

Advanced Skills Teachers

Promoting excellence



Contents

1	General information	4
	What is an Advanced Skills Teacher?	
	Why do we need Advanced Skills Teachers?	
	The AST role benefits	
	What advice would you give to a teacher interested in becoming an AST?	
2	Creating an AST post	5-7
	Situations which could lead to the creation of an AST post	
	Decisions to take prior to appointment of an AST	
	Internal or external recruitment and advertising	
	How are posts funded?	
	AST grant funding 2006-2008	
	Alternative methods of funding AST posts	
	Contracts	
3	Application, assessment and appointments	8-15
	Who can become an Advanced Skills Teacher?	
	What are the AST standards?	
	Applications	
	Completing the application form	
	What to do once the application form has been completed	
	External applications	
	Internal appointments	
	Unattached teachers and other candidates	
	Assessment	
	Who carries out the assessment?	
	What is the timescale for assessment?	
	What is the assessor looking for?	
	What does an assessment process involve?	
	How are assessment results announced?	
	Can a candidate who has not met the standards re-apply?	
	Can a candidate challenge the outcome of an assessment?	
	Reassessment	
	Appointments	
	Notification of appointment	

4	Pay and performance management	16-18
	What is the pay scale for ASTs?	
	How is the pay of individual AST posts determined?	
	Movement up the pay range	
	Review of an AST pay range	
	ASTs and threshold and reversion to the upper pay spine	
	Performance management	
	Consideration of outreach work in performance management	
	Performance management role of external co-ordinator of AST outreach	
	AST role in including outreach work in performance management	
5	The AST role	19-24
	What is the purpose of the AST grade?	
	What are the conditions of service?	
	AST professional duties	
	Outreach work	
	How does outreach work in practice – time and cover for outreach work?	
	Process of managing outreach work	
	Who controls outreach?	
	Central co-ordination of outreach	
	Points for headteachers and LAs	
	When is outreach not a requirement?	
	ASTs' work in their own schools – inreach	
	ASTs and Management responsibilities	
	What might a typical AST job description look like?	
	Annexes	25-33
	Annex A: Professional standards for AST applicants	
	Annex B: Guidance on evidence for assessment	
	Annex C: A typical assessment day	
	Annex D: Procedures for the review of an AST Assessment	
	Annex E: Local Authority role	
	Annex F: Specimen AST job description	

1 General information

What is an Advanced Skills Teacher?

An Advanced Skills Teacher (AST) is an excellent teacher who achieves the very highest standards of classroom practice and who is paid to share his or her skills and experience with other teachers. AST posts can be based in all types and phases of maintained schools and normally involve some outreach work. In order to take up an AST post a teacher must first have been assessed as meeting the applicable standards – those standards that are between a teacher's current career stage and AST status. (See page 9 of this document).

Why do we need Advanced Skills Teachers?

We need to recognise and retain the best teachers. Until the introduction of ASTs, promotion into management was the typical career route for most excellent teachers. The AST pathway offers teachers who want to stay in the classroom an alternative career route with the potential to earn a salary equivalent to that of many leadership posts. Together with the performance threshold, the Fast Track programme and Excellent Teacher status it is widening career progression opportunities and rewards for the best teachers.

AST posts concentrate on good teaching and learning and benefit the profession by helping to raise achievements and spread excellent practice both within and beyond the teacher's school. The creation of an AST post can provide a focus for and leadership in the development of teaching and learning across the school as well as the contribution they make to the development of individual colleagues.

The AST outreach role also supports networking between schools and encourages collaboration.

The AST role benefits:

- their own school by retaining their services as a classroom teacher, spreading their excellent practice through the school and building on the good ideas they bring back from other schools;
- other schools through the outreach contribution the AST is able to make and the potential for building collaborative links;
- the Local Authority (LA) by sharing good practice across schools and raising standards overall;
- the AST by broadening experience and providing new challenges;
- the profession by providing another career option;
- pupils and students through the AST's special contribution to raising teaching and learning standards.

What advice would you give to a teacher interested in becoming an AST?

Speak to as many existing ASTs as you can. Ask them about their role and about the assessment process. Find out how outreach work is managed in your LA. Consider with your line manager how your skills match the applicable standards and what areas you may need to work on to provide the evidence for assessment. Talk to your headteacher and LA AST co-ordinator about the likelihood of any AST posts becoming available.

2 Creating an AST post

Situations which could lead to the creation of an AST post

Any maintained school can create one or more AST posts at any time, although a teacher can only be appointed to a post if he/she has been successfully assessed against the applicable standards. There are various situations in which a school might decide to create an AST post; for example:

- as a career developmental opportunity for its teachers;
- the school decides it needs an AST post in its staffing structure (perhaps because it already has an outreach or networking responsibility or wishes to strengthen a particular department);
- the LA's strategic development of the AST grade suggests the need for an AST in a particular subject or location which fits with the school/teacher;
- in response to a general invitation from the LA to create AST posts with the offer of funding;
- a network or other collaborative group of schools decide to create one or more AST posts to work within the network;
- an organisation or agency with an interest in using AST outreach approaches the school with a proposal;
- central government proposes the use of ASTs to deliver or support the development of specific policies or programmes.

Many LAs will have central arrangements for the creation and funding of AST posts. Schools wishing to create an AST post or teachers interested in applying to become an AST are advised to check first with their local AST co-ordinator to find out if any special local arrangements apply.

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Decisions to take prior to appointment of an AST

In creating a post – or deciding to fill an existing post when the current AST moves on – the school will need to consider:

- whether recruitment will be internal or external;
- how the post will be funded;
- what the AST's role will be within their own school;
- how their outreach work will be decided;
- what their pay will be;
- who will be their line manager;
- what the contractual arrangements will be.

Guidance on all these issues is contained within this document.

Internal or external recruitment and advertising

To some extent the decision as to whether to appoint internally or to recruit externally will depend on the reason for the creation of the post.

Individual schools do sometimes advertise for ASTs in the national press. In other cases, a LA might send out an invitation to apply directed at all teachers, or at teachers in a particular subject or location, or a school might invite expressions of interest from teachers within the school wishing to become ASTs. Whatever approach is adopted it should comply with good equal opportunities practice.

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In some cases schools advertising externally invite applications from teachers who have not yet been assessed against the applicable standards for the AST grade. It is possible for more than one application for assessment to be accepted in relation to a single post and teachers can be assessed in their current schools. In other cases the advertisement will open recruitment to potential ASTs on the basis that they will take up the post as a classroom teacher and then work towards AST status once appointed. In this situation schools must not place a teacher on the AST pay spine until they have passed AST assessment.

How are posts funded?

How the funding has been allocated to LAs in the past

Since April 2004 the AST Standards Fund grant has been designed to support the number of AST posts in each LA which were in existence at the start of that financial year. Nationally this represented just over one per cent of the teaching workforce. Funding allocations were based on an average annual cost for each AST post of £15,500 made up of £6,200 for outreach costs and £9,300 for salary

related costs. In addition the total allocation to the LA included £300 per AST post (with a minimum of £5000) towards the cost to the LA of co-ordinating AST outreach work, supporting ASTs and monitoring the AST programme.

How did LAs calculate the amount of funding to pass on to schools?

The LA normally passed on to schools the full amount for outreach and actual salary costs. Eligible expenditure which could be paid to the school included:

- the additional salary paid to the AST;
- the cost of any threshold grant which the school lost on making the appointment;
- the cost of any allowance previously paid to the AST which was transferred to another teacher.

