



Professional Development Review



Background Information

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Note

The term 'teaching and learning support staff member' is used throughout this document to denote any individual who works with teachers in classrooms, supporting the learning process. It is implied, therefore, that it covers a number of job titles including teaching assistant, classroom assistant, learning support assistant and special needs assistant.

About NAPTA

The National Association of Professional Teaching Assistants (NAPTA) has been established to recognise the expanding role that all support staff are playing in schools. NAPTA supports these individuals by providing professional development opportunities, acting as an information service, and helping to assess and document their existing skills and training needs.

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National Occupational Standards

The National Occupational Standards for Teaching/Classroom Assistants (NOS TA/CA) were published by the Local Government National Training Organisation (LGNTO) in April 2001. The Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) took responsibility for them in September 2005, and reviewed and developed them over the two years that followed. In 2007, the standards were relaunched as the National Occupational Standards for Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools (NOS STL).

The National Occupational Standards are designed to be suitable for all staff who work with teachers, supporting the learning process in schools. They represent best practice expectations about the role and responsibilities of teaching and learning support staff.

“National Occupational Standards are presented in the form of units of competence. The units of competence are the building block for developing National Vocational Qualification/Scottish Vocational Qualification (NVQ/SVQ). Equally important, however, they can be used for a range of other purposes such as devising job descriptions, assisting in recruitment, selection and staff deployment, identifying training and development needs and performance targets, and developing training programmes and vocationally related qualifications ...

Those responsible for the deployment and management of teaching/classroom assistants can use the National Occupational Standards to carry out an audit of the skills needed for effective classroom support within the school including, for example, support needed for individual pupils, different age groups, and/or subject areas. A parallel audit of the competences of classroom support staff will facilitate the effective deployment of staff and identify opportunities for individuals' career development. The standards can also be used to define performance targets to support appraisal processes and the identification of training needs.”

Local Government National Training Organisation, April 2001

The NVQ/SVQ

The NVQ/SVQ for Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools has been created at Levels 2 and 3 of the National Qualifications Framework. The set of units of competence at Level 2 are designed to be applicable to teaching and learning support staff who are relatively inexperienced in the role or whose responsibilities at work are limited in scope. The set of units at Level 3 are aimed at experienced teaching and learning support staff and those whose working role requires a wide range of responsibilities.

Teaching and learning support staff must be able to demonstrate competence in the units through the presentation of evidence in order to gain NVQ/SVQ certification. NVQ/SVQ units of competence can be separately certificated. Teaching and learning support staff members can therefore work towards the qualification at their own pace, providing evidence and gaining certificates for one unit at a time, if desired. Once they have achieved the required number and type of units for the Level 2 or Level 3 qualification, they will be awarded a full NVQ/SVQ certificate at the relevant level.

The Level 2 and Level 3 sets of units are divided into mandatory units and optional units. If teaching and learning support staff wish to gain a full qualification at either level, they must take all of the mandatory units plus the required number of optional units for that level, complying with any rules governing the choice of optional units. Within these rules, the choice of which units to select is up to the teaching and learning support staff member and the school.

Level 2 NVQ/SVQ Mandatory units

The NVQ/SVQ at Level 2 has five mandatory units:

- 1 Provide support for learning activities
- 2 Support children's development
- 3 Help to keep children safe
- 4 Contribute to positive relationships
- 5 Provide effective support for your colleagues.

Level 2 NVQ/SVQ Optional units

In addition to the five mandatory elements, staff members must select **two** of the following optional units:

- 6 Support literacy and numeracy activities
- 7 Support the use of information and communication technology for teaching and learning
- 8 Use information and communication technology to support pupils' learning
- 9 Observe and report on pupil performance

- 10 Support children's play and learning
- 11 Contribute to supporting bilingual/multilingual pupils
- 12 Support a child with disabilities or special educational needs
- 13 Contribute to moving and handling individuals
- 14 Support individuals during therapy sessions
- 15 Support children and young people's play
- 16 Provide displays
- 17 Invigilate tests and examinations.

Level 3 NVQ/SVQ Mandatory units

The NVQ/SVQ at Level 3 has six mandatory units:

- 3 Help to keep children safe
- 18 Support pupils' learning activities
- 19 Promote positive behaviour
- 20 Develop and promote positive relationships
- 21 Support the development and effectiveness of work teams
- 22 Reflect on and develop practice.

Level 3 NVQ/SVQ Optional units

In addition to the six mandatory elements, staff members must select **four** units chosen from five groups. Their choices must include **no more than two units from Group E**.

