



Frequently Asked Questions About the *ETS*[®] Performance Assessment for Teacher Leaders (PATL)

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Introduction

The following questions and answers are for informational purposes only and may not cover all information related to the ETS® Performance Assessment for Teacher Leaders (PATL) and its administration.

The [ETS Performance Assessment for Teacher Leaders Candidate and Educator Handbook \(PDF\)](#) contains important information you need to know about all aspects of the PATL testing process. Answers to many of your frequently asked questions can be found in this handbook. We recommend that you use it as a resource throughout your PATL testing experience.

Task responses are submitted in an online environment. The [Submission System User Guide \(PDF\)](#) contains step-by-step instructions with related screen shots to guide you through the submission system process.

About the Assessment

What is the ETS Performance Assessment for Teacher Leaders like?

The ETS Performance Assessment for Teacher Leaders assesses the critical leadership roles that teachers play in contributing to student and school success. It measures leadership roles in six areas, called tasks, which are scored according to task-specific rubrics. Each task addresses specific standards within the [Teacher Leader Model Standards \(PDF\)](#).

Tasks are completed by entering a written response and uploading required documentation, called artifacts, via a secure online submission platform.

Registration

When can I register for this assessment?

See [registration dates and submission windows](#) for this assessment.

How do I register for this assessment?

See the [registration steps](#) for this assessment.

Preparation

What materials are available to help me get ready for this assessment?

There are several [resources](#) that are available to you, such as the [ETS Performance Assessment for Teacher Leaders Candidate and Educator Handbook \(PDF\)](#) and the [glossary \(PDF\)](#). The most important documents are the six [teacher leader tasks requirements and the rubrics](#). The tasks contain the guiding prompts (questions) to which all candidates need to respond. Practice questions are not necessary since the same prompts will be used for each administration of the test. The guiding prompts are the same guiding prompts that you will see in the assessment.



How should I organize my work schedule?

After reviewing the task directions, develop a timeline by working backward from the tasks' submission deadline dates to set an achievable schedule for yourself.

What if I want to strengthen my writing skills? What do you recommend?

The tasks in the PATL assessment require three kinds of writing: descriptive, analytic and reflective. There are obvious essential differences among these three types of writing. As you compose your written commentary, keep these differences in mind.

The Tasks

General

I teach in a non-traditional building. Do I need to do anything differently for my tasks?

No. The requirements for each PATL task enable candidates in a wide variety of situations and settings to respond successfully. The tasks are specific to each building's situation. All the requirements can be addressed by a candidate regardless of his or her setting.

Do I have to work on the tasks in a certain order?

There is no required order, but the first task does focus on skills and knowledge using adult learning theory that is applied to each of the other five tasks; therefore, you should consider completing this task first. Tasks 5 and 6 also might require a greater amount of time to get started, so you may want to initiate appropriate activities early in the process, even though they will not need to write about them until later.

Can textbox descriptions within the context of a task overlap? For example, if all my tasks (1–6) are dealing with the same educational issue — increasing achievement for low SES students — could some parts of the descriptions and artifacts be similar even though the situation is different?

Yes, you may be involved in areas such as increasing achievement for low SES students or literacy for all six tasks. However, the specific activities for each task must be different. For example, for Task 1, the focus needs to be on the use of adult learning strategies with colleagues, and the topic may be related to increasing achievement. For Task 5, the focus is on facilitating the communication skills; the activity itself is different from the other tasks, but the topic can be related to increasing achievement.



Can you clarify the terminology used to describe the individuals, or team members, with whom the teacher leader is collaborating?

The term "colleague(s)" is the term generally used throughout each of the six tasks. There are instances, however, when another word is used to refer to colleagues. Below is a chart that depicts these instances.

