

## Programme Specification for Assessment Only route to qualified teacher status (QTS)

**This document applies to Academic Year 2025/26 onwards**

Table 1 programme specification for Assessment only route to QTS

|     |                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.  | <b>Awarding institution/body</b>                                      | Department for Education (DfE)                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 2.  | <b>Teaching institution</b>                                           | University of Worcester (UW) in partnership with schools (or other suitable education settings)                                                                                                                                     |
| 3.  | <b>Programme accredited by</b>                                        | DfE following recommendation by UW                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 4.  | <b>Final award or awards</b>                                          | Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 5.  | <b>Programme title</b>                                                | Assessment Only Route (AOR)                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 6.  | <b>Pathways available</b>                                             | n/a                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 7.  | <b>Mode and/or site of delivery</b>                                   | The AOR takes place within schools/settings that follow the English National Curriculum and/or list of examined subjects. The Assessment Only (AO) teacher is often employed by the school/setting or its Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) |
| 8.  | <b>Mode of attendance and duration</b>                                | The AOR is a full-time period of assessment which lasts no longer than 3 months (12 weeks).                                                                                                                                         |
| 9.  | <b>UCAS Code</b>                                                      | n/a                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 10. | <b>Subject Benchmark statement and/or professional body statement</b> | <a href="#"><u>Teachers' standards (DfE, 2013)</u></a><br><br><a href="#"><u>Assessment only route to QTS: criteria and supporting advice (DfE, 2023)</u></a>                                                                       |
| 11. | <b>Date of Programme Specification preparation/ revision</b>          | Approved November 2023                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

### 12. Educational aims of the programme

The Institute of Education are committed to growing the teaching profession and retaining highly skilled and resilient teachers who are going to thrive within the profession.

The AOR provides candidates who have sufficient teaching experience (two or more years) in at least two schools (or other suitable education settings), with the assessment mechanisms to demonstrate the appropriate intellectual and academic capabilities (English and mathematics set out in section 13) and personal qualities, attitudes, ethics and values to meet the Teachers' Standards, without the need for further training.

Candidates will need the support of their school/setting, as this is where an assessment period of no longer than 12 weeks will take place. They will need an AO 'advocate' (a suitable colleague in school/setting) who, with the support of the school (in accordance with the partnership agreement), is willing to maintain the regular processes of assessment during the assessment period. The AO coordinator(s) and UW tutors (under the management and moderation of the AOR coordinator), verify the AO teacher's achievements against the Teachers' Standards, provide quality assurance and by the end of the assessment period, make a recommendation for QTS to the DfE.

### **13. Admissions**

#### **Entry requirements**

Before acceptance onto the AOR, interviewers must be assured that candidates have the continued capability to demonstrate the appropriate intellectual and academic capabilities and personal qualities, attitudes, ethics and values to meet the Teachers' Standards, without the need for further training.

Candidates must have achieved a standard equivalent to a grade C/4 in GCSE English Language and mathematics. In addition to this, those intending to teach pupils aged 3 to 11 need to have achieved a standard equivalent to a grade C/4 in a GCSE science subject. Candidates who are otherwise suitable, but have not successfully achieved a GCSE grade C/4, may take the University of Worcester's equivalency test in Maths, English and/or Science to demonstrate the required standard.

Candidates will usually hold a 2:2 degree or above from a British university or an award recognised as equivalent by the Qualifications Branch of the DfE. Candidates who have a third-class degree, or candidates for secondary who do not have a degree in their specialist subject, may apply but they will be asked to meet additional entry requirements. For example, based on an initial interview and subject knowledge audit, candidates could be asked to complete focused subject knowledge tasks. This would incur an additional fee. In addition, candidates for secondary who do not have a degree in their specialist subject, would usually be expected to have at least a grade B in their specialist subject at A Level and have evidence that they have taught their subject to high ability KS4/examination classes.

#### **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) requirements**

Statutory guidance, Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education, requires providers to ensure that entrants on all routes have been subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) criminal record check including a check of the children's barred list. Where candidates are employed by the school/setting which they will be assessed in, a copy of their current DBS must be provided. A new DBS will be required if the candidate is to be assessed in a different school/setting.

In addition, all AOR candidates will be subject to a Prohibition List check if they have not already by their current employer.

Registry keeps records showing that candidates have met the requirements of these checks.

