Evaluation of the Higher Level Teaching Assistant Training and Assessment Programme

April 2006

Final Report

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Acknowledgements

Pye Tait would like to thank the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) and all HLTA training providers for their time and efforts in assisting us to contact and recruit candidates to take part in this research.

Our gratitude also goes to HLTA candidates themselves for volunteering their time and valuable feedback.
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Executive Summary

In December 2004, Pye Tait Limited was commissioned by the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA)\(^1\) to provide research and evaluation support for the Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) programme.

The programme itself was born out of the National Agreement, *Raising Standards and Tackling Workload*, which was signed by Government Ministers, local authority employers and school workforce unions in January 2003. A new and higher status for teaching assistants was introduced by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). The purpose of this was twofold: to recognise the work already being undertaken by a considerable number of support staff; and to provide the opportunity to take on additional roles and responsibilities and in doing so to reduce the workload of teachers.

In 2003, the TDA was assigned responsibility to roll out training and assessment which would enable support staff to achieve the new HLTA status. Over 11,000 people have achieved this status to date; and just over 4,000 are registered to take part in training preparation and assessment.\(^2\)

In supporting the TDA to develop the HLTA programme, *Pye Tait conducted a large-scale detailed evaluation of provision in phase one*\(^3\). This review of the initiative was principally designed to assist the TDA in building upon aspects of HLTA training and assessment that are seen to ‘work well’ within current provision and to inform policy development and the future delivery models for phase two of the programme.\(^4\)

Through a combination of focus group and survey research, detailed feedback on provision was gathered from a total of 337 candidates selected from the 36 providers across the country and across a variety of routes:

- 3-day Assessment Only
- Full 50-day training (including assessment)
- Four Pilot routes
  - Subject Specialist
  - Training Needs Analysis (TNA)
  - E-learning
  - Shorter (10, 15, 20, 25 days)

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\(^1\) Formerly the Teacher Training Agency, the agency became the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) in September 2005.
\(^2\) Figures as February 2006.
\(^3\) Phase one ran from April 2004 to December 2005; the fieldwork for this study ran from February 2005 to November 2005.
\(^4\) Phase two will run from January 2006 to December 2008.
To supplement this information the evaluation included a series of interviews with HLTA training providers, a review of course and promotional materials developed by providers and review of providers’ own evaluations submitted to the TDA.

Key Findings

Recruitment and engagement

School leadership teams and particularly head teachers are highly influential in informing prospective candidates about the training and encouraging their engagement. Candidates, however, felt that school leaders should be more fully informed about the HLTA programme.

Early stages of the HLTA process such as application and registration were regarded as fairly straightforward with candidates preferring to register using the online facility.

Candidates were disappointed that schools did not seem to have an in-depth knowledge of the process and consequently were not in a position to offer them more support.

In addition the need for consistency between providers as well as Local Authorities (LAs) was strongly felt, and this was with regards to entry requirements for the HLTA training as well as the information and advice offered to candidates.

Provider-based sessions

Preparation sessions were generally well received, though some felt that they were badly organised, and not enough feedback was offered to candidates.

Inconsistency was noted between providers, and between tutors, in terms of the information given to candidates, and dealing with interpreting and evidencing the standards. However, all candidates having completed the course reported an increase in their levels of skills, confidence and knowledge.

ICT skills

Many candidates reported an increase in their ICT skills as a result of the training, though they suggested that not enough emphasis was placed upon E-learning elements of the course.

Those who were able to work with a mentor, found this facility extremely useful although many candidates noted how finding time in school to discuss their work with the mentor was extremely difficult.

Assessment

There were mixed responses to the assessment process. According to the majority of candidates, producing the portfolio was overly time-consuming, although many reported that it was a satisfying exercise to complete.
The cross-referencing required in portfolios was burdensome and the assessment visit for some caused great anxiety and disappointment afterwards because candidates felt that they had not been able to address relevant issues.

Finally, candidates were frustrated by what they considered to be an excessive wait for the results of their assessment.

**HLTA professional Standards**

Candidates enjoyed mapping their work against the Standards because it enabled them to see the extent of their existing role within schools.

Recognition of their role and offering support staff continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities raised their confidence and self-esteem. However candidates felt that the status of HLTAs should be raised, and given broader recognition amongst the whole school workforce.

Many of the problems encountered about evidencing the standards were reported to be because candidates felt that the context and type of school in which they worked, and their particular role and duties, meant they were unable to meet the standard. Also, on many occasions candidates felt they were able to meet standards but, the nature of the standard itself meant that providing physical evidence to demonstrate it was difficult.

During discussions with candidates, it became clear that the standards are subject to different interpretations, which is compounded by confusing terminology and phrasing of statements.

**Course materials**

Candidates particularly liked the HLTA pack developed by the TDA and made use of the exemplars provided.

However, they would like to see such exemplars related to specific roles in different types of schools and to be relevant to the primary and secondary phases.

A variety of course materials were produced by providers themselves, and candidates found detailed course and briefing session outlines to be beneficial, allowing them to plan ahead for the sessions and to be aware of what to expect.

**Delivery**

In terms of delivery itself, generally, candidates found the Assessment Only route to be too condensed and the Full-training route to be too prolonged.

The Pilot routes were positively viewed in this regard, particularly as they were designed for specialisms and placed greater emphasis on the initial needs analysis and tailored training.
Recommendations

Findings presented in this report are drawn from feedback offered by HLTA candidates and providers. The following recommendations, presented here under five key themes, are offered based upon the implications of the evidence collected:

Promotion and clarification of the HLTA programme

1. **Raising the profile of the HLTA programme and role** through a promotional campaign, ensuring that the school workforce is aware of what the status means and the impact it can have on the school environment.

2. **Giving more recognition to achievement of the status** through development of a HLTA certificate and a series of regional award ceremonies. Work should also be considered to inform how to address inconsistencies in HLTA roles and pay levels.

3. **Disseminating information about the meaning of HLTA status, what is involved in achieving the status and assistance that candidates will need during training.** This recommendation covers a series of information-giving options including use of information packs for head teachers, middle managers, mentors and potential candidates.

Administration and organisation

4. **Conducting a review of the administrative process** including application and registration procedures during phase two, to ensure that technical difficulties are removed.

5. **Holding a consultation between the TDA, providers and local authorities to allow consideration and standardisation of entry requirements, and the appropriate duration of courses** (extending the 3-day route and condensing the full 50-day route).

6. **Reviewing the timing of delivery** to include half-day training, spacing of training sessions and allocation of time to complete the portfolio.

Content and delivery

7. **Addressing the imbalance between primary and secondary focus** in training and course materials. Considering development of separate TDA packs for each phase and the methods of integrating focused briefing sessions into training.

8. **Standardising the structure and content of preparation sessions**, to a generic framework of delivery. Additional elements which focus on specific topics (e.g. behaviour management) will allow flexibility and tailoring of provision.
9. **Encouraging providers to share good practice** in development of course materials and programme delivery, and **consideration of developing a new set of exemplars of evidencing standards** and writing tasks which are role and school phase specific.

10. **Considering how to integrate, more formally, E-learning and E-discussion, use of the initial needs analysis (INA), mentoring and visiting a contrasting school** into provision.

**Technical issues**

11. **Conducting a review of the 31 professional standards** in terms of simplifying terminology and reducing confusion and multiple-interpretation.

12. **Allowing candidates to receive greater details as to the content of the assessment visit** in order to ease their anxiety and further standardise the assessor visit.

13. **Reviewing assessment procedures** and considering whether supplementary methods, such as observation, can be incorporated. Give attention to the assessment and moderation process to consider how notification of the outcome can be made earlier and how to reduce delays in notification.

**Ongoing training, assessment and evaluation**

14. **Supporting newly appointed HLTAs** by providing supplementary training sessions.

15. **Making available information on further training opportunities** through use of information packs, regional seminars, and national conferences for head teachers.

16. **Promoting communication and collaboration through development of the HLTA web resource** to include a designated site for providers to share good practice and a web-forum to allow candidates and providers to communicate easily.

17. **Continuing the evaluation of the programme into phase two** to ensure that the HLTA programme and its delivery is relevant, current and demand-led.
1. Introduction – A Brief Overview

In December 2004, Pye Tait was commissioned by the TDA\(^5\) to undertake research to support the development of the Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) Programme.

This is a timely piece of work, born out of current and recent reforms in education policy and practice and in particular, school workforce remodelling initiatives.

The main purpose of the research is to gather feedback from candidates on their experiences of undertaking HLTA training and assessment. There are several strands to the research, including evaluations of the Assessment Only route, full 50-day training route, and alternative routes which were being piloted.

This report presents detailed findings from extensive research and evaluation of all routes and aspects of the programme, from marketing strategies to the candidates’ experiences of the application process, the training itself and achieving HLTA status. It is intended that this report will help the TDA build upon best practice and identify areas for improvement for phase two of the programme. Information gathered about candidates’ experiences will be invaluable in shaping plans for the future training and development of school support staff.

Research was conducted during the months of February to November 2005, and includes data taken from 272 telephone interviews, conducted with candidates from 36 HLTA training providers across England. It also includes data from 10 focus groups, attended by 65 candidates.

Though research has been largely centred upon candidate responses to HLTA training, this report also includes information taken from 15 interviews with providers of HLTA pilot training routes, as well as an evaluation of some of the training and publicity materials used by each provider. These are supplemented by course evaluations completed by 16 Pilot route training providers. In addition, interviews were also conducted with five candidates who undertook HLTA training alongside a foundation degree.

Research to inform the work of the Implementation Review Unit (IRU)

The research and support work for the HLTA programme has been completed in conjunction with an evaluation of the burdens and benefits of participating in the programme.

This particular piece of work was designed to inform the TDA report for the IRU. The IRU were set up to ensure that new developments are not overly bureaucratic and burdensome.\(^6\)

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\(^5\) From 1 September 2005, the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) became the Training and Development Agency for Schools (the TDA), and is referred to as such throughout the document.

1.1 Reforms in education and teaching practice

The National Agreement (NA) ‘Raising Standards and Tackling Workload’ was signed by Government Ministers, local authority employers and school workforce unions in January 2003.

The Agreement highlighted the fact that teachers across England and Wales tended to have a poor work/life balance, with many citing their excessive workload as a major reason for leaving the profession. As detailed in ‘Raising Standards and Tackling Workload’:

“two-thirds of a teacher’s time is now spent on activities other than teaching. The profession has suffered recruitment and retention difficulties as a result.”

The agreement sets out the need to free teachers up from inappropriate workloads. In response, the School Teachers’ Review Body made proposals to effect changes in teachers’ contracts which would decrease the amount of non-teaching duties they had to fulfil and the amount of cover supervision they should undertake.

The Government’s response to these proposals came in the ‘Time for Standards’ Package. In order to bring about nation-wide change, this established a seven-point plan aiming to help every school raise standards and tackle workload issues. The plan included the following key proposals:

- Progressive reduction in teachers’ overall hours
- Changes to teachers’ contracts
- A concerted attack on unnecessary paperwork and bureaucracy
- Reform of support staff roles to help teachers and support pupils

In 2003, The National Remodelling Team introduced their three-phase plan. One of the aims of this plan was to extend the role of support staff and importantly, to recognise their roles, skills, and expertise more fully. The plan set about extending support staff roles and responsibilities by the delegation of 24 non-teaching tasks, including photocopying, collecting money, and administering exams.

In the same year a new work-life balance clause in teaching contracts was introduced, with dedicated time assigned for leadership and management duties. From September 2005, further changes were put in place to ensure that a minimum of 10% of teachers’ timetabled time was guaranteed for planning, preparation and assessment (PPA).

1.1.1 Creating a need for HLTAs

This radical restructuring of teaching and support staff roles over the last two years aims to recognise the significant contribution that support staff make to pupils’ learning and to enable teachers to focus more effectively on their teaching, thus providing every pupil with the maximum opportunity to achieve success.

In 2003 a new status for teaching assistants was created. The HLTA programme aims to recognise the professionalism and experience of school support staff and the contribution they make to children’s learning, in addition to providing a framework for professional development.

With a long-term aim of reducing the non-teaching duties performed by teachers, the successful execution of the above reforms has meant that the development and monitoring of support staff roles within schools is essential.8

1.1.2 Continuing professional development

HLTA status recognises that support staff should be acknowledged for their contribution to raising standards, and should have access to professional development opportunities.

In addition to reducing teachers’ workload, therefore, HLTA status was also designed to help develop clear progression routes for school support staff and provide a potential route to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).

During the year of 2004/05, funding from the TDA was available to train and assess approximately 7,000 Teaching Assistants (TAs) to achieving HLTA status, rising to around 14,000 in 2005/06 and will hopefully reach 20,000 by 2006/07.

1.2  Research and evaluation support for the HLTA programme

1.2.1  Project aims and objectives

The overall purpose of this work was to:

*support the development of the HLTA programme (national and regional) by providing an evidence base to inform future policy and delivery mechanisms.*

In order to achieve this aim, the following objectives have directed the research and evaluation:

- An assessment of candidates’ experiences of each stage of the training and assessment programme, from the application and registration to achieving the status and the changes in their role.
- Determining the benefits and weaknesses of each of the training routes offered to candidates through candidate feedback and provider evaluations.
- An assessment of the course materials and promotional literature offered by providers.

The commissioned work was designed to uncover aspects of the HLTA programme that were perceived by candidates and providers to ‘work well’ and in doing so, to identify areas of good practice which can be adopted and adapted by training providers across the country and inform national delivery. Its purpose is also to identify areas of provision which might require some development and change in order to improve the service, the experience of candidates and overall outcomes.

1.2.2  Scope

A total of 36 approved training providers offered HLTA training provision during phase one of the programme. Appendix 5 shows the routes offered by providers at the time of the evaluation. These details have been recorded from information supplied by training providers during the research.

The configuration of provision is as follows:

- Assessment Only route offered by all 36 providers
- Full 50-day training route offered by 26 providers
- Pilot routes offered by 16 providers

The 36 providers are located across the country covering nine regions. As much as possible, this research endeavours to include an evaluation of providers across all regions.
1.2.3 Methodology

In supporting the development of the HLTA programme, we have taken a multi-layered approach to the fieldwork, implementing a combination of focus group and survey research, gathering both quantitative and qualitative data.

A survey of candidates

Much of the feedback was gathered through the use of a semi-structured questionnaire with mainly closed questions, interspersed with open questions to draw out detailed responses. The survey was conducted either by telephone, post or email. This ensured that candidates were able to engage in the research in a way that suited their needs and preferences.

Overall, 267 candidates completed the questionnaire. This figure encompasses:

- 117 Assessment Only candidates
- 80 full 50-day training candidates
- 70 Pilot route candidates:
  - 29 Shorter routes candidates
  - 11 E-learning candidates
  - 17 TNA candidates
  - 13 Subject Specialist candidates

Focus groups with candidates

To add depth to the survey data, a series of focus groups provided very detailed findings for a selected number of candidates. Importantly in this instance, focus groups provided the opportunity for candidates to discuss issues openly and to compare their experiences directly. There were two varieties of focus group sessions; mixed-provider where approximately three providers were represented at one session and single-provider where attendees were all registered with one provider.

Details of the number of candidates involved in each method of data collection are provided in Appendix 6. In summary, 65 candidates attended ten focus groups held across the country. Of these, 50 were Assessment Only candidates and 15 were full 50-day candidates.

Recruiting candidates

All training providers offered significant assistance with contacting candidates. Letters and emails were sent out on a regular basis to candidates via the providers. These gave information about the purpose of the work, what would be involved in contributing to the research and requested that candidates would ‘opt-in’ to the research by contacting Pye Tait directly.
Supplementary data

In addition to gathering feedback from candidates on their experiences of the programme, to provide a holistic view of provision it has been necessary to include the following sources of information in the evaluation:

- Telephone interviews with 15 Pilot route providers
- Evaluations conducted by 16 Pilot route providers
- Interviews with 5 candidates on the Foundation Degree pilot programme
- Course materials (training and publicity materials) from all providers

In total, 337 candidates provided feedback on their experiences of the HLTA programme.

This report draws together the information gathered from a variety of sources as detailed above. The following section sets the context for the report and the background in terms of development and implementation of the HLTA programme. It also gives specific details about the training routes evaluated as part of the research.

Section three then explores the information and data gathered during the research with an analysis of the perceptions that candidates have of the initial stages of the HLTA process, such as registration.

Section four takes the next stage, looking in detail at training and assessment issues and a review of course materials developed by training providers.

An exploration of the HLTA standards and what it means to achieve HLTA status is covered in section five, whereas section six provides an alternative approach, taking into consideration the experiences of providers. This section analyses the interviews completed with Pilot route providers and reviews evaluation reports submitted to the TDA by providers themselves.

Section seven then draws together all of the information gathered and presented in sections three to six, in a summary of findings and with some concluding statements, leading onto the final section of recommendations of how to take forward the HLTA programme.
2. Contextual Background

2.1 The role of the HLTA

In 2003 the TDA published a list of 31 National Professional Standards, essentially consisting of outcome statements against which support staff could be assessed in order to reach HLTA status. The Standards were developed in consultation with professional associations, employers and representative groups of teaching assistants, teachers and head teachers. This was to provide assurance to teachers, employers and parents about the quality of contribution to pupils’ learning that teaching assistants with HLTA status could be expected to make.

The HLTA Standards recognise that though most teaching requires the expertise and skills of a teacher, some teaching and learning activities can be undertaken by other suitably trained staff, provided that they usually work within a system of supervision.

The Standards are therefore based on the principle that teachers must have responsibility for ensuring high standards of teaching and learning. Head teachers and teachers need to be satisfied about the skills, expertise and experience of the HLTA before delegating teaching activities.

The programme was designed to enable candidates to meet the Professional Standards, equating to a status, rather than a qualification. Many aspects of the status, however, are reliant upon the discretion of individual schools; pay and contractual arrangements are determined at a local level, and similarly, the deployment of support staff is a matter for individual schools to decide, as needs and circumstances vary according to particular classes and settings.

Similarly, the precise role played by HLTA staff within individual schools remains the decision of the head teacher and teaching staff, with the agreement of the support staff member and in keeping with their terms and conditions of employment.

2.2 Criteria for undertaking HLTA training and assessment

In order to be judged to have met the 31 HLTA standards at the assessment stage, candidates are required to provide written evidence that is then verified via interviews.

During phase one of the programme, two principle routes were offered: 3 day assessment only (for candidates considered to be ready for assessment) which involved preparation sessions for the assessment; and full 50-day training route (for candidates who were considered to require some training to fill possible gaps in their skills or experience). LA's (responsible for funding the routes) were encouraged to use training needs analysis tools (linked to the standards) in making decisions about candidates training needs.

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9 For a full list of Professional Standards see Appendix 1
Though no formal qualification requirements are compulsory for support staff at the start of HLTA training, candidates must gain literacy and numeracy qualifications to Level 2 of the National Qualifications Framework by the date of their assessment.

Besides this requirement outlined in Standard 2.6, LAs are subject to guidance by the TDA on selection criteria. However, for candidates to receive funding, the LA needs to be confident that they are sufficiently experienced or skilled to meet the HLTA Standards by the end of the training period. Some LAs request a specified amount of experience working within schools as well as the support of each candidate’s school in their achievement of the status.

### 2.2.1 The Assessment Only route

The Assessment Only route is designed for those individuals who are already operating at the level of the National Standards and are almost ready to be assessed against them. Candidates on this route will already hold considerable knowledge, skills and experience as a member of support staff.

Candidates undertaking the Assessment Only route complete 3 days of briefing to prepare them for assessment. The route was designed so candidates should have little work to undertake to demonstrate the Standards, once they have understood how to apply them to their work in schools.

### The foundation degree pilot programme

As an addition to the Assessment Only route, the TDA also piloted a strand of HLTA training which was designed to run simultaneously or subsequent to the foundation degree. Higher Education staff members were trained to deliver HLTA assessment and consider how HLTA assessment could be carried alongside the degree course.

The route was offered with the aim of preparing candidates more fully for writing their portfolio. Running the two courses in parallel meant that elements of the coursework could be used for both assessments, thereby decreasing candidate workload. It was hoped that the pilot would determine whether this approach is an effective delivery method, or if it is over-burdensome.

### 2.2.2 The full 50-day training route

The full 50-day training route provides an option for individuals with the potential to operate in a higher level role, but who require a training programme before they are ready to be assessed against the Standards.

Generic centre-based training offered on the full 50-day route is designed to be applicable to all TAs, irrespective of the type of school or setting in which they work. Centre-based training is broken down into approximately 20 units, after which candidates are given a school based task to complete. This route encompasses:

- 20 days of provider-based training
- 20 days of school-based training
- 10 days of E-learning
The content of the units varies slightly between providers as they designed their own course, however, the full 50-day route can include the following modules:

**Figure 1: Full-training modules**

2.2.3 Pilot routes

In 2004, additional training options were developed to accommodate candidates for whom the Assessment Only and the full 50-day routes were not suited to their needs and levels of experience. Whilst many were not sufficiently experienced to undertake the Assessment Only route, neither did they require the amount of training that the full 50-day route entails.

A number of shorter training approaches were consequently piloted, differing slightly in focus and offering options that were more tailored to the needs of candidates. The four Pilot routes consisted of:

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<th>Route</th>
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<tr>
<td>An E-learning route</td>
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<tr>
<td>A TNA route</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Shorter</strong> routes (between 10 and 25 days in length)</td>
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<tr>
<td>A <strong>Subject Specialist</strong> route, whereby candidates combine HLTA training with specialised training in their chosen field</td>
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**E-learning**

The E-learning training route combined online learning with face-to-face delivery. A pre-requisite for all candidates on this pilot, therefore, was the collaboration of their school in providing access to the internet.

Candidates attended 3 days of centre-based training. Supplementary learning was delivered via electronic resources, which enabled students to advance their skills at their own pace and convenience.

The E-learning route gave candidates full access to digitally based resources which support all areas of their training. Candidates also had the opportunity to maintain electronic contact with their peers and tutors at all times. The E-learning route provided opportunities to access training online in ways that can be ‘blended’ with face to face delivery, and at levels which can be tailored to meet their needs.
Training needs analysis

The individualised TNA route was mapped out by, and based upon an INA conducted with each candidate. In some cases, candidates completed an A3 sized ‘My Typical Week’ on a timetable, on to which they can map the standards that they meet on a regular basis. This activity highlighted any gaps in their experience in relation to the standards and can be used to develop a personal training route centred around individual needs.¹⁰

In other cases the initial training needs analysis was conducted by means of a challenge interview, whereby a member of school helped a candidate to see if they meet particular standards within their daily activities.

Training on the TNA route generally took place over two terms. Often candidates were offered a selection of modules from which they could choose the most relevant to their specific training needs.

Subject Specialist route

The Subject Specialist pilot route offered candidates the opportunity to combine their HLTA training with training in their particular subject field of interest, such as Primary Modern Foreign Languages.

Though the precise format varied between providers, generally subject flavoured courses are incorporated within the full 50-day HLTA training programme, and therefore the training was conducted over two terms or a full academic year, taking into account the additional workload taken on by candidates.

Within the programme there were a given number of subject specialism days, for example, on certain training days half a day is dedicated to the subject specialism. The exact breakdown of time allocated to each part of the training was in some cases determined by an initial training needs analysis. Training providers offering this route often worked in conjunction with local colleges to ensure appropriate training and support is available.

Shorter routes

The Shorter route approaches to HLTA training were developed in recognition from the outset that a wider menu of choice would be helpful. It was anticipated that a compromise of the two original routes would be needed, and consequently the TDA introduced ‘shorter’ training routes, offering either 10, 15, 20 or 25 days of centre-based training.

The precise format of the course varied between providers, however, training generally took place over two terms and was interspersed with school-based days.

Routes involved a mixture of compulsory days and non-compulsory half-days, which covered topics such as behaviour management, curriculum frameworks and planning. For some, training also includes a day visiting a contrasting school, as well as E-learning elements.

The shorter training routes tended to offer a ‘blended’ learning programme, whereby training consisted of workshops, individual learning and tutorial support, prior to the 3 day assessment process. The majority of Shorter routes were largely based on materials used in the full 50-day route, though some providers developed the route specifically based upon standards that were identified as problematic in

¹⁰ Therefore the TNA is not necessarily a ‘route’ in its own right – but a piloting of how to design a programme to meet individual needs.
the first round of moderation. By pre-determining difficult standards, providers were able to develop a tailored route, focused upon the needs of the candidates.

2.3 The assessment

For candidates to be awarded HLTA Status, they must firstly complete a series of assessment tasks and demonstrate all 31 of the professional Standards; outcome statements that indicate what candidates must know, understand and be able to do in order to perform their role.

