

Guidelines

for teachers applying for certification
by the Queensland College of Teachers
as Highly Accomplished Teachers and
Lead Teachers

*Certification against the Australian Professional Standards
for Teachers: for teachers employed in Queensland state
schools and in non-state schools represented by the
Queensland Catholic Education Commission*

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Introduction

These Guidelines should be read in conjunction with the Queensland College of Teachers (QCT) [Highly Accomplished Teacher and Lead Teacher Certification Policy](#). Certification is a national process, that is carried out by certifying authorities in participating states/territories. The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) developed a certification process as outlined in the [Guide to Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers](#). Certifying authorities contribute to the Certifying Authority Network supported by AITSL. The QCT has legislated authority to grant certification for teachers in Queensland state schools and in non-state schools represented by the Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC)¹.

The four career stages in the [Australian Professional Standards for Teachers](#) (APST) are Graduate, Proficient, Highly Accomplished and Lead. These stages provide benchmarks to recognise the professional growth of teachers throughout their careers. The descriptors across the four career stages represent increasing levels of professional knowledge, practice and engagement for teachers. Progression through the stages represents a growing understanding, applied with increasing sophistication, across a broader and more complex range of situations. The APST at the career stages of Highly Accomplished and Lead are the basis for national certification. (*Guide to Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers in Australia*, 2017, p. 5). Certification is a voluntary process, so teachers choose to apply for these career stages.

Certification process

The certification process has four main elements – a pre-assessment phase, two stages of assessment and then certification decision making. Differences in the process for the Highly Accomplished and Lead career stages are highlighted in these guidelines.

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| Applicants receive feedback at all stages | Pre-assessment Eligibility, self-assessment and professional discussion |
| | Assessment Stage 1 Submission of evidence, decision making and feedback Referee reports-validate and verify evidence Successful applicants progress to Stage 2 |
| | Assessment Stage 2 Onsite or virtual site visit including direct observation of practice and professional discussion |
| | Certification Decision making and recommendation |

Personnel involved in the certification process

In addition to the applicant, personnel involved in the certification process are referees (including colleagues and peers), a principal/supervisor or their delegate, and assessors.

Two trained assessors external to the school/setting of the applicant are nominated by the QCT to assess the certification application.

Referees nominated by the applicant are required to provide verification and comments against specific focus areas of the APST. An applicant must nominate three to five referees and is responsible for arranging for three to five references in the approved template. References must be completed and signed by the applicant's referees and submitted with the application of evidence at Stage 1.

The principal/supervisor or their delegate is required to undertake the following responsibilities:

- Pre-assessment: engage in a short professional discussion with the applicant, based on the APST, regarding their readiness for applying for certification
- Assessment Stage 1: provide a report on an observation of the teacher's practice that has occurred no more than 12 months before the date of their application and as a referee provide comments against specific focus areas of the APST for which they have direct knowledge of the applicant's practice
- Assessment Stage 2: have a short professional discussion with the external assessor during the onsite or virtual visit to provide comments against the specific focus areas of the APST demonstrated in observations of practice.

These responsibilities can predominantly be undertaken as part of the school's regular performance and development process. The principal/supervisor may delegate these responsibilities to a deputy/assistant principal or equivalent member of the senior leadership team of the school/setting who has significant knowledge of the applicant's practice. A form is available from your employer regarding this delegation.

Pre-assessment

Prior to commencing a certification application, teachers determine their own eligibility and readiness to apply for certification.

Eligibility requirements

To be eligible to apply for certification at the Highly Accomplished or Lead teacher career stages the

¹ Teachers in independent schools other than Catholic Independent Religious schools should refer to Independent Schools Queensland as their certifying authority

applicant must:

- be an Australian citizen or have a permanent residency visa
- have full registration in Queensland
- be employed in a Queensland state school or a non-state school represented by the 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.

Teachers do not have to be certified as a Highly Accomplished teacher before applying for Lead teacher status.

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 or QCEC.

