

GUIDANCE ON DYSLEXIA AND LITERACY TRAINING COURSES FOR SPECIALIST TEACHERS, PRACTITIONERS AND SUPPORT STAFF

How can I train to become a Specialist Teacher in the UK?

We receive many enquiries on training to become a specialist teacher and on courses suitable for those working in teaching and support settings with learners with dyslexia. The following guide is designed to give an insight into the main training routes and the particular Training and Professional Development courses on offer through Dyslexia Action.

Full details and application information on all of our courses is all available through our website see:

www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk

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HOW CAN I TRAIN TO BECOME A SPECIALIST TEACHER IN THE UK?

OBTAINING QUALIFIED TEACHER STATUS

Dyslexia and Literacy specialist teachers are usually qualified and experienced teachers or qualified learning support tutors with additional specialist teaching qualifications. Either of the following routes would normally be required in professional work settings and are usually followed by further postgraduate specialist teacher training which is offered by a number of providers including Dyslexia Action.

TEACHER TRAINING QUALIFICATIONS

Degree plus Qualified Teacher Status

This is a university degree course with subject specialism that also leads to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).

For mature students without A levels, you may find that universities may be prepared to take you on to a degree course if you have relevant work/study experience.

Degree plus a Postgraduate Teaching Qualification

An alternative route is to undertake a degree in a school curriculum or other relevant subject and then undertake Postgraduate Teacher Training. There are School-led and University-led courses available to choose from:

See: www.prospects.ac.uk/routes_into_teaching.htm
<https://getintoteaching.education.gov.uk/>

Applying for a Teacher Training Course

Applications for a postgraduate teaching qualification are made through UCAS Teacher Training. You can train in a university with school placements or train mainly in a school. In either case having a postgraduate teaching qualification would normally be required in professional work settings to then train to become a Specialist Teacher.

See: www.ucas.com/ucas/teacher-training/getting-started/entry-requirements

OBTAINING SPECIALIST TEACHER STATUS

Teachers eligible for these courses will normally be graduates with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) at either primary or secondary level or Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) obtained in further or higher education (FE/HE).

Applications from those without QTS/QTLS are accepted subject to **recent and relevant experience** gained in a teaching or learning support environment. All applicants should normally **have a minimum of two years teaching/learning support experience**.

Dyslexia Action offers the following Programmes both at Postgraduate and Undergraduate levels. All modules from the Professional Postgraduate Programme are accredited by Middlesex University London and are recognised as credits in a pathway to an MA in Professional Practice in Dyslexia and Literacy with the university.

Dyslexia Action Professional Certificate course in Specialist Teaching

Dyslexia Action offers the following Postgraduate Certificate programme at Level 7 (Master's Level) leading to Specialist Teacher/Practitioner Status:

- **Professional Certificate in Structured Teaching Intervention for Dyslexia and Literacy**
This course is the Level 7 pathway to qualification as a specialist teacher/practitioner of dyslexia/SpLD. Teachers/practitioners/tutors completing a Postgraduate Certificate course will be qualified to offer learning support to pupils with dyslexia/ specific learning difficulties and/or carry out screening tests only.
The course comprises three modules, A, B and C.
See: <https://dyslexiaaction.org.uk/structured-teaching-intervention/>

Dyslexia Action also offers the following Diploma programme at Level 5 leading to Specialist Teacher/Practitioner Status:

- **Level 5 Diploma in Strategic Teaching Support for Dyslexia and Literacy**
This course is the final part of a pathway to qualification as a specialist teacher/practitioner of dyslexia/SpLD and takes approximately 10 months to complete. Teachers/practitioners/tutors completing this certificate course will be qualified to offer literacy and learning support to pupils with dyslexia/ specific learning difficulties. This course may be undertaken by individuals who have completed the CPD pathway programme or by individuals with suitable alternative dyslexia/SpLD qualifications.
See: <https://dyslexiaaction.org.uk/level-5-diploma-in-strategic-teaching-support-for-dyslexia-and-literacy-dadip61/>

Both of these courses meet the criteria for:

- Associate Membership of [The Dyslexia Guild](#) (ADG)
- British Dyslexia Association (BDA) Approved Teacher Status (ATS) for qualified teachers
- British Dyslexia Association (BDA) Approved Teacher Status (ATS FE/HE) for qualified further and higher education teachers
- British Dyslexia Association (BDA) Approved Practitioner Status (APS) for non-qualified teachers

OBTAINING SPECIALIST TEACHER/ASSESSOR STATUS

Dyslexia Action offers the following Postgraduate programmes at Level 7 (Master's Level) leading to Specialist Assessor Status.

