



Skills for Learning Professionals

# General Professional Recognition Learning and Skills (England)

## GPRLS B4

## **Guidance for Referees**

April 2009

## Guidance for Referees

### GPRLS B4

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# General Professional Recognition Learning and Skills B4 (England)

## 1 Introduction

**General Professional Recognition Learning and Skills B4 (GPRLS B4)** is one of the Recognition routes designed to enable competent and experienced teachers to be recognised as having professional standing, according to the Further Education Teachers' Qualifications (England) Regulations 2007, to be referred to in this document as the 2007 Regulations.

The B4 route has been carefully designed to take into account the experience gained by long standing members of the workforce.

Experienced teachers who are successful in achieving Recognition through Standards Verification UK/Lifelong Learning UK, on behalf of the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS), and who are able to provide evidence of how they meet the GPRLS B4 eligibility criteria, are then in a position to commence professional formation. Once successfully completed, Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) or Associate Teacher Learning and Skills (ATLS) status, the new licences to practise conferred by the Institute for Learning (IfL), can be applied for.

For the full teacher role, the criteria for Recognition via the B4 route are based upon the requirements for teachers as stated in the 2007 Regulations. This criterion takes account of the experience of those practitioners who have been teaching in the Further Education (FE) incorporated sector prior to 1 September 2001 or teaching in the learning and skills sector prior to 1 September 2007 outside of FE Colleges. For the associate teacher role, the criteria for Recognition are adapted accordingly to match the requirements of the role.

General Professional Recognition will provide a route towards licensed status that does not demand acquiring additional formal qualifications. However, Professional Recognition **does not give equivalence** to the requirements of any particular teacher training qualification and Professional Recognition status cannot be used to support any claim for such certification.

There are two alternative GPRLS routes also available. These are:

### **GPRLS Skills for Life**

Open to applicants who:

- must comply with the 2001/2007 Regulations
- teach any Skills for Life subject (Numeracy, Literacy or ESOL)
- seek subject specialism and/or generic Recognition
- can demonstrate currency of practice in the full teacher role

### **GPRLS All Areas**

Open to applicants who:

- must comply with the 2001/2007 Regulations
- teach any curriculum area
- seek generic Recognition
- can demonstrate currency of practice in either the full or associate teacher role

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## 2 Eligibility

The new GPRLS B4 scheme is open to:

- practitioners who have been delivering LSC funded learner provision in the full or associate role and in an FE context in England in the 24 months prior to SVUK receiving the completed application form

and **either**:

- were teaching in the FE Incorporated sector prior to 1 September 2001

**or**:

- were teaching in the learning and skills sector prior to 1 September 2007 outside of FE Colleges

The scheme provides a means of gaining professional standing for those who may voluntarily wish to go on to seek licensed status (Please refer to the Eligibility Tables and Flowcharts in Appendix 1 for further clarification of the above points).

If the applicant is already qualified or began teaching in the FE incorporated sector before 1 September 2001 or in the learning and skills sector before 1 September 2007 outside of FE colleges, they may not be required to qualify further. However, if the applicant is required to gain QTLS or ATLS status by their employer or they themselves choose to gain this status, because they are part- or unqualified, then they may wish to pursue the GPRLS B4 route to Recognition. By this pathway, the applicant's prior qualifications, knowledge, skills and experience can count towards being recognised as meeting the new standards without them having to take the new qualifications.

The applicant's eligibility can be assessed by using the following checklist:

Is the applicant currently teaching? Or have they been teaching in the last 24 months?	Yes	No
Is the learning that is being delivered by the applicant funded by the LSC?	Yes	No
Is the applicant able to provide evidence confirming that they have taught in the FE incorporated sector before September 2001 or have been teaching in the learning and skills sector (and NOT in the FE incorporated sector) before 1 September 2007?	Yes	No
Do they have an up-to-date record of continuing professional development relating to both generic and specialist area practice?	Yes	No
Can they access two referees who meet the requirements for referees as set out in this document?	Yes	No
Can two records of observations of teaching practice, in line with the requirements for observations as set in section 2.3 of the Guidance to Applicants document, be obtained?	Yes	No
Have they registered with the IfL?	Yes	No

If the answer was 'no' to any of the above questions, then it is unlikely that the applicant is eligible for the scheme at this point.

