

Highly Accomplished and Lead teacher certification and renewal of certification

POLICY

Version: 1.1

Version effective: 6/07/2026

Audience: External - publicly available

1. Purpose

To outline the requirements for eligible teachers in Queensland to apply for certification or renewal of certification at the Highly Accomplished and Lead career stages of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST).

This policy is informed by the legislative requirements of the *Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005* (the Act).

2. Rationale

Certification as a Highly Accomplished teacher (HAT) or Lead teacher (LT) is nationally recognised, quality assured, uses the APST as criteria for assessment, and is informed by the principles and elements of the national Framework for the Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers. National certification is recognised in all Australian states and territories that apply the national Framework for Highly Accomplished and Lead teacher certification. Certification is portable, allowing teachers to maintain their status as a HAT or LT if they move between jurisdictions and sectors. Teachers with HAT or LT certification from another Australian jurisdiction will have their certification status recognised by the QCT after confirmation by the issuing authority that the certification is current.

National teacher certification is an important element in a broader teacher quality strategy that develops, recognises, and supports expert practitioners.

National certification at the HAT and LT career stages of the APST is a voluntary process that supports this recognition of expertise and quality teaching.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all fully registered eligible teachers in Queensland employed by a prescribed employing authority or entity, seeking certification at the HAT or LT career stages of the APST.

The policy implements key provisions relating to certification in the Act, specifically:

- ch 2A pt 1, certification of teachers
- ch 2A pt 2, renewal of certification
- ss 67A & 67J, that sets out who may apply for certification or renewal of certification.

Further, reg 12 A of the Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Regulation 2016 (the Regulation) sets out prescribed employing authorities and sch 1, pt 2 of the Regulation sets out the prescribed fees.

4. Policy statement

Under s 67G (2) of the Act, the Queensland College of Teachers (QCT) will certify eligible teachers covered under the scope of this policy if satisfied they have the abilities, experience, knowledge, and skills stated in the APST at either the HT or LT career stage.

An eligible teacher can seek certification through application to the QCT.

An eligible teacher:

- is an Australian citizen or permanent resident
- holds full registration
- is employed by an employing authority for a prescribed school, as defined in s 74 (1) of the Act.

Additional employer eligibility requirements may apply to a teacher making an application under s 67A of the Act.

4.1 Acceptable teaching experience

To achieve certification, eligible teachers working in a prescribed school will need to be able to demonstrate their skills against the APST. S 67C of the Act details two stages of the assessment process, including an assessment of an applicant's teaching practice.

Experience gained via a Permission to Teach (PTT) approval is not acceptable teaching experience for certification, as holders of a PTT are not fully registered teachers.

4.2 Application for certification or renewal of certification

S 67B and s 67K of the Act requires that a certification or renewal of certification application must be made in the approved form and be accompanied by the prescribed fee.

The QCT certifies or refuses to certify an applicant based on an applicant's demonstrated abilities, experience, knowledge and skills as stated in the APST.

The QCT are required to maintain a register of currently certified teachers, including the relevant dates for certification renewal.

Certification is for a period of five years and renewal is to verify an applicant's ongoing performance at the HAT or LT career stage. Under s 67J of the Act, a teacher may apply for renewal of certification if they hold full registration and are employed by a prescribed employing authority. An application for renewal must be made at least six months before their certification elapses. Under exceptional circumstances, the college may accept a renewal application four months before the certification stops having effect.

4.3 Review of decision

Where the QCT does not grant certification to an applicant and issues an information notice under s 67H(3) or s 67N(3) of the Act, the applicant may apply to the QCT for an internal review of the decision.

5. Definitions

Term	Definition
Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (the APST)	A public statement of what constitutes quality teaching. The Standards are organised into four career stages – Graduate, Proficient, Highly Accomplished and Lead. These professional standards are used for certification.
Certification	Awarded by the QCT to teachers who provide evidence from multiple sources that is assessed as satisfying the professional knowledge, professional practice and professional engagement criteria at either the Highly Accomplished or Lead Teacher career stages described in the APST.
Certifying authority	Responsible for implementing and managing the national certification process in a particular jurisdiction.
Eligible teacher	A teacher may be eligible for certification at either a HAT or LT level should they meet all the eligibility criteria.
Fully registered teacher	Full registration is granted by QCT when a teacher has met the Proficient career stage of the APST, and all other current registration requirements.
Highly Accomplished teacher	A teacher certified by a nationally recognised certifying authority against the APST Highly Accomplished career stage.
Lead teacher	A teacher certified by a nationally recognised certifying authority against the APST Lead career stage.
Prescribed entity	An employing authority for a state school, an employing authority for a non-state school represented by Catholic Education Queensland Limited (CEQL), or CEQL.
Prescribed school	A prescribed school under s 74 of the Act.

6. Legislation

- [Education \(Queensland College of Teachers\) Act 2005](#)
- [Education \(Queensland College of Teachers\) Regulation 2016](#)

7. Considerations

Commitment to Human Rights, Multiculturalism, Equity, and Child Safety

The QCT is committed to upholding the principles of the *Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld)*, the *Queensland Multicultural Recognition Act 2016*, and the *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 (Qld)*. This policy has been developed to ensure fairness, inclusivity, and the safety and wellbeing of all individuals, including children and young people.

In line with these commitments, this policy:

- respects, protects, and promotes human rights
- supports equitable access to services and opportunities for all individuals, including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- embeds principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion in its design and implementation
- prioritises the safety, wellbeing, and empowerment of children and young people, ensuring compliance with Child Safe Standards.

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure compliance with these principles and to reflect the evolving needs of Queensland's communities, including children and young people.

8. Related documents

- [Australian Professional Standards for Teachers](#)
- [Framework for the Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead teachers](#)
- [Guidelines - Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead teachers in Queensland](#)
- [Guidelines for teachers applying for renewal of certification by the Queensland College of Teachers as Highly Accomplished teachers and Lead teachers](#)

9. Document details

Title	Highly Accomplished and Lead teacher certification and renewal of certification policy
Record number	2025/280773
Owner – Unit/Role	General Manager, Professional Standards
Approver	QCT Board
Approved on	6/07/2026
Effective from	6/7/2026
Next review date	6/7/2027

10. Version history

Version	Record number	Date	Author	Changes made
1.0	2025/280773	2025	General Manager, Professional Standards	Combining of the renewal of certification policy and the certification policy

1.1	2025/280773	2026	General Manager, Professional Standards	Deleted – The certification process is conducted once in each calendar year in Queensland.
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