Queensland-specific requirements

To be successful, applicants for certification must have an authentic teaching role to enable them to demonstrate achievement of the complete range of standards and descriptors. Applicants should refer to their employing authority for a definition of an authentic teaching role. When evidencing their authentic teaching role, applicants must focus on their individual contribution to the role, e.g. evidence of their independent planning and preparation of lessons, delivering lessons and differentiating practice to cater for the full range of students over a period of time. Also required is assessment of students, and reporting to students and parents on student progress. Evidence developed while in a full time nonteaching role will only be considered as part of a portfolio if applied in an authentic teaching role on return to a school setting. The process for an applicant who changes their teaching role during certification will be reviewed on a case by case basis (Teaching Requirements, *Guide to Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers in Australia*, 2017, p. 11).

Classroom music specialists who deliver an educational program accredited or approved by the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority, for example Australian Curriculum Music, are eligible to apply – these teachers require teacher registration.

The Instrumental Music Program Curriculum (delivered by both registered and non-registered teachers) does not meet the 'educational program' definition, and

therefore instrumental music teachers are not eligible to apply.

Teacher librarians, as for other registered teachers, need to demonstrate an authentic teaching role against the APST.

Teachers of the International Baccalaureate (IB) are eligible as the IB is recognised as an 'educational program'.

Self-assessment

It is strongly recommended that a self-assessment be undertaken prior to commencing a certification application. All applicants will have access to the online AITSL teacher [self-assessment tool](#) against the APST to self-assess their readiness to apply for certification and to provide them with an understanding of what is required for certification.

All applicants must conduct a professional discussion with their principal/supervisor or delegate regarding their readiness to apply for certification and/or what additional preparation they need to proceed with their application. Obtaining the endorsement of the principal/supervisor to proceed is not mandatory but is strongly recommended.

Certification assessment

The assessment of certification applications has two stages. Applicants must be successful at Stage 1 before proceeding to Stage 2. It is expected that Stage 1 and Stage 2 assessment will occur in the same calendar year except in special circumstances. An applicant's inability to complete Stage 1 and Stage 2 assessment in the same calendar year will be reviewed by the QCT on a case-by-case basis.

Assessment Stage 1: Submission of evidence

Assessment at Stage 1 includes annotated direct evidence of teacher practice against the APST, a written statement addressing the APST, observation reports, written references, referee contact list and QCT evidence map.

Required elements of the Stage 1 submission include:

- a written statement addressing the APST
- a completed QCT evidence map (available on the QCT website https://cdn.qct.edu.au/pdf/psu/Pg31-EvidenceMap_interactive_.pdf)
- 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 has direct knowledge of the applicant's professional practice
- three to five written references in the approved template (obtained from relevant employer) and signed by the referees, including one by the principal or their delegate.
- a written description of a Lead Initiative (for Lead applications only).

Stage 1 applications will initially be evaluated for compliance against the eligibility requirements and mandatory requirements at Stage 1. The QCT may ask an applicant to provide further information or a document needed to confirm the application. An applicant will have 14 days to provide the information or document. If the applicant does not comply with the information request, then the applicant is taken to have withdrawn the application.

As part of supporting applicants through this process and ensuring applications can be fully assessed within reasonable timeframes, there may be other instances where the QCT may return an application for amendment and return by the applicant to the QCT within 14 days:

- if the application is not complete, for example referee statements are not included
- if any files are corrupted, for example they are not able to be viewed by an assessor
- if files are not embedded correctly and are unable to be opened
- if the application is more than 2GB
- if the application is unable to be navigated.

Demonstrating the APST

To achieve certification, evidence of performance that improves teaching and learning is required at the Highly Accomplished or Lead career stages of the APST.

Evidence includes:

- direct evidence of the career stage descriptors - annotated artefacts, observation reports and feedback on teacher practice
- teacher reflection on the direct evidence
- referees' statements.

The detail of the evidence to be provided differs between the Highly Accomplished and Lead career stage descriptors and is outlined below. Direct evidence draws directly from the teacher's work and is defined as the things the teacher makes, does, writes and says: that is, their individual contribution. It is much stronger than secondary evidence such as an email from a colleague.

How many artefacts should I submit?

The QCT preference is for a principle-based approach rather than a rule-based approach to the question of, how many artefacts should be submitted. The response to this question is based on the following principles:

- opportunity for success
- quality
- national consistency
- transparency
- time efficiency for applicants and assessors
- valuable professional development.