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### 3 How to apply

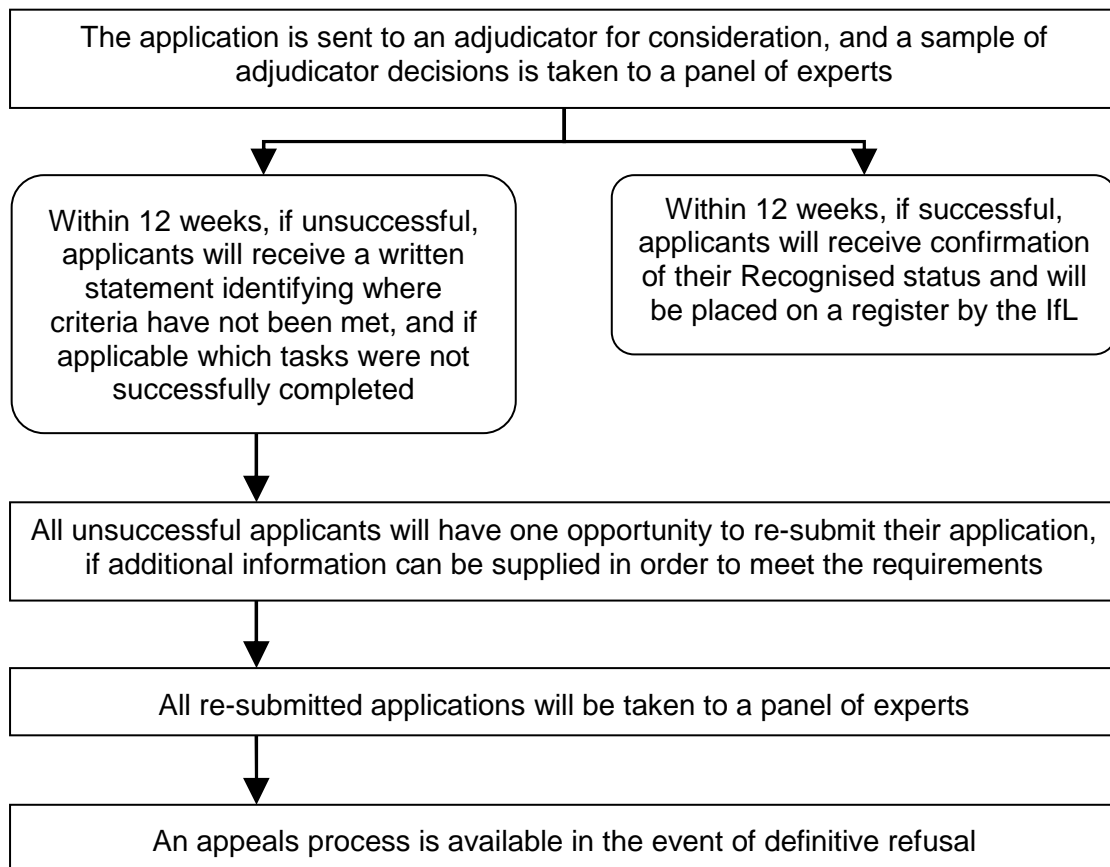
Applicants will need to complete an application form, obtain references from two referees and provide a range of documentation including:

- evidence of being in either the full teacher role or the associate teacher role within the 24 months prior to the receipt of the application form by SVUK
- evidence to confirm that they have taught in the FE incorporated sector before September 2001 or have been teaching in the learning and skills sector outside of FE colleges before 1 September 2007
- **two** clear and relevant references from appropriate colleagues or managers in the sector
- **two** records of observations of their teaching carried out within the 24 months prior to the submission of the application
- their current or most recent job description(s) and position
- a full CV
- Retention, Achievement and Success data (if completing Activity 2, Domain areas E/F)

*NOTE: Applications that are sent without one or more of the above required documents will be returned unprocessed. Where electronic submission of the documentation is preferred, references may be scanned for this purpose.*

## 4 What happens next?

A professional judgement by peers is at the heart of the Recognition process. The following flowchart outlines the journey of an application:



The team of adjudicators is drawn from across the learning and skills sector and includes both education specialists and practitioners from a range of disciplines. They have been selected for their experience of external review and accreditation, as well as for their knowledge, skills and expertise in teaching and learning issues. Panel members are also experts and respected members of the relevant community of practice. SVUK officers are not involved in any way in the decision making process.

