

Guidance for VTCT Level 3, 4 & 5 Education and Training Qualifications

(ET3A1, ET4C1 & ET5D1)

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1. Overview

1.1. Purpose of the document

This guidance is to provide an updated explanation of the qualifications in education and training available and relevant for working in the post 16 education and training sector (FE & Skills).

The previous guidance issued by the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) was produced following the implementation of the new qualifications in education and training in 2013. Since then there have been significant developments in the sector and in government policy which this guidance document intends to incorporate.

It further seeks to relate the guidance to the wider cohort of post 16 learners and to emphasise areas of effective practice.

The intended audience for this document is:

- Employers of teachers and trainers (including colleges of further education, independent training providers, local authorities, the third sector, the military, uniformed services, young offender institutions, prison education and the probation service)
- Human resource (HR) managers and line managers
- Staff development managers
- Newly employed teachers and trainers and existing staff
- Course providers and teacher educators
- Those considering teaching as a career

2. Guidance for new teachers

2.1. General guidance

Those considering initial teacher training should have reliable access to accurate information advice and guidance prior to application and, if embarking on such a programme, whilst training. Initial general information and advice is available from FE Advice but more detailed and ongoing IAG is the responsibility of course providers. The following may provide some initial steer.

2.2. Core knowledge and skills requirement

Common to all the teaching qualifications is the requirement for further education teachers to have a knowledge and skills base in English literacy, English language, numeracy and ICT at an appropriate level in order for them to best support the needs of their students. The set of specifications for these skills is known as the Minimum Core. The Minimum Core document and its companion document, Inclusive Learning Approaches, have been refreshed and combined to accompany this new Guidance document and will continue to support teachers, teacher educators, employers and awarding organisations in implementing the Minimum Core requirements.

Effective practice dictates that course providers put all applicants through an initial assessment which can be used to form the basis of a personal development plan for the individual. This should include any English, maths or ICT development needs. The course provider should ensure that applicants have opportunities during their course to develop these skills to a level appropriate for their future professional role as teachers. It is expected that teacher trainees should have achieved recognised qualifications at Level 2 in maths and English prior to the completion of their initial teaching qualification.

3. Which course

There are 3 levels of qualification and potential teachers should make an informed choice based on their levels of confidence, prior qualifications and career aspirations as to which level to take. It is neither necessary nor generally advisable to take each qualification in hierarchical sequence. It is quite usual for suitably qualified individuals to move straight to the full level 5 Diploma in Education and Training. FE Advice offers impartial advice on finding an appropriate course.

3.1. Summary of the teaching qualifications

- VTCT Level 3 Award in Education and Training (12 credits)
- VTCT Level 4 Certificate in Education and Training (33 credits)
- VTCT Level 5 Diploma in Education and Training (120 credits)

Following deregulation of the FE teaching qualifications in 2013, employers of further education teachers have developed their own policies on qualification requirements for their staff. These policies will vary depending on the type of organisation, the type of training offered and the learners that are recruited.

It is important to note that the relaxation of teacher qualification requirements does not indicate that these qualifications are no longer valued and neither does it imply any diminution in the professional standards expected of those working in the sector.

The qualifications in education and training are designed to enable prospective teachers to acquire the skills necessary for excellent teaching and to develop an understanding of the learning needs and aspirations of a wide spectrum of young and adult learners.

Those who choose to teach in the post 16 education and training sector are engaging with those who have an initial, and frequently urgent, motivation to learn. A key element in the dynamics of the teaching and learning process is to maintain and enhance this motivation.

Teachers in the sector are privileged to work with such learners but have a corresponding obligation and duty to maintain currency in their subject specialism and in the acknowledgement that learners have a multiplicity of learning preferences and needs. Teacher qualification is but one stage in the professional journey and there is a need to modify approaches through analytical self-reflection and continuing professional development.

The absence of regulation, however, does mean that currently there is an element of choice for the new teacher as there are different levels of qualification - although it is important to understand the implications of that choice. The three levels of teaching qualification cannot be exactly matched to particular job roles or employer type but career aspirations and personal circumstances are likely to have an impact on the qualification that a new teacher decides to take.

