

Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers:

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

To be read in conjunction with the **Guide to Certification for Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers in SA – AISSA** which contains all the specific information about the process as well as other information available on the:

[AISSA Certification Website](#) and the [AITSL Certification Website](#)

1. What is Teacher Certification in Australia?
2. How long does Certification last?
3. What is the Guide to Certification?
4. Are the Rewards for Great Teachers payments for teachers who are certified as HAT or LT as promised by the Australian Government in 2012 still available?
5. Is there an application fee?
6. Why does there have to be a fee at all?
7. Given the cost involved why should I undertake certification?
8. What will happen to the current AST (Advanced Skills Teacher) level?
9. Are there any requirements that I must meet to be able to apply for HAT or LT Certification in SA?
10. Is there anything else I need to do before I prepare an application?
11. If I meet the pre-requisites, have undertaken the professional discussion and the online self-assessment and submitted my Expression of Interest form to AISSA what do I then need to do to gain certification?
12. What is the South Australian Teacher Certification Committee (SATCC)?
13. What is the role of the assessors, who appoints them and where do they come from?
14. When can I submit my Stage 1 Evidence?
15. Is there a Stage 1 form? And a specific type of presentation that I must use?
16. Are there any specific format requirements for Stage 1?
17. To whom do I have to submit my application?
18. What happens if I am unsuccessful at Stage 1?
19. Can I appeal against an unsuccessful outcome?
20. If I am certified for HAT, can I then apply for LT?
21. Do I have to be in a leadership position to apply for LT certification?
22. Does the AISSA provide any support for teachers preparing a certification application?
23. What is the HALT Network?
24. How many certified HALTs are there currently in Australia?
25. Where can I find out more information?
26. More questions?

1. What is Teacher Certification in Australia?

National Certification is a voluntary and portable process that ensures teachers have access to a rigorous and transparent process that recognises Highly Accomplished (HA) and Lead teachers. It enables you to receive feedback on your practice and have your practice evaluated by nationally trained assessors who are external to your school. It exposes you to communities of practice and supports you to further develop and grow as a professional whilst improving outcomes for your students.

Certification recognises and promotes the development of collaborative learning professionals who strive to continually reflect upon and improve their practice. Certification supports teachers to explore their practice at the Highly Accomplished or Lead (HALT) career stage of the [Australian Professional Standards for Teachers](#).

Certification of HALTs has three purposes:

- a. recognise and promote quality teaching
- b. provide an opportunity for teachers to reflect on their practice
- c. provide a reliable indication of quality teaching that can be used to identify, recognise and/or reward Highly Accomplished and Lead teachers.

2. How long does Certification last?

National Certification is granted for a 5-year period after which certified teachers must renew their Certification. [The Guide to Renewal of Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers in Australia](#) outlines what certified teachers need to do to renew their certification, including developing professional practice and professional learning statements and selecting referees.

3. What is the Guide to Certification?

The Guide to Certification outlines all requirements and responsibilities of the process. It is an essential document for all stakeholders in the process. There are some minor adjustments to the process in SA and the SA Guide can be found on the AISSA website.

4. Are the Rewards for Great Teachers payments for teachers who are certified as HAT or LT as promised by the Australian Government in 2012 still available?

No.

5. Is there an application fee?

Sectors have responsibility for setting their own application fee. The Association for Independent Schools SA (AISSA) application fee for teachers employed in an Independent school is \$1825, which is paid to AISSA in 3 instalments:

- \$125 - registration as an applicant with AISSA (a once off payment which will not need to be paid again if applicant is unsuccessful and reapplies, or delays their Stage 1 or 2 assessment)
- \$850 - submission of Stage 1 materials for HAT or LT certification
- \$850 - final payment made only when the applicant is successful at Stage 1 of the process and continues on to Stage 2 (see below for details on the stages and their assessment).

