

Guidelines for CMALT candidates and assessors

Introduction

CMALT is our portfolio-based professional accreditation scheme developed by ALT to enable people whose work involves learning technology to:

- have their experience and capabilities certified by peers;
- demonstrate that they are taking a committed and serious approach to their professional development.

CMALT holders are learning technology practitioners, teachers and researchers from across the educational and commercial sectors.

This document provides information about the portfolio submission and assessment process. If you would like information about how to register for CMALT, renew your CMALT membership of ALT or other aspects of CMALT please refer to the CMALT website <http://www.alt.ac.uk/cmalt> .

Other information is available

- [The CMALT Prospectus](#) - in which you will find background information about CMALT, an overview of the scheme and details of specialist options [671 kB PDF - May 2010]
- [Overview of Registration Criteria and Fees](#) - [17 kB PDF - April 2009]
- [CMALT Registration Form](#) - Use this form to register for CMALT [6.6 kB PDF]
- [CMALT web page](#)
- [Youtube video](#) on using Google sites to create your portfolio

About the portfolio submission process

1. Your submission will not be processed unless:

- you are in good standing as an ALT Member, and
- ALT has received the relevant Certification Fee relating to your submission.

The CMALT Certification fee is £95.00 or £47.50 if you are registering under one of the promotional initiatives.

2. Please send your completed submission form to cmalt@alt.ac.uk .

3. If your portfolio consists of single document, its file-size should be no more than 10MB, and it should be capable of being read in Microsoft Word 2007, or as a PDF or web archive file (mht). So long as your portfolio can conveniently be accessed by the assessors, and remains fixed during the assessment process, you may use other formats, for example an institutional e-portfolio system or a blog, provided that it keeps to the standard structure.
4. We will acknowledge receipt of completed portfolio submissions by email.
5. We aim to come to an initial decision about portfolios within a maximum of 3 months of receipt.
6. In case of difficulty or if you have questions regarding your submission please e-mail cmalt@alt.ac.uk .

Completion guidelines

To gain CMALT accreditation, you need to demonstrate knowledge by means of a portfolio 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 portfolio 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 portfolio 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 concise 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 submitting your portfolio for CMALT and how this relates to your future career aspirations.

You are then required 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.

You should include evidence to support the statement, either directly within 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.)

Generally, the supporting 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, feedback from users / students 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 to 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 **must** 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 candidates 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.

Examples of strong and weak statements can be found at the end of this document.

1. Operational issues

Candidates should demonstrate both their understanding and use of learning technology. "Use" might include the use of technology to enhance learning and teaching, the development, adaptation or deployment of technology to support teaching, training or learning.

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 affordances of the technology, 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, Virtual Learning Environments, Computer-Aided Assessment, blogs, wikis, mobile technology, e-books, 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 or learners, 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

Candidates 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 show 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 e-portfolio, 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

Candidates 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 policies and standards are likely to include special educational needs/accessibility, discrimination, copyright and intellectual property, freedom of information, 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

Candidates 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, Candidates 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 is an indicative list of possible specialist options:

- producing learning materials/content/courseware;
- project management, including resource management, in learning technology;
- 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/strategic 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;
- accessibility.

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 portfolio. 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 portfolio. Your portfolio 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 portfolio you have submitted 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.

Guidelines for Assessors of Certified Member of the Association for Learning Technology (CMALT) portfolios

Each candidate has 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 assess the portfolio and complete the CMALT Portfolio Assessment Form (see below), **secondly** to exchange results, and thirdly jointly to agree a final decision, for the Lead Assessor to communicate to the Membership Services Manager, who will communicate the result to the Candidate. Email exchanges between the assessors should be copied for information to the Membership Services Manager, to enable progress to be monitored.

Assessors should judge each section of the portfolio 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 portfolio, assessors will take account of the “benchmark” portfolio 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 portfolio should pass or be referred.

3. A referral.

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

CMALT Portfolio Assessment Form

Assessors should complete the form independently then exchange results and agree a final decision, which should be summarised in column 4 by the Lead Assessor. 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 candidate. 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 candidate's portfolio prior to resubmission by the candidate.

NAME OF CANDIDATE:

S = Strong A = Adequate I = Inadequate	Insert Assessor's initials below			Comments (particularly if 'Inadequate')
	Lead assessor	Second Assessor	Final decision	
Question	Decision: Put S, A or I			
1. Operational a) <i>An understanding of the constraints and benefits of different technology</i>				
b) Technical knowledge and ability in the use of learning technology				
c) Supporting the deployment of learning technologies				
2. Teaching a) <i>An understanding of teaching, learning and/or assessment processes</i>				
b) An understanding of your target learners				
3. Legal Understanding and engaging with legislation, policies and standards				
4. Communication a) Working with others or b) Interface between human and technical systems				
Specialism (s) Write the titles below.				
1.				
2.				
3.				

