

Lead Practitioner Accreditation:

Your programme guide

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What is SSAT Lead Practitioner accreditation?

LP accreditation is a rigorous process for improving teaching and learning across a school, network, MAT or region. LP accreditation empowers professionals to improve together, in all settings and phases. Effectively, accredited LPs can turn whole-school priorities into tangible classroom impact, through the professional development of their colleagues. LP accredits 'leaders of learning' from teaching, leadership and support staff.

What are the ten LP standards?

LP accreditation examines competency across these ten LP standards:

1	Communicating and presenting	6	Understanding how learners learn and make progress
2	Negotiating and Influencing	7	Transferring specialist expertise
3	Challenging, developing and innovating	8	Coaching to lead
4	Always learning	9	Negotiating to lead
5	Undertaking research to improve specialist expertise	10	Networking to lead

The Person	Standards 1-4 define the attributes that make up a leader of learning.
The Understanding	Standards 5-7 define the expertise of the aspirant LP.
The Effect	Standards 8-10 define the leadership of the aspirant LP; leading learning and supporting professional development of colleagues with impact on them and their learners.

What makes LP accreditation unique?

A fundamental principle in LP accreditation is that of developing others. The aspiring LP must demonstrate impact on their colleagues' professional development to be successful. There is no upper limit on who will be developed by the aspiring LP, with many LPs having real success in developing colleagues beyond their school and beyond their trust.

Who can apply for Lead Practitioner accreditation?

Lead Practitioner accreditation is open to any practitioner who influences the professional development of others. While many applicants are teachers, middle leaders and senior leaders, the accreditation is equally relevant to colleagues working in pastoral, inclusion, support and specialist roles across schools, trusts and other educational settings.

Rather than focusing on job title or position, LP accreditation recognises impact. It is designed for practitioners who share expertise, develop colleagues, lead improvement initiatives, coach or mentor others, and contribute to improving teaching, learning and practice.

The programme is particularly well suited to those who are already leading learning, formally or informally, as well as practitioners who aspire to extend their influence and develop their leadership of learning. By focusing on professional expertise, evidence-informed practice and sustained impact, LP accreditation recognises and develops those who make a difference through the growth and success of others.

What sort of person is successful as a Lead Practitioner?

SSAT Lead Practitioners (LPs) are outstanding individuals who lead practice within and beyond their own place of work. They not only demonstrate expertise in their field but also lead others to improve their practice, resulting in positive impact on student learning.

Aspiring LPs will:

- ▶ Have a track record of high-quality work and credibility in their field, with good communication and presentation skills at all levels.
- ▶ Have the potential to share practice and build a sustainable, collaborative professional learning network.
- ▶ Be creative, inspiring, and resilient, with excellent personal organisation and self-motivation.
- ▶ Possess an enthusiasm for challenge, development & innovation, and a commitment to professional development both of themselves and others.

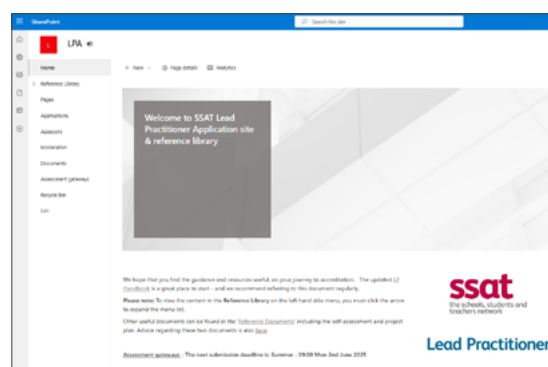
What sort of time commitment is expected for LP accreditation?

Aspiring Lead Practitioners have up to two years to submit their portfolio for assessment, allowing them to progress at a pace that reflects their role, responsibilities and professional commitments. Most practitioners choose to complete the process within one academic year, but there is flexibility to take longer if priorities or circumstances change.

Rather than following a fixed timetable, LP accreditation is designed to fit alongside existing professional practice and school improvement work. Practitioners submit their portfolio during an assessment window when they feel ready, provided this is within the two-year timeframe. This flexible approach enables applicants to evidence meaningful and sustained impact, rather than working towards a specific deadline.

What support will I receive?

- ▶ **Join a national cohort:**
For all individual aspiring LPs, you have the option of joining a national cohort of LPs, where you will be offered online support seminars and have the opportunity to network with other aspiring LPs from a range of settings.
- ▶ **The Lead Practitioner Reference Library:**
Whether you are an individual LP, or part of a school or LP Learning Centre cohort already benefiting from the tailored support sessions, aspiring LPs are provided with access to a comprehensive reference library offering a range of information, advice, documents and guidance through the processes.



Is Lead Practitioner accreditation an alternative to National Professional Qualifications (NPQ)?

Lead Practitioner (LP) accreditation complements the NPQ framework but is designed for practitioners whose influence extends beyond their immediate team. While specialist NPQs focus on areas such as teaching, behaviour and teacher development, LP accreditation recognises and develops those leading professional learning and driving improvement across a school, and often beyond it. For practitioners aspiring to have a wider impact on colleagues, schools, trusts, or the profession, LP accreditation is often the more appropriate pathway.

