

The Barnsley HLTA programme INFORMATION PACK

INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOR
APPLICANTS, MENTORS AND HEAD TEACHERS

Please read the guidance notes
BEFORE completing the application form.

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS:

NOON FRIDAY 26th June 2015

(Late entries will **NOT** be accepted)

Contents

Please ensure that you read this information pack fully BEFORE completing your application form.

1. OVERVIEW

Achieving the Barnsley HLTA Status is an exciting professional development opportunity for highly skilled TAs. It needs to be stressed to potential candidates however, that achieving Barnsley HLTA status **will not automatically give that person an HLTA post in their school.**

Teaching Assistants applying for the programme should already be meeting higher level standards. The programme's aim is to assist candidates in preparing a portfolio of evidence to show they are meeting these standards. The HLTA standards and Candidate Handbook can be downloaded at www.barnsley.gov.uk/schoolsworkforce - **Click on Professional Learning – Professional Development for support staff.** The Barnsley HLTA programme will continue to be reflected for pay and grading purposes as a level 4 qualification at Grade 6. In addition candidates who achieve Barnsley HLTA status will also be eligible to access Huddersfield University's course programme 'Learning Support BA (Hons)' credited with one module (equivalent to 30 credits).

2. DETAILS OF THE APPLICATION PROCESS

- a. Application forms must be returned to **Karen Hartshorne - High View Primary Learning Centre, Newsome Avenue, Wombwell, Barnsley, S73 8QS** with all the relevant paperwork by noon on **26th June 2015**. Please mark the envelope 'ADDRESSEE ONLY'. Late entries will not be accepted.
- b. A panel will process all applications against the criteria.
- c. Candidates will be notified in the **week ending 10th July 2015**.

The candidate will need a mentor with QTS to support them in this rigorous process.

3. FEEDBACK FROM THE ASSESSMENT PANELS

Following previous rounds of applications for HLTA, the assessment panel made a number of observations which are outlined below. It is hoped that this information will assist schools and applicants when applying for the HLTA funding in future rounds and avoid unnecessary disappointment.

COMMENTS RELATING TO SPECIFIC CRITERIA

1. Minimum time in post as a teaching assistant

A number of applications were received without **relevant experience as a teaching assistant**. Work for example as a school secretary, without day to day support for teaching and learning in the classroom does not meet the criteria, nor would the applicant have gained sufficient experience at an appropriate level of responsibility to meet the HLTA standards.

2. Qualifications

- Many difficulties arose from failure to provide the appropriate, or even any, certification of **level 2 qualifications** as requested in the criteria. Only those qualifications listed on **Table 1** (detailed Section 5 of this document – Selection Criteria) are currently acceptable– **there are no exceptions**. Head Teachers / Line Managers are advised to ask to have sight of these original certificates before signing the verification form to avoid disappointment.
- Applicants and schools need to be aware that only formal certification from the exam board will suffice. Letters in support, score cards / score reports, 'Thursday morning slips' etc are **not acceptable** as the formal proof of qualification needs also to be seen by the HLTA preparer. Applicants without these formal documents need to make arrangements to purchase replacement copies from the exam boards **BEFORE** they submit an

application or undertake and pass an equivalent qualification before they apply. (Information on basic skills courses can be obtained from www.barnsley.gov.uk/adultlearning or telephone 01226 775270/1).

- Level 2 in English and Mathematics (or equivalent as indicated in the LA criteria) is non-negotiable. This is one of the actual HLTA standards and consequently it would be impossible to gain HLTA status without this qualification.

3. Information and Communication Technology Skills (ICT)

- All HLTA routes will require ICT skills well beyond word processing. Applicants without more advanced ICT capability would be advised to gain further qualification / experience in this area before embarking on application for HLTA status. More details of ICT courses provided by the authority can be obtained from karenhartshorne@barnsley.gov.uk.

4. Head Teacher Verification and Support of the School

- The active support of the school is critical. Consequently, without the verification form signed by the Head Teacher or their delegated senior manager, the application cannot be considered. Some candidates did not have the support of their school and consequently may have had hopes raised unfairly. Where a school cannot support an application, it is advised that this professional feedback is offered as part of the applicant's Performance Review.
- The panel felt that the timing of applications for HLTA preparation could usefully form a focus for the Performance Management review of likely applicants. This would help to set HLTA in a continuum of professional learning and ensure that some of the preliminary training and experience is built in at an earlier stage as future applicants work towards application for HLTA status.
- For candidates preparing for future application for HLTA the panel suggests that planned and regular opportunities need to be made as soon as possible for applicants to work with whole classes and larger groups as this was the weakest area in a number of applications.
- Head Teachers will need to consider the time over and above the release time necessary to attend training and build this into the school's overall timetable.
- Schools will need to assign a member of staff to mentor each candidate, this mentor must hold QTS.

