

What does 'Active' mean in relation to an award?

All BDA awards are 'for life'. However, understanding of dyslexia, its causes, effects and methods of intervention are continually developing through the efforts of both researchers and practitioners. Therefore, to ensure that, for example, parents, carers, Local Authorities and schools can have confidence that the holder of an award has kept up to date with current thinking and practice the BDA holds a list of those who have successfully submitted a CPD Portfolio every three years demonstrating what they have done during that time to keep themselves abreast of developments. Those who are on that list have an 'Active' award and the BDA will confirm this to enquirers.

I have a qualification in Further Education and AMBDA (FE/HE) and want to apply for a post in a large secondary school. Can I apply for 'school' AMBDA or must I get QTS first?

You can apply without QTS for both Approved Practitioner Status (APS) and AMBDA. You should apply to whichever course listed on the BDA web site is most convenient for you. Ask the course leader if you can just enrol for the Specialist 'school' Units as you have already successfully completed the Core Units as part of your AMBDA FE/HE. Naturally you will have to successfully complete the Assessed Specialist Teaching and Assessment requirements. (If you took your FE/HE course more than 3 years ago then you will have to submit a Continuing Professional Development Portfolio *along with your application.*) *The details are on the BDA website.*

I have done some units in dyslexia as part of a Masters' course. How can I use these to get ATS or AMBDA?

Most courses will accredit relevant prior learning (APL) to give exemption for up to 50% of their Units. However, this is a matter for the course leader not the BDA. You should approach your nearest accredited course. There is a list of these on the BDA web site. Both OCR and Dyslexia Action (DA) have centres countrywide teaching BDA accredited courses and the DA, Stranmillis University, Belfast and Birmingham University also have modular distance learning courses.

I took a course in dyslexia some time ago. How recent does it have to be to 'count' towards a qualification?

If it was a BDA accredited course within the past three years you can submit your application for ATS/APS/AMBDA at any time. However, if you took the course more than 3 years ago you must submit a Continuing Professional Development Portfolio along with your application. The details are on the BDA website.

If the course was not accredited by the BDA then you may be able to use that study to gain exemption from a course that is. Most courses will not credit study done more than 5 years previously. Alternatively, if you also have professional experience with dyslexic learners you may like to consider applying for a BDA award by the 'Individual Merit' route. Details are on the website.

I was awarded ALSA/ATS/APS/AMBDA over three years ago. What will happen if I don't submit a Continuing Professional Development Portfolio?

Your name will not be placed on the list of those with 'Active' awards. You can still put the letters after your name but you cannot claim to have an 'Active' qualification and if the BDA are approached by a potential employer they would have to tell them that you were not on the Active list.

The BDA accredited course I am taking is part of the University's Masters programme. However, the units leading to ATS/APS/ AMBDA are not enough for me to get the Master's award. Do I have to get this award to qualify for the BDA award?

No. So long as you have passed those units leading to ATS/APS/AMBDA and satisfactorily completed the specialist practical teaching and assessment requirements you should be given a completed Tutor Form to send with your application to the BDA.

I took a BDA accredited course that led to ATS/AMBDA or ATS (FE/HE)/ AMBDA (FE/HE) depending on where you did your Specialist Teaching Practice. I did mine in a College of Further Education. I now teach in a school. Can I apply for ATS AMBDA?

This must have been some time ago. Currently, 'School' and FE/HE courses have separate 'Core' and 'Specialist' taught elements. If you were awarded an FE/HE attribution you will either have to find a 'school' course that will register you to take the appropriate Specialist lectures and successfully complete the relevant Specialist teaching. (The reverse applies if you have a 'school' award.) If you have been successfully teaching dyslexic pupils in your school or college for some time and can provide evidence of this confirmed by a person with AMBDA then you can apply for ATS / AMBDA by Individual Merit. (If you do not hold QTS then you can apply for Approved Practitioner Status - APS - not ATS.). The details and application forms are on the BDA web site.

I took a BDA accredited course some time ago but did not apply for ATS / AMBDA at the time. I now need it for my career. My tutor has left the university concerned. How can I get my tutor form signed?

