

## **Criteria for Recognition of Teachers and other Professionals with Specialist Training.**

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

There are many varied specialist training courses in dyslexia and their numbers are increasing. Some have been set up by Local Education Authorities, others under the auspices of a university or other educational establishment. The variety of these courses is welcome and the excellence of many is indisputable. However, there is a need to establish nationally and internationally recognised levels of proficiency.

The BDA stresses the importance of the practical content of specialist training courses. While not seeking to dictate the detail of teaching programmes, we strongly advocate a structured, sequential, multisensory approach for reading, writing, spelling and numeracy. This has been found to be essential for those with specific learning difficulties/dyslexia. These specialist teaching skills must be transferable to the classroom and other learning environments.

The BDA recognises that there is a range of introductory courses on specific learning difficulties. Students who propose subsequently to pursue an accredited course are advised to attend a dyslexia conference or awareness raising day prior to taking a course. This will help to familiarise themselves with the background to the topic.

ATS or AMBDA may be awarded to:

- **qualified teachers** who hold Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and are recognised by the General Teaching Council (or equivalent);
- **speech and language therapists** with appropriate professional qualifications and experience;
- **occupational therapists** with appropriate professional qualifications and experience;
- **educational psychologists** with appropriate professional qualifications and experience; and
- **other psychologists** with appropriate professional qualifications and experience.

Applicants must have completed a BDA accredited course and have a minimum of two years relevant teaching experience in the teaching of children.

If you are unsure whether your qualifications and experience are suitable, please contact the BDA office prior to commencement of the course.

## **BDA Approved Teacher Status (ATS).**

It is expected that an ATS accredited course will enable candidates to achieve the following outcomes:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the nature of dyslexia and identify children with specific learning difficulties in the classroom.
2. Make a diagnostic appraisal based on observation, assessment of attainment test findings, and demonstrate an understanding of the reports of other professionals.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of structured, sequential, multisensory teaching, and design a teaching programme to meet specific individual needs at a basic level in learning, literacy and numeracy. Social and behavioural difficulties should be taken into account for each of the pupils in their specific teaching.
4. Construct, deliver and evaluate such a programme.
5. Review classroom organisation to facilitate individual learning within the National Curriculum framework or equivalent.
6. Communicate effectively with teachers, parents and other professionals by verbal and written reports on the needs and achievements of learners with dyslexia.
7. Demonstrate an understanding of the contribution of ICT in the screening and teaching of specific learning difficulties/dyslexia and a knowledge of the range of relevant technical aids to teaching.

The course must provide a minimum of:

- **40 hours** of lectures plus seminars, tutorials and study time,
- **20 hours** evaluated specialist teaching, of which **10 hours** must be with the same pupil. The remaining 10 hours may be with two different pupils, one of which could be taught in a group.
- **1 hour** of teaching to be observed and assessed by a tutor who holds AMBDA.

### **Observation.**

The following are essential points on observation.

Observation of the 1 hour of evaluated specialist teaching is for the purposes of both formative and summative assessment.

Whether by direct observation or video/DVD, this observed specialist teaching must form a significant part of the process of developing the student's specialist skills. The hour should be followed by a written report to the student which should indicate how far that teaching currently meets the criteria.

Teaching should be evaluated by formal and informal means of observation, teaching diaries and the monitoring of pupils' progress. The teaching programme should be discussed and approved by the supervisor or tutor. Progress should be monitored with a final report on the quality of teaching.

All observation must be carried out by a course tutor who holds AMBDA.

This evaluation should take into account the quality of the observed teaching and the progress of the learner(s). The recording of lessons on video or DVD may be offered as a negotiable alternative provided they follow the BDA Video/DVD Guidelines.

Teaching diaries and video/DVD and audio taped lessons should be provided **supplementary** to the main assessment. The teaching programme should be discussed with, and approved by, the supervisor/tutor and progress monitored by reference to set performance criteria.

The teaching practice must include a minimum of 10 hours with one pupil. The remaining teaching practice could be with two different pupils. One of these could be taught in a small group of no more than three pupils.

### **Associate membership of the British Dyslexia Association (AMBDA).**

An AMBDA accredited course must enable the candidate to achieve the following outcomes:

1. Those competencies listed under Approved Teacher Status above and the following outcomes at postgraduate level:
2. Understand and critically appraise current research in specific learning difficulties/dyslexia and its relevance for teaching and learning.
3. Competently observe and assess the cognitive abilities and difficulties of students who fail to become competent in literacy and/or numeracy and to report appropriately on their needs and the provisions required.
4. Competently prepare and disseminate technical reports to specialist teachers and other professionals.
5. Critically appraise and reflect on a range of learning and structured, sequential, multisensory language and numeracy teaching programmes.
6. Design and evaluate appropriate programmes in relation to the assessed needs of a range of dyslexic learners.
7. Produce and critically evaluate appropriate programmes in relation to the assessed needs of a range of dyslexic learners, making reference to current research.
8. Demonstrate an understanding of the legal and professional issues that affect dyslexic students.
9. Demonstrate an understanding of the implications of social, emotional and community issues for dyslexic learners and their families.

The course must provide a minimum of:

- **90 hours** of lectures, seminars and guided learning hours plus private study time. It should include 12 hours of lectures and tutor led seminars devoted to the study of psychometric testing.
- **30 hours** of evaluated specialist teaching, a minimum of **12 hours** of which must be with the same pupil. The remaining 18 hours may be with two different pupils, one of which could be taught in a group.
- **3 hours** of teaching to be observed and assessed by a course tutor who holds AMBDA
- **3 diagnostic assessment reports** stemming from three different assessments carried out under supervision and demonstrating a range of assessment experience. These must include:
  - supporting assessment plans;
  - working papers; and
  - related tutors' reports.
- **1 hour** of one of the above diagnostic assessments must be observed and assessed by a course tutor who holds AMBDA.

Use of lessons and assessments recorded on video/DVD is allowed subject to the procedures outlined below and must be in accordance with the BDA Video/DVD guidelines.

## **Observation.**

The following are essential points on observation.

Observation of the 3 hours of evaluated specialist teaching is for the purposes of both formative and summative assessment. This should be split into 1 hour segments and should take place at appropriate points during 30 hours of teaching.

Whether by direct observation or video/DVD, this observation must form a significant part of the process of developing the student's specialist skills. Each hour should be followed by a written report to the student which should indicate how far that teaching currently meets the criteria.

Teaching should be evaluated by formal and informal means of observation, teaching diaries and the monitoring of pupils' progress. The teaching programme should be discussed and approved by the supervisor or tutor. Progress should be monitored with a final report on the quality of teaching.

**All observation must be carried out by a course tutor who holds AMBDA.**

## **Both Awards.**

In the case of both awards, assignments in the form of essays, case study and teaching and assessment reports should form part of the overall assessment. These should be made available if required.

The BDA considers these criteria to be essential in establishing Approved Teacher Status and Associate Membership of the BDA. However, it does not insist upon specific aspects of course structure or the academic aspects of assessment procedures. It also does not seek to act as a secondary examining body in these respects.

Any candidate wishing to seek BDA accreditation who has not fulfilled the practical components specified above will be required to attend and fulfil this within the framework of a BDA accredited course.

Candidates must apply for either ATS or AMBDA within five years of successful completion of a BDA accredited course. Any candidate who completed a course more than five years ago should contact the BDA office for further advice.

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