



BATOD Guidance for employers/employees

Understanding the deaf education mandatory qualification

The British Association of Teachers of Deaf Children and Young People (BATOD) is the United Kingdom's only professional association dedicated to Qualified Teachers of Deaf Children and Young People (QToDs).

The Association advocates for the interests of QToDs and the deaf¹ babies, children (CYP) and young people they support, engaging with governments and key agencies at national and regional levels. BATOD provides ongoing professional support through continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities, as well as national and regional meetings. These initiatives ensure members have access to current information, resources, and best practice guidance.

A key constitutional aim of the Association is "To encourage and assist in the training of Teachers of Deaf Children and Young People, including mandatory qualification training and post-qualification continuing professional development".

Value statement:

Deaf babies, children, and young people (DYCP) have a right to support and education from Qualified Teachers of Deaf Children and Young People (QToDs).

In order to become a QToD in schools or local authority services, teachers must have qualified teacher status (QTS)², or full recognition in Scotland, before undertaking a QToD mandatory qualification (MQ).

Teachers appointed to a QToD role should have the postgraduate diploma (PGDip) and the QToD element. BATOD strongly recommends that employers check the certificates/transcripts carefully to ensure that applicants have the correct MQ PGDip qualification.

The Association strongly supports the MQ, which has led to quality early intervention from the point of identification and has framed the high standards that have enhanced the quality of the education of CYP over many years.

¹ Throughout this document, the term 'deaf' covers the full range of deafness to be found in the population.

² It is also possible, in England, to train with Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) status, but this may limit the age groups of CYP with whom you can work once trained. All QToDs must have specialist training and qualifications.

The Association endorses the birth-adulthood age range reflected in the MQ as it focuses on the implications of deafness for each DCYP from identification through to transition to adulthood³, and therefore

- informs practice at all stages
 - ensures the flexibility of the workforce
 - ensures an understanding of a DCYP's journey to adulthood
 - embeds a holistic understanding of the development of DCYP.
1. The MQ should cover all teachers who are specifically employed to work with deaf children and young people (birth-young adulthood). Such holders of the qualification should be remunerated accordingly (see Allowances for QToD policy).
 2. The Association recognises that any course leading to an MQ must be approved by a specific nation's education department. The Association should be involved in the consultations with the respective education departments and the course providers before the course is awarded mandatory status.
 3. The Association "recognises that, in England it is stated in the Education Regulations 2003 that students undertaking the MQ must be supervised by a qualified and experienced QToD and must achieve the MQ within three years of starting to work with deaf children⁴."
 4. The Association recognises the qualification for ToDs is not mandatory in Northern Ireland (NI) and supports the government in their acknowledgement of the QToD professional in **DE Circular** 2007/22. In NI, a teacher must complete the qualification within 3 years, and 'To be eligible to teach pupils with visual and hearing impairment, the teacher must have successfully completed one of the approved courses listed on Annex B to this Circular'".
 5. The Welsh Code of Practice (2021) references ToDs but the statutory obligation is not as rigorously emphasised as it is in the English Code of Practice. In Wales, teachers who gained QTS on or after 1st April 2003 must also have completed an induction period. There is no national expectation for QToDs to have compulsory three years teaching experience prior to obtaining a QToD role. The Welsh Government does not mandate professional learning in relation to specific areas of professional practice. However, a QToD, or an appropriately supervised ToD undertaking the MQ, is considered an auxiliary aid in terms of the Equality Act.

³ Upper age varies across the UK: England (25) Scotland (18) Wales (18) Northern Ireland (18)

⁴ (Education (School Teachers' Qualifications) (England) Regulations 2003).

