



TEACHING ASSISTANT GUIDE

WHICH COURSE IS RIGHT FOR ME ?

CHOOSING A COURSE

“*Knowing what you are looking for*”

On the surface choosing a Teaching Assistant course appears a complicated process. In reality however, once you know what you are looking for it is fairly simple. Therein lies the key.. ‘Knowing what you are looking for’. The internet is laden with teaching assistant courses that aren’t worth the paper the ‘certificate’ they give you is written on. This guide is designed to help you avoid those and be confident that wherever you study you will be obtaining a qualification accepted by schools and OFSTED.

WHERE DO I START ?

The most important thing to establish when looking at a course is, does it lead to a RQF listed qualification. If it does, the course is accredited and will be accepted by all schools, if it doesn't then it's not accredited and will not be accepted by OFSTED and schools. Schools are bound to adhering to OFSTED guidelines and requirements and they will insist that all members of staff hold a recognised qualification.



WHAT IS THE RQF ?

RQF stands for Regulated Qualification Framework. Essentially it is a list of recognised qualifications put together by Ofqual. Ofqual stands for Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation and they are the regulating body of qualifications.

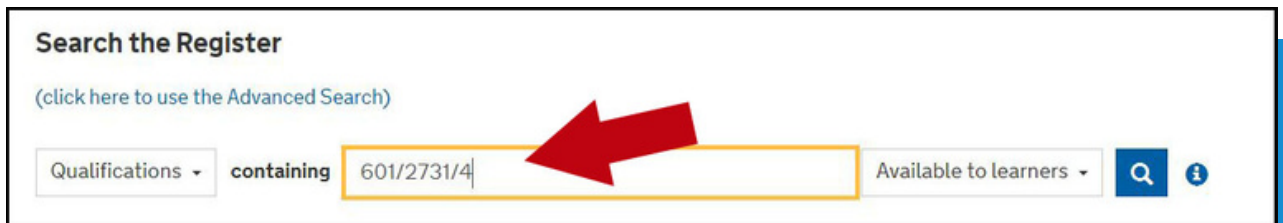
Within this list you will find qualifications across all sectors, not just Teaching. You will also find qualifications from a number of different awarding bodies. All of them are recognised if they are on the RQF.

HOW CAN I CHECK IF A QUALIFICATION IS LISTED ON THE RQF?

This is a very simple process. All RQF qualifications have a course code. This should clearly be shown in any course information. If a course does not have a code you know it is not recognised. Be careful however, many courses have codes that are not RQF ones so it is always important to check..

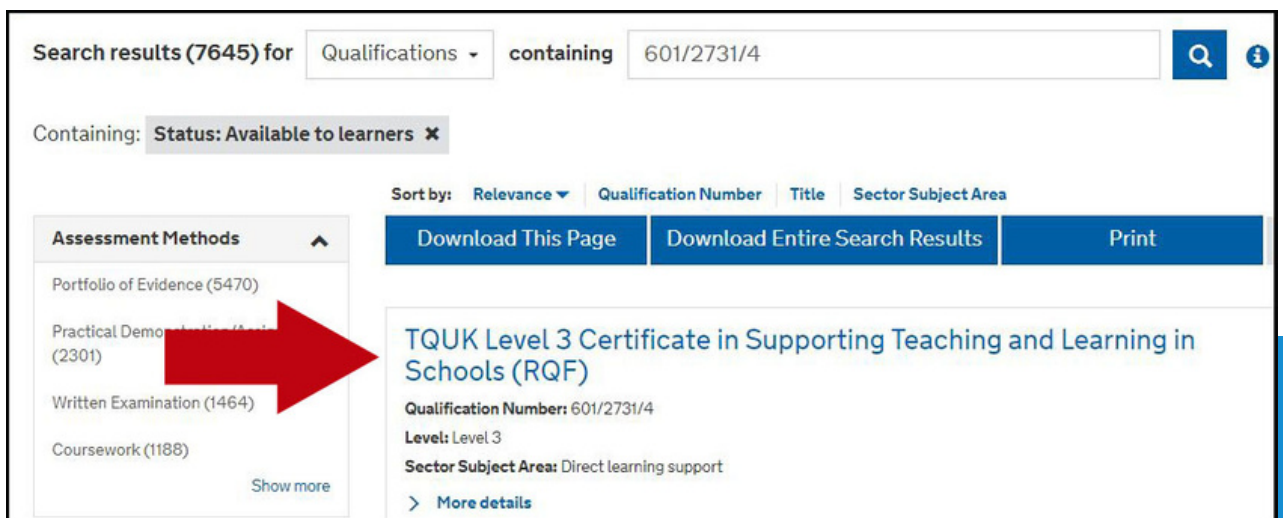
04 CHECK THE QUALIFICATION HERE:

<http://register.ofqual.gov.uk>



In the marked box enter the course code and click on the magnifying glass.

As an example, the code for our Supporting Teaching and Learning Level 3 Certificate qualification is 601/2731/4. This will then bring up a list of qualifications that either match, or closely match the code. If it is a genuine qualification the top qualification listed will be a direct match as is the case here:



Now you know for sure that the qualification is 100% recognised.... Or not as the case may be and you have saved yourself expense and heartache. At the bottom of this guide you will find answers to some other commonly asked questions but in reality the only one that matters you will have now established.

