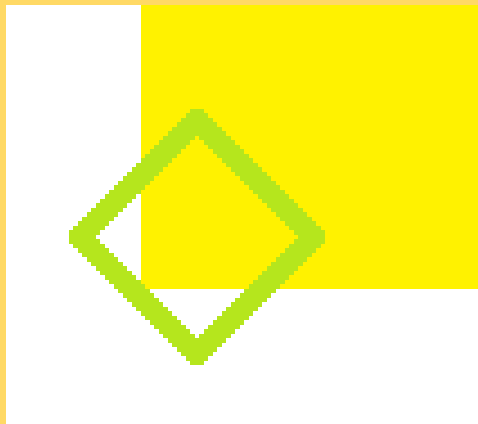


Dyslexia Action

Level 5 Diploma in Specialist Teaching for Literacy-Related Difficulties (DIST)



Programme Syllabus

From 1 October 2026 v1

THE CPD STANDARDS OFFICE
CPD PROVIDER: 50005
2026-2027
www.cpdstandards.com



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Introduction

Dyslexia Action CPD courses are designed to strengthen the expertise and confidence of teachers, teaching assistants and support tutors in order to ensure the progress and achievement of children/adults with literacy difficulties and special educational needs. CPD courses allow professionals to develop and enhance their current skills and understanding. Whilst studying Dyslexia Action CPD courses, participants will question what currently takes place in their learning environment and will learn new theories and strategies. They will learn from fellow professionals and will share their experiences and discuss issues via the course forums. Our Level 4 and 5 unit and awards courses are mapped to level descriptors¹ and build towards qualifications. They are not awareness courses. Participants must complete the assignments and cannot be given access as 'read only' courses.

Disclaimer

This document is subject to regular revision and replaces any earlier version produced by Dyslexia Action. Whereas every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this document, Dyslexia Action Training and Professional Development is unable to provide any warranty concerning the accuracy or completeness of any information contained herein and in the associated website. Dyslexia Action reserves the right to make changes to the information given and to change the content of courses. Applicants will receive additional, current information during the admissions process and on joining their chosen course. *Dyslexia Action Training and Professional Development assumes no responsibility or liability for any injury, loss or damage incurred as a result of any use or reliance upon the information and material contained within its publications or downloaded from its website.*

Explanation of Terms

RPL – Recognition of Prior Learning

Candidate – The person undertaking an award or unit qualification

CPD – Continuing Professional Development

Hours of Learning Time - This includes all the learning activities that are required to achieve the learning outcomes. Hours of Learning Time includes: preparation before the course begins such as induction activities; familiarisation with the course outline and recommended reading; participation in online activities such as forums and group activities and private study and assessment activities both during and after the course ends.

Learner – The pupil / student that the course participant does any practical work with

Participant – The person who is studying on a course

Accessibility

If you have queries about the accessibility of this document, please contact us directly for advice and assistance.

Copyright

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¹ See Appendix for further details.

Level 5 Diploma in Specialist Teaching for Literacy-Related Difficulties (DIST)

There are two available routes to completing the Level 5 Diploma. They each have their own entry requirements. Details of these routes can be found below.

Who is the diploma designed for?

The Level 5 Diploma is a comprehensive programme which trains teachers, teaching assistants and support tutors to become qualified specialist teachers and practitioners. The programme is suitable for those working with children or adults and those who are overseas. Please note, that as the components of the diploma pathway form part of a cumulative professional qualification pathway, elements of it cannot be retaken if failed.

The Level 5 Diploma will enable you to:

- Acquire a comprehensive understanding of literacy acquisition and gain the technical knowledge to foster language awareness in learners with literacy difficulties (including dyslexia)
- Get to grips with a literacy skills audit tool and use it to plan a bespoke literacy intervention programme
- Develop the expertise to use the [Dyslexia Action Literacy Programme \(DALP\)](#) which endorses a multifaceted approach to literacy teaching. Learning points cover knowledge of phone-me-grapheme correspondences, parts of speech, basic punctuation, suffixing skills and working with polysyllabic words
- Plan comprehensive individualised literacy sessions that are structured, cumulative and multisensory
- Analyse learners' literacy performance with precision and accuracy using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)
- Develop the skills to mentor and advise non-specialist staff on effective strategies for supporting learners with literacy challenges within your educational setting.

Why choose the Diploma in Specialist Teaching for Literacy-Related Difficulties?

- We believe in equipping our delegates with a deep understanding of literacy difficulties, so they are able to adapt lessons and materials in order to meet individual learner needs, including differences in working memory capacity and processing load
- This highly respected course has been developed by specialist teachers who have decades of teaching experience
- Our tutors on this course are all SpLD experts, with specialist expertise in this field, with key milestones to help keep you on track.
- No other courses offer training on the engaging and highly effective [Dyslexia Action Literacy Programme \(DALP\)](#) that can be used across all age groups
- Enjoy flexible learning. Fit in your studies around work and personal commitments, with key milestones to help keep you on track
- Benefit from individual support and detailed feedback from your tutor as you create your lesson plans, make formative records and work through a reflective journal together.

Suitability of the Diploma for Aspiring Teacher-Assessors

The Level 5 Diploma offers an in-depth and rewarding learning experience for individuals passionate about the intricacies of literacy teaching. Its comprehensive and rigorous curriculum is specifically designed to develop expertise in this area.

Suitability of the Diploma for Already Qualified Specialist Teachers

The Level 5 Diploma in Specialist Teaching for Literacy-Related Difficulties can also be undertaken by qualified specialist teachers *with a Level 5 or Level 7 specialist teaching qualification recognised by Dyslexia Action as equivalent to our own*, who wish to gain an introduction and practical experience of the [Dyslexia Action Literacy Programme](#). However, important conditions apply. Please see the External RPL section below for further details.