5. Area of Expertise

- The HLTA standards require that those awarded HLTA status have sufficient understanding of their area(s) of expertise to support children and young people's development, learning and progress (standard 10). The following subjects/areas of expertise are available for you to select at the application stage.

Art & Design	English/Literacy	RE
Food Technology	Geography	SEN
Assessment	History	Science
Behaviour management	ICT	Vocational Learning
Business studies	Mathematics/Numeracy	Knowledge of a particular age group – KS1/KS2/KS3 or KS4
Citizenship	Maths & Science	
Classics	Modern Foreign Languages	
Design & technology	Music	
Drama	Pastoral Care	
EAL	PE (inc. dance)	
Early Years	PSHE	

Some Practical Points

- Some application envelopes had not been weighed and consequently incurred additional postage costs and risked delayed delivery.
- The closing time and date has to be rigorously adhered to.
- Failure to meet the required HLTA Standard is a serious matter and application must only be made when the school has satisfied itself that an application is appropriate and timely. A small number of candidates have withdrawn from the assessment when they became more aware of the professional commitment necessary to reach the HLTA standards. Candidates are therefore urged to apply only after they have engaged in a professional dialogue with their Head Teacher / Line Manager.

5. HLTA SELECTION CRITERIA

Candidates will be assessed using the criteria listed below.

Candidates who do not meet the minimum requirements outlined below will not be able to proceed with a HLTA application.

All candidates must:

1. Posses, and provide evidence* of English and Mathematics GCSE grade A-C or equivalent qualifications (see table 1 below).
2. Be regularly involved in working with whole class groups (see Note 1 below) as well as small groups and individual children.
3. Have access to and ability to use ICT.
4. Have the active support (see Note 2 below) of their school confirmed in writing.
5. Provide evidence of a level 3 (or higher) qualification in a relevant occupational/academic area (see table 2 below) if undertaken.
6. Have relevant experience as a Teaching Assistant.
7. Be in a position to demonstrate that they can meet the HLTA standards without further training opportunities, including verification of this level by the Head Teacher.

Acceptable Level 2 and Level 3 Qualifications:

TABLE 1 – Acceptable Level 2 English and Mathematics Qualifications

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
CSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English Grade 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mathematics Grade 1
GCE O Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English Language • English Literature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mathematics
GCSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English A*-C • English Literature A*-C 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mathematics A*-C
Key Skills/Functional Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication/Level 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application of Number/Level 2

TABLE 2 – Acceptable Level 3 and Level 4 Qualifications

Level of Qualification	General		Vocationally - Related	Occupational
5	Higher Level Qualifications / Degrees BTEC Higher Nationals			Level 5 NVQ
4	NNEB STA/C Specialist Teaching Assistant Certification			Level 4 NVQ
3	A Level	Free-standing mathematics units level 3 BTEC National Diplomas / Certificates	Vocational A Level (Advanced GNVQ)	Level 3 NVQ

Further information on the National Qualifications framework can be found on the QCA website at: <http://www.qca.org.uk/ng/framework>

*** Please ensure that a photocopy of each certificate is attached to the application form. Where a certificate is not available alternative certification should be obtained from the relevant examination board. Information on how to obtain this can be obtained from the awarding body website AQA, EDEXCEL, OCR and WJEC. The statement of results is NOT acceptable evidence.**

Note 1

'Whole class groups' will be considered as a group of pupils deemed larger than a small group, i.e. half or more of a mainstream class. 'Whole class groups' in Special Schools will be smaller due to the complexity of the needs of their pupils. A 'whole class group' must be the 'class' that a teacher would normally take.

Note 2

'Active support' of the school is essential for all candidates pursuing HLTA status. Schools will need to commit to provide a mentor (with QTS) for the candidate. Schools must provide time out for the candidate to the 3 day preparation and assessment meeting and to facilitate timetables and arrangements to allow the candidate to gain appropriate experience and do their school assessment tasks.

7. SELF REVIEW

Candidates will need to complete the self-review **themselves** and should then pass it to their Head Teacher / Line Manager to be verified. A copy of the new 'Guidance Standards' may be downloaded from the HLTA website www.tda.gov.uk/support/hlta.aspx This document will assist in the clarification of the HLTA standards, especially as the standards have been revised. The self review will continue to be scrutinised by the selection panel when considering appropriate routes for the applicant.

Please could candidates enclose photocopies of the required English, Maths and Level 3 qualifications if undertaken.