Task	Term(s)	Comments
1	Colleagues, Group or Learner	Refers to the individual(s) with whom the teacher leader is collaborating.
2	Colleagues or Team Members	Refers to the individual(s) with whom the teacher leader is collaborating.
3	Colleagues, Team Members	Refers to the individual(s) with whom the teacher leader is collaborating.
3	Teachers	Refers to the individuals who are the recipients of the professional development planned by the small group of colleagues.
4	Teacher Leader, Teacher	The artifact language refers to the teacher leader candidate as "Teacher Leader" or "Teacher." When the artifact description combines the colleague with whom the teacher leader candidate is mentoring, the teacher leader is labeled as the "Teacher" portion of this "Teacher-Colleague" combination.
4	Colleague, Colleagues	Step 3 (b) and (c) include the use of the term "colleagues" to mean individuals other than the teacher leader's mentee.
5	Colleagues, Team Members	Refers to the individual(s) with whom the teacher leader is collaborating.
6	Colleagues, Group, Team Members	Refers to the individuals with whom the teacher leader is collaborating.

Collaboration

I know other candidates who are also taking the PATL assessment. Can we collaborate on some or all the tasks?

You can work collaboratively with other PATL candidates to complete the six PATL tasks if you are all completing your internships within the same school/district. Although the activities may be the same, the written commentary (the responses to the guiding prompts) and the completed artifacts must be different. More information is available in the *Handbook* under "Collaboration with Other Teachers."

Can I work with fellow teacher leaders?

A colleague, in this context, is a member of the faculty of the school/district where you are experiencing your PATL internship; a colleague cannot be another candidate in your PTL preparation program class. As much as possible, the



colleagues you choose should be different for each task. Although there may be fellow PATL candidates in the same school/district who are involved in the activity of the task, it's best if you choose non-candidates to focus on since the tasks require the development of colleagues' skills; a fellow PATL candidate's skills should already be finely honed.

When choosing colleagues to work with on the tasks, what professional characteristics should I consider?

Look for colleagues who most closely reflect the values you wish to emulate as a teacher leader and who embody the intended characteristics of the task(s) at hand. Consult with your building supervisor to discuss these traits before asking any colleague to join your team. Be mindful of colleagues' schedules, workloads and extracurricular activities that might impede their full participation in the intended tasks.

Do the colleagues I choose to work with have to be different for each of the six tasks?

It is possible that there may be an overlap in some cases, but you should try to choose different colleagues for each of the tasks.

- Task 1 requires you to focus on a group of colleagues who have different perspectives and are at different stages in their career development.
- For Task 2, you want to work with colleagues who are interested in learning how to design and implement research.
- Task 3 allows you to demonstrate how you create quality professional learning experiences with your colleagues.
- Task 4 requires you to select a colleague who is comfortable being observed by you and who wants to understand how to design and use multiple assessments.
- For Task 5, you want to find at least two colleagues who need to improve their ability to interact and communicate with adults from the families and from the community.
- In Task 6, you want to select colleagues who are interested in and willing to advocate for an educational improvement that will improve teachers' practice.

Character Limit and Printing Responses

Is there a maximum character limit for the tasks?

Yes. Each task has a specified character limit. **The character count includes every letter, every punctuation mark and every space you type.** As you are typing your written commentary online, an automatic counter will be available on your screen to show you how many characters you have used out of the allowable



number of characters. You cannot submit or save any task that exceeds the maximum character limit. You may need to edit your response before submitting a task.

Should I try to use the maximum number of characters?

No. The character count guideline for each task is intended to be an outside limit — not a target. You should be able to communicate the substance of your evidence within the maximum character limit; do not assume that a longer task submission equals a better or higher-scoring task.

Why does the system's online character counter display a different number than the counter in my word processing program?

To ensure fairness for all teacher candidates, the online submission system automatically standardizes all type that is input into the system. This means that the online character counter in the submission system may be higher or lower than the character counter in your word processing system. Font, margins and line height will also all be automatic. The system's online character counter is the only official character counter for your tasks.

How can I print my responses?

If you wish to print your tasks, you can copy and paste your work from the online submission system into a word processing document.

Building Your Responses

How should I start building my responses to the tasks?

Begin by reading through the task directions to get a sense of how your submission is expected to be built. Then determine what activities will become the focus of each task and identify colleagues with whom you will work on those activities. Finally, decide the order in which you will approach each task.

How do I know if I am addressing the Teacher Leader Model Standards when I compose my tasks?

All the guiding prompts within the tasks that you answer are based on the [Teacher Leader Model Standards \(PDF\)](#). Continually check your written commentary against the 4-point rubrics before you submit your response. The rubrics for each task were developed to align with the teacher leader standards.

