

FAQ- Frequently Asked Questions on BTS and TPA



1. What is Brunei Teachers' Standards (BTS)?

Brunei Teachers' Standards (BTS) is a set of teaching competencies designed to raise the quality of teaching in order to improve attainment of all students and the overall quality of education in Brunei Darussalam.

2. Why is the Ministry of Education investing in the BTS?

International education evidence-based research shows that raising teaching quality would directly improve students' achievement and learning outcomes. In the long run, Brunei Darussalam hopes to build up a nation comprised of highly educated and skilled young people who are able to compete for careers at the highest level locally and around the globe. At the same time, contributing to the growth of the country's economy and quality of life.

3. How does BTS contribute to the 2035 Vision?

BTS aims for the country to be recognised for the accomplishments of its well-educated and highly skilled people, for the quality of life in Brunei and for its dynamic and sustainable economy.

4. How and when will we see the impact of BTS?

The BTS has been implemented since January 2016 and will be embedded in the education system over the years to come. Students are expected to experience changes to the standard and style of teaching during this period. As BTS becomes further embedded in schools, students' attainment levels are expected to increase and improvements in teaching will continue to grow.

5. What will BTS mean for teachers?

Teachers will be provided with standards to help them reflect on their teaching practices and aspire towards achieving high quality teaching and learning. The BTS will make teaching a more satisfying career choice as teachers will know what is expected of them.

6. What will BTS mean for students?

BTS will highlight the needs for teachers to encourage students to care about their education and be more engaged in their future. Learning should be more exciting, motivating, interactive and rewarding.

7. Who did Brunei's Ministry of Education engage to embark on BTS?

The Independent Schools Inspectorate Consultancy (ISIC) United Kingdom. ISI Consultancy (ISIC) is an independent specialist education organisation which works to support schools and colleges, and education leaders. It has a strong track record and extensive experience of inspecting and advising schools in a large number of countries around the world, including many in Asia and offers a unique understanding of how governments can improve teaching standards.

8. What is Teacher Performance Appraisal (TPA) and its purpose?

The Teacher Performance Appraisal (TPA) is an appraisal system to evaluate the competency of teaching, the quality of students' achievements and learning using the Brunei Teachers' Standards (BTS) framework. The aims of the BTS-TPA are to recognise best practices and identify areas to support teachers' professional growth and development. It is used to determine the overall quality of teaching and learning in schools across Brunei Darussalam.

9. What is BTS-TPA Appraisal Cycle?

BTS-TPA Appraisal Cycle refers to the period of time taken for lesson observations to be completed by schools. A cycle can last between 12 to 18 months depending on the number of teachers in the school. Schools with a large teacher population (for example: 80 or more teachers) can take up to 18 months to complete a cycle.

10. How many lesson observations are required for the first BTS-TPA Appraisal Cycle?

In this early stage of BTS-TPA implementation beginning January 2016, teachers are required to be observed 5 times (it is an international practice to ensure fairness, accuracy and validity of the evaluation outcomes) by the School Management Teams (SMTs) lasting 12 to 18 months. The lesson observations are to be conducted by at least 2 evaluators on separate occasions.

11. How many lesson observations are required after the first BTS-TPA Appraisal Cycle?

The number of lesson observations will vary depending upon the evaluation outcomes from the first appraisal cycle.

12. Who is a School Management Team (SMT)?

A School Management Team comprises the principal/*guru besar*, the deputy principal/*penolong guru besar*, senior masters and subject heads of department.

13. Who evaluates the School Management Teams (SMTs)?

Within the school, the Principal/*Guru Besar* can evaluate the Deputy Principal/*Penolong Guru Besar*, senior masters and subject heads of departments. A teaching Principal/*Guru Besar* from that school can be evaluated by the Head of Cluster (HoC) and/or by an Inspector.

14. What is a "new" teacher?

A new teacher would be a new graduate or a teacher who is new to Brunei Darussalam and the government school system. These would also include direct contract and expatriate teachers.

15. Must teachers be informed of an impending school-based internal lesson observation?

Yes. Teachers are to be informed during the pre-observation meeting to allow them to prepare well for the lesson. This allow them to demonstrate their best in teaching which will lead to the greatest impact on students' learning and achievements.

