CMALT Frequently asked questions

These are typical questions that individuals have asked us through the JISC list and in the workshops. If you do not find the answer to your question below, please e-mail your enquiry to cmalt@alt.ac.uk or check the website http://www.alt.ac.uk/cmalt .

   A. Portfolios

   B. Evidence

   C. Specialist Options

   D. Recognition by employers

   E. Assessors

   F. Other

A. Portfolios

Q1. What is a portfolio?

A portfolio is a means of assessment. It comprises a set of evidence that represents learning and achievement appropriate to the assessment criteria and the requirements of a programme of study or accreditation scheme. Portfolio building involves both gathering and presentation of evidence and an element of critical reflection and commentary.

Portfolios are essential tools for learning and reflection, not just a means to accreditation. CMALT candidates have found the process of collating and reflecting on their skills and experience in terms of career and professional development planning, as valuable as the certification they receive.

Q2. What type of style of writing is expected for the portfolio?

The style of writing expected is one of a reflective and analytical nature and not solely descriptive. You should aim to achieve a balance of description and reflection in your statements. The main part of the portfolio should include short statements against each of the core and specialist areas, alongside reference to 'proof' usually presented in appendices.

Q3. Does ALT use an e-portfolio system for CMALT?

At present ALT does not use its own e-portfolio system for CMALT. Instead we are making use of a simple word-processed submission form. This provides a useful structure for CMALT candidates who may choose to use the Word template or create an e-portfolio on their own system following the CMALT structure. Candidates have used both approaches successfully. (Please note that if you are using an e-portfolio on your own system, please ensure you make it a shared document. This will ensure that your CMALT portfolio not only can be seen by you, but also by the Certification Manager and by the assessors.)

Q4. What is the maximum file size I can send in?

The maximum file size is 1MB. Providing hyperlinks to URLs, provided they are stable, is one way to enable your assessors to view supplementary material, provided this is not used as an excuse to "pack" your submission with bulky material that may be time-consuming to review.

B. Evidence

Q5. Should my portfolio evidence be mainly reflective or mainly descriptive?

Descriptive evidence is factual statements about what you have done, what you currently do, and about things you have achieved. Reflection is self-assessment as to what the evidence shows about your practice, and what it shows about your grasp of the CMALT core areas and your specialist options.

The balance between evidence and reflection will vary, but it is important that you do not leave it to your assessors to have to interpret the descriptive evidence; and you should write your portfolio in the expectation that it will be read by assessors who may have no knowledge of you, and who will not be able to read between the lines.

Q6. What do I do if some or all of my work-based learning evidence is difficult to show due to licensing or log-in problems?

Explain this briefly within the body of your submission, and contact us directly. Ideally we would expect your employer to make strong efforts to enable your assessors to view such evidence by, for example, giving them guest log-ins.

Q7. How do I evidence instructional materials?

You can point to these as URLs, or include examples, or screenshots, as appendices. You may choose to provide assessors with guest access to live materials. You will need to make clear what role you have or had in producing the materials or in supporting learners in using them.

Q8. How much can I put in the appendices?

Don't make the assessors read through appendices from start to finish. Instead point to individual appendices from the main body of your portfolio, using them to back up points contained therein. The number of appendices is not limited, but take care only to include appendices which directly support your submission.

C. Specialist Options

Q9. How many specialist options should I present and will I be penalised if I can only evidence one specialist option?

You will not be penalised if you only present one specialist option. We do not expect candidates to present more than two specialist options. For some people, they have a great deal of depth in one particular area, while for others, they specialist expertise cuts across more than one area.

D. Recognition by employers

Q10. How is the CMALT recognised by employers?

Individuals who have achieved CMALT have found that this is taken seriously by employers, as it provides evidence that the individual is taking a committed and serious approach to his or her development as a learning technologist.

What is notable is that there have been an increasing number of job advertisements that have specifically asked for CMALT in their person specification.

Q11. What phraseology should I use on my C.V. when referring to holding a CMALT accreditation?

We suggest you say something like this:

"On dd/mm/yyyy I was awarded CMALT, that is, Certified Membership of the Association for Learning Technology (ALT). CMALT is a portfolio-based professional accreditation scheme developed by ALT to enable people whose work involves learning technology to have their professional experience and capabilities assessed by peers. Full details of CMALT can be found at http://www.alt.ac.uk/cmalt/".

CMALT holders are entitled to use the post-nominal letter 'CMALT'.

Q12. Why does ALT not use terms like e-learning when describing CMALT?

ALT believes that as e-learning becomes embedded as a normal part of most learners' experience the term will fall into disuse. In contrast we are confident that the term "learning technology" (i.e. the broad range of communication, information and related technologies that can be used to support learning, teaching, and assessment) will remain an acknowledged field of study, research and practice.

Q13. Do employers typically pay for an individual to register for CMALT?

There is no clear pattern, but employers may pay. Employers who normally pay for the costs of work-related examination fees or staff development more broadly are likely to look favourably on paying for the CMALT certification fee, at least in the first year.

There are also a variety of initiatives which support CMALT candidates. To find more information about current initiatives and eligibility criteria, please go to http://www/alt.ac.uk/cmalt .

E. Assessors

Q14. How do assessors make their judgements?

Assessors look for reflective statements which summarise in a coherent way your experience and capabilities. For further details refer the guidelines for CMALT candidates and assessors, which you can download at http://www.alt.ac.uk/cmalt .

Q15. What skills and knowledge does my nominated assessor ideally require?

Your nominated assessor is not required to be a learning technologist, although familiarity with the learning technology domain will not be any detriment. He or she will need to know your work and be able to comment confidently. ALT will check that your assessor is acceptable for the role, and we will give the assessor the opportunity to decline.

Q16. Is the lead assessor already a holder of CMALT?

Yes. If you choose not to nominate an Assessor, or if ALT declines to accept your nominee, or if your nominee declines to assess your submission, then ALT will appoint a second assessor, who will also be a holder of CMALT.

F. Other

Q17. What support will CMALT candidates have with completing their portfolio?

There is a wide variety of support available including documents, workshops and webinar and the CMALT Community networking site. Please refer to the CMALT website for details http://www.alt.ac.uk/cmalt.

Q18. Does ALT allow exemptions for other qualifications towards CMALT?

Currently ALT does not allow any exemptions towards CMALT. However if you have learning technology related qualifications you are encouraged to make reference to these in your submission, since in most cases these will be relevant to your submission.

Q19. How do I reference an achievement if it was more than five years ago?

By showing clearly why it remains relevant to your current practice or capabilities, and/or by reflecting on why you gained this qualification or achievement.

Q20. Is CMALT internationally recognised?

No. But we would expect that possession of it would nevertheless be of interest to non UK employers.

Q21. Can someone who obtains CMALT and then goes to work abroad still retain CMALT status?

Yes. Holding CMALT is not dependent to where in the world you are based.