All universities have to keep records of past students including awards made. You should approach the current course leader or, if the course is no longer running, the present Head of Department, Dean of Faculty, and / or Administrative Person at the university and ask them to give you a letter confirming that you passed all elements of the course **including the practical elements**. We emphasise this as in some courses the practical elements are not taken into account for passing the course. If you find that this is not possible you should write to the BDA giving full details of your attempts and we will try to guide you further. You should note that if the course was taken more than three years ago you will have to submit a Continuing Professional Development Portfolio along with your application. If all else fails, you can apply via the Individual Merit route.

I did an OCR dyslexia course some time ago but did not apply for ATS/AMBDA at the time. I believe that the course has changed since then. Can I still apply?

The position with regard to OCR courses, and before that RSA, is complicated. You should approach the OCR directly and ask them to give you a letter confirming that the units you took are appropriate for the award of ATS / AMBDA and, if so, issue you with a Tutor Form to go with it. You should note that if the course was taken more than three years ago you will have to submit a Continuing Professional Development Portfolio along with your application.

I have taken early retirement from teaching and want to become a freelance dyslexia tutor. Can I take a course giving me both 'school' and FE/HE ATS/AMBDA?

Yes, whilst most courses lead to only one of the awards both courses may be offered by the same course provider. Also there is a significant part of each course (the 'Core Studies') that is common to both awards with the Specialist Studies and requirements for specialist teaching practice being different. You should find a provider offering both awards and register for one of the courses and ask to take the other specialist element either concurrently or the following year. Remember that you must successfully complete **both** practical elements if you are gain both awards.

Can I use my 'school' ATS/AMBDA award to apply for a job in Further Education?

Yes, so long as you are honest about what the award implied. What weight an employer puts on any qualification or experience is a matter for them. Depending on the needs of their student intake 'school' ATS / AMBDA might actually be an advantage.

I have ATS/AMBDA. Is there a 'short-cut' to ATS/AMBDA (FE/HE)?

It depends what you mean by a 'short-cut' and how long ago you were awarded ATS/AMBDA. If this was within the last 5 years you should approach your nearest accredited course leading to 'school' ATS/AMBDA. Ask them to register you for the 'Specialist' part of the course and the supervised and assessed practice of teaching. (They may see this as registering you for the whole course but giving you exemption from the 'Core' studies.) Most courses will accredit relevant prior learning (APL) to give exemption for up to 50% of their Units. However, this is a matter for the course leader not the BDA.)

We are a Local Authority course. Due to the recent cut-backs we can no longer afford to employ specialist lecturers to teach on the course. However, we do have appropriately qualified people who work for the authority (e.g. Educational Psychologists, Advisers, and Specialist Teachers) who could take the sessions and do the assessments. Will we need to be re-accredited if we employ them?

There are two issues here – BDA criteria and University requirements. To teach on the Specialist part of the course, particularly that relating to specialist teaching and

diagnostic assessment of pupils and to observe and assess the practical teaching element a person **must** have **AMBDA or equivalent**. The Core can be taught by a person appropriately qualified in the theory and research underlying the understanding of dyslexia. You should let your Liaison Team know what you are proposing and send them the CVs of the people proposed as tutors. They can then guide you as to whether two or more should seek AMBDA by Individual Merit.

If your course is validated by a university at post-graduate level (Level 7) they may have regulations about the level of academic qualifications to be held by anyone teaching a significant part of such a course. You should inform them also about what you propose and seek their guidance.

I teach in a secondary school that has pupils from 11 to 18 years of age. I have been asked to join the Learning Support Department and am to take an appropriate course. Should I take 'school' ATS/AMBDA or ATS/AMBDA (FE/HE)?

Unless your work is to be confined to the 6th Form then we think that 'school' ATS/AMBDA would be the appropriate course to take. Particularly if you took a course leading to AMBDA rather than ATS this would give you not only appropriate specialist teaching skills but also qualify you to perform statutory assessments for access arrangements. However, there are many elements of the Specialist FE/HE course that would be of benefit for you. One suggestion would be that having obtained your ATS/AMBDA you seek to attend those elements of the course, possibly as a university 'short-course' as you do not need to take the observed and assessed specialist practical teaching elements of the FE/HE course unless you want both awards.