Group A: Supporting pupils' learning

- 8 Use information and communication technology to support pupils' learning
- 23 Plan, deliver and evaluate teaching and learning activities under the direction of a teacher
- 24 Contribute to the planning and evaluation of teaching and learning activities
- 25 Support literacy development
- 26 Support numeracy development
- 27 Support implementation of the early years curriculum
- 28 Support teaching and learning in a curriculum area
- 29 Observe and promote pupil performance and development
- 30 Contribute to assessment for learning
- 31 Prepare and maintain the learning environment
- 32 Promote the transfer of learning from outdoor experiences.

Group B: Meeting additional support needs

- 33 Provide literacy and numeracy support to enable pupils to access the wider curriculum
- 34 Support gifted and talented pupils
- 35 Support bilingual/multilingual pupils
- 36 Provide bilingual/multilingual support for teaching and learning
- 37 Contribute to the prevention and management of challenging behaviour in children and young people
- 38 Support children with disabilities or special educational needs and their families
- 39 Support pupils with communication and interaction needs
- 40 Support pupils with cognition and learning needs
- 41 Support pupils with behaviour, emotional and social development needs
- 42 Support pupils with sensory and/or physical needs
- 43 Assist in the administration of medication
- 44 Work with children and young people with additional requirements to meet their personal support needs.

Group C: Providing pastoral support

- 45 Promote children's well-being and resilience
- 46 Work with young people to safeguard their welfare
- 47 Enable young people to be active citizens
- 48 Support young people in tackling problems and taking action
- 49 Support children and young people during transitions in their lives
- 50 Facilitate children and young people's learning and development through mentoring
- 51 Contribute to improving attendance
- 52 Support children and families through home visiting.

Group D: Supporting the wider work of the school

- 16 Provide displays
- 17 Invigilate tests and examinations
- 53 Lead an extra-curricular activity
- 54 Plan and support self-directed play
- 55 Contribute to maintaining pupil records
- 56 Monitor and maintain curriculum resources
- 57 Organise cover for absent colleagues
- 58 Organise and supervise travel

- 59 Escort and supervise pupils on educational visits and out-of-school activities
- 60 Liaise with parents, carers and families
- 61 Provide information to aid policy formation and the improvement of practices and provision.

Group E: Working with colleagues

Staff members cannot choose both units 63 and 64.

- 62 Develop and maintain working relationships with other practitioners
- 63 Provide leadership for your team
- 64 Provide leadership in your area of responsibility
- 65 Allocate and check work in your team
- 66 Lead and motivate volunteers
- 67 Provide learning opportunities for colleagues
- 68 Support learners by mentoring in the workplace
- 69 Support competence achieved in the workplace.

The National Workload Agreement's 22 tasks

In January 2003, the Government, employers and school workforce unions signed a National Agreement designed to help schools to raise standards and tackle workload issues. One of the aims of this National Workload Agreement was to free teachers from the shackles of excessive non-teaching workload. It proposed that schools deploy more support staff in extended roles, as a means of releasing extra time for teachers and reducing their workload. The National Workload Agreement therefore redefined the roles that both teachers and teaching and learning support staff perform within a school.

“The National Agreement is not about replacing teachers with teaching assistants and other support staff – it makes clear that teachers and teaching assistants are not interchangeable and that each class/group must have an assigned qualified teacher to teach them. It is about looking at the key role currently played by support staff, identifying ways in which that role can be extended in order to raise standards, and seeing the benefits that having a better-trained, wider range of adults can have for pupils, teachers and every aspect of school improvement.”

Department for Education and Skills, January 2003

The National Workload Agreement also stated that support staff should, increasingly, be recognised for the contribution they make to raising pupil standards, and should have access to expanded roles, and improved choices and career opportunities, including proper recognition for existing responsibilities.

To deliver these reforms, a seven-point plan was agreed, which stipulated that, in order that teachers could better focus on teaching and learning, administrative and clerical processing should be done by support staff. Under the National Workload Agreement, the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document 2004 identified 21 tasks which should no longer be carried out by teachers, with a 22nd task included from September 2005. These tasks are predominantly administrative, and will often now be part of the role of support staff within the school.

