GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS AND FOR ASSESSORS

Certified Membership of the Association for Learning Technology (CMALT)

Definitive documents relating to CMALT will always by found on the ALT web site at http://www.alt.ac.uk/cmalt/, from where you can download a copy of these Guidelines, the CMALT Prospectus, and the CMALT Application Form (a.k.a. CMALT portfolio), and where you will also find the email and postal address of the CMALT Certification Manager, to whom all communications should be addressed.

This document contains:

- “small print” information about CMALT rates and the application process p.1);
- detailed guidelines on how to prepare a CMALT portfolio (p.3);
- an addendum regarding recognition of CMALT by the HE Academy (p.8);
- Guidelines for assessors (p.9).

Small print

Prices

Both Individual Member and Certified Member fees are tax deductible. The costs of getting and remaining certified are as follows.

Getting certified

1. Application is only open to Individual Members of ALT.

2. Applicants for Certified Membership, or their employer, will be charged a Certification Fee of £95. Special preferential rates may apply, please check www.alt.ac.uk/cmalt for announcements.

3. Once ALT has received the Certification Fee, attached to the Registration Form available from www.alt.ac.uk/cmalt, you will be entitled to submit a CMALT portfolio for assessment by ALT. Once ALT has assessed your portfolio we will let you know whether or not it meets the CMALT criteria. If it does meet the CMALT criteria you will be granted Certified Member status.

4. If your portfolio does not meet the CMALT criteria we will indicate in what respect(s) it falls short, and you will be entitled to submit it for assessment a second time. If following assessment your portfolio meets the CMALT criteria you will be granted Certified Member status.

5. If, after re-assessment, your portfolio still does not meet the CMALT criteria, and you want to continue with the certification process, you will need to apply afresh and a further Certification Fee of £95 will be due.
**Remaining certified**

1. When your individual membership is next due for renewal, to remain in good standing as a Certified Member, your membership will be charged at a new “Certified Member rate” of £80 per annum (£53 for students, retired, unemployed; £93 overseas). Certified Members will normally be required to pay their membership fees annually by Direct Debit.

2. CMALT certification will remain valid for 5 years, with the strong likelihood that triennial “light touch” renewal will become a requirement, through resubmission of an updated portfolio for review by ALT. If ALT judges your update portfolio to fall short of the CMALT standards then pertaining, you will be entitled to resubmit it for review once more. If after review your portfolio is judged by ALT still to fall short of the CMALT criteria you will revert to being an Individual Member, and, when your membership is next due for renewal, you will be charged at the individual rate - currently £52 per annum (£25 for students, retired, unemployed; £65 overseas).

3. These costs will apply until ALT’s membership fees are next due to be updated. Any changes will be shown on our web site at [http://www.alt.ac.uk/](http://www.alt.ac.uk/).

**Application process**

1. Your application will not be processed unless:
   - you are in good standing as an ALT Individual Member, and
   - ALT has received from the £95 Certification Fee relating to your application.

2. Our strong preference is for your completed application form to be sent to the Certification Manager as a single email attachment, or as a URL.

3. If your portfolio consists of single document, its file-size should be no more than 1MB, and it should be capable of being read in Microsoft Word 2000, or as a PDF. (So long as our application can conveniently be accessed by the assessors, and remains fixed during the assessment process, you may use other formats, for example and institutional e-portfolio system, or a web log, provided that the format of the standard application form.)

4. We will acknowledge receipt of completed application forms by email.

5. We aim to come to a decision about applications within a maximum of 3 months of receipt.

6. In case of difficulty, contact the CMALT Certification Manager by email, from whom you can expect a reply within 5 working days, usually sooner.

7. To join ALT, or to renew your membership if it has lapsed, go to [http://www.alt.ac.uk/membership_join.html](http://www.alt.ac.uk/membership_join.html).