Applicants should focus on the quality of their evidence rather than the quantity of evidence. The *Guide to Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers in Australia* states that an examination of quality collections of evidence indicates the standards can be effectively demonstrated in approximately 35 artefacts or fewer. Artefacts are pieces of evidence that demonstrate an applicant's achievement against one or more of the descriptors.

When compiling an application applicants should always keep in mind the audience, i.e. the assessors. Applications should be succinct and in a user-friendly format, i.e. easy to read and easy to navigate.

Applicants should make careful selection of quality evidence, i.e. evidence that is credible, verifiable and robust.

If intending to submit a significant number of artefacts (more than 35 artefacts) applicants should ask themselves:

- Am I relying on quantity rather than quality evidence?
- Am I assisting the assessors or hindering them in making a judgement about my claims due to the number of pieces or the size of my application?
- Have I reviewed my application with an eye for quality and user-friendliness rather than hoping I have covered every descriptor?
- Is my application succinct?

An application with significantly more than 80 artefacts may be returned to the applicant for editing within two weeks. Annotations are not evidence so lengthy annotations will also be returned for editing.

As a guide, annotation limits are:

- per descriptor (approximately 150 words each)
- per artefact – covering multiple descriptors (approximately 350 words)
- per evidence set – covering multiple artefacts and descriptors (approximately 600 words).

Based on the above guide, annotations are limited to no more than 10,000 words.

Interpretation of “artefact”

There is sometimes confusion on what constitutes an artefact, predominantly occurring when several items are nominated as an artefact.

The AITSL and QCT definition of **artefact** is:

An individual piece of evidence and/or linked extracts that demonstrate a teacher’s achievement against one or more descriptors

When an Assessor is required to exercise **more than one judgment** to be made on whether an artefact supports the applicant demonstration of a particular

descriptor/s, then it is **more than one artefact**.

An artefact may comprise several items when

- the items are linked to the one specific activity (eg registration, agenda, presentation, notes for a workshop)
- the items that demonstrate the same capability (e.g. Term 1 Unit Plan, Term 2 Unit Plan, Term 3 Unit Plan, an email thread based on the same topic etc).

As they would all require only a single judgement to be made against the descriptor/s.

Example to demonstrate this interpretation

An Evidence Set comprises several artefacts linked to a common theme.

For example, the Evidence Set below (Figure 1) contains five artefacts on the theme – Indigenous Learning.

Figure 1. Example Evidence Set - Indigenous Learning

Art 2
Indigenous Conference

Art 3
Indigenous Lesson Plans

Art 4
Emails Indigenous Learning

Art 5
Stolen Generation

Art 1
Term Unit Plan Indigenous

Art 1
Term Unit Plan Indigenous

Artefact 1 is a single word document Unit Plan and is acceptable to be nominated as an artefact

Indigenous Conference Notes

Indigenous Conference keynote

Indigenous Conference Registration

Artefact 2 is three items all specifically related to applicant attendance at the one activity (Indigenous Conference) and is acceptable to be nominated as an artefact.

Lesson Plan 1 - Indigenous Culture

Lesson Plan 2 - Indigenous Culture

Lesson Plan 3 - Indigenous Culture

Artefact 3 is three items that are all examples of the same type of applicant capability (lesson planning) and is acceptable to be nominated as an artefact.

Email thread to unit teachers

Artefact 4 is multiple emails between teachers, but all addressing the one topic (specific unit implementation) and is acceptable to be nominated as an artefact.

Artefact 5 contains multiple items to demonstrate different applicant capabilities by relying on a unit plan, a lesson plan, teaching powerpoint resource, student work samples, assessment exam and a unit evaluation



This is **NOT** a single artefact, but in fact an Evidence Set that contains six separate artefacts

Direct evidence

At both career stages, the following principles apply:

- evidence collectively demonstrates achievement of each of the seven standards and takes account of each of the descriptors at the relevant career stage
- a piece of evidence or an artefact can address one or multiple descriptors, within and across the APST, and should demonstrate the holistic nature of the teacher's practice
- evidence is drawn directly from the teacher's work
- evidence demonstrates the impact of the teacher's work on student outcomes, such as student learning, engagement in learning and wellbeing
- evidence of the impact of the applicant's practice on teaching colleagues (although working with preservice teachers and teacher aides may be included, work with registered teaching colleagues is required)
- evidence must clearly reflect the teacher's individual contribution and demonstrate positive impact on colleagues' practice and student outcomes over a period of time.