6. In Scotland the MQ and guidance for ToDs is being updated currently from 2007 and expected after consultation in 2026. The role of the ToD is clear in Scottish policy: any teacher who is wholly or mainly working with deaf children should gain the ToD competencies. The 2026 guidance will specify that this is through a postgraduate qualification in a university. ToDs in Scotland work closely with legislation such as the Additional Support for Learning Act (2004, amended 2009), the UK Equality Act (2010) and the British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015. As qualified teachers, they work following Scottish policy on Additional Support (2009) and Getting it Right for Every Child (2022). In terms of the Equality Act, a QToD is considered an auxiliary aid. There is no explicit legal right for all deaf children or parents to have access to a QToD. For example, if a child is educated in a private school, the local authority can decide not to support them. Local authority services for deaf children assess and support all state educated deaf children to provide them with the optimal contact with a ToD depending on their needs.
7. The completion of individual free-standing modules is not recognised as meeting the requirements of the MQ.
8. The Association advocates for the rights of deaf teachers becoming QToDs and emphasises the responsibility under the Equality Act of the employer and course provider to enable fair access to the course, teaching placements, and other related training components.

What does this mean for employers/employees?

- a. It is recommended employers release the student for an average of one day per week study leave for the duration of the course.
- b. Students undertaking the MQ must be supervised by an experienced QToD and must achieve the MQ within three years⁵ of starting to work with deaf children. (Education (School Teachers' Qualifications) (England) Regulations 2003).
- c. Teachers on a course to become a QToD should have practice in more than one type of educational provision and should demonstrate their practical competence as a QToD before successfully completing the course. The Association recognises that for some teachers their prior experience (e.g. parenting a deaf child or working in a deaf specialist setting as support staff) may be considered by the course providers in lieu of prior classroom-based teaching experience.

⁵ Currently in Scotland it is five years (2007 guidance). However, the 2007 guidance is currently being updated.



BATOD will:

- monitor the provision and effectiveness of MQ courses from the BATOD student member experience through representation on student consultative meetings and other relevant stakeholder meetings, and a student representative on the BATOD National Executive Council (NEC)
- provide, or assist with the provision of relevant CPD, resources, and related material
- continue to raise the profile of MQ courses with major organisations concerned with education and/or deaf people throughout the UK. Contribute to calls for evidence on MQ courses and support the expectation of high and rigorous standards of competence before awarding a mandatory qualification.

This BATOD position statement was created by the BATOD National Executive Council (NEC) with the support of all MQ course providers in the UK:

[The University of Birmingham](#)

[The University of Edinburgh](#)

[The University of Leeds](#)

[The University of Manchester](#)

[Mary Hare courses in partnership with Liverpool John Moore University](#)

Employment rights

England [Training and study at work: your rights](#)

Northern Ireland [Employment Rights \(Time off for Study or Training\) Order \(NI\) 1998](#)

Scotland [The Right to Time Off for Study or Training \(Scotland\) Regulations 1999](#)

Wales – ['Section 63D of the Employment Rights Act 1996'](#)

BATOD NEC welcomes feedback on the publication. Contact BATOD National Executive Officer, Teresa Quail, via exec@batod.org.uk

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Other BATOD documentation

Documents are available on the [BATOD website - Deaf Education, BATOD Policies/Statements](#)

BATOD [Articulating the specialism 'The role of the QToD'](#) series

BATOD 2025 Membership survey report

BATOD 52-week cover guidance for Qualified Teachers of Deaf Children and Young People

BATOD 'Features of Effective Services' – for Heads of Sensory Support Services

BATOD Guidance on paid allowances for QToDs

BATOD Paper If not statutory – then essential; maintaining services in challenging times (revision pending)

BATOD Policy note – QToD staffing ratio in deaf resource provisions

BATOD Position paper - The retention and recruitment of QToDs

BATOD Position statement on QToDs and levels of British Sign Language

BATOD Position statement on study leave for employees completing the mandatory qualification to become a Qualified Teacher of Deaf Children and Young People

BATOD Statement - Communication approaches, modes and methods currently in use in the education of deaf CYP in the UK

BATOD [Statement on Inclusion](#)

BATOD and British Association of Educational Audiologists [Joint policy statement on taking earmould impressions](#)

BATOD and Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT) – Best practice guidance 'Collaborative Working between Qualified Teachers of the Deaf and Speech and Language Therapists'

National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS), BATOD and NatSIP [Briefing on the specialist needs of deaf children and the role of Teachers of the Deaf](#)