Level 5 Diploma – Standard Route

This route is only available for graduates² and takes one calendar year to complete. Applicants must have at least two years recent and relevant teaching or learning support experience in a dyslexia/literacy support setting. There is an application process. Applications are considered during a review process. Only applicants who have suitable professional experience, the required qualifications and the necessary interest in learning in-depth about literacy teaching will be accepted.

There are three parts to the diploma; the individual components are not available to book separately. Each component must be passed in order to progress to the next part of the course. Participants are given only one chance to resubmit an assignment that has not passed on first submission.

Please note: as this is a professional qualification pathway, no unit of study can be retaken. If the resubmitted work is not of passing standard, the participant is deemed to have failed the unit of study and cannot progress to the next stage of the diploma (see: Extension and Deferral Process further down and [Terms](#) you agreed to upon application).

NB: The Standard Route takes approximately one year to complete.

Diploma in Specialist Teaching for Literacy-related Difficulties (Standard Route)			
Part Number	Title	TQT	Credits
DIST-01	Understanding Literacy Difficulties	120	12
DIST-02	Foundations for Building Structured Literacy Teaching Interventions	230	23
DIST-03	Extending Specialist Literacy Teaching Skills	130	13
	Total	480	48
Notes:	TQT = Total Qualification Time		

² Foundation degrees do not meet the entry requirements of this course.

The Dyslexia Action CPD Certificate Pathway Route

This is a Level 4/5 study pathway suitable for non-graduates and graduates. Applicants for this route must have at least one year of recent and relevant experience in a school or college setting working with learners with literacy difficulties/dyslexia/SpLD.

Please note: It takes approximately 18 months to two years of study to complete the diploma via this route³.

In this pathway the Level 5 Diploma participants do not enrol directly for the diploma; instead, they enrol initially for one of three possible certificate pathway routes. Each of the following certificate pathways is made up of two awards, each comprising three units. Participants can choose from **one** of three possible certificate pathways below, depending on their work setting. Either:

1. The [Literacy CPD Programme Pathway \(DACRT51-SCH\)](#) for teachers and teaching assistants (primary/secondary) **or**
2. The [International CPD Programme Pathway \(DACRT67-INTL\)](#) for teachers and teaching assistants working overseas (primary/secondary)
- or**
3. The [Supporting Adults CPD Programme Pathway \(DACRT56-ADU\)](#) for tutors/training staff/those in FE/HE working with adults (16 plus) and those working with adults overseas.

NB: If you wish to study the Unit DACPD99 (Numeracy and Dyscalculia) instead of one of the units within DACRT51-SCH, DACRT67-INTL or DACRT56-ADU please contact cpdmail@dyslexiaaction.org.uk for further information (terms apply).

Progression onto the Level 5 Diploma: The Application Process

There is an application process to join the Level 5 Diploma at Unit 2 (once you have passed the CPD certificate). Only applicants who have suitable professional experience, the required qualifications and interest in literacy teaching will be accepted. NB: The CPD Pathway Certificate gained is equivalent to the DIST1 unit of study for RPL purposes.

Successful applicants join the diploma at the beginning of DIST-02 and are expected to proceed to DIST-03 to complete the full diploma. Part 2 of the diploma (DIST-02) must be passed in order to progress to DIST-03.

Participants are given one chance to resubmit an assignment that has not passed on first submission.

Please note: as this is a professional qualification pathway, no unit of study can be retaken. If the resubmitted work is not of passing standard, the participant is deemed to have failed the unit of study and cannot progress to the next stage.

Diploma in Specialist Teaching for Literacy-related Difficulties (CPD Certificate Pathway Route)			
One of the following CPD certificate courses must be completed and is accepted (after application process) as RPL for DIST-01:		TQT	Credits
DACRT51-SCH: Level 4 CPD Cert. in Supporting Literacy in Learners with Dyslexia, OR: DACRT67-INTL: Level 4 CPD Cert. in Supporting International Learners with Dyslexia, OR: DACRT56-ADU: Level 5 CPD Cert. in Supporting Adults with Dyslexia and Co-occurring Difficulties.		n/a	RPL
In addition, both the following units must be successfully completed to gain the full diploma qualification:			
DIST-02	Foundations for Building Structured Literacy Teaching Interventions	230	23
DIST-03	Extending Specialist Literacy Teaching Skills	130	13
Total for Diploma depending on pathway chosen		480	48
Notes:	TQT = Total Qualification Time		

³ Applicants may accelerate the pathway only by studying more than one CPD unit at a time within the pathway only (upon successful completion of the first unit) within the certificate. No more than 2 CPD units can be studied at the same time.

External RPL Applicants: Already Qualified Specialist Teachers

Practitioners who are already qualified specialist teachers can apply for the diploma. Potential applicants with a previous specialist teaching qualification recognised by us will be offered one of two possible entry pathways:

- a. **Entry to DIST-02.** Direct entry to DIST-02 depends upon the recognition status of the previous qualifications gained; these must be approved by an Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process as being equivalent to the general theory on literacy learning unit of study (DIST-01) at the time of application to the course. If the qualification is more than ten years old and other CPD log evidence is not available or not recognised as sufficient, direct entry to DIST-02 is not available
- b. **Entry to the Standard Route of the diploma.** We reserve the right to require entry onto the full diploma if general theory knowledge in the previous qualification is not recognised as being current, or if the qualification is more than ten years old and other CPD log evidence is not available or not recognised as sufficient for RPL purposes.

