

FAQs for Referees

Have you been asked to be a referee for an applicant for Highly Accomplished teacher (HAT) or Lead teacher (LT) certification?

This FAQ sheet is for you.

How many referees can an applicant nominate?

Applicants nominate 3-5 referees who can verify their practice as described in the evidence presented in the Stage 1 application.

Who can be nominated as a referee?

An applicant's current principal/supervisor, or their appointed delegate, must be one of the referees. The other referees are selected by the applicant. Referees may include, but are not limited to, classroom teachers, school leaders, education consultants, teacher educators and specialist staff with knowledge and understanding of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST).

An applicant can select referees with whom they have previously worked in locations different to their current school.

So as a principal, can I delegate my role as a referee?

Principals may choose to delegate their responsibility as a referee to another suitable member of their school leadership team. Delegations may be required when a principal is on leave, new to the school, or where the responsibilities related to capability development and support of teachers is the responsibility of another senior school leader.

A nominated delegate will be required to undertake the same responsibilities required for a principal referee, including confirming the professional relationship of the applicant and their other selected referees.

Do I need to have knowledge of the APST to be a referee?

Preparing an application is a rigorous professional process. It is important that applicants carefully select their referees, ensuring that each has a knowledge of the APST and knowledge of the practice of the applicant.

A sound knowledge of the APST is beneficial, as this is the basis for making judgements regarding certification of teachers at the HAT and LT career stages. Information about the APST can be found at [Teacher Standards \(aitsl.edu.au\)](https://aitsl.edu.au)

If I agree to be a referee, what is the likely time commitment?

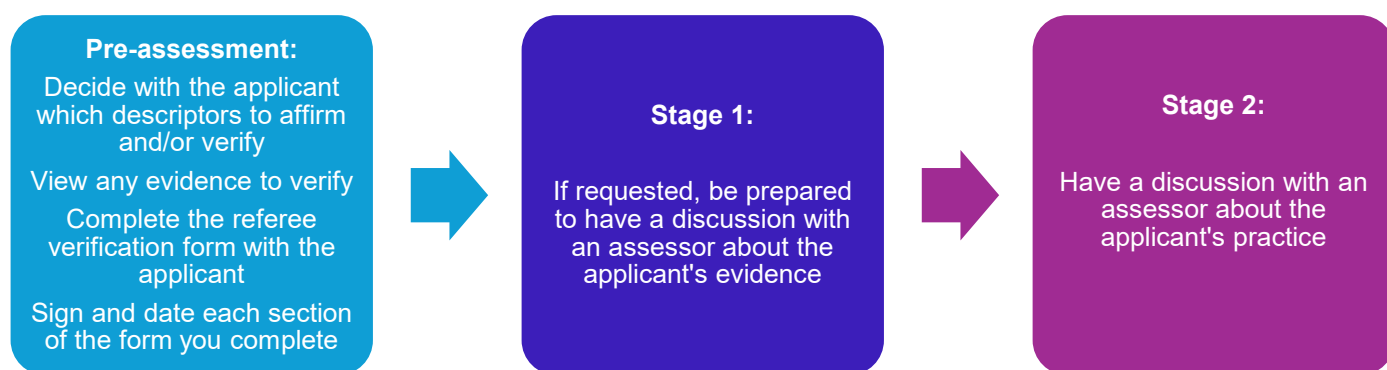
It will vary depending on the number of descriptors you agree to verify, and the evidence used to demonstrate them. Applicants should ask their referees to verify select and targeted Standard descriptors, about which they can speak directly and with first-hand knowledge of the applicant's practice.

Applicants are advised they will need to make a mutually convenient time to meet with each of their referees to discuss the evidence they are providing against the Standard descriptors.

Referees may also be required for a discussion with a certification assessor to provide further information about the applicant's evidence. It is at the discretion of the assessors as to which referees they contact (if any), and at what stage of the application assessment process.

What is my role as a referee?