I took a Local Authority course some time ago and did not apply for ATS/AMBDA at the time. The service has been reorganised and no one seems to know anything about it. How do I get my tutor form signed so that I can apply for the award?

If you have written to the Director of Education/Children's Services and not had a satisfactory reply then your next approach should be to the university that validated your course. If you don't know which this is then write to or e-mail the BDA with the name of the Local Authority, the title of the course and the dates you took it. We should be able to tell you which university it was and they should have records that will help you. If not, and particularly if you took the course some time ago you may like to consider taking the Individual Merit route. Details are on the BDA web site.

How do I upgrade my ATS award to AMBDA?

If possible you should approach the provider of your ATS course. If they also run an AMBDA course they should be able to give you exemption from the ATS part, or the parts of the course that constitute your ATS studies. You can then take the remaining studies and complete the additional specialist teaching practice. If they do not run an AMBDA course then you will have to look for the nearest course provider who does and follow the same advice. There is a list of providers on the BDA web site. If you took your ATS course more than three years ago you will also have to complete an ATS CPD Portfolio to make it 'Active'.

What are the fees for a course, Practising Cert, ATS, and AMBDA etc

The fees for an accredited course are entirely a matter for the course provider and their validating university. They can vary up to about £2,000 depending on many factors. Local Authority courses may be free or subsidised for professionals employed by that LA. If you live in an area where there is more than one provider you should 'shop-around'. The BDA fees for processing your application to them for the award of ATS / AMBDA etc. on successful completion of the course are on the web site.

Where can I find available courses?

The BDA web site has a list of current accredited course providers.

<http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/services/professional-accreditation/course-providers>

If a state school can employ somebody with AMBDA even if they don't have a PGCE what is the pay scale rate?

This is entirely a matter for the school and / or the Local Authority. If the proposed changes in legislation are implemented pay scales generally will be increasingly a matter for the school.

What is the difference between ATS and AMBDA?

ATS (Approved Teacher Status) and Approved Practitioner Status (**APS**) indicates that you are a professionally trained, competent specialist teacher of pupils with dyslexia with a good understanding of the theories underlying the nature of dyslexia. As well as being competent to deliver specialist dyslexia teaching on a 1:1 basis you are also able to support, coach and mentor colleagues in their day-to-day teaching of dyslexic pupils both in your own school and others. (ATS also indicates that you have QTS.)

AMBDA (Associate Membership of the British Dyslexia Association) indicates not only the above but that you also have a very solid understanding of the theories and research underpinning the reasons for and successful teaching methods of dyslexic pupils. It also indicates that you understand educational psychometrics, can competently use relevant standardised tests and carry out diagnostic assessments. It therefore makes you an appropriate person to perform formal assessments to justify the provision of special arrangements for appropriate learners. It also gives you automatic access to an Assessment Practising Certificate enabling you to write reports for DSA funds.

In practical terms an ATS/APS course involves a minimum of 40 hours of lectures and 20 hours of observed and assessed specialist teaching and AMBDA a course of 90 hours and 30 hours of observed and assessed specialist teaching. Full details are on the BDA web site:

<http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/quality-mark-and-accreditation/professional-membership-accreditation/individual-accreditation-applications.html>

Both awards now require you to submit a Continuing Professional Development Portfolio every 3 years to remain on the BDA's 'Active' list. Being on this list indicates to parents, other teachers and LAs etc. that your knowledge, skills and understanding of dyslexia detailed above are up-to-date.

Do I still need AMBDA if I have an Assessment Practising Certificate?

It all depends what your professional activities involve. AMBDA involves much more than the practising certificate. It indicates that as well as being a competent assessor you also have a very solid understanding of the theories and research underpinning the reasons for and successful teaching methods of dyslexic pupils and can apply those methods in your Specialist Teaching of learners with dyslexia and coaching and mentoring colleagues. You are qualified to perform formal assessments and write reports with ATS and a Practising Certificate but to perform fully what should be expected of a fully qualified Specialist you need AMBDA.

What are the benefits of having AMBDA?

