

Section 2: Key elements underpinning a professional framework for teaching assistants

2.1 NJC model role profiles for teaching assistants

The career framework in section 4 is based on five levels of teaching assistants, with additional responsibilities at each level, and three levels of additional support needs assistants. While there is some overlap between the two sets of profiles, those for additional support needs assistants are likely to match more closely to jobs in special schools and pupil referral units.

The levels are taken from the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) school support staff model role profiles, published in July 2013. These were developed for use in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The profiles model typical jobs in order to help employers ensure that roles are appropriately graded and remunerated¹.

The role profiles **are**:

- Statements of typical school support staff roles with associated NJC factor evaluations
- Indicative evaluations of the job information described to allow employers and unions to compare their own evaluations with these generic ones.

The profiles **are not**:

- Intended to replace existing job descriptions
- Statements of what ought to be done in schools
- Requirements or recommendations on how employers should organise schools staff
- Intended as 'ready reckoners' that allows a read across from points scores into grade boundaries. Pay structures are a separate issue.

Another important aim of the profiles is to illustrate career pathways for school support staff, hence the reason for them underpinning this career framework.

Extracts from the model profiles have been included in this document. They list:

- Role purpose
- Key duties (additional duties are listed in the full profiles²)
- Indicative knowledge, skills and experience

In the full profiles, additional possible duties under each role are suggested. It is important to note that duties relating to supporting pupils with health care needs are not included in the profiles for teaching assistants 1 to 5. See Appendix 3 for more information.

¹ To find out more about the profiles, the NJC cover circular is available at www.skillsforschools.org.uk/library/role-profiles

Schools wishing to undertake job evaluation using the profiles should initially hold a joint employer/union planning meeting to establish scope.

² The full set of role profiles can be found here: www.skillsforschools.org.uk/library/role-profiles

2.2 National Occupational Standards for Supporting Teaching and Learning

The National Occupational Standards for Supporting Teaching and Learning (NOS STL) form the basis of existing training and qualifications for school support staff. They apply across the UK. The NOS STL were developed by the Teaching Agency (now the National College of Teaching and Leadership) and published in June 2007. The standards describe what support staff need to do, know and understand in their roles. Consultation was carried out across the UK to ensure the standards reflect the occupational roles of all learning support staff.

The NOS STL apply to anyone who provides direct support for teaching and learning in any type of school – primary, secondary or special. The 69 units cover a very broad range of support staff roles, including teaching assistants, cover supervisors, pastoral support, bilingual support, subject support, and special educational needs and additional and behavioural support.

The NOS STL can be used on a standalone basis to inform focused CPD. They are also the basis of the content covered by accredited qualifications for school support staff under the Qualifications and Credit Framework (see section 3.2). The standards can be accessed here:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-occupational-standards-for-supporting-teaching-learning

Another useful document about the National Occupational Standards is 'Discover how standards can transform your school', published by the TDA in 2010: www.skillsforschools.org.uk/file.aspx?id=136

2.1 Essential training

Support staff 'Essential training materials' were developed by the Teaching and Development Agency and are now owned by the National College for Teaching and Leadership. They are available for newly appointed school support staff, staff who have been in post for some time but may benefit from further or refresher training, or for those who are changing role. The materials aim to equip support staff with the knowledge and skills that will enable them to contribute to the school's overall aim of raising educational standards, uphold school policies and provide appropriate and reliable support for the school.

The materials are presented as a series of modules. They have been designed so that they can also be used to support the achievement of Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) qualifications if desired (see section 3.2). There are 11 core modules that will be of interest and use to all support staff, and four optional modules for staff who are directly involved in supporting teaching and learning. The materials can be localised to suit local contexts, needs and delivery methods. The modules include:

- Schools as organisations
- Help and improve own and team practice in schools
- Communication and professional relationships with children and young people and adults
- Equality, diversity and inclusion in work with children and young people
- Maintaining supportive relationships with children and young people
- The development of children and young people
- Support children and young people's health and safety
- Support children and young people's positive behaviour
- Safeguarding
- Introduction to ICT

The additional modules designed for support staff whose role is directly involved in supporting teaching and learning are:

- Supporting learning activities
- Support assessment of learning
- Preparing and maintaining learning environments, and
- Functional skills

The materials can be downloaded here:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/support-staff-essential-training-materials

Section 3: Qualifications

3.1 Generic qualifications

3.1.1 Adult English and maths

In England, the adult literacy, language and numeracy sector uses a five-level system to categorise adult skills. Starting at the bottom, these are Entry Level 1 to 3, Level 1 and Level 2. Wales has taken a similar approach to measuring basic adult skill levels. Scotland and Northern Ireland have, on the other hand, chosen to use international levels as the basis of measuring adult skills. The chart below presents the measures of adult skills together with school and vocational levels used by different parts of the UK:

National Standards for adult literacy and numeracy	School Academic Equivalents		Vocational Equivalents			Approximate International Levels (PIAAC, IALS, ALL)
	England, Wales and Northern Ireland	Scotland	England and Northern Ireland (NQF)	Wales (CQFW)	Scotland (SCQF)	
Level 2	GCSE A*-C		Level 2		Level 5	Level 4
Level 1	GCSE D-G		Level 1		Level 4	Level 3
Entry Level 3	Standards expected of young people at ages	9 to 11	Entry Level		Level 3	Level 2
Entry Level 2		7 to 9			Level 2	Level 1
Entry Level 1		5 to 7			Level 1	Below Level 1
Pre-entry level			Pre Entry			

www.nationalnumeracy.org.uk
©National Numeracy

Functional Skills qualifications in English and maths are available across the five levels (Entry 1 to Level 2) and can be completed in a wide range of college, community and work-based settings. They were designed as the replacement qualifications for Key Skills and Adult Literacy and Adult Numeracy (ALAN) qualifications from September 2012. Key Skills and ALAN at Level 1 and 2 have been phased out. Please note these qualifications are not always accepted as alternatives to GCSEs.³

Functional Skills relate to England only. The UK equivalents are Essential Skills Wales, Core Skills in Scotland and Essential Skills in Northern Ireland.

3.1.2 Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

Functional Skills qualifications in ICT are available across the five levels (Entry 1 to Level 2).

The European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) is a qualification from the British Computer Society which is recognised internationally and enables people to demonstrate their competence in the use of computers and common applications. It can be completed in a learning centre or as a flexible distance learning course.