The assessment process, consistent across all routes, begins with a self-review for all candidates against the 31 Standards. Assisted by the provider, candidates must identify how their current work demonstrates that they are meeting, or near to meeting, the standards. As well as consolidating candidates’ current roles within schools, this activity also highlights any areas in which they need to develop their experience, knowledge and skills.

The assessment tasks

In order to achieve HLTA status, candidates must complete a total of four assessment tasks for which, candidates are asked to identify activities that they have undertaken, using evidence from their work with pupils and teachers in the following three contexts:

- Working with an individual pupil
- Working with a group
- Working with a whole class, or large group of pupils

As the assessment process is consistent across all routes, so too are the four tasks, which are managed by each training provider in exactly the same way to ensure continuity. The nature of the assessment tasks and the structure of the assessment visit are fixed irrespective of the training route.

Tasks 1-3

The first three tasks require candidates to outline and evaluate their experiences of working within everyday classroom routines, in the three contexts as outlined above. Using standardised response sheets provided by the TDA, candidates must reference which Standards have been met during the activities and describe and evaluate the activities themselves.
Task 4

In Task 4, candidates may write up to five short reflections on situations or events that provide further evidence that they have met the Standards. This often relates to their wider professional experiences and responsibilities, such as:

- Working with pupils, teachers and other adults inside and outside the classroom
- Helping to supervise pupils in the playground
- Assisting in educational visits
- Participating in professional meetings and working parties

The assessment visit

As part of the assessment process, trained assessors visit the candidates at their school to discuss the completed tasks and to view the portfolio of evidence which supports the tasks. The assessor also holds discussions with the head teacher and colleagues to verify the work of the candidate.

Subsequent to the school visit, the assessors’ recommendations of the outcome are subject to internal and external moderation.
3. Candidates’ Experiences of Application and Registration

Findings

Although there was some variation, at the time of providing feedback, the majority of candidates had completed the assessment tasks, and were either awaiting the assessment visit or notification of the results.

The vast majority of the candidates who took part in the research are female, with experience working as a TA or in a support role that ranges from one to 32 years. The average amount of experience held by Assessment Only and Pilot route candidates is 9 years, whereas those candidates on the 50-day route hold approximately 6 years experience.

A large proportion of those interviewed work in a primary setting (approximately 70%), and most are aged between 35-54 years although a large proportion also fall into the age category 45-54 years, which is particularly pertinent to Assessment Only candidates.

3.1 Candidates’ motivations

Becoming a TA

Candidates on the Assessment Only route cite their primary motivation for becoming a TA as having previously worked as a volunteer or parent helper. This motivation is also highly influential for Pilot route candidates with almost the same number reporting that they wanted to work with children. In addition, many of those undertaking Pilot route training report that their main motivation was due to the hours of the job suiting their commitments and family lifestyle.

Applying for HLTA training

With regard to applying for the HLTA programme, gaining recognition of their current role seems to be a primary factor in motivating candidates to register:

“This is the first course to enable good TAs to gain recognition”
- Assessment Only candidate

By contrast, 36% of those on the full 50-day training route reported that they applied because they wanted to improve their promotional prospects. This was also considered important by approximately a third of both Assessment Only and Pilot route candidates.

The principal motivations for pursuing HLTA status across all routes are outlined below:
Assessment Only candidates also cited the hope of financial reward as an important motivation for applying to the programme. The HLTA status was seen by some as the next logical step on their career path. Small numbers of candidates across all routes also reported such incentives as to build confidence, to meet other TAs and to rise to a challenge.

Candidates suggested that line managers put them forward for the training because they recognise such personal qualities as confidence and a commitment to the job. Further reasons given include the fact that candidates are already seen to be working at the expected standard required for HLTA status.

### 3.2 Candidates’ experiences of application and registration

**Hearing about the HLTA programme**

Head teachers seemed to have been very influential in informing candidates about the programme. The majority of candidates undertaking training across all routes said that they found out about HLTA training through their head or through literature circulated within their school. A small proportion heard about the programme through their LA, and some candidates on the Assessment Only and the full 50 day route attended a preparation session, to which both potential candidates and their head or deputy head teacher were invited to attend. The session outlined what HLTA training and assessment would entail, and the degree of school involvement required. This was described as informative and useful by candidates:

“I first went on an induction talk …to find out about the HLTA, this was very informative, especially over pay structures…”

- 50-day candidate

In one focus group discussion, however, a small number of candidates noted that such open days were mainly concerned with promoting the local training provider rather than providing candidates with accurate and unbiased information.
Overall, candidates seem to have had a fairly positive experience of the initial stages of the programme. Candidates were asked how easy or difficult it was to access the information they required at this early stage and over half of the candidates on all routes report that it was fairly easy to find information about HLTA training, with nearly 30% saying it was very easy. Of the initial literature received by candidates on all routes, the TDA pack was considered the most useful by the majority of candidates.

To support these findings, a high proportion of candidates asserted that changes to the registration process are not necessary. However, just under 10% of 50-day training route candidates commented that they required further clarification that they had been accepted on the course, as their status during the application process was often confused.

Registering for HLTA training

Candidates were offered various ways of registering for HLTA training. Online registration seems to have been fairly popular. For example, half of candidates on 50-day training, over two-thirds of candidates on Assessment Only and 88% of Pilot route candidates registered for training using the online route. However, a small proportion of candidates on all routes reported having technical problems with the website, although they were happy to register via telephone in these circumstances and thought that the service by this mode was good.

The overall process of registering for HLTA training was considered good or very good by over 80% of candidates on the main training routes.

“*It was fast, accurate and easy to use*”

“*Remarkably straightforward online procedure*”

- Assessment Only candidates

3.2.1 Literacy and numeracy

As a requirement for achieving the Standards, literacy and numeracy qualifications are essential. Similar numbers of full 50-day route (59%) and Other routes (61%) candidates held the necessary literacy and numeracy qualifications when they applied for the course.

As expected on a much shorter course designed for those already working to the HLTA professional standards, a much larger proportion (82%) of Assessment Only candidates held the appropriate qualifications.

In circumstances where candidates did not already hold the qualifications and were required to take additional training to meet this standard, candidates from all routes were generally happy with the arrangements made to obtain them. An exception to this is where 50-day candidates reported that they were under the impression that the training would encompass time to achieve the necessary qualifications but found later that this was not the case and as a result had to train for literacy and/or numeracy in their own time additional to HLTA work. Some candidates explained that they selected the full 50-day routes
specifically because they thought that it would allow time to achieve the qualifications.

In addition, many Assessment Only candidates felt that time allocated to gain the qualifications necessary for the course was unreasonable.

### 3.2.2 Additional experience required

Though the majority of candidates on all routes hold substantial relevant experience, when applying for the course their principal concern was that they receive additional training in working with a whole class or large group of pupils.

An interesting contradiction was noted with regards to gaining additional experience before embarking upon HLTA training, whereby candidates were required to be working at a certain level and have specific areas of experience in order to apply for HLTA training, but were unable to gain such experience due to their lack of status. Whole-class teaching was one such example of this.

Additional areas in which candidates needed to gain experience included the following:

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<tr>
<td>Direct contact with parents and carers about a pupil’s learning</td>
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<td>Opportunities to observe others and to be observed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training on IT skills</td>
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### 3.2.3 Selecting a provider

Around two-thirds of candidates on all routes based their choice of approved training provider on the convenience of its location. Others based their decision upon LA recommendation (approximately 10%) or were only aware that there was one provider available to them (23% of 50-day and 12% of Assessment Only candidates).

Candidates tended to select providers based on their location and prefer to travel short distances for provider-based sessions. A large proportion (39%) of those on the Assessment Only route reported that they travelled 1-5 miles to attend preparation sessions and 17% travelled 6-10 miles. Over half of Assessment Only candidates, therefore, chose to travel 10 miles or less, however, 16% reported travelling 26 miles.

Likewise, Pilot route candidates mainly travelled shorter distances to preparation sessions (over 40% travelled up to 10 miles) although as with Assessment Only candidates, some were prepared to travel further (17% travelled 16-20 miles and 22% travelled 26 miles and over). Full route, 50-day candidates seemed to travel slightly longer distances with one-quarter of them reporting that they travelled 1-5 miles to attend preparation sessions and 16% saying that they travelled between 11 and 15 miles. For nearly 40% of these candidates, distance travelled seemed to be fairly evenly spread across the longer range distances (over 16 miles).
When questioned about how informed they felt at this early stage, most Assessment Only and 50-day candidates reported that they would have welcomed **additional information, including a list of providers to help with their decision on choice of provider.** During focus groups, they reported that information on the specific location of the preparation sessions would also have been useful. Equally, around 5% of these candidates feel that a greater degree of communication between candidates and their provider at this stage, should be encouraged.

### 3.2.4 Changes to selection and application

The majority of the candidates on all routes felt that **overall no changes to the application and selection process were necessary.**

However, around one-quarter of candidates felt that the amount of paperwork that they have to produce was burdensome; particularly with the duplication of certificates.

In addition, candidates suggested that **there was not enough readily available information** on the following aspects of the course:

- The **amount of time and work** involved in the course, especially with regard to collecting evidence
- The **need to produce relevant certificates**
- Clarification of **what the status would mean**
- **Details of the assessment tasks**

All candidates who did not receive it said they would have liked the TDA **pack and timetable prior to starting the course.** Assessment Only candidates suggested, during focus groups, that their head teachers and colleagues would have benefited from receiving a TDA pack as this would inform them of the HLTA training and assessment process. Candidates felt this was particularly important for those acting as mentors in order that they are sufficiently knowledgeable to advise candidates.

In addition, many felt that **parents were not fully aware of the process and what it involves and that they should understand the role that HLTAs perform in schools, why they are necessary, and how their role is beneficial to children.**

Approximately three-quarters of candidates across all routes would have liked the opportunity to meet HLTA who have completed the course. One or two 50-day candidates commented that although they appreciated the fact that the HLTA initiative was in its first year, **future candidates could benefit greatly from speaking to HLTA who have recently achieved the status.**
3.2.5 Time before starting the training

Having registered with a training provider and secured LA funding, over 70% of Assessment Only and Pilot route candidates started their training within two months. This was considered an acceptable timescale by most. It is worth noting that take-up of training seems to have been a little slower for 50-day candidates, with 55% of these starting training within two months and a further 21% taking three months.

Training and preparation days were generally considered to be held at appropriate times and on appropriate days; with an average of nearly 90% of candidates (across routes) stating that they did not have any problems attending the provider-based sessions. Small numbers of candidates (less than 10%) suggested, however, that sessions should not be run over school holidays.

3.3 Access to information

The vast majority of candidates reported that it was easy or very easy to find information about the course. However, those who were on the programme in the very early days highlighted, in the focus groups, that there was confusion about what the status meant, what the course would involve and the implications for schools.

Candidates on Pilot routes and the Assessment Only route felt that a comprehensive information pack covering what the course involves in terms of time and workload given at the start of the training would be an effective way of addressing this.

Those on the full 50-day training route commented that the information they received was very much on a need-to-know basis during the early stages of registration. They considered this necessary as too much information at this stage may have put them off. Their main concern was that initial information was often provided too late, and the registration process was rushed as a result.

Approximately 15% of candidates, across routes, felt that they received misleading information about the choice of routes available and their entry requirements. In focus groups discussions, a small number of candidates revealed that they were informed that they needed Level 2 qualifications in literacy and numeracy before they started the course, however, the certificates were not actually required until the assessment date.

Approximately half of all candidates reported a lack of information about the nature and content of each route. Many Assessment Only candidates suggested, during the focus group discussions, that they would have been happier to undertake the full 50-day route but were not clear about its content.

The main frustration of many candidates was the inconsistency of the information received from the different providers, both in terms of its quantity and content, officially but also in an unofficial ‘guidance’ capacity. The need to standardise the quality and quantity of information given is seen as essential in maintaining a fair and structured training process nationwide.
Summary: 3. Application and registration procedures

- In its first year, the HLTA programme attracted TAs and support staff of considerable experience – an average of 6 to 9 years experience in their current role. The majority of the candidates responding to the survey were aged 35 years and upwards.

- HLTA programme was seen as an opportunity to gain recognition for the role that TAs have in school and for their contribution to children’s learning. Some also applied in order to improve their promotional prospects.

- The majority of candidates on all routes reported that the registration process was straightforward. However, some candidates did report technical difficulties with the website.

- Though most candidates were happy with the arrangements made to gain literacy and numeracy qualifications, the time scale given to achieve them was considered very tight (by both Assessment Only and 50-day candidates) and contributed to their heavy workload when preparing their portfolio.

- Candidates felt that they were given limited/misleading information regarding the content of each route and in some instances suggested that they were not on the correct training programme.

- Candidates generally found that their experience as a TA was appropriate for the course and allowed them to reach the Standards without too much difficulty. One area in which many candidates lacked experience was whole class teaching.

- Many candidates reported that there was limited awareness amongst teaching staff and parents as to what the training and assessment process involves. They would like comprehensive information provided from an early stage.

- Candidates across all routes feel that entry requirements should be standardised nationwide as much discrepancy was noted between LAs.
4. Candidates’ Experiences of Training and Assessment

4.1 The provider-based sessions

Structure and format

Overall, the provider-based sessions were perceived favourably by over two-thirds of candidates across all routes. A high proportion of them considered the quality of training and preparation at these sessions to be good or very good. This was the case for 81% of Pilot route candidates, 75% of full 50-day candidates and 67% of Assessment Only candidates, and was largely due to the quality and enthusiasm of the tutors, who were rated highly amongst candidates:

“The input from the trainers was clear and very useful. They provided good support and great encouragement. They answered questions fully and gave concrete examples or explicit encouragement.”
- Pilot route candidate

The majority of Pilot route candidates also felt that their course was well run, and this was mainly due to good tutors and support from schools. Areas that are deemed to be lacking appear to be minimal, but include the need for specific guidelines of what the course entails and the need for tutorials.

Around one-fifth of 50-day candidates noted a lack of structure to the course as a whole and suggested that the sessions did not follow a clear or logical outline. However, the structure and delivery of the provider-based sessions did not cause any problems. A suggested approach was half-day sessions, as described below:

At one provider, the 20 provider-based sessions were delivered in 40 half days of training. This was considered more manageable by candidates, as it offered greater flexibility to schools and more manageable units of training for candidates.

Most candidates reported that the format of the training sessions was appropriate; this generally took the form of Power Point presentations followed by a group discussion amongst candidates. Indeed, all candidates looked favourably on peer support and group work situations. In a focus group discussion, a 50-day candidate described an example of this approach:

“A tutor gave out a lesson plan, and described a classroom scenario whereby two children in the class had Special Educational Needs, and one child spoke limited English. Candidates worked in groups to establish how they would adjust the lesson plan accordingly”
- 50-day candidate

A major issue raised by many 50-day candidates (40%) was that the timescale of the training process was too long and in many cases, covered material that was too basic. Candidates suggested that the ICT training was too basic and did not take into account previous experience, especially for those who had been in their role for over three years.
**Guidance and support**

Almost half of the Assessment Only candidates said they were disappointed by the **amount of support offered by tutors** throughout the course. In particular, candidates would have liked to receive more constructive criticism; rather than offered practical tips as to how they could improve their work. Tutors instead recommended that candidates seek help from their peers. However, due to the nature of assessment, tutors are limited in the amount and nature of feedback they can offer and as a result, candidates found this very frustrating.

"Tutors were good but it was a shame they could not look at your file and give you guidance."
- Assessment Only candidate

Some candidates (an average of around 10%) also reported that providers were inconsistent in their delivery; they commented that different tutors offered **conflicting advice** with regard to what constituted evidence. Therefore, candidates suggested that examples of previous candidates' work would have been helpful, along with the opportunity to discuss the course with previous candidates.

**Individual needs**

Those on the full 50-day route claimed that the training offered was **not tailored enough to the needs of the candidates**, with many commenting that it was too basic (as discussed above). Many also felt that the course should have focused more on areas such as **behaviour management**, which was considered beneficial by all.

Candidates considered that it would be beneficial, due to differences in school environment and role, for tutors to address each Standard individually. Candidates would have liked tutors to assess where they were unable to meet a particular Standard; in order that they could address any gaps.

Around one-quarter of candidates, in particular those on the full 50-day training route, noted that much of the training offered was **aimed at those working in primary** rather than secondary settings. Though focus group discussions highlighted the benefits of being trained alongside others from different settings, candidates felt that there was an imbalance in emphasis which placed those working in the secondary phase in a disadvantaged position when it came to looking at examples of how to evidence the Standards.

**Perceived benefits**

A high proportion (74%) of Assessment Only candidates considered their preparation sessions **successful in terms of explaining the standards clearly**.

Just less than 70% of Assessment Only candidates consider the preparation sessions to be good or very good in terms of explaining how to apply the standards to candidates' work, and this is particularly due to the **format of the information provided**. Examples of others' work also proved helpful.

In focus group discussions with full 50-day route candidates, it was commented that the whole course was beneficial as it reinforced existing
knowledge and highlighted the extent of the role already performed by
candidates. These candidates particularly liked the depth of information
covered during sessions, reporting that they feel they have gained much
more from this than Assessment Only candidates would have gained in
their provider-based sessions.

Figure 3: Successes of HLTA training

As a result of training, HLTA candidates on all routes reported an
increase in their skills levels, their knowledge and their confidence
(see figure 3):

“This course enabled me to show myself and others my potential. The
observation and feedback I received gave me more confidence and self-
belief.”
- Pilot Route candidate

4.2 Course materials

When asked about the use of training materials, candidates reported that
the standard of the course materials was high. However, some
candidates (approximately one-fifth across all routes), considered that
they were not given out at an appropriate time or in a logical order.
Consequently, some materials were seen as irrelevant and candidates
felt that they were not encouraged to make the best use of them because
they were distributed all at once. This made the training materials
difficult to manage and candidates were unsure as to what to bring to
each session.

Even though the TDA provided reference packs and handbooks for
HLTA candidates, many training providers developed their own
additional course materials to aid the dissemination of information and
provide candidates with learning sources that they could use outside the
classroom environment. These materials take on many different guises,
although there were some common methods utilised during the training
sessions across all of the HLTA routes:
The differences in support needs are reflected in the course materials that providers individually developed to assist their own training sessions. A summary of the course materials is provided below, however, for more detail on the types of materials produced and used by individual providers across all routes, please refer to appendix 8.

**Course materials: Assessment Only**

The course materials developed by providers who offered the Assessment Only route were concerned with disseminating general information to HLTA candidates and providing guidance on the Standards and assessment procedures.

**Figure 4: Course materials provided on the Assessment Only route**

- **PowerPoint presentations**
- **Handouts**
- **Guidance sheets**
- **Review sheets and evaluation forms**

![Diagram showing course materials: Assessment Only route]
As the Assessment Only route was designed for HLTA candidates who already have substantial prior knowledge and experience, it is clear why the additional course materials reflect only a basis for guidance and useful information, rather than a need to provide further training.

Generally, this information was centred on the Standards, guidance for the assessment visit itself, and illustrative ‘prompt’ questions for the response sheets.

However, a couple of training providers used further ideas for the development of course materials:

- Advice on the assessment visit from the ‘assessor’s viewpoint’
- Guidance on specific topics such as Special Educational Needs and behavioural management
- Example scenarios

**Course materials: Pilot routes**

The training providers offering the Pilot route courses developed a wide range of course materials.

**Figure 5: Course materials provided on the Pilot routes**

These materials shared many of the elements found in the Assessment Only materials, such as PowerPoint presentations and handouts. However, these are used for each training session or topic, rather than just for general preparation sessions.
Such topics included:

- **Social, emotional and behavioural** skills
- **Teaching and learning** styles
- **Internet** training
- **Reading and writing** assessment

Along with this, training providers offered additional information such as extracts from Ofsted reports, ideas for school-based tasks, useful website references and video clips demonstrating pupil behaviour.

**E-learning materials** were also developed as part of the Pilot routes, with providers facilitating the use of electronic discussion groups, virtual learning environments and streamed video links.

Clearly, however, it is dependent upon the route that the training provider offered as to the volume and type of course materials that they have developed.

One provider that offered the TNA route felt that ‘**confidence is what they really need**’ and as a result, did not develop many additional course materials, but they opted on concentrated group work and activities rather than providing documentation.

This is in contrast to a Shorter route training provider, who gave each candidate:

> “a folder and a binder with lots of handouts with quotations each day and website addresses for different themes; supporting documents about the tasks and lots of information about behavioural management.”

- Pilot route candidate

**Course materials: full training (50 day)**

Unsurprisingly, the training providers who offered the full 50-day training route appear to be the ones who also **developed the largest amount of additional course materials** for their candidates.

These course materials commonly comprised of the following:
As the full training route was designed for HLTA candidates who have the potential to complete the course but need further experience and personal development, the additional course materials used by training providers were wide-ranging in their purpose and design.

Again, PowerPoint presentations and handouts were the main resources implemented by training providers. However, the content of these materials was much more comprehensive than for either the Assessment Only or the Pilot route courses.

Subjects covered by these materials included:

- Lesson planning
- Behavioural management
- Special Educational Needs
- Classroom procedures
- Effective questioning
- Good practice
- Inclusive cultures
Noticeably, these subject-related materials were also often accompanied by quizzes, activities, questionnaires and mapping exercises for candidates to use in conjunction with the theories and information they had covered during the session.

Along with this, full 50-day training route candidates appear to have been provided with much more information regarding relevant legislation and educational policies, for example, the Disability Act, Every Child Matters, the National Curriculum, and Equality and Diversity policies.

Like the Pilot route courses, the full 50-day training route providers also offered useful weblinks, resources for further information and case studies. These were complimented, however, with sessions covering ICT training and inductions on E-learning.

### 4.3 Integral elements of HLTA training

#### Working with a mentor

Many participating schools had appointed a mentor to support their teaching assistant in preparing their portfolio and producing evidence to meet the HLTA standards. To assist in increasing awareness, some training providers offered two half-days of training for mentors to help them support HLTAs through to successful completion.

The extent to which HLTA candidates say they had access to mentors varied according to the chosen route, as shown below.

**Figure 7: Proportion of candidates who worked with a mentor**

![Bar chart showing the proportion of candidates who worked with a mentor](chart)

Candidates tended to view the role of the mentor in different ways, depending on the route they are taking.
Table 1: Candidates' views on working with a mentor

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<th>Route</th>
<th>Views and Observations</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Assessment Only</strong></td>
<td>50% of HLTA candidates had worked with a mentor and generally viewed the process less positively than candidates on other routes. Some felt they were capable of completing the course without this support or help.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pilot route</strong></td>
<td>Most candidates had worked with a mentor (71%) and over half found the extra support extremely beneficial. Others were happy to work on their own.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Full training route (50 day)</strong></td>
<td>73% of HLTA candidates stated that they had worked with a mentor. They believed it had been very useful, and had given a support system that was not offered by the training provider. They also found that having a mentor within school ensured the support and understanding from all staff including the head teacher.</td>
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The varying responses to the mentoring elements of the HLTA training may not be that surprising. Those candidates who required the full 50 day training route were also the candidates to appreciate their mentors most. Likewise, those ready to take the Assessment Only route were the candidates to find the least need for a mentor.

Candidates on all routes (just less than 10%) commented that it would be beneficial for mentors to receive training with regard to what is involved in the HTLA process, thereby putting them in a better position to advise and offer assistance.

**Good practice in mentoring**

One provider issued a series of notes to those in the position of mentor, supporting candidates on the full 50-day route. Mentors are also invited to training days, but were provided with notes regardless of whether or not they attended.

**School support**

Candidates on the Assessment only route suggested that the HLTA training and status needs broader recognition amongst teaching staff, head teachers and parents.

Candidates felt that where teaching staff do not necessarily understand the role or the training process to reach it, there is a lack of support from their colleagues. They suggested that if teachers and school leaders do not fully understand what the training process entails, they are less prepared to allocate time within schools for TAs to complete their school-based tasks. Many candidates (approximately 85%) considered that more time would be helpful during school hours to complete the workload;
“I felt the research work on top of the assignments was difficult to achieve. I didn’t feel I could ask our school for more time during working hours to complete what was asked.”
- Assessment Only candidate

Candidates on all routes feel strongly that further clarification of the role would benefit everyone involved, and they suggest that this should be done by providing comprehensive information to all staff within schools.

ICT

Few candidates on any of the routes reported difficulties using ICT throughout the training process. However, for those that did, it was due to lack of access to a PC during working hours rather than a lack of ICT skills to perform the tasks. Those who were less ICT literate commented that their skills improved as a result of the training.

At least one-quarter of candidates felt, however, that more time should have been allowed within schools to complete ICT training. Despite improving their skills in this area, some candidates considered this aspect to be underdeveloped, this was particularly pertinent to those on the 50-day route, who saw potential to focus on more complex and advanced computer training within the programme. In addition, many candidates were not allocated time within school to complete ICT tasks, and as a result had to complete these aspects of their training at home.