Applications should meet agreed criteria and should provide information and evidence regarding the applicant's ability to lead learning and/or provide effective learning opportunities in a teaching capacity in their curriculum area. The criteria reflect the six domains in the *New overarching professional standards for teachers, tutors and trainers in the lifelong learning sector*, and are as follows:

- A Professional values and practice
- B Learning and teaching
- C Specialist learning and teaching
- D Planning for learning
- E Assessment for learning
- F Access and progression

The focus for the above criteria should be the **learner** and **effective learning**.

### 5 What is the role of the referees?

The role of the referees is crucial. Applications to previous Recognition schemes have been undermined by vague or sketchy references. Referees are asked to complete the references as thoroughly as possible, addressing each of the six domain areas identified (Domains A-F) in the *New overarching professional standards for teachers, tutors and trainers in the lifelong learning sector*<sup>1</sup>.

Your role is to provide a review of the applicant's practice and to support and supplement the information given in the application form. Your key contribution is to provide an informed review of the applicant's professional competence, using knowledge of their work including their teaching, and the context in which they lead learning and/or provide effective learning opportunities. **Specific examples of good practice are important.**

It is important to discuss any **proposed** application with the applicant **before** they begin completing an application form. At this early stage you should consider whether:

- they are eligible to apply for Recognition
- they are likely to meet the criteria
- you are an appropriate referee and can support their application.

We recognise this is a different kind of reference from one that is normally required for supporting a promotion or appointment i.e. it is **not** a job reference. We are looking for evidence of commitment to teaching and learning rather than general academic achievement. However, teachers must also demonstrate the requisite level of subject knowledge, understanding, and skills required to teach.

<sup>1</sup> For further information, please see the Lifelong Learning website at:  
[http://www.lluk.org/documents/professional\\_standards\\_for\\_itts\\_020107.pdf](http://www.lluk.org/documents/professional_standards_for_itts_020107.pdf)

### 6 Who can be a referee?

As a referee, you should be familiar with the applicant's professional work and should understand the context and quality assurance framework in which the applicant's teaching activities take place. You need not necessarily be a very senior member of your institution, but you should be an experienced staff member, active in teaching or a closely affiliated role. An appropriate referee should be someone who has observed the applicant's teaching, for example, a course team leader, line manager or someone from another institution in a similar role.

A referee should:

- be a qualified teacher

**and**

**either:**

- be currently practising as a teacher and be a registered member of IfL

**or:**

- have left teaching practice within the last 24 months (retirement/change of career)

In addition:

- at least one referee must be a specialist in the applicant's curriculum area.

The adjudicators find it helpful when referees are able to comment on the applicant's current or recent roles and responsibilities. Information about other relevant activities, including a commitment to CPD undertaken within the last five years is also helpful.

If you take on the role of referee, you should not be a family member or an employee/student of the applicant; neither should you be applying for Recognition yourself other than in exceptional circumstances, in which case you should contact SVUK prior to committing yourself to the role.

#### 6.1 First and Second Referee

The first referee must be a specialist in the applicant's curriculum area, whereas the second referee should be someone who can write a reference from a different perspective. For example a manager, teacher trainer, employer, etc.

#### 6.2 Authenticating Referee

In addition to completing the reference, one of the referees is also asked to complete the *Authenticity and Validity Declaration*. To do this, they must have experience of working within the learning and skills sector quality assurance framework.

For example, you will be one or more of the following:

- someone with experience of internal auditing or inspection
- a part-time inspector for OfSTED
- a verifier, moderator or external examiner for an awarding institution
- someone with experience in a similar quality assurance capacity

### 7 What do the referees do?

**At least one of the referees should discuss the suitability of the applicant entering the Recognition process BEFORE the application document is completed.**

When the application has been completed, both referees need to consider:

- does the applicant provide evidence that demonstrates application of knowledge and skills?
- does the applicant concentrate on the subject area in which they are applying for Recognition?
- has the applicant given responses that relate directly to the activities, suitably referring to their records of observation and retention/achievement/success data where appropriate?
- has the applicant ensured that the learner, effective learning and the creation of suitable conditions for learning are kept central to their responses?
- has the applicant given enough information for the adjudicators to make their decision? Where appropriate, has the *Tariff of Initial Teacher Training Qualifications* been consulted? For more information on the Tariff, visit [www.standardsverificationuk.org/2924.htm](http://www.standardsverificationuk.org/2924.htm) (This may be important in respect of the applicant's qualifications, as there are numerous qualifications, some of which are less well-known than others and which may or may not have had relevant content)
- has the applicant done him or herself justice?