The Computer Literacy and Information Technology (CLAIT) course is a nationally-recognised qualification. It can be studied at 3 levels - new, plus and advanced.

³ For English and maths resources, see www.skillsforschools.org.uk/evidence-research.aspx?id=124

3.2 Vocational qualifications

3.2.1 What is the Qualification and Credits Framework (QCF)?

The Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) was implemented from September 2010 for the creation and accreditation of qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. School staff qualifications which were previously accredited to the National Qualification Framework (NQF), such as National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs), were redesigned to meet the requirements of the QCF. The QCF qualifications are based on the same National Occupational Standards (see section 2.2) that underpinned NVQs. The QCF includes vocational, work-related and basic skills qualifications. University qualifications (including foundation degrees), GCSEs and A-levels are in separate frameworks (see diagram in Appendix 1). Scotland has its own system - the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF).

3.2.2 How are the qualifications structured?

Qualifications in the QCF are made up of knowledge and competency-based units. Every unit has a credit value that tells you how long, on average, it will take to complete. One credit is based on ten hours of learning and assessment time (whether the learning takes place in a school, college or training centre, in the workplace, or through independent or distance learning). So a 10-credit unit would take on average 100 hours of learning to complete. Each unit and qualification also has a level, between Entry level and level 8, to show how difficult it is. There are three size ranges of qualifications on the QCF:

- Award – for qualifications up to 12 credits in size
- Certificate – for qualifications between 13 and 36 credits
- Diploma – for qualifications of 37 credits or more

Credit for units can be carried forward by learners. Previous learning doesn't have to be repeated in order to achieve a QCF unit in a different context. So, for example, a learner moving from a child-care setting to working in a school may have already achieved one or more units that will contribute to a QCF qualification for supporting teaching and learning in schools.

3.2.3 Offering individual QCF units for CPD purposes

The QCF offers flexibility for awarding credit for individual units as well as whole qualifications. This may be particularly useful where schools (or clusters of schools) have identified a training need common to a large group of staff (e.g. managing challenging behaviour or supporting children with English as an additional language), perhaps through school improvement processes. A training provider could offer a relevant QCF unit which would provide staff with nationally recognised credit for their achievement, and schools with the assurance that the training had been understood and applied. Such an approach might encourage support staff to then go on to achieve full qualifications over time. Units awarded by different awarding organisations can be combined to build up qualifications.

A useful document is 'Guidance for the new qualifications for support staff in schools', available to download here: www.skillsforschools.org.uk/file.aspx?id=77

3.2.4 QCF qualifications for school support staff - summary

The following seven qualifications are available for support staff in schools under the QCF:

Qualification	Description
Level 2 Award in Support Work in Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge-based qualification suitable for all support staff roles in schools. • Develops the knowledge and understanding that all those working in a school setting will need and covers areas such as safeguarding, communication and understanding the school context. • Can be taken by candidates not yet employed in a school, as well as providing initial training or induction for those who are new in post.
Level 2 Certificate in Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For school staff who directly support the teaching and learning of pupils. • Incorporates units in the Level 2 Award in Support Work in Schools and adds competency-based units to reflect the role of those supporting pupils' learning.
Level 2 Certificate in Supporting the Wider Curriculum in Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed to meet the needs of those working as mid-day assistants/supervisors or who support the wider activities of schools such as before and after school clubs. • Incorporates units in the Level 2 Award in Support Work in Schools. • Shares units with the Level 2 Certificate in Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools, recognising that teaching assistants may have additional responsibilities. • Has fewer credits than the Level 2 Certificate in Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools, which candidates who progress to a teaching assistant role can gain through the achievement of credit from additional units.
Level 3 Award in Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge-based qualification suitable for initial training, candidates not yet in a school role but who have the capability to achieve at Level 3, and candidates wishing to demonstrate progression. • Intended to provide underpinning knowledge and understanding for those with a role in directly working with young people in schools.

Qualification	Description
Level 3 Certificate in Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For school staff who directly support the teaching and learning of pupils. • Incorporates units in the Level 3 Award in Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools. • Additional units cover the generic knowledge and skills required to work in a teaching assistant or similar role at Level 3.
Level 3 Certificate in Cover Supervision of Pupils in Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For staff working in the role of Cover Supervisor. • Incorporates units of the Level 3 Award in Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools. • Includes some units that are also in the Level 3 Certificate in Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools. • Reflects differences between the cover supervisor and teaching assistant roles by omitting units about actively advancing pupils' learning and including a unit on providing whole-class supervision. • Candidates moving from one role to the other can demonstrate competence in the new role through the achievement of credit from specified additional units.
Level 3 Diploma in Specialist Support for Teaching and Learning in Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For staff who directly support teaching and learning of pupils in an area that requires specialist knowledge and skills. • Incorporates units in Level 3 Certificate in Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools. • Additional optional units cover specialisms which may be a feature of the role at level 3.

In addition, Level 2 and 3 qualifications are available in Playwork which may be useful for support staff involved in after-school clubs, and in Children and Young People's Workforce. However, these are more geared towards staff working in Early Years.

3.2.5 QCF awarding organisations

The following awarding organisations offer the qualifications above:

- CACHE (www.cache.org.uk)
- City and Guilds (www.cityandguilds.com)
- Edexcel (www.edexcel.com)
- NCFE (www.ncfe.org.uk)
- OCR (www.ocr.org.uk) – via apprenticeship route only
- Industry Qualifications (www.industryqualifications.org.uk)
- Skills First (www.skillsfirst.co.uk)

3.2.6 Online and home learning teaching assistant courses

Some QCF qualifications are available to study online through organisations such as Stonebridge, TA College, ICS Learn, Open Study College and Home Learning College. Prices vary considerably. The National Extension College offer courses most of the qualifications for school staff and offer a 10% discount to UNISON members. See www.nec.ac.uk/content/nec-working-partnership-unison

3.2.7 Apprenticeships

QCF qualifications can also be delivered through apprenticeship schemes. The Learning and Skills Improvement Service worked with the Training and Development Agency for Schools to develop the 'Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools' Apprenticeship frameworks. The following apprenticeships are suitable for teaching assistants:

- Level 2: Intermediate Level Apprenticeship in Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools
- Level 3: Advanced Level Apprenticeship in Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools

More information can also be found here:

www.gov.uk/supporting-teaching-and-learning-in-schools-apprenticeships

Section 4: Professional framework for teaching assistants

In this professional framework for teaching assistants, the QCF qualifications have been mapped against the five levels of TAs and the three levels of additional support needs assistants outlined in the NJC role profiles (see section 2.1).