Contrasting school visit

Visiting a contrasting school was one element of the training considered both beneficial and enjoyable by candidates on all routes.

Over 80% of 50-day candidates were able to visit a contrasting school. Around one-quarter of these reported that the school they visited differed to that in which they worked in many respects; giving them the opportunity to experience schools with a larger ethnic mixture of pupils, a larger proportion of children with SENs and different school and class sizes. This was considered very enlightening and offered ideas and inspiration that they would otherwise not have received.

E-learning

Many candidates completed this element of the training at home, and reported that they could take as much from it as they chose to. Therefore whilst some candidates spent hours working on this element of the course in their personal time, others completed none of the E-learning elements of the course, but this seemed to have little impact on their success.

Those who did complete the e-learning component of the course considered the main benefits to be:

- Learning new skills
- Improving their confidence
INA

Many candidates, particularly those on the 50-day or Pilot routes, reported that as part of the HLTA selection process they completed an initial self-review of their role as a TA against the 31 Standards. This helped identify the areas in which they needed additional experience or training.

Many of the candidates found this process to be very useful in focusing the training on their needs although some candidates (20%), across all routes, reported that the INA was completed but not revisited at a later stage.

4.4 Preparing the portfolio

The portfolio was completed electronically by the vast majority of candidates (95% of Assessment Only candidates). Candidates on all routes commented that the disk provided was far from user-friendly: it proved very difficult to edit; there was no spell-checking facility; and candidates could not highlight sections or cut and paste where necessary. Many also reported that lining up the tables was time-consuming and frustrating and several suggested that instructions would have been helpful.

“I felt like tearing my hair out. The CD wouldn’t work and I had to download from the HLTA website. When trying to put the standards next to the text I found it really difficult to get them to line up, it kept going out of sync. Really frustrating, the grid was a nightmare.”
- Assessment Only candidate

The majority of candidates said that preparing the portfolio was far more time consuming than expected (over three-quarters of all candidates across routes). During focus group discussions, several suggested that it took over 40 hours to write up; whilst one or two others claimed ‘it took weeks and weeks’. As a result, a great deal of additional work had to be completed at home.

Many candidates did, however, find it personally satisfying to complete the portfolio, and found that it provided them with an opportunity to reflect on their personal development.

“I enjoyed producing the portfolio because I found that I was able to evaluate my role and I gained confidence when I realised how much I do.”
- Pilot route candidate

4.5 The assessment visit

At the time of interview some candidates had not completed the assessment process, particularly those on the full 50-day training route. The views of the Assessment Only candidates who had undergone the assessment visit were very mixed. Figures 8 and 9 summarise the different experiences.

Some reported having a very positive experience helped by the friendliness of their assessor, whilst other candidates felt that the visit was very different to what they had been expecting. They suggested that interviewers sometimes asked them rather vague and difficult questions.
The two diagrams below summarise the differences in opinion that arose among candidates as a result of the assessment visit:

**Positive experiences of the assessment visit**

**Figure 8: Positive experiences of the assessment visit**

- They had **plenty of time** with the assessor
- Assessment was **well organised**
- **School was generally supportive** and did not regard it as a burden
- Given **several dates and times** and schools chose which were most convenient
- Assessors were **well prepared** with a full set of questions ready
- Assessors were **friendly**, established rapport and put candidate at ease

**Areas for concern in relation to the assessment visit**

**Figure 9: Areas for concern regarding the assessment visit**

- **Other school staff** found the process a **burden**
- **Flexibility and choice** of dates could be provided as Heads have few free days
- Felt they should be observed **actually working with children**
- Some assessors were **late** or did not stay the full 3 hours
- Process was meant to be **rigid and consistent** but was not
- Some assessors appeared **unapproachable**
- Some primary TAs were assessed by those with **only secondary experience**
- Sometimes the assessor was also the **training provider** or someone known to provider
These differences in experiences led to a number of suggestions being put forward during focus groups as to how the assessment visit could be modified for the future:

- many candidates would have preferred to write a paragraph about each Standard, and how they met its requirements
- the assessor could tape record the interview
- observation of how candidates work with children would be beneficial, instead of concentrating wholly on the portfolio and the interviews
- assessors may consider providing more feedback at the end of interviews
- ensure that the assessor is unknown to the candidate prior to the visit – some candidates were assessed by their training providers, others had been assessed by the husband of their training provider
### Summary: 4. Training and assessment

- **The standard of training** across all routes was considered to be good or very good by the majority of candidates, and all candidates on all routes reported an increase in their confidence, skills and knowledge as a result of the training.

- Though many candidates found course materials to be of high quality, many full 50-day route candidates noted that they should be more relevant to specific training sessions and given out at more appropriate times.

- Full 50-day route candidates felt that the course needed to follow a more logical order, allowing candidates to prepare for training sessions in advance.

- Both Assessment Only and full 50-day route candidates were disappointed by the amount of support and constructive tips that providers were able to offer.

- Many felt the need for greater support from schools, and felt that a broader understanding of the status was necessary. Mentors were considered invaluable by many, though candidates also thought that training should be available to them, to raise their awareness and support.

- Candidates on the full 50-day route generally found the timescale of the course to be unrealistic, and all routes complained about the excessive wait for results, having completed the portfolio to such a tight deadline.

- Many on the full 50-day route suggested that much of the training was aimed at too basic a level, particularly with regards to ICT.

- Those who work in secondary schools suggested separate training sessions to candidates in primary settings would be helpful, to ensure that examples given are relevant to all.
5. Candidates’ Experiences of Meeting the Standards and Achieving HLTA Status

5.1 Useful Standards

Feedback provided by candidates suggests that the development of Standards for HTLAs has encouraged teaching staff and head teachers of schools to give value and recognition to the HLTA role, encouraging a respectful and effective working team relationship between teachers and support staff. For this reason, candidates considered the development of Standards, as a whole, to be extremely beneficial.

In addition, candidates commented that several of the Standards were valuable in their own right as they meant that teaching staff were encouraged to delegate duties, they would usually do themselves, to support staff. Such roles included lesson planning (Standard 3.1.1), involvement in out-of-school activities (Standard 3.1.4) and whole class teaching (Standard 3.3.5).

It was also highlighted in focus groups with candidates on the 50-day training route that, having to locate and identify school policy, placed them in an advantageous position, as, in some instances, staff would ask their advice on policy-related issues as a result of their training.

5.2 Problematic Standards

Candidates cited problems with specific Standards for one of two principal reasons; whilst some were actually difficult for candidates to achieve, others were reported as a common part of their everyday role, yet proved difficult to provide physical evidence for. In addition, candidates suggested that the Standards can be interpreted in different ways as the phrasing or terminology is ambiguous. Section one of the Standards was particularly referred to in this respect.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the majority of the problems encountered by candidates on the Assessment Only and Pilot routes related to evidencing Standards as opposed to achieving them. However, candidates on the full 50-day training route faced problems in meeting certain Standards.

With regards to producing written evidence, Standard 1.1 was by far the most commonly reported Standard to cause problems. This applied to 39% of candidates on the Assessment Only route and 29% of those on the Pilot routes. Small numbers of candidates on the full 50-day route also had difficulties with this Standard.

Standard 1.1 was considered particularly difficult by candidates as they felt that their school context restricted their experience. However there are issues with how this standard was interpreted. Many candidates interpreted it as requiring working in schools where there is an ethnic mix in pupil cohort. Candidates’ comments included:
“Within our school we have no children other than White English, so trying to evidence 1b was difficult.”
- Assessment Only candidate

Indeed, two thirds of Assessment Only candidates suggested that the type of school they work in (including the ethnic mix of the pupil cohort), makes Standards 1.1 and 3.1.4 problematic to achieve.

Candidates on all routes also reported problems in meeting the following standards:

**Figure 10: Problematic Standards**

The majority of candidates on the full 50-day route, particularly those working in secondary schools, reported difficulties in meeting certain Standards. These candidates explained that many of the Standards are based around situations that arise more frequently within primary schools. **Standard 1.5**, for example, proved difficult because few staff have contact with parents in a secondary setting. This Standard also proved difficult for 10% of candidates on the Assessment Only route and 5% of those on the Pilot routes.

Daily variation inherent in the role of the TA and the different roles that different TAs can take within the school environment means that collecting evidence for Standards can be difficult and time consuming. Assessment Only candidates commented in focus group discussions that they would have liked to have known at an earlier stage about requirements in terms of collecting large amounts of evidence.

Citing **Standard 3.1.4** as an example, candidates reported that collecting evidence often meant chasing teachers around after lessons, as planning out-of-school visits is not an activity which support staff are
usually involved in. Approximately 12% of candidates on the Assessment Only route reported difficulty in reaching this Standard.

The majority of Pilot route candidates reported difficulties with section 1 of the Standards, although several (9%) reported that Standard 3.3.7 was also difficult to evidence, as it implies that all schools have problems with bullying, harassment and stereotyping. Comments highlighted that this is not always the case:

"I have little or no need to deal with bullying and harassment, only challenges to stereotypical views of those of gender, and even these are mild so I feel unsure that they will be acceptable as evidence of the Standard."

- Pilot route candidate

A small proportion of candidates on the Assessment Only route (6%) also reported difficulties in meeting this Standard, citing similar reasons.

Those on the full 50-day route additionally reported problems with the following Standards:

Table 2: Problematic Standards – 50-day route

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>They demonstrate and promote the positive values, attitudes and behaviour they expect from the pupils with whom they work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>They know how to use ICT to advance pupils’ learning, and can use common ICT tools for their own and pupils’ benefit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.5</td>
<td>They advance pupils’ learning in a range of classroom settings, including working with individuals, small groups and whole classes where the assigned teacher is present.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Candidates encountered difficulties when it came to collecting evidence for Standard 1.3; however Standards 2.4 and 3.3.5 refer to situations in which the 50-day candidates did not have sufficient experience or opportunities within their school to reach.

Of the Subject Specialist candidates interviewed, one-fifth reported that they had difficulties in reaching certain Standards due to their subject specialism. However, on the whole, Pilot route candidates reported difficulties with the same Standards as those on the Assessment Only route and the full 50-day route, citing the same reasons for these difficulties.

Additionally, however, 7% of Pilot route candidates also reported difficulties in reaching:
Standard

| 3.1.1 | They contribute effectively to teachers’ planning and preparation of lessons. |

As with candidates on all routes, those undertaking the Pilot route felt that their role was largely determined by the kind of school in which they worked, reporting that aspects of the TA role outlined in Standards such as 3.1.1 simply did not make up part of their regular duties.

5.2.1 Gaps in the Standards

The vast majority of candidates were satisfied that the 31 Standards were effective in allowing them to demonstrate the full breadth of duties and responsibilities that their role as a TA entailed.

However, over a third of Pilot route candidates suggested that a Standard be developed that recognises this very breadth of duties regularly performed within their role, for example:

They perform a wide range of tasks and their role encompasses a large breadth of responsibilities on a daily basis.

5.3 Achieving the status

The majority of candidates across all routes (over three-quarters of all candidates), during telephone interviews and focus groups discussions, commented that they were frustrated with the length of time it took to receive notification of the outcome of assessment.

“It has now been 5 months since I completed HLTA and have not had the results if I have passed or not. This is very frustrating and annoying. Why does it take so long?”
- Assessment Only candidate

A variety of reasons were suggested for such delays. For instance, candidates have reported that their examiners have completed the paperwork incorrectly or that there has been a breakdown of communication regarding completion dates between providers and candidates.

“I, along with four others in the class of 18 or so, instead of getting our results, received a letter telling us that following national moderation the assessment process had been deemed to be insecure.”
- 50-day candidate

“I was supposed to hear in February but had a phone call from my provider on Thursday last week [21st April] to be told that I had not been granted the status! Apparently my application was very good but the external assessor who visited me at school did not fill out the paperwork correctly!”
- Assessment Only candidate

As a result, the delays caused frustration and anxiety; in addition candidates claim they impacted on the schools and themselves in terms of future planning, roles and responsibilities.
For example, some candidates were unsure of whether they could apply for a HLTA position. However many candidates either planned to take on work or were currently working in a HLTA role on the basis of achieving the status in the near future. This was particularly significant in the fieldwork period prior to September 2005 and the introduction of PPA time. Many candidates reported that their schools had planned to utilise them as HLTA to provide cover for PPA time. However, delays in hearing the outcome had resulted in schools needing to find alternative arrangements; or candidates being asked to undertake the role without the appropriate salary.

A high proportion of candidates raised the issue of financial recognition for their new status. Some suggested they will receive a pay rise once they have received official notification of having gained the status. However some suggested that their schools could not offer any additional pay.

During focus group discussions, some candidates claimed that schools have opted for a compromise by offering a dual contract and split salary, therefore only paying at a higher scale for the time that their support staff are working on HLTA responsibilities.

Support networks

Many of the Assessment Only candidates commented that support should be available for candidates who have achieved the status, as this would be helpful for them to adjust to their new role and responsibilities. Candidates found that sharing their experiences had been highly beneficial and they would like to continue to do so. Some candidates were able to continue with this peer support although many would welcome a formal support network which also includes school leaders and management level staff.

5.3.1 Understanding the status and the HLTA role

Candidates on all routes suggested that awareness of the status should be raised across the school workforce. This could improve relationships within schools; increase the significance of the role and encourage participation. The following were suggested:

- Raising and clarifying the profile of HLTA status
- Encouraging broader recognition of the role
- Implementing a pay structure that reflects the role and responsibilities

“A lot of our teachers don’t seem to know what HLTA actually is and I’m not sure, in a secondary school context, that I do myself either, especially with HLTA being a status rather than a qualification.”
- 50-day candidate

Candidates reported that many of their school workforce colleagues do not have a clear understanding of what is involved in the HLTA role and subsequently do not value the role. In addition, they claim that parents and outside agencies such as LAs need to be more fully informed.
“Having achieved the status, I feel somewhat disappointed that my efforts do not seem to have been recognised by the school or the LA.”
- Assessment Only candidate

In relation to gaining recognition for their achievements and respect for their role, candidates (across all routes) felt disappointed by the award they receive. At least one-fifth felt that the letter they are issued does not adequately reflect the effort they have made and that some form of certification would be more appropriate.

Feedback from candidates has highlighted variation across LAs and schools, in the level they are being deployed at and the salaries that they are receiving. Again, candidates felt that the lack of consistency relates to the lack of knowledge and recognition that schools and other agencies have for the HLTA role.

5.3.2 Role development

Candidates on the Assessment Only route commented that their role within schools initially involved tasks with little responsibility that were largely directed by the class teacher.

Many reported that these responsibilities have evolved over time to include the following kinds of activities:

- **Lesson** planning
- Taking **small groups** of children
- Guiding other **TAs**

Some additionally reported that as their roles have evolved they have developed closer relationships with the class teacher and a more prominent role within the school, gaining the trust and respect of the staff.

“The programme raised my professional self-esteem and confidence greatly and I gained a lot of professional respect from my colleagues.”
- Assessment Only candidate

However, during focus group discussions, some Assessment Only candidates (less than 10%) noted that their role and pay had not significantly changed since achieving the status.

5.3.3 Additional training

Across all routes, just under half of the candidates expressed an intention to embark on future training, although many candidates stated that they are waiting for their assessment outcome before making any further plans.\(^{11}\)

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\(^{11}\) Full-training candidates were not given an option of ‘don’t know’ to respond to this question.
Of those who did want to train further, some were keen to progress to QTS. Around one-third of 50-day candidates would like to continue to QTS or PGCE (and a similar proportion of Assessment Only). However, common to all candidates is that they would like information about what training is available to them.

Some Assessment Only candidates (around 10%) commented that they have been deterred from pursuing further training as a result of their HLTA training, while some were unsure at this stage.

Reasons given for not wishing to continue with training across all routes include the following:

- De-motivated by long wait for results (particularly Assessment Only)
- Discouraged by amount of work involved
- Lacking qualifications or confidence
- Enjoy a less formal ‘big sister’ relationship with pupils
- HLTA status has not affected their role within school
- Reasons for not wishing to continue with training

Figure 12: Reasons given for not wishing to undertake further training
Though candidates reported that they have benefited from achieving the status, whether it be in financial terms or through recognition of their role, many are frustrated that there is no ‘next step’ after HLTA in terms of annual CPD.

5.4 Successful aspects of the process

Candidates on all routes cited many benefits to achieving HLTA status. These are summarised below:

- **Personal satisfaction** and development
- A **pay increase**
- Recognition of their achievement
- Improved **confidence**
- **Contact** with other TAs
- Increased opportunities to progress within a teaching career

5.5 Foundation degree and HLTA training

A small number of HLTA candidates who undertook their training whilst they were already studying for the foundation degree were asked for their feedback about the programme. This aspect of the evaluation was designed to uncover any information about how HLTA training could be successfully combined with the foundation degree or if this approach placed additional burdens on candidates.

These candidates stated that at the start of the course, they were unsure as to what HLTA status would mean. Some suggested they were initially led to believe that achieving the foundation degree would also automatically give them HLTA status.

Candidates therefore suggested that more literature about the programme and what it involves would be helpful. They suggested that this should also include clear guidelines for school and LAs about what the job of an HLTA entails. Feedback about this approach mirrored much of the feedback from Assessment Only candidates.

*Figure 13: Candidate feedback regarding the foundation degree training route*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback from candidates regarding the Foundation Degree route</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 days is <strong>not sufficient to be prepared for the assessment</strong> – too much work involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Did not improve knowledge, confidence or skills as already covered</strong> by Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Not enough support and guidance given</strong> and feedback minimal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IT skills not developed</strong> as fully as expected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Not enough examples</strong> were given for candidates to draw from, e.g. for evidencing Standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Table formatting</strong> was difficult on the disc provided</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Many candidates suggested that **5 days** would be more appropriate to cover everything needed for the assessment preparation and taking into account the workload involved in studying for a foundation degree.

Due to the amount of work involved in achieving HLTA status, these candidates also suggested that this should be reflected through the **receipt of an HLTA qualification, rather than a ‘status’**.

However, candidates did not believe that their knowledge, confidence or skills as a teaching assistant had been particularly improved, due to the fact that much of the required information simply needed to be transferred from their foundation degree files into their HLTA portfolio.

Nevertheless, the work for the portfolio was greeted with varied responses, with some candidates reporting that they received **adequate information and support**; whilst others did not feel they have sufficient support or guidance and felt they were not told how many Standards would actually need evidencing.

When they were asked about the impact of undertaking the HLTA course whilst studying for a foundation degree, candidates were able to put forward a number of benefits:

**Figure 14: Benefits of undertaking HLTA training alongside a foundation degree**

It was felt that much of the work from the foundation degree could be transferred directly into the HLTA portfolio. This was particularly the case for the necessary assignments and tasks which had already been completed as part of the foundation degree programme.

Some candidates felt that the foundation degree had made a difference to the HLTA programme in terms of increasing their general awareness about learning theories and teaching styles. However, it was felt that there should be more of a parallel between the two as candidates believed the foundation degree only assisted in the writing up of the HLTA portfolio.
## Summary: Meeting the Standards and achieving the status

- Candidates considered **certain Standards extremely useful** in terms of encouraging their school to allocate them duties that did not form part of their usual role. Such duties included **lesson planning** (Standard 3.1.1), **involvement in out-of-school activities** (Standard 3.1.4), and **whole-class teaching** (Standard 3.3.5).

- **Standard 1.1** was the most commonly reported problematic Standard by candidates on all routes. Candidates felt that their school context made this difficult to reach and evidence.

- Candidates on the **50-day training route**, found section 3 of the Standards problematic, in particular: Teaching and Learning Activities – Planning and Expectations.

- By contrast, for candidates on the **Assessment Only and Pilot routes**, their main difficulty related to section 1 of the Standards: Professional Values and Practice. They claimed that their school setting limited their ability to provide supporting evidence.

- Candidates reported **several benefits to undertaking HLTA training**, including personal satisfaction, recognition of their achievement and improved confidence.

- Candidates suggested that the **profile of HLTA Status could be raised and clarified** which could increase the number of support staff who wish to undertake further training and assist in standardising the role and pay structure of HLTAs across the country.
6. HLTA Training Providers

6.1 A Review of providers

Candidates across all routes were asked to review their training and the training provider. This section summarises the comments and feedback offered. A full summary of perceptions of provision is offered in appendix 9.

It is important to remember, however, that this summary is only an indication of the issues raised by candidates. It was only possible to gather a low number of candidate responses for certain providers, and so the results of their feedback should not be viewed as a comprehensive appraisal of the training providers involved.

Assessment Only provision

There were some mixed responses from the candidates regarding the Assessment Only route. However, there are several overall impressions that can be gathered from the candidates’ feedback.

Programme organisation and delivery

Generally, Assessment Only candidates felt that their preparation was well-organised and made good use of the resources and materials available. However, some candidates did feel that the structure for the preparation sessions was ‘a little jumbled’ and needed improving, possibly with a little more time between each one.

Clarity in delivery, flexibility in delivery and periods of group work were all appreciated by candidates who experienced these elements in their training programmes, although many suggested that there needed to be more focus directed toward the Standards and portfolio.

A small number of candidates reported that they had experienced problems with the venue, and this was often in conjunction with the feeling that class sizes were a little too large. However, others did mention that they had a good venue for their training.

Guidance, support and tutor knowledge

The majority of candidates were very positive about the levels of tutor support they received from their training providers. Generally, candidates felt that their tutors had been supportive, accessible and knowledgeable about the subject. It was acknowledged by candidates from one provider that it was ‘good they [the tutors] had TA experience’.

However, it may still be worth noting that some candidates rated the levels of tutor support they received as poor or very poor, with a lack of communication and clarity being among the reasons given. A large numbers of candidates reported inconsistencies between the information given out by the TDA, and that which was given by their tutors and also information offered by different tutors of the same provider.
IT, E-learning and INA
The feedback concerning this component of the Assessment Only route was less encouraging. Candidates suggested several areas for improvement:

- More access to computers on training days
- More IT support in general
- More one-to-one time should be given to help individual needs

Some candidates felt that they were only given access to IT facilities late on in the programme, and more e-support would help them with any problems they may encounter.

A small number of candidates did not find the self-review particularly helpful and identified a need for more individual support.

Pilot route provision
Candidates were generally positive and enthusiastic about the Pilot route courses. There were only a couple of issues highlighted by candidates.

Programme organisation and delivery
Overall, candidates viewed the Pilot route courses as well organised, with good quality in both the delivery of the course itself and in the preparation briefings. Only a small number suggested that their programme initially appeared a little unstructured.

There were only a couple of minor points which candidates wished to raise:

- information about tasks should be given early on in the course
- timing needs to be considered – one course ran in line with SATS

Guidance, support and tutor knowledge
Candidates were incredibly positive about the levels of tutor support and guidance they received during the course of the Pilot routes. Tutors were generally regarded as knowledgeable and easily accessible. Some candidates would highly recommend their training providers due to their positive attitude and for being inspiring.

Only a very small number of candidates felt unsupported and that they received conflicting advice from tutors. Some believed their programme had been more like self-help than being tutored, relying on peer support and self-sufficient learning rather than tutor support.

IT, E-learning and INA
The majority of candidates who had been offered an E-learning component as part of their training programme believed that the support and quality of training had been satisfactory. Some had especially appreciated the support they received from online discussion boards.

Only a very small number believed that the quality of their E-learning experiences had been poor, as they had difficulties accessing IT facilities in school and the need for more personalised and tailored support and training.
Full 50-day training provision
Candidates providing feedback about the full 50-day training route highlighted positive experiences of the provider-based sessions but also a range of problems appearing to occur across all areas of the programmes.

Programme organisation and delivery
Although a high proportion of candidates did rate their experience of the provider-based sessions positively, others were concerned about the apparent lack of structure and organisation they encountered during their training. Some felt that a large mixture of different tutors disrupted the course, and others felt the sessions were disjointed and repetitive.

The preparation for the assessment and tasks were generally viewed favourably by candidates on the full 50-day training route, but it was felt that the training sessions ‘could be condensed’ to a shorter timescale.

The following positive elements were highlighted:

- good resource materials
- good use of small groups
- very useful group work

Guidance, support and tutor knowledge
Several candidates, as on other routes, raised their concerns about the programmes when it came to issues of guidance and support from tutors. Many candidates reported feeling unsupported by their tutors, with inconsistencies appearing in the information they were provided by different tutors.

It was also suggested by a minority that their tutors lacked sufficient knowledge and experience and were not fully prepared to conduct the training. However, most candidates did believe that their tutors had been helpful, knowledgeable and interesting; although, a small number did state that they did not feel they were considered to be ‘proper students’.

IT, E-learning and INA
Responses about E-learning were rather varied among the candidates who had received this as part of their training – other candidates who had not experienced E-learning thought that it would have been beneficial.