The evidence drawn directly from practice will include:

- [annotated](#) artefacts of the teacher's practice (*Guide to Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers in Australia, 2017, (p16)*).
- at least two reports of classroom observation that have occurred in the last year, at least one of which must be by the principal/supervisor or delegate.

Examples of this evidence may include:

- lesson plans and supporting documentation that detail the planning and delivery of a teaching sequence and its impact on student learning
- annotated samples of student work
- analysis of student performance data and outcomes, demonstrating how this has influenced teaching strategies and planning
- documentation of assessment strategies, and

their links to the intended learning outcomes

- student/parent feedback drawn from regular practice
- evidence of participation in professional learning, how it has improved teaching practice, and how the learning has been applied to improve student outcomes
- documentation used to support engagement with parents, the community and colleagues, including evidence of the impact of this engagement.

It is recognised that the evidence teachers can provide will vary depending on a number of contextual issues including level of schooling, position within a school, type of school and sector. Teachers are encouraged to provide evidence that is specific to their own context.

Some teachers may not be able to provide direct evidence for every descriptor from their regular work. For example, a teacher may not have had the opportunity to teach Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students or students with disability. This should be included in the context area of the written statement. However, using annotation to draw links and explain a teacher's knowledge of differentiation strategies in this area enables evidence that is not directly related to these descriptors to be used.

Teacher reflection on the direct evidence

The applicant will submit a short, written statement (three A4 pages in length) addressing the APST, which includes:

- an overview of the teacher's context and background to the evidence
- key features of the evidence
- a summary of major strengths as a teacher against each domain of the APST – Professional Knowledge, Professional Practice and Professional Engagement.

In addition, for the Lead career stage, the applicant will submit a short description of an initiative the applicant has led within the school or across schools (two A4 pages in length).

This will be an initiative implemented over a period greater than six months that was designed to build the capacity of colleagues. The expected impact of a lead initiative is on all teachers across the whole school and/or beyond the school through local cluster arrangements or regional networks. For a very large school of 2000 or more students, the expected impact is across a sub-school, for example the primary school, middle school or senior school.

The lead initiative must: be implemented over a minimum of six months; be linked to school and/or system initiatives; demonstrate the applicant's leadership in design, implementation, evaluation and review (the applicant may be given the lead initiative as a project by the principal) and demonstrate evidence of positive impact on colleagues' knowledge, practice and/or engagement. The written statement about the initiative must refer to the direct evidence.

Referees

Applicants must nominate referees who are able to provide comments regarding the applicant's evidence and performance against the specific descriptor(s) of which they have direct knowledge. The current principal/supervisor or delegate must be a referee. If the applicant is in a new school/setting the previous principal/supervisor's details must also be provided.

Referees may include but are not limited to classroom teachers, school leaders, education consultants, teacher educators, and/or specialist staff. The role of a referee is to verify evidence presented in the application at Stage 1.

Referees will have direct knowledge of the applicant's practice and the evidence they have provided. Applicants will state which descriptors each referee can provide evidence against. Those referees, including the principal/supervisor, who have provided observation reports, will include the observation in their reference.

Applicants will submit three to five references in the designated referee template with the Stage 1 application of evidence. A referee list submitted with the Stage 1 application of evidence will inform assessors of the name, role and descriptors covered by each referee. Across the referees every descriptor must be covered. At the Lead career stage, at least one referee must have knowledge of the applicant's lead initiative. The applicant is required to include all references by all nominated referees in the Stage 1 application submission.

To ensure consistency with QCT administrative and legal/review processes, referees are required to submit signed and dated written statements as part of the

application process.

Assessment Stage 1: Decision making

An applicant's achievement against the APST will be determined through independent assessments of evidence by two assessors external to the school/setting of the applicant and nominated by the QCT. Assessors are trained in the certification and assessment process and have the expertise to assess against the APST at the relevant career stage and in the applicant's context.

