

Criteria for courses leading to Accredited Teacher Status (ATS) Accredited Practitioner Status (APS) and (AMBDA) Associate Member of the BDA (School Level)

A primary concern of the BDA is that the professional help available to people with dyslexia of all ages and abilities should be of a consistent and high standard.

The BDA stresses the importance of the practical content of specialist training courses. While not seeking to dictate the detail of specialist teaching programmes, the BDA requires that candidates **must** demonstrate competence in planning, teaching and evaluating intervention based on a **structured, sequential, cumulative and multisensory** approach. This applies to both literacy-based and dyscalculia courses. In the case of ATS / APS and AMBDA literacy courses, programmes should cover reading, writing and spelling based on phonics and morphology. Such methods have been found to be effective for those with specific learning difficulties / dyslexia. The specialist skills taught must be transferable to the classroom and other learning situations. Therefore, BDA accredited courses must meet criteria relating to how they teach and assess the knowledge, understanding and practical skills involved in such specialist teaching.

Accredited Teacher Status (ATS) may be awarded to teachers who hold Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and/or are recognised by the General Teaching Council (or equivalent) or have QTLS and hold Professional Membership of the Institute for Learning. Applicants must also have a **minimum** of two years' full-time or equivalent part-time relevant professional experience in teaching/supporting learners of school age (16 years of age or under at the end of the current school year). **However**, if an applicant has had a minimum of two year's appropriate previous professional educational experience in another phase of education but is now working with learners 16 years of age or under, a letter, on headed paper, from the applicant's line manager stating that they have successfully completed an academic year of full or equivalent part-time professional activity with these learners may be substituted for the two-year requirement.

Accredited Practitioner Status (APS) may be awarded to other educational professionals who do not hold QTS; e.g. Teaching Assistants, Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Educational and other psychologists, with appropriate professional qualifications and experience. They must also have a minimum of two years full time or equivalent part-time

relevant professional experience with learners of school age (16 years of age or under at the end of the current school year). **However**, if an applicant has had a minimum of two year's appropriate previous professional educational experience in another phase of education but is now working with learners 16 years of age or under, a letter, on headed paper, from the applicant's line manager stating that they have successfully completed an academic year of full or equivalent part-time professional activity with these learners may be substituted for the two-year requirement.

Applicants for the award of ATS/APS must have successfully completed a BDA accredited course taught and assessed at a minimum of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) Level 5 (Foundation Degree) in England, Wales or Northern Ireland. For other equivalent levels see page 43 et seq. at:

<http://qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/qualifications-frameworks.pdf>

Certificates will be endorsed with the level at which the course was taught and assessed.

AMBDA may be awarded to any educational professional with appropriate professional qualifications (e.g. Teachers, Teaching Assistants, Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Educational and other psychologists) who have a minimum of two years full or equivalent relevant part-time professional experience in teaching or supporting learners of school age (16 years of age or under) **or** if the applicant has appropriate professional educational experience in another phase of education, a letter, on headed paper, from the applicant's line manager stating that they have successfully completed an academic year of full or equivalent part-time professional activity with learners 16 years or under at the end of the current school year, may be substituted for the two year requirement.

Applicants must have successfully completed a BDA accredited course, taught and assessed at a minimum Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) Level 7 (Post-graduate) in England, Wales or Northern Ireland. For other equivalent levels see page 43 et seq. at:

<http://qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/qualifications-frameworks.pdf>

Criteria

ATS/APS Accredited Teacher/Practitioner Status Courses will enable candidates to achieve the following age-specific outcomes:

Core Elements - A critical understanding of:

1. contemporary theoretical explanations of the nature of SpLD, specific learning difficulties (dyslexia) and awareness of co-existing SpLD;
2. contemporary models and theories of 'typical development' of language, literacy and numeracy skills and how dyslexic learners may differ from those who are not experiencing difficulties in acquiring these skills;
3. the principles underlying structured, sequential, cumulative, multisensory literacy teaching based on phonics and morphology;
4. the social, emotional and behavioural difficulties learners with specific learning difficulties may encounter;
5. how to design teaching programmes to meet specific individual needs at a basic level in learning, literacy and numeracy;
6. how a learning environment may be organised to facilitate individualised learning within the normal curriculum framework e.g. Dyslexia Friendly Practice;
7. the contribution of ICT in the screening and teaching of SpLD/dyslexia and knowledge of relevant technical aids;
8. current legislation including e.g. Equality Act, SEND CoP, Data Protection Act.

