Teaching Assistant

Introduction
Teaching Assistants support the work of teachers in primary, secondary and special schools. They might support pupils one-to-one or in small groups. Teaching Assistants work under the teacher's guidance and supervision.

Also known as
- Classroom Assistant
- Learning Support Assistant
- Child Support Assistant
- Welfare Assistant

Work Activities
As a Teaching Assistant, you will support the learning of children of all ages and abilities, in primary, secondary and special schools.

Your exact role will vary from one school to another and depends upon which age group is being taught. You could have a general support or caring role, or perhaps more specific responsibilities, such as helping students who have learning difficulties.

Some Teaching Assistants support pupils within a particular curriculum area, such as ICT, whereas others might be based within a department, or assigned to a child.

As a Teaching Assistant, you could work with individuals, a range of groups of children or a whole class. Your work might involve:

- helping children with learning activities such as reading and writing
- creating imaginative displays of pupil's work
- sorting out and tidying classroom equipment and materials
- getting things ready for lessons, such as handing out pens and paper
- observing and recording pupil progress
- supervising children in the playground or on school outings
- liaising with parents or carers and Teachers

You might give extra support to pupils with learning or behavioural difficulties, children whose first language is not English (or Welsh if working in a Welsh Medium school), and those in their first term of school.

Personal Qualities and Skills
To become a Teaching Assistant, you'll need:

- good communication skills
- patience, tact and sensitivity
- to be good at taking instructions and working as part of a team
- the ability to maintain discipline and deal with challenging behaviour
- good listening skills
- to be caring and helpful
- to be well organised

Pay and Opportunities
Pay
The pay rates given below are approximate.

- Starting: £14,500 - £15,500
- With experience: £16,000 - £18,000
- Senior Teaching Assistants earn £19,000 - £21,000

**Hours of work**

As a Teaching Assistant, you will usually work up to 37 hours a week. Full-time and part-time posts are available. You may get paid for working during term time only (around 38 weeks a year).

**Where could I work?**

Employers are state and private primary, secondary and special schools.

**Where are vacancies advertised?**

Vacancies are advertised in local/national newspapers, on recruitment and employers’ websites, and on Find a Job (www.gov.uk/jobsearch).

Social media websites, such as LinkedIn, Twitter or Facebook, are a great way to network, find vacancies and get in contact with possible employers. Make sure that your profile presents you in a professional manner that will appeal to potential employers.

Take a look at our General Information Article 'Finding Work Online'

**Entry Routes and Training**

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Many Teaching Assistants start by volunteering in a school, then becoming employed - so this could be a great way for you to start.

You will usually have training on-the-job, including through an induction period.

However, whilst previous work experience is fantastic, employers are also looking for candidates who have an appropriate qualification or who are willing to work towards one in the role.

Recognised qualifications for TAs include:

- level 2 award in support work in schools
- level 2 certificate in supporting teaching and learning in schools
- level 3 award in supporting teaching and learning in schools
- level 3 certificate in supporting teaching and learning in schools
- level 3 diploma in specialist support for teaching and learning in schools (includes units on supporting bilingual learners and those with special educational needs)

The Care Council for Wales has a List of Required Qualifications to work within the Early Years & Childcare Sector in Wales.

An Intermediate Level Apprenticeship or Advanced Level Apprenticeship is also great place to start, and this pathway is becoming increasingly popular.

Some schools employ Teaching Assistants with a specialism, for example, in literacy, numeracy, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), or special educational needs.

**Progression**
Experienced Teaching Assistants can apply for Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) status. This will allow you more responsibility in the classroom, for example, supervising a class for a short period in the teacher's absence, contributing to lesson planning and developing lesson resources. Some HLTAs in secondary schools can specialise in maths and science.

There are no formal entry requirements, although individual local authorities might set their own when putting together their selection process. To qualify, you will have to satisfy HLTA professional standards.

**Work Experience**

Many people enter as volunteer Teaching Assistants and become employed after gaining experience.

**Rehabilitation of Offenders Act**

This career is an exception to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. This means that you must supply information to an employer about any spent or unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands or warnings, if they ask you to.

This is different from other careers, where you only have to reveal information on unspent convictions if you are asked to.

**Qualifications**

To get onto an Intermediate or Advanced Level Apprenticeship, you'll usually need five GCSEs at grade C/4 or above, possibly including English or Welsh (first language) if planning to work in a Welsh Medium school, and maths.