3.2. VTCT Level 3 Award in Education and Training (ET3A1)

The VTCT Level 3 Award in Education and Training is a 12 credit qualification that offers an introduction to teaching in the education and training sector. Please note that there is no requirement to have this qualification in order to join a Level 4 Certificate in Education and Training or a Level 5 Diploma in Education and Training as the suite of qualifications is not designed primarily as a progression route to full qualification.

This knowledge-based teaching qualification has no minimum teaching practice requirement and therefore may be taken by individuals who are not in a teaching role. However, there is a minimum requirement to take part in micro teaching (peer teaching) which involves planning an observed and assessed teaching session for a specific group of learners (usually the peer group of classmates), delivering and reviewing the session and responding to feedback from the observer and the 'learners'. Trainee teachers who are already in a teaching role may be able to use their usual workplace teaching for this observed teaching session.

The level 3 award offers limited opportunities for employment but it may provide an informed basis for subsequent decision making in terms of further qualification or progression.

3.2.1. Course entry requirements

There are no nationally agreed course entry requirements. Course providers may set their own entry criteria.

3.2.2. Teaching practice and assessed observations requirement

There is a minimum requirement for trainee teachers to engage in observed and assessed microteaching for the following option unit:

- Understanding and using inclusive teaching and learning approaches in education and training (UET2)

For this unit, trainee teachers must be involved in at least one hour of microteaching. They must deliver at least one 15-minute microteaching session that is observed and assessed by a member of the delivery team. For the additional 45 minutes, they can either deliver additional microteaching sessions or observe the microteaching of other trainee teachers.

Trainee teachers who are currently teaching may prefer to use their practice instead of microteaching to meet the requirement of this unit.

There is a requirement to undertake observed and assessed practice in a real work environment for the following optional units from the L & D suite that are included in this qualification

- Facilitate learning and development for individuals (UV30761)
- Facilitate learning and development in groups (UV30762)

For these units, practice should be in the appropriate context – with groups of learners or with individual learners. The number of hours of practice required and the number of hours to be observed and assessed are not specified for these units.

3.2.3. VTCT Level 3 Award in Education and Training (ET3A1) structure

To be awarded the VTCT Level 3 Award in Education and Training, learners must achieve a minimum of 12 credits.

All mandatory units must be completed. A minimum of 6 credits must be achieved from the optional unit Group A and a minimum of 3 credits from optional unit Group B.

VTCT product code	Unit title	Level	Credits	GL	Unit reference number
Mandatory units – 3 credits					
UET1	Understanding roles, responsibilities and relationships in education and training	3	3	12	H/505/0053

VTCT product code	Unit title	Level	Credits	GL	Unit reference number
Optional units – Group A – minimum 6 credits					
UET2	Understanding and using inclusive teaching and learning approaches in education and training	3	6	24	D/505/0052
UV30761	Facilitate learning and development for individuals	3	6	25	J/502/9549
UV30762	Facilitate learning and development in groups	3	6	25	F/502/9548
Optional units – Group B – minimum 3 credits					
UET5	Understanding assessment in education and training	3	3	12	R/505/0050
UV30563	Understanding the principles and practices of assessment	3	3	24	D/601/5313

3.3. VTCT Level 4 Certificate in Education and Training (ET4C1)

The VTCT Level 4 Certificate in Education and Training is a 33 credit teaching qualification that develops practical teaching skills and through the optional units can prepare teachers to work in a wide range of contexts. This qualification may be helpful for those whose duties do not include the full range of teaching responsibilities, for example instructors or those who teach very small groups of learners.

Please note that completing the VTCT Certificate in Education and Training is not a requirement for joining the higher level Diploma and that suitable candidates may go straight on to the higher level.

3.3.1. Course entry requirement

Applicants need to be qualified, proficient or experienced in the subject which they intend to teach. It would be expected that applicants have sufficient personal skills to complete the academic and other requirements of the programme. They will also need to be able to support their learners at the appropriate level whilst delivering their subject specialism. Applicants need to demonstrate the potential to study at minimum academic level 4 – the same level of study as the first year of a degree course.

