



Accreditation at Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher

The Role of the Principal

Contents

Introduction.....	2
The phased model.....	2
The role of the principal.....	2
Discussing the candidate’s intention to apply	2
Acknowledging and verifying.....	2
Completing the classroom observation.....	3
Providing a referee’s report.....	3
Other roles for the principal	4
School Report: Observation of Teaching	5

The Lead Teacher

Lead teachers are recognised and respected by colleagues, parents/carers and the community as exemplary teachers. They have demonstrated consistent and innovative teaching practice overtime. Inside and outside the school they initiate and lead activities that focus on improving educational opportunities for all students.

They establish inclusive learning environments that meet the needs of students from different linguistic, cultural, religious and socio-economic backgrounds. They seek to improve their own practice and to share their experience with colleagues.

They are skilled in mentoring teachers and teacher education students (pre- service teachers), using activities that develop knowledge, practice and professional engagement in others. They promote creative, innovative thinking among colleagues.

Lead teachers apply skills and in-depth knowledge and understanding to deliver effective lessons and learning opportunities and share this information with colleagues and teacher education students. They describe the relationship between highly effective learning and teaching in ways that inspire and enable colleagues to improve their own professional practice.

They lead processes to improve student performance by evaluating and revising programs, analysing student assessment data and taking account of feedback from parents/carers. This is combined with a synthesis of current research on effective learning and teaching.

Lead teachers represent the school and the teaching profession in the community with distinction. They are professional, ethical and respected individuals inside and outside the school.

The Highly Accomplished Teacher

Highly Accomplished teachers are recognised as highly effective, skilled classroom practitioners who routinely work independently and collaboratively to improve their own practice and the practice of colleagues. They are knowledgeable and active members of the school.

Highly Accomplished teachers contribute to their colleagues' learning. They may also take on roles that support, guide or advise others. They regularly initiate and engage in discussions about effective teaching to improve the educational outcomes for their students.

They maximise learning opportunities for their students by understanding their backgrounds and individual characteristics and the impact of those factors on their learning. They provide colleagues, including teacher education students (pre-service teachers), with support and strategies to create positive and productive learning environments. Highly Accomplished teachers have in-depth knowledge of subjects and curriculum content within their sphere of responsibility. They model sound teaching practices in their teaching areas. They work with colleagues to plan, evaluate and modify teaching programs to improve student learning. They keep abreast of the latest developments in their specialist content area or across a range of content areas for generalist teachers.

Highly Accomplished teachers are skilled in analysing student assessment data and use it to improve learning and teaching. They are active in establishing an environment which maximises professional learning and professional practice opportunities for colleagues. They monitor their own professional learning needs and align them to the learning needs of students and the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. They behave ethically at all times. Their interpersonal and presentation skills are highly developed. They communicate effectively and respectfully with students, colleagues, parents/carers and community members.

Introduction

In NSW, accreditation is the structured process through which teachers are recognised as meeting teaching standards. Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher are voluntary levels of accreditation undertaken by experienced teachers. The foundation for the accreditation process is the [Australian Professional Standards for Teachers](#).

The phased model

The accreditation model for Highly Accomplished Teacher and Lead Teacher comprises two distinct phases:

- a preliminary phase involves teachers making a decision about which accreditation level reflects their practice and undertaking an online assessment of their achievements as an indicator of their likely success in demonstrating the Standards, and
- an accreditation submission phase, where the applicant collects evidence from three sources leading to their final application for accreditation against the Standards.

It is the responsibility of the candidate to manage the entirety of their application, liaising with others involved in the accreditation process, including NESAs, and monitoring their progress in relation to the maximum timeframe for completion.

The role of the principal

As a principal, you have a number of key roles in the Highly Accomplished and Lead accreditation processes of teachers from your school:

Discussing the candidate's intention to apply

A teacher's accreditation choices should be the subject of a discussion between the teacher and their principal. This discussion might involve you in assisting the teacher to determine the most appropriate key stage for their accreditation based on the descriptions of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher.

When a teacher decides to proceed from the preliminary to the submission phase, they must inform their principal.

While your advice will be important to the teacher, the decision to apply is for the teacher to make and principal's approval is not required.

Acknowledging and verifying

You need to acknowledge that you have had a discussion with the teacher about their intention to apply through your principal log-in to the NESAs website.

The applicant's principal will also need to verify the teacher's eligibility to apply on the basis of the school's performance and development process¹ and that they hold Australian citizenship or permanent residency status.