Who identifies the focus for the practitioner's efforts?

Through the self-assessment tool and support sessions, LP accreditation encourages and guides aspiring LPs to examine the school improvement priorities in their own setting to establish a focus for their efforts throughout the accreditation timeline. Importantly, this focus will provide evidence towards some of the LP standards, not all, as it seeks to build a holistic picture of the leader of learning. LPs are successful when they can evidence a broad and diverse range of impact, including but not exclusively, school improvement priorities.

What happens after accreditation?

Lead Practitioner is not a post, but a process of professional development, with accreditation serving as a check point along this development journey. The LP standards ensure the aspirant LP asks themselves the right questions at the right time to enable them to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding. This means that LPs are always striving to achieve more, in their own practice and in others' practice – ensuring the learners at the heart of school improvement, are provided with the very best opportunities to excel in learning. This journey continues beyond accreditation.

How long does accreditation last?

LP accreditation is valid for three years. This reflects the expectation that Lead Practitioners continually develop their expertise, remain current in their practice, and demonstrate impact through leadership, coaching and professional learning.

After three years, LPs can apply for re-accreditation through a streamlined online process, evidencing their continued impact against the 10 LP standards.

Why establish a cohort of Lead Practitioners at your school/Trust?

While accreditation is awarded to individuals, its greatest impact is often achieved through a school, trust or regional cohort approach. Establishing a cohort can help organisations:

- ▶ Recruit, retain and develop future leaders of learning.
- ▶ Identify and nurture individual strengths and areas for development.
- ▶ Embed a framework centred on impact and professional growth.
- ▶ Strengthen evidence-informed teaching and learning.
- ▶ Support school-wide or trust-wide improvement priorities.
- ▶ Create a coherent approach to professional development.

SSAT works with leaders to design a cost-effective cohort model aligned to local priorities and intended outcomes.

How can the programme be tailored to our context?

Every school, trust and region has its own priorities and challenges. SSAT offers consultation and tailored support to ensure Lead Practitioner accreditation aligns with your context and improvement goals. Schools and Trusts can access bespoke guidance, support sessions and cohort models designed to maximise impact. Organisations purchasing tailored support also benefit from a discounted individual accreditation fee.

Can I talk to someone in more detail about my requirements for LP?

Get in touch with the LP team who will be happy to help at: lpaccreditation@ssatuk.co.uk

LPS CRITERIA

Attributes	Underlying	Developing	Extending	Transforming
LP1: Communicating and presenting	I have shared some of my ideas / approaches with colleagues, but I am not aware of their adoption into practice.	I have presented my ideas / approaches within my team. Some ideas / approaches have been adopted into practice.	I have planned and successfully presented my ideas / approaches with groups outside my team. My ideas / approaches have been adopted into practice.	I have planned and successfully presented my ideas/approaches beyond my institution, such as regionally, nationally or across my Multi Academy Trust. My ideas / approaches have been adopted into practice.
Sign up and access the tools to begin your journey to accreditation.				
LP2: Negotiating and influencing	I show sensitivity to the concerns and feelings of other colleagues and do not treat disagreement as disloyalty.	I show sensitivity to the concerns and feelings of others and treat disagreement as professional not personal, developing people within my team through coaching and debriefing.	I show sensitivity to the concerns and feelings of others and embrace disagreement and discussion to move people on. I can demonstrate that I have developed and inspired people within and beyond my team through coaching and debriefing. I have the skills to empower and motivate people to achieve goals.	I show sensitivity to the concerns and feelings of others and the confidence to know when to intervene to move forward. I can demonstrate that I have developed and inspired people beyond my institution to achieve excellence, through coaching and debriefing. I can demonstrate that I have empowered and motivated people to achieve goals.
LP3: Challenging, developing and innovating	I have worked systematically to support and develop a colleague.	I have developed and led an area of innovation within my team, challenging existing practice and inspiring change.	I have approached change outside my team in a creative way, seeing it as an opportunity. I have shown confidence in my ability to make well considered and professional decisions, accepting responsibility and taking ownership. This has had an impact on teaching and learning beyond my team.	I have approached change creatively, leading innovation. I have shown confidence in my ability to make well considered and professional decisions, accepting responsibility and taking ownership. This has had a measurable impact on teaching and learning beyond my institution, such as regionally, nationally or across my Multi Academy Trust.
LP4: Always learning	I have identified personal goals to improve my knowledge and skills and assisted a colleague in identifying their goals.	I have taken action to achieve my goals, to develop my knowledge and experience and to continue learning. I have my own goals and their goals.	I have consistently and collaboratively reflected on evidence about learning, my practice, and the practice of my colleagues which has led to my own and their excellence in the classroom.	I have consistently and collaboratively reflected on evidence about learning, my practice, and the practice of my colleagues which has led to my own and their excellence in the classroom, such as regionally, nationally or across my Multi Academy Trust, to identify goals which develop knowledge and skills with the intention of pursuing and achieving excellence in the classroom.
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Find out more				