The 22 tasks are:

- 1 Collecting money from pupils and parents
- 2 Investigating a pupil's absence
- 3 Bulk photocopying
- 4 Typing or making word-processed versions of manuscript material and producing revisions of such versions
- 5 Word processing, copying and distributing bulk communications, including standard letters, to parents and pupils
- 6 Producing class lists on the basis of information provided by teachers

- 7 Keeping and filing records, including records based on data supplied by teachers
- 8 Preparing, setting up and taking down classroom displays in accordance with decisions taken by teachers
- 9 Producing analyses of attendance figures
- 10 Producing analyses of examination results
- 11 Collating pupil reports
- 12 Administration of work experience (but not selecting placements and supporting pupils by advice or visits)
- 13 Administration of public and internal examinations
- 14 Administration of cover for absent teachers
- 15 Ordering, setting up and maintaining ICT equipment and software
- 16 Ordering supplies and equipment
- 17 Cataloguing, preparing, issuing and maintaining materials and equipment and stocktaking the same
- 18 Taking verbatim notes or producing formal minutes of meetings
- 19 Coordinating and submitting bids (for funding, school status and the like) using contributions by teachers and others
- 20 Transferring manual data about pupils not covered by the above into computerised school management systems
- 21 Managing the data in school management systems
- 22 Invigilating external examinations.

Professional Standards for HLTAs

Included as part of the National Workload Agreement signed by the Government, employers and school workforce unions in January 2003 was the proposal to introduce the role of higher level teaching assistant (HLTA). This new HLTA role is intended to make a distinct contribution within schools, complementing that of the teacher in the support of pupils' learning.

"Teachers' professional training, knowledge and experience prepare them to take overall responsibility for pupils' learning. However, they are not required to take sole responsibility for every aspect of each lesson that is taught. There are times when they will want to draw upon support from a wide range of other colleagues, including HLTAs."

Department for Education and Skills, September 2003

The National Workload Agreement stated that HLTAs are able to cover classes, and should be able to ensure that pupils can progress with their learning, based on their knowledge of the learning outcomes planned by the classroom/subject teacher. It is anticipated that many HLTAs could progress, in time, to become qualified teachers.

HLTAs work in a range of different settings and have a greater degree of autonomy than most other support staff in the school. This increased level of understanding and responsibility is reflected in the Professional Standards which an HLTA is expected to meet.

The Professional Standards for HLTAs set out what an individual should know, understand and be able to do to be awarded HLTA status. The standards are set out in three sections:

Professional attributes

The attitudes, values and commitment expected of HLTAs.

- 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 a 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

The knowledge and skills needed by HLTAs to be able to work effectively with teachers as part of the professional team supporting learning.

- 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

The expectations for planning, monitoring, managing and evaluating learning within the framework of guidance and supervision agreed with the assigned teacher and in accordance with arrangements made by the headteacher of the school.

Planning and expectations

- 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

- 22 Monitor learners' responses to activities and modify the approach 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

- 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.

In order to gain HLTA status, the candidate is required to demonstrate, in the context of their specific specialist area and to the satisfaction of an approved assessor, that they are able to meet the requirements of each of the Professional Standards. A teaching and learning support staff member can work towards meeting the standards through a combination of prior experience, experience on the job, and training.

The Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) organises national HLTA training programmes via regional providers and local authorities. These programmes help teaching and learning support staff to gain the skills required to meet the Professional Standards, and provide the required assessment. There are three types of training programme available:

- an 'assessment only' route of around three days training
- a 'full training programme' route of around 50 days training
- an 'accelerated route' to HLTA status. This is a more tailored programme for teaching and learning support staff who meet many of the Professional Standards but who require a programme to meet specific standards.

The profiling process

These notes explain how NAPTA collects, organises and analyses the data about teaching and learning support staff's perceived competences.

The questionnaire

The online questionnaire asked the teaching and learning support staff members to rate their current experience and abilities in response to questions/statements that fell into the following areas:

- Personal profile
- Teaching support
- Learning activities
- Literacy and numeracy
- Classroom and resources
- Administration/pupil data
- Pupil behaviour
- Pupil care and development
- Health and pastoral support
- Extra-curricular and observation
- SEN/healthcare
- Bilingual/multilingual pupils
- School policy and practice
- Working relationships
- Leadership
- Professional development
- Parents/carers.

The personal profile section contained a number of questions, for example, 'Which subject area do you specialise in, if any?'. Respondents were asked to select appropriate responses for each question.

The screen that started with the statement 'I provide effective and appropriate teaching and learning support for pupils' marked the start of the occupational standards section of the questionnaire. For each statement in this section, respondents were asked to answer:

- Do you do this as part of your job?
- Do you feel confident at this?

Analysing the responses

Each statement that the teaching and learning support staff were asked to respond to has been carefully mapped to the units of competence contained in the National Occupational Standards for Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools, the units of the NVQ/SVQ for Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools, the Professional Standards for Higher Level Teaching Assistants, the National Workload Agreement's 22 tasks and a range of professional development opportunities. A statement may be mapped to several elements (units, tasks or standards); and each element has several statements which apply to it. The outcome for each of the elements shown in the reports represents the combination of the teaching and learning support staff members' responses to all of the statements mapped to it.