Generally, E-learning was thought to be a useful resource, with the quality of the IT and E-learning training being received favourably. However, some candidates suggest the following difficulties:

- accessing IT facilities was not always easy
- E-learning did not always have relevance for the role of the TA
- E-learning was not always well planned

Although some candidates had completed a skills analysis at the beginning of the programme, they claimed that these did not appear to have been consulted during the training sessions. Subsequently, it was
felt by many candidates that the E-learning and IT elements could be improved through the use of more individualised training, taking into account the previous IT experience of each candidate and the information provided through the initial skills analysis.

### 6.2 Issues raised by Pilot route providers

A series of in-depth telephone interviews were conducted with Pilot route training providers in order to gain an insight into the approaches they took in designing and delivering the training. The interviews were designed to identify what works, and what does not work, in current delivery methods.

These interviews covered a range of subjects concerned with each of the four Pilot routes, and they are detailed in this section under the following six sub-headings:

- Involvement
- Course design
- Recruitment
- Provision
- Quality assurance
- Effective practice

What follows is a detailed review of each Pilot route based on the feedback obtained from those providing the routes. The interview schedule used for this aspect of the evaluation can be found in appendix 3.

**E-learning**

There was only one interview conducted with an E-learning provider, but the information gathered provides helpful insight into issues of delivery and design and could therefore help inform future E-learning programmes.

**Involvement and course design**

The E-learning provider had become involved with the pilot scheme because E-learning is an area of their expertise and they already have a ‘virtual learning environment’ established at their provision. It was felt that they would be able to offer a flexible learning opportunity, which candidates could tailor to their own individual training needs.

When considering the design of the course, the E-learning provider worked closely with five LAs to assess candidates through the process of an Initial Needs Analysis.

Those candidates who were felt to be strong enough to work individually, but were not quite ready for the Assessment Only route, were put forward for the E-learning pilot.
Following this, the candidates conducted a self-review with an e-tutor and were able to determine which modules would meet their needs. Through these reviews, it was also identified that candidates wished for a tutor group to be formed so that they would not feel too isolated with the work.

The E-learning programme was then based on the full 50-day course, but broken down so that the smaller ‘chunks’ of work would be appropriate for distance learning.

**Suggestions made by providers**

- It was recommended that the tutor aiding the self-review is an expert in moderating, in order to decide what each candidate needs.
- Regular face-to-face meetings are essential with the E-learning route.

**Recruitment**

The provider was unable to identify any problems with recruitment for the E-learning route. Five LA’s assessed which route was most suited to each candidate on an individual basis.

**Provision**

The E-learning provider offered four days of face-to-face induction before the candidates began the course in earnest. These were used to ensure all candidates were able to use the technology and software required, and to discuss any issues with the tutors.

Each module for the E-learning course contained a school-based activity, but this provider had not organised for the candidates to visit other schools as part of this particular programme.

**Quality assurance and effective practice**

This provider operated a system of on-going informal checking of both candidates and tutors. A project manager also checked ‘interactivity.’ At the time of interview, no issues had arisen as a result of those checks.

The provider in this case, was able to identify a number of areas of effective practice in relation to the E-learning pilot:
Figure 15: Effective practice: E-learning route

Training needs analysis

Again, only one provider offering this route was interviewed but was able to provide extremely useful information on a variety of issues.

Involvement and course design

Involvement in the Pilot routes programme initiated when it became clear to the provider that some candidates needed more than the three days, but not as much as fifty days of training.

In addition, the provider noted how roles vary widely from school to school. Due to this, the provider felt that 'the screening of the TAs is the most important aspect' and it was crucial to get them into the right route. The TNA would allow the candidates to receive the right training on an individual basis.

In the design of the programme, it was important to the provider to minimise the burden on schools and candidates by:

- ensuring they ran courses during the day, to accommodate those with a family
- differing the days so the TA’s were not always out of school at the same time

Smaller groups appeared to work better when it came to the training as this allowed the tutors to focus on specific issues raised by individuals: ‘although the handbook says ‘no individual guidance’, they need it’.

The initial assessment asked for candidates to map their jobs onto a school timetable, so that they could visualise how to meet the Standards during their day-to-day routine. They were then given two school-based tasks to complete where there were gaps in the candidates’ experience.
Suggestions made by providers

- Candidates should present a completed task to the rest of the group in order to receive peer reviews – this works well in a peer support environment.

Recruitment

Emails are sent to schools at specific times in order to generate interest in the course, and flyers are also sometimes sent. The provider felt that the uptake to the programme had been slow as the information was not always getting through to support staff.

Provision

The course comprised of 5 days, with three dedicated to preparation work. ‘Stragglers’ were offered a sixth day.

The first day included an INA. One was also provided for the school, where a TA didn’t meet a Standard. The school would be asked to recognise this and agree to support the TAs in areas such as:

- Planning
- Special Educational Needs
- Code of Practice

The trainer found this method of evaluation to be very labour intensive but also believed it to be incredibly thorough.

It was identified that candidates need the support of an allocated mentor in school who understands the Standards and knows the TA themselves and also, to be able to contact the tutor when further assistance is required.

Quality assurance and effective practice

The quality assurance manager observed the training sessions, and a survey was emailed out to the students. An external review did not uncover any other issues.

The tutor for the TNA route was able to identify two clear examples where training had proved effective and beneficial.
**Shorter routes**

In total, nine interviews were completed with providers who had offered the shorter training route to HLTA candidates. This enabled a large amount of information to be passed on concerning the course design and delivery.

**Involvement and course design**

Providers mainly became involved with the Shorter training route because they identified that many candidates were too advanced for the 50 day route, but not yet ready for the Assessment Only route.

It was felt that a shorter route would therefore allow candidates the chance to develop the few Standards that they still needed to work on, without taking more time than was necessary.

Each provider designed the Shorter route in a slightly different way, but there were some common elements running through them all.

The majority of the providers who offered the Shorter route conducted approximately 10 days of face-to-face training sessions. These were then complimented by smaller components of E-learning and school-based activities. In addition to this, 2-3 days were usually provided for the HLTA assessment.

**Suggestions made by providers**

- Candidates should be able to ‘pick and choose’ which modules are necessary for their own development. A set of core modules could be complimented by a number of module options which candidates can opt to work through if they wish.

- This encourages candidates to acknowledge the expertise, skills and experience they already have in reference to the Standards, whilst also allowing them to further any areas of their work which they feel need attention.
Recruitment
The majority of the Shorter route providers recruited their candidates through the standard LA and TDA processes. Some stipulated specific requirements such as pre-requisite literacy qualifications, or a minimum amount of school experience.

Few of the providers felt the need to implement any direct marketing strategies, although a couple did go into schools, meet with head teachers and disseminate information about the HLTA training.

Recruiting sufficient numbers does not appear to have caused any problems with this group of providers, with one provider intending to recruit 25 candidates, and ending up with 115.

It was felt that candidates had chosen the shorter route to boost their confidence with the Standards, after not feeling quite ready for the Assessment Only route.

Provision
As there were nine shorter route providers who completed the interview, there were various responses regarding the nature of provision.

Significant elements of training have been identified and reviewed across all shorter route providers offering feedback. These are detailed in the table below.

Table 3: Integral elements of Pilot route provision

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>INA</strong></td>
<td>All except three of the Shorter route providers conducted an INA, allowing training providers to tailor provision to individual candidate needs. One provider had complimented this by asking candidates to keep journals, relating school work to the Standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Course materials</strong></td>
<td>Providers used a wide variety of course materials, the most beneficial being: - PowerPoint presentations, handouts, tapes and videos, case studies, online resources and information packs on behavioural management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mentoring</strong></td>
<td>The majority of providers included mentors in their course design, but reported that some candidates received more mentor support than others. The type of mentoring varied, from candidates being “buddied” together, to school teachers attending some of the sessions. One provider paid mentors to work with the candidates on each module.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School-based study</strong></td>
<td>School-based activities were a core element of all modules, and providers reported that candidates found the tasks beneficial to both their understanding of the Standards, and to their work in school. Some providers also arranged for candidates to visit another school for a day. Those that had not done this said that they would in future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E-learning</strong></td>
<td>Nearly all providers had incorporated an E-learning element, as well as the use of email support and discussion boards. There were problems, however, for many providers who reported a lack of available IT facilities and IT knowledge among candidates.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Quality assurance and effective practice

All providers developed rigorous quality assurance procedures for the Shorter training route.

Although at the time of interview most providers felt it was too soon to be able to identify any issues that had arisen from these quality procedures, one put forward that candidates wished for more information to be provided to schools about the HLTA programme.

Providers were able to highlight a number of different areas of good practice when it came to the design and delivery of the Shorter route training programme.

Figure 17: Effective practice: Shorter routes

Subject Specialist route

There were four interviews completed with training providers who offered the Subject Specialist route.

Involvement and course design

Providers suggested the following reasons why they had initially become interested and involved with the Subject Specialist route.

- **Already had specialist staff** so it seemed like a good opportunity
- Substantial interest in **employment-based routes**
- Shortage of teachers means this could be a **financially profitable scheme**
- Recognised the need for a **more tailored route**
Providers based the training on the following types of course design:

1. **Splitting the day sessions into half** so that the particular specialism was covered in the morning, and the HLTA information was covered in the afternoon.

2. **Splitting the total amount of training days equally** between the specialism and the HLTA information.

Course design also included online learning resources, dedicated e-learning modules, and visits to Advanced Skills Teachers.

### Suggestions made by providers

- Offering the candidates ‘drop-in’ support sessions can help with the specialist subject element of the route.
- Observing an ‘exemplar’ lesson in the specialist subject can also help, for example, by helping TA’s learn different teaching methods.

### Recruitment

Unsurprisingly, for the Subject Specialist route, candidates were required to have a certain level of expertise in their chosen specialism before beginning the course. This did not always have to be a formal or advanced qualification, but at least some evidence of prior knowledge and understanding.

The following different marketing strategies were employed by the Subject Specialist providers in order to generate interest in the route:

- Flyers and brochures
- Mail drop to schools
- Accompanying an LA member to seminars
- Newspaper and bus adverts
- Dissemination events
- School visits to speak to teachers and head teachers

None of the providers experienced any problems with recruiting an adequate number of candidates to the route, with one even being able to compile a waiting list ready for future courses. Providers believed that the main reason candidates apply for the Subject Specialist route is because they wish to further the knowledge and expertise they already use in schools, whilst at the same time gaining recognition for their role.

### Provision

The majority of the Subject Specialist courses offered between 6 and 12 practical sessions, with one delivering the course mainly as a distance learning venture.
Although all of the providers offered an INA or self-review, it was queried how necessary the INA was for this route. Since the Subject Specialist modules are generally mandatory, it is not really possible to tailor the route to individual needs.

However, one provider used the INA as part of the application process and used it to ‘de-select’ prospective candidates who were unable to meet the requirements.

The self-review was greeted more positively, with providers suggesting that this was a good way of identifying which candidates might require a little more support.

Some of the courses included school-based activities and elements of E-learning, which contained opportunities for discussion and e-support that were offered to candidates instead of any structured or formal approach to mentoring.

Quality assurance and effective practice
Similar to the measures put in place for the Shorter routes, the Subject Specialist providers also adopted the range of methods set out below, to monitor their quality procedures:

- Internal and external moderation
- Use a specialist for the subject teaching
- Evaluations and feedback from candidates
- Team meetings with staff
- Tutors all have assessor experience and teaching qualifications

Nearly all of the providers felt that, at the time of interview, it was too soon to tell if any issues had arisen as a result of these quality assurance procedures. However, one provider did suggest that guidelines needed to be developed about how the provider can accurately assess and guarantee candidates’ competence in their specialist subject before they are accepted onto the route.

Further to this, it was also highlighted that the opportunities for candidates to give feedback at the end of the course also needed to be developed.

None of the Subject Specialist providers were able to identify any areas of effective practice as they had not conducted their evaluations at the time of interview.
6.3 Pilot route provider evaluations

Sixteen alternative routes providers completed self-evaluation reports, highlighting both the successes and areas for improvement on each of the four different Pilot routes. The four routes were:

- **E-learning**
- **TNA**
- **Shorter** routes - 15, 16, 20 and 25 day
- **Subject Specialist** – those evaluated offering Maths and Science, Speech and Language Therapy, and Modern Foreign Languages as the specialist areas

These 16 evaluations were joined by two smaller reports from providers who had cancelled their pilots during the initial recruitment phases. Both of these providers offered **Subject Specialist routes**; one in Special Educational Needs and the other in Physical Education.

6.3.1 E-learning

**Successes**
The three providers who offered the E-learning route were able to identify the following successful outcomes from the pilot:

- Course materials could be **accessed and used as often and as much as the individual candidate wished** – some materials proving useful even after the course has finished
- **Discussion boards, chatrooms and e-tutor support** were greatly appreciated, and allowed candidates to share ideas and give each other feedback
- Candidates could engage in **flexible learning**, choosing the time most appropriate for them to do the work
- Candidates developed **organisational and learning management skills** as a result of working on-line rather than in a ‘classroom’ environment
- **Levels of IT proficiency and confidence** were boosted among candidates

Even though the E-learning route required candidates to spend the most time working through the modules alone, one of the most successful elements of these pilots was the **high level of interaction and support between the candidates themselves, and with e-tutors and mentors**. The provision of online discussion forums and ‘chat’ facilities appears to have encouraged communication between candidates that may otherwise not have occurred.

This idea is corroborated by providers who offered other Pilot routes, such as the shorter routes, but who incorporated e-learning elements into their courses. These providers also found the **online discussion facilities to be widely used and appreciated** by candidates.
To consolidate the positive levels of interaction among the E-learning candidates, one evaluation highlighted the use of three ‘face-to-face’ days as a popular method of allowing e-tutors and candidates to meet one another and receive lots of helpful information about the course. They also suggested that having at least two candidates from each school on the pilot, and conducting peer assessment tasks, allowed candidates to further assist each other with the work and ‘helped them feel less isolated’ during the E-learning programme.

Areas for improvement
As a result of the evaluations, providers highlighted these areas for improvement in consideration of future E-learning programmes.

- Increase number of face-to-face sessions to reassure candidates and work through any problems
- Provide more direct guidance with regards to the evidence required for the Standards
- Modification of ‘live’ learning materials to ensure suitability for E-learning
- E-learning providers also suggested that more mentoring time would be beneficial to E-learning candidates in the future.

E-learning providers outlined a number of technical difficulties encountered during the piloted courses. They suggested that the following would be helpful:

- Ensure that all candidates are ‘e-ready’ and have access to computer facilities: school computers can sometimes be unreliable
- Ensure that the correct software is available
- Check that all tasks and materials are suitable for an E-learning environment
- Make sure broadband access is not limited

In consideration of these problems, it is worth noting that one E-learning provider employed an ‘e-developer’ in order to troubleshoot, suggest changes and add to the course materials. This had seen, for example, the implementation of a site map and the breaking down of their ‘Blackboard’ website into several smaller sections, thereby easing navigation for candidates and tutors.
6.3.2 Training needs analysis

The two training providers who evaluated the TNA pilot were mainly positive about the programme.

Successes

The successful elements of the TNA included the following:

- Development of a highly personalised training programme
- Positive use of pro-forma worksheets and ‘skeleton plans’ where Standards and self-evaluations could be clearly mapped and developed
- School-based activities helped relate modular work to the Standards
- Small learning groups allowed candidates to get to know and support one another

Due to the on-going self-review exercises that occur throughout the TNA programme, ‘candidates’ questions, concerns and training needs can be highlighted early’, and as a result, responded to quickly.

One evaluator was keen to note that the TNA training route not only benefits the individual candidate, but also benefits the candidates’ whole school. This was perceived to be because the TNA route ‘embeds good practice’ among candidates by emphasising the importance of continual self-evaluation. This approach to teaching can then be assimilated into the practices of other school staff.

Another benefit to the candidates’ school as a whole was the flexible nature of the course, meaning that for example, the burden on the school in covering TA absences was reduced to a minimum.

Areas for improvement

There were only the following few elements to the TNA route that the evaluations considered needing improvement:

- Scrutiny/feedback of self-evaluations was time-consuming (i.e. expensive)
- Needs to be more group work so that candidates can share ideas
- Group tuition is difficult due to all the different candidates having different training needs

Overall, the TNA pilot evaluations reported that candidates had benefited from the small training groups, the peer support and the personalised learning methods, and as a result, felt the TNA experience to be fulfilling and worthwhile. Their suggestions for areas of improvement, therefore, were limited and concerned with issues prior to the commencement of the programme itself.
Make all prospective candidates complete a **detailed self-evaluation** so that this is unnecessary during the programme. This way, training costs would be reduced.

There needs to be better **marketing of the HLTA concept** to schools. Currently, it is far from universally understood.

Ensure that candidates have **mentor support** within their school in order to assist with the self-evaluation and needs analysis forms.

### 6.3.3 Shorter routes

There were seven provider evaluations for the shorter route pilot courses, all of which provided extensive feedback on the training programmes they had been running.

**Successes**

There were several elements of the shorter Pilot route which were identified by the providers as having a positive influence on the candidates training experiences. These were:

- **Pairing candidates** so they each **spend a day in a contrasting school**, allowing them to reflect on different teaching practices.

- **Length and pace of the course** was viewed favourably, giving time to go through queries and difficulties.

- **School-based activities** allowed candidates to consolidate their understanding of the Standards by seeing them in practice.

- **E-learning support tools** were used well and appreciated by the candidates.

- **Group work** and **one-to-one reviews** were regarded as invaluable.

The main elements of the shorter routes that appear to have been a success for the candidates, and in some cases the training providers, were based on **interactive sessions** such as **group work, pairing up of candidates** for school-based activities, or using **pairs of trainers** to work with the candidates together.

The **length, content and style** of the shorter route courses were all received positively by the candidates, who felt that they had time to go through any queries they had.

Along with this, the shorter route provided the opportunity for **modular course designs**, which allowed training providers to cover ‘a wide range of topics in a short time, and each of the Standards to be covered in the same way.’ Subsequently, **course objectives were met comfortably** and training delivery was received well by the candidates.
Finally, one evaluation highlighted the fact that some of the course content had gone on to develop good practice in schools, particularly in the areas of Special Educational Needs and behavioural management.

**Areas for improvement**
Training providers who had offered the ‘shorter’ Pilot route were able to identify a number of areas where they felt improvements could be made to the course.

- **Improve consistency** in training - have the same tutor throughout if possible
- **Provide feedback** at specifically designated points in the course
- **Provide more information about assessment** and task expectations

The Shorter route pilot evaluations were particularly concerned with pre-selection assessments for candidates, and providing scope for more flexibility within the training schedule. They proposed:

- An initial needs analysis: ‘as it was, the needs of the group were diverse and not all candidates required the training they received, and neither did all receive the training they required.’
- That all candidates gain Level 2 qualifications prior to starting the shorter route – those candidates who were working concurrently on both found the workload demanding. As a result, three candidates withdrew from the programme.
- That candidates should be able to opt out of sessions if they do not require the training on that particular Standard.
- Holding an introductory session to which TA’s and school staff are invited, to go through HLTA assessments and status information.
- Producing e-newsletters for mentors so they feel more involved on an on-going basis

**6.3.4 Subject Specialist**

Three training providers evaluated the Subject Specialist Pilot route, one in Maths and Science, one in Speech and Language Therapy and one in Modern Foreign Languages.

**Successes**
The evaluations for the Subject Specialist highlighted the positive impact this training pilot had had on candidates' understanding of the curriculum, teaching methods and lesson planning. The following were identified:
School-based activities developed knowledge and understanding of the Standards.

E-learning tools, such as the discussion boards, allowed candidates to share ideas and concerns.

The course had developed candidates’ understanding of the curriculum and teaching methods, thereby providing greater opportunity for personal development.

Ideas for lesson plans, such as games, activities and resources were useful and added to candidates’ confidence in class.

Self-review was a useful exercise as it made candidates think about applying their own experiences of learning to their teaching methods.

Due to the fact that many of the successful aspects of the Subject Specialist route involved ‘practical’ teaching methods and resources, it is unsurprising that as a result, the Subject Specialist evaluations reported on the direct impact the HLTA training was having on the candidates’ schools.

It was noted by one training provider that some of the resources which were produced during the candidates’ school-based activities had been adopted by other members of staff within the schools and were having a ‘significant impact’ on the teaching methods within those schools.

As candidates had become more aware of curriculum requirements they agreed that as a result, they had become more involved in the day-to-day planning and teaching of whole classes.

Along with this, the Subject Specialist candidates had also been able to incorporate their own experiences of learning into their lesson plans. For example, the use of videos, websites, handouts and presentation materials during the training programme expanded candidates’ knowledge and ideas about the resources, teaching methods and learning activities available and possible within a classroom environment.

Finally, by recognising e-learning as a flexible educational tool, the candidates were able to develop their IT proficiency as well as utilise this in schools.

Areas for improvement
Subject Specialist evaluations highlighted problems in the structure and delivery of the course itself:

- Have sessions at longer intervals to allow for more preparation time
- Allow more time for one-to-one guidance, covering any individual concerns
- Lengthen the course to reduce pressure on candidates
In addition, focusing on the specialist subject aspect of the training route is a priority for future development, as follows:

- It would be helpful to ensure that candidates have achieved a pre-requisite qualification in their chosen specialism, before embarking on the Subject Specialist route. This would ensure that required standards in the specialism are met.
- Provide the opportunity to go through the Standards individually with a tutor, as all candidates have different training needs.
- Focus the support of schools by raising their awareness of the HLTA programme, either through a ‘learning contract’ or through more observation of the TA in school as part of the course.

### 6.3.5 Cancelled pilots

There were two pilot courses cancelled, both of which offered Subject Specialist training routes (one in Special Educational Needs and the other in Physical Education). Although the courses did not run, both providers offered short evaluations detailing the problems they had encountered. They included:

- Both pilots were cancelled following the initial recruitment phase, with both citing a lack of interest as the cause of the cancellations.
- For one of the cancelled routes (Special Needs), of those candidates who had applied, nearly half of them did not meet the required selection criteria.
- The uptake was reduced because both the timeframe was short and the number of schools invited was limited. It was suggested that in future, schools need at least one term’s notice to arrange applications.
- The providers also suggested that the HLTA role does not appear to be well understood or acknowledged across all schools.

### 6.3.6 Summary of Pilot route provider evaluations

Although the different Pilot routes highlighted particular issues; there were some common successes reported across the provider evaluations.
All of the training route providers who had incorporated e-learning tools into their course delivery believed that it had been beneficial to candidates. It provided further learning materials and teaching resources; allowed them to share ideas, discuss any concerns; and develop their own levels of IT confidence and proficiency.

Many training providers paired candidates together, so that they could arrange to spend time observing one another in their respective schools. This allowed candidates to see different teaching methods in practice and share ideas and experiences with one another. Providers who had not offered this as part of their courses wished to do so in the future.

The school-based tasks and activities that were set enabled candidates to consolidate their learning and see the Standards working in practice.

Providers’ suggestions for future development

Figure 19: Providers’ suggestions

- Ensure pre-requisites are met by prospective candidates
- Recommendations from all pilot types
- Improve levels of mentoring and support in schools
- Provide schools with more information about HLTA programme
- Conduct INA as part of selection process
- Conduct INA as part of selection process

Figure 18: Successful training elements of Pilot routes

- Observation of another school to see different teaching practices
- Positive aspects across all pilot training routes
- E-learning for further support and flexible study times
- School-based tasks to see Standards in practice
Many of the evaluations suggested that it was particularly necessary for the providers of future training programmes to ensure that all the candidates accepted onto the course had satisfied any pre-requisites appropriate to each route.

If, for some reason, this was not possible then providers should at least ensure that candidates failing to meet the set requirements had made the necessary arrangements to do so during their time on the HLTA programme.

However, this should be approached with some caution. Those candidates who do plan to complete the HLTA course and any other qualifications at the same time need to carefully consider if the workload is manageable.

It was also suggested that levels of mentoring and support need to be improved. Although some training providers admitted that this was due to their lack of focus on mentoring during the course design, a number of the evaluations also highlighted that schools were not being provided with enough information about the HLTA programme in the first place.

Along with providing more information to schools in order to raise their awareness, understanding and support for the scheme, it was also felt that the supporting teachers and mentors should be invited to some of the candidates’ learning sessions to become more actively involved in the school-based tasks that the candidates are required to complete.

It was also suggested that another area in which schools could be involved would be through the completion of an INA for each prospective candidate during the recruitment process. Not only would this allow candidates and their mentors to work closely together, but would also allow trainers to identify the most urgent or common needs to be addressed during the course of the programme.
Summary: 6. HLTA training providers

- **ICT training and e-learning** elements were generally appreciated by candidates, helping to develop their IT proficiency and confidence.