Note that it is a requirement to have already obtained Specialist Teacher/Practitioner Status before embarking on either of these two courses:

- **Professional Certificate in Assessment Practice for Dyslexia and Literacy**

This course is the pathway to qualification as a specialist assessor of dyslexia/SpLD for individuals already holding a specialist teaching/practitioner qualification at Level 5 or Level 7 SpLD.

The course comprises a short Bridging Module and then modules B, D and E.

See: <https://dyslexiaaction.org.uk/assessment-practice-for-dyslexia-and-literacy/>

- **Professional Diploma in Dyslexia and Literacy**

This course is the pathway to qualification as a specialist assessor of dyslexia/SpLD for individuals already holding a specialist teaching/practitioner qualification at Level 7 and who wish to progress to the MA pathway. The course comprises a short bridging module and modules D, E and F.

N.B. Candidates wishing to apply for this course must have obtained a relevant SpLD Postgraduate Certificate at Level 7.

See: <https://dyslexiaaction.org.uk/level-7-professional-diploma-in-dyslexia-and-literacy/>

Both of these courses meet the criteria for:

- Membership of The Dyslexia Guild (MDG),
- British Dyslexia Association (BDA) Associate Membership (AMBDA)
- British Dyslexia Association (BDA) Associate Membership (AMBDA FE/HE) for qualified further and higher education teachers (B, D & E route subject to accreditation)
- An Assessment Practising Certificate (APC) for dyslexia/SpLD.

DBS checks

Please note: A Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check is a requirement for working with children and young people. You should allow AT LEAST 6 WEEKS to process any DBS application and this must be in place before any face to face work is undertaken with a learner. Please visit www.homeoffice.gov.uk/agencies-public-bodies/dbs/ for further information.

COURSE ACCREDITATIONS

British Dyslexia Association (BDA)

The BDA Accreditation Board accredits courses offered by course providers and also offers the opportunity for individual accreditation to candidates completing these courses. To do this they must meet specified criteria at AMBDA or ATS/APS level, or their FE/HE equivalents. For details on BDA approved courses

See: <http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/services/professional-accreditation>

SpLD Assessment Standards Committee (SASC)

This steering committee is a standard-setting group concerned with the diagnostic assessment of specific learning difficulties in an educational setting. The authority for this committee and its remit, stem from the SpLD Working Group 2005/DfES Guidelines.

SASC seeks to extend the principles of good practice contained in the Guidelines across all age ranges and throughout the profession. For approved courses

See: www.sasc.org.uk/

Assessment Practising Certificate (APC)

- Candidates completing an accredited Certificate or Diploma in the Assessment of Dyslexia/SpLD at Level 7 are able to apply directly for a SASC approved Assessment Practising Certificate (APC) to carry out diagnostic assessments as a Specialist Teacher/Assessor. This qualification is also essential if you wish to carry out assessments for a Disabled Students' Allowance.
See: www.sasc.org.uk/
- Both BDA and SASC approve courses that qualify successful candidates to undertake assessments as a Specialist Assessor and to apply for a SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate which can be obtained from Dyslexia Action, the BDA or Patoss
See: <http://www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk/assessment-practising-certificate/>

OTHER COURSES

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Courses

Dyslexia Action Training and Professional Development offers a wide range of short accredited [CPD e-learning training courses](#) which are designed to strengthen the expertise of teachers and teaching assistants supporting children and adults struggling with literacy and can assist in your current role.