Where the AST retained management or other responsibilities and these were reflected in their AST salary range, the Dedicated School Grant (DSG) would not cover the cost of that element of the salary previously awarded as a management allowance or other responsibility payment.

Neither was it designed to provide for any on-costs related to the additional salary.

While this was the recommended methodology for calculating the payment of the grant to each school; individual LAs could agree a different approach with their schools.

AST grant funding 2006-2008

Since 2006 the AST Standards Fund grant has been incorporated into the new School Development Grant (SDG). The allocation of the School Development Grant for each local authority will be calculated by adding together the 2005-06 allocations for each predecessor grant with the addition of a per pupil increase each year.

Allocations to schools are based on the amount they received from the predecessor grants in 2005-06 with a per pupil based increase each year at the level of the minimum funding guarantee. This will enable schools to continue to support existing AST posts. Where the individual school's SDG allocation includes funding for providing a service across schools, such as an AST, receipt of that funding should still be conditional on that service being provided. So if an AST at one school were to leave their AST post and the school did not replace them with another AST, then the local authority will be able to switch funding from that school to support a new post in another school.

How is the funding for AST posts generated?

If a school wishes to create a new AST post funded via the SDG they should first contact the LA AST co-ordinator to ensure that funding is available. Once such a post has been raised and filled by the school, the next step will be to generate payment of the funding. To do so schools should complete form AST2. The AST2 form should be sent to the national assessment agency and copied to the LA. This form contains details about the AST, the school they will be teaching at and the salary point on which they have been placed on the AST pay spine.

Funding is currently delivered to LAs in regular scheduled streams in May, September, December and March. Schools have the freedom to spend their grant allocations over 17 months (to 31 August of the financial cycle).

Alternative methods of funding AST Posts

If schools and LAs wish to create additional AST posts beyond the number which can be supported through the School Development Grant in 2008-11, there are various options available.

Posts funded through local formula

Changes to school funding regulations in 2004 enable LAs to direct delegated funding to support AST posts. Schools Forums should be consulted about any such proposals. The outcome can be that the existence of an AST in a school becomes a factor in the local funding formula and funding for AST salary and outreach costs can be included in the school's budget share.

School funded posts

Increasingly schools are funding their own AST posts. This is often in order to use the ASTs to help fulfil the school's overall outreach commitments – for example those associated with specialist school status.

Group funded posts

Groups or clusters of schools can combine to support one or more shared AST posts. This may be particularly useful for networks of small primary schools where an AST may teach in two or three schools and do outreach work across the network.

Contracts

It is important that contracts setting out the requirements of the post are available to new ASTs so that they know what their posts entail, who they report to, what they will be paid and the scope of their responsibilities. LAs will need to ensure that contracts are in line with local policies on contracts of employment.

ASTs will want to consider how the form of contract will affect the timing and conditions under which they will eventually leave the grade.

3 Application, assessment and appointments

Who can become an Advanced Skills Teacher?

The grade is open to all qualified teachers in maintained schools who want to remain as classroom practitioners, are prepared to take on AST professional duties including outreach work and can meet the applicable standards. This includes part-time and peripatetic staff. Existing heads, deputies or assistant heads can also apply.

There are no requirements relating to length of service and a teacher does not have to have passed the threshold in order to apply for an AST post. However, a candidate will need to have been teaching for long enough to be able to provide evidence to support their application against the applicable standards.

The key requirement is for excellent teaching practice and credibility with a wide range of colleagues inside and outside the school.

What are the AST standards?

The national standards, which all Advanced Skills Teachers must meet, are described in detail in **Annex A** of this document. The standards can also be found on the Teaching and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) website at www.tda.gov.uk

As provided in Annex 1 of the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD), the revised standards for Excellent Teachers and Advanced Skills Teachers come into effect for pay purposes from 1 September 2007. For teachers in England these standards are part of a framework of professional standards which also contains standards for the award of QTS, standards for teachers on the main scale who have successfully completed induction (the core standards) and standards for post-threshold teachers. Within the

framework the standards are designed to be cumulative and progressive. As a result there are some standards which are only defined at one career stage but which continue to apply at all subsequent career stages.

While the framework as a whole applies in England only, the standards for excellent teachers and ASTs are pay standards and as such apply in England and Wales. Responsibility for setting non-pay standards for Wales rests with the Welsh Assembly Government.

Applications

Completing the application form

An application for assessment against the applicable standards for the AST grade can only be accepted in connection with an application for an existing or agreed AST post. Applicants for AST posts who have not previously been assessed as meeting the applicable standards should complete the application form AST 1 and submit it to the headteacher of the school at which he/she is currently employed. The AST 1 form can be downloaded from the AST website at www.teachernet.gov.uk/ast and completed electronically. The AST 1 form must be submitted in hard copy as set out below.

What to do once the application form has been completed

From September 2007 a different procedure applies in relation to AST assessment. The headteacher must first be satisfied that the teacher meets the standards which apply to his current career stage before the teacher can be considered for assessment against the applicable standards.

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This means that in relation to applications for assessments on or after 1 September 2007 the headteacher should be first satisfied that the teacher meets those standard set out in Annex 1 of the STPCD which apply to his current career stage (“the relevant standards”).

The relevant standards –

- a. in the case of an applicant who is an Excellent Teacher, are the core, post threshold and excellent teacher standards;
- b. in the case of an applicant who is currently paid on the upper pay spine, are the core and post-threshold standards;
- c. in the case of an applicant who is currently paid on the main scale, are the core standards.

If the headteacher is not satisfied that the teacher meets the relevant standards he/she must reject the application and provide the teacher with a written explanation for rejection. This should be done within 20 working days of receiving the application. In such cases no external assessment will be carried out.

If the headteacher is satisfied that the teacher meets the relevant standards he must then decide whether he/she will support the application. If so the headteacher should complete the relevant sections of the application form, adding in an evaluation of the extent to which the teacher meets those standards which are to be externally assessed as set out in the table below and submit the completed form to the assessment agency within 20 working days of receiving it from the applicant.

If the headteacher decides that he/she cannot support an application for assessment, he should provide feedback to the applicant.

CAREER STAGE	APPLICATION FOR	EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT AGAINST
Main scale Teacher	Advanced Skills Teacher	Post-threshold, Excellent Teacher and Advanced Skills Teacher standards
Post-Threshold Teacher	Advanced Skills Teacher	Excellent Teacher and Advanced Skills Teacher standards
Excellent Teacher	Advanced Skills Teacher	Advanced Skills Teacher standards

External applications

The candidate's headteacher then sends the form to the headteacher or LA personnel department advertising the post. They will draw up a short-list of candidates, which may include both those who have already been successful at AST assessment and others who need to be assessed before appointment. The application forms of the short-listed candidates who need to be assessed should be sent to the nationally appointed assessment agency, VT Education and Skills (VT) whose address can be found within the application form.

Before the form is sent to VT either the school or the LA should complete the funding declaration confirming there is an agreed post. VT will arrange the applicant's assessment and notify the headteacher or LA of the outcome. The appointing body will then interview their shortlist of candidates who have been successfully assessed and appoint to the post.

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Because there is an additional stage in the recruitment process for ASTs who are to be externally assessed, LAs and schools will need to allow plenty of time between the placing of an advertisement and the contractual resignation date for any applicants who would have to move to a new school. A candidate who has already been assessed as meeting the standards for the AST grade can be considered for appointment without further assessment.