- **Group work and peer reviews** received a positive response, as they allowed candidates to support one another, share ideas and compare experiences.

- Tutors were generally regarded as supportive and knowledgeable.

- **School-based activities** often allow candidates to relate the Standards to their everyday classroom environment.

- Many courses were able to provide **useful ideas** in terms of new teaching methods, learning styles and classroom resources.

- Some candidates felt that tutors need to become **more consistent** with the information they provide regarding the tasks and assessment.

- Providing **more individualised and one-to-one training** was one of the most common recommendations made about running the courses in future.
7. Summary and Conclusions

The Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) commissioned an evaluation of the HLTA programme in order to establish the experiences of candidates and the effectiveness of the programme. The information gathered will help the TDA to build upon good practice and inform future delivery of the programme.

Pye Tait adopted a multi-layered approach to undertaking the fieldwork, combining focus group and survey research. It included candidates from both of the main routes (Assessment Only and the full 50-day training route), in addition to the Pilot routes. The evaluation involved a total of 337 candidates plus a series of supplementary data (interviews with providers, reviews of course materials and provider evaluations).

The research conducted with candidates captured detailed feedback regarding each stage of the training, preparation and assessment process, highlighting areas of good practice as well as those areas which need addressing or developing in preparation for the second phase of the programme.

Overall perceptions

The overall response to the programme seems to be that it is a positive and rewarding experience. TAs and support staff working for an average of eight years in their pre-HLTA role joined the programme because they saw it as an opportunity to gain recognition for their role and to improve promotion prospects. This is particularly true of those on the Assessment Only route but also to a large extent is a prime motivator for those on the full 50-day route and Pilot routes. This reflects the achievements of the programme in aiming to offer extended opportunities for continuing professional development of support staff and recognition of the significant role that they play in children’s learning and development.

Administration and engagement

In terms of delivery, apart from initial teething problems of administrating and organising the programme, overall, the early stages were fairly straightforward. The registration and application process was considered to be unproblematic. Only minor technical difficulties were reported which arose due to the website being in the early days of its development.

Candidates would, however, have liked further clarity regarding the exact details of what was involved in gaining the status and in each route, particularly concerning the timescale and the amount of work required. Candidates were disappointed that schools were not made more aware of the training and assessment process and consequently not in a position to offer them more support. In addition they felt strongly about the need for consistency between providers as well as LAs, with regard to entry requirements for HLTA training and the information and advice offered to candidates.

This implies that a greater emphasis should be placed on disseminating information about the nature, content and requirements of HLTA training.
and assessment. This would help to ensure a smoother progression to HLTA status for potential and newly registered candidates, and inform those working closely with HLTA candidates of the expectations of the training and the subsequent support required.

Some candidates who were able to attend a briefing/information-giving session run by local providers found this to be especially helpful in providing them with the information they required prior to registering.

**Delivery**

The quality of the provider-based sessions was generally considered to be high, though candidates were disappointed with the amount of constructive criticism and practical tips that providers were able to offer. Inconsistency was again noted between tutors in terms of the advice they offered and what constituted evidence for each Standard. Such experiences have burdened a small number of candidates as they have had additional work to complete as a result of receiving incorrect information.

Though course materials were generally considered to be of a high standard, some candidates, particularly those on the full 50-day training route, felt that they were distributed in a disorganised manner or at an inappropriate time which resulted in poor use of available materials.

Most candidates across all routes noted that training and course materials (including the TDA pack) were mostly geared towards the primary phase, unless they were on a Pilot route. This made it difficult for those working in the secondary phase to relate the Standards and the exemplars provided in the course materials to their role in school. Consequently, they felt that they lacked guidance and support for collating evidence and writing the portfolio, compared to the resources that others could utilise.

Looking at the different routes, it seems that many candidates on the 3-day Assessment Only route felt that they needed more time to put together their portfolio and consult with peers and tutors. Conversely, those on the full 50-day training route found some of their training too basic and prolonged. Many suggested that it could easily be condensed. These findings seem to suggest that for some, the Pilot routes are an appropriate approach to take when their experiences do not match the requirements of these main routes. Indeed, Pilot route candidates seem to be more content with their training than those on the main routes.

There are aspects of the training which candidates have found to be particularly useful, such as having a mentor, e-learning aspects and individualised training which focused on the INA. However, these training components were not integrated consistently across routes, providers or schools. Some candidates felt that their ICT skills were under-developed and many lacked access to IT facilities. Candidates found it extremely difficult to organise time with their mentor. In terms of INA, some candidates noted that they completed this at the beginning of the course but it was not referred to afterwards.

To support these findings, it is noticeable that Pilot route candidates favoured the specialist and tailored nature of training, use of IT and E-learning approaches. The positive responses received about these routes suggests that due consideration should be given to these options for future delivery.
Views on the assessment process are mixed. **Producing the portfolio, although extremely time consuming, for some it was an enjoyable exercise.** The **assessment visit for many candidates, proved to create a great deal of anxiety** although most said that they felt prepared. Common problems identified with the visit related to administration of the day, time issues and the identity of the assessor (whether known to the candidates already or to the tutors). Common to all routes and experiences or background of candidates was the recommendation **that assessment should include observation of their work.** Candidates felt that this is not only preferable to reliance on written evidence but also a necessary component of assessing their competence in the classroom.

**Course materials**

A supplementary and significant element of the evaluation includes a review of course materials. In addition to collating examples of course materials from providers, candidates were asked about the materials that they found most useful and what they would like in addition.

Providers seem to have developed some generic materials which are usually PowerPoint presentations, handouts and task sheets. However, these differ in content and focus according to the route taken. As the focus of the Assessment Only route is to prepare candidates for the assessment, the materials concentrate on the meaning of the standards and evidencing these. Candidates found handouts referring to the assessors’ viewpoints, use of scenarios and guidance on specific topics, such as SEN, useful. **Pilot route materials cover a wider range of specific issues** such as teaching and learning styles and social, emotional and behavioural skills. The **full 50-day training materials come in many forms**, including quizzes, video clips and self-reviews. These **cover many topics** including lesson planning, behaviour management and inclusive cultures.

**HLTA Standards**

According to some candidates, the development of professional Standards has been successful in recognising the role of a TA and in raising their profile within schools. Candidates enjoyed mapping their work against the Standards because it enabled them to see the extent of their existing role within schools. Recognition of their role and offering support staff CPD opportunities raised their confidence and self-esteem. They help candidates see that they often only required additional training or experience in minimal areas, including whole class teaching and having direct contact with parents and carers.

Candidates found some Standards are difficult to evidence though and suggested it was due to the type of school they work in or the nature of their role which limited their experiences and therefore the opportunities to gather relevant evidence. Both responses to the survey and focus group attendees suggested that section one of the Standards was the most difficult. For instance, they felt that working in the secondary phase, gave little opportunity to liaise with parents and carers. Also, many candidates reported that they do not usually take responsibility for planning out-of-school activities as this has never been part of their role, so were unable to provide evidence.

In addition, candidates also found that there are multiple interpretations to some of the standards. This led to confusion and as such results in candidates either collecting evidence that is not relevant or being unable to complete their portfolio of evidence.
Feedback was requested from candidates across all 36 providers and very mixed responses were received. This is particularly true of those undertaking Assessment Only training. The **Pilot route training provoked largely positive feedback** on organisation and administration issues, the support and guidance offered by providers and any e-learning or INA elements. However, candidates on the full 50-day route were less impressed by providers' ability to structure and organise the course efficiently.

The self-evaluations conducted by Pilot route providers confirmed the positive feedback received from candidates, and emphasised the most successful elements of each route; the **E-learning route offered a flexible learning environment**, the **TNA route and the shorter routes allowed candidates to adopt a personalised route**, selecting the units they felt to be most relevant; and the **Subject Specialist route allowed candidates to focus on a specific interest** and demonstrate their specialist knowledgeable and skills in this area. Across all Pilot routes, the timing and duration of the training was well received.

All candidates reported an increase in their levels of skills, knowledge and confidence as a result of their training and preparation, and in turn for most, this has had a positive effect on their relationship with pupils and colleagues. Candidates also feel that their teaching practice has improved, particularly in managing a class and in behaviour management.

**Overall, the programme is considered to be a worthwhile and valuable experience** by candidates, especially in terms of professional development. However, candidates on all routes were frustrated about the length of time it takes to receive notification of the outcome of their training. Many candidates also felt that their achievements were not recognised as they were not reflected by a change in role, increase in responsibilities and / or increase in pay. However, candidates would most like to see their new status recognised and appreciated by parents, colleagues and school management teams.

Based on the views of those directly involved in the HLTA programme, it is clear that the move towards awarding a higher status to teaching assistants and school support staff has been a **successful initiative in developing and recognising the skills and contributions of the whole school workforce**. HLTA training and assessment has offered support staff an opportunity for progression and has allowed expansion of their roles and responsibilities in school. Consultation with HLTA candidates and providers revealed that there are many benefits to taking part in the programme and achieving the status, including improvements in confidence, working practice in the classroom and recognition from colleagues of the significant contributions that support staff make to the learning and development of pupils.

Throughout the evaluation we have identified some useful examples of good practice in delivery, course design and use of materials, which could be shared and adopted across providers and routes.

Along with this, there are examples of aspects of the programme and delivery which candidates found to be problematic and to which
improvements could be made. For example, there are inconsistencies between delivery and information offered to candidates. Producing the portfolio is overly burdensome and the Standards lack flexibility to allow for different circumstances of candidates.

These issues highlight where attention should be focused in order to develop a programme which offers a positive, rewarding and worthwhile training and assessment experience to all candidates. It is on this basis that a set of recommendations have been developed to support the TDA in development of the programme for phase two.

**Phase two of the HLTA programme**

From January 2006, assessment of HLTA status is to be carried out by a single organisation approved to conduct assessments in each of the government office regions (GORs). They will also make sure that preparation of candidates is of high quality and offer schools and LAs other services to support the programme. The new HLTA Assessment Partnership has been set up to coordinate activities by drawing together these Regional Providers of Assessment (RPAs) and the TDA.

RPAs in the HLTA programme, will be responsible for such areas as:

- Promoting and increasing **access to and opportunities for training** and ensuring that **training is focused** on HLTA standards and individual need.

- Promoting **suitable and accessible preparation** for assessment and contributing to **quality assurance and improvement** of preparation.

- Delivering high quality **assessment** in line with TDA requirements, in respective GORs.

- Ensuring that candidates are aware of their right to **appeal** and that an **appeals procedure is in place** and can be monitored and developed accordingly.

- **Assessing** candidates’ files, **moderating** assessments on a monthly basis and taking part in peer review procedures.

- **Supporting LAs and other stakeholders** with regard to the HLTA programme, **promoting partnership working** and sharing information to maintain high standards.

This approach is an important step towards a consistent and high quality training and assessment process. To support these steps, the findings drawn from this research will be particularly useful for RPAs when considering development of the programme. Indeed, many of the findings and subsequent recommendations have direct relevance to the remit of RPAs, for example when considering such issues as assessment, preparation and quality assurance.

On a strategic level, it is expected that the HLTA assessment partnership and TDA’s HLTA programme board and delivery team will also find the evidence and recommendations provided in this report, to be highly valuable and constructive in their future planning and development of HLTA training and assessment.
8. Recommendations

It is with consideration of the implications of findings presented in previous sections of this report, based on information gathered from candidates on the 3-day, 50-day and pilot training routes, along with information offered by providers themselves and through a review of course materials, that a series of recommendations have been developed. These are presented here under five key themes:

1. Promotion and clarification of the HLTA programme
2. Administration and organisation
3. Content and delivery
4. Technical issues
5. Ongoing training, assessment and evaluation

It is intended that these recommendations will compliment and support the implementation of changes to the HLTA programme which are taking place; in addition to supporting the TDA in further development of the programme for phase two and beyond.

1. Promotion and clarification of the HLTA programme

Raising awareness

Work needs to be done to raise the profile of the HLTA programme and status. It is important for school staff, parents and governors to understand what HLTA means in terms of support staff roles and responsibilities, the impact it will have on the school environment and on children's learning.

Awareness of the HLTA status is limited. A co-ordinated system of information dissemination is required to raise awareness.

The following options should also be considered, by the TDA, for the HLTA programme:

   a) Inform schools that they should allow time for school-based activities, access to IT and a mentor.

   b) Make guidance very clear on requirements for literacy and numeracy qualifications and how they can be achieved during training (whether time is allocated for this).

   c) Further guidance on the meaning of the standards for head teachers, teachers and mentors. This could be achieved through information packs targeted to potential candidates, teaching staff, head teachers and parents.

   d) Mentors could be provided with a mentor information pack which guides them on how to mentor, the meaning and interpretation of standards and relating this to roles in the school. It could also alert them to the quantity and amount of work involved in the training and assessment process.
Potential candidates could receive initial information packs detailing the following information:

- Details on all routes, highlighting the advantages and disadvantages of each route and experience required for each.
- A clear diagram that allows candidates to establish the correct route for them.
- Comprehensive list of training providers and exact locations of training centres.
- Where to download additional information and materials in preparation for each training session.
- Information on how to gain literacy and numeracy qualifications and when they should allocate time for this.

To help inform mentors and head teachers of what is involved in the training and what the status means, providers should be encouraged to invite them to initial information-giving events or training sessions and to visit schools in their locality to discuss the prospect of achieving the status and how to go about it.

**Implications for development of the programme**

A campaign to promote the status for support staff (to encourage their engagement and understanding) and for those involved with schools (to support their understanding) could be undertaken. This could aim to inform head teachers, support staff and parents of the role of the HLTA, their skills, additional responsibilities and their competence in the role once the status is achieved.

A professionally presented certificate and regional award ceremonies would be helpful in recognising candidates’ achievements.

**Inconsistencies in role and pay levels do not help with recognition of the status.** Standardisation of the HLTA role will be addressed to some extent by the introduction of a framework for support staff, which is currently under development. This will assist schools and local authorities in recognising the additional responsibilities that HLTAs take and will work towards reflecting that in pay scales. However, ultimately a nationally agreed pay structure would be beneficial.

**2. Administration and organisation of the HLTA programme**

Although the administrative process of the programme is fairly straightforward, many candidates reported problems with online registration. This is a preferred method of application and it is hoped that with the introduction of a new online registration system, some of the initial registration problems have been overcome. However, such is the importance of this facility that the TDA might consider implementing a review of the successes and failures of the system during phase two. A small-scale evaluation of the system and candidates’ use and experiences of the online facility would help to iron out any further complications.
To overcome inconsistency in the application stage, the TDA, training providers and LAs might consider a joint consultation to review entry requirements which should be formalised and standardised nationally and which require clarification in relation to each route.

Well planned and organised delivery is crucial to candidates’ perceived success of training. Timing issues need to be addressed to allow maximum flexibility and appropriateness of delivery. Providers should be encouraged to review their timetables and consider whether half-day sessions could be incorporated into training. This would allow for less intensive preparation briefings – particularly for Assessment Only candidates – and would be more suited to the workload of candidates and their responsibilities in school.

A review and amendment of the timing of delivery could also ensure that training does not overlap school holidays, training days are adequately spaced and sufficient time is allocated to complete the portfolio between final briefing and submission of the assessment.

In accordance with candidates’ experiences of the 3-day and full 50-day routes, the TDA and training providers might consider the duration of these routes and whether it would be practical and beneficial to make amendments. For instance, it is recommended that the 3-day Assessment Only route be extended to up to five days, allowing candidates more time to discuss their evidence and completion of tasks. This extra time would then allow IT training to be further integrated into the course and time for greater focus on problematic standards.

The full 50-day route is for many candidates, prolonged and aimed at a basic level. One option here would be to consider the content of the course and additional material that could be incorporated while raising the level of training to cover more complex issues. It would also be useful to stipulate a requirement that candidates have access to IT facilities (perhaps during provider-based sessions) and are able to explore different software and programmes applicable to the school environment.

Another option is to condense the full 50-day route, considering that many candidates do not achieve the twenty days of school-based training or ten days of e-learning as prescribed. The material on the 50-day route could be covered in 30 days, allowing for 15 provider-based sessions, 5 days of E-learning and 10 days of schools-based activities.

A more focused approach such as this would be more likely to gain support from schools in terms of covering for support staff absence whilst training and allowing some time in school to concentrate on HLTA activities.

3. Content and delivery

One of the main priorities would be to address the imbalance between primary and secondary phases. This needs to be considered by training providers when designing the briefing sessions, their course materials, exemplars and feedback. In addition the TDA might like to address this issue in their HLTA pack where discussions around the standards, evidencing and completing tasks could be related to roles in the secondary phase accordingly. Perhaps taking this one step further, training packs could be developed which are specific to school phases with supplementary annexes that relate to certain
types of schools, such as special schools.

Although mixing with candidates of various backgrounds and roles is beneficial for those involved, providers and the TDA could consider how focused briefing sessions could be integrated into the programme, thereby concentrating on roles and evidence relevant to specific types of school.

The provider-based sessions require some form of standardisation and this is especially true of the 3 days allowed for Assessment Only briefings. Taking examples of good practice from successful providers, a standard structure and content could be introduced to guide providers in the development of their programme. Flexibility in the structure would come from additional elements that can be added onto a generic framework, such as behaviour management and education policy. This would also allow the development of individual pathways to achieving the status based around skills and experience.

Variety in course materials is essential and many providers have successfully achieved this for the full 50-day and some Pilot routes. Course materials for the 3-day route are not so well-developed and are rather general. Providers could be encouraged to share their successful methods and types of materials that are well-received by candidates. At the beginning of the training, it would be useful for all candidates to have access to a detailed course outline, timetable, contact details for tutors and appropriate contact times when they can expect a response. The TDA and providers might like to collaborate in drawing up new sets of exemplars of how to evidence the Standards and write tasks which relate to different roles within schools and different types of schools. They might also like to develop examples of previous work (of various standards) which will help to guide candidates in the right direction. A dummy portfolio available online or paper-based and held by each provider would be particularly useful for candidates, especially in giving an example of how to structure the portfolio.

Adopting useful training elements

Candidates have found e-learning elements to be very useful and therefore this could be made a standardised requirement. Making E-learning compulsory would ensure that candidates received all elements of training as planned. The TDA could work with providers, LAs and schools to ensure that access to IT facilities and allotted time intervals is expanded for all candidates. E-learning elements could be introduced early into the training and pitched at different levels to suit candidates of varying skills and experience. This element could be achieved through a self-paced, modular workbook, covering Microsoft Office and including chapters on the internet, emailing, and using an Interactive Whiteboard. Time to complete this could be allocated during training sessions to ensure that support is on hand if necessary, however, those who wish to should be able to complete more in their personal time.

Candidates who have used virtual learning portals and e-discussion boards designed for the HLTA programme, have found them to be especially useful. This facility has encouraged candidates to discuss their work and share ideas to a greater extent than provision using only face-to-face sessions.
The TDA might encourage all providers to set up e-discussion boards, show candidates how to access the boards, encourage use of the boards and tutors post regularly with advice, tasks and questions. This facility could potentially be time-saving, allowing the provider to answer questions and make the responses available to all candidates, thereby not having to address the same questions with different candidates. It will also encourage a system of fair treatment where all candidates are open to the same information and assistance.

The TDA might like to consider implementing a greater uptake and focus on INA. Providers could be encouraged to adopt a more personalised approach to training through the INA process and to regularly refer to the initial analysis and adapt training accordingly. This would suit candidates on all routes but especially those on the full 50-day and Pilot routes, who will be able to identify gaps and requirements through the INA and then will be able to select an appropriate pathway to achievement.

The TDA and providers could consider integrating more formally into provision, an allotted amount of time for candidates to visit a contrasting school. A formal system would allow candidates to select a relevant school and perhaps support staff could exchange roles and schools thereby reducing requirements for cover in some cases. To reduce the burden on schools, perhaps two half day visits could be considered where candidates could then experience different types of schools.

An additional element to integrate into the programme would be a system of consultation between current and past HLTA candidates. To a large extent, this would reduce the anxiety and confusion of current candidates. This approach could take a number of paths.

4. Technical issues

Entry criteria and requirements for HLTA training varied across LAs, and this was an issue that many felt needed addressing by standardising requirements nationwide.

A detailed review of the Standards is required. The TDA and training providers might like to review each Standard in terms of terminology, meaning and interpretation. The objective should be to remove any misunderstanding and inconsistency between providers. It is imperative that providers fully understand how to evidence each Standard correctly.

The consultation could also consider whether multiple Standards could be simplified for candidates and how to address the Standards which candidates have identified as vague or difficult to evidence.
Looking at the assessment visit, the TDA and providers might like to consider how to offer more advice to candidates on what the visit will involve and the likely issues that the assessor will address. Although candidates are prepared for the formality and structure of the day, they are not aware of the content of their interview with the assessor. Some indication in this area would ease their anxiety.

The TDA could also consider how to further standardise the assessor visit. There seems to be a range of different approaches taken by assessors, from dealing with the portfolio in detail to asking general questions about the candidates’ roles. Guidance on the approach to take and the focus of the visit would reduce the inconsistency here. Assessors should also be encouraged to tape-record the interviews if necessary and not to record notes verbatim as this can draw out the process and upset the flow of the discussion and candidates’ thought processes.

The appropriateness of assessment methods requires some discussion and consideration in which the TDA, training providers and LAs might like to be involved. Although the portfolio is integral to achieving the status, other methods could be considered as supplementary. For example, the use of structured observations or diary methods signed by teachers or the head teacher might reduce the burden on candidates in terms of the time it takes to produce all written evidence. The administration involved in producing the portfolio, for example, cross-referencing across tasks and standards, is extremely time consuming and therefore it is recommended that the TDA considers simplifying this method of assessment. Candidates also require more guidance on the structure and length of the portfolio and the amount of evidence required.

A significant feature of candidates’ frustrations was completing the assessment grid electronically. Some of these issues have already been acknowledged by the TDA although a review could take place in phase two to ensure that technical difficulties have been fully addressed.

Delays in receiving the assessment outcome are fairly common, for some taking over six months to receive the result and for others, requiring a second assessment visit. The assessment and moderation process requires urgent attention to iron out any mistakes that are made, such as assessors completing forms incorrectly, courses missing submission deadlines and inaccurate moderation. The TDA could consider how the assessment and moderation process can be condensed to a smaller timescale overall.

5. Ongoing training, assessment and evaluation

Once candidates have achieved the status, it would be useful to provide add-on training sessions, to ensure that they are adapting to their new roles within schools, providing them with an opportunity to air any grievances they may have and to ensure that their skills and knowledge of any new initiatives or legislation is up-to-date.

School support staff and HLTAs would benefit from receiving detailed information about further training available to them and career progression options. This information could be included in information packs offered to schools and HLTAs and it is recommended that the TDA considers with LAs, providers and the DfES how to
**promote opportunities to support staff.** This could be through a series of regional seminars or a national conference for head teachers.

**A significant finding in this evaluation is that communication and collaboration needs to be encouraged.** The TDA supports a HLTA website which has recently been re-designed and refreshed and is a valuable resource for new candidates. However, there is significant opportunity to further develop this web resource to include a designated area for providers in which they could share good practice examples in delivery and course materials. This will also be an opportunity to put to each other the questions they may have. The TDA could then monitor the use of this site and have an input into answering some of these questions.

In addition, a **web area could be dedicated to current candidates and providers to allow them to communicate easily.** There could be access to a national discussion forum which would allow candidates to share their ideas and reservations.

Finally, this evaluation has encountered a variety of issues for praise, national adoption and those for development. Phase two of the programme is due for commencement in January 2006 and it is hoped that this report will help to inform implementation of this phase. However, **it is imperative that assessment and evaluation of the programme is continued.** Phase one was very much exploratory for many providers who have learnt a great deal during these initial stages. Phase two will see some improvements and developments in strategic design of the programme and its delivery at local level. However, continued evaluation will ensure that the programme is relevant, current and demand-led in its design and delivery.
# Appendix 1: Professional Standards for HLTAs

## 1. Professional values and practice

1.1 They have high expectations of all pupils; respect their social, cultural, linguistic, religious and ethnic backgrounds; and are committed to raising their educational achievement.

1.2 They build and maintain successful relationships with pupils, treat them consistently, with respect and consideration, and are concerned for their development as learners.

1.3 They demonstrate and promote the positive values, attitudes and behaviour they expect from the pupils with whom they work.

1.4 They work collaboratively with colleagues, and carry out their roles effectively, knowing when to seek help and advice.

1.5 They are able to liaise sensitively and effectively with parents and carers, recognising their roles in pupils’ learning.

1.6 They are able to improve their own practice, including through observation, evaluation and discussion with colleagues.

## 2. Knowledge and understanding

2.1 They have sufficient understanding of their specialist area to support pupils’ learning, and are able to acquire further knowledge to contribute effectively and with confidence to the classes in which they are involved.