The QCF units are based on the National Occupational Standards for Supporting Teaching and Learning, which themselves can also be used to help with a wide range of staff development activities. In the framework on the following pages, the National Occupational Standards relevant to each QCF unit have been listed, since training can also be organised using existing resources that have been developed around these standards. Further information about the standards is available here, where the full suite can be downloaded:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-occupational-standards-for-supporting-teaching-learning

Another useful document about the National Occupational Standards is 'Discover how standards can transform your school', published by the TDA in 2010: www.skillsforschools.org.uk/file.aspx?id=136

In organising the information in the professional framework for teaching assistants, a distinction has been made between the relevant QCF level that should be achieved at each TA level, and the QCF level a TA may be working *towards* in order to progress. The level the TA may be working towards is listed under the suggestions for continuing professional development. An exception to this is TA1, since the National Occupational Standards on which the QCF qualifications are drawn may be used to provide a stand-alone training structure, without a qualification being necessarily achieved.

The information for each TA level is split into 3 sections:

- 1) An extract from the NJC model role profile (NB potential additional duties are listed in the full profiles⁴)
- 2) Qualifications relevant to working at that level
- 3) Suggestions for continuing professional development

While the indicative qualifications are listed, it is important to remember that qualifications are not mandatory for teaching assistants and it may be that knowledge and experience is deemed to be equivalent. However, the content of the qualifications and corresponding National Occupational Standards may provide a useful benchmark.

⁴ The full profiles are available here: www.skillsforschools.org.uk/library/role-profiles

4.1 Teaching Assistant Level 1

4.1.1 Extract from model role profile for Teaching Assistant 1

The full profile can be downloaded from www.skillsforschools.org.uk/library/role-profiles

Role purpose: To work with teachers to support teaching and learning, providing general and specific assistance to pupils and staff under the direction, guidance and direct supervision of the classroom teacher.

Key duties

1. Work with individuals or small groups of pupils in the classroom under the direct supervision of teaching staff and provide feedback to the teacher.
2. Support pupils to understand instructions; support independent learning and inclusion of all pupils.
3. Support the teacher in behaviour management and keeping pupils on task.
4. Support pupils in social and emotional well-being, reporting problems to the teacher as appropriate.
5. Prepare and clear up learning environment and resources, including photocopying, filing and the display and presentation of pupils' work and contribute to maintaining a safe environment.

Indicative knowledge, skills and experience

- Working at or towards National Occupational Standards in Supporting Teaching and Learning reflected in the Level 2 Certificate in Supporting Teaching and Learning on the Qualification and Credit Framework, or equivalent experience.
- Knowledge and compliance with policies and procedures relevant to child protection and health and safety.

4.1.2 Relevant qualifications in the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF)

The 'Indicative knowledge, skills and experience' section in the role profile extract indicates that a TA1 should be working *at or towards* the NOS STL reflected in the **Level 2 Certificate in Supporting Teaching and Learning** (see page 8). The core QCF units included in the Level 2 Certificate in Supporting Teaching and Learning and the National Occupational Standards from which they are drawn are listed below. Additional optional units must also be taken in order to gain the qualification.

Level 2 Certificate in Supporting Teaching and Learning	
QCF unit title	Relevant National Occupational Standards⁵
Child and young person development	2: Support children's development
Safeguarding the welfare of children and young people	3: Help to keep children safe
Communication and professional relationships with children, young people and adults	20: Develop and promote positive relationships
Equality, diversity and inclusion in work with children and young people	18: Support pupils' learning activities 23: Plan, deliver and evaluate teaching and learning activities under the direction of a teacher 38: Support children with disabilities or special development needs and their families
Schools as organisations	61: Provide information to aid policy, formation and the improvement of practices and provision
Help improve own and team practice in schools	5: Provide effective support for your colleagues 22: Reflect on and develop practice
Maintain and support relationships with children and young people	4: Contribute to positive relationships
Support children and young people's health and safety	3: Help to keep children safe
Support children and young people's positive behaviour	3: Help to keep children safe 19: Promote positive behaviour
Support learning activities	1: Provide support for learning activities 6: Support literacy and numeracy activities 8: Use information and communication technology to support pupil's learning 9: Observe and report on pupil performance

⁵ The full suite of National Occupational Standards is available here:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-occupational-standards-for-supporting-teaching-learning

4.1.3 Suggestions for continuing professional development

- Training based on individual QCF units, the relevant National Occupational Standards listed above or the 'Essential training' modules
- Working towards Level 2 Certificate in Supporting Teaching and Learning
- Level 1/2 maths
- Level 1/2 English
- Entry level ICT course, e.g. a functional skills course, European Computer Driving Licence or Computer Literacy and Information Technology (CLAIT)
- Understanding how children learn through play
- Introductory course in the basics of recording data and using it to support children's learning
- First aid at work certificate

4.2 Teaching Assistant Level 2

4.2.1 Extract from model role profile for Teaching Assistant 2

The full profile can be downloaded from www.skillsforschools.org.uk/library/role-profiles

Role purpose: To work with teachers to support teaching and learning by working with individuals or small groups of pupils under the direction of teaching staff. May be responsible for some learning activities within the overall teaching plan.

Key duties

1. Implement planned learning activities/teaching programmes as agreed with the teacher, adjusting activities according to pupils' responses as appropriate.
2. Participate in planning and evaluation of learning activities with the teacher, providing feedback to the teacher on pupil progress and behaviour.
3. Support the teacher in monitoring, assessing and recording pupil progress/activities.
4. Provide feedback to pupils in relation to attainment and progress under the guidance of the teacher.
5. Support learning by arranging/providing resources for lessons/activities under the direction of the teacher.
6. Support pupils in social and emotional well-being, reporting problems to the teacher as appropriate.
7. Share information about pupils with other staff, parents/carers, internal and external agencies, as appropriate.
8. Understand and support independent learning and inclusion of all pupils as required.

