

# Maintaining Highly Accomplished or Lead Teacher Accreditation Procedure

Information for K-12 teachers

July 2023

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# Information for teachers

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## Why must Highly Accomplished or Lead Teachers maintain their accreditation?

As a Highly Accomplished or Lead Teacher (HALT) you need to continue to demonstrate exemplary teaching practices that impact the learning of students and your colleagues.

You will maintain your accreditation by continuing to demonstrate, model, and lead innovative teaching and learning practices in relation to all of the applicable Standards.

NESA oversees the system of accreditation and recognition of teachers' professional capacity against the [Australian Professional Standards for Teachers \(the Standards\)](#) which includes the requirements and processes for maintaining HALT accreditation.

## How long is an accreditation maintenance cycle?

<b>Full-time</b>	5 years
<b>Casual or part-time</b>	7 years

Teachers employed on a full-time basis have five years to complete maintenance requirements.

Teachers employed on a casual or part-time basis have seven years to complete maintenance requirements, in recognition of the nature of their employment. Teachers can provide evidence of employment to NESA to adjust their timeframe from five to seven years.

You are required to be engaged in the delivery of curriculum and assessment in a school for a period of time during your maintenance period. There is no requirement for a specified number of hours or teaching load.

These procedures should be read in conjunction with your employer's internal procedures.

All teachers must meet the conditions of accreditation set out in [Section 1 of the NSW Teacher Accreditation Manual](#) (the TA Manual) to become and remain accredited in NSW. Teachers accredited at HALT must also meet the conditions for maintaining HALT accreditation set out in [Section 7](#) of the TA Manual.

# Overview of the maintenance of Highly Accomplished or Lead Teacher accreditation

## At a glance



## 1. Demonstrate consistent practice at Highly Accomplished or Lead Teacher

Ensure your teaching practice continues to meet the Standards for [Highly Accomplished](#) or [Lead Teacher](#) by performing a range of professional activities and practices in the normal course of your work, such as:

- critical reflection of your own practice
- sharing of exemplary teaching practices and support of the professional growth of colleagues
- implementing evidence-based best practices that maximise learning opportunities for students
- ongoing engagement in professional development
- delivery of curriculum and assessment in a school.

### Casual teacher tips

If you are a casual teacher, you should approach the principal at the school where you most often teach to seek support for meeting your maintenance requirements. You will need to actively participate in relevant professional activities.

You can download your [HALT Maintenance of Accreditation Report](#) from the NESA website at any time to start recording how you continue to maintain the Standards.

## 2. Meet your professional development requirements

You are responsible for identifying your Professional Development (PD) needs and planning your learning throughout your maintenance period. [Guidelines](#) to help plan your PD can be found on the NESA website.

### The total of your PD hours must be at least 100 hours

By the end of your maintenance period you must have completed a minimum of 100 hours of PD at your career stage or above.

## Complete at least 20 hours of NESA Accredited PD across each of the mandatory priority areas

You must complete and evaluate in your NESA online account (eTAMS) at least 20 hours of NESA Accredited PD which must include PD in each of the mandatory [priority areas](#). Accredited PD is aligned to the four priority areas set out by the NSW Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning. These are:

- delivery and assessment of NSW Curriculum
- student mental health
- students with disability
- Aboriginal education and supporting Aboriginal students.

## Complete a minimum of 20 hours of professional commitment activities

You must complete a minimum of 20 hours of professional commitment activities. Professional commitment activities must only include activities where you directly mentor or support other teachers, including pre-service teachers. Professional commitment activities may include:

- mentoring or coaching teachers or teacher education students
- engaging with teacher education students, provisionally/conditionally accredited teachers or Proficient Teachers to improve their teaching practice
- leading PD or educational forums in a school or through professional teaching associations or networks
- developing and implementing projects, including research, in schools or the wider education community
- writing for publications that contribute to professional knowledge and discussion for teachers.

## Meeting the remainder of your PD requirements

The balance of the 100 hours can include any combination of NESA Accredited PD or Elective PD or professional commitment activities.