Many schools will look for evidence of skills and knowledge developed through relevant work experience, either paid or voluntary.

**Adult Opportunities**

**Skills/experience**

Many people enter as volunteer teaching assistants and become employed after gaining experience.

**Distance learning**

The Open University offers a Certificate in Supporting Learning in Primary Schools, by distance learning. You'll need to be based in a primary school, special school with primary pupils or other closely-related setting, either as an employed or voluntary teaching assistant.

The Open University also runs a foundation degree in Primary Teaching and Learning. During your studies, you will need to be working with children in a primary school for a minimum of five hours a week.

**Further Information**

**Contacts**

- **Apprenticeships: Get In. Go Far**
  National Apprenticeship Service (NAS)
  Tel: 0800 015 0400
  Email: nationalhelpdesk@findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk
  Website: [www.apprenticeships.org.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk)

- **LGjobs**
  Local government vacancies
  Website: [www.lgjobs.com](http://www.lgjobs.com)

- **Skills Development Scotland - Modern Apprenticeships**
  Tel: 0800 9178000
  Email: info@skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk
  Website: [www.myworldofwork.co.uk/modernapprenticeships](http://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/modernapprenticeships)
• **myjobscotland**: Scottish local government vacancies
  Scottish enquiries
  Email: myjobscotland@cosla.gov.uk
  Website: [www.myjobscotland.gov.uk](http://www.myjobscotland.gov.uk)

• **Open University (OU)**
  Tel: 0845 3006090
  Website: [www.open.ac.uk](http://www.open.ac.uk)

• **Western Education and Library Board (WELB)**
  Irish enquiries
  Email: info@welbni.org
  Website: [www.welbni.org](http://www.welbni.org)

• **Department for Education (DfE)**
  Website: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education)

• **Eteach**
  Email: info@eteach.com
  Website: [www.eteach.com](http://www.eteach.com)

• **Teaching-Assistants.co.uk**
  Email: info@teaching-assistants.co.uk
  Website: [www.teaching-assistants.co.uk](http://www.teaching-assistants.co.uk)

• **BBC News: Education**
  Website: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/education/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education/)

• **Guardian Education**
  Website: [www.guardian.co.uk/education](http://www.guardian.co.uk/education)

• **National Education Union**
  Publisher: Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL)
  Tel: 020 7930 6441
  Website: [www.new2teaching.org.uk](http://www.new2teaching.org.uk)

• **Careers Wales - Welsh Apprenticeships**
  Tel: 0800 028 4844
  Website: [ams.careerswales.com/](http://ams.careerswales.com/)

• **Social Care Wales**
  Address: South Gate House, Wood Street, Cardiff CF10 1EW
  Tel: 0300 30 33 444
  Email: info@ccwales.org.uk
  Website: [www.ccwales.org.uk](http://www.ccwales.org.uk)

• **Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol**
  Information on Higher Education courses and scholarships through the medium of Welsh
  Email: gwybodaeth@colegcymraeg.ac.uk
  Website: [www.colegcymraeg.ac.uk](http://www.colegcymraeg.ac.uk)

• **Welsh Government Education and Skills Department**
  Email: customerhelp@gov.wales
  Website: [www.wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/?lang=en](http://www.wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/?lang=en)

• **Mudiad Meithrin**
  Email: post@meithrin.co.uk
  Website: [www.meithrin.co.uk](http://www.meithrin.co.uk)

• **Teacher Training & Education in Wales**
People Exchange Cymru (PEC)
Public sector recruitment portal for Wales
Email: peopleexchangecymru@gov.wales
Website: www.peopleexchangecymru.org.uk/home

Related Careers

- Nursery Nurse
- NVQ Assessor
- School Lunchtime Supervisor
- History Teacher
- Geography Teacher
- Modern Foreign Languages Teacher
- Music Teacher
- English Teacher
- Maths Teacher
- Science Teacher
- Education Welfare Officer
- Playworker
- Special Educational Needs Teacher
- Art and Design Teacher
- Design and Technology Teacher
- Early Years Teacher
- Physical Education Teacher
- Primary Teacher
- Secondary Teacher
- Training Manager
- Higher Education (HE) Lecturer
- School Business Manager
- Teacher of English as a Foreign Language
- Lecturer
- Teacher
- Welsh Teacher
- Nursery Assistant
- Headteacher