You have what is nationally, and increasingly internationally, recognised 'Gold Standard' award for specialist teachers of dyslexic pupils. Government bodies recognise ATS/APS and AMBDA as the accreditations appropriate for the specialist teaching of pupils with dyslexia, and coaching and mentoring of colleagues in their own and other schools.

Can I perform formal assessments and write reports to justify special arrangements for pupils with dyslexia if I have AMBDA?

Yes, so long as your AMBDA is 'Active'. This means that you took your course not more than 3 years ago or that you have successfully submitted a Continuing Professional Development portfolio. If you wish to write reports for the DSA (Disabled Students' Allowances) you must also hold an Assessment Practising Certificate (APC).

Do I need to be a qualified teacher to gain AMBDA?

No. However you do need to have QTS to be awarded ATS but, you can gain the equivalent of ATS – APS (Approved Practitioner Status) if you successfully complete an ATS course but do not have QTS.

Where can I find work with AMBDA?

As the teaching system in the UK is becoming increasingly fragmented, you can seek work in a variety of situations. Your Local Authority may have a list of specialist supply teachers or know of schools that are looking for a specialist. Schools, in particular Academies and Faith Schools may have recruitment needs that they have not communicated to the Local Authority. Similarly, many private schools are keen to assure parents that they can support the needs of all pupils, including those with dyslexia. The BDA uses Associates with AMBDA to deliver its training courses and, with an APC, to carry out diagnostic assessments. Finally, your local BDA Dyslexia Association

may run their own specialist classes and may know of schools and / or parents who would welcome access to a specialist teacher.

In all these situations it is worthwhile to construct a well-focussed CV showing that you have done your research into the requirements of the particular situation you are applying for and not just a general statement.

How do I find out how to interpret test scores particularly standard deviations and discrepancies between test scores?

The short (and best) answer is to take a course leading to AMBDA. However, if this is not possible your local university or college of further education may be running a course in psychometrics. If you need to be able to use this knowledge to perform formal assessments for special arrangements for SEND and to write the subsequent reports then you must either take a course leading to AMBDA or one leading to ATS/APS and a recognised course in psychometrics. See the SASC web site, <http://www.sasc.org.uk/>

I took my ATS/AMBDA course over 3 years ago so I need to submit a Continuing Professional Development Portfolio. Please can you tell me what constitutes CPD other than that listed?

For formal and informal CPD the Scrutiny Team will be looking to see that the conferences, courses or reading you have attended and/or undertaken can be considered as 'academically respectable'. In other words they are not just meetings to say how important it is to 'do something about dyslexia' or to publicise the latest 'miracle cure' unless that is also accompanied by a clear and critical consideration of the theory underlying it.

In relation to reading, your local ATS/AMBDA course provider may be able to supply you with an up-to-date reading list and may even be running a short, updating course. If you are using web sites as one of your sources then again be careful to evaluate them in terms of the recognition of their providers. Nationally recognised dyslexia associations, government web sites and those *hosted by universities are good examples of such sites. Ones to be cautious about are those run by commercial organisations or avowed 'pressure groups'.*

I don't have anyone with AMBDA to 'sign-off' my CPD portfolio. How will I know if my head or line manager is acceptable?

They will be acceptable so long as they have looked through what you have written and have observed your specialist teaching on a number of occasions and have knowledge of its effectiveness. They should include statements to this effect in their letter of support which must be on headed paper with an original signature. If in any doubt also ask them to include a copy of their CV.

How do I know if my psychology qualification lets me take a course leading to ATS/AMBDA?

This is a matter for the course leader and the British Psychological Society. If BPS accepts your qualifications as those of a Chartered Psychologist then you can be enrolled on a course accredited for AMBDA. However, the final decision rests with the leader of the course.

Where can I get insurance?

The BDA offers insurance to holders of BDA Professional Membership, through a third party broker. You need to be clear the level of insurance you need in relation to what you do. There are two types of insurance in the professional area – (see below). Depending on your professional work you may feel you need Public Indemnity also.

Professional Indemnity insurance - Covers claims made by dis-satisfied clients. If you find yourself in dispute with a client, Professional Indemnity insurance will cover the cost of defending any allegations or claims made against you.