Internal appointments

Where posts are for internally advertised appointments, the process is the same except that the candidate's own headteacher should send the completed form(s) to the assessment agency once he or she has completed their section of the form, including the funding declaration, if relevant. If the post is to be funded through the LA, for example, the application form should be sent via the LA so that they can complete the funding declaration. Teachers who have passed the assessment, but have not been appointed to an AST post can apply for other advertised AST posts without having to be reassessed.

Unattached teachers and other candidates

Where the candidate does not have a headteacher, for example an unattached teacher, there is provision for the candidate's employer to designate a line manager to carry out the role of a headteacher. Candidates who are not employed as teachers in the maintained sector when they make their application should normally pass their application form to the school at which they were most recently employed, but it can also be completed by their current headteacher if this is more appropriate.

A candidate who is simultaneously employed at two or more schools should pass the application to a designated headteacher who would normally be

the head of the school where the teacher works the most hours or, if all headteachers agree, any one of them. The designated headteacher should consult all the other headteachers before completing the application form.

Headteachers and/or line managers should complete their section of the application form within 20 working days of receiving it.

Assessment

Who carries out the assessment?

The DCSF has appointed a national agency, VT Education and Skills (VT) to arrange the assessment of candidates against national standards for the AST grade. The assessors available to VT are suitably qualified and experienced persons, many of whom are registered inspectors.

What is the timescale for assessment?

AST assessments are normally carried out by the assessment agency within six weeks of receiving the AST application form. If there is a particular reason why a speedier assessment is needed it may be possible to arrange this – please phone VT to discuss the possibilities.

There may be instances in which it is difficult for the school to arrange for an assessment within the six week period. However, if there is any delay the agency will make every effort to ensure that the candidate is not disadvantaged – this is a particular risk in the case of an application for an external post. If a candidate is moving schools to take up an AST post, the school raising the post should take into consideration the normal periods of notice time that will be required during the application and assessment process. There are no fixed dates nationally for the creation of AST posts. However, schools and/or LAs may set their own local deadlines.

What is the assessor looking for?

Candidates will need to satisfy the assessor through the information they provide in their application form, their performance on the day and collection of evidence, that they can meet all the applicable standards for the Advanced Skills Teachers grade. These are set out in **Annex A**.

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What does an assessment process involve?

On receipt of the completed application form the assessor will consider the application and take account of the headteacher's view of the candidate's suitability. The candidate should not send the assessor examples of supporting evidence; only the application form is required in advance of the assessment day. However, candidates should ensure that their full collection of evidence is ready by the time the assessment date has been agreed. Guidance on how to collect and present examples of evidence can be found in **Annex B**.

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All applicants must then undergo a one day assessment in their school, by an external assessor, which will include:

- two classroom observations;
- an interview;
- a discussion with the candidate's headteacher and any other staff familiar with the candidate's work;
- a review of documentary evidence including the completed application form, the candidate's evidence against the standards and any additional information as required. (See Annex B for further guidance);

and may hold interviews with

- students that the candidate knows well; and
- parents whose children have been taught by the candidate.

While the assessor will be expected to carry out the activities described above it is the responsibility of the candidate to identify and provide evidence in support of their application, including identifying and making arrangements for external contributors to attend on the day.

The assessor will contact the school in advance of the assessment day to agree a programme for the day with the headteacher.

An example of a typical assessment day is included in **Annex C**.

How are assessment results announced?

The assessor will give feedback at the end of the assessment day including their judgement on whether the teacher meets the applicable standards and the evidence to support this judgement.

The assessment agency will formally notify the candidate of this decision, in writing, within three working days. A written feedback will be sent to the candidate and the headteacher at the host and post school within three working weeks. Where the candidate has fully met applicable standards, this will be no longer than one side of A4 in length. Where the candidate has not fully met the applicable standards, the report may be longer and will outline the areas which need further evidence.

Can a candidate who has not met the standards re-apply?

Candidates who do not fully meet the applicable standards first time round may re-apply for assessment, once they have addressed the points in the report and can provide additional evidence that they now fully meet each of the applicable standards. Supporting evidence from their headteacher will be required. The second assessment will be a complete assessment against all of the applicable standards. There is no specific timescale for reapplication but it is unusual for sufficient new evidence to be available to support a second assessment until at least two terms have elapsed since the original assessment.

Can a candidate challenge the outcome of an assessment?

A candidate can ask for their assessment to be reviewed. An application for a review should be on the basis of one or more of the following criteria:

- the original assessor did not take proper account of relevant evidence;
- the original assessor took account of irrelevant or inaccurate evidence;
- the original assessor was biased, or unlawfully discriminated against the candidate.

Full details of the review procedure are provided in **Annex D**.

Reassessment

The original AST guidance included a requirement that ASTs would need to be reassessed by the national assessment agency after a period of five years in the grade. This was intended to ensure the continuing quality of the AST grade. However, following the introduction of performance management procedures for all teachers including ASTs, the need for reassessment as a mechanism for quality assurance has been removed.