Assessors may include teachers, school leaders, supervisors, education consultants, teacher educators, QCT officers and/or specialist staff. As external assessors, they may not assess applications from their own school or applications where they have significant prior knowledge of a teacher's practice or a significant personal relationship.

The Stage 1 evidence will be assessed individually by two assessors, who will then confer with each other to reach a consensus judgement. References will then be reviewed independently before the assessors come to an assessment decision. If the assessors cannot reach an agreement the QCT will be contacted for advice and if a consensus decision still cannot be reached, a third assessor will assess the application.

Following an assessment that Stage 1 evidence demonstrates achievement of the seven standards at the appropriate career stage, assessors make a recommendation to the QCT for progression to Stage 2.

Assessment will be at the level of the seven standards. Assessors will make an on-balance judgement about whether each standard has been demonstrated, based on the evidence provided, which takes account of each descriptor within that standard. The QCT makes decisions about certification on the basis of the evidence submitted and the assessors' reports and communicates the decision to the applicant. Professional feedback information is provided in page 9 of the Guideline. Applicants must be assessed as meeting all seven standards on balance at Stage 1 before proceeding to Stage 2.

Assessment Stage 2: Direct observation of practice and professional discussion

Assessment at Stage 2 involves direct observation and assessment of teacher practice onsite or virtually, depending on the employer². An external assessor completes observations of teaching practice, a

²The Department of Education will conduct virtual site visits involving the upload of two videos of classroom practice, each 35 minutes long. For further information refer to the Department document, The Guide to Quality Video Evidence. If you require further support with video equipment please contact the Department. In 2019 the QCEC will conduct onsite Stage 2 visits involving the observation of two 35-minute lessons. For support with the Stage 2 process after you have spoken with your assessor, please contact the QCT 3377 4711 or HATandLTCertification@qct.edu.au

discussion with the principal/supervisor or their delegate, discussion with other colleagues as required, and professional discussions with the applicant based on the Stage 1 assessment.

Stage 2 provides additional evidence to inform a final judgement as to whether an applicant meets the APST and allows the applicant to reflect on and demonstrate deep understanding of the evidence presented during Stage 1.

Following successful completion of Stage 1, there will be contact between the applicant and one of the assessors involved in Stage 1 about which areas within the APST will be the focus of the site visit. The applicant will then take responsibility for structuring the visit to allow observation of the identified priority areas.

Following this discussion, the applicant will construct a program for the visit. The onsite visit is expected to be undertaken on a single day. If a virtual visit is undertaken, additional time will need to be allowed for applicants to record, and for assessors to review video recordings of classroom observations.

Onsite visits must include:

- pre-observation discussion led by the applicant about what is to be observed, which standards will be demonstrated and the context and background of the observation
- observation of classroom practice which involves the applicant teaching two 35-minute lessons in one day
- discussion with the principal/supervisor or their delegate to further explore the performance of the applicant against the APST
- discussion with other colleagues as nominated by the applicant to provide further evidence against the APST (optional but no more than two colleagues)
- post-observation professional discussion with the applicant of up to one hour in length to:
 - debrief and reflect on the observations
 - explore the evidence provided in Stage 1 in further depth
 - respond to questions.

Virtual visit (with guide to timelines) must include:

- pre-observation discussion led by the applicant about what is to be observed, which standards will be demonstrated and the context and background of the observation (virtual visit day 1)
- recording of classroom practice which involves the applicant teaching two 35-minute lessons in one day (virtual visit day 2)
- upload of video evidence (virtual visit day 3) less

than 2 GB per video (Department applicants refer to the Quality Video Guide for specific requirements through the employer)

- observation of videos by the assessor (virtual visit day 4 or 5)
- discussion with the principal/supervisor to further explore the performance of the applicant against the APST (virtual visit days 1-6)
- discussion with other colleagues as nominated by the applicant to provide further evidence against the APST (optional but no more than 2 colleagues) (virtual visit days 1-6)
- post-observation professional discussion with the applicant (virtual visit day 5 or 6) of up to one hour in length to:
 - debrief and reflect on the observation
 - explore the evidence provided in Stage 1 in further depth
 - respond to questions

Following the visit, the assessor who conducted the visit will document the evidence provided during the visit and submit this to a second assessor. Where practical, this will be the same assessor who was involved in Stage 1. They will arrive at a decision on whether the applicant meets all seven standards at the relevant career stage. If the assessors cannot reach agreement, the QCT will be contacted for advice and a third assessor may be involved. A further visit may be held at the instigation of the assessors where evidence remains inconclusive or insufficient.