Indicative knowledge, skills and experience

- Working at QCF Level 2 in Supporting Teaching and Learning or equivalent; may be working towards QCF Level 3 and/or National Occupational Standards.
- Knowledge and compliance with policies and procedures relevant to child protection and health and safety.

4.2.2 Relevant qualifications in the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF)

The '*Indicative knowledge, skills and experience*' section in the role profile extract indicates that a TA2 should be working at the **Level 2 Certificate in Supporting Teaching and Learning** standard (see page 8).

See page 13 for an outline of the core QCF units and the National Occupational Standards from which they are drawn for the Level 2 Certificate in Supporting Teaching and Learning.

An alternative QCF qualification at Level 2 is the **Certificate in Supporting the Wider Curriculum in Schools** (see page 8). This qualification was designed for staff such as mid-day supervisors who support the wider activities of the school but may be relevant to teaching assistants who hold additional responsibilities, for example in running before and after school clubs. This qualification has fewer credits than the Level 2 Certificate in Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools, but candidates are able to take additional units in order to make this up. Some of the optional units for the Certificate in Supporting the Wider Curriculum include:

Level 2 Certificate in Supporting the Wider Curriculum	
QCF unit title	Relevant National Occupational Standards
Support children and young people at meal or snack time	No specific occupational standard drawn on
Support children and young people's play and leisure	10: Support children's play and learning 54: Support children's play and learning
Support children and young people's travel outside of the setting	59: Escort and supervise pupils on educational visits and out-of-school activities
Support extra-curricular activities	53: Lead an extra-curricular activity

4.2.3 Suggestions for continuing professional development

- Training based on individual QCF units or the relevant National Occupational Standards listed above
- Level 2 maths
- Level 2 English
- Introduction to the social and emotional aspects of learning
- Working towards QCF Level 3 (see page 18).

4.3 Teaching Assistant Level 3

4.3.1 Extract from model role profile for Teaching Assistant 3

The full profile can be downloaded from www.skillsforschools.org.uk/library/role-profiles

Role purpose: To work with teachers to support teaching and learning, providing specialist support to the teacher in an aspect of the curriculum, age range or additional needs.

Key duties

1. Provide learning activities for individuals and groups of pupils under the professional direction and supervision of a qualified teacher, differentiating and adapting learning programmes to suit the needs of allocated pupils.
2. Assess, record and report on development, progress and attainment as agreed with the teacher.
3. Monitor and record pupil responses and learning achievements, drawing any problems which cannot be resolved to the attention of the teacher.
4. Plan and evaluate specialist learning activities with the teacher, writing reports and records as required.
5. Select and adapt appropriate resources/methods to facilitate agreed learning activities.
6. Support pupils in social and emotional well-being, reporting problems to the teacher as appropriate.
7. Teaching assistants in this role are expected to undertake at least one of the following:
 - a. Provide specialist support to pupils with special educational needs, for example learning, behavioural, communication, social, sensory or physical difficulties
 - b. Provide specialist support to pupils where English is not their first language
 - c. Provide specialist support to gifted and talented pupils
 - d. Provide specialist support to all pupils in a particular learning area (e.g. ICT, literacy, numeracy, National Curriculum subject).

Indicative knowledge, skills and experience

- Meeting the National Occupational Standards in Supporting Teaching and Learning Level 3 and working at QCF Level 3. Demonstrate specialist skills relevant to their role in 7(a-d) above.
- Knowledge and compliance with policies and procedures relevant to child protection and health and safety.

4.3.2 Relevant qualifications in the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF)

The *'Indicative knowledge, skills and experience'* section in the role profile extract indicates that a TA3 should be meeting the NOS STL reflected in QCF **Level 3 qualifications in Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools**.

There are three Level 3 QCF qualifications in Supporting Teaching and Learning (see page 9), which are outlined below:

- **Level 3 Award in Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools**

The Level 3 Award is purely knowledge-based and does not require a work placement, so may not be the most appropriate qualification to choose for a TA who is already employed in the school.

- **Level 3 Certificate in Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools**

This qualification incorporates the units in the Level 3 Award in Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools. Additional units cover the generic knowledge and skills required to work in a teaching assistant or similar role at Level 3, which are listed below:

Level 3 Certificate in Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools	
QCF unit title	Relevant National Occupational Standards
Support children and young people's health and safety	3: Help to keep children safe
Support learning activities	1: Provide support for learning activities 6: Support literacy and numeracy activities 8: Use information and communication technology to support pupils' learning 9: Observe and report on pupil performance
Support children and young people's positive behaviour	3: Help to keep children safe 19: Promote positive behaviour
Communication and professional relationships with children, young people and adults	20: Develop and promote positive relationships
Equality, diversity and inclusion in work with children and young people	18: Support pupils' learning activities 23: Plan, deliver and evaluate teaching and learning activities under the direction of a teacher 38: Support children with disabilities or special development needs and their families
Support assessment for learning	30: Contribute to assessment for learning
Engage in personal development in health, social care or children and young people's settings	

- **Level 3 Diploma in Specialist Support for Teaching and Learning in Schools**

This qualification is for those members of the school workforce who directly support teaching and learning of pupils in schools in an area that requires specialist knowledge and skills. The qualification incorporates the units in the Level 3 Certificate in Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools. Additional optional units cover specialisms which may be a feature of the role at Level 3. There are many units to choose from, which fall into the following categories:

- Supporting learning
- English as an additional language
- Special educational needs
- Providing pastoral support
- Supporting the wider work of the school
- Working with colleagues

4.3.3 Suggestions for continuing professional development

- Training based on individual QCF units or the relevant National Occupational Standards listed for the Level 3 Award and Certificate listed above , e.g.
 - Observation and evaluations skills
 - Understanding monitoring and tracking student progress
 - Understanding the SEND code of practice
 - How to support students who have SEND effectively
 - Developing effective intervention programmes
 - Developing social aspects of learning interventions
- Training based on the specialist skills identified in the role profile, e.g. in learning, behavioural, communication, social, sensory or physical difficulties; EAL; support to gifted and talented pupils; supporting particular curriculum areas.

4.4 Teaching Assistant Level 4

4.4.1 Extract from model role profile for Teaching Assistant 4

The full profile can be downloaded from www.skillsforschools.org.uk/library/role-profiles

Role purpose: To work with teachers to organise and support teaching and learning activities for classes. The primary focus is to undertake specified work with individuals, groups and whole classes under the direction and supervision of a qualified teacher.