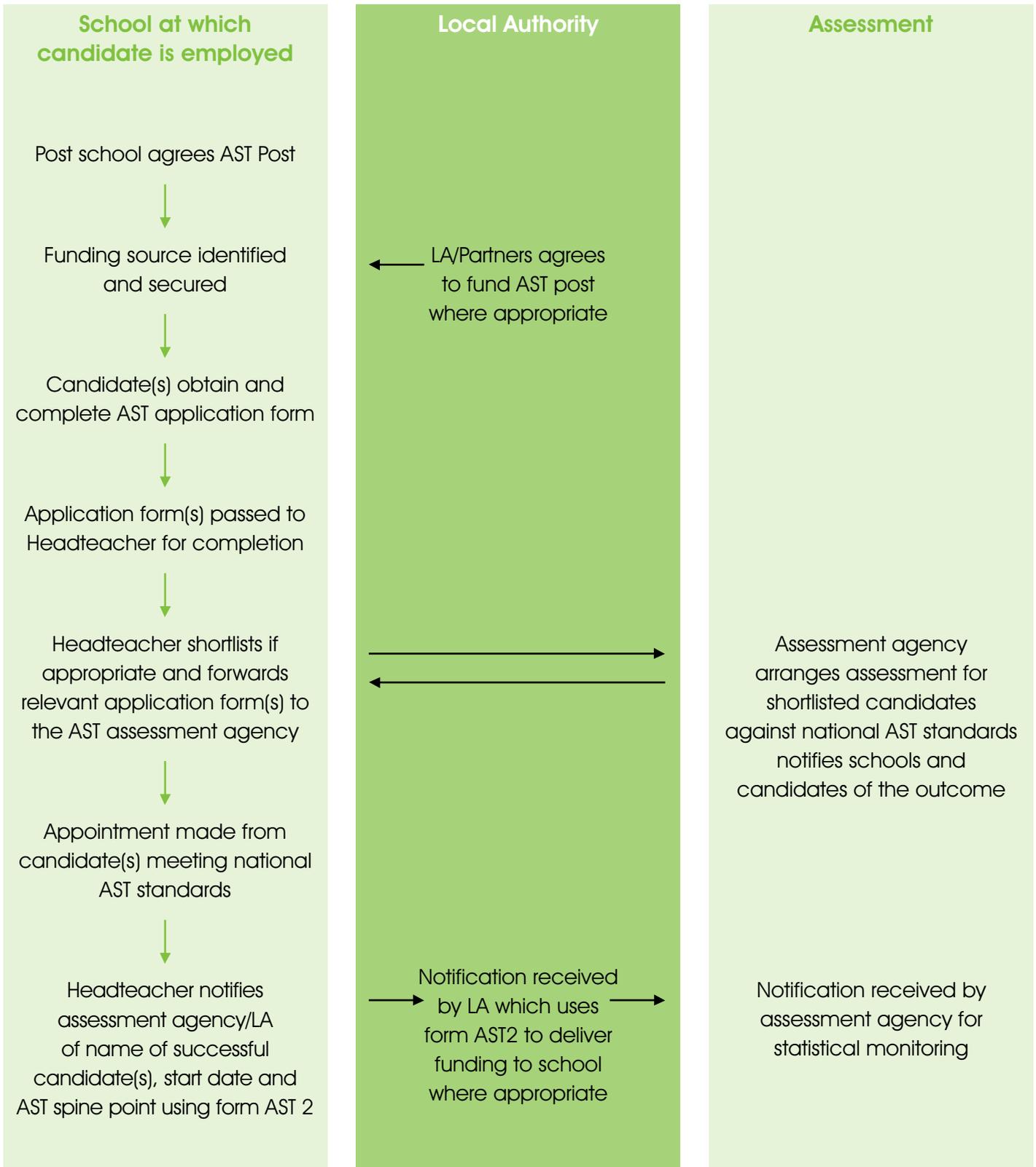
Appointments

Notification of appointment

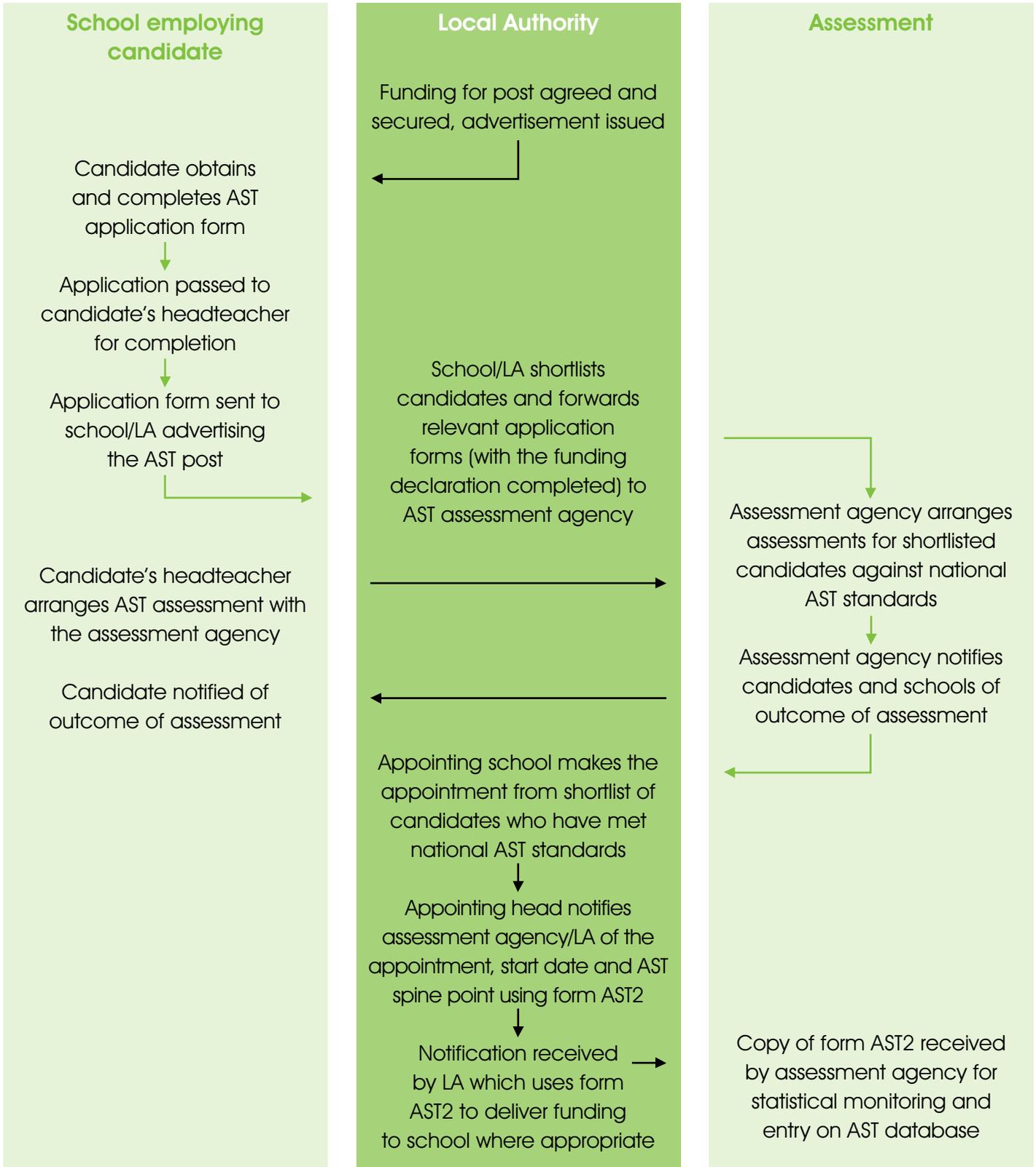
Once an appointment has been made, the appointing headteacher should notify the assessment agency using Form AST 2 (available on the AST website). This ensures that the appointment is entered on the national AST database. A copy should also be sent to the LA AST co-ordinator in order to generate AST grant payments if the post is being supported by the LA through the SDG or in any other way by the LA. Appointment notification also ensures that the AST receives relevant information and invitations to events and networking opportunities which will support their role and professional development and may also be of benefit to the school.

Appointment process

INTERNALLY ADVERTISED POSTS



EXTERNALLY ADVERTISED POSTS



4 Pay and performance management

What is the pay scale for ASTs?

To recognise their particular contribution there is a separate pay spine for holders of AST posts.

From September 2009 AST pay will range from:

£36,618 to £55,669 nationally,
£37,627 to £56,681 in the London Fringe,
£39,523 to £58,577 in Outer London, and
£43,538 to £62,596 for those in Inner London.

The current AST pay scales can be found in full on the AST website www.teachernet.gov.uk/ast

How is the pay of individual AST posts determined?

The pay for each AST post will be set individually by the relevant body – normally the school's governing body. This individual pay range reflects the fact that each AST post will have its own distinctive mix of duties and responsibilities and each AST will bring their own strengths, abilities and experience to the role.

Governing bodies (or LAs in the case of centrally employed ASTs) will select a five point pay range within the overall pay spine which will allow for appropriate pay increases. For example, an AST starting at point 11 on the AST pay spine has the opportunity to progress to point 15 on the AST pay spine.

An AST will normally start on the first point of the five point range and movement up the range depends on performance. In setting the pay range the Governing body should take into account:

- the nature of the work to be undertaken; including any work with teachers from other schools;
- the scale of the challenges to be tackled;
- the professional competencies required of the post holder;
- any other recruitment consideration that they consider relevant.

They should also have regard to the following:

- the status of the grade as an alternative to a leadership group post, for the best teachers who wish to stay in the classroom;
- the need for an appropriately substantial pay increase in relation to the appointee's previous post;
- whether the post would or might otherwise have attracted an allowance – for example for SEN;
- any recruitment considerations; and
- whether the appointee is a teacher of a shortage subject or a subject where there is a particular need to raise the quality of teaching and learning.

ASTs are not eligible for additional allowances, such as management or SEN allowances or teaching and learning responsibility payments, on top of their AST pay. However, schools do have the discretion to give teachers, including ASTs, a recruitment or retention incentive or benefit where appropriate in accordance with the STPCD.