#### **Admissions procedures**

Applications forms are available online and from the AOR administrator. Candidates submit their completed applications, which will need to include two school references (one must be from the candidate's current school/setting) to admissions in Registry. Registry checks qualifications and then passes the applications to the AOR administrator who subsequently hands them to the appropriate AOR coordinator; Primary or Secondary.

The interviews will always be conducted in pairs for calibration and moderation purposes. The AOR coordinator(s), with the help of another UW Tutor if appropriate (a stage/subject specialist in Secondary) will scrutinise the application to ensure that all entry criteria have been satisfied.

Following short-listing, candidates are invited to the first stage interview which is online and part of the Primary and Secondary departments' usual interviewing processes. This will be with the AO coordinator(s) and where appropriate, other UW tutors. This interview includes; a discussion around the candidate's previous and current teaching experience, an initial check of audits (see section 16) which are sent out with the interview invite and the nomination of a colleague in the school/setting suitable for the AO advocate role.

If successful at this stage, the candidates move to the second stage interview which is in the school/setting where they will be assessed and with the AO advocate present. This interview includes; a joint lesson observation and a second check of the candidate's audits. At this point, if candidates have provided evidence that they can meet all of the Teachers' Standards, the other associated capabilities, are seen to demonstrate this in practice, and the school/setting can meet the requirements of the partnership agreement, the assessment period can commence.

The assessment period of no longer than 12 weeks can begin at various points of the year as long as it can be guaranteed by the school/setting that the AO teacher will be provided with at least a 50% timetable (not exceeding 80%) in the required age ranges and subjects and across a range of abilities.

Some candidates may be asked to meet certain conditions or provide further evidence before they can progress to the second stage of the interview process and/or the assessment period.

### **Admissions/selection criteria**

During the admissions and interview process, candidates will be expected to:

1. Provide evidence of two or more years' experience teaching in at least two schools/settings within the application form
2. Provide evidence of planning, teaching and assessing whole classes across two key stages in the required age ranges and subjects during the initial interview
3. Demonstrate their wider professional knowledge and responsibilities during the initial interview
4. Demonstrate suitable subject knowledge in discussion with UW tutors during interviews and other associated tasks
5. Exhibit the attributes and qualities desirable in a teacher throughout the interview process
6. Exhibit criticality and reflection when questioned about their teaching experience throughout the interview process
7. Demonstrate various intellectual and academic capabilities (English & mathematics) during interview tasks e.g. use of correct spelling and punctuation and speaking, listening and communicating using standard English grammar
8. Show an understanding of key government agendas appropriate to the age ranges and context of the pupils in their charge throughout the interview process
9. Demonstrate they are capable of meeting all of the Teachers' Standards (DfE, 2013)
10. Meet any conditions placed upon them prior to commencing the assessment period including qualifications and safeguarding requirements.

### **Selection process**

The following audits are completed by candidates as part of the selection process to determine their suitability for the programme:

- Meeting the Teachers' Standards self-audit
- Subject knowledge self-audit (for secondary subjects only)

(Audits with accompanying evidence from across two key stages are shared via the admissions portal)

The first online interview provides the opportunity for AOR Coordinators and UW tutors to check the suitability of the AO candidate's previous teaching experience and their audits (above). If successful at this stage, the appropriate advice and time can be given to the AO candidate to prepare for the second interview.

The second interview within the school/setting, is another opportunity to check any updates to the AO candidate's audits and any additional tasks set from the first interview. It is also when the practical assessment (a lesson observation) takes place, verifying aspects of the evidence provided by the candidate, against the Teachers' Standards.

#### **14. Programme structures and requirements**

The assessment period is work-based with no requirement for AO teachers to attend sessions at the university. Attendance at the school/setting during the assessment period will be in accordance with AO teacher's school/setting.

During the assessment period, AO teachers must have responsibility for planning, teaching and assessing the curriculum and examination content (where applicable). The assessment period also needs to be completed consecutively in the same academic year.

#### **15. Programme management**

As set out in the partnership agreement, the AOR is managed by the AOR coordinator(s) from UW, who are experienced leaders across ITT (Initial Teacher Training). They have overall responsibility for recruitment, assessment and quality assurance processes.

If appropriate the route will be supported by highly experienced UW tutors in the relevant age ranges and subjects. They will have responsibility for the age and subject-specific assessment of AO teachers during the recruitment and assessment periods, and for providing guidance to AO advocates and AO teachers if required.