¹ Annual performance assessments may be those conducted using the current school/system processes where these exist and are not required in a specific format. It is recognised that currently some school authorities may not have these processes. In these cases satisfactory performance will be indicated by the principal through the verification process. Following the implementation of the Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework the specific requirements of an annual performance assessment outlined will need to be met.

In the case of an applicant for Highly Accomplished Teacher, the teacher must have completed at least two satisfactory annual performance and development cycles, and in the case of a teacher applying for Lead Teacher, at least three satisfactory annual performance and development cycles.

To verify a teacher's eligibility to apply, you need to follow these steps:

1. Log-in using your ID and password
2. Click on the principal tab
3. Select Highly Accomplished or Lead from the list of options- check accuracy of description
4. Go to the dropdown menu and select the teacher's name
5. Check the relevant boxes to indicate that 'yes':
 - a. you have had a conversation with the teacher
 - b. the teacher is an Australian citizen or permanent resident²
 - c. the teacher has had satisfactory annual performance reviews³

Completing the classroom observation

The documentation submitted by all candidates for accreditation at Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher includes two reports of observations of teaching conducted at the school.

One of these observations is to be conducted by the teacher's principal/head of school or their direct delegate.

A template is provided by NESA for reporting the observation for accreditation purposes. The use of this template is optional and you may use your school's observation template. However, the report on the observation must show:

- the teaching practice and Standard Descriptors were the focus of the observation
- a description of the candidate's actions, and
- comments that evaluate the candidate's teaching practice.

The template is on pages 5-6 of this document.

Providing a referee's report

The teacher undertaking accreditation at Highly Accomplished or Lead Teacher is required to provide between three and eight referees from three perspectives. As the principal's referee report is one of these perspectives, carefully constructed statements will be important in the candidate's overall submission. You cannot delegate this role.

The requirements for referees are outlined in the [Policy for Accreditation at Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher](#) and the [Information for Referees booklet](#).

Before you provide your report, you will need to have:

- a clear understanding of the Standard Descriptors that you are commenting on, and
- first-hand knowledge of the teacher's practice in relation to the agreed Standard Descriptors.

² If evidence of citizenship or residency is needed, the principal is advised to request a passport or birth certificate.

³ Where a school does not have a formal annual review process, the principal's checking of this box verifies that the teacher's practice is satisfactory for their current employment position and/or accreditation level.

There is no specified minimum or maximum number of Standard Descriptors to be addressed by the principal. This is a matter for negotiation between the principal and the candidate.

If you are unable to write a supportive referee statement for a teacher, it is advised that you clearly communicate to the teacher. In such a case, a principal referee statement is still required. There is specific advice in the Information for Referees booklet to support referees who are unable to write a supportive comment.

Other roles for the principal

Being aware of the External Observation

All teachers undertaking accreditation at Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher must be observed by a NESAs appointed External Observer. While the teacher will make the arrangements for the observation, the timing of the observation is negotiated by the External Observer with the teacher and the school.

Supporting other referees

Principals should consider the need to support others, such as the applicant's colleagues or parent/community members, in their decision to become a referee for the applicant.

Your support may be especially important in the case of a referee who feels unable to provide a positive statement.

Recognising the accreditation status of successful candidates

Recognition and sharing outstanding practice is important in developing a culture of professional excellence in schools. Teachers who have attained accreditation at Highly Accomplished or Lead Teacher are:

- entitled to use post nominals (ATA for Highly Accomplished Teacher; ATL for Lead Teacher) to indicate their accreditation status when they choose to do so,
- required to maintain their accreditation, so need access to opportunities to participate in activities that reflect their key stage, and
- able to make significant contributions to the professional learning of other teachers in the school.

Responding to the needs of unsuccessful candidates

Teachers who have completed their accreditation submission and were not awarded accreditation at Highly Accomplished or Lead Teacher by their TAA A/L may require your support. A discussion with the teacher regarding their career direction, reflection on their submission and future accreditation and professional possibilities may be appropriate.

Need more advice?

Contact the NESAs Teaching Standards Directorate

Call: 1300 739 338

Email: contactus@nesa.nsw.edu.au

Street Address: Level 4, 117 Clarence Street, Sydney, NSW 2000

Postal address: GPO Box 5300 Sydney 2001



School Report: Observation of Teaching

Name of Candidate Teacher:

Accreditation submission level:

Name of Teacher Observer:

Position/role of Teacher Observer:

Lesson being observed:

Class:

Date:

Agreed focus of the lesson observation	
Practice to be observed	Standard Descriptors (e.g. 4.1.4)
Describe the candidate's actions that you observed during the lesson	

Evaluate the candidate's classroom practice in relation to the Standard Descriptors identified

Signed Date Candidate Teacher

Signed Date Teacher Observer