Movement up the pay range

An AST's pay should be reviewed each September. However, as for all post threshold and leadership posts, any salary progression up the pay range for ASTs will be discretionary and will be managed in line with the school's overarching pay policies.

Movement up the pay range is possible only if there has been a sustained high quality of performance by the AST in the light of the previously agreed performance criteria. In making these judgements it is important to have regard to the contribution made by the AST during any outreach work.

ASTs can receive a maximum of two spine points in any one school year. However, if the demands of the post have changed substantially to warrant a large pay increase, it might be more appropriate to move the teacher onto a higher pay range.

Review of an AST pay range

As well as agreeing performance related movement up the individual pay range of an AST, a governing body can also review the range itself. This might be appropriate, for example, if:

- there is a significant change in the responsibilities of the AST such as leading a large whole-school or LA project to improve an aspect of teaching and learning;
- where there are changes to the schools situation which lead to a wider review of salaries.

ASTs and threshold and reversion to the upper pay spine

ASTs do not receive a separate threshold payment as the AST grade provides access to a higher pay spine. Governing bodies will, however, wish to take account of the threshold payment and upper pay spine rates available to other staff when determining individual AST pay ranges.

ASTs who leave an AST post to revert to classroom teacher are deemed to have crossed the threshold and will revert to an appropriate point on the classroom teacher upper pay spine.

If a teacher is successfully assessed but does not take up an AST post he or she will only be deemed to have passed the threshold if and when they also fulfil the other threshold eligibility criteria (i.e. they reach M6 of the classroom teachers' pay scale).

Performance management

All teachers have a designated line manager for performance management. In the case of ASTs this is likely to be either the headteacher or a deputy headteacher. The governing body has a responsibility to agree annual performance criteria with the AST and to review AST pay in the light of performance against those criteria every year. While in most respects AST performance management will mirror that of other teachers, schools may need to establish specific arrangements to ensure that the AST's 20 per cent outreach commitment is also taken into consideration.

Consideration of outreach work in performance management

The approach to this will depend on how the AST's outreach commitment is managed. Where the school makes arrangements for outreach work directly with other schools, it should include the provision of feedback on the AST's performance and evaluation of their impact in the agreement for the outreach provision. It is not unusual for there to be some external co-ordination and management of AST outreach work. This can be within a partnership of schools but currently is most often the case where LAs are adopting a strategic approach to the deployment of ASTs, which involves active management of and support for their outreach work. Where external co-ordination of outreach applies the LA or other managing partner may contribute to the wording of the AST's outreach objective. In this situation there should also be central arrangements for the evaluation of the ASTs' contribution and schools with ASTs need to be sure that they have access to any such information which may be relevant for performance management purposes.

Even where there are other partners involved in managing AST outreach work, the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that arrangements are in place for outcomes to feed into performance management rests with the headteacher.

Performance management role of external co-ordinator of AST outreach

The LA or whoever is co-ordinating the AST's outreach work should ensure that all outreach activity is properly monitored and evaluated so that this can be fed into performance management. For example, it is good practice to have clear agreed objectives for outreach work, for evaluation methods to be built into the outreach agreement and for feedback proformas to be available for completion by the headteachers of the schools where outreach is conducted. The external co-ordinator should also be able to provide feedback for performance management in relation to any work the AST has undertaken outside individual schools; such as cross LA projects.

AST role in including outreach work in performance management

The AST should keep copies of any feedback or evaluation forms and other relevant information as part of their collection of evidence for performance management purposes.

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5 The AST role

What is the purpose of the AST grade?

The distinctive function of the AST grade is to provide pedagogic leadership within their own and in other schools driving forward improvements and raising standards in teaching and learning.

What are the conditions of service?

ASTs are expected to work flexibly under the direction of their headteacher. This includes commitments outside normal school time – the working time provisions for classroom teachers in the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD) do not apply as ASTs are not classified as classroom teachers. Full details of AST pay and conditions can be found in the Document.

AST professional duties

The main focus of the AST's role is excellent classroom teaching. In terms of time, ASTs spend most of their week teaching their own classes.

In addition the AST grade has specific professional duties which ASTs carry out in their own and other schools. The duties include a provision that ASTs will normally spend 20 per cent of their time carrying out their professional duties in other schools. This is usually referred to as outreach work.

The commitment to outreach is the distinctive feature of the Advanced Skills Teacher grade. Outreach gives ASTs the opportunity to have an impact in the wider educational community. Outreach work does not include the use of ASTs as teachers in the outreach school apart from specific instances such as giving a demonstration lesson which fall within professional duties.

Details of AST duties can be found on the current **STPCD** and the following are examples of how they may be carried out.

Working with other teachers on classroom organisation and teaching methods/providing model lessons

- leading continuing professional development activities;
- holding workshops on classroom management, differentiation, pace and challenge;
- matching teaching approaches to pupil learning styles;
- making a video of model lessons;
- acting as a consultant to teams developing strategies for pupils experiencing difficulties;
- supporting the operation of the literacy and numeracy hours.

Disseminating best practice based on educational research

- identifying educational research to enhance existing practices;
- acting as a link with the LA in implementing strategies for dealing with challenging behaviour and promoting inclusion;
- co-ordinating the assessment and analysis of results and developing action planning;
- co-ordinating the assessment and analysis for targeting underachievement and reducing disaffection.

Producing high quality teaching materials

- updating existing schemes of work and supporting their introduction;
- leading the introduction of new technologies, such as video conferencing, white board technology, the use of the National Grid for Learning and the Internet;
- developing resource packs to support existing teaching.

Advising on professional development

- designing and delivering professional development activities;
- participating in the planning and delivery of focused in-service training days;
- identifying CPD activities needed to support local processes for improving teaching and learning.

Participating in the performance management of other teachers

- contributing to the development and introduction of the school's performance management policy;
- developing a code of good practice in the observation of teaching;
- undertaking observations and feedback in schools (not the AST's school).

Helping teachers experiencing difficulties

- observing and feeding back on the teaching of colleagues experiencing difficulties;
- providing a structured programme of advice and support.

Mentoring newly qualified teachers

- providing a weekly discussion and overseeing personal action planning;
- formulating a handbook to provide support across the school.

Initial teacher training

- providing exemplar lessons for trainee teachers;
- contributing to the assessment of students' teaching practice;
- participating in the training of teachers within teacher training institutions;
- acting as mentor to trainee teachers;
- leading the development of a School-Centred Initial Teacher Training Scheme.

In addition, the AST's excellence as a classroom teacher will enable them to be very effective in supporting school priorities. They may, for example:

- provide workshops for pupils on key borderlines;
- provide targeted support for disaffected or more able pupils;
- support or lead strategies for helping particular groups such as underachieving boys.

ASTs are not expected to do all of the above at once but over time could be expected to work on particular projects and on completion move onto others.

Outreach work

The challenge of outreach is the challenge of “making a difference” within the education system in a far broader way than is normally possible.

The Government sees outreach as an exciting opportunity to find imaginative and innovative ways of sharing good practice, including through the use of new communications technology. Schools that have received outreach have spoken warmly of the benefits. Increasingly schools are joining together into networks to share resources and activities and to provide mutual support to enable all schools to improve. ASTs, with their commitment to outreach work, can play a central role in such networks.

How does outreach work in practice – time and cover for outreach work?