2.2 They are familiar with the school curriculum, the age-related expectations of pupils, the main teaching methods and the testing/examination frameworks in the subjects and age ranges in which they are involved.

2.3 They understand the aims, content, teaching strategies and intended outcomes for the lessons in which they are involved, and understand the place of these in the related teaching programme.

2.4 They know how to use ICT to advance pupils’ learning, and can use common ICT tools for their own and pupils’ benefit.

2.5 They know the key factors that can affect the way pupils learn.

2.6 They have achieved a qualification in English/literacy and mathematics/numeracy, equivalent to at least Level 2 of the National Qualifications Framework.

2.7 They are aware of the statutory frameworks relevant to their role.

2.8 They know the legal definition of Special Educational Needs (SEN), and are familiar with the guidance about meeting SEN given in the SEN Code of Practice.

2.9 They know a range of strategies to establish a purposeful learning environment and to promote good behaviour.
3. Teaching and learning activities

3.1 Planning and expectations

3.1.1 They contribute effectively to teachers’ planning and preparation of lessons.

3.1.2 Working within a framework set by the teacher, they plan their role in lessons including how they will provide feedback to pupils and colleagues on pupils’ learning and behaviour.

3.1.3 They contribute effectively to the selection and preparation of teaching resources that meet the diversity of pupils’ needs and interests.

3.1.4 They are able to contribute to the planning of opportunities for pupils to learn in out-of-school contexts, in accordance with school policies and procedures.

3.2 Monitoring and assessment

3.2.1 They are able to support teachers in evaluating pupils’ progress through a range of assessment activities.

3.2.2 They monitor pupils’ responses to learning tasks and modify their approach accordingly.

3.2.3 They monitor pupils’ participation and progress, providing feedback to teachers, and giving constructive support to pupils as they learn.

3.2.4 They contribute to maintaining and analysing records of pupils’ progress.

3.3 Teaching and learning activities

3.3.1 Using clearly structured teaching and learning activities, they interest and motivate pupils, and advance their learning.

3.3.2 They communicate effectively and sensitively with pupils to support their learning.

3.3.3 They promote and support the inclusion of all pupils in the learning activities in which they are involved.

3.3.4 They use behaviour management strategies, in line with the school’s policy and procedures, which contribute to a purposeful learning environment.

3.3.5 They advance pupils’ learning in a range of classroom settings, including working with individuals, small groups and whole classes where the assigned teacher is not present.

3.3.6 They are able, where relevant, to guide the work of other adults supporting teaching and learning in the classroom.

3.3.7 They recognise and respond effectively to equal opportunities issues as they arise, including by challenging stereotyped views, and by challenging bullying or harassment, following relevant policies and procedures.

3.3.8 They organise and manage safely the learning activities, the physical teaching space and resources for which they are given responsibility.

(Source: Professional Standards for higher level teaching assistants, September 2003)
**Appendix 2: Sample Questionnaire**

**HLTA survey - Assessment Only Candidates**

I'm calling in relation to our HLTA research. We had arranged a telephone interview with you today. Is it still convenient to talk to you now?

*If not re-arrange the time for the interview*

If YES, outline the structure of the interview:
* background information
* finding out about the HLTA programme
* the application process
* choosing a provider
* the quality of the provision
* their future plans in relation to training

**Background information**

Q1 Name

Q2 Training provider

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provider</th>
<th>Training Provider</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APU - mPowerNet</td>
<td>Granada Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Practice Network</td>
<td>Literacy Matters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham HLTA Consortium</td>
<td>St Martin's College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canterbury Christ Church University College</td>
<td>Staffordshire County Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE)</td>
<td>Luton University</td>
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<tr>
<td>College of West Anglia</td>
<td>Manchester Metropolitan University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community South West</td>
<td>Mersey and Cheshire HLTA Partnership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Devon Teaching Assistants Training Partnership</td>
<td>North East HLTA Partnership (Northumbria University &amp; CCDU)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eastern Leadership Centre</td>
<td>PKR Educational Consultants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Edge Hill Consortium</td>
<td>Portsmouth University / WHPS</td>
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<tr>
<td>EM Direct</td>
<td>Shropshire County Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>FourS</td>
<td>South Yorkshire Teaching Assistants Consortium</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Other: If they have been with a consortium please note who they did the briefing days with.

Q3 Other

Q4 LA

Q5 Region

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>North East</th>
<th>South West</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>North East</td>
<td>South East</td>
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<tr>
<td>East Midlands</td>
<td>North West</td>
<td>West Midlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>South East</td>
<td>Yorkshire &amp; Humberside</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Q6 Gender

- Male
- Female

### Q7 How many years have you been working as a Teaching Assistant?

- ____________ years

### Q8 What type of school do you work for?

- Primary
- Nursery
- Middle school
- Secondary
- Special
- Other

### Q9 What year group(s) do you usually work with?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Group</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
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<td>Nursery</td>
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<td>Reception</td>
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</table>

### Q10 Which subject area(s) do you usually work in?

- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Art
- Business Studies or Economics
- Citizenship
- Design & Technology (inc Food and Textiles)
- Drama
- Early years
- English
- English as an additional language
- Geography
- History
- ICT
- Maths
- Media Studies
- Modern Foreign Languages
- Music
- Personal, Social and Health Education
- Physical Education
- Psychology
- Religious Education
- Science
- Social Science
- Special Educational Needs
- Other

### Q11 What have been your main areas of responsibility as a Teaching Assistant?

- Helping teachers to plan and prepare lessons
- Providing feedback to pupils about their learning/behaviour
- Monitoring pupils' progress
- Other

### Q12 Do you hold any qualifications that relate specifically to your work as a Teaching Assistant and if so, at what level?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Entry Level</th>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
<th>Level 4</th>
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<tr>
<td>NVQ</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other vocational qualifications</td>
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<td>Apprenticeship</td>
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<td>Certificate</td>
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<td>Diploma</td>
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<td>Foundation degree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
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<tr>
<td>APEL (Accredited Prior Learning)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Q13 q12 other - Please list any qualifications, not listed above, and at what level

### Q14 What is the full title of the course?
Evaluation of the HLTA programme

Q15  Briefly, what were your main motivations for becoming a Teaching Assistant?

Q16  Age

| Under 25 | 35-44 | 55-64 |
| 25-34 | 45-54 | 65 and over |

Q17  Finally in this section, what stage are you at with the HLTA programme?

- completed the 3-day briefing
- awaiting the assessor visit
- completed the programme
- putting together the portfolio of evidence
- awaiting notification of the outcome of the assessment

Finding out about HLTA training

Q18  How did you first hear about the HLTA programme?

- Head
- LA
- Circular in school
- TTA
- Other

Q19  How did you follow this up?

- HLTA website
- through school
- through LA
- Other

Q20  How easy did you find it to acquire the information you needed on HLTA?

- very
- not very easy
- fairly easy
- extremely difficult

Q21  Was there any information on the HLTA programme that you could not find but would have found useful?

The LA application and selection process

Q22  What were your main motivations for applying to the HLTA training programme?

- for recognition of current role
- to improve skills
- to meet other Teaching Assistants
- to improve promotion prospects
- to build confidence

Q23  Did you need to gain additional experience before applying for HLTA training?

- Yes
- No

Q24  If YES, in what area did you need additional training?

- experience of working with a whole class
- experience of direct contact with parents/carers about a pupil’s learning
- opportunities to observe others/ to be observed
- IT access
- to obtain feedback in order to improve practice

Q25  What did the application process for LA funding entail - could you outline the content of the application form?

- through headteacher recommendation
- Self-review against the 31 standards
- outlining how you met the LA’s selection criteria
- other selection/application process

Other
Q26 Would you make any changes to the selection and application process for LA funding in term of:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the information applicants need to supply</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>any duplication or unnecessary burdens</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The HLTA registration process

Q27 How did you register for a HLTA training place?

| Online via the HLTA website | ❑ |
| Call centre                 |   |
| Other                       |   |

Q28 How would you rate the experience of registering?

| Very good | ❑ |
| Adequate  | ❑ |
| Good      | ❑ |
| Poor      | ❑ |

Q29 Why do you think this?

Q30 Are there any changes you would make to the registration process to make it easier for candidates?

The Course

Q31 Once you had secured LA funding and registered, how long did you have to wait to start your training?

| Up to 1 month | ❑ |
| Up to 2 months | ❑ |
| Up to 3 months | ❑ |
| Up to 4 months | ❑ |
| Up to 5 months | ❑ |
| Over 5 months  | ❑ |
| Other          |   |

Q32 Were you happy with this?

Training and assessment

Q33 Why did you choose your training provider?

| Only one provider available to them | ❑ |
| LA recommended them                | ❑ |
| Location                            | ❑ |
| Prior knowledge of their provision | ❑ |
| Other                               |   |

Q34 How far did you have to travel to attend briefing sessions at your provider?

| Under a mile | ❑ |
| 1-5 miles    | ❑ |
| 6-10 miles   | ❑ |
| 11-15 miles  | ❑ |
| 16-20 miles  | ❑ |
| 21-25 miles  | ❑ |
| 26 miles and over | ❑ |
| Other        |   |

Q35 When did you attend training sessions?

| Term-time        | ❑ |
| During vacations | ❑ |
| Other            |   |

Q36 On what days did you attend training sessions?

| Weekdays  | ❑ |
| Weekends  | ❑ |
| Other     |   |

Q37 At what times did you attend training sessions?

| Working hours | ❑ |
| Evening       | ❑ |
| Other         |   |
Q38 Would briefing sessions at any of the other times have been suitable for you?

Q39 Did you have any difficulties attending any of the training sessions?

Yes □ No □

Q40 If so, why? How were these difficulties resolved?

Q41 Did you hold appropriate literacy and numeracy qualifications when you applied for a training place?

Yes □ No □

Q42 If NOT, were you happy with the arrangements for obtaining the qualifications during your training?

Yes □ No □

Q43 Could you briefly outline the arrangements for obtaining these qualifications?

Q44 Using the scale Very good, Good, Adequate, Poor; how would you rate:

The general organisation of the course? Very good □ Good □ Adequate □ Poor □

The overall quality of your briefing sessions? Very good □ Good □ Adequate □ Poor □

The quality of the support and guidance you received from your HLTA provider? Very good □ Good □ Adequate □ Poor □

Follow up rankings below, especially any 'Very good' or 'Poor' responses

Q45 Could you explain why you chose those rankings?

Q46 Again, using the scale Very good, Good, Adequate, Poor; how successful was your briefing in the following:

Explaining the Standards Very good □ Good □ Adequate □ Poor □

Explaining how to apply them to your own work and evidence them □ □ □ □

Explaining the assessment process and the evidence that you needed to demonstrate the standards □ □ □ □

Preparing you for the assessor visit □ □ □ □

Follow up rankings below, especially any 'Very good' or 'Poor' responses

Q47 Why those rankings?

Q48 What changes, if any, could your provider make to improve their briefing?

Q49 Did you work with a teacher/mentor in school?

Yes □ No □

Q50 If YES, to what extent did this enhance the programme?
Evaluation of the HLTA programme

Q51 Of the 31 standards are there any in particular which you have found difficult to evidence?
(Interviewer note: please refer to additional sheet with list of standards to confirm the correct standard(s) chosen)

1.1
1.2
1.3
1.4
1.5
1.6
2.1
2.2
2.3
2.4
2.5
2.6
2.7
2.8
2.9
3.1
3.1.1
3.1.2
3.1.3
3.1.4
3.2.1
3.2.2
3.2.3
3.3.1
3.3.2
3.3.3
3.3.4
3.3.5
3.3.6
3.3.7
3.3.8

Q52 Why was this/these standard(s) difficult to evidence?

your subject/specialism
school policy restrictions
type of school/students
Other - please give reasons for each standard

Q53 Did you complete the portfolio electronically?

Yes
No

Q54 If YES, how did you find this? If you wrote the Portfolio up by hand, what were your reasons for this?

Q55 How did you find producing the portfolio more generally?

Q56 How did you find the assessment visit?

Q57 Overall, how successful do you feel your training has been in:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>N/a</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improving your skills as a Teaching Assistant?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improving your knowledge?</td>
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<td>Improving your confidence?</td>
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</table>

Follow up rankings below - if the respondent answers 'Very good' or 'Good' ask them to give examples

Q58 Why those rankings?

Q59 What skills/knowledge did you hope would be better developed through the HLTA programme; (eg. what areas of work would you like to feel better prepared to undertake?)

HLTA status and post-training support

Q60 Do you have any plans to undertake more training to build on your HLTA status (eg Foundation degree, QTS)?

Yes
No
Don't know at present

Q61 (If YES) Can you expand on this? What training are you thinking of pursuing and why? (Get an indication of what direction they are looking to take career-wise)

Q62 Do you have any other comments that you would like to make - whether about the HLTA programme more generally, or in relation to your own experience of HLTA assessment?
## Appendix 3: Pilot route Provider Interview Schedule

### Background

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provider Name:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provider type:</td>
<td>LA ☐ Private training provider ☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>HEI ☐ Training Consortium/Partnership ☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>FEI ☐</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact Name:</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tel number:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Email:</td>
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</table>

| Main route(s) offered: | 50 Day Full Training ☐ |
| Assessment Only ☐ |

| Other route(s) offered: |  |
| Subject Specialist ☐ | E-support ☐ |
| Shorter route ☐ | Training Needs Analysis ☐ |

| Number of ‘Other Route’ candidates: |  |
| Start /end dates: |  |

### Involvement with the route

1. How /why did you become involved in piloting the ... route?

2. What do you see as the main rationale behind this route?

### Course design

3. What were your main considerations when designing the course – in terms of the following:

   a) Target market The format of the course (eg, provider- and school-based components, use of E-learning)

   b) The content of the course (eg, core areas to cover and integrating this with the assessment tasks/process of the HLTA programme)
## Evaluation of the HLTA programme

### Recruitment

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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Please outline your recruitment criteria and the rationale behind them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Did you produce any marketing materials for your Other Routes provision?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>How was the Application process (standard LA process + registering with TTA)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Were you able to recruit a sufficient number of candidates?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Did you identify any patterns in the type of Teaching Assistants who expressed an interest in /applied for this route? (eg, school phase, training needs etc).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Have candidates discussed with you their reasons for selecting this route? If so, have you identified any patterns in this respect?</td>
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</table>

### Provision

#### a) Attendance

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>How many sessions did the course comprise?</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Were candidates able to attend all /most of the training sessions? (if they run e-support route, were candidates able to complete any assignments set?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Average distance travelled by candidates to training centre?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### b) Initial Needs Analysis (INA)

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Do you offer and Initial Needs Analysis?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>At what stage was the INA completed? Before selection / After selection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>What did the INA entail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>i. Paper-based or electronic?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii. Provider / candidate input?</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>At what point did you look at tailoring provision – after each candidate’s INA, or once all the INAs were completed? Did you use a particular system/approach in analysing the INA data?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Please could you give some examples of the way in which provision was tailored to an individual’s needs – or to the needs of a sub-group of candidates?</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>In practice, how did you find managing the permutations of need that emerged?</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Were there any patterns in the support needs identified amongst the candidates?</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>In your view, is the INA approach an effective way of managing provision?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Do you have any examples of good practice for working with this approach?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### c) Course materials

22. What materials did you use in delivering the course?

23. Did you develop any of your own materials – what were these and in what way did they supplement the TTA pack?

24. Which materials – whether TTA or provider – did candidates find most useful?

### d) Mentoring

25. Did you use mentoring for candidates – provider-based and/or school-based mentors?

26. Did you involve the mentor in any area of the programme?

27. How did the mentor(s) input into the course /support the candidate?

### e) Provider-based provision

28. What were the main elements of this provision?

### f) School-based study

29. What were the main elements of this provision?

30. Did this component of the training add to the candidate’s experience of the course /route?

31. Were visits made by candidates to other schools? Was this an effective use of time?

32. Were schools able to accommodate this component of the training?

33. Have you had any feedback from schools regarding this training route? (re benefits, concerns).

### g) E-learning components

34. Did your course include E-learning elements?

35. How was this delivered /what did this include? (course exercises + networks + resources?).

36. How did candidates find the use of E-learning?

37. Did candidates require support to make use of these elements?

### Quality Assurance

38. What Quality Assurance procedures do you have in place?

39. Have you identified any issues through these procedures?

40. Have you been able to act on any of these issues?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Effective practice</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>41 Success rates – percentage of candidates that met the Standards?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42 Has there been any evidence of impact of the course on candidate’s classroom practice? OR, where would you expect your course /this route to most impact on candidates’ classroom practice?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43 Have your ‘main’ routes and ‘other’ routes provision fed into each other in any way?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44 Would you make any changes to your provision – or the route more generally – to enhance its fitness-for-purpose?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 Do you have any models /examples of good practice? Re:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Design of the route</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Recruitment /marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Delivery of the route</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Supporting candidates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 4: Focus Group Schedule

1. Background information

This information will be gathered through an introductory ‘mini-questionnaire’

- Name
- LA
- Training provider
  - Training route (Assessment only; 50-day training)
  - Age (under 25; 25-34; 35-44; 45 and over)
- How long have you worked as a Teaching Assistant?
- What type of school do you work for? (Nursery, Primary, Secondary, Special, Other)
- What year group(s) do you usually work with?
- Do you tend to work in a particular subject area? If so, which?
- What have been your main areas of responsibility as a Teaching Assistant?
- What qualifications do you hold – more generally and relating specifically to your work as a Teaching Assistant?
- What were your main motivations for becoming a Teaching Assistant?

2. Finding out about HLTA training

In terms of general information about the HLTA programme:

- How did you first hear about HLTA training?
- How did you follow this up?
- Was there any information on the HLTA programme that you could not find but would have found useful?
3. The LA application and selection process
   - How did you decide on whether to pursue HLTA training?
   - What were your main motivations for applying?
   - Were you able to apply straight away? (eg, did you need to gain additional experience before applying? If so, in what area? – literacy /numeracy).
   - What process did the LA use and how was it for you? (Would you make any changes etc).

4. Choosing a provider and registering for a training place
   In terms of information on the courses available to you:
   - How did you go about investigating potential training providers/courses for your own training?
   - What factors influenced your decision to pick your training provider?
   - Is there any information that your chosen provider(s) did not supply that you would have found useful (whether on their website or in written communications)?
   - How did you register for a HLTA training place? (on-line via the HLTA website; call centre)
   - Would you make any changes to the application/registration process (for LA funding and booking a training place)?
   - Once you had secured LA funding, how long did you have to wait to start your training?
   - Did the location and timing of your training suit you?
   - Did you have any difficulties attending any of the training sessions? If so, why? How were these difficulties resolved?

5. Training and assessment
   Views on the candidate’s particular course
   Admin/organisation
   - Did you have all the information you needed on your course before it started?
   Other prompts: general organisation of the course; provider’s efforts in keeping in touch with candidates before the training started; communications during the training.
Assessment Only candidates

- Before starting the course, what areas did you feel you needed most help with from your training provider (whether to do with, for example, understanding the briefing or assessment process or in relation to a particular Standard)?

- Did you already hold appropriate literacy and numeracy qualifications before you started the programme?

- If not, were you happy with the arrangements for obtaining the qualification(s) during your training?

- Participants to outline the three-day candidate briefing at their provider (content, format, how well it worked for them)

- Participants to outline the way in which their provider prepared them for the assessment process (content, format, how well it worked for them)

- Participants to outline the way in which their provider prepared them for the school visit (content, format, how well it worked for them)

Where participants are from the same provider – discussion should establish whether a view is shared by a number of the candidates.

Where participants are from different providers – discussion should establish whether a particular example of training would be welcomed by those from other providers etc.

Prompts

Success of briefing process in aiding:

- candidates’ understanding of the Standards
- applying the Standards to their work in school
- reviewing current work against the Standards
- identifying knowledge /skills for development and how to do this
- candidates’ understanding of the assessment process and the evidence required to demonstrate the Standards
- formative feedback on the first draft of assessments
- candidates’ understanding of the nature and purpose of the assessor’s visit and of their role in preparing for and organising the visit
- the support and guidance candidates received from their provider during the training

Course materials

- What course materials did your training provider supply to you?
- Were there any materials that you found particularly useful? Why?
- Were there any materials that you didn’t receive that you would have found useful?
The assessment process

- Did you find the assessment tasks useful in helping you to evidence the Standards? Why /why not?
- How did you find writing-up and evidencing the assessment tasks?
- Record-keeping – did you use the TTA forms /did your provider supply any other materials?
- Were you able to obtain opportunities to evidence all of the Standards?
- How long did writing-up take? How did you find this?

The school visit

- How did you find the school visit? Did it create any particular burdens for you or others in the school team?
  (prompts: preparing for, arranging for school staff to meet assessor, meeting with assessor, feedback from assessor)
- Re-cap on areas that candidates felt their provider delivered particularly well and why
- Re-cap on any changes that candidates feel their provider could make to improve their training

Full 50-day training candidates

- Before starting the course, what areas did you feel you needed most help with from your training provider (whether to do with, for example, understanding the training or in relation to a particular Standard)?

Provider-based training

- Participants to outline the provider-based training on their course
- Did you find these activities useful? Why /why not?

School-based training

- Participants to outline the school-based training they undertook
- Did you find these activities useful? Why /why not?
- Were you able to obtain permission from your school to undertake all of the school-based training? If not, how did your training provider deal with this? Overall, was this component of the training manageable? (any burdensome aspects?).

Prompts:

- Improvement of skills
- Improvement of knowledge
- Improvement in levels of confidence
...your understanding of the Standards
...applying the Standards to your work in school
...reviewing your current work against the Standards
...identifying knowledge /skills for development and how to do this
...your understanding of the assessment process and the evidence required to demonstrate the Standards
...formative feedback on the first draft of assessments
...understanding of the nature and purpose of the assessor’s visit and of your role in preparing for and organising the visit

### On-line component

- What activities were included in the on-line component of your training?
- Where did you undertake the on-line component of the training?
- Did you have any difficulties using IT as part of the training?
- If so, was your provider able to help with this?
- How would you rate the on-line component in terms of the following:
  - Improvement in your ICT skills
  - Improvement of your knowledge
  - Improvement in your levels of confidence

### The assessments

- Did you find the assessment tasks useful? Why /why not?
- How did you find writing-up and evidencing the assessment tasks?
(Prompts: record-keeping – did you use the TTA forms /did your provider supply any other materials?)
- Were you able to obtain opportunities to evidence all of the Standards?

### The school visit

- How did you find the school visit?
(Prompts: preparing for, arranging for school staff to meet assessor, meeting with the assessor, feedback from the assessor)

### Course materials

- What course materials did your training provider supply to you?
- Were there any materials that you found particularly useful? Why?
- Were there any materials that you didn’t receive that you would have found useful?
Evaluation of the HLTA programme

Misc

- Were you able to visit a contrasting school? Did this enhance your training – how?
- Did you work with a mentor in school? Did this enhance your training – how?

Literacy and numeracy qualifications

- Did you already hold appropriate literacy and numeracy qualifications before you started the programme?
- If not, were you happy with the arrangements for obtaining the qualification(s) during your training?
- Re-cap on areas that candidates felt their provider delivered particularly well and why
- Re-cap on any changes that candidates feel their provider could make to improve their training

6. HLTA status and post-training support

- How do staff /parents at your school feel about the introduction of Higher Level Teaching Assistants?
- Has your role as a Teaching Assistant changed since you achieved HLTA status? (both in terms of the nature of your work and working relationships)
- Do you have any plans to undertake more training? (eg, general CPD or specific training to build on HLTA status). Anyone hoping to pursue QTS?
- Have you discussed the introduction of HLTA status with other Teaching Assistants at your school? What are their views on it? (Prompts /follow-ups: are others interested in HLTA training? Why/why not? Why have they not pursued training so far? What are the barriers to pursuing HLTA training?)
- Would you recommend the HLTA programme to other Teaching Assistants?
- Would you recommend your particular route – AO or full training - to other Teaching Assistants?
- Would you recommend your training provider to other Teaching Assistants?
- Finally, do you have any other comments that you would like to make – whether about the HLTA programme more generally, or in relation to your own experience of HLTA training?
### Appendix 5: Provision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provider</th>
<th>Assessment Only</th>
<th>50 Day Route</th>
<th>Shorter Route</th>
<th>E-Learning</th>
<th>TNA</th>
<th>Subject Specialist</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anglia Polytechnic University (APU)</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Table drawn up using information supplied by training providers during the research.
Appendix 6: Details of Candidates

The sample breakdown.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Route</th>
<th>No. of candidates interviewed</th>
<th>No. of Focus Group attendees</th>
<th>Interviews with providers</th>
<th>TOTAL candidates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment Only</td>
<td>117 + 5 Foundation degree</td>
<td>50</td>
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<td>172</td>
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<tr>
<td>Full Training</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>95</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pilot routes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shorter E-learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>TNA</td>
<td>17</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject Specialist</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>15</td>
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</table>

Focus group attendance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Attendees</th>
<th>Route</th>
<th>Providers Represented</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>AO</td>
<td>Birmingham HLTA Consortium, Northampton University</td>
<td>10/03/05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bournemouth</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>AO</td>
<td>Community South West</td>
<td>22/03/05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colchester</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>AO</td>
<td>ELC</td>
<td>06/09/05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>AO</td>
<td>EM Direct</td>
<td>13/05/05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portsmouth</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>AO</td>
<td>Portsmouth (WHPS) Sussex HLTA Consortium</td>
<td>23/03/05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheffield</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>AO</td>
<td>SYTAC</td>
<td>12/04/05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shrewsbury</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>Shropshire County Council</td>
<td>06/09/05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunderland</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>Sunderland University</td>
<td>04/10/05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellingborough</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>Northampton University</td>
<td>24/08/05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weymouth</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>Weymouth College</td>
<td>02/06/05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Distribution of candidates responding to the survey.