For Primary and Secondary See:

<https://dyslexiaaction.org.uk/primary-and-secondary-spld-practitioner-teacher-qualifications/>

Primary/Secondary Overseas See:

<https://dyslexiaaction.org.uk/spld-qualifications-for-international-teachers-and-practitioners/>

For those Supporting Adults UK and Overseas See:

<https://dyslexiaaction.org.uk/adult-and-fe-he-spld-teacher-practitioner-qualifications/>

The CPD Pathway Certificates above also lead to the **Level 5 Diploma in Strategic Teaching Support for Dyslexia and Literacy** further details are on page 3.

These courses are intended primarily for teachers, practitioners, support teachers or teaching assistants and may also be useful to you if you work in a support role. They **do not** however confer Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). Registration for all of these programmes is online. We recommend that you look initially at the Level 4 CPD Award in Perspectives on Dyslexia; you can find further details in the downloadable syllabus:

Dyslexia Action CPD: Level 4 and Level 5 CPD, International and Supporting Adults Pathways Unit, Award and Pathway Certificate Syllabus (available through above links)

Courses for Teaching Assistants

Teaching Assistants will find Dyslexia Action short, accredited CPD courses useful, in particular the **Level 4 Certificate in Supporting Literacy in Learners with Dyslexia (DACRT51)**

There are some Learning Support Assistant Courses in supporting pupils with SpLDs, leading to ALSA status (Accredited Learning Support Assistant). For further information see the BDA website and approved courses (Section 8).

See: <https://dyslexiaaction.org.uk/primary-and-secondary-spld-practitioner-teacher-qualifications/>

Courses for those working with Adults

Level 5 Certificate in Supporting Adults with Dyslexia and Co-occurring Difficulties (DACRT56)

This programme is suitable for those working in Further or Higher Education and with adult learners. This is the baseline qualification for those seeking membership for DSA-QAG.

QTS is not required for this pathway.

See: <https://dyslexiaaction.org.uk/adult-and-fe-he-spld-teacher-practitioner-qualifications/>

CPD courses for Specialist Teachers and Assessors

These courses provide specialist CPD and training for **qualified specialist** teachers, practitioners and assessors.

See: <http://www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk/courses-for-qualified-spld-professionals/>

OTHER INFORMATION

The Dyslexia Guild

The Dyslexia Guild is a membership organisation of specialist teachers/practitioners/assessors and other professionals who are keen to maintain contact/network with others from the world of SpLD. The Guild aims to promote discussion, information and research as well as keeping members informed of developments in the field through publication and distribution. The Guild is open to all those with a professional or general interest in dyslexia. Benefits include an online library with e-books and e-journals; online forums; a topical termly journal: The Dyslexia Review; an e-newsletter: Guild Gallery and a vibrant annual Summer Conference.

Grades of Membership

The majority of Guild members are either specialist teachers, practitioners or support tutors holding a Level 7 Postgraduate Certificate in Dyslexia/SpLD or equivalent qualifications. Specialist teacher/practitioner/assessors will normally hold an additional Level 7 Postgraduate Certificate or Diploma in Dyslexia/SpLD.

Our grades of Membership are as follows:

Affiliate Member	not entitled to post nominal letters or physical library loans but support the ethos of the organisation
Associate Member(ADG)	are qualified specialist teachers and support tutors
Associate Member (ADG FE/HE)	are professional members and support tutors in further and higher education who have gained membership through Accreditation of Prior Experience and Learning (APEL) and hold qualifications relevant to student support for Non-Medical Helpers (NMH)
Member (MDG)	are qualified specialist teacher/assessors
Fellow (FDG)	are qualified specialist teachers and assessors with at least seven years of post-Member qualifying experience.

For further details see: <http://www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk/da-guild/>

The Literacy and Dyslexia-SpLD Professional Development Framework

This easy to use online tool encompasses the levels of knowledge and skills required across the education workforce to support all learners with dyslexia/SpLD.

See: <http://framework.thedyslexia-spldtrust.org.uk/>

Contact Details

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