List of Specialist Teaching Qualifications Recognised by Dyslexia Action for RPL Purposes

- Dyslexia Action Professional/Postgraduate Certificates (University of York, Middlesex University)
- Dyslexia Action Diploma qualifications in Dyslexia and Literacy (University of York)
- Dyslexia Institute Postgraduate Certificate or Diploma qualifications
- Hornsby Postgraduate Diploma in Specialist Teaching

Exit Awards

The expected exit qualification is the same for participants from each of the potential application categories (Standard Diploma, CPD Certificate Pathway RPL and external RPL):

- Candidates successfully completing Parts 1, 2 and 3 of the Standard Diploma Route exit with the *Diploma in Specialist Teaching for Literacy-Related Difficulties*
- Candidates successfully completing a CPD Pathway Certificate (DACRT51/DACRT-SCH, 67/INTL or 56/ADU) and DIST-02 and Part 3 of the diploma exit with the *Diploma in Specialist Teaching for Literacy-Related Difficulties*
- Candidates entering the programme at DIST-02 with external RPL that successfully complete DIST-02 and DIST-03 of the diploma exit with the *Diploma in Specialist Teaching for Literacy-Related Difficulties*.

Rarely, there may be reasons why progression through the three parts of the diploma is not possible for participants. There are early exit awards in such cases:

- Candidates successfully completing DIST-01 of the Standard Diploma Route can exit with the *Understanding Literacy Difficulties Award*
- Candidates successfully completing DIST Parts 1 and 2 of the Standard Diploma Route can exit with:
 - *Understanding Literacy Difficulties Award and*
 - *The Certificate in Support for Literacy-difficulties*
- Candidates successfully completing a CPD Pathway Certificate (DACRT51-SCH, 67/INTL or 56/ADU) and Part 2 of the diploma can exit with the *Certificate in Support for Literacy-difficulties*
- External RPL candidates entering at DIST-02 and successfully completing Part 2 of the diploma can exit with the *Certificate in Support for Literacy-difficulties*.

The Specialist Teaching Programme

Participants on the teaching course use the [Dyslexia Action Literacy Programme \(DALP\)](#). This specialist literacy training programme has been developed by the postgraduate tutor team at Dyslexia Action in response to the need for a programme that, through individual placement identification, provides a flexible pathway to accommodate each learner's literacy profile. DALP builds upon previous works in the United States of America by Orton, Gillingham, Stillman and Cox, as well as the British programmes initially developed by Hickey and the team at the Dyslexia Institute - e.g., the Dyslexia Institute Literacy Programme (DILP). The dynamic learning pathways that can be generated by practitioners who are trained to use DALP, contribute to its power as a teacher training tool and teaching intervention programme. The separate dimensions of DALP also make it a challenging tool to master – great dedication and self-study is required to gain competence in its use.

Learning Outcomes

DIST-01: Understanding Literacy Difficulties			
Level: 5	Total Qualification Time: 120	Credits: 12	Duration: 10 weeks (approx.)
This introductory study unit provides a grounding in the key theoretical perspectives and constructs required to gain a firm understanding of how literacy-related difficulties arise and are perpetuated. It is designed to give graduate participants the opportunity to acquire a grounding in the sources of literacy difficulties. There is tutor support, but study is expected independently with the tutor providing a monitoring role. DIST-01 is not required for entrants who have followed the CPD Certificate Pathway Route.			
Learning Outcomes - Participants will be able to: 1. Discuss a range of factors that can influence literacy acquisition and progression 2. Demonstrate a sound grasp of the key concepts and terminology necessary to promote progress in learners with delayed literacy development 3. Demonstrate understanding of the range of factors to consider when supporting learners with decoding and reading comprehension difficulties 4. Demonstrate understanding of the range of factors to consider when supporting learners with spelling and written expression difficulties			
DIST-02: Foundations for Building Structured Literacy Teaching Interventions			
Level: 5	Total Qualification Time: 230	Credits: 23	Duration⁴: 18 weeks (approx.)
The second diploma unit of study raises awareness of the key elements and rationale of effective literacy intervention practice using the Dyslexia Action Literacy Programme (DALP) as an example. The analysis of the different strands of DALP will enable participants to appreciate the range of factors to consider when planning strategic, structured support for learners with dyslexia and literacy-related difficulties. Participants analyse placement data in order to develop the necessary knowledge and skills to ascertain a learner's ideal entry point on the Dyslexia Action Literacy Programme (DALP) . A short series of specialist literacy sessions is delivered under the supervision of an experienced specialist literacy teacher, to give practitioners preliminary experience in the delivery of tailored learning resources for a specific learner.			
Learning Outcomes - Participants will be able to: 1. Demonstrate understanding of the essential components of a structured literacy intervention programme 2. Employ a placement process to gather evidence upon which to base a literacy intervention programme 3. Demonstrate understanding of the range of factors to consider when designating an entry point for a learner in a structured literacy intervention programme 4. Deliver a short series of structured, cumulative multisensory teaching sessions under the supervision of a qualified specialist literacy teacher			

⁴ This will vary depending upon where school/college holidays fall in the teaching calendar.

DIST-03: Extending Specialist Literacy Teaching Skills			
Level: 5	Total Qualification Time: 130	Credits: 13	Duration⁵: 10-15 weeks⁶ (approx.)
The final diploma unit of study is designed to enable the practitioner to gain the necessary experience to independently plan and deliver a series of structured literacy lessons to a learner. Participants will put their knowledge of the Dyslexia Action Literacy Programme (DALP) gained from the previous units of study into practice by taking the lead in the lesson planning process. A range of additional activities is undertaken to enable the participant to develop a varied portfolio of strategic teaching support skills.			
Learning Outcomes Participants will be able to: 1. Independently prepare a series of structured, cumulative multisensory teaching sessions for a learner with literacy difficulties based upon the findings of a placement process 2. Effectively conduct a teaching intervention with a learner with literacy difficulties based on a structured literacy intervention programme 3. Discuss how the essential components of a structured, sequential, cumulative multisensory lesson combined with higher-order skills tasks support multi-dimensional literacy development 4. Critically reflect upon the effectiveness of own teaching sessions and the resources used within them			

Demands of DIST 02 and 03

Each of the parts of the diploma is demanding and intensive. Each part of the course is designated a number of notional study hours per week, 'notional' meaning the time that the average participant would need to spend to complete all studies, formative and summative tasks. This includes the time needed for planning and delivering the teaching intervention programme. This means that it may take some participants longer than the stated hours per week to gain the maximum professional development opportunities that the course affords.