You can refer to the list of appropriate activities that may be recorded as Elective PD published on the [NESA website](#). Examples of Elective PD which may align to nominated Standard Descriptors at the higher levels include activities such as:

- engaging in or leading PD related to educational leadership
- relevant further study or professional commitment activities.

## Record your PD

You must retain a record of any completed Elective PD and/or professional commitment activities that captures the date completed, the Standard Descriptors addressed and the duration of the activity or course. You must keep the record for 12 months after you submit your maintenance. An optional log template can be found on our [website](#).

As part of NESA's quality assurance processes NESA will conduct random audits of teachers' Elective PD records after they have submitted their maintenance. If you are audited, you will need to provide your record within 28 days. More details on NESAs auditing processes can be found on [our website](#).

## 3. Final steps in the last three months of each maintenance period

### Complete your HALT Maintenance of Accreditation Report

- Your [HALT Maintenance of Accreditation Report](#) must be submitted to your principal within the final three months of your maintenance period
- If you have not already, download your [HALT Maintenance of Accreditation Report](#) from the NESA website.

Your report needs to:

- include an overview of the context and background of your practice that demonstrates impact on student learning outcomes and the practice of your colleagues
- include at least three examples of impact on learning outcomes of students and impact on the practice of colleagues.

In your report you must make sure that you describe how your practice has been informed and improved by professional development activities over the maintenance period.

The maintenance report you write must be between 2500 and 5000 words in total.

You must sign, date, and keep a copy of the report.

### Include three to five referees in your report

You will need to include three to five referees with your report.

- The principal you currently work with must be included as one of your referees.
- The other referees must be colleagues who can attest that you have applied current knowledge and depth of practice throughout your maintenance period. You should ensure that you have sought their agreement to being a referee and that they understand what is required.
- NESA will contact at least one of your referees before making the accreditation decision.

### Submit your report to your principal

You can submit your maintenance to your principal if you have met all the requirements.

You should submit the HALT Maintenance of Accreditation Report to your principal by email.

Your principal must review the report and attest that:

- your maintenance report is an accurate reflection of your teaching practice and
- your ongoing performance is satisfactory.

Your principal will email a signed copy of your report to NESA at [HALenquiry@nesa.nsw.edu.au](mailto:HALenquiry@nesa.nsw.edu.au) for an accreditation decision.

## 4. NESA makes the accreditation decision

The final part of the process is the accreditation decision, which is made by NESA, within 28 days of receiving your principal's attestation. NESA's decision will be based on:

- your completed [HALT Maintenance of Accreditation Report](#)

- your principal's attestation
- your record of NESAs Accredited PD in eTAMS.

## Starting a new maintenance period

You will be notified of the accreditation decision by email. Where NESAs decides that you have maintained your accreditation, you will start a new maintenance period the day after your current period ends.

## 'What if' scenarios for teachers

### What if I am a principal maintaining accreditation at HALT?

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You must still meet the requirements for maintenance and complete a HALT Maintenance of Accreditation Report. You cannot self-attest or act as a referee on your own behalf.

If your line manager is accredited at Proficient Teacher or above they can review the report and attest that:

- your maintenance report is an accurate reflection of your teaching practice and
- your ongoing performance is satisfactory.

They will also act as one of your referees and you should ensure they understand what may be asked of them.

Where your line manager is not accredited, [contact](#) NESAs.

### What if my principal identifies an issue(s) with my practice that may impact my accreditation?

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The principal must inform you and your employer in writing within 28 days of becoming aware of any issue(s).

- Work with your principal to resolve the issue(s) they have identified.

The principal can attest at any time during your maintenance period that your practice does not meet the Standards for Highly Accomplished or Lead Teacher and advise NESAs.

### What if I am due to submit my maintenance and I have not met my PD requirements?

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There are several things that you can do in this situation, including:

- discuss your professional development goals with your principal and develop a plan
- check the [NESAs website](#) for PD courses
- engage in NESAs Accredited and/or Elective PD to meet the [PD requirements](#).

You can apply to NESAs for an extension to your timeframe in certain circumstances.

You can do this in the final six months before your due date, providing evidence of the grounds for your extension request.

