum areas, including statutory assessment requirements
- make use of formative and summative assessment to secure pupils' progress
- use relevant data to monitor progress, set targets, and plan subsequent lessons
- give pupils regular feedback, both orally and through accurate marking, and encourage pupils to respond to the feedback.

7 Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe learning environment

- have clear rules and routines for behaviour in classrooms, and take responsibility for promoting good and courteous behaviour both in classrooms and around the school, in accordance with the school's behaviour policy
- have high expectations of behaviour, and establish a framework for discipline with a range of strategies, using praise, sanctions and rewards consistently and fairly
- manage classes effectively, using approaches, which are appropriate to pupils' needs in order to involve and motivate them
- maintain good relationships with pupils, exercise appropriate authority, and act decisively when necessary.

8 Fulfil wider professional responsibilities

- make a positive contribution to the wider life and ethos of the school
- develop effective professional relationships with colleagues, knowing how and when to draw on advice and specialist support
- deploy support staff effectively
- take responsibility for improving teaching through appropriate professional development, responding to advice and feedback from colleagues
- communicate effectively with parents with regard to pupils' achievements and well-being.

PART TWO: Personal and professional conduct

A teacher is expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct. The following statements define the behaviour and attitudes, which set the required standard for conduct throughout a teacher's career:

Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by:

- treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position
- having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
- showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others
- not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.

Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach, and maintain high standards of attendance and punctuality.

Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks, which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.



 For more information, please contact:

Harvey Grout

assessmentonly@reading.ac.uk


Institute of Education


University of Reading

Redlands Road

Reading RG1 5EX

 [ioereading](#)

 [UniRdg_IoE](#)

 [ioe_reading](#)

reading.ac.uk/education