

Relationship between the induction training materials for teaching assistants developed by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) for Teaching Assistants

Information for Teaching Assistants

The induction programme is an introduction to your new role and responsibilities as a teaching assistant. It identifies the skills and knowledge you will need to develop over time to become a competent practitioner. As and when you develop the required expertise and knowledge you may be interested in achieving a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ). NVQs are awarded to people who have demonstrated that they can work to nationally agreed standards of competence in a particular occupation. The NVQs for teaching assistants (see below) will allow your competence and effectiveness to be formally recognised.

The NVQs for teaching assistants are based on national occupational standards developed by the Local Government National Training Organisation (LGNTO) working closely with teaching assistants and those who manage and support them in school and LEAs. In line with Government policy for education in England, which includes plans to improve training and development opportunities for classroom support staff and the development of new national qualifications, their development also had the support of the Department for Education and Skills (DfES).

The induction programme will provide you with some of the underpinning knowledge and highlight some of the skills you need to demonstrate competent performance at work. A series of maps showing how the induction programmes would contribute to development of the knowledge, understanding and skills needed for an NVQ has been produced. You can use these maps to identify what you should know as a result of attending the course.

Copies of the maps and guidance notes describing what they are and how they can be used are available from the DfES or LGNTO (see contact list below).

The induction programme was not designed to provide all of the knowledge and skills needed to achieve an NVQ. The gap between the induction programme and the national occupational standards that form the basis of the relevant NVQ represents your learning and development needs. This additional learning and development may be gained from experience at work and/or attending school-based or externally arranged training events. To gain an NVQ you will need to demonstrate to a qualified assessor that you can work to the required standards. The NVQ assessor will take account of evidence from a range of sources including prior learning and experience.

As you complete the induction course and the projects, and continue working in the school, you will be able to build up a significant body of evidence for assessment against the relevant national occupational standards. Some of this evidence may count towards your achievement of an NVQ. Keeping a journal or reflective diary of what you do on the induction programme, other training programmes and in school is a good way of recording your progress towards meeting the requirements of the NVQ.

It is important that where written records, including your journal or reflective diary, may be used later as evidence for NVQ assessment, the records are dated and signed off as being a true record of your own work by an expert witness, e.g. your mentor or the class teacher. The evidence can then be cross referenced to the relevant standards and kept within your professional development portfolio. The maps show where evidence may be generated from course activities and the range of units to which such evidence may contribute.

It is well worth developing a portfolio of evidence even if you have no immediate intention of working towards an NVQ. If you subsequently decide that you want to complete an NVQ (or some units towards an NVQ), you can, at some time in the future, present your evidence

for assessment. The shelf life of evidence depends on the skills and/or knowledge being assessed. For example, IT skills/knowledge may become obsolete very quickly but skills/knowledge relating to liaising with parents may remain relevant for some time. Evidence cannot therefore be judged by a prescribed time limit. Only evidence which reflects your skill/knowledge at the time the NVQ assessment takes place will be accepted for achievement of NVQ units.

Details of the NVQs for teaching assistants are given below. If you are interested in taking an NVQ you should contact an Awarding Body for further guidance about what is involved.

National Vocational Qualifications for Teaching Assistants

The NVQs for teaching assistants are available at levels 2 and 3. The level 2 is designed to be applicable to teaching assistants whose responsibilities at work are limited in scope. The level 3 is suitable for those whose working role calls for competence across a varied range of responsibilities. Note that it is your job role that determines which of the NVQs would be suitable for you. There is no requirement to complete level 2 before doing the level 3 NVQ.

Within the NVQ structure, a unit can be *mandatory* - which means that all candidates must achieve it to gain the full qualification, or *optional*. Candidates seeking the full NVQ must take the required number of optional units and comply with any rules governing the choice of these units. Within these rules, the choice of which optional units to select is a matter of candidate and employer choice.

The mandatory plus options approach has been used for the NVQ for teaching assistants at both levels 2 and 3. Candidates taking the level 2 award have to achieve four mandatory units and a further three units selected from the group of optional units. There are no rules governing the choice of optional units although employment expectations are likely to make some more relevant than others, e.g. most teaching assistants will be involved in supporting literacy and numeracy and would use the relevant optional unit to demonstrate their competence in this important aspect of their job role.

Candidates taking the level 3 award have to achieve a total of ten units, four of which are mandatory. A further six units must then be selected from across four sets of optional units. The option sets are designed to ensure that all candidates have a breadth of skills and knowledge covering all aspects of competent performance. At least one unit must be selected from each of the option sets. A further two optional units are required and these can be selected from any of the remaining optional units. Again, employment expectations will determine to a large extent which of the optional units are relevant to an individual candidate and the optional units for supporting literacy and numeracy development are likely to be applicable to most.

Units of competence can be separately certificated within the NVQ system. This means you can work towards a qualification at your own pace, providing evidence and gaining certificates for one unit at a time, if that is your preference. Once the required number and type of units specified for the qualification have been achieved, a full NVQ certificate is awarded.

The structures of the level 2 and level 3 NVQs for teaching assistants are shown below.

NVQ Level 2 for Teaching Assistants

The NVQ level 2 requires the achievement of **seven** units of competence from the National Occupational Standards.

Mandatory units

Candidates must achieve all **FOUR** mandatory units.

- 2-1 Help with classroom resources and records
- 2-2 Help with the care and support of pupils
- 2-3 Provide support for learning activities
- 2-4 Provide effective support for your colleagues

Optional units

Candidates select **THREE** units from the following option choices.