As noted earlier, tutors give guidance via forums and written feedback, but it is participants' responsibility to work through the course materials in order to gain professional understanding. The DALP tutors are there to advise participants and support the growth of self-initiated professional understanding and the development of competence in specialist literacy teaching. They are not provided to intensively coach participants until participants gain competence.

⁵ This will vary depending upon where school/college holidays fall in the teaching calendar and the number of sessions selected for the practicum.

⁶ This will vary depending upon where school/college holidays fall in the teaching calendar, the number of sessions selected for the practicum and the time spent compiling the compendium/portfolio tasks after completing the practical aspect of the course.

How will I be assessed?

There is quite a variety in the assignments for the diploma as a whole. These include reflective tasks, compulsory forums, conducting and reflecting upon your own performance in lesson delivery, designing higher order skills tasks for learners etc. All submissions are uploaded either on Moodle or via links within Moodle. Many quizzes feature in the units, as a means of self-checking knowledge and directing participants to key pieces of information within the course materials. Undertaking the quizzes should be seen as the means to an end, not as an end in itself. The end being the development of essential underpinning knowledge.

Unit Assignment Overview

DIST-01: Understanding Literacy Difficulties

- Quizzes (x7)
- Summative Assessments including short answer questions and activity design (x7, word count ranges between 330 and 1,200)

DIST-02: Foundations for Building Structured Literacy Teaching Interventions

- Quizzes (x6)
- Summative Assessments including case studies, evidence of teaching skills and lesson planning (x 5)

DIST-03: Extending Specialist Literacy Teaching Skills

- Completion of Teaching Skills Development Dialogue (TSDD) and learning session recording
- Compilation of teaching portfolio

Expectations of Participants

This diploma is a challenging professional qualification pathway and it should not be undertaken lightly.

DIST-01: requires 12 – 13 notional hours of self-study per week

Participants will acquire a theoretical understanding of the [Dyslexia Action Literacy Programme \(DALP\)](#) and then begin to apply the principles of specialist literacy provision under supervision.

DIST-02: requires 13 notional hours of study per week

In the early, theoretical section of this unit, tutors are available on the forums to give advice and respond to queries from participants. There is no one-to-one tutorial or meeting provision, participants gain their knowledge base through readings, structured exercises and the review of case study materials.

In the middle section of this unit, participants conduct the placement process with a learner. On handing in these findings, participants are allocated a one-to-one DALP tutor to supervise them in the practical teaching element of DIST-02 and then in DIST-03.

DIST-03: delivery of lessons and compilation of teaching portfolio

Practical teaching is an essential part of the diploma course. Candidates are required to submit evidence of teaching practice throughout their teaching practicum. Film recordings of teaching practice are made with the appropriate permissions from the school, learners and parents and within the terms of The Data Protection Act (2018). Recordings are usually submitted using a file upload facility - specific directions are available with the course handbooks.

Teaching Practice: Working with a Learner

The learner selected for the teaching intervention programme must be available for the duration of the teaching practice (around 14 school/college weeks). If the learner is going to be away for more than a week during the teaching practice, she/he may not be suitable for this intervention, similarly learners taking examinations may not have the time or focus to fully engage. Tutors will advise on the suitability of chosen learners, based on the information provided, but *it is the responsibility of participants to find and select suitable learners*.

Please note:

- Participants working with children can only teach a learner within a DfE registered state or independent school with a Unique Reference Number (URN)⁷ and should be covered by the school DBS check and safeguarding arrangements (this does not apply to those based overseas, although the school or college should be a registered organisation through the state authority)
- For safeguarding reasons, participants cannot teach a learner in the participant's own home or in the learner's family home: this is not permitted
- For reasons of academic and professional integrity, participants cannot teach a family member or close family friend for the teaching intervention programme
- Participants will be expected to select a learner whose age range is equivalent to the age range of learners they are working with at the time of making their application to the course with Dyslexia Action
- Learning sessions must be conducted face-to-face not over the internet.

The criteria for selection of a learner for the teaching intervention programme are:

- The learner should have a minimum age of seven⁸
- The learner should be currently underachieving in literacy (it is not a criteria that the learner has a diagnosis of dyslexia)
- The learner must not have a complex learning profile or social/ behavioural problems that will present challenges for the participant in training
- The learner can hold age-appropriate conversations in English and has been educated in a mainly English-speaking environment. English must be the language the learners predominantly use in school to access the curriculum. Learners who are struggling with English as an additional language are not suitable for the practical elements of the courses. All lessons within the teaching intervention programme must be delivered in English
- The learner should not be taking important exams during this period.

⁷ County Council Inclusion/SEND provision providers without a URN are usually considered suitable as long as the participant can provide:

- The name of county council overseeing provision
- An email for the provision provider that has a .gov.uk email extension

⁸ If you regularly work with children younger than this it may be possible to work with a younger child, but the deciding factor is whether the child's profile will enable you to gain sufficient experience of the application of DALP during your training with us. It may be the case if a younger child is taught that additional exercises may need to be undertaken to demonstrate competence for the purposes of the course.

Required Teaching Practice Hours

Dyslexia Action requires you to undertake a minimum of 20 hours of teaching support during the teaching practice. At least 10 hours of teaching support should be done with one learner individually (not in a group setting). Lessons normally take place on a weekly basis allowing lesson plans to be developed, resources to be prepared and tutor feedback given. Individual lessons can be scheduled for one hour or one-and-a-half hours with the learner (as appropriate for the age and profile of the learner). Successful completion of these teaching hours and other study-related tasks will enable participants to apply for Associate Membership of The Dyslexia Guild (ADG) and membership of other professional bodies (e.g., PATOSS).