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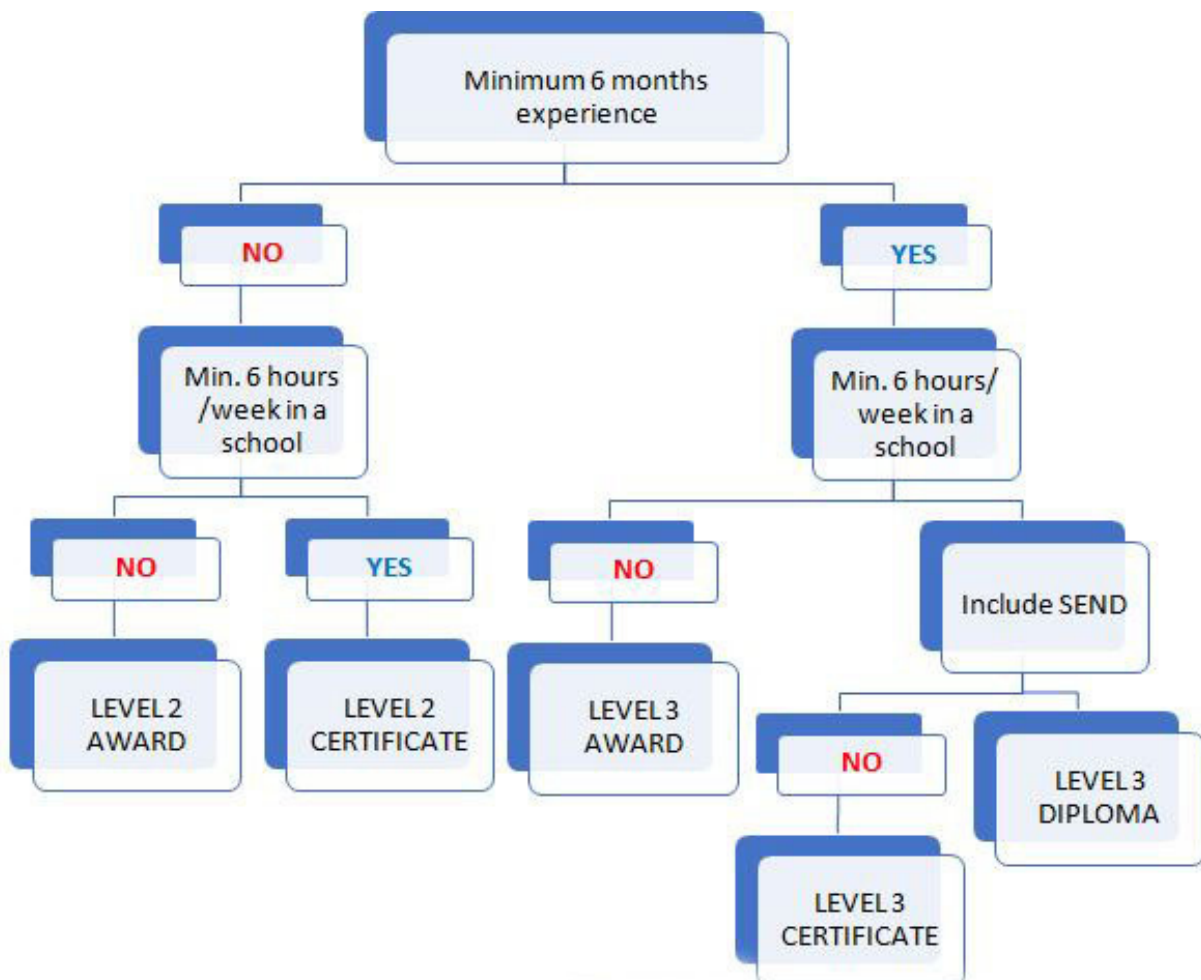
OK, NOW I KNOW HOW TO CHECK IF A QUALIFICATION IS GENUINE, HOW DO I CHOOSE THE CORRECT ONE FOR ME ?

There is no 100% correct answer to this question but we can give you guidelines which you can follow.

If you are unsure it is wise to speak to one of our course advisers either by calling us on **01902 810448** or via **live chat** at **www.studyfromhome.co.uk** .

You can also request that we call you.

HERE IS A SIMPLE FLOW CHART TO HELP YOU CHOOSE THE CORRECT QUALIFICATION:



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THE QUALIFICATIONS

We offer all of the RQF listed, Ofsted recognised qualifications listed above. Here is an outline of them:

SPECIALIST SUPPORT IN SUPPORTING TEACHING AND LEARNING IN SCHOOLS LEVEL 3 DIPLOMA

Course Code:- 603/2496/X

This is the strongest qualification you can do at Level 3 and fully qualifies you to work as a Teaching Assistant as well as working with SEND children. It is a RQF listed course that gives you 53 credit pts. You must be able to access a placement (can be voluntary) in a primary or secondary school for at least one day or two afternoons/mornings a week throughout the duration of the course. It covers the 11 units that comprise of the Certificate qualification plus 5 that specialise in SEND. The awarding body is NCFE CACHE.