Anyone who gives advice or provides a professional service to clients should have Professional Indemnity Insurance

Public Liability Insurance - If members of the **public** or **customers** come to your premises or you go to theirs (including if you work from home), you should think about taking out public liability (PL) insurance. **PL insurance can cover awards or damages given to a member of the public because of an injury or damage to their property caused by you or your business. It can also cover any related legal fees, costs and expenses as well as costs of hospital treatment (including ambulance costs) that the NHS may claim from you.**

If I have done the Open University E801 course can I assess for dyslexia or is it just special needs?

If you successfully completed the OU Course E801 including the additional studies and assessments as detailed on their web site you can apply for AMBDA. AMBDA obtained in this way is the same as any other AMBDA and providing you completed the course less than 3 years ago you will be on the 'Active' list and can assess for dyslexia. If you took the OU course more than three years ago you should complete a CPD Portfolio to submit with your application.

Can I assess for DSA?

Only holders of an Assessment Practising Certificate (APC) can assess for DSA. You can be awarded one of these automatically on application if you hold 'Active' AMBDA and have completed your Level 7 accredited course within the last five years (3 years for courses starting from September 2016)

What tests should I use when assessing?

The psychometrics element of your course should have covered this. If you work for a Local Authority or school they may have a policy regarding it and their own supply of tests. If not, then we suggest you contact your educational psychology service for advice. If you provide private professional services we suggest you consult an appropriate text on psychometrics and dyslexia. The list of approved tests for DSA can be found at <http://www.sasc.org.uk/>. This is a useful starting point for testing both adults and children.

How do I interpret test scores and questions related to standard deviations? How do I deal with discrepancies between test scores?

If you are a teacher and these are part of a report you have received as the result of a formal assessment of a learner then you should ask the writer of the report to explain more fully their implications. If this is not possible then your SENCO or the educational psychologist who supports your school should be able to help you. If you are a parent who has been presented with them as part of an assessment of your child, again seek clarification from the writer of the report. If you still have a problem then you can approach your Local Authority's Parent Partnership person and/or the secretary of your BDA local Dyslexia Association.

Where can I buy the tests?

Most of the suppliers of psychometric tests have web sites that any of the search engines will take you to. Most psychometric tests are coded with the level of qualification required by their users. You should find full details on the supplier's web site. Usually you will need to provide evidence of completing a Level 7 psychometrics course in order to buy them. Courses accredited for AMBDA contain such a recognised psychometric element.

Where can I get funding to buy the tests?

If you work for a school or Local Authority this is a matter for them. If you work as an individual the short answer is that you probably cannot. Some LDAs advertise second hand tests from retiring specialist teachers. Beware of using tests that you are not trained to administer though and check that they are the latest versions.

Where can I get funding to do a course if I am unemployed?

Look at the Government's Qualifications and public funding website for information and advice; <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/qualifications-approved-for-public-funding>

Can I get funding for the course resources if I am doing a government funded course?

Again look at the Government Qualifications and public funding website for information and advice; <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/qualifications-approved-for-public-funding>.

Can I assess for Dyslexia with a BDA screening test?

Assessing for dyslexia is a complex process that requires the level of training provided in a course leading to AMBDA. However, you can get a good indication whether a learner should be referred for a full diagnostic assessment from the results of the BDA screening test.

How do I find information on the BDA website?

The website is currently under review and it is hoped that the search engine will be far more effective when the review is completed.

How I would recognise if someone is qualified to diagnose dyslexia?

They should be able to show you a certificate of the award of AMBDA or an Assessment Practising Certificate (APC) or, if a psychologist, a certificate of registration with the Health and Care Professionals Council (HCPC) issued in the past three years. The BDA can confirm that they are on the list of holders of 'Active' AMBDA. The SASC web site has a list of those holding APCs <http://www.sasc.org.uk/Assessors.aspx>.