Regional Breakdown of Candidates

School Settings

Age Distribution of candidates
### Appendix 7: Pilot route Provider Self-Evaluations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provider</th>
<th>Route</th>
<th>Successes</th>
<th>Areas for improvement</th>
<th>Other notes / recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Granada Learning</td>
<td>E-learning</td>
<td><strong>Module contents</strong> - candidates were able to use materials as little or as much as they liked, and found some activities useful even after standards had been reached.</td>
<td>Tutors felt that candidates often got more support than they would through other routes and they needed to work more things out for themselves.</td>
<td>Need to <strong>make sure that candidates are 'e-ready'</strong> and have access to computer facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SYTAC</td>
<td>E-learning</td>
<td><strong>Discussion boards and e-tutor support</strong> were appreciated and used effectively – candidates sharing work and giving each other feedback through them</td>
<td><strong>More orientation time was needed</strong> in order for candidates to introduce themselves to one another and familiarise themselves with the programme</td>
<td>Ensure that the <strong>correct software is available</strong>, and all tasks and materials are suited to e-learning before uploading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Employment of an e-developer</strong> in order to troubleshoot, suggest changes, and make additions to the course material (e.g. breaking the Blackboard site into several parts; implementing a site map)</td>
<td><strong>Modification of learning materials</strong> was required, particularly of those originally devised for live teaching.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Chatroom sessions</strong> between the candidates and a tutor have proved valuable in discussing and solving problems, particularly in the run-up to submission deadlines</td>
<td><strong>A greater degree of face-to-face contact</strong> was required, particularly in the early stages in order to reassure candidates and work through any problems they may have, for example, with the software / applications being used</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Hours can be worked according to each individual</strong> – E-learning allows candidates to choose when it is most suitable for them to work</td>
<td><strong>Need to provide a balance of the materials made available</strong> – enough so that a realistic indication of the requirements for each Standard is provided, but not too much so that candidates feel confused or swamped</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provider</td>
<td>Route</td>
<td>Successes</td>
<td>Areas for improvement</td>
<td>Other notes / recommendations</td>
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<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
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<td>--------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community South-West</td>
<td>E-Learning</td>
<td><strong>Increase in IT skills and confidence</strong> in addition to the areas covered by the modules, which candidates viewed as an extra bonus to the route. &lt;br&gt;<strong>Bite-size units at fortnightly intervals</strong> viewed favourable – kept focus and retained flexibility. &lt;br&gt;<strong>3 face-to-face days</strong> popular so could meet tutors and other candidates, and receive lots of helpful information. &lt;br&gt;<strong>Content of modules</strong> allowed candidates to develop critical thinking skills and organise their planning and learning management. &lt;br&gt;<strong>Mentor</strong> time was extremely useful. &lt;br&gt;<strong>Having at least 2 candidates from the same school</strong> meant that they could help each other. &lt;br&gt;<strong>Website/E-learning platform</strong> was easy to navigate. &lt;br&gt;**Prompt and friendly **responses from tutors. &lt;br&gt;<strong>Online discussion facilities</strong> helped to create a good atmosphere within the group. &lt;br&gt;<strong>Peer assessment of tasks</strong> was appreciated by candidates. &lt;br&gt;<strong>Structured pathway</strong> which combined the ‘Martini’ e-learning model (any time, anywhere!!) with prescription.</td>
<td><strong>Candidates need more direct guidance</strong> with regard to the nature of the evidence required for the Standards. &lt;br&gt;<strong>Workload increased</strong> a lot in the last few weeks of the course. &lt;br&gt;<strong>Third face-to-face day</strong> needed to be placed earlier in the course. &lt;br&gt;<strong>More mentor time</strong> would be beneficial, and having good access to mentors as well (e.g. a specific time set aside each week where discussion cannot be interrupted). &lt;br&gt;<strong>Technical problems</strong> caused a few glitches with the course – downloading materials, portal responding slowly etc.</td>
<td>Have more than one candidate from each school on the course to allow them to help one another more. &lt;br&gt;Ensure broadband access is not limited; school computers were also found to be generally unreliable.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Evaluation of the HLTA programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provider</th>
<th>Route</th>
<th>Successes</th>
<th>Areas for improvement</th>
<th>Other notes / recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DTATP</strong></td>
<td>TNA</td>
<td>Highly personalised programme</td>
<td>Self-evaluation / needs analysis pro-forma: candidates who did not enjoy mentor support in school found this approach unnecessary and felt that it ‘atomised’ the Standards</td>
<td>Feedback from candidates: all felt training was personalised; small training groups had been beneficial; email support from tutor, and peer support, were invaluable; experience was fulfilling and worthwhile.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Peer support – candidates paired and supported each other between training days</td>
<td>Scrutiny and feedback of self-evaluation / needs analysis was time-consuming (and therefore expensive), exercises often having to be repeated where previous exemplar were deemed inappropriate</td>
<td>Make all would-be HLTA’s complete a detailed self-evaluation so that this is unnecessary during the actual programme – thereby keeping costs down.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Use of pro-forma worksheets and ‘skeleton plans’ where Standards and self-evaluations could be clearly mapped and developed</td>
<td><strong>Little group tuition could take place</strong> as 27 Standards were not being met across various candidates at the start of the programme</td>
<td>The HLTA concept is far from universally understood – needs to be marketed to schools more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>School-based development activities: individual tasks provided to each candidate after analysis of self-evaluation (successful where candidate had mentor support in school)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Small learning groups</strong>, where they got to know and support each other The TNA process informed and enriched the AO route processes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Whole schools benefit</strong> – this route embeds good practice into schools by emphasising self-evaluation</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Flexibility</strong> of the course created minimum burden for schools</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Rapid-response provision</strong> for literacy and numeracy testing</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>North East HLTA Partnership</strong></td>
<td>TNA</td>
<td><strong>Self-review session viewed favourably</strong> by all candidate, enabling them to clarify any issues, receive all the relevant information and have any questions asked</td>
<td>Provide more exemplar in introductory material for candidates’ reference, particularly regarding the school-based tasks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Training delivery</strong> throughout was successful in explaining the Standards</td>
<td><strong>Conduct more discussion</strong>, so that candidates can pool their ideas and share experiences of practices in other schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Modular work helped relate school-based tasks to the Standards</strong></td>
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</table>
## Evaluation of the HLTA programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provider</th>
<th>Route</th>
<th>Successes</th>
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</table>
| Networked Learning Partnership  | 15-day Shorter route   | **Day spent in a contrasting school** was found to be a valuable experience by the candidates; this is particularly valuable for transferable means – so that candidates can reflect experience from different school settings.  

*All PowerPoint presentations, tutor notes and handouts* were provided to each candidate on CD, the quality of the material was excellent.  

*Structure, delivery and support* throughout the course were received positively.  

*Length of course* was viewed favourably, candidates and head teachers who were unable to release candidates for a 50 day course.  

*Not all of the Standards received in-depth coverage due to the length of the course - therefore, candidates require an initial screening to determine where the candidates are ‘weak’ and have major areas of concern – as it was, the needs of the group were diverse and not all candidates required the training they received, nor did all receive the training they required.*  

An initial INA would allow the ability to target resources through face-to-face tuition and ICT support, according to each individual candidate – enabling better progression. |
| South West                     |                        |                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                        |                                                                                               |
| APU                            | 16-Day Shorter route   | **Group work** was appreciated by the candidates – reading through their written work.  

*Looking at final tasks* completed by previous students.  

*Pace* of the course was suitable; allowed time to go through any queries/ worries with group.  

*Consistency in training* needs to be improved – have the same tutor throughout; or, if there has to be a number of tutors, ensure that they are giving out the same information as one another.  

*Spend time on E-learning/ICT* with the tutors present.  

There needs to be uniformity in what is considered enough work to cover a standard. |
| St. Martins College            | 16-day Shorter route   | **One-to-one discussion** – a self-review, invaluable in debating the Standards and determining which modules candidates needed to complete.  

*Small groups* ensured personalised learning and support.  

*Separate the training from the preparation for assessment* – provide feedback at specifically designated points of the course.  

*Ensure candidates gain Level 2 qualifications prior to starting tailored HLTA route* – candidates working concurrently on both found the workload demanding and so 3 withdrew.  

*Use the INA to identify the starting point of the candidate* – just identifying the need for development does not signify how much development is actually required.  

Used a ‘Blackboard’ website to support learning – discussion boards, web links and word documents to supplement modules, and on-going access to tutor. |
<p>| College                        |                        |                                                                                                        |                                                                                        |                                                                                               |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provider</th>
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<th>Other notes / recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Four S</td>
<td>20-day</td>
<td><strong>For candidates</strong>&lt;br&gt;Implementation and development of previous experience of staff members was rewarding and beneficial to the candidates due to the provision already being an HLTA trainer, and therefore able to apply previous training packages to this programme&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;Modular design of the course allowed a wide-range of topics to be covered in a short time, and each of the Standards to be covered in the same way&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;School-based follow-up activities were useful in consolidating what had been learnt during lessons&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<strong>For trainers</strong>&lt;br&gt;The ‘continuity tutor’ provided consistent information about the entire cohort, and individual training needs, in order to provide a shape to the training and a familiar face each week&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;Use of a standardised training planner provided a starting point and a focus for the sessions&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;Co-training was appreciated by those who delivered in pairs&lt;br&gt;All trainers felt the course to be a rewarding experience&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;Timesheets and special coding allowed costings to be tracked</td>
<td><strong>Is it necessary to cover all Standards</strong> – some trainers felt that they lacked time due to differences in candidate knowledge and experience; or should candidates be able to opt out of sessions they don’t require?&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;Pair candidates – to allow them to observe other school practices and support one another&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;Provide more information about assessment and task expectations – allow more time to prepare for assessment and to go through what was required – clarify the purpose of the follow-up&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;Fortnightly rather than weekly sessions in order to allow those working part-time more opportunity for research&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;Provide clear timetables of the sessions, deadlines and assessments, providing reminders and opportunities for questions throughout the course&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;Explicitly highlight the Standards being covered in each session, emphasising the connections between the module content and the Standards&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;Provide the ‘bigger picture’ to the trainers re: how HLTA assessments work in order for the candidate to gain status, so that they can provide information to candidates as questions arise in sessions</td>
<td>Team approach from those delivering the course helped to spread workload and generate ideas&lt;br&gt;A Needs Analysis document for each candidate at the start would allow trainer to ensure the content of their modules was appropriate; and so that candidates can select the tasks most appropriate to their developmental needs&lt;br&gt;A cohort of up to 20 candidates seems a good size. Benefited from being able to deliver to a mixed cohort, but with the opportunity of separating into smaller groups if necessary. Numbers lower will also have financial implications.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Evaluation of the HLTA programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provider</th>
<th>Route</th>
<th>Successes</th>
<th>Areas for improvement</th>
<th>Other notes / recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Best Practice Network | 20-day Shorter route | **School-based tasks were beneficial**, keeping the Standards in focus during working day and dovetailing with HLTA assessment tasks  
**Pairing candidates** so that they could visit other school settings  
**E-learning** tasks, such as research, proved to be valuable learning tools  
**Self-confidence and self-esteem** were both reported to have been boosted among the candidates as a result of the course  
**The use of a reflective journal** was beneficial and adopted by all candidates | **Organise one or two INA sessions** so that candidates completed only the modules needed, with brief input on all Standards to ensure confidence in going forward to HLTA assessment  
**Develop mentoring** by inviting the supporting teacher to several of the sessions  
**Produce e-newsletters for mentors** so that they feel more involved on an on-going basis  
**Build in more feedback on tasks** throughout the course – how they link, and ways of improving them | The TTA Guidance to the Standards is helpful; as is the use of summaries and prompt sheets.  
The format of the Candidate Handbook is less user-friendly  
Maintain a strong liaison with the Las at the initial stages, and during the programme |
| PkR-NI | 20-day Shorter route | **School visits prior to the training** to introduce the HLTA pack to candidates and teaching staff, and to explain the self-review. This helped candidates’ understanding, whilst involving the school.  
**Three briefing days to cover understanding of the Standards and completion of the tasks** worked well in developing candidates’ understanding in conjunction with the tasks | **Fewer school-based learning days** – 10 were difficult to achieve because candidates and support teachers were working full-time  
**Differentiate individual needs more** when splitting the 20 days between in and out of school training – some candidates needed more than 10 days external training, some needed less  
**Produce specific guidance** re: the initial self-review and how to fill it in | Rather than briefings at individual schools, in future the provision would hold an introductory session to which Tas and staff were invited.  
Can offer a route best suited to an individual’s training needs – this is cost effective, and it reduces the burden on both candidates and schools |
## Evaluation of the HLTA programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provider</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Literacy Matters | 25-day Shorter route | **Appropriateness of the course** in meeting the candidate's needs – nearly all the candidates agreed that objectives were met, that the training delivery was appropriate and training materials and course content were accessible and appropriate with good links to the Standards.  
  **School-based tasks** enhanced knowledge and teaching style, and changed TA’s expectations of what pupils could do – over 90% of candidates reported progression in their pupils due to the tasks they had done as part of their HLTA training.  
  **Some course content contributing to school improvement** – particularly in areas of SEN and behavioural management.  
  **E-learning was particularly useful** in boosting confidence, underpinning knowledge, confirming thinking.  
  **School visits by trainers** in order to support the TA’s were invaluable. | **A modular approach would be better** – all of the candidates had different needs and were coming from different TA contexts (e.g. KS2, Foundation Level) so the content and length of the course received varying levels of approval. A modular course would allow candidates to select the aspects of training that best met their needs.  
  **Arrange visits by candidates to other schools** – this hadn’t been planned during this pilot due to time constraints. | It is a focused training programme that allowed demonstration of HLTA Standards, whilst enhancing TA skills, increasing pupil’s progression and benefiting school practices. |
### Evaluation of the HLTA programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provider</th>
<th>Route</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Edge Hill | Subject Specialist (Maths and Science) | **School based learning experiences** provided through the subject based modules also developed knowledge and understanding of the Standards  
**E-learning** as a flexible vehicle for the subject based module meant that candidates could use the material most relevant to their own needs and experiences. The provision of a discussion board also helped candidates share ideas and concerns. Candidates were able to gain expertise in E-learning, and then utilise this in schools  
**Individual tutorials** built relationships and helped to identify any individual needs  
**TTA material (Candidate Pack) and subject based material** were well used by the candidates  
**Impact on the school** – resources produced through school based work were being used by other members of the department and having a ‘significant impact’ on teaching in the school  
**Greater opportunity** – the candidates all agreed that they had become more aware of the curriculum, more involved in planning, teaching and learning and consequently had more opportunity for professional development | **Difficulty in tailoring the course** due to its subject specific nature – this meant that although useful, the INA was not particularly effective or relevant  
**Have a more formal approach to in-school mentoring** in order to guarantee empathy for candidates’ workloads and give schools a further insight into the work being done, and the benefits it could bring to the school itself  
**The school-based element also required more formal structure** so that candidates could be more fully supported in school  
**Provide more time in college** rather than relying on E-learning materials. However, this proved difficult due to schools being reluctant to release the TAs for large amounts of time  
**‘Pair up’ candidates** so that they can share their experiences and support one another – if this was developed formally it would achieve a consistent approach | Although an INA was conducted, the provision of the subject based module meant that all candidates worked through similar material rather than individually tailored routes. |
| University of Portsmouth (WHPSC) | Subject Specialist (Speech and Language Therapy) | **Candidates had been able to incorporate their learning into practice** by using strategies they gained with a wide range of children | **Difficulties with the TTA software** were encountered by the majority of candidates  
**Support from schools** needs to be more focused, particularly in their awareness of the HLTA programme – possibly through the use of a ‘learning contract’ or more observation of the TA in school | Need to ensure that TAs have completed, or have arranged to complete, Maths and English qualifications |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provider</th>
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<tr>
<td>Trinity and All Saints</td>
<td>Subject Specialist (Modern Foreign Languages)</td>
<td>Course was well-planned with well-defined modules, imparting a wide range of teaching strategies and relevant information. Candidates reported that the course was motivational, inspiring and interesting. Ideas on lesson plans, such as games, activities and resources were very useful and added to confidence. Content was useful and applicable to SEN pupils. Small number of candidates (10) was appreciated by those taking MFL pilot. Self-review was a useful exercise as it made candidates think about applying experiences to meet the Standards. Group work allowed candidates to share ideas and reassure one another. Use of videos, websites, handouts and presentation materials expanded candidate knowledge about resources, methods and activities available and possible. Observation of lessons in Specialist Language College assured the quality of the observed lesson.</td>
<td>Have sessions at longer intervals as going into college twice-weekly was disruptive to school routine and didn’t allow for much preparation time. More one-to-one time for guidance and any specific concerns. A longer course would put less pressure on the candidates and allow more time for reinforcement, reflection and preparation for tasks. Language competence needs to be thoroughly assessed somehow, before the uptake of the course.</td>
<td>As all candidates have different Standards they will find it hard to meet, there should be more opportunity to go through these individually with a tutor. Candidates do not necessarily have a language teacher in their own workplace – this creates questions about models, guidance and mentoring. Some candidates did not have experience of teaching language in primary. Nature of course and diversity of languages involved meant that tutor cannot give feedback re: language competence of candidates. There needs to be some form of complementary language course offering pronunciation, basic grammar, language for classroom interaction and behaviour management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EM Direct; (cancelled)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pilot route was cancelled following the initial recruitment phase, due to a lack of interest; and of those candidates who had applied, nearly half did not meet the criteria.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Evaluation of the HLTA programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provider</th>
<th>Route</th>
<th>Successes</th>
<th>Areas for improvement</th>
<th>Other notes / recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University College</td>
<td>Subject Specialist (Physical Education) -</td>
<td></td>
<td>Number of schools invited to take part in the Pilot route was strictly limited due to</td>
<td>The Pilot route was cancelled following the initial recruitment phase, due to a lack of interest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton</td>
<td>cancelled</td>
<td></td>
<td>a concern that the pilot would be inundated with applicants. However, this concern</td>
<td>The process revealed that the HLTA scheme is not well understood in schools and they are cautious to support a programme when the financial climate is also uncertain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>proved unfounded and the limitations had been unnecessary. Use a one in ten ratio of</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>applicants to invitations when estimating a response rate.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Limited time frame in which schools had to respond was problematic- if information</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>evening is conducted before the end of summer term then there would be time to make</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>adequate arrangements (need at least one term’s notice).</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 8: Course Materials