Referees may be involved in each phase of the application process and can elect to affirm descriptors, verify evidence, or both.



Up to 10 Standard descriptors may be deemed demonstrated by referee affirmation. These are identified in part 1 of the verification form – 'affirmed descriptors' – and require a comment that specifies the referee's direct, first-hand knowledge of the applicant's practice. Only referees affirming descriptors will complete this part.

In part 2 of the verification form, all Standard descriptors not listed in part 1 should be addressed. Each item of evidence against a descriptor will be verified by the elected referee as an accurate representation of the applicant's practice.

It is important to remember that referees are not required to provide a character reference, but rather verification of how the applicant's evidence of practice demonstrates the selected Standard descriptors. It is also important to note that referees do not assess an application.

Referees may be contacted by an assessor to discuss verified evidence in further detail if required.

What if I'm not available for a discussion with an assessor?

If you have agreed to act as a referee, it is expected that you agree to engage in a timely discussion with an assessor if requested. If your circumstances change and you cannot participate in a discussion, the application assessors will negotiate an alternative method of consultation.

What if I am unable to verify an applicant's evidence?

If affirming one or more descriptors for part 1 of the verification form, it is mandatory that you include a specific, detailed comment about the applicant's practice, as the applicant is not required to provide additional direct evidence in their application for the descriptors in this section.

If you cannot complete this comment, then you must not agree to complete this section of the form. Descriptors included in this section without comments cannot be assessed as demonstrated.

For you to be able to verify the applicant's direct evidence in part 2 of the form, you should have seen the evidence to be submitted. If an applicant does not provide you with the evidence, please do not agree to be a referee for that descriptor. If you are unable to verify the evidence provided by the applicant, you should not complete this section of the form.

Can I submit evidence on behalf of the applicant?

The referee's role is to verify the evidence in the application. If discussions with a referee reveal evidence that the applicant has not included, this will be noted and the QCT may invite the applicant to submit details of this evidence as a supplement.

Does the applicant I am acting as referee for have to be solely responsible for an activity or project they have referred to in their application?

No, an applicant can share responsibility for an activity or project. However, they must ensure they clearly outline the aspect of the activity or project they were responsible for and define what their individual role and responsibilities were.

This should be reflected in the evidence provided to demonstrate the Standard descriptor(s). An applicant's referee may be asked to verify the role played by the applicant in the activity or project to confirm the applicant's evidence is reflective of their contribution and practice.

Can I be a referee for a colleague if I am also applying for HAT or LT?

Yes, you can be a referee for a colleague and be an applicant for HAT or LT certification yourself.

Can I be a referee for an applicant if I am an assessor?

Yes, you can be a referee for an applicant and be an assessor. When application allocations to assessors are determined, you would need to declare your knowledge of the applicant as part of the conflict-of-interest process so the application can be allocated to another assessor.

Can I say 'no' to being a referee for an applicant?

All referees, other than the applicant's current principal/supervisor, or their delegate, have the option to decline an applicant's referee request. However, referee requests should be considered as an important professional responsibility for teachers and school leaders.

Applicants carefully consider the selection of their evidence and have invited you to be one of their referees because they believe you have first-hand knowledge of their practice in relation to the identified Standard descriptors.

Useful Links

Queensland College of Teachers

- [Policy for Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers](#)
- [Certification Guidelines](#)
- [Certification Referees Guidelines](#)
- Highly Accomplished teacher referee verification form – [download from our website](#)
- Lead teacher referee verification form – [download from our website](#)

Department of Education

- Teaching.Expertise@qed.qld.gov.au

Queensland Catholic Education Commission

- <https://www.hatandlt.qcec.catholic.edu.au/>

AITSL

- [Australian Professional Standards for Teachers \(APST\)](#)
- [AITSL teacher self-assessment tool](#)
- [Classroom Practice Continuum](#)

For further information please email the QCT's certification team at: certification@qct.edu.au