I am a qualified teacher and hold a BA (Hons) together with a PGCE. In addition I completed a one year MA qualification in 2013 through 'Anytown' University, which focused on dyslexia support and current diagnostic practices. Since 2013 I have taken on the role of Specialist Dyslexia Teacher at my current school. My Headteacher is keen to support my application for accreditation. I would be grateful if you could outline the steps in order to complete this. I have downloaded both application forms from the BDA website but am unsure who should complete the 'tutor' copy. Can this be completed by my Head or do we need to approach a BDA accredited tutor?

Unless the whole or part of your MA was accredited for ATS or AMBDA you need to apply for either ATS or AMBDA by Individual Merit. Details are on the BDA website.

I am an experienced New Zealand registered educational Psychologist, currently working privately in Switzerland. I wish to participate in a course of training to enable me to assess, diagnose and recommend interventions for children with specific learning difficulties/dyslexia. A distance learning option would be most suitable for me given my location in Switzerland. I have tried to research available options, but to be honest I'm confused about which course of study would be most suitable given my status as a registered Psychologist (not chartered, as I am not recognized within the British system). I am registered with the New Zealand Psychologists' Board.

As you say, a distance learning course would be the most convenient for you. These are available from Dyslexia Action, Stranmillis University, Belfast and Birmingham University. However, having said that, many UK courses have now condensed their face-to-face teaching into a series of week-ends and guided learning and may be conveniently situated for travel. Coincidentally, we have recently made an award to a teacher from Switzerland who flew over to the UK for the relevant week-ends!

I currently work as a teacher of English as a Foreign Language in Asia but I also have QTS from the UK. We are trying to improve our SEN provision and I came across your website while doing some research. I think my organisation would benefit greatly from having a few AMBDA teachers in our centre as we do come across a number of dyslexic learners each term and we're not really equipped or skilled to neither diagnose nor offer adequate support.

Distance learning courses are available from Dyslexia Action, Stranmillis University, Belfast and Birmingham University. The only alternative would be to see if any conveniently situated in-country university ran courses with appropriate content. They could apply to the BDA for accreditation or you could download the requirements for an award by Individual Merit from the BDA web site, map the units / modules available from that university onto *those requirements and write to or e-mail the BDA to see if they constituted appropriate evidence for the award.*

I hold QTS and an OCR Level 5 diploma in teaching learners with SpLD (dyslexia), I am looking to obtain a post graduate certificate in assessment practice. I understand I would need to obtain an ATS/APC from the BDA. Could you kindly send information on the best possible route to obtain a post graduate certificate in assessment practice and ATS programme the based on my current qualifications.

We are not sure what you mean by 'a post graduate certificate in assessment practice'. If you are seeking a university qualification with this title then this is a matter for an appropriate university. If you are seeking a certificate that enables you to write formal reports assessing for / diagnosing dyslexia then you need an to enhance your OCR ATS course to AMBDA. You then have an award entitling you to perform assessments and write reports for access arrangements under JCQ regulations. You would also be entitled to seek an Assessment Practising Certificate

(APC) from the BDA which would also entitle you to write reports for support from the DSA. You can also gain an APC by applying for ATS on the strength of a Tutor Form from your OCR Level 5 course and successfully completing a recognised course in Educational Psychometrics. (See the SASC website for details of such courses).

I have my tutor and candidate forms ready to send off for my AMBDA application but I was under the impression that there was a specific window of dates where they will be accepted. Is this correct? And if so, when can I send them in.

What you say was previously the case but we now accept applications for BDA awards at any time. There is a four to six week turnaround on first applications, but can take longer if there is a high volume of applicants

I have successfully completed the Open University E801 and AMBDA FE/HE practical and intend to apply for AMBDA FE/HE status. I have a query about the teaching hours and age of students. For the past five years I have worked 18.5 hours per week in a FE college as a Lecturer in SpLDs. Whilst I have lectured both undergraduate and postgraduate students, almost all of my time has been spent with FE students (i.e., 16-19 year olds). I have a Professional Certificate in Education but have not needed to apply for QTLS and therefore have not kept details of which students I have taught etc. Will the panel accept 18.5 hours x 38 weeks x 5 years = 3,515 teaching hours?