Key duties

1. Plan, prepare and deliver specified learning activities to individuals, small groups and/or classes modifying and adapting activities as necessary under the direction and supervision of a teacher.
2. Assess, record and report on development, progress and attainment.
3. Liaise with staff and other relevant professionals and provide information about pupils as appropriate.
4. Use teaching and learning objectives to plan, evaluate and adjust lessons/work plans as appropriate within agreed systems of supervision.
5. Assess the needs of pupils and use knowledge and specialist skills to support pupils' learning.
6. Support pupils in social and emotional well-being, reporting problems to the teacher as appropriate.
7. Teaching assistants at this level are expected to undertake at least one of the following:
 - a. Provide specialist support to pupils with learning, behavioural, communication, social, sensory or physical difficulties.
 - b. Provide specialist support to pupils where English is not their first language.
 - c. Provide specialist support to gifted and talented pupils.
 - d. Provide specialist support to all pupils in a particular learning area (e.g. ICT, literacy, numeracy, National Curriculum subject).

Indicative knowledge, skills and experience

- Working at or towards the professional standards for Higher Level Teaching Assistants.
- Demonstrate specialist skills that may be appropriate to 7(a-d) above.
- Knowledge and compliance with policies and procedures relevant to child protection and health and safety.

4.4.2 Relevant qualifications in the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF)

There is no specific QCF qualification for TA 4. The *'Indicative knowledge, skills and experience'* section in the role profile extract indicates that a TA 4 should be working *at or towards* the professional standards for Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs). The professional standards set out what teaching assistants who are working at a higher level are expected to know and be able to do. There are 33 standards, grouped under three main headings. It should be noted, however, that meeting these standards does not amount to a formal qualification; rather it denotes a status. The professional standards for HLTAs can be found in Appendix 2.

4.4.3 Suggestions for continuing professional development

Other qualifications may be suitable to work towards as a TA 4 in a primary school. For example:

- **Level 4 - Supporting learning in primary schools – E111**
This is an Open University course appropriate for teaching assistants working alongside teachers in primary schools, or in a special school, hospital educational unit, or pupil referral unit with primary-aged children. The credits from this undergraduate-level module could count towards a certificate of higher education, diploma of higher education, foundation degree or honours degree.
- **Level 4 - Certificate of Higher Education in Supporting Teaching and Learning in Primary Schools**
This Open University course is equivalent to the first third of an honours degree.

Other areas for CPD may include:

- Training based on the specialist skills identified in the role profile, e.g. in learning, behavioural, communication, social, sensory or physical difficulties; EAL; support to gifted and talented pupils; supporting particular curriculum areas
- Secure knowledge of understanding and interpretation of the SEND Code of practice
- How to engage disaffected students
- Providing an inclusive learning climate for students
- Secure understanding of SEN conditions and interventions/strategies
- Secure knowledge of child development and developmental delays
- Becoming an in-house mentor

4.5 Teaching Assistant Level 5 (Higher Level Teaching Assistant)

4.5.1 Extract from model role profile for Teaching Assistant 5

The full profile can be downloaded from www.skillsforschools.org.uk/library/role-profiles

Role purpose: To collaborate with teachers in planning and delivering programmes of teaching and learning activities for classes. The primary focus is to undertake educational activities with individuals, groups and whole classes within a framework agreed with and under the overall direction and supervision of a qualified teacher.

Key duties

1. Plan, prepare and deliver assigned programmes of teaching and learning activities to individuals, small groups and/or classes modifying and adapting activities as necessary under the overall direction and supervision of a teacher.
2. Assess, record and report on development, progress and attainment.
3. Liaise with staff and other relevant professionals and provide information about pupils as appropriate.
4. Use teaching and learning objectives to plan, evaluate and adjust lessons/work plans as appropriate within agreed systems of supervision.
5. Assess the needs of pupils and use detailed knowledge and specialist skills to support pupils' learning.
6. Support pupils in social and emotional well-being, reporting problems to the teacher as appropriate.
7. Develop and implement Individual Development Plans for pupils (such as Individual Educational Plans), including attendance at, and contribution to, reviews.
8. Support the role of parents/carers in pupils' learning and contribute to meetings with parents/carers to provide constructive feedback on pupil progress/achievement etc.
9. Liaise with external agencies on a regular basis.
10. Teaching assistants at this level are expected to undertake at least one of the following:
 - a. Provide specialist support to pupils with learning, behavioural, communication, social, sensory or physical difficulties
 - b. Provide specialist support to pupils where English is not their first language
 - c. Provide specialist support to gifted and talented pupils
 - d. Provide specialist support to all pupils in a particular learning area (e.g. ICT, literacy, numeracy, National Curriculum subject).

Indicative knowledge, skills and experience

- Meeting the professional standards for Higher Level Teaching Assistants.
- Demonstrate specialist skills that may be appropriate to 7(a-d) above.
- Knowledge and compliance with policies and procedures relevant to child protection and health and safety.

4.5.2 Relevant qualifications in the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF)

There is no specific QCF qualification for TA 5. The '*Indicative knowledge, skills and experience*' section in the role profile extract indicates that a TA 5 should be *meeting* the professional standards for Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs). The professional standards set out what teaching assistants who are working at a higher level are expected to know and be able to do. There are 33 standards, grouped under three main headings. It should be noted, however, that meeting these standards does not amount to a formal qualification; rather it denotes a status. The professional standards for HLTAs can be found in Appendix 2.

Assessment for higher level teaching assistants

Government funding for the external HLTA assessment process was scrapped in August 2012. It is now up to headteachers to decide whether a member of their staff has demonstrated through practice that they meet the specific set of HLTA professional standards and are, therefore, competent to take on the role of HLTA within that school. Headteachers can approach independent training providers to discuss opportunities for their staff to attend HLTA-based courses.

HLTAs must have achieved a Level 2 or above qualification in English and maths.

4.5.3 Suggestions for continuing professional development

In addition to the suggestions for TA 4, Higher Level Teaching Assistants may be interested in training to obtain qualified teacher status (QTS). Various colleges and universities offer Foundation Degrees. These have various titles such as 'Teaching and Learning Support', or a good place to start is by searching under 'Teaching Assistant Studies' in the subject group section of the UCAS foundation degree website. See section 4.6 for more details.