Please see: 'Course Start Dates and Teaching Practice Dates' section for further information.

Will I need to have a DBS check?

As a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Enhanced Disclosure is a requirement for those working regularly with children and young people⁹The person you choose to use for any practical teaching should normally be someone within your school or workplace, where you will already have a DBS Enhanced Disclosure. If you do not currently have a DBS check then this will need to be organised with the educational establishment in which your potential learner is schooled. The DBS must be in place before any face-to-face work with a learner. Please visit: gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check for further information.

We reserve the right to request this information from you or to terminate a programme where we feel it is not in the interests of the learner to continue. Dyslexia Action Training and Professional Development will not assume responsibility nor will accept liability incurred as a result of any participant or learner being engaged in this programme.

Pre-reading for DIST

There is no pre-reading required. As a student of this programme, you are eligible for a **complimentary one-year membership** to The Dyslexia Guild, which includes library access for the duration of your active studies. To activate these benefits, please email: library@dyslexiaaction.org.uk.

⁹ And with adult learners who are categorised as vulnerable.

Application Information

Hardware and Software Requirements

Minimum Hardware and Software Requirements

- Windows/Apple computer with a suitable word processing programme (please note we cannot accept Apple Pages files). We do not support smartphones or tablets or very old Mac/pc machines.
- High Speed Internet connection
- Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox (Internet Explorer is not supported)
- Microsoft Office/OpenOffice/Google Docs
- Adobe Acrobat Reader/Foxit Reader/VLC Media Player

Internet connection

For the purpose of viewing online videos, broadband connection with a liberal bandwidth usage policy (5GB) is highly advisable. The basic course content can also be accessed via mobile broadband or even dial-up using smart phones and tablets, but the learning experience will likely be diminished and some video/audio content may not be accessible.

Email Account

There are two conditions that must be met by all participants on the programme. The application process or study pathway may be suspended until these conditions are met:

1. Email addresses used to register for Dyslexia Action courses must match the name you are enrolling under on that course. This is insisted upon to support effective tracking of those registering and studying with us. This also helps ensure that professionally appropriate emails are used in the practical modules/units where contact with learners' parents, schools and other external bodies is necessary.
2. You must have your own personal email account or individual work email account. Shared or family email addresses contravene GDPR guidelines and are not suitable for course correspondence. We recommend using Google Mail (Gmail) as this email also gives free access to Google Drive storage.

Junk/spam Filters

Despite all precautions, important emails to you from Dyslexia Action might be filtered as junk/spam. To avoid this problem please add cpdmail@dyslexiaaction.org.uk, dalpmail@dyslexiaaction.org.uk, campusonline@realtraining.co.uk. For IT assistance contact help@realtraining.co.uk

Course Start Dates and Teaching Practice Dates

Course start dates

Standard Diploma Graduate Route Dates - DIST01, 02 & 03			
START DATES	DIST-01	DIST-02	DIST-03
September 2026 - approx 12 months	Tuesday 1 September 2026 Friday 6 November 2026	Tuesday 5 January 2027 - Friday 26 March 2027	Tuesday 4 May 2027 - Friday 23 July 2027
January 2027 - approx 15 months This cohort Includes an extended break over the summer period	Tuesday 5 January 2027 - Friday 26 March 2027	Tuesday 7 September 2027 - Friday 17 December 2027	Tuesday 18th January 2028 Friday 5th May 2028
April 2027 - approx 12 months	Tuesday 6 April 2027 - Friday 18 June 2027	Tuesday 7 September 2027 - Friday 17 December 2027	Tuesday 18th January 2028 Friday 5th May 2028

CPD Certificate Pathway Route Dates - DIST02 & 03 only			
START DATES	DIST-01 (n/a)	DIST-02	DIST-03
September 2026 (6-7 months)	Not applicable as would have studied DACRT51/DACRT-SCH, 56/ADU or 67/INTL as alternative route	Tuesday 1 September 2026 - Friday 20th November 2026	Tuesday 5 January 2027 - Friday 26 March 2027
January 2027 (6-7 months)	Not applicable as would have studied DACRT51/DACRT-SCH, 56/ADU or 67/INTL as alternative route	Tuesday 5 January 2027 - Friday 26 March 2027	Tuesday 4 May 2027 - Friday 23 July 2027

Teaching Practice dates

September Cohort Start - DIST-01, 02 & 03		
Unit	Teaching/Assessment Element 1	Teaching/Assessment Element 2
DIST-01 Sept	No requirement	No requirement
DIST-02 Jan	Course activity: Initial assessment (placement process) When?: approximately early February Type of access required: one or two sessions Time required: approx. two hours for placement process	Course activity: Teaching practicum (Part One) When?: approximately March Type of access required: one-to-one lessons (weekly) Time required: Both 8 sessions and 10 sessions schedules: 3 x 90 min. lessons (or 2 x 45 mins* in the same week) *Please note, that if you are teaching 2 x 45 mins, they should be on consecutive days
DIST-03 May	Course activity: Teaching practicum (Part Two) When?: approximately May Type of access required: one-to-one lessons (weekly) Time required: 8-session schedule continuation: 5 x 90 min. lessons (or 2 x 45 mins in the same week) 10-session schedule continuation: 1 x 90 mins and 6 x 60 mins lessons	Course activity: Compendium/Portfolio Activities When?: approximately approximately March-July Type of access required: Some learner contact time for the activities (see below for summary detail) Time required: 2 x 90 mins - Higher-order skills 1 x 60 mins - Activity design 1 x120 mins - Dynamic Appraisal

Cont...

