GUIDANCE ON DYSLEXIA AND LITERACY TRAINING COURSES 
FOR SPECIALIST TEACHERS AND SUPPORT STAFF

We receive many enquiries on training to become a specialist teacher and on courses suitable for those working in teaching and support settings with learners with dyslexia. The following guide is designed to give an insight into the main training routes and the particular Training and Professional Development courses on offer through Dyslexia Action.

Full details and application information on all of our courses is all available through our website: http://dyslexiaaction.org.uk/training-courses

HOW CAN I TRAIN TO BECOME A SPECIALIST TEACHER IN THE UK?

STEP ONE: OBTAINING QUALIFIED TEACHER STATUS

Should you decide that you wish to become a Dyslexia and Literacy specialist teacher, you would first need to gain a university degree plus a recognised teacher training qualification. Either of the following routes would normally be required in professional work settings and are usually followed by further postgraduate specialist teacher training which is offered by a number of providers including Dyslexia Action. See Step Two below.

1. DEGREE PLUS QUALIFIED TEACHER STATUS
   This is a university degree course with subject specialism that also leads to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).

   For mature students without A levels, you may find that universities may be prepared to take you on to a degree course if you have relevant work/ study experience.

2. DEGREE PLUS A PGCE
   An alternative route is to undertake a degree in a school curriculum or other relevant subject and then undertake Postgraduate Teacher Training.

   Applications for a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) are made through UCAS Teacher Training: http://www.ucas.com/ucas-teacher-training and are normally made between October and December each year for entry to a course beginning the following September. You can train in a university with school placements or train mainly in a school. In either case having a postgraduate teaching qualification would normally be required in professional work settings to then train to become a Specialist Teacher.
STEP TWO: OBTAINING SPECIALIST TEACHER STATUS

Teachers eligible for these courses will normally be graduates with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) at either primary or secondary level or (QTLS) obtained in further or higher education (FE/HE). Applicants should normally have a minimum of two years teaching experience. Practitioners who complete courses without QTS can apply for APS (Approved Practitioner Status). However not all Postgraduate Specific Learning Difficulties courses will allow entry to candidates without QTS.

3. ACCREDITED COURSES FOR SPECIALIST TEACHERS AND ASSESSORS

British Dyslexia Association (BDA)
The BDA Accreditation Board accredits courses offered by course providers and also offers the opportunity for individual accreditation to candidates completing these courses. To do this they must meet specified criteria at AMBDA or ATS level, or their FE/HE equivalents. For details on BDA approved courses see: www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/quality-mark-and-accreditation/professional-membership-accreditation/choosing-a-course-and-individual-accreditation-app.html

4. SpLD Assessment Standards Committee (SASC)
This steering committee is a standard-setting group concerned with the diagnostic assessment of specific learning difficulties in an educational setting. The authority for this committee and its remit, stem from the SpLD Working Group 2005/DfES Guidelines. SASC seeks to extend the principles of good practice contained in the Guidelines across all age ranges and throughout the profession. For approved courses see: www.sasc.org.uk/SASC_Default.aspx?id=16

5. POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE COURSES IN SpLD
Postgraduate Certificate courses in Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) take approximately one year part time, leading to Approved Teacher Status (ATS) with the BDA. Teachers completing a Postgraduate Certificate course will be qualified to offer learning support to pupils with SpLDs and/or carry out screening tests only.

Dyslexia Action offers two Postgraduate Certificate programmes at Level 7 (Master’s Level) that are accredited by Middlesex University and are as follows:

- **Postgraduate Certificate in Structured Teaching Intervention for Dyslexia and Literacy**
  Can lead to ATS (BDA) with additional mentored teaching hours (Module C2)

- **Postgraduate Certificate in Assessment for Dyslexia and Literacy**
  This route is particularly relevant for those working in FE/HE support environments and is an assessment pathway
  See: http://dyslexiaaction.org.uk/postgraduate-programme

6. POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA COURSES IN SpLD
These Diploma courses are higher level postgraduate courses lasting approximately one year part time and lead to a SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate as well as Associate Membership of the British Dyslexia Association (AMBDA). Dyslexia Action offers a Postgraduate Diploma that meets the criteria for both APC and AMBDA and is accredited by Middlesex University. Candidates wishing to apply for this course must have obtained a relevant SpLD Postgraduate Certificate at Level 7.