The table below compiles brief examples of the different course materials provided for candidates by the various training providers during their HLTA training programmes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Provider</th>
<th>Assessment Only</th>
<th>Pilot routes</th>
<th>50 Day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anglia Polytechnic University (APU)</td>
<td>Course information for Headteachers</td>
<td>Shorter Route:</td>
<td>Course outline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>HLTA Standards documentation</td>
<td>Course information for Headteachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PowerPoint presentations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Course outline and timetables</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Handouts: e.g. guidance on reflective journal; self esteem models; social</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>emotional and behavioural skills; emotional coaching; teaching styles; extracts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>from Ofsted reports; ideas for tasks; behavioural management</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ICT worksheet</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Self-review sheet</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Candidate module assessment forms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Practice Network</td>
<td></td>
<td>Course agenda and outline</td>
<td>Course agenda and outline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>E-learning task outline</td>
<td>Handout: coverage of Standards</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Website review evaluation form</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Handouts: school-based tasks</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Process for delivery of medium terms for E-learning, Personal Reflective</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Skills, Behavioural Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Birmingham and Midlands HLTA Consortium</td>
<td>Course agenda and outline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E-learning task outline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Website review evaluation form</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Handouts: school-based tasks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Process for delivery of medium terms for E-learning, Personal Reflective Skills</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Behavioural Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training Provider</td>
<td>Assessment Only</td>
<td>Pilot routes</td>
<td>50 Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canterbury Christ Church University College</td>
<td>Course outline</td>
<td></td>
<td>Course outline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE)</td>
<td>Course information leaflet</td>
<td></td>
<td>Course information leaflet</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Course agenda</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>PowerPoint presentations: candidate briefing re: course</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Handouts: evidencing Standards; documentation checklist; aims of the course</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community South West</td>
<td></td>
<td>E-learning:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PowerPoint presentations: HLTA information briefings, course outline</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>E-learning portal: incl. streamed video links; useful weblinks; photographs of practical resources</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Course agenda and outline</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Handout: HLTA information</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>East Devon College/Devon Teaching Assistants Training Partnership</td>
<td>Session briefing notes and outline</td>
<td>TNA Route:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Skeleton tasks sheet</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Training day agendas</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Handouts: development task activities; useful web references</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Evaluation of the HLTA programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Provider</th>
<th>Assessment Only</th>
<th>Pilot routes</th>
<th>50 Day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **East Region Consortium/Eastern Leadership Centre** | PowerPoint presentations: candidate briefing sessions  
Self-review sheet  
Gallery of Standards  
Standards for which candidates may need support evidencing  
Handouts: preparation for next session; advice on compiling evidence; prompt questions for completing response sheets  
Response sheet for tasks | | PowerPoint presentations: candidate briefing sessions.  
Training Needs Analysis sheet  
Handouts, including: timesheets; pre- and post-session tasks; swap visit; example lesson plan; advice on assessment; behaviour management; useful websites; SEN Disability Act; H+S; legal responsibilities; activities to advance learning; relevant legislation; Skills Audit sheets to assess candidates ICT proficiency |
| **EM Direct**                      | PowerPoint presentations: candidate briefing sessions  
Course agenda and outline | | Provided sample of one training session: Classroom & Behaviour Management; all sessions used same outline, including:  
PowerPoint presentation to accompany session  
Video clips: e.g. classroom rules/behaviour  
Questionnaires and evaluation on session topic  
Handouts: detailed guidance/advice on session topic |
| **Four S**                         | PowerPoint presentation to accompany the three day sessions  
Handouts: activity sheets e.g. HLTA Standards; understanding the Standards grid; scenario examples; evaluation summary sheet; daily evaluation sheet; scenario; Standards tracker; task editing checklist | | PowerPoint presentation: candidate briefing  
Handouts: Standards trackers; task editing checklist  
E-learning component: internet research |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Provider</th>
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<th>Pilot routes</th>
<th>50 Day</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Granada Learning</td>
<td>Course outline PowerPoint presentation and handout: briefing session Handouts: course activity materials – autograph sheet, Standards breakdown and guidance for evidencing; activity analysis sheets; Self review Evaluation sheet</td>
<td></td>
<td>Course outline PowerPoint presentations for each session Handouts: day course notes for candidates including: references, websites and quotes; role of the assistant; protocols and procedures for working in schools; notes on relevant legislation – National Curriculum, Every Child Matters etc.; case studies; strategies for looking at Standards. Course notes for mentors: briefing, different areas and topics where mentor can help the TA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy Matters Ltd.</td>
<td>Course outline PowerPoint presentation and handout: introduction and course outline HLTA Course Handbook: introduction, learning agreement, general information e.g. appeals, TTA Materials Handouts: Standard Record Form; training and assessment guidelines; diamond ranking; evidencing several elements of a Standard; example Task Sheet; Candidates Assessment Grid; Definition of SEN; recording evidence Candidates Self Review, Illustrative Questions for completing responsesheets.</td>
<td><strong>Shorter Route:</strong> PowerPoint presentations and handouts: ICT Training; Internet training; Teaching Writing; SEN; Reading Assessment; Assessment of Writing; Learning Styles and Thinking Skills; Course outline E-learning materials: downloading curriculum documents, ICT training</td>
<td>PowerPoint presentations and handouts: ICT Training; Internet training; Teaching Writing; SEN; Reading Assessment; Assessment of Writing; Learning Styles and Thinking Skills; Introduction/outline of course Handouts: course activity materials – autograph sheet, Standards breakdown and guidance for evidencing; activity analysis sheets; Self review, Evaluation sheet E-learning materials: downloading curriculum documents, ICT training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luton University</td>
<td>PowerPoint presentation: briefing Introduction and course outline HLTA Course Handbook: introduction, learning agreement, general information e.g. appeals, TTA Materials Handouts: Standard Record Form; training and assessment guidelines; diamond ranking; evidencing several elements of a Standard; example Task Sheet; Candidates Assessment Grid; Definition of SEN; recording evidence Candidates Self Review, Illustrative Questions for completing responsesheets.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training Provider</td>
<td>Assessment Only</td>
<td>Pilot routes</td>
<td>50 Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manchester Metropolitan University</td>
<td>Power Point presentation: candidate briefing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Candidate agendas for the 3 briefing days.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Programme content for the 3 briefing days.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Task planning sheet.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Handout notes: Preparation for the school visit; making judgements and moderation,</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Candidate self review</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Merseyside &amp; Cheshire HLTA Partnership</td>
<td>PowerPoint: candidate briefing sessions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Candidate Handbook.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Day 2 Programme.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Day 3 Agenda.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diamond.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>F2F Briefing notes.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Candidates progress Days 1 &amp; 2.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Candidate Briefing evaluation.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gallery of standards.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networked Learning Partnership South West</td>
<td>PowerPoint presentation: candidate briefing</td>
<td><strong>Shorter route:</strong> Based on 50 day route materials</td>
<td>Notes and Resources: info on Standards and websites to visit:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment information used from the 50 day route materials including Handouts,</td>
<td></td>
<td>Standards and Guidance – HLTA Guidance Handbook; Training Day Agendas, including</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grid, information on the assessment visit, copy of the standards</td>
<td></td>
<td>tasks</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Video clips on learning with ICT Skills audit templates</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Power Point Presentations.</td>
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<td>Case Studies.</td>
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<td>Handouts – eg. Behaviour/Attendance, Classroom Procedures, Intro to what is an HLTA</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>E-learning – website links</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Evaluation of the HLTA programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Provider</th>
<th>Assessment Only</th>
<th>Pilot routes</th>
<th>50 Day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Northampton University College              | PowerPoint presentation: candidate briefing  
Course outline                                                                |                                                                              |        |
| Northumbria University – North East HLTA Partnership | Training Needs Analysis:  
PowerPoint presentation: candidate briefing  
Individual Module Plan                                                         |                                                                              |        |
| Northampton University College              | Course outline  
PowerPoint presentations: candidate briefing sessions                          |                                                                              |        |
| PKR Educational Consultants                |                                                                              | Shorter Route:  
Course outline  
Task sheets  
E-learning: internet searches; PowerPoint presentations – SEN               |        |
| Shropshire County Council                   | Handouts: TA responsibilities; summary of assessment process; clarifying Standards;  
assessment guidance sheets; tasks and guidance; HLTA checklist; advice from ‘assessor’s viewpoint’ |
| South Yorkshire Teaching Assistants Consortium (SYTAC) | Overview of briefing days  
Handout: ‘bridging’ activities                                                    | Course information handout                                                   |        |
<p>| St Martin’s College                         | Briefing day agendas                                                             |                                                                              |        |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Provider</th>
<th>Assessment Only</th>
<th>Pilot routes</th>
<th>50 Day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sunderland University</td>
<td>Course content outline&lt;br&gt;Legislation policy&lt;br&gt;Practice session&lt;br&gt;PowerPoint presentations: Equal Opportunities, Education Policy, National Curriculum and Assessment&lt;br&gt;Handouts: list of websites, legislation, SEN code of practice, attainment targets, journal (formative assessment practices), National Curriculum, assessment session&lt;br&gt;Quiz&lt;br&gt;List of useful resources&lt;brTask guidance (e.g. health and safety)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telford and Wrekin Borough</td>
<td>Power Point presentation briefing session&lt;br&gt;AO Information booklet.&lt;br&gt;Professional Development Information Booklet.&lt;br&gt;Qualifications Grid.&lt;br&gt;List of acceptable qualifications for HLTA.&lt;br&gt;List of useful information and reference point websites.&lt;br&gt;Copy of TTA Professional Standards Book.&lt;br&gt;Booklet of Literacy &amp; Numeracy requirements for HLTA.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinity &amp; All Saints College</td>
<td>PowerPoint presentation: briefing&lt;br&gt;Response sheet for 4 tasks + 1 example&lt;br&gt;Handouts: A-Z of Sources of Evidence; illustrative prompt for completing response sheets; Standards which may require support to evidence; assessment guidelines; appeals procedure, Course agendas, Evaluation Form.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Evaluation of the HLTA programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Provider</th>
<th>Assessment Only</th>
<th>Pilot routes</th>
<th>50 Day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Weston College**      | PowerPoint presentations: candidate briefing sessions  
Handouts: diamond diagram of Standards, timetable, HLTA Gallery of Standards |                                                                             |                                                                         |
| **Weymouth College**    | PowerPoint presentations: candidate briefing sessions                                               |                                                                             | PowerPoint presentations: candidate briefings; behavioural management  
Course outline  
Handouts: lesson plans; action plan; SEN; emailing revision;  
'The Emotional Brain';  
'The Mind Friendly Learning Framework'; communications; behavioural management; useful resources; 'Strategies for Reflective Practice'; TA index  
HLTA student information sheet/id Course review sheet |
| **Worcester University College** |                                                                                                   |                                                                             | Course outline  
Power Point presentation:  
Handouts: ICT quiz; diamond ranking; legislation, Good Practice & Guidance Quiz;  
The VARK Questionnaire;  
Application of Cognitive Theorists;  
Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs; organisation of resources; activity instructions; case study; working relationships; key elements of planning; effective questioning; skills and qualities; social, emotional and behavioural skills; inclusive cultures. producing inclusive policies; evolving inclusive practice |

Appendix 9 : Review of Providers

The following information has been gathered from candidates on all routes using crosstabulations of survey data, analysis of literal questions and analysis of focus group minutes. **In some cases there are few candidates who have responded** from a particular provider (see source of data which gives number of candidates per route and provider). In these cases, crosstabulation results were not used if there were less than 3 candidates responding for a particular provider and route although some literal responses have been included.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provider</th>
<th>Route</th>
<th>Programme organisation and delivery</th>
<th>Guidance, support and tutor knowledge</th>
<th>IT, E-learning aspects and INA</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Source of data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anglia Polytechnic University (APU)</td>
<td>AO</td>
<td>Good – clarity in delivery, good use of examples.</td>
<td>Good – explained well and regular/easy communication, very knowledgeable.</td>
<td>Clear instructions on CD Rom.</td>
<td>Progress through training was a bit slow.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pilot</td>
<td>Rated organisation of pilot course and quality of briefing sessions as good and very good.</td>
<td>Quality of support and guidance rated good. Excellent tutors although conflicting advice from them.</td>
<td>Rated quality of E-learning elements as good and poor and difficulties in getting access to PC. Ongoing INA.</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>Information was repetitive.</td>
<td>Inconsistent information from tutors. Some were very good.</td>
<td>Need more training on ICT.</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Practice Network</td>
<td>AO</td>
<td>Well organised but venue problems. Lack focus on standards &amp; portfolio. Need to explain the grid earlier – made it overcomplicated</td>
<td>Knowledgeable tutors – good that they had TA experience.</td>
<td>Need more IT support.</td>
<td>Sometimes patronising.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pilot</td>
<td>Rated organisation of pilot course and quality of briefing sessions very highly. Poor timing of training – in line with SATS. And some administration lacking.</td>
<td>Quality of support and guidance rated very good. Good communication with tutors, accessible and supportive. Knowledgeable tutors.</td>
<td>Rated quality of E-learning elements as good and very good. Ongoing evaluation of needs in relation to individual experience.</td>
<td>Many would recommend provider – positive attitude and inspiring.</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provider</td>
<td>Route</td>
<td>Programme organisation and delivery</td>
<td>Guidance, support and tutor knowledge</td>
<td>IT, E-learning aspects and INA</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Source of data</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham &amp; Midlands HLTA Consortium</td>
<td>AO</td>
<td>Rated adequate on quality of provider based sessions – too much packed into training. Quality of training to prepare for assessment tasks rated good.</td>
<td>Supportive tutors.</td>
<td>Didn’t find the self-review very helpful.</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 + Focus group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FT</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tutors not properly prepared.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canterbury Christ Church University College</td>
<td>Pilot</td>
<td>Rated organisation of pilot course as poor. Unstructured but others say well planned.</td>
<td>Tutors lack knowledge.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>Assessments were well directed.</td>
<td>Knowledgeable tutor but hearing impairment made it difficult to ask questions. Lack of guidance from tutors.</td>
<td>Skills analysis would be helpful at the start.</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE) College of West Anglia</td>
<td>AO</td>
<td>Good venue &amp; resources, good handouts. Group work useful and flexible in delivery methods</td>
<td>Knowledgeable and flexible tutors – according to some candidates. Tutors were accessible.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AO</td>
<td>Rated organisation and quality of briefing sessions highly.</td>
<td>Rated quality of support and guidance highly.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of West Anglia</td>
<td>AO</td>
<td>Well organised course but poor venue and poor administration. Good examples supplied, briefings were well planned &amp; informative.</td>
<td>Good support and guidance, helpful tutors, good preparation for assessment visit although others say that feedback and guidance was poor.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Focus group 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pilot</td>
<td>Rated quality of briefing sessions as very good. Initial organisation unclear.</td>
<td>Good tutor, approachable and accessible.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>Good use of small groups.</td>
<td>Tutors and guest speakers were very interesting.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community South West (HLTA)</td>
<td>AO</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pilot</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FT</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East Devon College / Devon Teaching Assistants Training Partnership</td>
<td>AO</td>
<td>Clarity in delivery, candidates felt fully prepared. Organisation and quality of delivery of briefing sessions are rated highly. Good use of materials and timetable. Liked timing between sessions.</td>
<td>Lots of support and guidance -- rated good or very good. Clear instructions. Standards explained clearly. Extra help between sessions was good.</td>
<td>Personalised training was useful -- adapted to suit needs.</td>
<td>Highly recommended although some uncertainties felt by candidates.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pilot</td>
<td>Rated organisation of pilot course as good and quality of briefing sessions generally good. Sessions a little rushed although delivery was efficient &amp; effective.</td>
<td>Quality of support and guidance rated good to very good. Good information provided on standards although felt tutors were not fully informed and gave conflicting advice.</td>
<td>Rated quality of E-learning elements as very good. Used INA to highlight gaps.</td>
<td>Many would recommend provider although felt that it was more like self-help than being tutored.</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>Good quality of training in preparing for assessment tasks.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Good PowerPoint training.</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Region Consortium / Eastern Leadership Centre</td>
<td>AO</td>
<td>Organisation of course was fairly good although candidates felt it was a little 'jumbled'. Need to use more examples of valid evidence.</td>
<td>Lack of communication re results &amp; lack of guidance on presenting the portfolio. Tutor was helpful and accessible. Inconsistencies in information offered by tutor and TDA. Quality of support and guidance rated adequate to poor.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Found the briefing sessions a waste of time.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>High ratings on quality of provider based sessions although mixed views on quality of training to prepare for assessment tasks. Overall good ratings but confusing materials. Mix of tutors was disruptive, disjointed structure &amp; lack of continuity.</td>
<td>Tutors lack knowledge &amp; provided inconsistent information. Others say they were helpful and well-informed.</td>
<td>Few reported difficulties in accessing a PC.</td>
<td>Mixed views.</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Edge Hill Consortium</td>
<td>AO</td>
<td>Organisation of programme delivery is rated poor. Goalposts moved. Session on writing tasks occurred 3 days before submission, received letter 5 days before re evidence. Need smaller groups, better facilities &amp; venue. Quality of briefing sessions – low ratings.</td>
<td>Lack of accessibility to tutor – email address offered on last day, lack of communication, lack of support and clarity. Tutors not fully informed and gave inconsistent information on standards. Guidance and support rated adequate to poor.</td>
<td>More guidance from other candidates than tutors when having IT problems.</td>
<td>Candidates not encouraged to collaborate and discuss work – felt alone.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pilot</td>
<td>Well organised although changes in venue were disruptive.</td>
<td>Lots of support and encouragement offered. Tutors accessible.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EM Direct</td>
<td>AO</td>
<td>Too much on standards all at once but good explanation of standards.</td>
<td>Tutors were accessible &amp; approachable although some report lack of regular contact. Some lack of understanding by tutors and little guidance or feedback. Inconsistent information on standards from the tutor.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mixed responses on this provider.</td>
<td>Focus group 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>Good rating on quality of provider based sessions and quality of sessions in preparing for assessment tasks. Could be condensed. Twilight training not useful. Need clearer guidance at the beginning. Well organised and good preparation on assessment.</td>
<td>Good support from tutors and good guest speakers.</td>
<td>❍ICT training was poor.</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Four S</td>
<td>Pilot</td>
<td>Rated quality of pilot course briefing sessions as adequate to good. Some felt it was well prepared, others felt it was poorly planned.</td>
<td>Quality of support and guidance rated good. Difference in quality of tutors.</td>
<td>Rated quality of E-learning elements across poor, adequate and good.</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Granada Learning</td>
<td>AO</td>
<td>Poorly organised.</td>
<td>Lack of information.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Did not feel inspired.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>Good organisation and structure although some complex paperwork. Lack of timetable/plan.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of E-learning element.</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy Matters Ltd</td>
<td>AO</td>
<td>Organisation highly rated. Tight time schedules, too much time spent on intro sessions – need to start explaining standards at first session. Good materials (PowerPoint presentations, handouts and examples of evidence). Quality of briefing sessions rated highly. Need more guidance on tasks.</td>
<td>Good use of support groups. Tutors were very accessible – always available and by different methods. Rated average to good on support and guidance. Tutors were highly experienced, friendly knowledgeable and thorough. Standards were well explained.</td>
<td>Candidates would like more access to computers on training days.</td>
<td>Some felt they needed more one-to-one time.</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pilot</td>
<td>Rated organisation of pilot course as good. Venue, facilities &amp; materials were good. Sessions were repetitive, need info on tasks earlier on.</td>
<td>Quality of support and guidance rated good although some say not supportive and rushed through.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>Good rating on quality of provider based session in general and quality of sessions in preparing for assessment tasks. Good materials.</td>
<td>Discrepancies in information from tutors on requirements but tutors were helpful &amp; knowledgeable.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Need more one-to-one.</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
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Note: AO = Assessment Ongoing.
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<tr>
<td>London Borough of Newham Education Directorate</td>
<td>AO</td>
<td>Well organised. Need more focus on the assessment visit and the standards.</td>
<td>Good support and co-operative. Tutors were professional although some information offered was inconsistent with the TDA.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>Rated good and very good on quality of provider based sessions. Lack clarity on evidencing standards. Could be condensed.</td>
<td>Lack support &amp; guidance from tutors. Tutors not fully prepared to run the programme.</td>
<td>No difficulties reported in accessing a PC. Interactive whiteboard training was very useful.</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luton University</td>
<td>AO</td>
<td>Large class sizes – training not individualised. Need more one-to-one</td>
<td>Conflicting information and guidance, candidates felt that tutors were not fully informed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manchester Metropolitan University</td>
<td>AO</td>
<td>Good venue. Ample opportunities for one-to-one because lots of staff available. Good resources &amp; written information. Quality of briefing sessions rated fairly high.</td>
<td>Lots of support and encouragement offered. Tutors very accessible. Guidance &amp; support rated adequate to good, others rated highly.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Some mixed feelings from different candidates.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>Quality of training sessions was good.</td>
<td></td>
<td>ICT training was very useful.</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merseyside and Cheshire HLTA Partnership</td>
<td>AO</td>
<td>Rated high on organisation. Very good or good on quality of briefing sessions. Good resources. Need to use better examples.</td>
<td>Good support and guidance, helpful staff.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Networked Learning Partnership South West</td>
<td>Pilot</td>
<td>High clarity in provider sessions.</td>
<td>Somerset: some good tutors. Cornwall: lack of support, confusing &amp; inconsistent information.</td>
<td>Needs to be more personalised and tailored.</td>
<td>Differences according to location &amp; LA. Cornwall: visit to contrasting schools was poorly organised.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>Quality of provider based sessions rated highly although mixed views on this from others. Somerset: need more guidance &amp; support on tasks, poor organisation. Cornwall: mixed views – good mix on tutor-led and group work although poor on preparing for assessment tasks. Need to review course structure.</td>
<td>No difficulties in accessing a PC. Somerset: irrelevant training &amp; not enough E-learning time.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton University College</td>
<td>AO</td>
<td>Class sizes were too large, small venue. Sessions were carefully structured. Organisation rated good.</td>
<td>Tutors not fully informed. Candidates need more guidance on appropriate evidence. Lack of support (rated adequate), relied too heavily on TDA pack. Discrepancies between support from different tutors.</td>
<td>Mixed views from candidates on appropriateness of facilities and on evidencing. Need more one-to-one.</td>
<td>Focus group</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>A minority report quality of sessions poor on preparing for assessment tasks. Others rate organisation of the course as good although venues moved. Good course content although bombarded with information at the beginning. Group work and discussions were very useful. Sharing the first 2 briefing sessions with AO candidates was very confusing.</td>
<td>Tutors were good.</td>
<td>IT sessions on PowerPoint were useful.</td>
<td>Candidates felt that they were not considered to be ‘proper’ students.</td>
<td>Focus group 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Pye Tait Limited 133 April 2006
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northumbria University - North East HLTA Partnership</td>
<td>AO</td>
<td>Well organised, good break between briefing days.</td>
<td>Good support offered but more help needed on the standards.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pilot</td>
<td>Rated organisation of pilot course as good and quality of briefing sessions as good to very good.</td>
<td>Quality of support and guidance rated good and very good. Tutors were approachable and informative.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lacked clarity at times. Felt isolated.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>Lectures were good but too long. Poorly paced.</td>
<td>Tutors lack knowledge of the candidates’ experiences.</td>
<td>Need more time on individual needs. Lack of help with E-learning element. Library &amp; IT sessions not beneficial; duplicate information &amp; lack focus.</td>
<td>Mixed reactions. Could be patronising.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilgrim Partnership</td>
<td>AO</td>
<td>Organisation was adequate.</td>
<td>Tutors could give more information on what is required, disparities between what was said at different sessions and in relation to TDA packs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>Lack structure, poorly organised and lectures not tailored enough (sent to college to SCITTs lectures joined at part 2 of training).</td>
<td>Lack of tutor support.</td>
<td>Lack of time on E-learning &amp; too basic.</td>
<td>Visit to contrasting school was poorly organised. Compensated for poor experience but additional training not happened yet.</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PKR Education Consultants</td>
<td>AO</td>
<td>Well organised but structure of the briefing sessions could be better. Too much time spent reading the TDA pack. Quality of briefing sessions rated adequate.</td>
<td>Support and guidance rated adequate to poor. Conflicting advice from tutor and TDA pack.</td>
<td>Need to be consistent in feedback.</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pilot</td>
<td>Rated organisation of pilot course as good to adequate.</td>
<td>Good support.</td>
<td>Rated quality of E-learning elements as good.</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>Quality of provider based sessions were good although could be repetitive. Could be better organised. Need more time on tasks. Discussions on planning were useful.</td>
<td>Tutor was friendly &amp; helpful.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portsmouth University/WHPS</td>
<td>AO</td>
<td>Simple, easy to understand structure. Organisation rated poor – disorganised process. Quality of briefing sessions rated good. Need to use more examples.</td>
<td>Tutors were accessible. Quality of support rated good to very good. Good preparation for the assessment visit, clear and precise although some say inconsistencies between tutors &amp; lack of clarity.</td>
<td>Late access to IT and instructions on completing the grid.</td>
<td>Would prefer more time between briefing sessions. Mixed response to this provider.</td>
<td>Focus group 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pilot</td>
<td>Well organised, specialist subject was well covered. Poor venue but good resources.</td>
<td>Good support and accessible tutors.</td>
<td>Tailored to group needs.</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>Rated quality of provider based sessions very highly.</td>
<td>Tutors were experienced. Outside trainers were used.</td>
<td>Difficult to access a PC.</td>
<td>Positive experience.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shropshire County Council</td>
<td>AO</td>
<td>Organisation of course and delivery were adequate although class sizes too large. Good examples offered but lacked explanation of how to demonstrate standards.</td>
<td>Need more support and feedback. Lack of critical discussion. Lack of understanding of TA roles. Quality of support rated adequate to poor.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Used a lot of meaningless scenarios.</td>
<td>Focus group 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>Well organised, small groups were good.</td>
<td>Tutors were good &amp; professional.</td>
<td>ICT was good but difficulties accessing a PC.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>South Yorkshire Teaching Assistants Consortium (SYTAC)</td>
<td>AO</td>
<td>Poorly organised, planning was ‘back to front’, goalposts moved.</td>
<td>Information provided simple to understand. Some lack of understanding by the tutor although explained the standards well. Conflicting information from tutors. Lack of support and communication with provider.</td>
<td>Lack of IT skills to help candidates, blackboard set up too late.</td>
<td>Candidates felt alone. Mixed views about this provider.</td>
<td>Focus group 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pilot</td>
<td>Organisation good.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Martins College</td>
<td>AO</td>
<td>Poor venue. Rated highly on organisation. Good use of examples and materials. Quality of briefing sessions rated good to very good.</td>
<td>Tutors were accessible and friendly. Knowledgeable tutors with experience. Quality of support rated highly.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Good to meet assessor on the final day.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pilot</td>
<td>Rated organisation of pilot course and quality of briefing sessions highly but needed clearer explanations of what expected.</td>
<td>Supportive tutors and accessible although others say that support was poor.</td>
<td>Rated quality of E-learning elements as good and very good. ICT session was informative.</td>
<td>Had to be self-sufficient.</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staffordshire County Council Education Directorate</td>
<td>AO</td>
<td>Rated highly on organisation and quality of briefing sessions rated adequate to high. Need to use more examples and introduce the portfolio earlier in training.</td>
<td>Good support and encouragement although some say support was poor.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mixed views on this provider.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>Course well explained, aware of expectations.</td>
<td>Helpful &amp; supportive tutors. Good guest speakers with specialisms.</td>
<td>Need more tutoring on E-learning.</td>
<td>Positive experience</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunderland University</td>
<td>AO</td>
<td>Well organised although class sizes were too large. Gave good examples. Relied too heavily on reading through the TDA pack during sessions.</td>
<td>Poor communication with candidates. Inconsistent in marking and discussions.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Need more one-to-one. Candidates felt alone.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>Lack focus and clarity. Quality of provider based sessions rated as adequate.</td>
<td>Tutor not able to give clear explanations.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sussex HLTA Consortium</td>
<td>AO</td>
<td>Disorganised process. Good venue. Lack of information in briefing sessions.</td>
<td>Inconsistencies between info provided by tutors but they were friendly.</td>
<td>Late access to IT and instructions on completing the grid.</td>
<td>Focus group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telford &amp; Wrekin Borough Council</td>
<td>AO</td>
<td>Rated highly on organisation and quality of briefing sessions.</td>
<td>Very good support offered and clear explanations of standards and assessment process.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinity &amp; All Saints College</td>
<td>AO</td>
<td>Well organised and structured training. Good materials. Need to use more examples. Good on one-to-one.</td>
<td>Quality of support rated good to very good. Tutors accessible and available. Knowledgeable tutors.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mixed views – 1 noted that 3 days served little purpose.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pilot</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>Good at preparing for tasks in provider based sessions. Need more planning and collaboration between tutors. Order of information not straight forward and clear.</td>
<td>Good tutors, standards were well explained.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weston College</td>
<td>AO</td>
<td>Well organised course &amp; professional, clear &amp; informative sessions, small groups helped relax candidates – very useful.</td>
<td>Very helpful &amp; supportive tutor, explained standards &amp; assessment fully, easily contactable.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Good location &amp; refreshments.</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Weymouth College</td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>Lack of structure and clarity to the course. Need more appropriate training e.g. behaviour management. Handouts were supplied but not referred to and not relevant.</td>
<td>Little support offered.</td>
<td>Training in provider sessions does not take into account previous experience.</td>
<td>Candidates felt that provider needed improving in all elements.</td>
<td>Focus group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilmslow High School</td>
<td>AO</td>
<td>Rated adequate on organisation and quality of briefing sessions. Need more preparation on assessment visit. Explained evidencing clearly.</td>
<td>Little guidance. Tutors lack knowledge of the process. Inconsistencies in information offered.</td>
<td>Need to focus more on individual needs.</td>
<td>No mentor offered.</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worcester University College</td>
<td>AO</td>
<td>Poor information on the standards.</td>
<td>Little guidance. Tutors lack knowledge of the process. Inconsistencies in information offered.</td>
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