January Cohort Start - DIST-01, 02 & 03		
Unit	Teaching/Assessment Element 1	Teaching/Assessment Element 2
DIST-01 Jan	No requirement	No requirement
DIST-02 Sept	Course activity: Initial assessment (placement process) When?: approximately late Sept/early October Type of access required: one or two sessions Time required: approx. two hours for placement process	Course activity: Teaching practicum (Part One) When?: approximately late October/early Nov Type of access required: one-to-one lessons (weekly) Time required: Both 8 sessions and 10 sessions schedules: 3 x 90 min. lessons (or 2 x 45 mins* in the same week) *Please note, that if you are teaching 2 x 45 mins, they should be on consecutive days
DIST-03 Jan	Course activity: Teaching practicum (Part Two) When?: approximately Jan onwards Type of access required: one-to-one lessons (weekly) Time required: 8-session schedule continuation: 5 x 90 min. lessons (or 2 x 45 mins in the same week) 10-session schedule continuation: 1 x 90 mins and 6 x 60 mins lessons	Course activity: Compendium/Portfolio Activities When?: approximately approximately March-July Type of access required: Some learner contact time for the activities (see below for summary detail) Time required: 2 x 90 mins - Higher-order skills 1 x 60 mins - Activity design 1 x120 mins - Dynamic Appraisal

April Cohort Start - DIST-01, 02 & 03		
Unit	Teaching/Assessment Element 1	Teaching/Assessment Element 2
DIST-01 Apr	No requirement	No requirement
DIST-02 Sept	Course activity: Initial assessment (placement process) When?: approximately late Sept/early October Type of access required: one or two sessions Time required: approx. two hours for placement process	Course activity: Teaching practicum (Part One) When?: approximately late October/early Nov Type of access required: one-to-one lessons (weekly) Time required: Both 8 sessions and 10 sessions schedules: 3 x 90 min. lessons (or 2 x 45 mins* in the same week) *Please note, that if you are teaching 2 x 45 mins, they should be on consecutive days
DIST-03 Jan	Course activity: Teaching practicum (Part Two) When?: approximately Jan onwards Type of access required: one-to-one lessons (weekly) Time required: 8-session schedule continuation: 5 x 90 min. lessons (or 2 x 45 mins in the same week) 10-session schedule continuation: 1 x 90 mins and 6 x 60 mins lessons	Course activity: Compendium/Portfolio Activities When?: approximately approximately March-July Type of access required: Some learner contact time for the activities (see below for summary detail) Time required: 2 x 90 mins - Higher-order skills 1 x 60 mins - Activity design 1 x120 mins - Dynamic Appraisal

January and September Cohort Start - DIST-01 (N/A), 02 & 03		
Unit	Teaching/Assessment Element 1	Teaching/Assessment Element 2
DIST-02 Sept	Course activity: Initial assessment (placement process) When?: approximately late Sept/early October Type of access required: one or two sessions Time required: approx. two hours for placement process	Course activity: Teaching practicum (Part One) When?: approximately late October/early Nov Type of access required: one-to-one lessons (weekly) Time required: Both 8 sessions and 10 sessions schedules: 3 x 90 min. lessons (or 2 x 45 mins* in the same week) *Please note, that if you are teaching 2 x 45 mins, they should be on consecutive days
DIST-03 Jan	Course activity: Teaching practicum (Part Two) When?: approximately Jan onwards Type of access required: one-to-one lessons (weekly) Time required: 8-session schedule continuation: 5 x 90 min. lessons (or 2 x 45 mins in the same week) 10-session schedule continuation: 1 x 90 mins and 6 x 60 mins lessons	Course activity: Compendium/Portfolio Activities When?: approximately approximately March-July Type of access required: Some learner contact time for the activities (see below for summary detail) Time required: 2 x 90 mins - Higher-order skills 1 x 60 mins - Activity design 1 x120 mins - Dynamic Appraisal

Dyslexia Action Training and Professional Development reserves the right to change course start dates and/or schedules and the right to cancel any programme where candidate numbers are insufficient to warrant the course taking place. In this case candidates will be offered places on alternative programmes or a full refund of fees will be available.

Course Fees 2026-27

There are two ways of making payment for the diploma units of study – either by paying an upfront, one-off sum, or paying by instalments. There are different fees depending upon the pathway you are following.

Please note: Payment terms are 30 days from receipt of invoice, or immediately if the course starts in less than 30 days. *Places are in high demand and we cannot hold places for participants who do not meet the payment schedule.*

All payments must be made in Pounds Sterling (GBP) – payment schedules are set out above. Please refer to [Terms and Conditions](#) for payment terms. VAT is applicable on all courses. If you choose to pay later by cheque or bank transfer an invoice will be raised with an additional fee of £30 inclusive of VAT. All fees are subject to an annual increase.

One-off Payment of Fees:

One-off Payment Fees			
	Fee Excluding VAT	Fee Including VAT	Timing of Payment
DIST – Standard Diploma (DIST-1, 02 & 03)	£3,795	£4,550	Payment terms are 30 days from receipt of invoice, or immediately if the course starts in less than 30 days

Payment by Instalments:

STANDARD DIPLOMA ROUTE – INSTALMENT PAYMENTS			
	Fee Excluding VAT	Fee Including VAT	Timing of Payment
DIST Instalment 1:	£1,290	£1,548	Payment terms are 30 days from receipt of invoice, or immediately if the course starts in less than 30 days
DIST Instalment 2:	£1,290	£1,548	Payment terms are 30 days from receipt of invoice, or immediately if the course starts in less than 30 days
DIST Instalment 3:	£1,290	£1,548	Payment terms are 30 days from receipt of invoice, or immediately if the course starts in less than 30 days
Total	£3,870	£4,644	

