

Applying for Highly Accomplished or Lead Teacher Accreditation Procedure

Information for principals and service directors

November 2022

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Information for principals/service directors

What is Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher accreditation?

Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher (HALT) accreditation is a voluntary national certification which recognises teaching practice which meets the [Australian Professional Standards for Teachers \(the Standards\)](#) at the relevant HALT career stage.

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

HALT accreditation recognises and promotes the development of collaborative practice and supports teachers to continually reflect upon and improve their practice and the practice of colleagues.

How do teachers apply for HALT accreditation?

Applying for HALT accreditation involves teachers collecting, annotating and submitting documentary evidence of their teaching practice for every Standard Descriptor aligned to the Highly Accomplished or Lead Teacher level of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (the [Standards](#)).

This evidence is submitted across three modules with feedback from NESA-trained HALT Assessors given for each module to guide and support a teacher's application.

These procedures should be read in conjunction with your employer's internal procedures and the principal's/service director's guide [HALT Accreditation – Role of the Principal/Service Director \(2022\)](#). This document has information on the role of principals and service directors in the higher levels of accreditation application process.

Overview of the principal's/service director's role in supporting teachers who are applying for Highly Accomplished or Lead Teacher accreditation

At a glance



Early childhood teachers

If there is no service director accredited at Proficient Teacher level or above in an early childhood service, the HALT applicant should contact NESA for further advice.

1. Verify eligibility and provide a supportive environment

You have a role to verify the applicant's eligibility to apply

To be eligible to apply for HALT applicants must be:

- an Australian citizen or permanent resident
- accredited at Proficient Teacher or above
- assessed as satisfactory in two of their most recent annual performance assessments (for HA) or three annual performance assessments (for LT).

Discuss readiness and verify eligibility

Discuss with the teacher their intention and readiness to apply for HALT accreditation and the level of accreditation appropriate to them.

The teacher must open a HALT application in their NESA online account (eTAMS) and then complete the mandatory HALT Orientation Course. Once they have done this, you will be notified in your NESA online account (eTAMS) to verify:

- that they have discussed with you their intention to apply and
- their eligibility.

In your discussion, you can encourage and support the teacher to attend a [NESA workshop](#) for HALT applicants.

You can also learn more about how to support HALT applicants by attending a NESA [information session](#) for principals/service directors on HALT accreditation.

Casual teachers

Casual or part-time teachers who work across several schools/services will need to nominate the principal/service director of one school/service to verify their eligibility.

Provide a supportive environment

Principals/service directors play a crucial role in establishing and maintaining a supportive professional environment for HALT applicants. You may consider how organisational structures, roles and responsibilities in your school/service provide opportunities that support teachers to engage in the levels of practice identified by the Standards for HALT accreditation.

HALT accreditation is a deeply reflective professional undertaking for each applicant and is best enabled by a collaborative professional growth culture.

If the applicant has completed the online preliminary assessment, you may:

- encourage them to reflect on their practice against the Standards for either Highly Accomplished or Lead Teacher and select the appropriate level, and
- identify areas within the Standards where teaching practice may require further development.

2. Internal observation of practice

You (or your delegate) will be required to complete at least one internal observation of the applicant teaching students/children in a classroom/learning environment.

NESA recommends that you complete the internal observation report(s) on NESA's template: [Principal/Service Director observing the applicant: internal observation of applicant's practice.](#)

Apply a four-step process to observations

NESA recommends that you follow the [four-step process](#) for the internal observations of practice:

1. Pre-observation reflection by the teacher

The applicant will consider their practice and reflect on which Standard Descriptors they intend to be the focus for observation.

2. Pre-observation discussion between you and the teacher

At this discussion you will come to an agreed understanding about which Standard Descriptors at the relevant career stage will be observed and agree how the practice and the impact will be made visible during the internal observation.

3. Internal observation of teaching practice

You will record visible examples of teaching practice, and the impact of practice, that align to the agreed Standard Descriptors.

4. Post-observation discussion and feedback

You will discuss the evidence demonstrating the agreed Standard Descriptors you have collected in relation to what you saw and heard during the observation.

The observation report

When writing the observation report, you should:

- identify which Standard Descriptors were the focus of the observation
- describe the practice you observed and the applicant's behaviour or actions, and
- include your evaluative comments about the observed teaching practice and impact in relation to the selected Standard Descriptors. You may also comment on additional Standard Descriptors if observed.

3. Site Visit

The Site Visit's purpose

NESA will organise an External Assessor to conduct the Site Visit following a request by the teacher. The External Assessor is trained by NESA to provide an independent, objective review of the teachers teaching practice against the Standards at the nominated career stage. The Site Visit is an opportunity for the teacher to demonstrate nominated Standard Descriptors through teaching and, where relevant, non-teaching sessions.

Two pathways to complete a Site Visit

There are two pathways for a teacher to complete a Site Visit:

- onsite
- recorded.

The requirements for both are the same, and you should help the teacher decide which pathway is appropriate.

