



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

REFEREE

Highly Accomplished Teacher and Lead Teacher

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. There are separate FAQ sheets for HAT and LT applicants, school leaders and assessors.

How many referees can an applicant nominate?

Applicants can nominate 3–5 referees to verify their practice as described in the evidence presented in the portfolio submission.

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 whom they have previously worked with in locations different to their current school to verify their evidence of practice.

At the Lead Teacher career stage, at least one referee must have knowledge of the Lead initiative led by the applicant.

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

Preparing a portfolio is a rigorous professional process. Page 19 of the Guide to Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers states that it is important that applicants carefully select their referees, ensuring that each has the appropriate level of experience, 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 on [DOE OnePortal - HAT and LT Page](#), [QCEC](#) website and the [AITSL](#) website.

How much time will it take to be a referee?

It will vary depending on the content in a portfolio you are asked to be referee for. Some applicants may ask their colleagues to

be a referee for a number of standards and/or descriptors within their portfolio, while other colleagues may be a referee for only one descriptor.

Applicants are advised that they will need to make a mutually convenient time to meet with each of their referees to take them through their portfolio and discuss the evidence they are providing against the standards and descriptors.

Prior to this meeting, applicants should determine, on the referee statement template, which standards and/or descriptors they would like their referees to verify.

Each referee is required to complete and **sign** a separate referee statement template. This can take place during the meeting or after the meeting.

It is the applicant's responsibility to collate and include all **signed** referee statements with their application for certification submitted to the QCT for Stage 1 assessment.

What is my role as a referee?

At Stage 1, applicants must nominate referees who are able to verify the practice described in the direct evidence.

Referees must have direct knowledge of the applicant's practice and must be able to provide evaluative statements regarding an applicant's evidence and performance against specific standards and/or descriptors.

It is important to remember this is not a character reference, but rather a statement of how the applicant's evidence of practice demonstrates the standards and/or descriptors. It is also important to be aware that referees are not required to assess an applicant's portfolio of evidence.

In short, a referee:

- verifies the practice described in the direct evidence is a true, accurate and authentic representation of the applicant's work
- evaluates the applicant's practice against specific standards

- and/or descriptors of which they have direct knowledge
- provides evaluative statements and in these statements, discusses their observation of the teacher's practice if they have provided an observation report the applicant has included as direct evidence within their portfolio.

How will I verify an applicant's evidence and will I need to provide a written referee statement?

All referees need to complete and sign a written referee statement verifying the applicant's practice and evidence against the relevant standards and/or descriptors. A space for comment by the referee on the applicant's practice against the standards is provided on the referee statement template.

The referee statement template is provided to all eligible applicants. It is also available for download on the [DOE OnePortal - HAT and LT Page](#) and [QCEC](#) websites.

How is my referee statement used during the certification process?

During assessment Stage 1, assessors will refer to referee statements as part of assessing the applicant's practice. Referee statements are not considered artefacts or direct evidence of the standards/descriptors by assessors — they are used by assessors to verify an applicant's practice.

By exception, assessors may also contact referees by telephone if further comment on the applicant's evidence is required in addition to that already captured in the referee statement.

What if I have completed an observation report for the applicant?

If you have completed an observation report of the applicant's practice, you need to refer to this in your referee statement.

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

For you to be able to verify the applicant's direct evidence you must have seen the evidence to be submitted. Should an applicant not provide you with a copy of the direct evidence, please do not complete the written referee statement. If you are unable to verify the evidence provided by the applicant, you should not complete the referee statement and should return the portfolio or copy of the portfolio to the applicant.

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 portfolio?

No, an applicant is able to 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(s)/descriptor(s). An applicant's referee may be asked to verify the role played by the applicant in the activity or project in order to confirm the applicant's evidence is reflective of their own 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 portfolio allocations to assessor pairings are determined, you would need to declare your knowledge of the applicant as part of the conflict of interest process so the portfolio can be allocated to another assessor.

As a referee, do I need to read and verify the entire portfolio of evidence?

No, you only need to read the part of the portfolio that you have been asked to verify by the applicant on the referee statement. If you wish to read the portfolio in its entirety, you can discuss this with the applicant.

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

All referees, other than the candidate's current principal, or the principal's delegate, have the option to say 'no' to an applicant's referee request. However, referee requests should be considered on their merit. Being a referee is 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 that you have first-hand knowledge of their practice in relation to the identified standards and/or descriptors.

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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