One-off Payment of Fees CPD Pathway/RPL Route:

One-off Payment Fees			
	Fee Excluding VAT	Fee Including VAT	Timing of Payment
DIST CPD Pathway Route – DIST-02 & 03:	£2,580	£3,096	Payment terms are 30 days from receipt of invoice, or immediately if the course starts in less than 30 days
DIST External RPL Pathway – DIST-02 & 03:	£2,580	£3,096	

Payment by Instalments Pathway/RPL Route:

CPD Certificate Pathway – INSTALMENT PAYMENTS			
CPD Certificate 51-SCH, 67-INTL or 56-ADU	See relevant CPD Certificate Pathway syllabus for costs and options		
	Fee Excluding VAT	Fee Including VAT	Timing of Payment
DIST Instalment 1 (for DIST-02):	£1,290	£1,548	Payment terms are 30 days from receipt of invoice, or immediately if the course starts in less than 30 days
DIST Instalment 2 (for DIST-03):	£1,250	£1,500	Payment terms are 30 days from receipt of invoice, or immediately if the course starts in less than 30 days
Total	£2,580	£3,096	

External RPL Pathway DIST-02 & 03 – INSTALMENT PAYMENTS			
	Fee Excluding VAT	Fee Including VAT	Timing of Payment
DIST Instalment 1 (for DIST-02):	£1,290	£1,548	Payment terms are 30 days from receipt of invoice, or immediately if the course starts in less than 30 days
DIST Instalment 2 (for DIST-03):	£1,250	£1,500	Payment terms are 30 days from receipt of invoice, or immediately if the course starts in less than 30 days
Total	£2,580	£3,096	

Please note: if you plan to pay in instalments the payment must be made before the start of the Unit.

Extension and Deferral Process

The diploma is an integrated study programme, which contains a tutor-supervised practical element. It is therefore expected that participants register for the diploma and work through without any unscheduled breaks. Short extensions to the summative deadline date are given in DIST-01. In DIST Parts 2 and 3 a teaching calendar schedules a completion pathway and it is expected that participants complete this practical part of the course without an extension, using the leeway built into the teaching calendar. Dyslexia Action reserves the right to levy an additional tutor support fee in cases where participants do not complete the course by the final teaching calendar deadline, if one-to-one tutor support is still required. See *The Default Extension Period System* sub-section below. For participants who have unforeseen mitigating circumstances there is a deferral system.

DIST-01

A deferral can only be granted once within DIST1 and there is a fee of £150 (inclusive of £25 VAT)

DIST-02 and DIST-03

There are a maximum of two deferrals permitted overall within DIST-02 and DIST-03 combined - the units are treated as an integrated whole for progression monitoring purposes. There is a fee of £360 (inclusive of £60 VAT).

Full details can be found in the course handbook(s).

Default Extension Period System

The Default Extension Period (DEP) system has been implemented to give participants who have fallen behind the set diploma schedule a final chance to submit. It is called the 'default' extension period as you fall into this system if you do not submit all of your work for Unit 3 by the date set. A levy is charged if you fall into this category, as you have exceeded the amount of tutor and administrative support time covered by the fees paid. The charge is £150 plus VAT. The length of this extension period depends upon the cohort in which you are studying exact dates for the start of the period will vary slightly but the end date is set:

1. Participants starting DIST02 in January the DEP will run from the day after the course end date in July until October 31st in the same calendar year.
2. Participants starting DIST02 in September the DEP will run from the day after the course end date in March/early April until June 30th in the same calendar year.

Participants who are working abroad whose term dates vary markedly from UK academic year dates should contact dalpmail@dyslexiaaction.org.uk at the time when it is clear that further time to complete the course is required.

You can opt out of the DEP system. This is in effect equivalent to withdrawing from the course. In this case you will not be charged and you will leave the diploma when you opt out. In most cases this will mean that you receive certificates for the units you have successfully completed.

Accreditation

Dyslexia Action courses have been in existence for 50 years and have a nationally respected profile in specialist teacher training and support. Our courses meet a number of accreditation criteria reflecting the importance we place on the quality of our courses and high standards of teaching and learning which are intrinsic to our programmes.

The Dyslexia Guild: The Level 5 Diploma in Strategic Teaching Support confers eligibility for **Associate Membership (ADG) of The Dyslexia Guild**, recognised as the first grade of professional membership for a specialist literacy teacher/practitioner. See 'Dyslexia Guild Membership' section..

The CPD Standards Office: All of our Level 4/5 CPD-brand courses are individually accredited by [The CPD Standards Office](#).

Certification

Dyslexia Action Certificate and Transcript

Candidates who have successfully completed all three parts of the Standard Diploma Route will be issued with a qualification certificate (Level 5 Diploma in *Specialist Teaching for Literacy-Related Difficulties*) and a transcript.

Candidates who have successfully completed a Dyslexia Action CPD Certificate and DIST-02 and DIST-03 will qualify for the Level 5 Diploma in *Specialist Teaching for Literacy-Related Difficulties*. A certificate and transcript will be issued.

Participants with a Disability

A person is said to have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on his or her ability to do normal daily activities.