How should I make use of the rubric? I know it is part of the scoring system, but can it help me as I work on my portfolio?

Absolutely. Keep the rubric for each task nearby as you work. The rubrics for each task are included in the task directions. When you finish a draft of a task response, read the rubric and ask yourself whether you have provided adequate evidence that addresses each bullet. Ask a trusted colleague to review your work and give additional feedback.

Are there penalties for accidentally answering a guiding prompt in the wrong place or including a student's name or the name of my school?

No. Raters are trained to collect evidence wherever they find it, as long as it has been included with that particular task. You should not intentionally include a student's name or the name of your school, but points will not be deducted if it accidentally appears.

Artifacts and Evidence

How do I select the evidence for my tasks?

Each task requires some form of a written response — this is part of your evidence. You will be required to submit different types of evidence for each of the tasks. In addition, tasks may require other types of evidence, such as a plan, anecdotal notes from colleagues or student work samples.

Make sure that you clearly understand what type of evidence is required for each task. If an artifact is required, make sure that the artifact you choose:

- does not exceed the required page limit
- addresses the indicators being measured
- best illustrates and connects with what has been written
- provides the raters scoring your response with a picture of your practice and with good information on which to score your performance
- is not blurry, illegible or does not contain an image that is too small to read
- Raters must be able to read the contents of the artifacts that you include with your response. Blurry or illegible artifacts could result in a score of zero if the rater is unable to view the evidence in the artifact.

Can the same artifact be used more than once (e.g., needs assessment or focus group)?

Yes, a needs assessment could very well cover several topics that overlap into different tasks.

Can I share artifacts with another candidate?

Yes, the artifacts you use may be the same as those used by another teacher leader candidate. However, the completed artifact must be different, reflecting the personality and situation of the individual who has submitted it.

Can I include a PowerPoint® presentation as evidence? If so, how many slides may I submit?

Yes. PowerPoint presentations are an acceptable form of evidence. You may submit up to six slides on a single page.

Can I include a double-sided document as evidence?

Yes, but only if the artifact requirement allows you to submit two pages. If you submit more than one double-sided page — which constitutes a two-page submission — raters will only look at the first page of the multi-page attachment.

If I want to submit pictures, can I place more than one on a page?

Yes, if the pictures relate to the same subject/topic/event and have appropriate captions. Raters are instructed not to consider photos if they have been resized to an extent that they are no longer viewable.

Can I submit more than one newspaper article on a page?

Yes, as long as the articles refer to the same subject/topic/event. You may reduce the font size of the articles so that they fit on the same page. However, do not reduce them to the extent they are not readable. Raters will be instructed not to consider articles that are so small they can't be read.

What types of files can I submit for artifacts?

Acceptable file types for artifacts include doc, pdf, ppt, xls, docx, pptx, xlsx, rtf, jpeg, png or txt. Files must not exceed 1 MB. **Note:** rtf files from MacBook® will not upload correctly. Artifact file names can include letters, numbers, and other characters such as periods, underscores, hyphens, square brackets and parentheses. File names should not contain spaces.

Task 1

What is meant by "Documentation from the plan/project" in the second part of Task 1?

In response to the guiding prompts, you need to develop a plan for a project to work with colleagues and to apply adult learning strategies. There are two artifacts that are required. One artifact focuses on the use of the adult learning strategies. The other is from the task or project selected by the group or your plan that you will develop to facilitate your colleagues' professional learning needed to complete the task or project. The artifact dealing with the plan/project could be, for example, a page from the plan document itself (an outline would be enough) or an email to the colleagues or administrator discussing the plan/project.

Task 2

Can the colleagues in Task 2 be a part of a cooperative group of which I am a member even if I have taken a leadership role for only a part of the research?

Yes, as long as the requirements of the task can be fulfilled.

- You need to be the one to initiate the research.
- You must also facilitate the learning of colleagues.



Although you may help do some research, the prime focus is the facilitation of others.

One of the key requirements of a teacher leader is to be able to direct colleagues to appropriate resources to advance their knowledge of educational issues. In recent years, educational research organizations have uncovered valuable evidence about these current and vital issues. They can provide data, research, analysis and leadership, through collaboration, that are useful for educators.