**Note.** During 2008 the assessment process will be managed using an e-commerce enabled document workflow system. At that point some of the details of these Guidelines will change. Please ensure you are working to the latest version available on the ALT website.
Portfolio guidelines

To achieve certification, you need to demonstrate knowledge and application of effective practice in four core areas, plus at least one specialist area of work. The following sections provide advice and guidance on how you should present your case for certification and substantiate this with evidence. They also provide suggestions for specialisms. Please refer to the Frequently Asked Questions at www.alt.ac.uk/docs/cmalt_faqs.pdf for further help.

Principles and values

The development of this scheme was informed by several principles and values, identified through consultation with ALT’s members. Central to the scheme is the definition of learning technology agreed within ALT.

“Learning technology is the broad range of communication, information and related technologies that can be used to support learning, teaching, and assessment.”

The principles and values that informed the development of the scheme are:

1. A commitment to exploring and understanding the interplay between technology and learning.
2. A commitment to keep up to date with new technologies.
3. An empathy with and willingness to learn from colleagues from different backgrounds and specialisms.
4. A commitment to communicate and disseminate effective practice.

These should be kept in mind when completing your application and selecting evidence, both for the core areas and when defining a specialism: they will also be used by assessors to inform their judgement of your form.

Statements and evidence

The application should commence with a contextual statement – the kind of thing you might write in a cover letter for a job application. It should provide a concisely biography, outlining your career history and current role(s), highlight briefly the operational context in which you work or have worked, and reflect on why you are applying for CMALT and how this relates to your future career aspirations.

The application then requires you to describe and reflect on your skills and experience against a set of core areas and specialism(s), which constitute the CMALT framework. For each of these criteria, and bearing in mind the principles and values above, you should expect to follow a similar pattern. Within the free-text boxes, you should state the kinds of activity you have undertaken that demonstrate your engagement with the core area or specialism. Example: you might say, “iteratively developing user interfaces on the basis of user feedback” in response to 4b, Interface between human and technical systems.

You should then include evidence to support the statement, either directly in the form, or in a numbered appendix, or as a link to evidence in the form of some suitable web content. (Within an e-portfolio system you might attach an appendix as an uploaded file, or include a hyperlink.) Example: Appendix 2b, supporting statements about your understanding of your target learners, might include a demographic breakdown of a student cohort, emailed feedback from learners on their experiences or a reflective statement summarising your experiences of working with a particular group.) Generally, the evidence you supply should
be brief – a well-chosen screenshot, the citation information and/or abstract for a paper or report (not the full text), a scan or image of a certificate, a one-page lesson plan and so on. As a rule of thumb, you should provide no more than a page and a half of evidence or up to 500 words in support of each free-text box – and in some cases, less than this will be appropriate, though this will depend to some extent on the extent to which you choose make use of appendices. You should also feel free to refer back to an earlier piece of evidence where this substantiates several statements within your submission, rather than feeling the need to re-include it.

Each section should have a **reflective and analytical component**, rather than being merely descriptive, thereby enabling assessors to judge, rather than infer that you have appropriate levels of understanding. Evidence that already demonstrates that certain standards have been met (such as a certificate, or a publication, or a link to a piece of your work as a learning technologist) are ideal.

Evidence should be recent, ideally within the last three years, although it is recognised that in some cases older evidence will be appropriate. However, it should be noted that unless relevant new evidence continues to be produced, it will be hard for applicants to remain in good standing when meeting the expected “light touch” triennial renewal process.

More information on appropriate statements and evidence is provided below, on a section-by-section basis.

**Core areas of work**

The style of writing expected is one of a reflective and analytical nature and not solely descriptive.

1. **Operational issues**

Applicants should demonstrate both their understanding and use of learning technology. ‘Use’ might include the development, adaptation or application of technology within teaching, training or the support of learning more generally.

This should include evidence of:

a) **An understanding of the constraints and benefits of different technology**

You should show how you have used technology appropriately, given the constraints and benefits it provides within your context.