A disability can arise from a wide range of impairments which can be:

- Sensory impairments, such as those affecting sight or hearing
- Impairments with fluctuating or recurring effects such as rheumatoid arthritis, myalgic encephalitis (ME), chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS), fibromyalgia, depression and epilepsy
- Progressive, such as motor neurone disease, muscular dystrophy, and forms of dementia;
- Auto-immune conditions such as systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE)
- Organ specific, including respiratory conditions such as asthma, and cardiovascular diseases, including thrombosis, stroke and heart disease
- Developmental, such as autistic spectrum disorders (ASD), dyslexia and dyspraxia
- Learning disabilities
- Mental health conditions with symptoms such as anxiety, low mood, panic attacks, phobias, or unshared perceptions; eating disorders; bipolar affective disorders; obsessive compulsive disorders; personality disorders; post-traumatic stress disorder, and some self-harming behaviour
- Mental illnesses, such as depression and schizophrenia
- Produced by injury to the body, including to the brain

In cases where someone is the sole carer for a person with a long-term illness or a disability then that person is, under The Equality Act, afforded the same rights and access to reasonable adjustments that the long-term unwell/disabled person would be. See: gov.uk/definition-of-disability-under-equality-act-2010

The online training provided by Dyslexia Action has an inbuilt flexibility and this enables many participants with disabilities to work without any reasonable adjustments. However, we can be responsive to individual requirements within practical limits. If you have a disability, we would encourage you to disclose this at the time of application so that we can put in place any support required at an early stage. Our disclosure (DISC) form is sent to any candidate who indicates that they have a disability on our registration form. On the disclosure form you are asked to detail the nature of your disability and to indicate whether you would like a one-week extension on all units/courses you study with Dyslexia Action.

If we have permission for us to disclose, this information will be shared with the Disabilities team, any tutors you work directly with and the tutor in charge of marking. Any agreed reasonable adjustments will be noted on a form and this form will be sent to you for your records. Participants with a disability can discuss their individual requirements with the Disabilities Advisor. The Disabilities Administrator should be contacted in the first instance at: dada@dyslexiaaction.org.uk

Tutor Support

DIST-01

- Tutor support via a Questions forum
- Tutor support for compulsory forums – responses to the forums are monitored many but not all are individually responded to
- Disability Advisor is available for support (if reasonable adjustments apply)

DIST-02

- Tutor support via forums for general queries
- One-to-one tutor support during the teaching practicum – this starts after the placement (an opening assessment task) findings are uploaded
- A few online meetings (to give key information, to give study tips, answer queries)
- Support via DALPmail for queries about teaching practicum logistics, personal matters etc.
- Disability Advisor is available for support (if reasonable adjustments apply)

DIST-03

- Tutor support via forums for general queries
- One-to-one tutor support during the teaching practicum – this continues until the summative tasks are completed
- Support via DALPmail for queries about teaching practicum logistics, personal matters etc.
- Disability Advisor is available for support (if reasonable adjustments apply).

Progression after the Diploma

Once you have successfully completed and passed the *Diploma in Specialist Teaching for Literacy-Related Difficulties* you will be a qualified specialist teacher (for those with Qualified Teacher Status - QTS) or qualified specialist practitioner (for those without QTS).

You may be interested in training to become a specialist teacher/practitioner assessor, the current suggested route available is via our sister company Real Training and is as follows:

[Certificate of Competence in Educational Testing \(CCET\)](#) or [Certificate in Psychometric Testing, Assessment and Access Arrangements \(CPT3A\)](#) (please check eligibility criteria).

Plus

[Dyslexia – Professional Report Writing](#) (please check eligibility criteria).

Dyslexia Guild Membership

While your course is fully comprehensive and includes everything required, you can enhance your studies with additional professional support.

As a student of this programme, you are eligible for a **complimentary one-year membership** to The Dyslexia Guild, which includes library access for the duration of your active studies. To activate these benefits, please email: library@dyslexiaaction.org.uk.

The Guild provides its members with a wealth of information relating to dyslexia and SpLDs through its online library (the National Resource Centre for Dyslexia), a single easy to access online platform that produces focused search results accessible by members 24/7. The library, supported by a Chartered Librarian, provides a unique, e-resource collection, covering dyslexia and other co-occurring difficulties. Participants have access to an online collection of over 800 specialist e-books, hard copy books and resources as well as simultaneous access to an online EBSCO database of over 1,600 full-text education and psychology journals.

On completion of the diploma, you will be eligible to apply for the following grade of membership:

- Associate Member of The Dyslexia Guild (ADG):
Level 5 Diploma in Specialist Teaching for Literacy-Related Difficulties (DIST)

Contact Details

Admissions Office

70-72 Stour Street
Canterbury
CT1 2NZ

Email: cpdmail@dyslexiaaction.org.uk

Web: dyslexiaaction.org.uk

Tel: + 44 (0)1784 222304



APPENDIX

Level Descriptors

Our courses are mapped against the Ofqual Level 5 Descriptors¹⁰ which are as follows:

Level 4 Knowledge Descriptor (the holder...)

- Has practical, theoretical or technological knowledge and understanding of a subject or field of work to address problems that are well defined but complex and non-routine.
- Can analyse, interpret and evaluate relevant information and ideas.
- Is aware of the nature of approximate scope of the area of study or work.
- Has an informed awareness of different perspectives or approaches within the area of study or work.

Level 4 Skills Descriptor (the holder can...)

- Identify, adapt and use appropriate cognitive and practical skills to inform actions and address problems that are complex and non-routine while normally fairly well-defined.
- Review the effectiveness and appropriateness of methods, actions and results.

Level 5 Knowledge Descriptor (the holder...)

- Has practical, theoretical or technological knowledge and understanding of a subject or field of work to find ways forward in broadly defined, complex contexts.
- Can analyse, interpret and evaluate relevant information, concepts and ideas.
- Is aware of the nature and scope of the area of study or work.
- Understands different perspectives, approaches or schools of thought and the reasoning behind them.

Level 5 Skills Descriptor (the holder can...)

- Determine, adapt and use appropriate methods, cognitive and practical skills to address broadly defined, complex problems.
- Use relevant research or development to inform actions.
- Evaluate actions, methods and results.

Typical Level 5 qualifications include Higher National Diplomas, Diplomas of Higher Education and Foundation Degrees. For further details on qualification levels see [Qualifications can cross boundaries](#) (Sept 2019).

¹⁰ dyslexiaaction.org.uk/level-5-descriptors/