Task 2 is about researching an educational topic and guiding your colleagues to collaborate with an educational organization that provides information or support based on a mutual interest. This collaboration is meant for you and your colleagues to achieve more than you can on your own. This collaboration may occur at any level of the organization's structure, with as many people as needed, and for any length of time in order to achieve the goals of your research. To respond to this guiding prompt in the context of this task, you as a candidate should demonstrate how, in doing research, you interact with a research entity, discuss information, and share sources, ideas and documents. Remember, your job as a teacher leader is to model and teach your colleagues how personal interaction with outside entities can result in successful information gathering and decision making.

Some examples of educational organizations are the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and Phi Delta Kappa International. Universities also could be contacted for research in a variety of areas.

See [two excerpts \(PDF\)](#), taken from candidate responses, as examples of how a candidate can involve an educational organization in the research process.

Remember, the work you submit as part of your response to each task must be yours and yours alone. Your written commentaries must all feature teaching that you did and work that you supervised.

Task 3

[In Task 3, why are we asked to explain how we utilize or facilitate the meaningful use of technology and/or media literacy?](#)

The purpose of Task 3 is for you to work with colleagues to create a sustainable professional learning experience for other teachers. This task requires you to provide examples of why you chose specific resources to improve instruction and student learning. The task also provides two ways for you to share how you introduced these resources to your colleagues. One option is for you to integrate technology into the professional learning experience. You can explain how it helped you meet your learning goals. The other option is to facilitate colleagues in analyzing and evaluating different types of media and how they can influence the selection of materials and information. You can explain how you helped your colleagues determine which materials and resources are most appropriate for meeting the learning goals.



Under artifacts in Task 3 it states: "Materials that document the plan's coherence, integration, and/or differentiation, addressing two of the three above characteristics." What are the distinctions among these three characteristics?

Coherence refers to the connection of all aspects of the professional development (an appropriate plan and strategies, the choice of colleagues and the impact of the plan) and how well these components blend together.

Integration refers to how well the professional development is embedded into practice.

Differentiation refers to the modification of the plan or strategies to impact individual situations of colleagues.

Task 4

In Task 4, the textbox labeled "Preparation for the Task" requires candidates to choose a lesson/unit "rich enough to support the use of multiple assessments." How do you define "rich?"

Each task textbox contains guiding prompts that require discussion of assessment and other data-collecting tools. Candidates should provide evidence of a variety of assessments (e.g., formal/informal, formative/summative) to show their knowledge of effective assessment. To do this, the lesson/unit needs to be complex enough to contain multiple assessments appropriate to the goals and the students' development level.

Task 5

I started a program to support parents a year ago; the program is still in operation. Can I use this activity as a basis for my Task 5 even though it was started before this year?

First and foremost, remember that Task 5 assesses your ability to improve colleagues' (a minimum of two) collaboration and interaction in their work with families and the community. You may use materials from the previous two years for any one of the tasks. However, if you are thinking about using something you have already created (e.g., a graduate classwork project) and adjusting it for your response, be sure you have evidence of how you helped at least two colleagues improve their ability to collaborate and interact with families and the community during this time. Any submission must closely align with the PATL guiding prompts.

In Task 5, how much of the discussion about interactions with family and community can focus on the work that I have done?

The purpose of Task 5 is for you to provide evidence of your efforts to improve your colleagues' (a minimum of two) interactions with families and the community (adults who work outside of the school building). The highest level of the rubric requires evidence of your work with colleagues to enhance their collaboration and

interaction skills. Producing documentation regarding your interactions with families and the community would not help a rater understand how you helped your colleagues improve their ability to interact and collaborate with families and the community.

Task 6

I want to be careful not to appear adversarial when I begin my work on Task 6. To what extent should I involve my administrator regarding my advocacy plan?

Before you initiate work on your advocacy plan, remember that your administrator is an important player in your school/district and his/her support and cooperation will probably be key to the success of your advocacy. Educators often cite trust as a critical ingredient for building cooperation and buy-in. So, a good place to begin would be with your administrator. Share with your administrator your idea for the advocacy and ask how frequently he/she would like to be informed of your progress as you and your team pursue your efforts. He or she may want to understand your day-to-day activities, how they will contribute to long-term reform, help strengthen your colleagues' practice, and, most importantly, make a difference for kids in the classroom.