Many ASTs are given a whole day a week off timetable in order to carry out their 20 per cent outreach commitments. This is certainly the best approach in areas where outreach work may involve travelling some distance. In other cases, the time may be broken down into two half days or consolidated into a block, for example a whole week out of every five weeks. Some ASTs find it more effective to have the same day for outreach each week, and in some LAs this is the norm for all ASTs to allow for networking and other joint activities. There are also ASTs who prefer to vary the days they are available for outreach in order to be able to be flexible in meeting the developing needs of the other teachers with whom they are working. Different approaches will meet different situations. The important thing is that the time should be identified and available.

In deciding on the pattern of outreach time schools will also need to take account of the way in which they are providing cover for the AST’s own classes. In many cases a regular outreach day will assist

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with planning cover. If an AST post exists when timetables are being planned it is also possible to reduce an AST’s teaching commitment using the outreach funding to contribute to the cost of any necessary additional staff. There is no single correct approach.

Process of managing outreach work

For outreach to be effective the following arrangements need to be in place:

- ASTs must have identified time for outreach work;
- There should be systems for identifying needs which are best met through AST outreach;
- Arrangements for filtering requests for outreach support and directing them to suitable ASTs;
- Schools receiving outreach support must enter into a clear agreement as to the objectives for the exercise and the conditions within which the AST will operate;
- There should be systems for monitoring and evaluating AST outreach work.

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Who controls outreach?

The way in which AST outreach work is managed often reflects the funding arrangements – a school which is funding its own AST post is likely to expect to have control over the AST's outreach work while an LA may play a more active role in directing the outreach of posts funded centrally, for example, through the School Development Grant. If a group or network of schools is jointly funding an AST post to work within the group they will expect to share ownership of the 'AST's' outreach objectives.

In practice, the best outcome will come through partnership. A school directing its own outreach work will still need to be aware of what is happening elsewhere in the LA to avoid duplication. LAs will need to have the agreement and co-operation of schools if they are to co-ordinate AST outreach. Equally, ASTs themselves will need to be involved in decisions on outreach work to ensure that it is within their competencies and in line with their development objectives. The important thing is to ensure that outreach work is well managed and that it is effective.

Central co-ordination of outreach

There are specific advantages in the central planning and co-ordination of AST outreach work. It provides a focus for AST work ensuring that it supports the priorities identified in the LA's Education Development Plan (EDP) and helps raise standards in its schools. This could involve, for example: targeted support to schools experiencing difficulties, including those in special measures; or co-ordinated activity to raise achievement in a particular subject or group of pupils across all schools in an area. Central management of outreach can also stimulate group-working amongst ASTs. Pilots run in several LAs have demonstrated that using ASTs together

as a team doing outreach in the same school or on a shared project can be a very effective way of deploying them.

An example of one LA's approach to the management of its ASTs can be found in **Annex E**.

Points for headteachers and LAs:

It is recommended that outreach activities be discussed with the LA before funding is sought, and then agreed with the AST once he or she is in post. This gives the headteacher a realistic picture of how a teacher's time might be used by the authority and gives him or her time to talk to other members of staff about the AST role and to organise lesson timetables accordingly. Feedback from ASTs show that either a full day off timetable or two half days are the most effective use of their time. However, other models such as weekly blocks or a month out of school have also worked well.

For more information on outreach and the Headteacher/LA role please see the AST Induction Handbook – at www.teachernet.gov.uk/ast

When is outreach not a requirement?

There are some exceptions to the requirement for ASTs to spend 20 per cent of their time on outreach work. For example where an AST is employed in a school that is subject to special measures or causing serious concern or in challenging circumstances and where their activities are clearly related to the school's and/or LA's plans for removing the school from this category. In this situation the AST may spend all their "outreach" time working to support improvements in teaching and learning in their own school.

However, even in this situation it is still better for the ASTs' own professional development if they can spend some time on outreach work. This can also be of benefit to the school in that they will be able to bring back to the school examples of good practice and other ideas they have picked up from the schools they are working in.

A new AST taking up post may also need time to establish their outreach role. It can be particularly difficult if the appointment starts mid-year when timetables have already been set. In this situation the AST could build up an outreach commitment over time but there would be an expectation that they would be working the full 20 per cent by the end of a year.

ASTs' work in their own schools – inreach

In addition to their classroom teaching and outreach work ASTs can also work to promote improvements in teaching and learning and support colleagues in their own school. Such work is usually known as inreach. AST professional duties do not specify any particular time allocation for this activity. ASTs are not subject to teacher's working time conditions and the expectation is that they will normally conduct work within their own school

in other time that they can access, such as twilight hours rather than taking time away from their own classroom teaching.

ASTs and management responsibilities

When the AST grade was created there was a clear understanding that it offered an alternative career route for teachers who did not wish to take on management responsibilities. Teachers taking up an AST post were not expected to combine it with a management role.

In practice there have been situations, particularly in small primary schools, with only a few teachers to share management roles, where this approach has been very difficult to achieve.

The purpose of the restriction was to ensure that ASTs continued to spend the majority of their time in the classroom. One of the underpinning reasons for the success of AST outreach work is that they have high credibility within the profession because other teachers know that they are primarily working as classroom teachers.

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What might a typical AST post description look like?

Every AST post will be different although all will be based on classroom teacher work and AST professional duties and most will involve some outreach work. The wide range of potential responsibilities is recognised by the long AST pay spine. In carrying out their AST professional duties some teachers will concentrate on their subject areas while others may take a more generic approach to improvements in teaching and learning. Some ASTs may mostly do one to one work with individual teachers, while others carry out whole school or cross LA projects or they may have a mix of roles, or develop specialisms over time. Clearly each post should both build on the AST's current strengths and offer the opportunity to stretch them and encourage them to develop in the role.

Annex F contains an example of one AST's job specification.

However, ASTs do also have the potential to act as leaders of improvements in teaching and learning and it may be appropriate in some schools for this role to be recognised within the staffing structure. In this situation we recommend that any administrative or management duties which are not compatible with the AST role are delegated to other staff. There are instances, for example, where schools have appointed ASTs to act as Heads of Department but in doing so have stripped the posts of elements which are not compatible with AST professional duties, such as responsibility for the management of staff and resources, moving these duties to others. These redesigned posts allow the ASTs to act as the leaders of teaching and learning in their subject areas.

In designing any AST post it is important that schools are aware of and avoid any danger that the AST will be overloaded.

Annexes

Annex A: Professional standards for AST applicants

PROFESSIONAL ATTRIBUTES

Frameworks

P1 Contribute significantly, where appropriate, to implementing workplace policies and practice and to promoting collective responsibility for their implementation.

E1 Be willing to take a leading role in developing workplace policies and practice and in promoting collective responsibility for their implementation.

A1 Be willing to take on a strategic leadership role in developing workplace policies and practice and in promoting collective responsibility for their implementation in their own and other workplaces.

Personal professional development

E2 Research and evaluate innovative curricular practices and draw on research outcomes and other sources of external evidence to inform their own practice and that of colleagues.

PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

Teaching and learning

P2 Have an extensive knowledge and understanding of how to use and adapt a range of teaching, learning and behaviour management strategies, including how to personalise learning to provide opportunities for all learners to achieve their potential.

E3 Have a critical understanding of the most effective teaching, learning and behaviour management strategies, and including how to select and use approaches that personalise learning to provide opportunities for all learners to achieve their potential.

Assessment and monitoring

P3 Have an extensive knowledge and well-informed understanding of the assessment requirements and arrangements for the subjects/curriculum areas they teach, including those related to public examinations and qualifications.

P4 Have up-to-date knowledge and understanding of the different types of qualifications and specifications and their suitability for meeting learners' needs.

E4 Know how to improve the effectiveness of assessment practice in the workplace, including how to analyse statistical information to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning across the school.

