

[Teaching assistants](#) play a vital role in the development and learning of students. Within the classroom, they provide critical support to a teacher and help to make sure that the school environment is harmonious and productive.

[Teaching assistants](#) often need a certain level of training to be effective within their roles, and this training is a vital component of their overall effectiveness. Therefore, it is necessary to make sensible decisions when considering a career as a teaching assistant. LearnQ can help to provide a well-rounded [education](#) in this field for anyone who wants to [become a teaching assistant](#).

What is a Teaching Assistant?

So, the role of a [teaching assistant](#) is quite simple to understand. The teaching assistant is there to serve as support for the teacher themselves, working with them to make sure that children receive support for both their social and educational development inside and outside of the classroom environment.

Teaching assistants are expected to support teachers by providing critical support in a range of ways. In secondary school, a teaching assistant is often referred to as a learning support assistant. Their responsibilities will vary from one situation to the next, but general support capability is expected.

What Are the [Roles of a Teaching Assistant](#)?

While it is true that the roles involved in a teaching assistant can vary from one place to the next, there are certain responsibilities that are expected on a universal basis:

- Helping to prepare the classroom for lessons by sorting out tables, chairs and preparing learning materials under the direction of the teacher.
- Listening to children read, and also read to them where applicable - this can also translate to telling stories.
- Working closely with children who might need a bit of extra support to complete tasks in the classroom.

- Working with teachers to plan out learning activities and provide complete records for the school.
- Supporting teachers in managing and maintaining order in the classroom - working with children that are (unintentionally) disruptive.
- Supervising group activities and making sure work is completed.
- Working with children who have had accidents in other lessons or are simply upset.
- Clearing up all the materials and equipment which have been used after the lessons finish.
- Helping out with either sports events or outings by attending and serving as a responsible adult.
- Taking part in the training sessions necessary for a teaching assistant or for general school policy.
- Carrying out certain administrative tasks where necessary for the teacher.

There are many situations where certain pupils who need extra support will be supplied with a [teaching assistant](#) to work exclusively with them. Some will work on a one-to-one basis, but other teachers will work in smaller groups.

Lots of schools will [employ teaching assistants](#) who have a specialism in a certain field. Teachers who perform well in English, mathematics, music, creative arts or special educational needs (SEN) are often in popular demand.

You may also find that you are expected to work with children who do not speak English as a first language if you have fluency in another language, but this depends on the situation.

Generally speaking, there is an expectation that experienced or specifically-trained teaching assistants can be expected to supervise a class on behalf of a teacher who is either undertaking training or is sick - negating the need to locate a supply teacher.

Naturally, every class has to be allocated a teacher as part of standard daily life, but higher-level teaching assistants (HLTA) would be expected to lead a lesson on occasion if the need arose for it. This would vary according to specific situations, however.

What is the Role of a Leader in a School?

If a school leader wants to be successful in their role, they need to be able to handle a few key responsibilities.

As the most important skill, they need to be able to lead the way when it comes to pushing for both teaching and learning outcomes for students. This is all about making sure to set expectations about the learning practices laid down by the school and making sure to use the values and behaviours of the organisation to successfully focus on improving the success of a student.

What is the Purpose of the Teaching Assistant Standards?

In 2016, a group of educational experts and students made a series of professional standards for teaching assistants who operated in schools.

The purpose of the educational standards was to hold teaching assistants to task and bring them into line with their colleagues in the school environment - teachers and headteachers - who already had a pre-existing series of regulations and expected standards.

There are four main areas where teaching assistant standards are outlined, and each one is important to the successful conduct of a TA.

Who Are the Teaching Assistant Standards For?

The teaching assistant standards are for two groups - the teaching assistants themselves and the regulatory bodies associated with them.

For the teaching assistants, the standards serve as a good guideline to help them understand and tackle the bulk of everyday behaviour and expected standards. Teaching assistants are expected to behave in such a way that complies with the codes.

For regulatory bodies, like inspectors, the guidelines are a framework to assess teaching assistants and to make sure they are operating in a responsible, mature fashion. It provides a valuable benchmark for successful grading.

What are the Four Themes?

The guidelines for [teaching assistant standards](#) are broken up into four different themes. Each area comprises a different aspect of teaching assistant life, and it is necessary to understand and comply with each of them for a well-rounded, supportive, and authoritative presence.

These themes are the following:

- Personal and Professional Conduct
- Knowledge and Understanding
- Teaching and Learning
- Working With Others

Let's take a proper look at each of these themes and discuss what they are composed of to help provide a comprehensive understanding for prospective learners. Each theme is equally important for a teaching assistant.

Personal and Professional Conduct

The first aspect of the teaching assistant standards is the personal and professional conduct that all [teaching assistants](#) are bound to. This states that teaching assistants should maintain public trust in education as a profession by doing the following:

- Demonstrate regard for the practices, policies and ethos of the school they work in as professional members of staff.
- Demonstrate positive attitudes, behaviours and values required to sustain and develop positive relationships within the school community.
- Have regard for the need to safeguard the wellbeing of pupils by following all the statutory guidance.
- Uphold the values consistent with those expected by teachers via respecting cultural diversity and individual differences.
- Commit to regular self-evaluation to improve their performance in the classroom.

Knowledge and Understanding

The second area of teaching assistant themes is all about knowledge and understanding. Teaching assistants are expected to:

- Share responsibility for making sure their own knowledge and understanding are up to date via self-reflection, liaison with school staff, and identifying opportunities for professional and personal development.
- Take any opportunities necessary to acquire the required qualifications, skills and experience needed to be an effective teaching assistant.
- [Show skills](#) and [experience](#) with understanding the needs of all pupils, showing specialist knowledge where necessary, and know how to effectively contribute to the delivery (and adaptation) of support to meet the individual needs of each child.
- Demonstrate a suitable level of knowledge regarding the subject being taught, and be able to use this to effectively support pupils and teachers.
- Understand that your roles within the classroom and the whole school may extend and often become more than a basic supporting role.

Teaching and Learning

The third value for a teaching assistant is all about teaching and learning. You'll be expected to:

- Demonstrate an informed, efficient approach to learning and teaching by adopting strategies designed to support the work of your teacher and, where appropriate, increase the achievement of all the pupils. This includes those who have special educational needs where appropriate.
- Support, promote and facilitate the inclusion of all pupils by encouraging active participation in both learning and extracurricular activities.
- Use effective management strategies for behaviour which fall in line with the procedures and policies laid down by the school.
- Directly contribute to the effective planning and assessment of pupils by supporting the monitoring, reporting and recording of their performance as appropriate to your role.

- Communicate with pupils in a sensitive and effective manner which helps them to adapt to their needs and support their learning overall.
- Help to maintain a safe learning environment via the management of teaching spaces, resources and other appropriate areas.

Working with Others

The final value is all about working with others. Teaching assistants are expected to be able to:

- Respect and recognise the role of other parents and professionals and caters by effectively working in harmony with them.
- Coordinate with the class teacher to keep other professionals informed of concerns, performance or progress that they may have about certain pupils.
- Understand their responsibility to inform not only planning but also decision-making by sharing knowledge as necessary.
- Understand their responsibility to be able to coordinate effectively with teachers and other colleagues, including specialist teachers.
- Communicate their knowledge and understanding of staff where appropriate to other professionals, health and social care members and any other relevant body to help with informed decision-making.