#### 7.1 Completing the references

If you are satisfied, you will complete the appropriate 'First or Second Referee' details sheet found within the application form, making it clear how you are qualified to do so. You will then prepare a signed reference, **on headed paper**, completed with reference to the six domains, see below.

In your reference you should provide comments on how the applicant meets the core criteria within the six domains, using your knowledge of his/her work and the context within which the applicant works. If possible, please comment on the applicant's role and responsibilities within the last five years. We expect the domains (see opposite page) to underpin the practice of competent teachers. Please provide examples, where appropriate, of ways in which this underpinning is apparent.

Your reference should refer to the applicant's experience and achievements in teaching and learning. Please provide practical examples to support your comments wherever possible. If you have been involved in observation of your colleague's teaching, please draw on the evidence this provides. Similarly, please comment on any innovative practice, contribution to developments in teaching and learning at an institutional level, or contribution to national initiatives in developing approaches to teaching and learning in the chosen curriculum area.

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We do not wish to constrain you by providing a template but ask that, in your reference, you comment **under the same domain headings** as those used in the application form. These reflect the *New overarching professional standards for teachers, tutors and trainers in the lifelong learning sector*. The six domain areas are:

- **A** Professional values and practice
- **B** Learning and teaching
- **C** Specialist learning and teaching
- **D** Planning for learning
- **E** Assessment for learning
- **F** Access and progression

### 7.2 Exceptional Circumstances

#### Authenticating and validating evidence

If neither referee is able to view the evidence and sign the declaration, people other than teaching colleagues, line managers or former employers who could be considered as able to authenticate the evidence and/or supporting documentation include:

- a trade union representative
- a person of suitable standing in the community

Where evidence and documentation have been authenticated in the past, for example, for previous employment, this secondary validation or authentication can be used. If original certificates have had to be produced to gain employment, a letter from the employer testifying to this fact could be used rather than the original certificates.

### 7.3 Evidence and supporting documents for the authenticating referee

If the applicant has asked you to take on this role as well, you must be satisfied that the evidence and documentation provided is authentic, and supports or substantiates claims made by the applicant in their application form. You must complete and sign the Authenticity and Validity Declaration stating that you found this to be the case. If you are not sure whether the applicant wishes you to take on this role, please clarify this with them before completing the form.

Please ensure that you provide specific details (i.e. Retention rates 2004-5005 provided by MIS rather than 'College data', titles of qualifications rather than 'certificates'). Please note that all information must be directly related to the applicant.

The applicant may provide you with several types of evidence, examples of which are listed below:

- for evidencing competence: internal quality audit records, for example, SAR, external examiner reports, student achievement data, line manager observation records and evaluation records from learners, a lesson plan
- a record that shows the applicant's continuing professional development from within the past 5 years in their curriculum area and generic teaching (as appropriate) and sets out the plan for continuing development over the forthcoming year