Applicants will be required to take an initial assessment of their maths, English and ICT skills. The teaching programme will support further development of these skills, recorded in a personal development log. It is recommended that trainee teachers will have been assessed as competent at level 2 in English and maths prior to the completion of their Certificate in Education and Training.

3.3.2. Teaching practice and assessed observations requirement

There is a requirement for a minimum of 30 hours of practice for this qualification with a minimum of 3 assessed observations. There is no requirement to evidence working with groups of learners to achieve this qualification unless the units undertaken specify that purpose. However, where trainee teachers are working solely with individuals, a programme may also include support and preparation for working with groups.

3.3.3. VTCT Level 4 Certificate in Education and Training (ET4C1) Structure

To be awarded the VTCT Level 4 Certificate in Education and Training, learners must achieve a minimum of 33 credits.

All mandatory units must be completed. A minimum of 15 credits must be achieved from the optional units.

VTCT product code	Unit title	Level	Credits	GL	Unit reference number
Mandatory units – 18 credits					
UET8	Delivering Education and Training	4	6	24	M/505/0122
UET9	Assessing Learners in Education and Training	4	6	24	F/505/0125
UV40767	Manage learning and development in groups	4	6	30	A/502/9550

VTCT product code	Unit title	Level	Credits	GL	Unit reference number
Optional units – minimum 15 credits					
UET1	Understanding and using inclusive teaching and learning approaches in education and training	3	3	12	H/505/0053
UET7	Planning to meet the needs of learners in education and training	4	3	15	A/505/1189
UV30564	Assess occupational competence in the work environment	3	6	30	H/601/5314
UV30566	Assess vocational skills, knowledge and understanding	3	6	30	F/601/5319
UV40575	Internally assure the quality of assessment	4	6	45	A/601/5321
UV40794	Develop and prepare resources for learning and development	4	6	25	A/502/9547
UET10	Using resources for education and training	4	3	15	L/505/0127
UV51238	Action research	5	15	50	T/503/5380
UET13	Delivering employability skills	4	6	20	M/505/1089
UV30795	Engage learners in the learning and development process	3	6	30	F/502/9551
UV40805	Engage with employers to facilitate workforce development	4	6	30	D/502/9556
UV41214	Equality and diversity	4	6	25	Y/503/5789
UV30792	Identify individual learning and development needs	3	3	24	K/502/9544
UV41226	Inclusive practice	4	15	50	L/503/5384
UET14	Preparing for the mentoring role	4	3	15	L/505/0189
UET12	Teaching in a specialist area	4	15	50	J/505/1096
UV40565	Understanding the principles and practices of internally assuring the quality of assessment	4	6	45	T/601/5320

3.4. VTCT Level 5 Diploma in Education and Training (ET5D1)

For those who wish to become fully qualified as further education teachers, with the possibility of gaining the professional status of Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS), the Level 5 Diploma (or its university equivalent) offers the optimal opportunity for substantial career development. Colleges of further education and many other sector employers are likely to require this level of qualification or at least a commitment to gain this upon employment.

The qualification comprises a combination of mandatory and optional units and has to comply with guidance offered in this document.

3.4.1. Course entry requirements

Applicants for the VTCT Level 5 Diploma in Education and Training need to be qualified and/or experienced in the subject which they intend to teach. Those intending to teach academic subjects would usually be expected to have a degree in their subject specialism. Those intending to teach in professional or vocational areas would usually be expected to have a professional or industry qualification and experience of working in their respective sector. There is a general expectation in the sector that a teacher should be qualified to at least one level above that at which they intend to teach. In some vocational areas this may be problematic but a reasonable expectation is that they hold the highest level trade qualification available, unless they have particularly substantial professional experience.

There are no firm rules regarding prior qualifications in maths or English although it is expected that trainee teachers gain qualifications at Level 2 prior to completion of their initial teaching qualification. Some providers will require formal qualifications before admission to an initial teacher training course for the sector. Others may administer pre admission tests in these areas. It is important to note that the successful completion of the full teacher qualification is academically demanding and applicants need to have, or be able to develop and demonstrate, high level personal skills to complete the academic and other requirements for the programme. Those in the full teacher role are required to be effective communicators in oral and written modes and to be able to handle, generate, and analyse statistical data. They will also need to be able to support learners' English and mathematical needs at the appropriate levels whilst delivering their subject specialism.