Specialist Elements - The ability to:

1. demonstrate knowledge of current good practice in the teaching of literacy (reading, spelling and writing). This should include understanding of appropriate structured, sequential, cumulative, systematic phonics teaching programmes including a morphological approach and the models on which intervention programmes are based, e.g. the Simple View of Reading;
2. identify learners with specific learning difficulties in the classroom by making an appraisal, based on observation and informal assessment, assessment of attainments and the reports of other professionals;
3. design, deliver and monitor teaching programmes and resources to meet specific individual needs at a basic level in literacy, within the appropriate school curriculum;

4. recognise any social and behavioural difficulties affecting a learner in their specialist teaching;
5. communicate effectively with learners, parents/carers, teachers and other professionals using oral and written reports about the needs and achievements of learners with dyslexic-type difficulties;
6. develop effective methods to improve study skills, organisational abilities, motivation and self-esteem for learners experiencing dyslexia.

Notes:

- Teaching of the Specialist Elements must be carried out by a course tutor who holds Active AMBDA or equivalent.
- 'Equivalent' means that the tutor concerned must have successfully taken a course accredited by the BDA for AMBDA during the past 5 years but who has not applied for the award. They must provide evidence (preferably in the form of a BDA CPD Portfolio) that their knowledge, skills and expertise are up-to-date.

The course must provide a minimum of:

- a. 40 hours of lectures **plus** seminars, tutorials and study time. Of the 40 hours, 18 hours should be devoted to the Core Elements;
- b. 20 hours of supervised and assessed specialist teaching, of which two hours must be formally observed and assessed.
 - I. 10 hours must be with the same learner, 16 years of age or under at the end of the current school year in a 1:1 situation.
 - II. 2 hours of **this** teaching must be formally observed and assessed.
 - III. The remaining 10 hours may be with a different learner, who could be taught in a small group of no more than three learners and /or may be 18 years of age or under at the end of the current school year.

Notes:

- The revision of the criteria to allow part of the supervised and assessed Specialist Teaching to be undertaken with a learner 16 years of age or over has been made in recognition of the needs of educational professionals teaching in situations making provision for learners both under and over statutory school leaving age.

- One of the learners must be 16 years of age or under and two hours of formally observed and assessed specialist teaching **must** be with this learner.
- Candidates/applicants wishing to work with learners over 16 years of age should consider taking a course leading to the award of Approved Tutor Status FE/HE.
- Hours of observed and assessed Specialist Teaching, meeting the BDA criteria, as part of an ATS/APS course may be carried over into the requirements for Specialist Teaching/support in an accredited AMBDA course.

Assessment of Specialist Teaching - The following points are essential:

1. No teaching or assessment should begin before the written consent of the learner and/or their parents/carers has been obtained. They should be made fully aware of what will be recorded (e.g. face of learner) and that they can withdraw that permission at any time without need for explanation. An example of an appropriate letter is attached.
2. The teaching programme should be discussed with, and approved by, the supervisor or tutor before intervention starts. Progress should be monitored by reference to set performance criteria, with a final report on the quality of teaching.
3. The specialist teaching practice must include a minimum of 10 hours with one learner 16 years of age or under at the end of the current school year. Two hours of **this** teaching must be formally observed and assessed and successfully completed for the relevant BDA award to be made. The remaining 10 hours may be with a different learner who could be taught/supported in a small group and / or may be with a learner 18 years of age or under at the end of the current school year.
4. Teaching will be assessed by on-going formal and informal observation, which should include scrutiny of session plans and evaluations etc. in a teaching diary. Assessment of specialist teaching will be judged against set performance criteria and forms a significant part of the process of developing the course member's specialist skills.
5. The formal observation and assessment of two hours of evaluated specialist teaching is for the purposes of both formative and summative assessment. Each formally observed teaching session must be accompanied by a detailed session plan and subsequent evaluation of the learner's progress and must take into consideration how the observed lesson fits into the overall teaching programme. Two hours of this formally observed and

