

Southfields Academy Teaching School, Nov 2018

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Assessment Only Route (AOR) to QTS

What is the Assessment Only Route?

The AOR allows you to be assessed against the QTS Standards over a 12 week period in school. It does not include any training and is not intended as an alternative for those people unable to find places on an Initial Teacher Training course. The assessment must be completed in 12 weeks. The assessment is carried out by experienced mentors in the designated employing school. As the Accredited AO Provider, the Teaching School will act as a guide and final assessor and will provide quality assurance for the Route.

When does the Assessment Only Route start?

The Route can begin at any point in the year as long as a candidate meets the requirements and good quality teaching experience, mentoring and assessment can be guaranteed for the 12-week assessment period.

Who is the AOR for?

The Assessment-Only Route is for **experienced but unqualified teachers**, who have been teaching whole classes for least two years. You will need to have experience in at least two schools. **AO applicants will be expected to be working in a school on entry to the programme** and will have the support of the school during the assessment process.

What kind of prior teaching experience is required?

You need to show evidence that you have **managed classes as a teacher in complete charge**, that is planned, taught and assessed units of work over a period of at least 2 years. You need to have taught English National Curriculum subjects within the age range of 11-16 or 14-19 and either covered the range of core NC Subjects with younger classes or taught a specialist subject to older students.

Does any teaching experience count?

A broad range of school/college contexts can be counted but teaching very small groups or one-to-one (in a Pupil Referral Unit or in a Special School) may not be appropriate. Evidence can be drawn from your years of teaching experience, but the final assessment draws on the designated 12 weeks. Some experience as a TA or HLTA may be helpful as part of your school experience, but you need evidence of acting as a full class teacher with responsibility for the planning, teaching and assessing of a whole group for the majority of the time.

For secondary schools, the teaching experience will be assessed against the curriculum requirements of **one specialist subject**. Cover supervision across a range of subjects can only be considered as supporting experience, and not as the main part of the assessed evidence

What teaching is required for the assessment period?

For assessment purposes, you need to be teaching (i.e. in charge of a whole class of 15 pupils and above) for at least a 50% timetable for 12 weeks.

What are the entry requirements?

- **An honours degree (2:2 or above) or equivalent**, related to your specialist subject (at least 50%).

- **Grade C/4 or equivalent in GCSE English Language and Mathematics.** (Some universities and private companies organise equivalency testing in these subjects for those without the appropriate certificates.)
- **Certificated passes in the ITT Professional Skills tests in Literacy and Numeracy.**
- **2 years' experience of teaching whole classes or groups in two different institutions,** with evidence from both.

We welcome applications for all subjects at Secondary level. You are expected to meet the subject and curriculum expectations of the Teaching Standards and therefore a specialist degree would be desirable. All successful applicants accepted onto the Assessment Only Route will be required to hold an **enhanced DBS clearance** before commencing the programme.

How do I apply for the AOR?

An application form (Parts 1 and 2) is available from our website by following the link to the [AO application form](#). The form should be returned directly to Carol Gray, ITT Administrator.

What does it cost?

Candidates will be charged £2,400 for this Assessment Only Route (in 3 payments). Any additional guidance visits necessary as part of preparation for the Route will be subject to a fee. An additional day's pre-assessment observation for instance will be costed at £500.

How do I accept a place and register?

Once your application forms are checked for meeting the minimum requirements you will be sent pre-registration interview information and be asked to commit to interview dates at your school. Prior to interview you will need to arrange for payment of the initial fee of £400.

At the pre-registration interview your teaching will also be observed to check that you are ready to be assessed. Your documents will be checked (original certificates and proof of ID), plus evidence of planning of lessons and units of work (see Timeline document for details of the process).

What are we looking for in a successful applicant?

You will:

- have the intellectual and academic capabilities needed to meet the required teaching standards;
- possess the appropriate qualities, attitudes and values expected of a teacher;
- be able to read and use clear and accurate Standard English in order to communicate effectively in verbal and written form;
- have met the requirements for health and physical capacity to teach.
- have passed the Professional Skills tests
- have evidence of 4-6 lesson observations judged to be at least 'good' by Ofsted criteria.

You will be able to explain the reasoning behind your lesson planning, to show your understanding of curriculum issues related to your specialism and the thinking behind your use of assessment as well as an appreciation of whole school issues.

What support is required from my school?

Endorsement from the Head (via Part 2 of the application form), provision of a subject mentor, opportunities to teach full classes at least 50% timetable, observation of your teaching, feedback, assistance with gathering evidence for your portfolio and final assessment by your mentor.

What is meant by a second school experience?

If your teaching experience currently has been in one school, you will need to arrange a placement in an additional school. We advise a **minimum 4 week placement as a block** or one-day a week experience over a term prior to beginning any Assessment period.

The second school experience provides you with the basis to compare school cultures and expectations, to assess the transferability of your skills and knowledge from one context to another and to gain additional teaching experience. You need enough time to build up a working relationship with a teacher and a class to allow for some collaborative teaching. A senior teacher from the second school should be able to provide a professional reference of your overall contribution.

The second school placement may be arranged for a very particular experience; for example a teacher from an independent school or a special school may want additional experience in a mainstream school. A teacher with experience of KS5 may want to work in another setting with KS4 students and staff. You are strongly advised to discuss any necessary additional school experience at the stage of your initial AOR application.

What happens during the 12 week assessment period?

You will be teaching a half timetable at least. Your school mentor will observe lessons (at least 3) and help you record evidence of achievement against the Standards.

You will need to complete an **Assessment Tracker** which provides a signposting to the evidence in your day-to-day teaching files (electronic or hard copy). **Weekly mentor meeting** notes will record important issues for your professional development will be completed and supported by appropriate evidence.

You will keep a record of any lesson evaluations of your own and any written reflections on experiences in your own and other schools in a **reflective journal**. These will provide useful material for your commentary on your development which will be presented in a **final Portfolio**.

You will organise a visit from the Teaching School assessor at the beginning (usually at week 4) and end of the 12 weeks. Discussions with you, your mentor and your assessor can help to identify any issues related to meeting the standards, appropriate teaching experiences and collection of evidence.

You can gather further advice through e-mail correspondence with the Teaching School.

The final assessment is organised with your mentor and the assessor to ensure there are opportunities for a lesson observation, discussion of evidence and a review of the Portfolio.

What kinds of evidence are necessary to support the Portfolio?

Evidence for assessment against the Teachers' Standards should be drawn from a range of sources:

Lesson plans

Lesson evaluations

Schemes of work

Record keeping

Marking

Monitoring and assessment data

Formal and informal lesson observations and written feedback

Notes made by the candidate during mentor meetings, discussions with colleagues, observations

Testimony from other teaching and non-teaching personnel

Resources

Learners' work

Displays

Prior experience

Attendance at courses, INSET/Departmental meetings

Parents' evenings

Tutoring

Extra-curricular activities; after school activities; trips; work experience

Annotated documentation e.g. NC documents, school policies, SEND Code of Practice

How soon do I get my QTS qualification?

After your final assessment, if you have met all the requirements, we notify the DfE and recommend you for QTS. The QTS award date is usually the day after the date the standards were passed, but formal notification from the DfE may take longer.

Do I have to follow up with an induction period in school?

All newly-qualified teachers are required to serve an induction period. However, there is discretion for the induction period to be reduced to one term for someone who is an experienced teacher who has completed the Assessment Only Route.