Evidence in support of such statements might include a brief commentary on the choices behind the development and use of learning technology that influence its fitness for purpose. (This might discuss issues as viability, sustainability, scalability, interoperability and value for money.) You may already have something like this in the form of a design outline, proposal, conference presentation or similar. You should include such existing documentation wherever it seems relevant. Alternatively, you might want to take this opportunity to find out more about a technology you have deployed and produce a report on its viability.

b) **Technical knowledge and ability in the use of learning technology**

You should show that you have used a range of learning technologies. These might include web pages, PowerPoint, Virtual Learning Environments, Computer-Aided Assessment, programming languages and so on.
Evidence might include copies of certificates (originals not needed) from relevant training courses, screenshots of your work, a note from academic or support staff who have worked with you or, if appropriate, confirmation that the work is your own from your line manager.

c) Supporting the deployment of learning technologies.

Statements about your involvement in supporting the deployment of learning technology might relate to providing technical and/or pedagogic support to teachers, advising on (or re-designing to take account of) technical and usability issues, developing strategies or policies, managing change, providing training or other forms of professional development, securing or deploying dedicated funding and so on, all within the context of the educational use of learning technology.

For evidence, you might include the overview section of a strategy document, meeting minutes, summaries of student feedback, testimonials or witness statements from other colleagues, for example.

2. Teaching, learning and/or assessment processes

Applicants should demonstrate their understanding of and engagement with teaching, learning and assessment processes. 'Engagement' may include using understanding to inform the development, adaptation or application of technology.

This should include evidence of:

a) An understanding of teaching, learning and/or assessment processes

Statements here might relate to areas such as teaching experience, learning design, curriculum development, work-based assessment, the creation and execution of a programme of training and so on.

Evidence might include being on the register of the Higher Education Academy, a PGCE award, having completed a SEDA-approved course or undertaken relevant sections of the FERL Practitioners Programme or Certified E-Learning Professional courses. Commentaries from peers on your approach would also provide suitable evidence. Other possibilities include teaching experience, reflective statements that analyse experience in terms of learning theory, pedagogic approaches, sociological theories, or a comparable, recognised perspective. In relation to learning design, a report, specification or reflective statement might be provided that clearly elaborates the principles that informed the design process. In any collection of evidence there should be some consideration of how technology is changing approaches to teaching and learning and/or the roles of learners, teachers and support staff.

b) An understanding of your target learners

Statements should how you have found out about learners’ needs and the context for their studies, and how you have developed inclusive, accessible and learner-centred approaches that reflect this.

Evidence might include a description of how assistive technologies have been used to support disabled students, how learner feedback has influenced the design of an application, how the needs of work-based learners or overseas students have shaped the curriculum, or records of conversations with product analysts, marketing departments or course teams and the resulting plans for your design. Evidence of changed practice, rather than simply the recognition that this is an important area, is required.
3. The wider context

Applicants should demonstrate their awareness of and engagement with wider issues that inform their practice.

This should include evidence of:

a) Understanding and engaging with legislation, policies and standards

Statements here should show how relevant legislation, policies, strategies, technical standards, professional/research codes of practice and so on have influenced your work. You are not expected to have expert knowledge of all of these areas, but are expected to be aware of how they relate to your current practice. Relevant legislation is likely to include special educational needs/accessibility, discrimination, copyright and intellectual property, data protection and privacy issues.

The kinds of evidence that would support this would include minutes of meetings with legal advisers, documentation showing how legal issues have influenced work (such as reports or data protection forms), justifications for modifications to a course to reflect new policies or a record of how technical standards have been taken into account during system development.

4. Communication

Applicants should demonstrate their knowledge and skills in communication either through working with others or through interface design.

This should include evidence of either (a) or (b).

a) Working with others

Statements should describe the way in which your work involves collaboration, for example through participation in a team or acting as an interface to other groups.

Relevant evidence would include reflection on collaborations with others, reports outlining your activity within a team process, how you have brokered support for a particular initiative (for example from a technical or legal support service) or how you have worked with others to solve problems.

b) Interface between human and technical systems

This section requires statements about work involving visual communication, human-computer interaction, and interfaces.