assessed Specialist Teaching must be with a learner 16 years of age or under at end of the current school year.

6. All supervision, observation and assessment of evaluated specialist teaching must be carried out by a course tutor who holds Active AMBDA or equivalent.
7. Where possible supervisors/tutors will observe teaching as it happens. However, the recording of lessons on DVD/USB/Mailbigfile or equivalent **secure** digital transfer may be offered as an alternative, provided they follow the BDA Guidelines. The recording should be password-protected and the password sent separately to the tutor by a different secure means.
8. Whether by direct observation or 'filming', this observed specialist teaching must form a significant part of the process of developing the course member's specialist skills. Each hour should be followed by a written report to the course member which should indicate whether teaching currently meets the criteria.
9. Progress of teaching should be monitored with a final report indicating whether or not it meets the criteria for specialist teaching using a structured, sequential, cumulative, multisensory approach.

N.B. A participant cannot obtain the BDA Award of ATS/APS unless they have successfully met the specialist teaching criteria.

A candidate who has successfully completed all elements of an ATS/APS course at Level 5 can be admitted to an AMBDA course at Level 7 with credit/advanced standing at the discretion of the course leader.

Normally all elements of an AMBDA course will be taught at Level 7 with the possibility of ATS/APS at Level 5 as an 'exit award'.

AMBDA (Associate Member of the BDA) Courses

An AMBDA accredited course must enable candidates to achieve all those competencies listed under ATS/APS above **and** the following outcomes at Level 7 (Post-graduate) of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) in England, Wales or Northern Ireland. For other equivalent levels see p. 43 et seq.: <http://qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/qualifications-frameworks.pdf>

In addition to the ATS/APS criteria, the following outcomes must be met to achieve the award of AMBDA.

Core Elements - The ability to understand and critically appraise:

1. current research underpinning contemporary theoretical explanations of the nature of dyslexic-type difficulties and its relevance for teaching and learning;
2. the theory and practice of psychometrics and educational testing;
3. the relationship of that theory to the assessment of cognitive strengths and difficulties of learners;
4. how to competently prepare and disseminate technical diagnostic assessment reports to teachers and other professionals and non-professionals concerned with the support of learners including parents in the case of learners under the age of 16 years. Such reports must include the provision of recommendations to meet specific purposes;
5. a range of learning strategies in the use of structured, sequential, cumulative, multi-sensory literacy teaching programmes based on phonics and morphology;
6. the evidence-base concerning effective interventions for learners with dyslexia and literacy difficulties, and how such knowledge may be used in monitoring and evaluating programmes of support;
7. the implications of social, emotional, behavioural, co-occurring and community issues for dyslexic learners and their families. It is important that these issues are considered across the full age range so that current difficulties can be understood in relation to their possible derivation and future implications;
8. the role of ICT in:
 - a. screening for and teaching of specific learning difficulties/dyslexia,
 - b. the range of technical aids for teaching, writing and numeracy,
 - c. support and access to learning;
9. the implications of and issues arising from current curriculum developments;
10. the methods principles of, and a range of methods for, delivering staff development for an inclusive curriculum.