Other training could involve:

- Leadership and management training
- In-house mentoring training
- Child protection training
- Training based on the specialist skills identified in the role profile, e.g. in learning, behavioural, communication, social, sensory or physical difficulties; EAL; support to gifted and talented pupils; supporting particular curriculum areas

4.6 Additional Support Needs Assistant Level 1

4.6.1 Extract from model role profile for Additional Support Needs Assistant 1

The full profile can be downloaded from www.skillsforschools.org.uk/library/role-profiles

Role purpose: To work with teachers as part of a professional team to support teaching and learning for SEN pupils. Providing learning support to pupils who need particular help to overcome barriers to learning, such as those with moderate, severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties and/or behavioural, social, communication, sensory or physical disabilities.

Key duties:

1. Implement planned learning activities/teaching programmes as agreed with the teacher, adjusting activities according to pupils' responses as appropriate.
2. Participate in planning and evaluation of learning activities with the teacher, providing feedback to the teacher on pupil progress and behaviour.
3. Support the teacher in monitoring, assessing and recording pupil progress/activities.
4. Provide feedback to pupils in relation to attainment and progress under the guidance of the teacher.
5. Support learning by arranging/providing resources for lessons/activities under the direction of the teacher.
6. Support pupils in social and emotional well-being, reporting problems to the teacher as appropriate.
7. Share information about pupils with other staff, parents/carers, internal and external agencies, as appropriate.
8. Understand and support independent learning and inclusion of all pupils as required.
9. Work with pupils on therapy or care programmes, designed and supervised by a therapist/care.
10. Attend to pupils' personal needs including toileting, hygiene, dressing and eating, as well as help with social, welfare and health matters, reporting problems to the teacher as appropriate. Physically assist pupils in activities (may involve lifting, where mobility is an issue).

Indicative knowledge, skills and experience

- Working at QCF Level 2 in Supporting Teaching and Learning or equivalent; may be working towards QCF Level 3 and/or National Occupational Standards.
- Knowledge and compliance with policies and procedures relevant to child protection and health and safety.

4.6.2 Relevant qualifications in the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF)

The 'Indicative knowledge, skills and experience' section in the role profile extract indicates that an Additional Support Needs Assistant 1 should be working at the **Level 2 Certificate in Supporting Teaching and Learning** standard (see page 8).

See page 13 for an outline of the core QCF units and the National Occupational Standards from which they are drawn for the Level 2 Certificate in Supporting Teaching and Learning.

4.6.3 Suggestions for continuing professional development

- Training based on individual QCF units or the relevant National Occupational Standards listed above
- Level 2 maths
- Level 2 English
- Introduction to the social and emotional aspects of learning
- Working towards QCF Level 3 (see page 18)

4.7 Additional Support Needs Assistant Level 2

4.7.1 Extract from model role profile for Additional Support Needs Assistant 2

The full profile can be downloaded from www.skillsforschools.org.uk/library/role-profiles

Role purpose: To work with teachers as part of a professional team to support teaching and learning for SEN pupils. Providing specialist assistance to pupils who need particular help to overcome barriers to learning, such as those with moderate, severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties and/or behavioural, social, communication, sensory or physical disabilities.

Key duties

1. Provide learning activities for individuals and groups of pupils under the professional direction and supervision of a qualified teacher, differentiating and adapting learning programmes to suit the needs of allocated pupils with SEN.
2. Plan and evaluate specialist learning activities with the teacher, writing reports and records as required.
3. Work with pupils on therapy or care programmes, designed and supervised by a therapist/care professional.
4. Monitor, assess, record and report on development, progress and attainment, as agreed with the teacher, drawing any problems which cannot be resolved to the attention of the teacher.
5. Select and adapt appropriate resources/methods to facilitate agreed learning activities.
6. Be involved in planning, organising and implementing individual development plans for pupils (such as Individual Educational Plans), including attendance at, and contribution to, reviews.
7. Attend to pupils' personal needs including toileting, hygiene, dressing and eating, as well as help with social, welfare and health matters.

Indicative knowledge, skills and experience

- Meeting the National Occupational Standards (NOS) in Supporting Teaching and Learning Level 3 and working at QCF Level 3.
- Skills and knowledge in providing specialist support to pupils.
- Knowledge and compliance with policies and procedures relevant to child protection and health and safety.

4.7.2 Relevant qualifications in the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF)

The 'Indicative knowledge, skills and experience' section in the role profile extract indicates that an Additional Support Needs Assistant 2 should be meeting the NOS STL reflected in QCF **Level 3 qualifications in Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools**. There are three Level 3 QCF qualifications in Supporting Teaching and Learning (see page 9):

- Level 3 Award in Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools
- Level 3 Certificate in Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools
- Level 3 Diploma in Specialist Support for Teaching and Learning in Schools

The details of these are outlined on pages 18-19.

4.7.3 Suggestions for continuing professional development

- Training based on individual QCF units or the relevant National Occupational Standards listed for the Level 3 Award and Certificate listed above, e.g.
 - Observation and evaluations skills
 - Understanding monitoring and tracking student progress
 - Understanding the SEND code of practice
 - How to support students who have SEN effectively
 - Developing effective intervention programmes
 - Developing social aspects of learning interventions
- Training based on the duties identified in the role profile

4.8 Additional Support Needs Assistant Level 3

4.8.1 Extract from model role profile for Additional Support Needs Assistant 3

The full profile can be downloaded from www.skillsforschools.org.uk/library/role-profiles

Role purpose: To work with teachers as part of a professional team to organise and support teaching and learning activities for SEN pupils, including classes. The primary focus is to work with individuals and groups delivering specified work under the direction and supervision of a qualified teacher. The individual provides specialist learning support for pupils identified as having learning difficulties, including complex and multiple special education needs, in a broad range of different learning situations and settings. The post holder also plans, organises and undertakes other related duties to fully support and underpin learning, personal and social development.