Certification decision making

Assessors will make the final recommendation to the QCT based on the assessment of evidence against the APST, observations of practice, referee statements and discussions during the virtual or onsite visit. Applicants will be provided with a copy of the assessment against the APST and notification of the recommendation as a Stage 2 report.

If the QCT is satisfied that the applicant has demonstrated the abilities, experience, knowledge and skills indicated in the APST for the relevant career stage, then the QCT will formally certify the teacher and notify their employer.

Unsuccessful applications for certification as a Lead teacher are not considered for Highly Accomplished status. Where an unsuccessful applicant for Lead teacher chooses to apply for certification as a Highly Accomplished teacher, they may submit their application during the next round of applications. The evidence will need to be annotated to demonstrate achievement of the APST at the Highly Accomplished career stage, and the written statement adjusted accordingly. A new visit is required. Such a Highly Accomplished application is treated as a new application and new fees apply.

In order to conform with the managerial, administrative and legal processes of the QCT, and on the proviso that all elements of the common national process are adhered to, the QCT may delegate the final decision on certification to a specified person or persons. The decision maker will consider the advice and documentation of the external assessors and make the final decision as required by the common national process.

Professional feedback

Professional feedback by an assessor and a member of the QCT certification team is part of the certification process and will be provided to all applicants at the end of Stage 1 and at the end of Stage 2:

- For unsuccessful applicants, the Stage 1 report will include feedback providing detail regarding strengths and the areas that require further improvement. All applicants can request further feedback by contacting the QCT to arrange a phone discussion. Any requests for further feedback must be made within 14 days of notification of the outcome of Stage 1.
- For successful applicants progressing to Stage 2, feedback will identify the areas of focus for the observations during the visit. The QCT provides applicants with written reports at the end of Stage 1. The Stage 1 report involves feedback about the assessment of the applicant's annotated evidence and their demonstration of achievement of all seven standards at the relevant career stage. The report nominates areas that require additional evidence at the visit.
- At the end of Stage 2 all successful applicants receive a final written assessment of their achievement against the seven standards at the relevant career stage. Their employer will also be notified.
- For unsuccessful applicants at Stage 2, feedback in the Stage 2 report will provide detail regarding strengths and the areas that require further improvement. All applicants can request further feedback by contacting the QCT to arrange a phone discussion. Any requests for further feedback must be made within 14 days of notification of the outcome of Stage 2.

Payment of fees

Please refer to the QCT certification webpage for advice on fees for applying for certification at Stage 1 and Stage 2. Fees are collected at the time of the Stage 1 and Stage 2 applications through [myQCT](#). Once assessment at Stage 1 or Stage 2 has commenced, no refund of fees is possible.

Right of review

An unsuccessful applicant may apply for a review of the decision in accordance with the legislation and existing QCT processes. An applicant must complete an application for internal review of a decision and must include the particular template for certification applications. The documents are available by emailing HATandLTCertification@qct.edu.au or from the QCT website. Applications for internal review should be sent by email to HATandLTCertification@qct.edu.au within 28 days of the information notice being received.

Information about internal review and external review can be found on the QCT website at <https://www.qct.edu.au/standards-and-conduct/about-review-of-qct-decisions>

A third assessor, independent of the original certification process, may be appointed as a member of the QCT Internal Review Committee (IRC) to review the application and support the IRC in their deliberations. The IRC will assess the evidence for certification against the APST and confirm or amend the original decision or substitute another decision for the original decision. The outcome will be communicated to the appellant as soon as practicable after the decision is made by the IRC.