For evidence, you might use screenshots of interface design in computer based learning materials, online learning environments, presentations, or technical support documentation, suitably annotated to show how human-computer interface issues within educational contexts have been taken into account.

Specialist Options

As well as the core areas, applicants are required to demonstrate evidence of independent practice in one or more specialist options. This reflects the fact that, although there are common areas of work in this area, practice is extremely diverse and everyone specialises in something different.
Your chosen specialist option might be defined by your manager, your professional body or your own personal interests. You can also define your own specialist topics if none of the recommendations here reflect your role and interests. However, when doing this, you should keep in mind that such areas should be specialist – that is, they should not be things that the majority of practitioners in this area would do.

Here are some examples of combinations that might be appropriate.

- For a materials developer in a small company: 4 core areas + specialism: producing learning materials/courseware.
- For an HE/FE learning technologist: 4 core areas + specialism: project management + specialism: VLE administration and maintenance.
- For staff developers with interest in technology: 4 core areas + specialism: organisational change + specialism: collaborative online learning.

Here is an indicative list of possible specialist options:
- producing learning materials/content/courseware;
- project management, including resource management;
- training, mentoring and developing others;
- evaluating projects;
- research;
- management/administration of a sustainable e-learning process;
- supporting and tutoring learners;
- designing tools and systems;
- institutional development стратегический work;
- knowledge and application of emerging standards for learning technology;
- assistive technologies;
- using technology for research;
- VLE administration and maintenance;
- interface design;
- distance learning/blended learning/e-learning;
- database design and use;
- managing and sourcing content;
- copyright;
- learner support;
- teaching with technology.

Defining and evidencing your specialism

In describing your specialism you (or your employer) should refer to the values listed at the top of these guidelines. Because these are specialist options you should be clear what makes your work distinct from common practice; many people use databases, for example, but designing specific relational databases with tailored reports that are interoperable with the institution’s Managed Learning Environment might be considered specialist. Similarly, many teachers provide blended learning, but developing and sharing guidelines for such practice or working with a distinctive blend of contexts might distinguish your work as specialist.

Evidence for your specialist activity is likely to be very specific but could include: reports, papers or presentations you have written; a job description plus written statements supporting your specialist knowledge from colleagues, clients or managers; active membership of professional or other bodies; certificates of completion of specialist training programmes or courses.
Future plans, suggested assessor and sign-off

The form ends with three boxes that are obligatory but not assessed. The first concerns your plans for the future. This can be as detailed as you like. The purpose of this is to help you plan for your professional development; it will also be useful when preparing to meet your continuing professional development requirement to remain in good standing.

The second allows you to provide details of a person (or persons), known to you, who would be a suitable assessor for your application. You may wish to choose, for example, someone who works within the same sector or who has a similar role. You should not nominate someone who is directly responsible for your work or who has worked with you in the production of any of the evidence included in your application. Your application will be assessed by two people; at least one of them will be someone who is not chosen by you, who may not be known to you and who may work in a different sector or a different kind of role. For this reason, you should ensure that your statements and evidence are accessible to someone whom you might consider to be a lay reader rather than someone with the same expertise as you. Note that you should have sought people’s permission before including their details here, and that inclusion does not oblige ALT to call upon them.

The third is a declaration that the application you have made is honest and fair. If there is reasonable cause to believe that you have given false evidence or breached procedure in some other way, your certification may be revoked.

Addendum:

ALT Certified Membership (CMALT) and recognition as an Associate or Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, and accreditation of an institution’s staff development provision

Following discussions 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.

30 April 2008

For information about CMALT see http://www.alt.ac.uk/cmalt/. 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.
Guidelines for Assessors of Certified Member of the Association for Learning Technology (CMALT) applications

Each application will have two assessors: one nominated by the candidate and one a holder of CMALT appointed by ALT, and referred to as the “Lead Assessor”. If the candidate does not provide details of a suitable assessor, or if their nomination(s) are felt to be unsuitable for any reason (such as the nominated person not agreeing to undertake the work), then two holders of CMALT will be appointed by ALT, one of whom will be defined as the Lead Assessor.