- **Postgraduate Diploma in Dyslexia and Literacy**
  See: http://dyslexiaaction.org.uk/postgraduate-programme
7. ASSESSMENT PRACTISING CERTIFICATE
Candidates completing a Diploma in SpLD, Level 7 are then eligible to apply for an Assessment Practising Certificate (APC) to carry out diagnostic assessments as a Specialist Teacher. This qualification is also essential if you wish to carry out assessments for a Disabled Students’ Allowance. See: www.sasc.org.uk/SASC_Default.aspx?id=5

Both BDA and SASC approve Diploma courses that qualify successful candidates to undertake assessments as a Specialist Assessor and to apply for a SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate which can be obtained from the BDA, Patoss or Dyslexia Action See: http://dyslexiaaction.org.uk/assessment-practising-certificate

8. EXAMINATION ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS (EAA)
Dyslexia Action also offers an online training and updating course for specialists wishing to provide Exam Access Arrangements.
See: http://dyslexiaaction.org.uk/exam-access-arrangements-eaa

This course is open to those who hold a specialist qualification at Level 7 such as a University Postgraduate Diploma in Dyslexia/ SpLD or an OCR Level 7 qualification or BPS Test User: Educational Ability/Attainment (formerly CCET) with additional qualifications.
The course enables specialist teachers and assessors to undertake assessments for Access Arrangements for examinations to be carried out according to the JCQ regulations. See: www.jcq.org.uk/faqs/access-arrangements

9. TEST USER: EDUCATIONAL ABILITY/ATTAINMENT (CCET)
This is a British Psychological Society (BPS) qualification for teachers and members of other relevant professions who work with children and adults and who want to use tests well. The course is a high quality benchmark standard for the use of psychometric tests in education.

This course will teach you how to use and understand psychometric tests, to use tests appropriately and not to use them when it is inappropriate to do so, and to work more effectively with educational psychologists. It does not however lead to an Assessment Practising Certificate. There is now a follow-on Postgraduate module offered by Patoss / Bath Spa University that can be undertaken if you have Approved Teacher Status and have successfully completed the CCET course which will then lead to an APC.
For further details on this award see: http://dyslexiaaction.org.uk/test-user-educational-abilityattainment-ccet

OTHER INFORMATION

10. THE DYSLEXIA GUILD
The Dyslexia Guild is a network of specialist teachers and other professionals who are keen to maintain contact and further the work of Dyslexia Action. The Guild aims to promote discussion, information and research as well as keeping members informed of developments in the field through publication and distribution. The Guild is open to all those with a professional or general interest in dyslexia. Benefits include an online library with e-books and e-journals; a topical termly journal: the Dyslexia Review; an e-newsletter: Guild Gallery and a vibrant annual Summer Conference.
For further details see: http://dyslexiaaction.org.uk/dyslexia-guild
11. DBS CHECKS  
**Please note:** A Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check is a requirement for working with children and young people. If you do not already have a DBS in place then you can apply for one through Dyslexia Action and pay an additional fee of £60. You should allow AT LEAST 6 WEEKS to process any DBS application and this must be in place before any face to face work is undertaken with a learner. Please visit [http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/agencies-public-bodies/dbs/](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/agencies-public-bodies/dbs/) for further information.

12. THE LITERACY AND DYSLEXIA-SPLD PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK  
This easy to use online tool encompasses the levels of knowledge and skills required across the education workforce to support all learners with dyslexia/SpLD. See: [http://framework.thedyslexia-spldtrust.org.uk/](http://framework.thedyslexia-spldtrust.org.uk/) for further details.

13. CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COURSES  
Dyslexia Action Training and Professional Development offers a wide range of short accredited CPD e-learning training courses for teachers and teaching assistants that may be useful in finding out more about dyslexia and co-occurring difficulties and can assist in your current role. See: [http://dyslexiaaction.org.uk/short-courses-cpd](http://dyslexiaaction.org.uk/short-courses-cpd)

These courses are intended primarily for teachers, support teachers or teaching assistants and may also be useful to you if you work in a support role. They do not however confer Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). Registration for all of these programmes is available online. We recommend that you look initially at the Level 4 CPD Award in Perspectives on Dyslexia; you can find further details in the downloadable brochure: *Dyslexia Action CPD: Level 4 and Level 5 Unit, Award and Certificate Qualifications*

14. TEACHING ASSISTANTS  
Teaching Assistants will find Dyslexia Action short accredited CPD courses useful, in particular the **Level 4 CPD Award in Perspectives on Dyslexia.** There are some Learning Support Assistant Courses in supporting pupils with SpLDs, leading to ALSA status (Accredited Learning Support Assistant). For further information see BDA approved courses (Section 8).

15. COURSES FOR THOSE WORKING WITH ADULTS  
The first three units of this programme (which form an Award) are now available from Dyslexia Action. Successful completion of the three units leads to the **Level 4 CPD Award in Understanding and Supporting the Needs of Adults with Dyslexia and Co-occurring Difficulties.** This programme is suitable for those working in Further or Higher Education and with adult learners. QTS is not required for this course. See: [http://dyslexiaaction.org.uk/supporting-adults-programme](http://dyslexiaaction.org.uk/supporting-adults-programme)

16. CONTACT ADDRESS  
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**DYSLEXIA ACTION TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**  
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