6. Why does there have to be a fee at all?

It was independently estimated in 2012 that \$1825 is the minimum cost for certification per applicant. The AISSA needs to ensure that they can facilitate a certification process for Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers (HALTs) that is rigorous, nationally compliant and credible. The AISSA also provides support and guidance for applicants.

7. Given the cost involved why should I undertake certification?

Achieving certification as a Highly Accomplished Teacher (HAT) or Lead Teacher (LT) has many benefits, both immediately and prospectively:

In an immediate sense, the following are benefits:

- Significant professional and personal benefit through detailed knowledge of the Standards and your application of them in your teaching;
- An excellent opportunity for you to reflect on your teaching practice and collaborate with colleagues and the wider profession to build capacity for yourself and others in teaching and improving student outcomes;
- Your enhanced status as a teacher, with this being a national accreditation that is recognised across States, Territories, schools and sectors.

In a prospective sense, the following could be benefits:

- The certification as HAT or Lead Teacher may be a pre-requisite for any senior leadership positions in some schools, sectors or systems;
- Some schools, sectors or systems have included in their Enterprise Agreements (EA) that the HALTs be recognised, supported and/or remunerated – please check your own school/sector/system EA.

8. What will happen to the current AST (Advanced Skills Teacher) level?

This is a decision for each school, sector or system.

9. Are there any requirements that I must meet to be able to apply for HALT Certification in SA?

Yes. To be able to apply to be a HALT you must meet the following requirements:

- Be an Australian or New Zealand citizen or have a permanent residency visa;
- Have full (not provisional) registration with the SA Teacher Registration Board;
- Either have been assessed as satisfactory in your most recent annual performance reviews, assessments, appraisals or equivalent: two years for Highly Accomplished career stage, or three for Lead career stage, OR have a referee providing verification and evidence of satisfactory recent past performance; and
- Have an authentic teaching role where you teach students over a period of time so you can show achievement of all the Descriptors at the relevant career stage;
- Undertake a professional discussion with your principal regarding your readiness to apply for certification and their support of your application.

NB: Teachers may apply directly for Lead, without having been assessed as a Highly Accomplished teacher.

10. Is there anything else I need to do before I prepare an application?

The AISSA asks all prospective applicants to submit an Expression of Interest form as soon as practical with an indication of the intended submission date for the Stage 1. This allows the AISSA to provide support and resources where possible. The form also requires approval from your Principal. The EoI form is on the AISSA website. Once completed the AISSA will invoice you the \$125 registration fee which is refundable.

Although not pre-requisites, it is highly beneficial for applicants to undertake the following:

- Undertake a *self-assessment* using the AITSL free online [Teacher Self-Assessment Tool](#) developed for this purpose prior to commencing a certification application to provide you with some indication of areas of strength and challenge as well as excellent feedback on which to reflect on your professional knowledge, practice and engagement against the [Australian Professional Standards for Teachers](#)
- Determine which career stage (Proficient, Highly Accomplished or Lead teacher) best reflects your current practice and for which you will be able to successfully collect evidence of your practice and impact on students and colleagues.
- Attend workshops and seminars to be offered by the AISSA to support and guide applicants
- Check the [AITSL Certification](#) and [AISSA Certification](#) websites site to keep up to date on latest information and details.
- A list of resources is also available on the AISSA Certification website

11. If I meet the pre-requisites, have undertaken the professional discussion and the online self-assessment and submitted my Expression of Interest form to AISSA what do I then need to do to gain certification?

You must undertake two stages to achieve certification (full details are in the Guide).

Stage 1

The first stage requires the submission of your 'Collection of Evidence' that shows that you meet the Standards required for certification as HALT.

This evidence must include:

- Annotated evidence of teacher practice
- Observation reports (at least 2)
- A written statement addressing the 3 Domains of the Standards and your key evidence
- If applying for the Lead career stage, a written statement of a Lead initiative; and
- Referee statements from at least three to five persons, one of whom must be your Principal or their delegate;

This evidence needs to relate to practice over an extended period of teaching and clearly indicate your **impact** on students and colleagues.