Specialist Elements- The ability to:

1. develop and demonstrate the necessary knowledge and skills to observe diagnostically and assess the cognitive abilities and weaknesses of learners who fail to become competent in literacy and report appropriately on their needs and provision required;
2. design, produce, deliver, critically evaluate and monitor learners' progress in appropriate programmes in relation to the assessed needs of a range of

- dyslexic learners making reference to current theory and research;
3. write diagnostic assessment reports following the current SASC criteria for Assessment Practising Certificate renewal applications www.sasc.org.uk

Note: Teaching of the Specialist Elements must be carried out by a course tutor who holds Active AMBDA or equivalent.

An AMBDA course must include a minimum of the following:

1. 90 hours of lectures, seminars and guided learning plus private study time. These 90 hours should include:
 - a. a minimum of 12 hours of lectures, workshops and tutor-led seminars devoted to the development of knowledge and skills in psychometric and educational testing;
 - b. a minimum of 21 hours devoted to the Core Elements for ATS/APS and AMBDA and
 - c. 42 hours to the detailed Specialist Elements for ATS/APS and AMBDA;
 - d. the remaining hours should be designated according to the interests and requirements of the particular cohort recruited.
2. 30 hours of evaluated, specialist teaching,
 - a. a minimum of 10 hours of which must be with a learner 16 years of age or under at the end of the current school year in a 1:1 situation;
 - b. of the remaining 20 hours, 10 may be with a learner 18 years of age or under at the end of the current school year;
 - c. The other 10 hours must be with a learner 16 years or under at the end of the current school year who could be taught in a small group of no more than three learners.
 - d. 3 hours of teaching must supervised, observed and assessed by a course tutor who holds Active AMBDA or equivalent. This can include the 2 hours undertaken as part of an accredited ATS/APS course.

N.B.

- Specialist Teaching means 1:1 and/or small group teaching using a **cumulative, structured, sequential, multisensory** programme based on phonics and morphology.
- **Two** of the learners must be 16 years of age or under and two hours of formally observed and assessed specialist teaching **must** be with these learners.
- The 30 hours can include the 20 hours undertaken for ATS / APS, if relevant.

Candidates must submit three diagnostic assessment reports stemming

from three different assessments, carried out under supervision and demonstrating a range of assessment experience.

- Two of the reports must be with a learner aged 16 years or under at the end of the current school year. The other may be with a learner aged 18 years or under at the end of the current school year.
- The reports must be evaluated using the current SASC criteria for Assessment Practising Certificates renewal applications.
www.sasc.org.uk
- They must include supporting assessment plans / schedules, working papers, raw test data, and original test record forms. Each report must be evaluated by a tutor holding Active AMBDA.
- The final report of the three diagnostic assessments must be evaluated, (using the current SASC criteria for Assessment Practising Certificates renewal applications), by a course tutor who holds an Assessment Practising Certificate (APC) or an Educational Psychologist registered with the HCPC and accepted as meeting those criteria.

Notes:

a. The revision of the criteria to allow the assessed Specialist Teaching to be undertaken with a learner 18 years of age or under has been made in recognition of the needs of educational professionals teaching in situations that also include provision for learners both over and under statutory school leaving age. **At least two** of the learners must be 16 years of age or under at the end of the current school year.

b. Candidates / applicants wishing to work with learners over 16 years of age should consider taking a course leading to the award of AMBDA (FE/HE).

Assessment of Specialist Teaching and Assessment for AMBDA - The following points are essential:

1. No teaching/support or assessment should begin before the written consent of the learner and/or their parents/carers has been obtained. They should be made fully aware of what will be recorded (e.g. face of learner) and that they can withdraw that permission at any time without need for explanation. A sample letter is attached for information.
2. The teaching/support programme should be discussed with and approved by the supervising tutor before intervention starts. Progress should be monitored by reference to set performance criteria, with a final report on the quality of teaching.