You should support the teacher's plan/organisation of their Site Visit and be aware of the schedule for the day.

The Site Visit process

During the Site Visit the External Assessor:

- will observe three sessions of practice, two of which must be of the applicant teaching students/children. All the sessions must occur on the same day.
- will have a professional discussion with the applicant to provide feedback on the observation of their practice aligned to the nominated Standard Descriptors
- may engage in a professional discussion with up to two colleagues if the applicant has nominated them
- will conduct a structured interview of up to 30 minutes with you. You should review the [interview questions](#) to prepare for the discussion. In the case of a recorded observation, the External Assessor will contact you to arrange a suitable time to complete the interview.

Early childhood teachers

In an early childhood context an applicant can nominate a teacher colleague to participate in the professional discussion with the External Assessor who is from their same service, employer or a teacher in their professional network who has first-hand knowledge of the applicant's teaching practice and impact.

4. NESA makes the accreditation decision

Each of the three modules is assessed by NESA-trained HALT Assessors. Principals/service directors have no responsibility for assessing modules.

NESA will make the accreditation decision based on the three HALT Module Reports and the External Assessor's Site Visit Report.

The accreditation decision is made by NESA within 28 days of the teacher submitting their third module (or within 28 days of their revisions, if applicable). If the teacher's application is successful, the teacher, you and the teacher's employer will be notified of the accreditation decision.

If NESA accredits the teacher at Highly Accomplished or Lead Teacher, NESA will issue a certificate to them and they will start their first maintenance period.

Recognition and support

We encourage you to recognise and share the teacher's achievement of HALT accreditation within your school/service to cultivate a culture of quality teaching and professional excellence.

The teacher will now begin to maintain accreditation at Highly Accomplished or Lead Teacher. You will need to provide:

- continued access to opportunities for the teacher to participate in professional activities aligned with their level of accreditation
- opportunities for the teacher to make significant contributions to the professional learning of other teachers and colleagues in the school/service.

‘What if’ scenarios for principals/service directors

What if I think the teacher is not a suitable HALT applicant?

Your advice and support is important to the teacher throughout the application process. However, your approval is not required for them to open an application. A teacher may decide to apply for HALT accreditation independent of any advice.

What if I am a principal/service director applying for HALT?

You should contact NESAs for advice on who is appropriate to complete the following:

- verification of your eligibility as an applicant
- internal observation(s)
- interview with the External Assessor during the Site Visit.

What if my availability changes on the day of the Site Visit?

You must contact NESAs at HALenquiry@nesa.nsw.edu.au as soon as practical to make alternative arrangements for your interview. You will need to provide contact details and alternative times to be sent to the External Assessor so that they can contact you by phone. Please note that the alternative interview time needs to be within 48 hours of the day of the Site Visit.

What if the teacher is unsuccessful at achieving Highly Accomplished or Lead Teacher accreditation?

We encourage you to be supportive of the teacher and to discuss with them:

- career path planning and direction
- their qualities, and the advice provided by the HALT Assessors in the module reports
- future accreditation and professional opportunities.

The teacher will remain at their current accredited level and will need to continue to meet the relevant maintenance requirements and timeframes, with the knowledge they may reapply for HALT accreditation at any time.

The teacher may decide to apply to NESAs for an [internal review](#) of a decision to not accredit them.

If they are not satisfied with the outcome of the internal review, they can apply to NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT) for a review of NESAs’s decision to not accredit them.

Additional Resources

[Applicant Guide – Internal Observations \(2022\)](#)

This guide provides advice to applicants about the requirements for internal observations of teaching practice for Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher (HALT) accreditation.

[Site Visit Guide – Applicants \(2022\)](#)

This guide outlines planning, preparing and running a Site Visit to meet the requirements for Highly Accomplished Teacher or Lead Teacher (HALT) accreditation.

[Internal observation report template – Applicant’s observation of a colleague \(2022\)](#)

This template provides a framework for a HALT applicant to report on an observation of a colleague’s teaching practice.

[Internal observation report template – Colleague’s observation of a HALT applicant \(2022\)](#)

This template provides a framework for the colleague of a HALT applicant to report on their observation of the HALT applicant’s teaching practice.

[Referee Guide \(2022\)](#)

This document has information for referees who are submitting statements for a higher levels of accreditation application.

[HALT Accreditation – Role of the Principal/Service Director \(2022\)](#)

This document has information on the role of principals and service directors in the higher levels of accreditation application process.

[Site Visit Guide – External Assessors \(2022\)](#)

This document has information on the role and responsibilities of an External Assessor in the higher levels of accreditation application process.

Fillable forms

[Site Visit – recorded observation schedule template](#)

[Site Visit – on site observation schedule template](#)

[Site Visit session plan template](#)

[Site Visit professional discussion notes template](#)

[Principal or Service Director observing the applicant template](#)

Other

[Australian Professional Standards for Teachers](#)

NSW Education Standards Authority

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Teacher Accreditation
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