



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

APPLICANT



Highly Accomplished Teacher and Lead Teacher

Are you interested in becoming certified as a Highly Accomplished Teacher (HAT) or Lead Teacher (LT)? This FAQ sheet is for you. There are separate FAQ sheets for HAT and LT assessors, referees and school leaders.

What is certification?

Certification is a process whereby experienced classroom teachers in Queensland schools may voluntarily pursue national certification to demonstrate their teaching skills and abilities at the higher career-stages of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST). Certification is portable to other Australian states and territories.

Do I have to apply for certification?

National certification is a voluntary process for eligible classroom teachers. In Queensland, eligible teachers are able to submit portfolios at designated dates each year to be considered for certification.

What are the certification eligibility requirements?

Prior to commencing certification an applicant must confirm their eligibility and readiness to apply. To be eligible, you must:

- be an Australian citizen or have a permanent residency visa
- have full teacher registration in Queensland
- be employed in a Queensland state school or a non-state school represented by the Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC)
- (if applying for Highly Accomplished career stage) have participated in at least two recent annual performance assessments – refer to your employer for more details about annual performance assessments
- (if applying for Lead career stage) have participated in at least three recent annual performance assessments – refer to your employer for more details about annual performance assessments.
- additional requirements apply depending on the applicant's employer. The application will not be assessed until all the certification and employer eligibility requirements are confirmed by the Department of Education (DOE) and QCEC.

Who can apply?

All eligible teachers are able to apply for certification. The APST are sufficiently broad to have allowed success for those in a wide range of teaching contexts including Early Childhood, Special Education, Learning Support, Outdoor Education, Rural and Remote, Schools of Distance Education, small and large schools.

- **School leaders** who have an ongoing teaching role with students may apply if they meet all of the eligibility criteria. However, holding a leadership position is not a guarantee that an application for certification will be successful.
- **Nationally trained assessors** will be required to meet the eligibility criteria and undergo the same certification process as all other applicants if they decide to apply for certification as a HAT or LT. Assessors will not be eligible to submit a portfolio for HAT or LT certification in the same calendar year in which they are actively operating as an assessor.
- **Teachers** who have been certified as HAT or LT in another sector or jurisdiction and are within 5 years of that certification, please contact the Queensland College of Teachers (QCT) by email at HATandLTCertification@qct.edu.au to provide verification of your certification and have it recognised in Queensland.
- **Instrumental music teachers** or music teachers who deliver an educational program based on the Australian curriculum or a syllabus developed or revised by the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority are eligible to apply. The State Schools – Performance, Department of Education – Instrumental Music Curriculum (that may be delivered by both registered and non-registered teachers) does not meet the 'educational program' definition, and therefore instrumental music teachers delivering this program are not eligible to apply.

What are the costs for applicants?

There are two staged costs for applicants to attain this voluntary, professional certification. Having a fee for HAT and LT certification is consistent with other Australian jurisdictions which offer teacher certification.

All HAT and LT applicants are required to pay the following fees for the assessment process:

Assessment Stage 1: \$850.00 per applicant

Assessment Stage 2: \$650.00 per applicant

Recertification: \$100.00 per applicant.

If an applicant is not successful at Stage 1, they are not required to pay a fee at subsequent stages, as they do not incur the costs for these.

What is the purpose of certification?

Certification supports teachers to explore their practice at the HAT or LT career stage of the APST. HAT and LT certification has three purposes:

- recognise and promote quality teaching
- provide an opportunity for teachers to reflect on their practice
- provide a reliable indication of quality teaching that can be used to identify and recognise teachers at the HAT and LT career stages.

What is the difference between HATs and LTs?

HATs are highly effective and knowledgeable classroom teachers. According to the APST, HATs are characterised as advocates of the profession, who contribute to the professional learning of peers through a range of activities that include, but are not limited to, supporting, working with and assisting their colleagues. The impact of a HAT is across a year level or faculty group.

LTs are exemplary classroom teachers. They are committed to quality teaching and learning, and their leadership impacts students and their colleagues across and/or beyond the school. LTs regularly innovate, initiate, evaluate and review programs and practice across the school.

How do I decide on the most suitable career stage?