Grounds for an extension of a teacher's accreditation timeframe include:

- illness and misadventure
- carer responsibilities

- undertaking further study; or
- other applicable professional or individual circumstances.

## **What if my principal intends to attest that my performance is unsatisfactory and/or my Report does not accurately reflect my practice at HALT?**

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If you have worked at the school for less than three months your principal must contact your previous school (subject to your consent) before attesting that you have not maintained your practice in relation to the Standards.

You will receive a written notification from your principal outlining the reason(s) and any Standard Descriptors that you have not met. You have the right to respond to the written notice within 28 days and address the issues identified.

The principal will review your written response and make an attestation.

NESA will review all relevant documentation and make an accreditation decision and advise you of its decision.

## **What if my principal attests that my performance is unsatisfactory and/or my Report does not accurately reflect my practice at HALT?**

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If your principal attests that your performance has been unsatisfactory and/or your Report does not reflect practice at the relevant career level of HALT:

- NESA will contact all of your nominated referees
- NESA will contact you and your principal, requesting further information and documentation to inform their decision
- NESA will review all relevant documentation and make an accreditation decision within 28 days of the attestation and advise you of the decision.

## **What if NESA has made the decision that I have not maintained accreditation at HALT?**

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If NESA decides that you have not maintained your practice at HALT and you still have time left in your maintenance timeframe, you have a number of options:

- You may choose to stop maintaining accreditation at HALT and return to accreditation at Proficient Teacher. You must then meet the maintenance requirements at Proficient Teacher and you must notify NESA in writing of your decision. Your maintenance end date will not change.
- You can resubmit your HALT maintenance to a different principal who you have worked with during your maintenance period to consider your report.
- If you are close to, or have reached, the end of your maximum timeframe you may have grounds to apply to NESA for an [extension](#).

If you have reached the end of your maintenance timeframe and NESA finds that you have failed to maintain your accreditation, NESA will issue a 14 days' written notice of an intention to suspend your HALT accreditation. (The 14 days' written notice period includes school holidays and employer shutdown periods.)

A NESA officer will provide you with further advice about next steps.

You can apply to NESA for an [internal review](#) of a decision that you have not maintained your accreditation.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the internal review, you can apply to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT) for a review of NESA's decision.

## What if my principal is unable to make an attestation about my practice at HALT?

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In limited circumstances your principal will advise NESA that they are unable to make an attestation about your HALT accreditation. The circumstances are:

- you have not worked in the school for long enough to allow the principal to confidently make a judgement about your practice and/or
- information provided by your previous school (where applicable and subject to consent from you) has not assisted the principal in making a valid and reliable judgement.

If you have worked at the school for less than three months your principal must contact your previous school (subject to your consent) before recording that they are unable to make an attestation about your practice. If you do not give consent for your principal to contact your previous principal, your principal is likely to make an attestation that they 'are unable to make an attestation'.

If the principal is unable to make an accreditation attestation, they will send you a written notice about this.

You should read the comments and discuss how you can address the reasons the principal has given for not being able to make an attestation.

You will be able to resubmit your report within your timeframe, or you can contact NESA for further advice.

If you are close to, or have reached, the end of your maximum timeframe you may have grounds to apply to NESA for an [extension](#).

## Can I nominate to return to a lower level of teacher accreditation?

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You can return to Proficient Teacher level at any stage, (or to Highly Accomplished Teacher in the case of Lead Teachers who were previously accredited at Highly Accomplished Teacher). To return to a lower level of accreditation, you must advise NESA in writing.

When you return to a lower level of accreditation, your maintenance period end date will not change. You must continue to meet the maintenance of accreditation requirements for the relevant level of accreditation.

## Additional resources

- [Elective Professional Development log template](#)
- [NESA Accredited PD](#)
- [Meeting Elective PD requirements](#)



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# NSW Education Standards Authority

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NSW Education Standards Authority  
GPO Box 5300  
Sydney NSW 2001  
Australia

Teacher Accreditation  
Phone: 1300 739 338  
Email: [contactus@nesa.nsw.edu.au](mailto:contactus@nesa.nsw.edu.au)  
[educationstandards.nsw.edu.au](http://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au)

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