Subject and Curriculum

P5 Have a more developed knowledge and understanding of their subject /curriculum area and related pedagogy including how learning progresses within them.

E5 Have an extensive and deep knowledge and understanding of their subjects/curriculum areas and related pedagogy gained for example through involvement in wider professional networks associated with their subjects/curriculum areas.

Achievement and diversity

E6 Have an extensive knowledge on matters concerning equality, inclusion and diversity in teaching.

Health and well-being

P6 Have sufficient depth of knowledge and experience to be able to give advice on the development and well-being of children and young people.

PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

Planning

P7 Be flexible, creative and adept at designing learning sequences within lessons and across lessons that are effective and consistently well-matched to learning objectives and the needs of learners and which integrate recent developments, including those relating to subject/curriculum knowledge.

E7 (a) Take a lead in planning collaboratively with colleagues in order to promote effective practice
(b) identify and explore links within and between subjects/curriculum areas in their planning.

Teaching

P8 Have teaching skills which lead to learners achieving well relative to their prior attainment, making progress as good as, or better than, similar learners nationally.

E8 Have teaching skills which lead to excellent results and outcomes.

E9 Demonstrate excellent and innovative pedagogical practice.

Assessing, monitoring and giving feedback

E10 Demonstrate excellent ability to assess and evaluate.

E11 Have an excellent ability to provide learners, colleagues, parents and carers with timely, accurate and constructive feedback on learners' attainment, progress and areas for development that promotes pupil progress.

Reviewing teaching and learning

E12 Use local and national statistical data and other information, in order to provide (a) a comparative baseline for evaluating learners' progress and attainment, (b) a means of judging the effectiveness of their teaching, and (c) a basis for improving teaching and learning.

Team Working and Collaboration

P9 Promote collaboration and work effectively as a team member.

E13 Work closely with leadership teams, taking a leading role in developing, implementing and evaluating policies and practice that contribute to school improvement.

A2 Be part of or work closely with leadership teams, taking a leadership role in developing, implementing and evaluating policies and practice in their own and other workplaces that contribute to school improvement.

P10 Contribute to the professional development of colleagues through coaching and mentoring, demonstrating effective practice, and providing advice and feedback.

E14 Contribute to the professional development of colleagues using a broad range of techniques and skills appropriate to their needs so that they demonstrate enhanced and effective practice.

E15 Make well-founded appraisals of situations upon which they are asked to advise, applying high level skills in classroom observation to evaluate and advise colleagues on their work and devising and implementing effective strategies to meet the learning needs of children and young people leading to improvements in pupil outcomes.

A3 Possess the analytical, interpersonal and organisational skills necessary to work effectively with staff and leadership teams beyond their own school.

Annex B: Guidance on evidence for assessment

It is recommended that candidates bring together the best examples of evidence in a form that is succinct and easily accessible to the assessor. Most teachers will already have identified and collected relevant material as part of their performance management and to underpin their professional development.

Collections of evidence can be arranged in different ways, but the most effective are arranged in sections, and sub-sections, according to the structure of the applicable standards. Assessors also find it helpful if the applicant addresses each of the applicable standards. A clear index, allowing easy access to each section is also useful.

Applicants should be selective and choose the best examples they have for each standard, it is not necessary to include a complete record of achievement although this should be available in the event that the assessor requires additional information. It is particularly useful when the candidate has collected relevant documentation and recorded relevant activities over a period of time. The evidence presented may provide a sample and then a reference to other documents.

There are no set rules on what can and cannot be included in a collection of evidence, however, below are some examples of documentation which could be used to support each standard:

To support standards relating to:

Professional attributes:

- descriptions of activities undertaken to develop practice in schools;
- examples of policies developed and implemented.

For candidates who have not yet attained threshold or the Excellent Teacher standards –

- letters from colleagues commenting on strategic leadership observed;
- evaluations carried out; and
- action research.

Professional knowledge and understanding:

- list of professional development activities, with the attendance certificates from courses;
- letters testifying to the quality of subject and pedagogical knowledge conveyed during support;
- lesson observations indicating the high level of inclusion in teaching;
- information about involvement in professional networks.

Professional skills:

- descriptions of help provided to other teachers;
- letters from LA advisers, from course participants, from examination boards if working as examiner and training others;
- testimony from colleagues regarding skills of working with staff and leadership teams;

For candidates who have not yet attained the Excellent Teacher and/or threshold standards –

- external assessment results with value added analysis;
- individual, departmental and whole school analysis, graphs and trends;
- results from student questionnaires, showing satisfaction with the teaching and/or letters from parents;
- reports and/or observations from school/departmental monitoring;
- samples of schemes of work;
- plans for modules, assessment criteria and methods of recording;
- examples of pupil's work with assessment comments.

Specimen

Here is an example of one candidate's evidence collection, which included some helpful information for the assessor about the school and the AST post.

Overview

Table of contents

Schedule for AST Assessment

Section 1: Profile of teacher

Teacher's goals

AST Application

Continuing professional development

Rationale for wanting to be an AST

Section 2: AST roles and responsibilities

Job description and other information on the proposed AST role (This information is not required by assessors, but can be useful)

Section 3: Information about the school

Most recent OFSTED report summary

School Development Plan summary

Departmental Action Plan

Section 4: Professional attributes

Information and testimonials and copies of policies developed and implemented could be provided from the candidate's line manager, parents' of pupils, Governors and head of University Education Department. This can include information about liaison with a feeder primary school, work with Business Education Department, support for pupils with special educational needs, training for teachers on ICT use in the classroom.

Section 5: Professional knowledge and understanding

This section could provide information about courses attended, involvement in professional networks, and examples that illustrate expertise, such as lesson observations.

Section 6: Professional skills

Teaching and learning

This section should provide reports/information on lesson observations carried out by such persons as LA adviser, head teacher and head of department.

Outcomes of teacher's activities

Value added data showing the progress made by pupils taught by the teacher, and showing the improving trend in examination results over time. This is particularly relevant to teachers working in school's facing challenging circumstances and in special measures.

Working with others

This section should include the main accomplishments of the teacher, such as courses run for other teachers, departmental website supporting distance learning.

Section 7: Information on lessons to be observed

Lesson plans

Extracts from schemes of work

Information about the two classes to be observed

Appendix

Any additional information; for example, ICT Development plan.

Annex C: A typical assessment day

The contents of a typical day are given below:

The assessor will arrive at the start of the school day, and will meet with the headteacher and the candidate. This first meeting will be used to explain the procedures for the day and answer any questions.

This will often be followed by a short meeting with the headteacher and/or deputy.

Early in the day, the assessor will study the collection of evidence produced to support the candidate's application.

The assessor will need to observe two lessons. In primary schools, one of the lessons will normally be either literacy or numeracy. In secondary schools, lessons will normally be from different key stages, and from different ability groups, where appropriate.