16. As an evaluator when does one use a plus "+" sign on the TPA Form?

A plus (+) is given when evidence of a relative strength is observable in the focus area taking into consideration of the students' age, level and ability in the class being evaluated.

17. As an evaluator when does one give a minus "-" sign on the TPA Form?

A minus (–) is given when there is clear evidence of a weakness in the focus area taking into consideration of the students’ age, level and ability in the class being evaluated.

18. When does one leave the space blank on the TPA +/- section?

The space is left blank when a particular focus area is neither outstanding nor an area of particular weakness; not immediately obvious; or not relevant to the lesson.

19. How does one come up with a final overall Teacher’s Performance Grade?

The overall Teacher’s Performance Grade for a single lesson observation is based on the evaluation outcomes on each of the sections A, B and C in the TPA form. For example, good grades outweigh satisfactory grades equalling an overall good (3) grade. Similarly, excellent grades outweigh good grades equalling an overall excellent (4) grade. However, the overall grade can be influenced by the outcomes of the post-observation professional dialogue (feedback) supported with strong evidence and written work scrutiny. This needs to be clearly stated in the TPA form under the additional comments section provided.

20. Can the completed TPA Form be shown to the teacher evaluated?

It is at the discretion of the evaluator whether to show the completed TPA Form to the teacher during the 1-to-1 post-observation professional dialogue (feedback) session which aims to encourage professional growth and development. The completed TPA Forms are to be treated with confidentiality among non-relevant personnel and those not involved in the appraisal.

21. What does the “context” section in the TPA Form mean?

The context section should have a short introduction of the lesson to be observed, which includes some of the following: lesson objectives, the ability group, place of the lesson (e.g. science laboratory, football field, school hall, classroom) and students’ activities.

22. Is it compulsory to write additional comments in the TPA Form?

Only when required.

23. If a teacher is not happy with his/her evaluation outcome on that day, can that evaluation be written off and redone?

No. A teacher has the opportunity to be observed more than once and so it is seen as a developmental process with further opportunities for progression.

24. Can the teacher be evaluated by more than two evaluators at one time in one classroom?

For the purpose of TPA, only one evaluator is allowed per lesson observation at any one time. However, there can be two evaluators in the class during the training of a beginner evaluator.

25. Will the teacher get a low grade because of teaching low performing students?

No. This is because the teachers’ performance grade also takes into consideration teaching quality and students’ progress over time as well as students’ achievement and learning.

26. What does an “Excellent” or “Exceptional” teaching look like?

“Excellent” or “Exceptional” teaching enables students to make rapid overall progress within the allocated curriculum time. All elements of teaching (e.g. subject knowledge, lesson planning and preparation, lesson delivery and varied approaches, classroom management, design of assessment

tasks, use of ICT and resources, written work supervision, professional engagement) are at least at excellent level and clearly demonstrated during teaching. High expectation of student's work is evident throughout the lesson. The teacher knows the students' capabilities and starting points and adapts teaching well to meet their different needs.

27. Is it possible for an “average” teaching quality result to yield excellent public examination results?

Yes. Students' achievements in public examinations are also greatly influenced by other factors such as family support, students' motivation, students' determination, effort and study habits.

28. What if both evaluators have different opinions regarding the teacher's performance?

First, weigh out the evidence for the disagreement from both evaluators, then make a further decision. If it still cannot be reconciled, engage a third person to be involved to help determine a judgement.

29. What if the school cannot complete 5 lesson observations per teacher as required in the first appraisal cycle?

It is recommended that more than one evaluator from the Senior Management Team (SMT) assist in observations. If it is unlikely that the school cannot complete the five observations as required, then the school would need to write in to Jabatan Sekolah Sekolah Kenaziran (JKSS) to explain the situation.

30. Where does evaluator get support from if he/she encounters challenges during the course of conducting the TPA?

The evaluator can seek immediate support from school's Principal/*Guru Besar*. Should the school leader not be able to resolve the issue, he/she can then get support from BTS Champions or the School Inspectors assigned specifically to the school. They may also seek help from Heads of Cluster (HoC).

Note: For more detailed information please refer to the TPA Handbook. It is a living document and will be reviewed after the first cycle is completed.