The material you submit is examined independently by two nationally trained assessors, appointed by the AISSA who are independent and impartial. Assessors contact your principal or their delegate and at least one of your other referees for further elucidation of their written statements regarding your meeting of the Standards.

The assessors prepare a Stage 1 Report for each applicant. If you are assessed as successfully meeting the Stage 1 requirements you are notified by the AISSA and arrangements made to progress to Stage 2 of the assessment.

Stage 2

One of the assessors from the Stage 1 process is assigned by AISSA to contact you to discuss arrangements and requirements of Stage 2 site visit (1 day) as set out in the Certification Guide. You need to structure the site visit to ensure that it contains all required observations and professional discussions to enable the assessor to collect further evidence on the agreed areas of the Standards as identified in the Stage 1 Report and verify your classroom practice at the HA or Lead level against the [AITSL Classroom Practice Continuum](#).

You are to take the lead in the planning and management of all aspects of the school visit, including liaising with your principal and the assessor prior to the school visit. The visit includes the assessor having

a professional discussion with your principal or their delegate to further explore your performance against the Standard(s) Descriptor(s) and one or more colleagues/referees. The visit also includes observation of your classroom teaching practice for at least 2 lessons.

If you are assessed in both the Stages 1 and 2 as meeting the Standards for the certification for which you applied (HAT or LT) a recommendation for approval is sent to the South Australian Teacher Certification Committee.

12. What is the South Australian Teacher Certification Committee (SATCC)?

SATCC is the cross-sector committee established by AISSA, CESA and DECD to approve recommendations for certification of teachers from the three sectors. The Committee ensures that the process undertaken by the sector conforms to the agreed national process developed through AITSL.

Each sector undertakes all the processes surrounding certification for teachers in their sector. The role of the SATCC is to approve recommendations for certification from the 3 sectors, validate processes, coordinate on-going assessor training, coordinate moderation of assessments and liaise with AITSL.

13. What is the role of the assessors, who appoints them and where do they come from?

The assessors are appointed by AISSA and have undertaken the National AITSL Assessor Training. AISSA have staff who have completed the Assessor Training and Facilitator Training and now facilitate the annual training of assessors in conjunction with AITSL, Catholic Education SA and DECD. The number trained by the AISSA will depend on the demand for certification.

Assessors undertake four days face to face training and approximately 35 hours online training as part of the National Assessor Training Program developed by AITSL. To be trained as an assessor, schools and assessors must indicate that the applicant will be available to be released at various times during the year to undertake up to five assessments.

Assessors can support but not assess teachers in their own schools or teachers who they know personally or professionally. Teachers who achieve certification where suitable will be offered the opportunity to train as assessors.

Assessors gain considerable professional development and status from the role. Assessors do not receive payment to undertake the role but when required the school can receive TRT replacement costs from AISSA.

In Stage 1 two assessors are assigned to each applicant. In the first instance, the two assessors assess the information separately, then confer regarding their assessments, determine the contacting of at least two of the referees and come to an assessment decision. If they cannot reach agreement that on-balance the seven Standards have been met on the evidence provided, AISSA appoint a third assessor to assist in reaching a decision.

The assessors prepare a written report: for unsuccessful applicants detailing strengths and areas needing improvement; for successful applicants progressing to Stage 2, the report identifies areas of focus for the school observations.

At Stage 2 only one of the assessors undertakes the in-school site visit. The assessor documents the evidence from the visit and submits this to the other assessor who was

involved in Stage 1 of the application and, if need be, to a third assessor. A further school visit may need to be held if the evidence is inconclusive or insufficient.

Having made the final assessment, the assessors write the Stage 2 report and liaise with AISSA who submit the required report and recommendation to the SATCC for the certifying entity to endorse or decline. The SATCC meet monthly throughout the year and applicants cannot be informed of the outcome of their application until authorised by the SATCC.