3. The teaching/support practice must include a minimum of 10 hours with one learner 16 years of age or under at the end of the current school year in a 1:1 situation. Two hours of this teaching must be formally observed and assessed. The remaining 20 hours may be with two different learners one of whom may be 18 years of age or under at the end of the current school year and one who is 16 years of age or under and taught/supported in a small group. (N.B All three can be 16 years of age or under.)
4. Teaching/support will be assessed by ongoing informal and formal observation which should include scrutiny of session plans and evaluations etc in a teaching diary. Assessment of specialist teaching/support will be judged against set performance criteria and forms a significant part of the process of developing a course member's specialist skills.
5. The formal observation of 3 hours of evaluated specialist teaching/support is for the purposes of both formative and summative assessment. Each formally observed teaching/support session must be accompanied by a detailed session plan and evaluation of the learner's progress and must take into consideration how the observed lesson fits into the overall teaching programme.
6. All supervision, observation and assessment of evaluated specialist teaching must be carried out by a course tutor who holds Active AMBDA or equivalent.
7. Where possible supervisors/tutors will observe teaching as it happens. However, the recording of lessons on DVD/USB/Mailbigfile or equivalent **secure** digital transfer may be offered as a negotiable alternative, provided they follow the BDA Guidelines. The recording should be password-protected and the password sent separately to the supervising/assessing tutor by a different secure means.
8. Whether by direct observation or 'filming', this observed specialist teaching/support must form a significant part of the process of developing the course member's specialist skills. Each hour should be followed by a written report to the course member; indicating how far that teaching currently meets the criteria.
9. Progress of teaching/support should be monitored with a final report indicating whether or not it meets the criteria. The specialist award designated for the course **must** not be given to anyone failing to meet these criteria. The award of AMBDA cannot be given to anyone not meeting the criteria for specialist teaching whatever their achievements in the assessments of other parts of the course assessment diet.
10. A film of one hour of the assessments of an individual learner, showing the use of at least **two** standardised tests (one of which will be a test

'battery' including sub-tests), appropriate for the age of the learner carried out in a 1:1 situation, should be submitted on a password-protected DVD / USB or other secure means, for assessment. It may be filmed on more than one occasion but must focus on the assessment of **one** learner. It should be password protected as in the guidelines for the assessment of Specialist Practice. The assessment of the DVD / USB must be carried out by a tutor holding Active AMBDA.

11. The final formal diagnostic assessment report which is evaluated by a tutor holding an APC must meet the SASC APC renewal criteria. The specialist award designated for the course **must not** be given to anyone failing to meet these criteria and again, AMBDA cannot be awarded.

All Awards

In the case of all BDA awards, assignments at either FHEQ Level 5 (minimum for courses leading to ATS/APS) or FHEQ Level 7 (minimum for courses leading to AMBDA) in England, Wales or Northern Ireland in the form of essays, case study and teaching and assessment reports should form part of the overall assessment. An anonymised sample of these may be requested by the Liaison Team when a course is re-accredited. For other equivalent levels see p.43 et seq.:

<http://qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/qualifications-frameworks.pdf>

The BDA considers these criteria to be essential in establishing the quality of ATS/APS and AMBDA. It does not insist upon specific aspects of course structure or the academic aspects of assessment procedures, apart from their being at the appropriate level. It does not seek to act as a secondary examining body in these respects but may request access to anonymised assignments, teaching/assessment files and / or assessment reports when courses are submitted for re-accreditation to ensure that the relevant criteria are being met **subject to the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR, 2018).**

Following successful completion of an accredited course, candidates must personally apply for AMBDA, ATS or APS within **three** years of successful completion of that course. The BDA recommends that all candidates successfully completing all elements of the course should be given a signed and dated Tutor Form, available on the BDA website.

Any candidate who successfully completed a course more than **three** years previously will also be required to complete a BDA Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Portfolio and will be asked to submit evidence relating to their current competencies in multi-sensory teaching and psychometric

assessment. <https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/services/professional-accreditation/cpd>

Any queries should be addressed to the BDA Accreditation Office
accreditation@bdadyslexia.org.uk