Key duties

1. Use teaching and learning objectives to plan, evaluate and adjust lessons/work plans as appropriate within agreed systems of supervision.
2. Deliver specified work to individuals and small groups modifying and adapting activities as necessary.
3. Work with pupils on therapy or care programmes, designed and supervised by a therapist/care professional.
4. Provide specialist support to pupils with severe learning, behavioural, communication, social, sensory or physical difficulties.
5. Monitor pupils conduct and behaviour throughout the learning process and intervene to resolve highly complex, difficult or very challenging issues.
6. Assess, record and report on development, progress and attainment.
7. Liaise with staff and other relevant professionals and provide specialist support/advice to meet the needs of pupils.
8. Assess the needs of pupils and use detailed knowledge and specialist skills to support pupils' learning.
9. Attend to pupils' personal needs including toileting, hygiene, dressing and eating, as well as help with social, welfare and health matters.

Indicative knowledge, skills and experience

- Meeting or working towards the professional standards for Higher Level Teaching Assistants.
- Demonstrate specialist knowledge and skills that are appropriate to providing specialist support to pupils with additional support needs.
- Knowledge and compliance with policies and procedures relevant to child protection and health and safety.

4.8.2 Relevant qualifications in the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF)

There is no specific QCF qualification for an Additional Support Needs Assistant 3. The 'Indicative knowledge, skills and experience' section in the role profile extract indicates that someone in this role should be *meeting or working towards* the professional standards for Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs). The professional standards set out what teaching assistants who are working at a higher level are expected to know and be able to do. There are 33 standards, grouped under three main headings. It should be noted, however, that meeting these standards does not amount to a formal qualification; rather it denotes a status. The professional standards for HLTAs can be found in Appendix 2.

4.8.3 Suggestions for continuing professional development

Other qualifications may be suitable to work towards as an Additional Support Needs Assistant 3 working in a primary school. For example:

- **Level 4 - Supporting learning in primary schools – E111**
This is an Open University course appropriate for teaching assistants working alongside teachers in primary schools, or in a special school, hospital educational unit, or pupil referral unit with primary-aged children. The credits from this undergraduate-level module could count towards a certificate of higher education, diploma of higher education, foundation degree or honours degree.
- **Level 4 - Certificate of Higher Education in Supporting Teaching and Learning in Primary Schools**
This Open University course is equivalent to the first third of an honours degree.

Other areas for CPD may include:

- Training based on the specialist skills identified in the role profile
- Secure knowledge of understanding and interpretation of the SEND Code of practice
- How to engage disaffected students
- Providing an inclusive learning climate for students
- Secure understanding of SEN conditions and interventions/ strategies
- Secure knowledge of child development and developmental delays
- Becoming an in-house mentor

4.9 Progressing from TA to teacher

Teaching assistants who would like to become a teacher are able to achieve this by taking a Foundation Degree, often as work-based programme of study. On completion, students are able to transfer to a BEd 'top up' programme in order to gain an undergraduate honours degree. Following this, some students then go on to apply for a 'Qualified Teacher Status' (QTS) course and train to be fully qualified teachers. For example, see the route provided by the Institute of Education here:

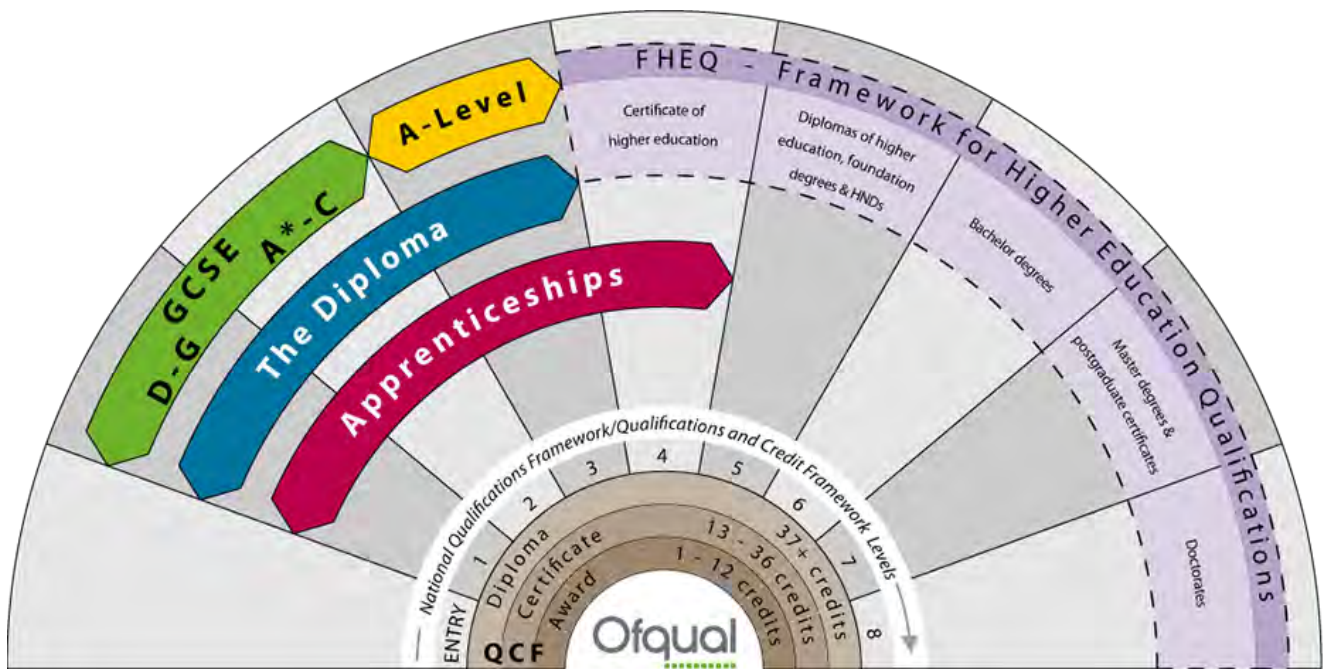
www.ioe.ac.uk/study/113.html

For more information about routes into teaching see:

www.education.gov.uk/get-into-teaching

Appendix 1: Ofqual qualifications diagram

This useful diagram shows how the QCF qualifications (England, Northern Ireland and Wales) fit in to a wider spectrum of qualifications.