Comments:

Initial decision: Pass, Borderline or Fail/refer (delete as appropriate).

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

Second signed:

Dated:

Lead signed:

Dated:

ALT signed off grade:

Dated:

Examples of strong and weak statements that might be included in a portfolio

Operational issues:

1a - Understanding constraints and benefits of different technologies

Although we used a VLE on a local server for a number of years, it was extremely cumbersome, expensive to set up and maintain, insufficiently flexible and unreliable. As a result, we talked to colleagues in other institutions and on their advice we replaced this system with a new thin client application, which simplified matters and required fewer specialist staff to support. As a consequence, we have doubled the number of supported users in the last two years. (Evidence: service level monitoring document covering the last three years.)

Classed as strong because it shows evidence of keeping up to date with new technologies, willingness to learn from colleagues from different backgrounds and reflection on personal practice. The evidence substantiates the impact of this.

1b - Technical knowledge and ability in the use of learning technology

We are fully committed to online learning. As a consequence, the course is entirely delivered in BlackBoard. Students log in on day one, and we inform them that we will only interact with them within the learning environment, to ensure that they commit to it properly. (Evidence: page from the students' handbook explaining how to log into BlackBoard.)

Classed as Inadequate because it shows none of the values and principles. (Arguably, the commitment to fully online learning isn't a commitment either to understand or explore the interplay between technology and learning, and use of a VLE only illustrates keeping up to date with one technology, not with technology more generally.)

1c - Supporting the deployment of learning technologies

As a staff developer, I've run a series of training workshops on how to use new technologies at my institution. In order to do this, I've had to learn about them myself. (Evidence: workshop schedule with named responsibility for sessions.)

Classed as Adequate because it shows a commitment to keeping up to date with new technologies and communicating effective practice. However, the evidence for this is only borderline acceptable, since it shows the commitment to keeping up to date, but not that the practices being communicated are particularly effective.

Teaching, learning and/or assessment processes:

2a - An understanding of teaching, learning and/or assessment processes

Our sociology course was under-recruiting, so we recently revised it so that it is taught online. We were particularly concerned that the discussions that used to take place in seminars shouldn't be lost, as this process of sharing perspectives on contemporary issues is at the heart of what we want to achieve. I read Laurillard's book, rethinking university teaching, and came to the conclusion that we had two parts to seminars: a narrative element and a discursive one. The narrative part consisted of a student presentation; the discursive part was the whole-group discussion that followed. To recreate this, we provided all students with a cheap webcam and some open source video capture software as part of their study materials. What happens now is that students take it in turns to record themselves doing a short presentation on their set topic. They upload this and give links to any associated readings as part of our VLE. I lock that page, and release it when the scheduled discussion is due to start. The other students then access it, and I

facilitate a discussion on the bulletin board. So far, it seems to work well – we've only done it once, but the student feedback was extremely positive. (Evidence: excerpts of student feedback.)

Classed as strong

It shows a commitment to exploring the interplay between technology and learning and an attempt to keep up to date with new technologies. The evidence gives strong support for the commitment to understanding the interplay between technology and learning.

2b - An understanding of your target learners

At a conference, I went to a session on teaching medical students, and heard about this computer-aided assessment system that people in the university down the road are using. It sounded useful, as we've had problems with students who have gaps in their basic knowledge, so I went along to a workshop they organised a couple of months later. Since then, we've started making use of a question bank to test basic knowledge of anatomy. The system automatically selects a sample of questions on the topics you specify, and produces tests for students, each of which is unique but equivalent. This has been really helpful – accessing a validated set of questions has saved a considerable amount of time for us, and having students sit different but equivalent tests has meant that plagiarism is impossible. Most importantly, though, it provides students with immediate feedback on areas of weakness, and they can use the test formatively by re-taking it as many times as they want. (Evidence: collated output of student performance from the CAA system.)

Classed as adequate, since it does show commitment to understanding the interplay between technology and learning, some commitment to keeping up to date with new technologies and a willingness to learn from colleagues. However, the evidence does not provide strong support for these values.

3. The wider context:

Understanding and engaging with legislation, policies and standards

I recently went on a training course about freedom of information in relation to online teaching. (I'm not sure it was all that relevant, though.) (Evidence: attendance certificate.)

Classed as Inadequate, because even though there is some evidence of commitment to keep up to date with technology-related legislation, there is no evidence of engagement with the issues.

Communication:

4b - Interface between human and technical systems

I recently had to develop a web site for a course – it was a bit of a difficult brief, in that the course team weren't clear whether this was for marketing or teaching purposes. They actually wanted a bit of both. Anyway, I put together a template for them, and we ran some usability trials with two students, which led to some changes.

(Evidence: a marked up print-out of the web site, with intended changes written on in pen.)

Classed as adequate, as there is evidence of learning from others (in this case, students, through the usability trials) and some indication of an understanding of the interplay between technology, learning and (in this case) non-educational functions such as marketing.