

## CMALT Frequently asked questions

### CMALT home | CMALT workshops |

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 email the CMALT Certification Manager on [cmalt@alt.ac.uk](mailto:cmalt@alt.ac.uk) who will be more than happy to assist.

- A. [Portfolios](#)
- B. [Evidence](#)
- C. [Specialisms](#)
- D. [Recognition by others](#)
- 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. Participants in CMALT 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?

The short answer is no, but we're working towards one. ALT piloted the Petal e-portfolio system when CMALT first started. However, there were many aspects of this system that we found were unsuitable for CMALT purposes (such as a lack of facility to work on the portfolio when off-line, lack of portability, lack of flexibility for users etc).

In the meantime, we are making use of a simple word-processed application form. This is proving to offer a useful structure for CMALT applicants who may choose to use the Word template or create an e-portfolio on their own system on the CMALT

structure. Applicants 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 people ALT appoints to assess it.)

#### **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 application with bulky material that may be time-consuming to review.

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### **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 specialisms.

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 application, 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 application.

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## C. Specialisms

### **Q9. How many specialisms should I present and will I be penalised if I can only evidence one specialism?**

You will not be penalised if you only present one specialism. We do not expect applicants to present more than two specialisms. 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.

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## D. Recognition by others

### **Q10. How is the CMALT recognised by employers?**

It is too early to say for certain, but individuals who have achieved CMALT have found that this is taken seriously by employers, proving as it does 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. How is CMALT recognised by the Higher Education Academy membership scheme?**

Following discussions in April 2008, between the Association for Learning Technology (ALT) and the Higher Education Academy focusing on ALT's certified membership scheme, we have agreed that a holder of [Certified Membership of ALT](#) (CMALT) has demonstrated understanding of and the ability to engage with several "Areas of activity" and "Core knowledge" elements in the UK Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning in higher education (UK PSF), and has also provided evidence of their commitment to several of the "Professional values" of the UK PSF.

Holding CMALT is therefore likely to provide relevant evidence for an individual who works in higher education to gain recognition as either an Associate or a Fellow of the Academy.

Secondly, use of CMALT with appropriate categories of staff as a component of an institution's staff development activity is likely to provide evidence that the institution's staff development provision aligns with the UK PSF, and thus be relevant to that institution's accreditation by the Higher Education Academy.

For information about accreditation and on recognition by the Higher Education Academy see <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/institutions/accreditation> and <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/professional/recognition>.

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**Q12. 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 achieved 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'.

**Q13. 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.

**Q14. Do employers typically pay for an individual's CMALT application?**

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.

**Q15. Is CMALT internationally recognised?**

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

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**E. Assessors**

**Q16. How do Assessors make their judgements?**

Assessors look for reflective statements which summarise in a coherent way your experience and capabilities. For further details, read pages 9 and ten of the guidelines for CMALT applicants and assessors, which you can access from the CMALT section of the ALT web site: [www.alt.ac.uk/cmalt](http://www.alt.ac.uk/cmalt)

**Q17. 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.

**Q18. 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 application, then ALT will appoint a second Assessor, who will also be a holder of CMALT.

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**F. Other**

**Q19. What support will CMALT applicants have with their portfolio building?**

ALT offer a free workshop to support groups of 8 or more in an institution who are going through the CMALT process. There are also a series of regional workshops you can attend to help you. The CMALT Accreditation Manager is thereafter available to assist individuals by telephone or email. Email [cmalt@alt.ac.uk](mailto:cmalt@alt.ac.uk).

**Q20. 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 application, since in most cases these will be relevant to your application.

**Q21. 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.

**Q22. Can someone who obtains CMALT and then goes to work abroad still retain CMALT status?**

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

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