Appendix 2: Professional standards for Higher Level Teaching Assistants

Professional values and practice

Those awarded HLTA status must demonstrate, through their practice, that they:

1. have high expectations of children and young people with a commitment to helping them fulfil their potential
2. establish fair, respectful, trusting, supportive and constructive relationships with children and young people
3. demonstrate the positive values, attitudes and behaviour they expect from children and young people
4. communicate effectively and sensitively with children, young people, colleagues, parents and carers
5. recognise and respect the contribution that parents and carers can make to the development and well-being of children and young people
6. demonstrate commitment to collaborative and cooperative working with colleagues
7. improve their own knowledge and practice including responding to advice and feedback.

Professional knowledge and understanding

Those awarded HLTA status must demonstrate, through their practice, that they:

8. understand the key factors that affect children and young people's learning and progress
9. know how to contribute to effective personalised provision by taking practical account of diversity
10. have sufficient understanding of their area(s) of expertise to support the development, learning and progress of children and young people
11. have achieved a nationally recognised qualification at level 2 or above in English/literacy and mathematics/numeracy
12. know how to use ICT to support their professional activities
13. know how statutory and non-statutory frameworks for the school curriculum relate to the age and ability ranges of the learners they support
14. understand the objectives, content and intended outcomes for the learning activities in which they are involved
15. know how to support learners in accessing the curriculum in accordance with the special educational needs (SEN) code of practice and disabilities legislation
16. know how other frameworks, that support the development and well-being of children and young people, impact upon their practice.

Professional skills

Teaching and learning activities must take place under the direction and supervision of an assigned teacher and in accordance with arrangements made by the headteacher of the school.

Planning and expectations

Those awarded HLTA status must demonstrate, through their practice, that they:

17. use their area(s) of expertise to contribute to the planning and preparation of learning activities
18. use their area(s) of expertise to plan their role in learning activities
19. devise clearly structured activities that interest and motivate learners and advance their learning
20. plan how they will support the inclusion of the children and young people in the learning activities
21. contribute to the selection and preparation of resources suitable for children and young people's interests and abilities.

Monitoring and assessment

Those awarded HLTA status must demonstrate, through their practice, that they:

22. monitor learners' responses to activities and modify approaches accordingly
23. monitor learners' progress in order to provide focused support and feedback
24. support the evaluation of learners' progress using a range of assessment techniques
25. contribute to maintaining and analysing records of learners' progress.

Teaching and learning activities

Those awarded HLTA status must demonstrate, through their practice, that they:

26. use effective strategies to promote positive behaviour
27. recognise and respond appropriately to situations that challenge equality of opportunity
28. use their ICT skills to advance learning
29. advance learning when working with individuals
30. advance learning when working with small groups
31. advance learning when working with whole classes without the presence of the assigned teacher
32. organise and manage learning activities in ways which keep learners safe
33. direct the work, where relevant, of other adults in supporting learning.

Appendix 3: Supporting pupils with health needs

Job evaluation

The NJC model role profiles for teaching assistants 1-5 do not include duties relating to supporting pupils with health care needs. The NJC state, “Where these duties becomes a requirement of the job, as part of an agreement between employers and unions, it should be set out in the job description as an additional duty allowing it to be accounted for in the evaluation of the role (and therefore in remuneration as appropriate).” Any school staff member providing support for pupils with health needs must be receive adequate training which is regularly reviewed and updated. As well as being essential, this provides an important route of continuing professional development.

Statutory guidance on supporting pupils with medical conditions (England)

The Department for Education (England) published new statutory guidance for schools about supporting pupils at school with medical conditions which is in force from 1 September 2014. Governing bodies must ensure the school’s policy sets out how staff will be supported in carrying out their role to support pupils with medical conditions, and how this will be reviewed. This should specify how training needs are assessed, and how and by whom training will be commissioned and provided. The guidance and associated resources may also be of interest to school leaders in the devolved nations. It can be downloaded from the following link:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions—3

Further resources

UNISON works with the Health Conditions in Schools Alliance. Template policies and advice can be downloaded from the website: <http://medicalconditionsatschool.org.uk/>. Below is a list of further training resources for schools and information from various health charities.

Asthma UK	www.asthma.org.uk/Sites/healthcare-professionals/pages/schools-and-early-years
British Heart Foundation	www.bhf.org.uk/schools www.bhf.org.uk/heart-health/nation-of-lifesavers/call-push-rescue/schools
Coeliac UK	www.coeliac.org.uk/schools
Diabetes UK	www.diabetes.org.uk/Guide-to-diabetes/Schools/School-staff/
Epilepsy Action	http://learn.epilepsy.org.uk/training-for-schools
Royal National Institute for the Blind	www.rnib.org.uk/send-reform-resources
Stroke Association	www.stroke.org.uk/finding-support/information-about-stroke-childhood
The Anaphylaxis Campaign	www.anaphylaxis.org.uk/schools/help-for-schools
Young Epilepsy	www.youngepilepsy.org.uk/for-professionals/education-professionals/resources-for-schools/

Appendix 4: Useful websites

www.skillsforschools.org.uk

UNISON's online guide to careers, training and development in schools.

www.nationaleducationtrust.net

Independent charitable foundation that leads and supports policy reform, rooted in what works in the classroom.

<http://tdtrust.org/about/dgt/>

The Teachers' Development Trust is a non-profit organisation promoting world-leading approaches to teacher learning. The 2015 report 'Developing great teaching which explores effective CPD for teachers may be useful in considering provision for support staff.

<http://goodcpdguide.com>

Run by the Teachers' Development Trust, the GoodCPDGuide, launched in January 2012, is a free database of high-quality professional development resources for education, including relevant information for support staff.

<http://register.ofqual.gov.uk/Qualification>

The register of regulated qualifications contains details of recognised awarding organisations and regulated qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/>

See the Education Endowment Foundation's 2015 report 'Making Best use of teaching assistants'.

www.careerswales.com/en/

Careers Wales

www.nidirect.gov.uk/careers

Careers Service Northern Ireland

www.myworldofwork.co.uk/

Skills Development Scotland

<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/Pages/Home.aspx>

National Careers Service

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Career Framework and Continuing Professional Development for Teaching Assistants

UNISON and the National Education Trust have worked together since 2013 to develop a career framework and professional standards for the teaching assistant profession.

This guidance is based on that work. It supports the effective deployment of teaching assistants by providing a professional framework for TA progression.

The guidance is for those who manage or support the professional development of teaching assistants in schools.

UNISON

UNISON represents the interests of more than 150,000 teaching assistants at national and local level, in every kind of school.

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