- 2-5 Support literacy and numeracy activities in the classroom
- 3-1 Contribute to the management of pupil behaviour
- 3-10 Support the maintenance of pupil safety and security
- 3-11 Contribute to the health and well-being of pupils
- 3-17 Support the use of ICT in the classroom

NVQ Level 3 for Teaching Assistants

The NVQ level 3 requires the achievement of **ten** units of competence from the National Occupational Standards.

Mandatory units

Candidates must achieve all **FOUR** mandatory units.

- 3-1 Contribute to the management of pupil behaviour
- 3-2 Establish and maintain relationships with individual pupils and groups
- 3-3 Support pupils during learning activities
- 3-4 Review and develop your own professional practice

Optional units

Candidates select **SIX** units from the following option choices. The selection must include **ONE** unit from each of groups A, B, C and D, plus any **TWO** others.

Set A

- 3-5 Assist in preparing and maintaining the learning environment
- 3-6 Contribute to maintaining pupil records
- 3-7 Observe and report on pupil performance
- 3-8 Contribute to the planning and evaluation of learning activities

Set B

- 3-9 Promote pupil's social and emotional development
- 3-10 Support the maintenance of pupil safety and security
- 3-11 Contribute to the health and well-being of pupils
- 3-12 Provide support for bilingual/multilingual pupils
- 3-13 Support pupils with communication and interaction difficulties
- 3-14 Support pupils with cognition and learning difficulties
- 3-15 Support pupils with behavioural, emotional and social development needs
- 3-16 Provide support for pupils with sensory and/or physical impairment

Set C

- 3-17 Support the use of ICT in the classroom
- 3-18 Help pupils to develop their literacy skills
- 3-19 Help pupils to develop their numeracy skills
- 3-20 Help pupils to access the curriculum

Set D

- 3-21 Support the development and effectiveness of work teams
- 3-22 Develop and maintain working relationships with other professionals
- 3-23 Liaise effectively with parents

Each of the units within the NVQs for teaching assistants is made up of two or more standards of competence. Each standard represents a sub-division of the role addressed by the unit as a whole.

Each standard is made up of three components:

- **performance indicators** giving details of what someone has to do to carry out that aspect of work to best practice expectations. For someone to be competent, their work must consistently match up to all the performance indicators for the standard. Assessment in the NVQ is about gathering evidence to demonstrate that this is indeed the case.
- the **knowledge base** which defines the knowledge and understanding needed for successful performance of the actions described by the performance indicators. Assessment for an NVQ is about gathering evidence to demonstrate that you 'own' and use this knowledge base to guide your actions.
- the **scope** describing the range of contexts to which the standard applies. Assessment in the NVQ is about gathering evidence to prove that you are capable of working to the required quality across the different contexts.

The evidence generated as a result of working through the induction training materials may contribute to the NVQ units to some extent. For example, there are strong links between the training materials and Unit 3-18 Help pupils to develop their literacy skills but very few links to unit 3-17 Support the use of ICT in the classroom. The maps and guidance notes provide further information about the mapping results and how to use them.

Further guidance

The mapping between the DfES induction programmes for teaching assistants and the national occupational standards for teaching assistants was carried out to show how the training programmes may contribute to development of the knowledge, understanding and skills needed for an NVQ. As stated above, the induction programmes were not specifically designed to support NVQ programmes nor to generate evidence to support assessment for an NVQ or NVQ units and further evidence of competence will be required. If you are interested in doing either the level 2 or level 3 NVQ for teaching assistants you are strongly advised to contact an Awarding Body for further information and guidance on evidence requirements and assessment processes and procedures.

If you decide to work towards an NVQ you need to register with a centre approved by an Awarding Body to offer the relevant NVQ. Your LEA Adviser or trainer should be able to tell you what, if any, arrangements the LEA has made for providing access to the NVQs. Alternatively details of approved centres in your locality can be obtained from the Awarding Bodies listed below.

Once registered with an approved centre, a qualified assessor will help you to review your relevant experience and prior learning and help you to identify which pieces of your evidence meet the national occupational standards and can be accepted for your NVQ. He or she will also agree an assessment plan with you and make sure that you fully understand when and how assessments will be carried out.

Useful Contacts

Awarding Bodies

The following Awarding Bodies offer the NVQs for teaching assistants:

City and Guilds

1 Giltspur Street
London
EC1A 9DD

Tel: 020 7294 2800
Fax: 020 7294 2400
e-mail: enquiry@city-and-guilds.co.uk

Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE)

8 Chequer Street
St Albans
Herts
AL1 3XZ

Tel: 01727 847636
Fax: 01727 867609
e-mail: info@cache.org.uk

Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR)

Westwood Way
Coventry
CV4 8JQ

Tel: 024 7647 0033
Fax: 024 7642 1944
e-mail: cib@ocr.org.uk

Department for Education and Skills

Teaching Assistants and School Support Team
School Workforce Unit
Department for Education and Skills

Area 6B
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

Tel: 0207 925 5907
Fax: 0207 925 6699
e-mail: assistants.teaching@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

Copies of the maps showing the links between the induction training materials and the national occupational standards are available by accessing the DfES web site www.teachernet.gov.uk and typing "teaching assistants" into the search engine.

Local Government National Training Organisation

Local Government National Training Organisation

Layden House
76-86 Turnmill Street
London
EC1M 5LG

Tel: 0207 296 6708
Fax: 0207 296 6666
e-mail: lynne.butler@lg-employers.gov.uk

Information about the NVQs including copies of the national occupational standards for teaching assistants are available on the LGNTO web site www.lgnto.gov.uk.