8. APPLICANT CRITERIA

HLTA Professional Standards 2007

Those awarded HLTA status must meet all of the following standards

<p>Professional Attributes <i>Those awarded HLTA status must demonstrate, through their practice, that they:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have high expectations of children and young people with a commitment to helping them fulfil their potential 2. Establish fair, respectful, trusting, supportive and constructive relationships with children and young people. 3. Demonstrate the positive values, attitudes and behaviour they expect from children and young people. 4. Communicate effectively and sensitively with children, young people, colleagues, parents and carers. 5. Recognise and respect the contribution that parents and carers can make to the development and well-being of children and young people. 6. Demonstrate a commitment to collaborate and co-operate working with colleagues. 7. Improve their own knowledge and practice including responding to advice and feedback. 	<p>Professional knowledge and understanding <i>Those awarded HLTA status must demonstrate, through their practice, that they:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Understand the key factors that affect children and young people's learning and progress. 9. Know how to contribute to effective personalised provision by taking practical account of diversity. 10. Have sufficient understanding of their area(s) of expertise to support the development, learning and progress of children and young people. 11. Have achieved a nationally recognised qualification at level 2 or above in English/Literacy and Mathematics/Numeracy. 12. Know how to use ICT to support their professional activities. 13. Know how statutory and non-statutory frameworks for the school curriculum relate to the age and ability ranges of the learners they support. 14. Understand the objectives, content and intended outcomes for the learning activities in which they are involved. 15. Know how to support learners in accessing the curriculum in accordance with the special educational needs (SEN) code of practice and disabilities legislation. 16. Know how other frameworks, that support the development and well-being of children and young people, impact upon their practice. 	<p>Professional Skills <i>Teaching and learning activities must take place under the direction of a teacher and in accordance with arrangements made by the Head Teacher of the school.</i></p> <p>Planning and Expectations <i>Those awarded HLTA status must demonstrate, through their practice, that they:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 17. Use their area(s) of expertise to contribute to the planning and preparation of learning activities. 18. Use their area(s) of expertise to plan their role in learning activities. 19. Devise clearly structured activities that interest and motivate learners and advance their learning. 20. Plan how they will support the inclusion of the children and young people in the learning activities. 21. Contribute to the selection and preparation of resources suitable for children and young people's interests and abilities. <p>Monitoring and Assessment <i>Those awarded HLTA status must demonstrate, through their practice, that they:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 22. Monitor learners' responses to activities and modify the approach accordingly. 23. Monitor learners' progress in order to provide focussed support and feedback. 24. Support the evaluation of learners' progress using a range of assessment techniques. 25. Contribute to maintaining and analysing records of learners' progress. <p>Teaching and Learning Activities <i>Those awarded HLTA status must demonstrate, through their practice, that they:</i></p>
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		<ol style="list-style-type: none">26. Use effective strategies to promote positive behaviour.27. Recognise and respond appropriately to situations that challenge equality of opportunity.28. Use their ICT skills to advance learning.29. Advance learning when working with individuals.30. Advance learning when working with small groups.31. Advance learning when working with whole classes without the presence of the assigned teacher.32. Organise and manage learning activities in ways which keep learners safe.33. Direct the work, where relevant, of other adults in supporting learning.
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Guidance Information For HEAD TEACHERS / MENTORS

9. INFORMATION FOR HEAD TEACHERS AND TEACHERS INVOLVED IN MENTORING THE HLTA ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Introduction

School support staff make a vital contribution to pupils' learning and achievement. With the introduction of training and assessment against national professional standards, support staff who achieve the Barnsley status of higher level teaching assistant (HLTA) will be able to offer proven skills to support teachers even more effectively in the future. The deployment of support staff with the Barnsley HLTA status is one of the strategies schools can use to implement the workforce agreement and their plans for school remodelling.

This briefing note provides:

- An overview of HLTA assessment
- Guidance on the type and level of school support required by candidates
- Further information

HLTA Training and Assessment

The Professional Standards for HLTAs identify what candidates need to demonstrate in order to be awarded the Barnsley HLTA status. To obtain the status, candidates must demonstrate that they meet **all** the standards. The role of the mentor is to then verify that they meet the standards on a regular basis for the HLTA Assessment process to be complete.

School Support for Candidates

HLTA assessment has been devised to minimise the burden on schools, however, the informed judgement and support of the school is crucial if candidates are to be successful in the assessment process. Schools, therefore, need to be sufficiently knowledgeable about the HLTA standards and be confident that the candidate is able to provide evidence of meeting **all** the HLTA standards.

Assessment

Candidates have to meet **all** of the standards in order to achieve HLTA status. They demonstrate that they have done so through completion of a series of assessment tasks. The evidence that they supply for each of these tasks is then verified by a half-day visit to the school by an independent assessor.

Tasks 1 to 3 require candidates to outline and evaluate their experiences of working within everyday school classroom routines: first with an individual pupil, second with a small group, and third with a whole class without any teacher present.

Task 4 gives candidates an opportunity to look at five situations or events that provide evidence for standards not already sufficiently covered. This often relates to their wider professional experiences and responsibilities, for example: working with pupils, teachers and other adults inside and outside the classroom; helping to supervise in the playground; assisting in educational visits; and participating in professional meetings and working parties.