Applicants are required to choose which career stage they will be applying for — either HAT or LT.

Deciding to apply for certification requires honest reflection about your practice against the APST. The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) has provided a [self-assessment tool](#) to support this reflection. If you are considering applying for HAT or LT it is crucial you use this tool authentically to support your decision making process. Reflection on your practice against this tool, as well as [AITSL's classroom practice continuum](#), will help you understand where your practice lies against the career stages of the APST.

Through your reflection these resources can inform the professional development goals of your performance review processes. The regular conversations you have with peers and school leaders throughout the performance review processes, and the essential professional discussion you must have with your principal or principal's delegate before applying, also provide valuable information regarding your readiness to apply.

What is the process to achieve certification as a HAT or LT?

The certification process has five main elements:

- 1. Pre-assessment phase** Prior to commencing an application, teachers determine their eligibility and readiness to apply for certification.
- 2. Assessment Stage 1** Eligible applicants submit a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate achievement of the HAT or LT descriptors of the APST. LT applicants also submit evidence in their portfolio about a Lead initiative. Each portfolio is assessed independently by two nationally trained assessors.
- 3. Assessment Stage 2** If successful at Stage 1, the applicant's classroom practice is assessed against the AITSL classroom practice continuum, along with professional discussions with the applicant, principal or principal's delegate, and other colleagues to confirm achievement of the relevant career stage of the APST.
- 4. Certifying Authority decision and national certification**
- 5. Renewal of certification** Certification is awarded for five years. After four years the applicant must apply for recertification in order to continue their certified status after five years.

Are there any differences between applying for HAT and applying for LT?

Teachers do not have to be certified as a HAT before applying for LT status. The process for submitting a portfolio of evidence is the same for HAT and LT. However, applicants considering applying for LT need to be aware there is an additional requirement, the Lead initiative. This is a significant leadership project of greater than six months' duration, implemented across your school and/or a cluster of schools. Additional information on the requirements of the Lead initiative can be found on page 18 of the Guide to Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers in Australia. The components of a portfolio of evidence are:

- a written statement addressing the APST
- a completed [QCT evidence map](#) (available on the QCT website)
- at least two pieces of annotated evidence addressing each of the seven standards, with each of the descriptors at the relevant career stage demonstrated at least once
- an index of labelled artefacts, for applications submitted as a zipped file of documents
- reflection on the direct evidence through annotation
- at least two observation reports on teacher practice, including one from the principal/supervisor (or their delegate), completed in the previous twelve months of teaching
- a list of three to five referees, including the applicant's current principal/supervisor or delegate (as nominated by the principal/supervisor), who have direct knowledge of the applicant's professional practice
- three to five written references in the approved template (obtained from relevant employer) which are signed by the referees, including one by the principal or their delegate.
- a written description of a Lead initiative (for Lead applications only).

Who assesses the application?

Two nationally trained assessors independently review each portfolio. Nationally trained assessors are school leaders or classroom teachers who have undertaken a rigorous national Assessor Training Program (ATP). Final decision making is by the QCT as Certifying Authority.

When can I submit an application?

Applications will be received annually.

If you are intending to apply in 2023 please refer to the DOE or QCEC website for submission requirements.

How often do I need to apply for recertification?

National certification requires renewal every five years. After four years the applicant must apply for recertification in order to continue their certified status after 5 years.

Useful Links

Queensland College of Teachers

[Guidelines for teachers applying for certification by the Queensland College of Teachers as Highly Accomplished Teachers and Lead Teachers](#)

[Highly Accomplished Teacher and Lead Teacher Certification policy](#)

Department of Education

[OnePortal - HAT and LT Page](#) - or search HAT and LT OnePortal

Queensland Catholic Education Commission

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

AITSL

[Australian Professional Standards for Teachers \(APST\)](#)

[Guide to the Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers in Australia](#)

[AITSL Teacher Self-Assessment Tool](#)

[Classroom Practice Continuum](#)

[AITSL certification documentary evidence supplement: HAT](#)

[AITSL certification documentary evidence supplement: LT](#)

For further information please email the QCT's HAT and LT Team at: HATandLTCertification@qct.edu.au

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