

This serves as a brief overview of the Assessment Only Route. Further details on the eligibility criteria and the application and assessment process can be found in our AO handbook, which is available on request.

What is the Assessment Only (AO) Route?

The Assessment Only Route enables individuals with extensive teaching experience to demonstrate that they are already meeting the Teachers' Standards in full, without the need for further training. Following a successful assessment, candidates are awarded Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).

Who can apply?

The Assessment Only route has a detailed set of statutory criteria.

It is primarily designed for Graduates with a wealth of prior teaching experience – teaching a range of abilities across a minimum of four consecutive academic years and in at least two different settings.

Those who wish to gain the qualification through the AO route might include very experienced graduate teachers without QTS who are:

- currently teaching as unqualified teachers in schools or academies
- working in British schools overseas and/or
- teaching in the independent school sector

What are the eligibility criteria?

The following criteria are entry criteria and must therefore be met prior to registration.

Academic:

- UK First Degree (or equivalent qualification) *
- GCSE Grade 4/C in English language*
- GCSE Grade 4/C in maths*
- GCSE Grade 4/C in a science (if teaching in EYFS or Primary) *

Applicants registered on the AO route prior to the 1st April 2020, are required to pass the literacy and numeracy professional skills tests. Further details about these tests can be found on the following website: <http://sta.education.gov.uk>

Applicants registered on the AO route on or after the 1st April 2020, are not required to have passed the professional skills tests but are required to demonstrate, through the interview and selection process, that they are proficient with fundamental skills in maths and English.

*** For qualifications gained outside of the UK, written confirmation from the UK National Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) must be provided to confirm the equivalence of these qualifications with the minimum standard required. For more information visit: <https://www.naric.org.uk/naric>**

Teaching:

- An absolute minimum of two years' teaching experience, teaching whole classes and being responsible for planning, teaching and assessment across the full range of national curriculum subjects at primary level. (Whole classes will usually consist of a minimum of 15 students.)
- Teaching experience across the full age phase in which a candidate is being assessed. For primary this requires evidence of teaching in EYFS and KS1 (3-7 years), lower and upper KS2 (7 – 11 years) or across KS1 and KS2 (5 – 11 years). Assessments in the middle school age phase (11-14) may also be considered.
- Candidates must have spent adequate time teaching in different year groups across the chosen age phase in order to have obtained sufficient evidence of their work against the Teachers' Standards. If a candidate's teaching has been primarily in one key stage, then it is unlikely that they will have obtained the necessary evidence in the second key stage in less than half a term (typically 5 or 6 weeks).
- Candidates must have taught in at least two schools or early years settings with responsibility for continuous planning, teaching and assessment. (Experience in a second school or setting should be for at least half a term, typically 5 or 6 weeks.) Teaching experience across two or more schools from within the same multi-academy Trust can be counted if the schools are considered by BMITTC to be suitably different, giving the candidate experience of teaching pupils of different backgrounds and abilities and using different approaches to planning, teaching and assessment.

Evidence of a candidate's teaching in a British international school may also be used, if the candidate was teaching the English National Curriculum and/or Early Years Curriculum during this time.

- A range of robust evidence of the candidate meeting (and ideally exceeding) the Teachers' Standards across the age phase and two or more settings.

Safeguarding:

Confirmation from the employing school that the following safeguarding checks have been obtained:

- An enhanced DBS
- Prohibition check
- 'fit to teach' health assessment

The employing school must also provide written confirmation that the applicant has the right to work in the UK.

If a candidate is being assessed in a school in which they are volunteering, BMITTC is required to conduct the necessary safeguarding checks and the candidate will be required to cover the cost of these checks.

Personal attributes and values:

Candidates must demonstrate, through the application and interview process as well as their portfolio of evidence, that they consistently demonstrate the positive values and personal attributes conducive to teaching. They are also required to provide evidence that they meet Part Two of the Teachers' Standards, relating to personal and professional conduct.

Please note that whilst we can offer advice to prospective applicants, based on the information they provide during an initial enquiry, this is only guidance. BMITTC can only determine a candidate's suitability / eligibility for this route with any certainty, following an interview - after receiving a fully completed written application, two references, evidence of the academic entry criteria and after viewing the initial portfolio of evidence. It is not sufficient to have merely gained the necessary teaching experience, there must be a wide range of robust evidence to demonstrate that candidates were meeting the Teachers' Standards during this teaching practice. Applicants may find it useful to complete the self-assessment checklist, available on our website, to help determine their eligibility.

How long does the Assessment take?

There are several stages to the assessment procedure but on completion of a successful interview, registration will take place and the final assessment will be conducted *within* three calendar months.

How will I be supported?

Each applicant will be supported by a mentor based in the school, as well as an assessor from Bourton Meadow Initial Teacher Training Centre.

Supporting documentation will also be provided, including a handbook, proformas and detailed guidance on the collation of the portfolio of evidence.

How will I be assessed?

The final assessment will take place towards the end of the three- month assessment period and will be carried out by two experienced colleagues from Bourton Meadow Initial Teacher Training Centre (BMITTC).

The final assessment will involve:

- scrutiny of a detailed portfolio of evidence against each of the Teachers' Standards
- at least one observed lesson (by two colleagues from BMITTC)
- a formal interview with the applicant
- a discussion with the mentor and/or headteacher

How much will it cost?

The Assessment Only route costs £2500 plus expenses. These expenses will include travel (and accommodation for two assessors, where necessary). The actual cost will therefore vary depending on the distance travelled, the duration of the stay and the number of candidates being assessed during the assessment visit.

The fees can be paid by a supporting school, the candidate or a combination of the two. How the funding will be split and paid to BMITTC will need to be arranged between the candidate and the school prior to application as details of the payments will need to be confirmed in the application form.

Will I have to undergo the Newly Qualified Teacher Induction Year?

All candidates who are assessed and recommended for QTS become Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs). They will therefore be required to complete the NQT induction. However, in some exceptional circumstances the length of an induction period may be reduced. Information about statutory arrangements for the induction of NQTs can be found online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/induction-for-newly-qualified-teachers-nqts>.

How do I apply?

Applicants wishing to be considered for the AO route need to check that they meet the eligibility criteria in full. An application will need to be supported by a headteacher and so prospective applicants should discuss their wish to apply for the AO route with the headteacher in the first instance, who will be required to sign a partnership agreement. Applicants should then complete an application form and submit this, along with photocopies of their academic qualifications. An initial assessment of their suitability for the AO route will be conducted and, if successful, an interview date will be arranged.

To discuss the AO route further and to request a copy of the AO handbook and candidate application form, please contact Helen Byrom, Head of Training.

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