14. When can I submit Stage 1?

The AISSA does not have a fixed submission date. Once you have submitted your Expression of Interest form to AISSA, which should provide an indication of the date you intend to submit your Stage 1 Evidence, the AISSA Project Manager will keep in touch to provide you with updated information, resources and forms and help you determine a suitable date for submission.

15. Is there a Stage 1 form? and a specific type of presentation that I must use?

Yes, there is a form/cover sheet, referee list and evidence mapping tool on the AISSA website which must be submitted with your Stage 1 evidence. Once submitted the AISSA will invoice you for the next payment of \$850.

16. Are there any specific format requirements for Stage 1?

Your evidence and requirements may be submitted in hard copy, digitally (USB) or online (e.g. website, One Note, iBook etc.) or a combination provided all requirements are met and the format is clear, well-organised and user-friendly for the assessors.

Two copies of hard (paper) submissions or USBs must be provided to AISSA. One copy is returned to the applicant and the other copy kept as required. Submissions may be deidentified and used for training purposes with the appropriate permissions.

All students referred to in an application must be deidentified and permission given to use student photographs and images as per the relevant school's policy. Referee statements and classroom observations must be dated and signed and, for authenticity, should preferably be on official letterhead.

17. To whom do I address my application?

Mary Pickett
AISSA Teacher Certification
301 Unley Rd
Malvern SA 5061
pickettm@ais.sa.edu.au

18. What happens if I am unsuccessful at Stage 1?

Applicants who are unsuccessful in meeting Stage 1 requirements receive a report that indicates which Standards/Descriptors were not fully evidenced. The applicant can use this information to review, revise and update their practice and evidence so that, if they wish, they can submit another application. Further payment for a second application is by negotiation with AISSA.

Unsuccessful Lead teacher applicants for Stage 1 may opt to reapply for certification as a Highly Accomplished teacher. In this situation, they may use substantially the same evidence, but the evidence needs to be annotated to demonstrate achievement of the Standards/Descriptors at the Highly Accomplished career stage and the written statement adjusted accordingly.

19. Can I appeal against an unsuccessful outcome?

Appeals can be made to the sector but are only considered on the basis that process was not followed correctly in consideration of your application, not on whether it was considered you met the Standards or not in terms of the evidence you submitted.

20. If I am certified for HAT, can I then apply for LT?

Yes. It should be noted that there is no need to achieve HAT certification before applying for LT certification.

21. Do I have to be in a leadership position to apply for LT certification?

No. However, to achieve LT certification a teacher would generally need to be in a position that enables them to undertake lead activities with other staff and on behalf of the school.

22. Does the AISSA provide any support for teachers preparing a certification application?

Yes. AISSA provides information sessions and workshops for interested teachers and leaders to learn more about the certification process and what is required for each of the stages, the process of collecting and annotating evidence and how this should be developed and presented. Provision of mentors for applicants may be possible as the number of HALT's in our sector grows.

23. What is the HALT Network?

The [HALT Network](#) brings together all teachers certified as Highly Accomplished or Lead around Australia. This new professional network facilitated by AITSL enables certified teachers to develop expertise with like-minded colleagues from across Australia and work together to share the collective expertise of the Network with the broader profession. All teachers nationally certified as Highly Accomplished or Lead are invited to join the Network, and there is no membership fee.

24. How many certified HALTs are there currently in Australia?

As at January 1, 2017 there have been 353 teachers certified since 2012. (228 HA and 125 Lead teachers)

25. Where can I find more information and resources?

Updates and further information will be placed on the [AISSA Teacher Certification](#) page as well as the [AITSL Certification site](#) and [Resources](#) page.

26. More questions?

If the above questions and answers and the AITSL site do not answer other questions you have please contact at AISSA:

Mary Pickett

pickettm@ais.sa.edu.au

8179 1400