Record keeping

The QCT is required under the [Public Records Act 2002](#) to keep records. The QCT regulatory compliance model and its implementation are based on values and behaviours that are critical to achieving optimal regulatory compliance. The QCT regulatory compliance framework requires good record keeping and reporting arrangements with stakeholders. Further information is available through the following link <https://www.qct.edu.au/pdf/Regulatory-Compliance-Framework.pdf>

Privacy

The QCT collects personal information, in accordance with the *Information Privacy Act 2009* and the *Information Privacy Regulation 2009*.

Information about the QCT's privacy policy is available at <https://www.qct.edu.au/about/privacy-policy>. It includes:

- when personal information is collected and how it is used
- when personal information may be disclosed and the legislative authority for that disclosure
- the impact if you do not consent to supplying the QCT with the information requested
- what to do if you believe that the QCT has not

handled your personal information correctly.

Further information is available on the QCT website through the following link: <https://www.qct.edu.au/about/accessing-qct-information>.

Contact the [Information and Privacy Officer](#) at the QCT should you wish to enquire about personal information.

Quality assurance

Quality assurance mechanisms are essential to achieve and maintain rigorous, valid and credible assessments of teachers' practice for the purposes of certification.

Moderation mechanisms will include but are not limited to:

- use of the APST as the basis for assessment
- consistent assessor training
- use of experienced assessors
- support of assessors by the QCT
- the national guide to certification
- materials to support implementation, focusing on key components of the certification process:
 - effective classroom observations, including use of the classroom practice continuum for observation reports
 - providing instructive feedback through the Stage 1 and Stage 2 reports.

In partnership with the QCT, AITSL will monitor these mechanisms and adjust them to ensure their effectiveness. Assessment processes and recommendations will be monitored and moderated by the QCT at both national and state levels.

This may take the form of an audit of the evidence of a sample of teachers who have been granted certification at the Highly Accomplished and Lead career stages.

The QCT will collect and provide summary data on certification decisions at each stage of the assessment process. Evaluation, review and improvement of the certification process will be undertaken.

Roles and responsibilities

| Item | AITSL | Certifying authority |
|---|---|--|
| National standards and certification process | Establish, review and maintain the <i>Australian Professional Standards for Teachers</i> , the certification process, and supplementary materials (supporting documentation, evidence guides and advice to assessors). | Advise and collaborate on establishment, review and maintenance of the certification process. |
| Nationally consistent training of assessors and QCT officers | Provide support materials for nationally consistent training to assessors and QCT officers. | Conduct nationally consistent training for assessors and QCT officers. |
| Materials to support implementation | Develop materials to support implementation targeted at teachers, school leaders and systems. | Utilise materials to support implementation. |
| Promotion of voluntary certification | Develop information packages to enhance understanding and promote voluntary certification. | Conduct information sessions. Disseminate information and make available guides for users. |
| Reviews of certification decisions | AITSL refers the applicant to the Certifying Authority. | Run or participate in review processes, depending on QCT requirements. The Internal Review Committee will confirm, amend or substitute the decision. The Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal will confirm, amend or set aside and either substitute the decision or return the matter to the QCT for reconsideration. |
| National data | Maintain summary data on the certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead teachers. Establish links with relevant bodies for provision of data and information relating to the implementation of nationally consistent processes for certification. | Maintain a QCT database of the certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead teachers. Provide AITSL with summary data at each stage of the certification process. |
| Quality assurance | Review nationally consistent certification and work with the QCT to implement improvements. | Maintain a QCT database of the certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead teachers. |
| Reporting | Report annually to the Education Council on the implementation of nationally consistent processes for the certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead teachers. | Maintain a QCT database of the certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead teachers. |

Glossary

Annotation – Written commentary by the applicant that demonstrates their thinking on why and how the evidence they have submitted addresses the standards/descriptors. Annotations will also illustrate how the applicant's practice has had impact on student outcomes and the practice of colleagues. Annotations are not evidence.

Annual performance assessment – Refer to relevant employer.

Applicant – The applicant is the teacher undertaking the national certification process.

Artefact – An individual piece of evidence and/or linked extracts that demonstrates a teacher's achievement against one or more descriptors. For example: a lesson plan, an observation report or a letter to parents. Not all artefacts need to be grouped as an evidence set based on a common theme.

Assessor – In accordance with the common national process, trained assessors external to the school/setting of the applicant are nominated by the Certifying Authority to assess the certification application.