LPS CRITERIA

Expertise	Underlying	Developing	Extending	Transforming
LP5: Undertaking research to improve specialist expertise	I have identified specific areas where improving my specialist knowledge and skills will enhance learning and I have shared this perception with a colleague.	I have engaged in research to develop my specialist knowledge and skills to enhance teaching and learning within my team.	I have engaged in research to develop my specialist knowledge and skills to enhance teaching and learning beyond my team.	I have engaged in research to develop my specialist knowledge and skills to enhance teaching and learning beyond my institution, such as regionally, nationally or across my Multi Academy Trust.
LP6: Understanding how learners learn and make progress	I have an understanding of how adults, children and young people learn. I have shared my understanding with another colleague.	I have an understanding of how adults, children and young people learn. I have shared my understanding within my team.	I have an understanding of how adults, children and young people learn. I have demonstrated my understanding by leading professional learning, modelling a range of approaches	I have in-depth understanding of how adults, children and young people learn and the factors that help or hinder their learning. I can unpick what is transferable and adapt to other contexts. I have led professional learning, modelling a range of approaches to teaching and learning beyond my institution, such as regionally, nationally or across my Multi Academy Trust.
LP7: Transferring specialist expertise	I reflect on my practice and explore new approaches. I have developed resources for the purpose of meeting identified needs in my own classroom and shared them with a colleague.	I reflect on my practice and have researched new approaches in depth. I have developed and shared resources for the purpose of meeting a need identified within my team.	As a result of reflecting and researching I have developed ideas and resources rooted in evidence. I have trialled and evaluated resources and training materials for the purpose of meeting identified learner needs with colleagues outside my team.	As a result of reflecting and researching I have developed ideas and resources rooted in evidence. I have trialled, evaluated, and refined resources that have a positive impact on teaching and learning beyond my institution, such as regionally, nationally or across my Multi Academy Trust.

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[Find out more](#)

LPS CRITERIA

Leadership	Underlying	Developing	Extending	Transforming
LP8: Coaching to lead	I have challenged and stimulated another colleague to take increasing control of their own learning. I am experimenting with strategies and tools to build effective coaching techniques appropriately.	I have challenged and stimulated colleagues in my team to take increasing control of their own learning. I use effective coaching techniques appropriately in each situation, even when I don't know their context well.	I have challenged and stimulated practitioners outside my team to take increasing control of their own learning. I use effective coaching techniques appropriately in each situation, even when I don't know people well. I have modelled coaching, so that others beyond my team can evaluate and replicate my coaching success.	I have challenged and stimulated practitioners beyond my institution such as regionally, nationally or across my Multi Academy Trust, to identify their own goals, learning processes and solutions. I consistently use effective coaching techniques appropriately in each situation. My coaching is geared to enabling professional learners to take control of their own learning. I have modelled coaching, so that others outside my institution can evaluate and replicate my coaching success.
LP9: Negotiating to lead	I have identified the needs in my own practice and that of my team and I have reached an agreement with a colleague that they will try new ideas.	I have led my team to change one aspect of their approach to contribute to institution improvement by responsibility within my team.	I have led an area of change outside my team that contributes to whole institution improvement. I have collective responsibility with others.	I have led sustainable change both within and outside my institution, monitoring impact in my own and workplaces to improve teaching and learning beyond my institution, such as regionally, nationally or across my Multi Academy Trust. I have successfully promoted collective responsibility and ownership in other people and provided models for use nationally.
LP10: Networking to lead	I have established a professional learning network. I can demonstrate examples of what my professional learning network is achieving.	I have established a professional learning network within my team. I can demonstrate examples of what my professional learning network is achieving.	I have established a professional learning network beyond my team. I have utilised technologies to include online dialogue where face to face networking is not feasible. I can demonstrate examples of what my professional learning network is achieving.	I have developed, refined, and contributed to professional learning networks beyond my institution such as regionally, nationally or across my Multi Academy Trust. I have utilised technologies to include online dialogue where face to face networking is not feasible. I can demonstrate examples of what my professional learning network is achieving.

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Lead Practitioner Accreditation

Driving excellence in education

Lead Practitioner accreditation is a professional learning process that supports whole-school improvement priorities and builds a culture of evidence-informed teaching and learning.

The SSAT LP Programme unlocks change-agent behaviour in practitioners at all levels. This results in cohorts of high-impact leaders of learning, who foster a culture of collaborative learning, embed a stronger focus on teaching and learning and build capacity for improvement within and across schools.

The Lead Practitioner programme provides:

- ▶ A framework of standards enabling aspirant LPs to identify and set professional development targets for themselves and colleagues.
- ▶ Recognition for individuals achieving a high standard, not only in leading practice for themselves, but also in supporting colleagues to achieve success - by all staff, in all phases.
- ▶ A formative process that encourages evaluation and critical reflection, collaboration and a relentless focus on outcomes for students.
- ▶ Access to a wide range of resources, research and case studies that can be drawn on and shared to improve and develop practice.
- ▶ Opportunity to engage with current regional, national and international developments through the wider network of SSAT Lead Practitioners.



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