Applicants need to demonstrate the potential to study at minimum academic Level 5 – the same level of study as the second year of a degree course. Some university equivalent Diploma in Education and Training qualifications are at Level 6 and some offer opportunities for graduates to obtain credits towards a Masters (Level 7).

3.4.2. Guided Learning Hours

Guided learning hours (GLH) refers to the indicative number of hours of supervised study that is recommended to complete an accredited unit or a qualification. This does not include unsupervised study, preparation or time taken for assessment. Guided learning hours are linked to the credit that learners receive for qualifications.

The indicative number of guided learning hours for the VTCT Level 5 Diploma in Education and Training is 360. On a one year programme, usually in a Higher Education Institution (HEI), this equates to between 10 – 12 hours per week. On a 2 year programme in a further education college the commitment would be about 5 hours per week and this may be arranged over more than one session. Independent (private) training providers may offer more flexible timetabling including more intensive provision and may incorporate distance, online or blended learning opportunities.

3.4.3. Teaching practice requirement

Teaching practice, together with observation and assessment of that practice, is a vital component of high-quality initial training. There is a requirement for a minimum of 100 hours of practice for the VTCT Level 5 Diploma in Education and Training which ideally will include teaching a variety of learners at more than one level in different learning environments. HEI courses may require more than the minimum 100 teaching practice hours.

The term 'teaching practice' refers to the teaching and learning sessions that are planned for specific learners and that take place in a learning environment. These sessions will include aspects of planning, delivery and assessment, including differentiation, and other factors that contribute to successful teaching and learning. Contact hours where teachers are supervising students for other purposes cannot be included as part of the required teaching practice hours.

Teaching practice group sizes may vary, ideally with a minimum of 12 learners, but the majority of the teaching practice must be to groups of 5 or more learners. It would not be possible to acquire, develop and demonstrate the full range of teaching skills through individual or small group teaching. Teachers need to be able to manage larger groups of learners and to deploy a variety of teaching techniques and facilitate a wide spectrum of learning activities.

Through their teaching placement/workplace mentoring, trainee teachers should have the opportunity to develop further subject specialist knowledge.

Course applicants are advised to discuss teaching practice arrangements in some detail with the course provider when enquiring about joining a course. If the trainee teacher is responsible for arranging their own teaching practice placement, as they are on most part-time teacher training courses, the details of location, context, type of learners and subject level(s) will have to be agreed with the course provider.

There may be additional teaching practice requirements for some of the optional units.

3.4.4. VTCT Level 5 Diploma in Education and Training (ET5D1) structure

To be awarded the VTCT Level 5 Diploma in Education and Training, learners must achieve a minimum of 120 credits.

All mandatory units must be completed. A minimum of 45 credits must be achieved from the optional units.

VTCT product code	Unit title	Level	Credits	GL	Unit reference number
Mandatory units – 75 credits					
UET3	Teaching, learning and assessment in education and training	4	20	65	H/505/0912
UET4	Developing teaching, learning and assessment in education and training	5	20	65	R/505/0923
UET6	Theories, principles and models in education and training	5	20	60	A/505/0818
UET11	Wider professional practice and development in education and training	5	15	50	J/505/0837

VTCT product code	Unit title	Level	Credits	GL	Unit reference number
Optional units – minimum 45 credits					
UV51238	Action research	5	15	50	T/503/5380
UV41226	Inclusive practice	4	15	50	L/503/5384
UET12	Teaching in a specialist area	4	15	50	J/505/1096
UET13	Delivering employability skills	4	6	20	M/505/1089
UET14	Preparing for the mentoring role	4	3	15	L/505/0189
UET15	Developing, using and organising resources in a specialist area	5	15	50	H/505/1090
UET16	Preparing for the personal tutoring role	4	3	15	T/505/1093

Document History

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