The tasks are snapshots of the candidate's work in school. The only thing that will be different from the way in which the candidate normally approaches their work is that they will record everything they do, including their reflections on and evaluation of the activity. These tasks must be signed by the mentor and handed in by the date agreed on day three of the programme. In exceptional circumstances the date may be extended however, the tasks must be completed and the assessment taken place within 12 months of that agreed date.

Candidates provide **supporting documentary evidence** linked to the tasks for the assessor to scrutinise during the school visit. They may wish to include such items as: samples of pupils' work, lesson plans; assessment sheets; reports; planning sheets; case studies; certificates for training; letters/cards of endorsement/thanks; observation notes; meeting agenda, minutes and notes; classroom resources; and so on. The assessor will have approximately one hour to scrutinise the documents presented. We advise candidates to supply one or two documents for each standard.

Oral evidence will also be gathered as part of the school visit. However, candidates will be advised not to leave too much to meetings with the teacher(s) during the school visit as time is limited. Assessors have only approximately 15 minutes for these meetings and there are limits to the number of standards that they can cover during that time.

School Visit

Assessors will spend approximately half a day in school to verify the evidence set out in the assessment tasks and to explore how the candidate has demonstrated all of the standards. They will need to have access to a quiet and private space in which to work and to meet the candidate and the mentor and any other colleagues who are

supporting them. The assessor will send a letter to the candidate and a copy to the head teacher confirming the arrangements for the visit in advance. **It is essential that colleagues meeting the assessor are familiar with both the standards and the candidate's tasks and that the mentor has Qualified Teacher Status.**

School Visit – Typical Timetable

9.00 Assessor arrives and is introduced to the Mentor
9.30 Observation (observation evidence)
10.00 Assessor scrutinises portfolio (documentary evidence)
11.15 Meeting with Mentor (oral evidence)
11.30 Meeting with candidate (oral evidence)

Meeting with the mentor – 15 minutes:

The purpose of the meeting is to ask the teacher (or teachers if the candidate works regularly with more than one colleague) about the candidate's work and to explore evidence relating to the candidate's achievement against standards selected by the assessor. It is also about getting a view of broader aspects of the candidate's performance in school. These may include, for example, the candidate's contribution to the overall functioning of the school and their professional values and practice. For the assessment process to be complete mentors must verify that candidates are meeting the standards on a regular basis as part of their role in school.

Questions:

There is no predetermined format of questions. The assessors will have prepared, in advance, questions based on their reading of the assessment tasks and scrutiny of the documents presented by the candidate. The questions will therefore vary from candidate to candidate. **Though the candidate may have seen indicative questions during preparation these questions will not necessarily be used by the assessor.** However, **each question will always be geared towards a specific standard** and the assessor will **always be seeking specific examples** of the candidate's practice and **will not be satisfied by assertions** that 'x always does this'. Such a response will be followed by a **'can you give me a specific example?'** type question.

It is therefore important that colleagues who meet with the assessors are fully prepared with examples of specific things the candidate has done that address each standard.

The assessor will require confirmation and specific evidence from a colleague who has Qualified Teacher Status that the candidate has taught whole classes without the presence of any qualified teacher on at least two occasions.

The Assessment Outcome

Candidates and school colleagues will not be told the outcome of the assessment at the school visit because the assessor's judgement is subject to a moderation process. The purposes of moderation are to:

- Confirm the threshold for meeting the standards
- Ensure that assessors' judgements are secure
- Ensure that there is consistency of judgement amongst assessors

Following moderation, candidates will receive a letter from the Local Authority informing them of their result. These are the possible outcomes:

1. **Standards met** - All the standards have been met and the candidate has achieved Barnsley HLTA Status.
2. **Partial reassessment** - There are small deficiencies in the meeting of the standards (up to 3) which can be rectified without the need for further training.
3. **Standards not met** - There is insufficient evidence that all standards have been met. The candidate is not recommended for Barnsley HLTA Status. The candidate has up to 12 months to further meet the standards from the date of the letter informing that standards were not met. This must be agreed with the head teacher and opportunities to meet the standards are to be put in place to meet the standards. If the candidate does not achieve this then the process will begin again from application to attendance of the programme.

The outcome letter can be used as proof of Barnsley HLTA status for current and future employers in the authority.

Assessment Deferrals

In extenuating circumstances the assessment may be deferred. However, the assessment must take place within 12 months of the date agreed on day 3 of the HLTA programme (This is the date given for the tasks to be sent to the HLTA Programme Manager).

If the assessment does not take place in this time then candidates will not have received the Barnsley HLTA status and schools will be charged accordingly. Candidates will be entitled to apply for the programme again 12 months after the date of notification that they have not achieved the Barnsley HLTA status in the first instance.