

The Assessment Only Route to QTS

Frequently asked questions and answers

Q: I have a 2:2 or 3rd Class degree – can I be considered for the Assessment Only route?

A: We consider each applicant on an individual basis related to their experiences and although we cannot guarantee that every applicant will be accepted for this route, holding a 2:2 or 3rd Class degree is not always a barrier.

Q: I hold a Foundation degree. Is this acceptable for the Assessment Only route?

A: Legislation requires all entrants to teaching in England to have a UK first degree or equivalent qualification. Any equivalent qualification must be one single qualification, not an aggregation of a number of separate qualifications. A first degree comprises 300 HE credit points of which 60 must be at level 6 of the QCF. A Foundation degree is the academic equivalent to two-thirds of a Bachelor's degree and comprises of credit points at level 5 and requires an additional year's study to attain the level of a first degree. The Open University offers a variety of 'top - up degree' courses. Additionally Staffordshire University is a local provider who offers a top up qualification.

Q. I do not have Grade C / Level 4 GCSE in . . . Is there a way I can gain this?

A: If you do not have these qualifications, in certain circumstances it may be possible to arrange one of these two options:

- 1) If you are not confident with your abilities in the subject, you can take classes, at a local AEI (Adult Education Institute) over the course of a year, and then sit a GCSE examination at the end of it. Please bear in mind that, as GCSE results are not announced until the end of August each year.
- 2) If you are confident that, with current knowledge and/or private revision/tutoring of your own, you would be able to pass a one-off test (an officially recognised exam, prepared and externally assessed by a freelance equivalency testing service such as <http://www.equivalencytesting.com/>), then this might be the quickest route to obtaining this qualification.

Q. I have not taught in another school. Can I be considered for the Assessment Only route?

A: We welcome applications at an early stage. You may not have experienced teaching in another school and this requirement will need to be met. This frequently occurs as a placement in a contrasting school. So whilst this is a requirement of the course, you can make an initial application without it and following your Stage 1 interview, we can put a personal learning plan in place.

Q. How long does the teaching experience in another school need to be for?

A. To ensure that there are sufficient opportunities to develop practice in planning, teaching and assessing children across the breadth of abilities and a range of subjects, experience in another school should be for about half a term (minimum of 6 weeks full time in school, 10 weeks if attending school for three days a week.). On occasions it may be possible to arrange a swap between two potential AO candidates, both of whom lack the alternative school experience.

Q. How much time do I need to spend teaching in the placement / contrasting school?

A. We anticipate that opportunities to plan, teach and assess would increase during the placement building to responsibility for 60% of the teaching timetable. This includes planning, marking and assessing.

Q. I only have experience of teaching one age phase. Could my placement experience be with a different age phase?

A. Yes! Often combining a second school experience with teaching children from a different, but consecutive, age-phase is an effective way of meeting both of these criteria.

Q. I am a Cover Supervisor. I have considerable experience of teaching class but not of planning. Will this be acceptable for the Assessment Only route?

A. Acceptance onto the Assessment Only route requires the candidate to be 'job ready'. The planning of lessons forms a significant part of a teachers' duties and therefore there is a requirement for those applying for the Assessment Only route to have had considerable experience of this. It is therefore important to liaise with senior leaders within your school to share this requirement with them. Plans can then be put in place prior to the commencement of the AO period to enable you to meet this requirement.

Q. How much experience of planning, teaching and the assessing is required to be ready for the Assessment Period?

A. KNSTE consider each application carefully but as a general rule, those with less than two years of planning, teaching and assessing pupils, for an equivalent of 60% of the teaching week, would not be considered ready initially. However, we welcome enquiries and applications at an early stage to allow us to assess your readiness for the Assessment Only route and to provide advice about the way forward.

Q. I understand that I will need to evidence my competence in meeting the Teachers' Standards. What evidence should I be keeping?

A. The evidence will vary according to situation and experiences. Documents such as lesson observations, lesson plans that have been evaluated, examples of record keeping, marking etc are usually included. There is no expectation that the portfolio will be complete upon application. KNSTE will provide a document that lists possible evidence for each of the Teachers' Standards in greater detail upon receipt of an application (Expression of Interest form). However, if you are interested in this route you may wish to start to put a portfolio together. For the purpose of

assessment we will only consider evidence that is **within 3 years** of starting the Assessment Period. The documents will only be those that occur 'naturally' as part of your practice and there is no requirement to generate any evidence / documentation specifically for the portfolio.

Q. I cover PPA and teach the foundation subjects and PE. Is this sufficient for the Assessment Only route?

A. To gain QTS you will need to demonstrate your ability to teach the core subjects along with the foundation subjects and therefore will benefit from gaining experience with teaching these.

Q. I regularly plan for intervention groups of about 6-8 pupils. Does this count towards the two years experience teaching experience required?

A. Unfortunately, for those teaching in a mainstream school this would not be accepted. KNSTE require teaching experiences to be with groups of 15 or more pupils as these demonstrate your ability to teach a full class of 15 or more pupils. We appreciate that the situation is different in a Special School.

Q. Can I access the Apprenticeship levy for the Assessment Only Programme?

A. At present-no. This is because apprenticeships are only available for courses of a minimum of 12 months duration.

Q. Who is responsible for paying the fees for the Assessment Only route?

A. The decision will be made by the applicant and the school they work in. Sometimes it is the person looking to gain QTS who pays, sometimes the school pays or the payments can be shared.

Q. Does working towards QTS through the Assessment Only route involve other members of school staff?

A. Yes! KNSTE require a Partnership Agreement to be signed by the school's Headteacher indicating their support of the process. You would also require a mentor, usually a senior member of staff, who would observe your teaching during the assessment period and provide support and advice about your teaching and developing portfolio.

Q. I work in a Special School with pupils up to the age of 16. Can I apply for the Primary AO route with KNSTE?

A. Yes. KNSTE will take into account the curriculum age of the children you are teaching. This will then help us to determine the appropriate age range for your AO qualification.

Further information about the Assessment Only route can be found at: <https://knste-shaw.org.uk/assessment-route/>

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