

03572 Level 5 Certificate in Teaching Learners with Specific Learning Difficulties (Dyslexia)
03573 Level 5 Certificate in Assessing and Teaching Learners with Specific Learning Difficulties (Dyslexia)
03574 Level 5 Diploma in Assessing and Teaching Learners with Specific Learning Difficulties (Dyslexia)
10218 Level 5 Diploma in Teaching Learners with Dyslexia (Specific Learning Difficulties)
10219 level 7 Diploma in Assessing and Teaching Learners with Dyslexia (Specific Learning Difficulties)

England Wales and Northern Ireland

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REPORT FOR PUBLICATION

1. The qualifications and standards

| Assessment Team: | Findings: |
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally assessment teams are strong and they are best when they have a breadth of skills and expertise. Many Centres provide in-house Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and assessors attend a range of nationally provided CPD courses and Conferences including the annual PATOSS conference. A growing number of assessors have their own Assessment Practising Certificates that are renewed every three years. • Forward thinking centres recruit and train new assessors when they foresee that the number of candidates are growing. This allows time for training and mentoring until the new assessors are considered able to assess independently. • Where Centres have only a few assessors EVs have encouraged them to think strategically about the future and to safeguard against vital members of the team becoming unavailable. • Centres have also been advised not to overload assessors. In a number of instances the ratio of candidates to assessor is too high. |

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| <p>Resources:</p> | <p>Findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centres that are linked to LAs or are based in FE and HE institutions benefit from the resources already there both in terms of materials and expertise across the range of SEN. They may also have access to on-line journals as well as course materials which can be a real bonus. • Many centres have the opportunity to invite outside speakers which enriches the input for the candidates. Candidates themselves can often share teaching materials that they have access to in their own workplaces. • What are particularly costly are the test materials particularly at Level 7. Tests are expensive and often short-lived as they need to be updated regularly. Furthermore tests do not always span the total age range required. • There is a growing number of free resources on-line as well as webinars from nationally recognised speakers. Websites linked to the Dyslexia SpLD Trust can also be useful in particular the Communications Trust and the Autism Trust. • Funding for courses is limited and not at the level of the Rose funding some years ago. This has certainly had an impact on recruitment to courses particularly level 7. Level 7 allows candidates to apply for an Assessment Practising Certificate and while this is deemed desirable for specialist teachers carrying out diagnostic assessments, it is still only mandatory for assessors working with students who are 16+. • Some Centres are now offering CPD follow-up course for ex-graduates; this allows these graduates to maintain their Practising Certificates which are now available for both Teaching and assessing. |
| <p>Candidate Support:</p> | <p>Findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is improving in many respects; centres are encouraged to have informative and comprehensive induction sessions as well as having candidates complete a needs audit; feedback is in the best Centres formative as well |

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| | <p>as summative so that problems can be dealt with as they arise. Candidates who declare special needs can be accommodated and often FE colleges can offer study support to those who need it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many Centres are now using Individualised Learning Plans with their candidates and this helps to develop good self-reflective practice. • Candidates in general are highly appreciative of the support offered by the assessment team; they also gain from peer support and time when they can be together and share ideas and materials is of benefit to all. • Feedback from candidates is used to feed into course evaluations and adjustment for forthcoming courses. EVs encourage Centres to carry out impact surveys in the workplace of candidates who have graduated so that employers can feed back on the benefits of the training. The courses encourage the candidates to disseminate their new knowledge and skills to their colleagues. |
| <p>Assessment and Verification:</p> | <p>Findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality Assurance is adhered to in most centres with adequate moderation and standardisation meetings; Internal Verification is formative as well as summative and, if not, EVs have been diligent in encouraging this. IVs are in most cases subject specialists also, which is a bonus. • Feedback is in most cases prompt which allows it to feed into future practice. • Unit Certification can encourage many candidates to achieve something from a course when circumstances prevent them completing. |
| <p>Management Systems and Records:</p> | <p>Findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centres are becoming used to the new claims procedures. Those centres which offered other training were more competent initially with on-line claims but others are catching up. • The best recording systems continue to be those where it is easy to link management systems with individual portfolios and where candidates present their work in a way that links clearly to the assessment units. • Recording systems are becoming more transparent and centralised. It took some Centres |

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| | <p>a while to ensure that all feedback was centralised and not just on assessors' personal computers. Records are written, signed and dated. Actions points are now, in most instances, followed up and recorded. Confidentiality issues are addressed and there is a growing emphasis on Data Protection and the recording of learners being taught or assessed. Permission now has to be granted by learners and their parents, if applicable. They also need to be informed that this permission can be withdrawn at any point.</p> |
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| <p>Assessment Summary:</p> | <p>Findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the whole Centres are turning out graduates who have made great progress in their expertise in teaching and assessment. The strength of the courses lies in the blend of theory and practice. Candidates learn to self-reflect and evaluate to the point where they can be independent. Quite a number of candidates come from academic backgrounds sometimes already with masters' degrees and they really value the opportunity to use their theoretical knowledge in a practical setting. There is something very compelling about enabling one's own learners while one is learning oneself. • Candidates that have learners working at different phases of education allow experience of all to SpLD learners across the age range to all candidates. • The EV team are both dedicated and conscientious as well as being generous with the expertise they share with their Centres. Assessment by the EV team is rigorous and conforms with national standards. |
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| <p>2. Sector Developments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Dyslexia SpLD Trust continues to lobby for better provision for learners with dyslexia. Dyslexia specialists are now widely recognised as appropriately trained teachers of learners with a wide variety of literacy problems. The Trust has been funded for another two years which helps to ensure that the Professional Development Framework is further developed. This government funded free audit tool is being increasingly used in LAs and training Centres. OCR centres make use of it for both assessors and candidates. It is also a growing repository for a wide range of resources as is the web-based Interventions for Literacy. |
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- The draft Code of Practice has now been released and it is open to consultation until December 2013. There is more information on the graduated approach to supporting pupils with SEN and it acknowledges the government's commitment to improving outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs by identifying early and making the appropriate provision.
- The dyslexia sector collectively continues to have concerns over the proposals to shift the goal posts in grading of GCSE exams. The removal of the continuous assessment of student's course work to a single examination will disadvantage many dyslexic learners as will the requirements for International Baccalaureate which require pupils to study a foreign language. The removal of speaking and listening as part of the English GCSE curriculum will further disadvantage many dyslexic candidates.
- There is also continued concern over the new grammar, punctuation and spelling test introduced in 2013.
- Lobbying continues for the inclusion of SEN and dyslexia in initial teacher training. At present this is minimal at best. This was the reason for the launch at the House of Lords earlier this year of a report "The Fish in the Tree" which reported research into the amount of training currently available. The members of the Dyslexia SpLD Trust continue to lobby on this contentious issue.