AO teachers will need the support of their school/setting in accordance with the partnership agreement which sets out its expectations including:

- Ensuring that AO teachers have a minimum of 50% and a maximum of 80% of a class teacher's timetable in the relevant age ranges and subjects
- Making a strong commitment to supporting the AO advocate in maintaining the assessment processes during the assessment period
- Ensuring that time is provided for the AO advocate and AO teacher to meet throughout the assessment period for the AO advocate to provide written and verbal feedback on the Teachers' Standards

AO advocates make a commitment to maintaining the AOR assessment processes in their school/setting during the assessment period. This includes:

- Observing and monitoring the practice of the AO teacher on a fortnightly basis providing written and verbal feedback on lessons observed
- Arranging regular discussion and feedback sessions to review the enhancement of the AO teacher's continued evidence against the Teachers' Standards

The programme is also supported by an AOR administrator. A full list of roles and responsibilities can be found in the Partnership agreement.

The AO Coordinator will report to the Head of Institute, the Partnership Lead and the relevant Partnership Governance Board, who will meet three times per year to monitor the success of the partnership and inform future developments. The AOR will be reviewed as part of the relevant department's (Primary or Secondary) PGCE AER.

## **16. Programme assessment**

A series of robust assessments are used for selection, formative and summative purposes. Assessments are designed for accuracy and consistency but without unnecessary burden for AO teachers.

Formative assessment methods include lesson observations, an Evidence Enhancement Plan (EEP), review meetings and self-reflections. These feed into the summative assessment and therefore must be completed.

Summative assessments methods include lesson observations, a Pebblepad portfolio which includes a recommendation for QTS report and a viva.

AO teachers must successfully complete all assessments in order to be recommended for QTS.

### **Assessment criteria**

AO teachers will:

#### **PART ONE: TEACHING**

1. Set high expectations which inspire, motivate and challenge pupils
2. Promote good progress and outcomes by pupils
3. Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge
4. Plan and teach well-structured lessons
5. Adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils
6. Make accurate and productive use of assessment
7. Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe learning environment
8. Fulfil wider professional responsibilities

#### **PART TWO: PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT**

1. Uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school.
2. Have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach, and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.
3. Have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

[Teachers' Standards \(DfE, 2013\) – hyperlink](#)

Continue to demonstrate intellectual and academic capabilities in the following English and mathematics areas:

1. Speaking, listening and communicating using standard English grammar, clear pronunciation, relevant vocabulary.

2. Reading fluently and with good understanding.
  3. Writing with high standards of clarity, accuracy, legibility and coherence.
  4. Use of correct spelling and punctuation.
  5. Interpretation and understanding of data, statistics and graphs.
  6. Completing mathematical calculations with whole numbers, fractions, decimals and percentages fluently.
- (AOR: criteria and supporting advice, DfE, 2023)

## **Assessment process**

### **Formative**

The observation during the second interview informs an Evidence Enhancement Plan (EEP) for the AO teacher's assessment period. The EEP will be shared with the AO teacher and AO advocate so that opportunities to enhance evidence of certain Teachers' Standards can be identified.

AO advocates should observe AO teachers 5 times during the assessment period. This is not only to provide further evidence for the summative portfolio (see below for 'Summative' assessments), but for continued professional development. AO advocates should also meet with the AO teacher bi-weekly to review the EEP and portfolio, providing guidance and support.

AO teachers will be required to complete ongoing tasks related to the Teachers' Standards for their EEP and portfolio, all adding to the evidence verifying their capabilities.

### **Summative**

As mentioned above, the AO advocate will observe the AO teacher 6 times during the assessment period. This will evidence that the AO teacher continues to meet the Teacher's' Standards.

The final assessment takes place in the school/setting with the AO coordinator(s), UW tutor (where appropriate) and AO advocate conducting a joint lesson observation. There is then a review of the AO teacher's portfolio and a Viva with the AO teacher to discuss their achievements against the Teachers' Standards. The AO advocate will be invited to take part in the Viva process, though they do not have to.

A recommendation for QTS report is then completed by the AO coordinator(s) or UW tutor.

AO candidates will be informed of the assessment strategy and all assessment procedures at interview with details also set out in the AOR handbook. Procedures can be discussed further during tutorials with the AO coordinator(s) or UW tutor which can be requested during the assessment period.