Authentic teaching role – Refer to relevant employer.

Certifying authority – The body managing the certification process. In Queensland, there are two certifying authorities. The QCT is legislated as the certifying authority for both teachers in state schools and teachers in non-state schools represented by the Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC).

Delegate – Nominated by the applicant's principal or supervisor. May be the deputy/assistant principal or equivalent member of the senior leadership team of a school/setting who has significant knowledge of the applicant's practice.

Direct observation – The observations conducted in person or by using video recordings.

Full registration – In accordance with the regulatory regimes of the QCT.

Portable – Certification will be portable, allowing teachers to maintain their status as a Highly Accomplished teacher or Lead teacher if they move between jurisdictions and sectors.

This does not mean that any industrial arrangements attached to certification, such as a particular pay rate, are automatically transferable. The way in which certified teachers are recognised or rewarded is an employment matter.

Principal – The person taking responsibility for the overall control and administration of the school. This includes day-to-day management of a teacher and assessing their performance.

Referees – Referees may include but are not limited to classroom teachers, school leaders, education consultants, teacher educators, and/or specialist staff.

Referees nominated by the applicant are required to provide verification and comments against specific focus areas of

the standards about which they have direct knowledge of the applicant's practice.

Setting – A state school or a non-state school represented by the QCEC.

Site visit – Site visits may be conducted either onsite or virtually using video technology. Offering the option of a virtual site visit is at the discretion of the certifying authority.

Student outcomes – Broadly defined and includes student learning, engagement in learning, and wellbeing.

Highly Accomplished teachers

Highly Accomplished teachers are recognised as highly effective, skilled classroom practitioners and routinely work independently and collaboratively to improve their own practice and the practice of colleagues. They are knowledgeable and active members of the school/setting.

Highly Accomplished teachers contribute to their colleagues' learning. They may also take on roles that guide, advise or lead others. They regularly initiate and engage in discussions about effective teaching to improve the educational outcomes for their students.

They maximise learning opportunities for their students by understanding their backgrounds and individual characteristics and the impact of those factors on their learning. They provide colleagues, including preservice teachers, with support and strategies to create positive and productive learning environments.

Highly Accomplished teachers have in-depth knowledge of subjects and curriculum content within their sphere of responsibility. They model sound teaching practices in their teaching areas. They work with colleagues to plan, evaluate and modify teaching programs to improve student learning. They keep abreast of the latest developments in their specialist content area or, if generalist teachers, across a range of content areas.

Highly Accomplished teachers are skilled in analysing student assessment data and use it to improve teaching and learning. They are active in establishing an environment which maximises professional learning and practice opportunities for colleagues. They monitor their own professional learning needs and align them to the learning needs of students.

They behave ethically at all times. Their interpersonal and presentation skills are highly developed. They communicate effectively and respectfully with students, colleagues, parents/carers and community members.

Lead teachers

Lead teachers are recognised and respected by colleagues, parents/carers and the community as exemplary teachers. They have demonstrated consistent and innovative teaching practice over time. Inside and outside the school/setting they initiate and lead activities that focus on improving educational opportunities for all students.

They establish inclusive learning environments that meet the needs of students from different linguistic, cultural, religious and socio-economic backgrounds. They seek to improve their own practice and to share their experience with colleagues.

They are skilled in mentoring teachers and preservice teachers, using activities that develop knowledge, practice and professional engagement in others. They promote creative, innovative thinking among colleagues.

Lead teachers apply skills and in-depth knowledge and understanding to deliver effective lessons and learning opportunities and share this information with colleagues and preservice teachers. They describe the relationship between highly effective teaching and learning in ways that inspire colleagues to improve their own professional practice.

They lead processes to improve student performance by evaluating and revising programs, analysing student assessment data and taking account of feedback from parents/carers. This is combined with a synthesis of current research on effective teaching and learning.

Lead teachers represent the school/setting and the teaching profession in the community. They are professional, ethical and respected individuals inside and outside the school/setting.

References

AITSL, (2017). *Guide to the Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers in Australia*. Carlton South: Education Services Australia.

[QCT Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher Policy](#)

[QCT Act and Regulation](#)