The assessor will hold interviews/discussions with the following people:

- at least one interview with the candidate to discuss their work;
- other members of staff within the school who can provide evidence to support the application;
- the appropriate LA adviser or colleagues from another school, where the candidate has worked with other schools within the LA;

and may hold interviews with

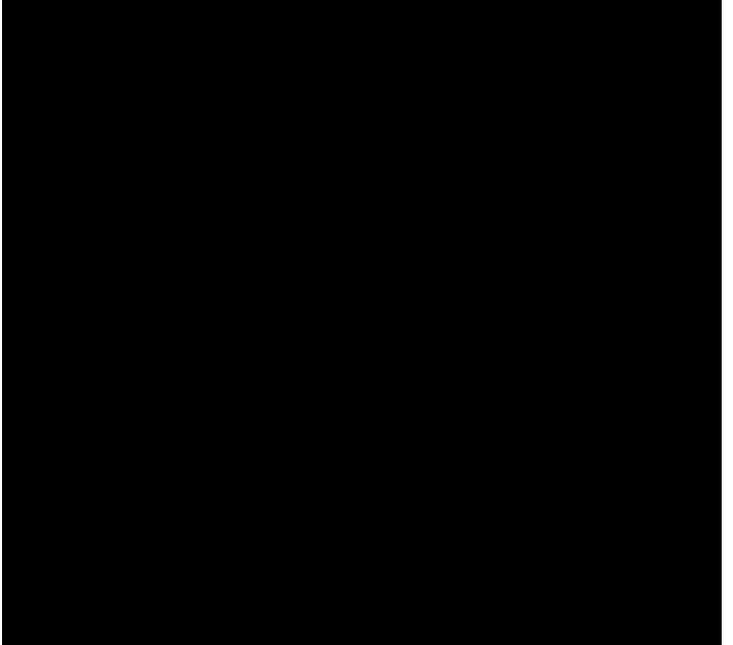
- a group of 4–8 pupils who know the candidate well;
- a small group of parents whose children have been taught by the candidate.

The assessor may wish to have lunch with the candidate, or may wish to use lunch time for further study of the evidence.

During the day, the assessor will need some time to make notes and check whether there are any gaps in the evidence. If further evidence or clarification is needed, the assessor will discuss this with the candidate or the headteacher.

At the end of the day, the assessor will feed back the judgement on whether the candidate fully meets all the criteria to the headteacher and the candidate. The assessor will then provide brief feedback on the reasons for the judgement, highlighting particular strengths, or, where not all the applicable standards are fully met, the reasons why. This feedback will normally take between 15 and 30 minutes.

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Annex D: Procedures for the review of an AST assessment

1. Candidates assessed to become Advanced Skills Teacher but not granted certification can, if they wish apply to have that decision reviewed. A decision not to certify a candidate as an AST can only be reviewed if:

- the original assessor did not take proper account of relevant evidence;
- the original assessor took account of irrelevant or inaccurate evidence; or
- the original assessor was biased, or unlawfully discriminated against the candidate.

2. To have the assessment reviewed the candidate should apply in writing to:

The Review Co-ordinator
The National Assessment Agency for AST and ETS
VT Education and Skills
OPUS 1
Bay Tree Avenue
Kingston Road
Leatherhead
Surrey, KT22 7UE

Applications for review must be received within 40 working days of receiving the assessor's decision. Candidates should explain why they think their assessment should be reviewed, and should indicate what evidence they have that at least one of the three grounds for review in paragraph 1 applies to their case.

3. The Review Co-ordinator will give the original assessor an opportunity to comment on the application for review, and will pass the case to a second assessor, or Review Officer.

4. The Review Officer will consider all the available evidence. He or she may ask to see the original assessor's records of the assessment. He or she may ask for comments from the candidate, head teacher or line manager, or from the original assessor. The Review Officer may repeat any of the steps the original assessor took, such as conducting a classroom observation or interviewing the head teacher. He or she may also look at other evidence, including interviewing the candidate's colleagues or parents of pupils they teach, which the original assessor may not have considered.

5. If the Review Officer is satisfied that the candidate would have been certified as an AST had the original assessment been properly conducted (according to the criteria in paragraph 1), he or she will certify the candidate as an AST. Otherwise, the original assessment will stand. The Review Officer will notify both the candidate and the assessor of the decision, giving reasons for it, within 40 working days of receiving the application for a review. The Review Officer will also inform the candidate's headteacher, and the headteacher of the school offering the AST post, of his or her decision.

Annex E: Local authority role

A LA that has agreed to support ASTs post in their Authority will normally have defined the parameters in which they wish them to operate. The following bullets show how one Authority, guided by a steering group of head teachers and others, has defined its principles and criteria for the appointment and development of ASTs.

- The LA will encourage the appointment of ASTs in educational fields and geographical areas where there is a need;
- In collaboration with schools the LA will seek to ensure a reasonable spread of ASTs across the LA;
- The LA will generally support not more than one AST per primary and three ASTs per secondary school;
- The 'outreach' function of ASTs should be co-ordinated by appropriate members of the LA advisory service;
- ASTs should have the opportunity to support a range of different schools including those where
- there is innovative curriculum development as well as those schools where there are weaknesses;
- ASTs will support schools and teachers where development needs have been negotiated and agreed with the school;
- The planned programme of support for the AST's school should be agreed each term with the AST's headteacher.

LAs may also want to include their policy on the time allocation for outreach work and its location.

LAs should appoint someone to co-ordinate AST work within the authority and to be a contact for schools and the DfES. This may be a different role from that of the person who deals with Standards Fund grant applications and claims.

One LA's approach to co-ordinating outreach

Each AST has a responsibility to contribute to the LA's CPD programme in support of the local development plan. The LA centrally has negotiated a protocol with schools which sets out the

expectations of the ASTs and how they will work in outreach schools and also identifies how the school will treat them and what it can expect of an AST.

For Primary ASTs the outreach role will be co-ordinated by the School Development Adviser who will:

- identify and make contact with the ASTs in their district;
- identify particular strengths (Key Stage, subject, etc) of the AST;
- establish, through discussion, which schools in the district need support in teaching and learning;
- identify and establish for the schools needing such support opportunities for teachers to observe the AST in their school;
- identify and establish for schools "A" and "B" in need of support opportunities for the AST to visit those schools so that they can work alongside teachers in the classroom;
- involve ASTs in the curriculum development projects being set up in the district;
- involve ASTs in Continuing Professional Development activity;
- ensure appropriate links are made with curriculum advisers.

The School Development Adviser will hold regular termly meetings with ASTs to discuss and monitor overall progress. LAs will normally use monitoring and evaluation forms to collect feedback on the effectiveness of the ASTs work and to inform the performance management process.

In this authority the outreach role for secondary ASTs is co-ordinated by the relevant subject adviser who also ensures that appropriate emphasis is given to cross-curriculum issues by ASTs.

Increasingly LAs are using ASTs working in teams with other ASTs or in wider professional groupings.

This example of an AST's job description is just an illustration of how it worked for one AST and should not be taken as a template.

Annex F: Specimen AST job description

Job specification

1. Teaching

- a. Curriculum: develops; carries out general teaching duties as specified in the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document;
- b. Contributes to the school's tutorial, extra-curricular and residential programme as laid down in the job specification of all full-time teaching staff.

2. NQT induction

- a. Assists in planning the induction year for all newly qualified teaching staff. In accordance with the school policy document and the DfES regulations and the LA programme, arranging regular meetings with them and undertaking classroom observation, as appropriate;
- b. Works with the LA Advisory Service to support NQT induction across the Authority under the direction of the relevant Advisor.

3. ITT programme

- a. Participates in the training programme of students on the school initial teacher training (ITT) course, and the delivery of non-subject specific aspects of that training, in co-operation with the ITT Professional Link Tutor;
- b. Contributes to the assessment of the students' teaching practice.

4. Curriculum

- a. Develops high quality teaching materials and strategies for Advanced GNVQ courses, especially in Leisure and Tourism;
- b. Develops and delivers methods of assessment for Advanced GNVQ courses.

5. Balance of college and outreach role

The post-holder will work an 80 per cent timetable in school and 20 per cent on "out-reach" activities.

The job specification should also include the performance criteria against which the AST's progress would be assessed.



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