Table 2 AOR indicative assessment strategy if the AO teacher is ready for their final assessment at week 10.

| Assessment methods<br>Formative/ <b>Summative</b>                             | Selection | Formal assessment period |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |       |       |       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|
|                                                                               |           | Wk 1                     | Wk 2 | Wk 3 | Wk 4 | Wk 5 | Wk 6 | Wk 7 | Wk 8 | Wk 9 | Wk 10 | Wk 11 | Wk 12 |
| Subject Knowledge Audit                                                       | ✓         |                          |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |       |       |       |
| Meeting the Teachers' Standards Audit (including evidence)                    | ✓         |                          |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |       |       |       |
| Lesson observations                                                           | ✓         |                          | ✓    |      | ✓    |      | ✓    |      | ✓    |      | ✓     | ✓     |       |
| Evidence Enhancement Plan issued/reviewed                                     | ✓         |                          |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | ✓     |       |       |
| Review meetings                                                               |           | ✓                        |      | ✓    |      | ✓    |      | ✓    |      | ✓    |       | ✓     |       |
| Independent reviews and portfolio updates                                     |           |                          | ✓    |      | ✓    |      | ✓    |      | ✓    |      | ✓     |       |       |
| Intellectual and academic signed letter of competency (English & mathematics) |           |                          |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |       | ✓     |       |
| <b>Portfolio check</b>                                                        |           |                          |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |       | ✓     |       |
| <b>Viva and recommendation report</b>                                         |           |                          |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |       | ✓     |       |

### Arrangements for QAA and moderation

The first online interview is Quality assured and moderated under the Primary and Secondary departments' usual interview processes.

The second interview provides the opportunity for the AOR coordinator(s) and UW tutor (where appropriate) to carry out quality assurance visits of each new partnership school/setting before the formal assessment period is allowed to commence. This visit also provides the opportunity for UW staff to train the AO advocate. Schools/settings and AO advocates are given detailed guidance within the Partnership Handbook before the formal assessment period commences. The quality of the observations, feedback and support that AO advocates provide is also quality assured as the assessment period progresses through the quality assurance of lesson observations and feedback.

Further arrangements are made for external moderation of assessments to ensure consistency and fairness across routes in accordance with the University of Worcester's [assessment policy](#). Further guidance about how moderation works is available within the AO setting handbook.

UW ensures that the programme is compliant with the Assessment only route to QTS: criteria and supporting advice (DfE, 2023).

## 17. Regulation of assessment

The AO coordinator(s) and UW tutor (where appropriate) must be assured that the AO teacher has continually demonstrated the appropriate intellectual and academic capabilities and personal qualities, attitudes, ethics and values to meet the Teachers' Standards by the end of the assessment period.

### Submission of assessment items

- The portfolio of assessment (subject knowledge audit, evidence of meeting the Teachers' standards, intellectual and academic capabilities signed letter of competency, Evidence Enhancement Plan, 6 lesson observations, written reviews/evidence tasks, recommendation for QTS report & UW Career Entry Profile)

It is the responsibility of the AO teacher to ensure that all of the assessment items are included in their Pebblepad portfolio and made available to the AOR coordinator (s) or UW tutor on the agreed due date, which must be within the 12-week assessment period.

### Retrieval of failure

Where an AO teacher fails to provide the necessary evidence in their portfolio of assessment within the 3 month period (12 weeks), or where the AO Coordinator(s) and UW tutor decide that the AO teacher does not fully meet the Teachers' Standards, it should be deemed that the AO teacher has failed the AOR.

### Pause in assessment

In unforeseen and exceptional circumstances, an AO teacher may need to pause their assessment period. This must be agreed by the Primary or Secondary departments' Practice Panel. When the AO teacher's assessment period commences, it should not exceed 12 weeks in total.

### Requirements for Awards

Table 3 Assessment only route to QTS award and requirements

| Award                          | Requirement                                                                                            |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) | In order to be eligible for the award, candidates must meet all of the Teachers' Standards (DfE, 2013) |

AO teachers must also demonstrate competence in other intellectual and academic capabilities (i.e. English and mathematics – see section 13) as set out by the Assessment only route to QTS: criteria and supporting advice (DfE, 2023).

**Please note:** This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of the route can be found in associated programme documentation.