SUPPORTING TEACHING AND LEARNING IN SCHOOLS LEVEL 3 CERTIFICATE

Course Code:- 603/2498/3

This is a RQF listed course that gives you 35 credit pts. You must be able to access a placement (can be voluntary) in a primary or secondary school for at least one day or two mornings/afternoons a week throughout the duration of the course. It qualifies you to work as a mainstream Level 3 Teaching Assistant. The awarding body is NCFE CACHE. Should you wish to upgrade to the Level 3 Diploma at a later date you can do so by completing the extra three units.

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SUPPORTING TEACHING AND LEARNING IN SCHOOLS LEVEL 3 AWARD

Course Code:- 603/2495/8

Again, this is a RQF listed course. If you are unable to obtain a placement then this would be the one to consider. No placement is required and the qualification gives you 12 credit pts. It is not however as strong as the Certificate or Diploma qualifications, but it is still recognised. When applying for job roles it can help if you state that once you gain employment you would be looking to complete the extra units to upgrade to the Certificate or Diploma. The awarding body is NCFE CACHE.

SUPPORTING TEACHING AND LEARNING IN SCHOOLS LEVEL 2 CERTIFICATE

Course Code:- 603/2476/4

Once again, this is a RQF listed course. As with the Level 3 Certificate course it requires you to have access to a placement in a school (can be voluntary) for at least one day or two mornings/afternoons a week throughout the duration of the course. The qualification gives you 30 credit pts and the awarding body is NCFE CACHE.

There is no requirement to do Level 2 before you do Level 3. If you have experience of working in a school then it can be worth going straight to Level 3 as you can save yourself some time and money and open up more opportunities. If you have no experience it is wiser to begin with Level 2.

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LEVEL 2 AWARD IN SUPPORTING TEACHING AND LEARNING

Course Code:- 603/2478/8

This is another RQF listed course. As with the Level 3 Award, this one does not require a placement. Again, it is not as strong as the Certificate version, giving you 12 credit points upon completion. It is more suitable for those who wish to work in support staff roles in a school such as site staff and administrators.

HIGHER LEVEL TEACHING ASSISTANT LEVEL 4 CERTIFICATE

Course Code:- 603/1432/1

This course is for students employed in a teaching assistant role who would like the opportunity of progressing onto Higher Level Teaching Assistant Status. Students should have completed a Level 3 Supporting Teaching qualification or have extensive experience of working as a Teaching Assistant. It is an RQF listed qualification and gives you 36 credit points upon completion.



ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS:

“What are credit points?”

Upon completion of each unit on a RQF qualification you are awarded credit points. For example, on the Specialist Support Level 3 Diploma you would earn a total of 44 credit points. These points can be used to help access other courses in the future should you wish to continue your study. It is another way of identifying that the qualification is genuine. These should not be confused with ‘CPD points’. CPD points are now being offered on courses that do not provide an RQF qualification. **Please, don’t be misled, it is not the same thing and not recognised by Ofsted.** If you are unsure, check on the RQF framework as explained at the beginning of this guide or contact us.

“Placement Requirements...”

Qualifications requiring placements (can be voluntary) in a school would require you to be in reception class or above. Anything below this would fall under the Early Years curriculum and a different set of qualifications.

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“I’ve seen TA jobs asking for NVQ’s...”

There have been numerous changes over the years to qualifications in the UK and there are still some schools who when advertising for job roles still ask for NVQ’s. NVQ’s were replaced with QCF qualifications, which in turn have now become RQF qualifications. So if you see a job asking for any of these.. NVQ, QCF or RQF, it’s all the same thing in essence.

NVQ’s are no longer available in this sector.

If a school is unsure you can advise them to contact OFSTED who will update them that it is RQF qualifications that are now required. This is quite rare but it does happen from time to time.

“I’ve seen cheaper alternatives to RQF qualifications....”

This is where many, many people unfortunately get caught out. It can be very attractive when you see a course advertised as “Teaching Assistant Level 3 Diploma” and listed at a crazy low price such as £49. The simple premise is, if you undertake such a course, you will NOT be qualified as a teaching assistant. We cannot emphasise this enough. Over the years we have spoken to so many students who have spent time and money upon completing a course only to have their hopes and dreams dashed when applying for a job.

So, don’t be fooled by the name of a course, what a ‘salesperson’ is telling you, how cheap it appears to be.

PLEASE ensure you follow the checks outlined and ensure you complete a RQF qualification if you wish to be qualified as a TA.



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So courses that don't lead to RQF qualifications are useless....

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Surprisingly the answer to this question is...
No!

Initially to be qualified as a TA you will need the RQF qualification. However, after that you can look to add to your skills with 'CPD' (Continuous professional development) courses.

These are courses that can provide additional knowledge in specific area.. for example Autism. Completing them effectively adds additional skills to your CV allowing you to specialise in those areas.

Always check that any such courses are accredited by a regulated awarding body.

Study from Home only offer accredited qualifications.