What is meant by print media in Task 6?

Print media refers to media that has been printed on paper or exists in a physical format. This includes physical newspapers, magazines, articles, photos and newsletters. This can also include digital or online media — such as digital newsletters or online articles — that you have printed out on paper.

How is an advocacy plan different than a professional development plan?

The PATL glossary defines advocacy and advocate as follows:

- **Advocacy:** The active support of educational change within the school and/or educational community through communication, public relations, organization, and follow-through.
- **Advocate:** To define objectives, gather facts, articulate a rationale, assess and consider others' interests and resources, develop and present a clear case, and revise it in response to feedback.

For Task 6, Step 1, you want to demonstrate your ability to facilitate your colleagues, so they are able to identify and assess opportunities for educational improvement and are able to create a plan for the advocacy of the identified improvement. If this were professional development you or your school system would already have those tools, resources, and training sessions for your educators, to improve their teaching effectiveness already chosen and set.

In this advocacy task, you should be working with your colleagues to define what will be the focus and gather the facts needed to engage and involve your target



group to be part of this process. You should also be able to understand and communicate how educational policies and trends influenced how you and your colleagues developed the advocacy plan and how you intend to implement the advocacy plan.

Permission Forms

Can I use my own permission forms — rather than the permission forms posted on the website — to gain consent to include materials in my tasks?

No. You must use the approved PATL permission forms. These forms can be downloaded from the [Resources](#) section of the website.

Do I need to submit all the permission forms I collect?

No. You should keep the signed permission forms with your records.

When I submit my artifacts, I am going to redact all identifying information. Do I need permission forms from individuals whose names are redacted? Are permission forms required for words or quotes, emails, etc., when the person's name is redacted?

Yes, you must obtain a signed permission form for the use of any materials you submit as artifacts that are not created solely by you. Even though the names are redacted, the materials are not solely yours, and the permission form acknowledges that the individual has released the material(s) for use in this assessment.

Submissions

Should I include names of any students, parents or school officials in my submissions?

No. Students should be referred to as "Student 1," "Student 2," etc. Colleagues should be referred to as "my principal" or "my guidance counselor" or "Collaborative Colleague 1," "Collaborative Colleague 2," etc., instead of using names.

Will I receive a confirmation email when I submit my task?

Yes. To verify that your task has been submitted, refer to the Submission Status column on the task chart on your assessment home page. A status of "Submitted" means that the task has been submitted.

Can I make changes to my responses after I have submitted my tasks?

No. Once a task has been submitted, you can no longer make changes. You will be able to view your response in read-only format.



Scores

When will I receive my scores?

Official score reports are made available via your testing account in the PATL registration system approximately six weeks after the submission deadline.

See [score reporting dates](#).

If I successfully complete the assessment, but would like a higher score, can I resubmit a task?

No. If you passed the assessment, you may not resubmit tasks for a higher score.

If I do not successfully complete the assessment, can I resubmit all the tasks?

If you are required to pass the assessment and you did not pass, you may resubmit any tasks. Note that there is a \$75 resubmission fee for every task you choose to resubmit.

When can I resubmit a task?

You may resubmit tasks in the resubmission window immediately following the original submission window. See [Resubmitting a Task](#). If you do not do so within that time, you will have to pay another registration fee and take the assessment all over again.

What happens if I do not include artifacts?

You must enter written commentaries and upload and link the artifacts associated with each task. Without both, a task will receive a score of zero.

Technical Help

What if I need technical support or have questions about how the website works?

The PATL submission system is designed to make the process of authoring and submitting your tasks as intuitive as possible. Features such as Character Count, Save Response, Link Artifacts to Highlighted Text and Remove Link are located within each step as tools to assist in the development of your response. Information and helpful tips are available in the [Submission System User Guide \(PDF\)](#).

Additional assistance, technical help and information are available via email and phone through ETS Customer Service.

Email: ppa@ets.org

Phone: 1-609-359-5634 or 1-855-628-5088
Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–6 p.m. ET (except
for U.S. holidays)