There seems to be some confusion here. Those whom you teach normally are a matter for the course leader (here the OU) to agree as an appropriate background for taking the course. Learners over 16 years are now a 'grey area' as there are so many diverse situations in which they are taught. What matters to the BDA is with whom you did your Assessed Specialist Teaching and Assessment. If you have a completed Tutor Form from the OU showing successful completion of the course and its assessment within the past three years then they must have agreed that this was appropriate.

Last year I received an email from my course tutor regarding accreditation for CPS 1 (Dyslexia). I completed the course some time ago (my certificate is dated 25th Nov 2009). The course was run in association with Anytown University and my certificate is issued by that university. Is it now too late to get my accreditation? I already have the form required and am aware of the fee involved.

We are not sure what CPS 1 implies but if the Tutor Form shows that you have successfully completed all elements of a BDA accredited course then you can apply for the relevant BDA award. However, as the date you quote is more than three years ago you will also have to complete a CPD Portfolio showing what steps you have taken to ensure that your understanding and skills are up to date and submit it with the Tutor Form. Details are on the BDA web site.

I would like to apply for ATS by Individual Merit (IM). I am an overseas qualified (Australia) Educational Psychologist. I do not have HCPC registration in the UK as yet and would like to apply for ATS first. I am also a Secondary School SENCO with primary experience and have QTS.

You should download the relevant documents from the BDA web site and map your qualifications and experience onto the criteria. You will find a checklist of the appropriate evidence with those documents. We can answer any queries you may have regarding interpretation of the criteria but cannot comment on the evidence you are proposing to produce until the relevant fee has been paid.

I am looking to study for a recognised qualification to support pupils at secondary school level. I am a Teacher's Assistant. Please could you advise on the type of qualification I should be considering?

It rather depends on what level of study you wish to undertake. The first level of BDA award is Accredited Learning Support Assistant (ALSA). This is usually taught at Level 3 upwards (the level being a matter for the course provider). Next is Approved Practitioner Status that can be taught at either Level 5 (Foundation Degree) or Level 7 (Post Graduate). Finally the 'Gold Standard' is Associate Member of the BDA (AMBDA) that is taught at Level 7 (Post Graduate). Whether your current qualifications are appropriate for a particular level is a matter for you and the course provider.

I have recently completed the Open University E801 course in Teaching Literacy to Learners with Dyslexia and their AMBDA accreditation year. I wanted to complete my registration form for AMBDA FE/HE but I would really like to speak with someone to make sure I am applying for all of the right sections.

The thing to do is to do your best with it and send it in with your completed Tutor Form. If we have any queries we will contact you.

I have recently started working at Anytown School in Blankfordshire. I will be teaching 11-13 year old dyslexic boys English and the Headteacher has offered to fund me through some dyslexia training. I would be very grateful if you could recommend which of your courses would be most helpful and how I would go about applying for a place on one.

We cannot comment on the suitability or otherwise of a particular course for any individual's needs. However, there is a list of BDA accredited courses on the BDA web site. You should consult their web sites and apply to the most appropriate/convenient course provider. If there are none near to you, distance learning courses are available from Dyslexia Action, Stranmillis University, Belfast and Birmingham University. Acceptance onto their course is entirely a matter for the course provider.

I am currently studying on the Dyslexia course offered through University of Anytown – I chose this as it was an accredited course. I understand that I can apply for AMBDA after completing their one year course and wanted to double check that I could apply for an APC without any additional studying.

If the university issues you with a fully completed Tutor Form to be submitted with your application for AMBDA you can apply for an APC with the BDA at the same time.

I have achieved an OCR Level 5 Diploma in Teaching Learners with Dyslexia/SpLD. I have also achieved the Postgraduate Award in Proficiency in Assessing for Access Arrangements (PAPAA) with Communicate-Ed, which is recognised at Level 7. Would the PAPAA be acceptable for an Assessment Practising Certificate via Route 3 as it is precisely aimed at understanding the principles of assessment, and administering psychometric testing? That is the first module of two, the second of which looks at their application for access arrangements.

If you also have a Tutor Form from the OCR confirming that you have successfully completed all elements of their ATS/APS course and confirmation of your PAPAA award you may submit them to the BDA with an application for an APC.