It should be noted that some items within the various elements are taken to be implicit, eg it is assumed in some cases that, if the teaching and learning support staff members state that they are competent in a particular area, they are also familiar with that area's underlying principles, policies, procedures and practices.

The reports should be used by the teaching and learning support staff members, their line managers and their employers for information only. They are in no way intended to be a statement or evidence of teaching and learning support staff's *actual* skills, knowledge or competence, but rather they outline the teaching and learning support staff's *own current perception* of their skills, knowledge and competence. NAPTA and its partners cannot be held in any way responsible for any actions taken by any party following receipt of a *Professional Development Review* report.

Development Resources

To help schools to meet identified needs and to offer more general support, NAPTA provides a number of extensive and carefully compiled resources. These fall into three principal categories – those that:

- meet individual development needs through school-based activities
- offer institutional guidance
- stimulate self-study, and offer reference sources and help to support learners individually, in groups or in whole classes.

All the material is provided in convenient digital formats and is accessible online by logging in to the NAPTA Web site at www.napta.org.uk with your membership number and password. The content of each section of the material (outlined below) is structured like a Web site and is accessible through standard Web-browser software.

Meeting Individual Needs

The reports from the NAPTA *Professional Development Review* and *Support Staff Survey* highlight a range of important areas for individual and team development. Many of these are best addressed by short, carefully-targeted sessions run in school.

To support this process, the *Meeting Individual Needs* material provides detailed, structured, prepared resources, closely mapped to the National Occupational Standards for Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools, to be used in brief, efficient group training sessions. The contents of each session are designed to be supportive enough to enable effective internal delivery by a team leader.

The National Occupational Standards for Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools document is included in the material.

Institutional Guidance

Most schools struggle to implement all the mandatory management processes that are now expected in the context of single status for all support staff. The following resources are offered to make implementation much easier.

CPD Portfolio Builder

This resource provides a wealth of materials to help support staff plan, structure and take forward their own professional development, as well as detailed, practical guidance for those managing them. Schools may find that the principles outlined can be applied more broadly.

Observation form

Teaching and learning support staff (who work in the classroom) may be observed in their role as part of the performance management process, or for professional development. A sample classroom observation form, which can be adapted for use in your school, is provided.

Support staff competence checklists

NAPTA's *Support Staff Survey* provides an analysis of the roles of support staff and their level of confidence for each of the 44 units of the Level 2 Support Work in Schools qualification (SWiS). Schools may like to consider in more detail staff confidence in the SWiS units that relate directly to their role. A series of competence checklists are provided to help with this.

The Support Staff Little Pocket Book

A handy guide offering precise and up-to-date information on essential issues such as new policies and initiatives, rights and responsibilities, the curriculum, special educational needs and salary structures.

Team Leaders' Toolkit

This is a professional development tool for team leaders of support staff in schools. The resource may be of benefit both to those who already have responsibility for support staff, and to those who aspire to such a position. Support staff team leaders in a school may include roles such as senior technician, lead higher level teaching assistant (HLTA), bursar, site manager or senior librarian, amongst others.

Video resources

Links to a selection of online films relating to issues that affect school support staff.

Curriculum Support

Certain individual and more general needs are best met by providing accessible self-study, reference and curriculum support resources, for on-the-job use. A very extensive and carefully tailored set of materials is provided to help schools meet these demands.

Cover Lessons Resources (secondary/special schools)

These subject- and key stage-specific materials form a varied and valuable source of ideas and activities for staff working with groups or whole classes. A number of activities are provided, each designed to be used with limited support and during a single lesson.

Flying Start (secondary/special schools)

This resource covers the key academic, personal and social issues that pupils must address if they are to progress successfully and become better independent learners. It is suitable for any support staff who deal with teaching and learning, and particularly with gifted and talented pupils.

ICT Skills Resources

This resource provides the solution for developing personal competence and confidence in using ICT.

Marking guide

With support staff taking increasing responsibility for pupils' learning, it is important that they are able to contribute to appropriate marking and assessment. This portable document format (PDF) file offers essential guidance and carefully structured activities to help schools and their staff achieve this.

Maths & English Resources (secondary/special schools)

This resource offers a wide-ranging set of material to help students with Maths and English at KS3 and GCSE.

Primary Resources (primary/special schools)

This rich, versatile set of digital publications provides support staff with a vast bank of over 3600 pages of pupil-centred materials covering a wide range of subjects.

SEN Reference

This gives support staff easy access to further information about the different needs of pupils that they work and communicate with, plus practical examples of how simple technology can help pupils with particular needs.

Video resources

Links to a selection of online films relating to providing curriculum support.