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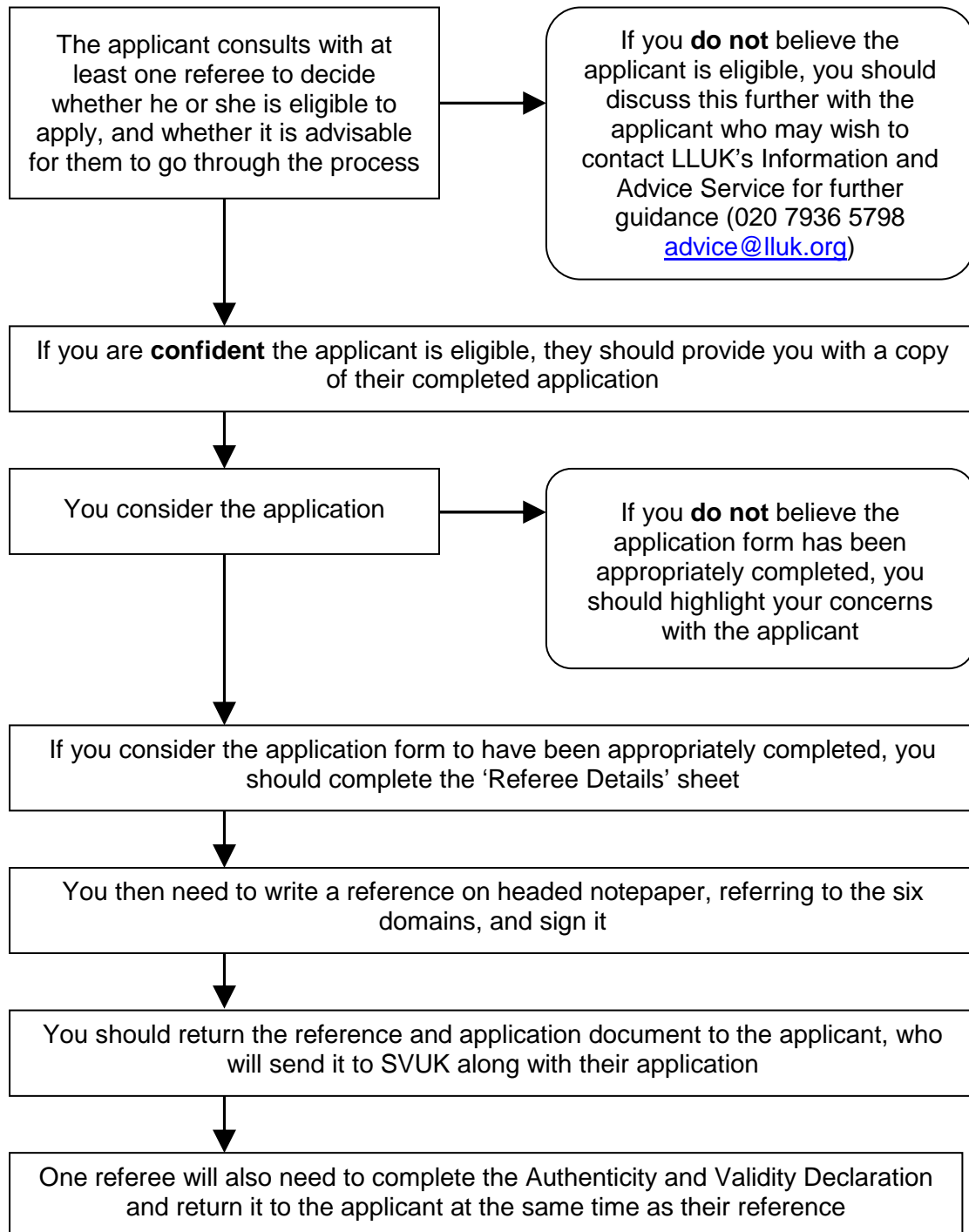
- membership of any relevant professional bodies, institutions or specialist organisations
- relevant specialist qualifications/experience/published material, along with a record of any training undergone to update the qualifications where appropriate

NB For authentication purposes, please ensure that you see the original certificates or confirmation that originals have been seen by employers.

### **7.4 Authentication sampling**

In accordance with our quality assurance procedures, SVUK will request original copies of the stated qualifications and supporting evidence from a random sample of successful applications.

## 8 Summary of the Process



**NB** All applications and references should either be submitted in paper-based form or submitted electronically. The references may be scanned for this purpose.

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**Applications without signed and completed references on headed paper will not be considered.**

We may wish to contact you to clarify points in your reference. Please indicate on your details form your preferred means for us to do so.

**Your contribution to GPRLS as a referee is greatly appreciated.**

For further advice and assistance regarding points within an application, please contact:

### **LLUK Information & Advice Service**

Tel: 020 7936 5798

E-mail: [advice@lluk.org](mailto:advice@lluk.org)

For further information regarding the processing of an application, please contact:

### **General Professional Recognition Learning and Skills (England)**

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36 Park Row

Leeds

LS1 5JL

Tel: 0113 241 0435

E-mail: [recognition@svuk.eu](mailto:recognition@svuk.eu)