The task of the assessors is firstly, independently, to complete the CMALT Application Assessment Form (see below), secondly to exchange results, and thirdly jointly to agree a final decision, for the Lead Assessor to communicate to Certification Manager, who will communicate the result to the applicant. Email exchanges between the assessors should be copied for information to the Certification Manager, to enable progress to be monitored.

Assessors should judge each section of the application as being of one of the following standards:

- Evidence is inadequate (or non-existent); or,
- Evidence is adequate in that it is both complete and credible; or
- Evidence is strong in that it is well documented and highly convincing.

To assist them in determining the standard of each section of the application, assessors will take account of the “benchmark” application fragments provided to them by ALT.

Based on the two assessments the outcome could be one of the following:

1. A clear pass.

Both assessors should agree that the candidate adequately meets the criteria for all the sections including at least one specialism.

2. A borderline case.

This might arise if at least one assessor judges one section (but not more than one) to be inadequate. A section judged as being strong by the same assessor or the other assessor could be used to compensate for the inadequate section, at the assessors’ discretion. The assessors should come to an agreement on whether the application should pass or be referred.

3. A referral.

This would arise if at least one assessor judges two or more sections to be inadequate. In this case to the lead assessor will write a feedback statement to be sent to the applicant. This should identify the areas judged to be inadequate and then outline, in a constructive, supportive manner, what needs to be done for the applicant to pass when the application is resubmitted.
CMALT Application Assessment Form

This form is for illustration purposes only. The definitive marking sheet can be obtained from the ALT website at: http://www.alt.ac.uk/docs/cmalt_markingform.doc

The task of the assessors is firstly, independently, to complete this form, secondly to exchange results, and thirdly jointly to agree a final decision, which the Lead Assessor will put in column 4 of the form. Email exchanges between the assessors should in general be copied for information to the Certification Manager – jay.dempster@alt.ac.uk – to enable progress to be monitored.

The lead assessor must put a brief explanatory comment in column 5 if the final decision in relation to any of the sections of the application is “inadequate” If the overall outcome of the assessment is a referral or a fail, the Lead Assessor will briefly summarise the reasons in the comments section at the end indicating, in the case of a referral, what improvements are needed in the applicant’s portfolio prior to resubmission by the applicant. The ALT-Appointed lead assessor should produce a final copy, signed by both assessors with a scanned signature and email back to the CMALT Administrator on cmalt@alt.ac.uk, or by fax to 01865 484165 or post to Gipsy Lane, Headington, Oxon, OX3 0BP.

The contents of the form minus the names of the assessors will be shared with the applicant. If the outcome of the assessment is a Referral or a Fail, the Lead Assessor should summarise the reasons in the comments section indicating, in the case of a referral what improvements are needed in the applicant’s portfolio prior to resubmission by the applicant.

NAME OF APPLICANT (Lead Assessor to insert):

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<tr>
<th>S = Strong</th>
<th>Insert each assessor’s name/initials below</th>
<th>Brief comments from lead assessor if final decision is “inadequate”</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A = Adequate</td>
<td>Lead assessor</td>
<td>Second assessor</td>
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<tr>
<td>I = Inadequate</td>
<td>Column 1</td>
<td>Column 2</td>
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### Question

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<th>Decision: Put S, A or I</th>
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<td>1. Operational</td>
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<td>c)</td>
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<td>2. Teaching</td>
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<td>b)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Legal</td>
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<td>4. Communication a) or b)</td>
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</table>

### Specialism(s)

Write the titles below.

1. 
2. 
3. 

**Comments:**

Final decision: Pass, Fail/refer (delete as appropriate)

Lead Assessor’s signature: Date:

Certification Manager signed off grade: Pass, Fail/refer (delete as appropriate) Date: