


UHL Apprenticeship and Development Centre Functional Skills Policy

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1. Rationale

Functional Skills provide essential life and employability skills. Employers, such as UHL, value literacy and numeracy skills for their role in communication, problem-solving, and workplace efficiency. The ability to access and complete functional skills qualifications by colleagues and apprentices should be considered on an individual basis and should consider the best interests of both the employee/apprentice and employer. Developing the Functional Skills of a learner will develop and enhance their personal effectiveness, employability as well as providing a firm foundation to progress further in learning.

2. Scope of Policy

This policy seeks to ensure that functional skills delivered by and on behalf of the Centre are relevant to learner and apprentice/learner, employer and programme needs. They should be effectively delivered to provide a high quality learning experience.

The primary focus of this policy is to support the apprenticeship provision and assurance against national funding rules.

This policy sets out the Centre's objectives and strategies for planning, managing and delivering functional skills, as well as covering quality assurance and staff development relating to the delivery of functional skills.

Any subcontracting will be monitored and picked up through the Sub-Contracting policy.

3. Provision of Functional Skills

3.1. Functional skills, maths and English, can be studied in a number of ways.

- As part of an Apprenticeship Education Programme
- Alongside an Apprenticeship Education Programme to support individual, employer or career aspiration needs
- As a standalone package by an employee
- As a standalone package by an employee to ensure required skills or professional requirements can be met prior to enrolment onto an Apprenticeship Education Programme.

3.2. Whilst maths and English are the most commonly known functional skills, the Centre also recognises digital skills as an essential life and work skill.

3.3. The functional skills information, advice and guidance (IAG) for Centre apprentices will be conducted by the sub-contractor, Leicester College. The contract was awarded in 2017 and is reviewed annually.

- 3.4. All learners are offered an initial assessment by the Centre. This is typically conducted on the BKSB platform. The completion of initial and diagnostic assessments will ensure that each learner's current levels of skills are identified on their Training Plan.
- 3.5. Leicester College will support learners needing to complete maths and English development and qualifications.
- 3.6. Learners who do not need to complete maths and English qualifications either due to age and agreement with employer or those who have evidence of the required level of maths and English, but at IAG demonstrate a subsequent attrition of skills, will be able to complete self-directed learning through the online assessment tool (BKSB) to refresh and update their knowledge.
- 3.7. The provision of digital skills and knowledge is currently not mandatory for any of the Apprenticeship Education Programmes delivered by the Centre and therefore not covered in the contract with Leicester College. The Trust ICT Training Team would be the provider of this development through either the BKSB system or the Digital Learning Solution System.
- 3.8. Which apprentices need functional skill qualifications?

3.8.1. For apprentices aged 16-18 when they started their apprenticeship, Functional Skills requirements remain unchanged, meaning they must still complete English and maths qualifications at the level required by their apprenticeship standard, or a lower level if they have recognised learning challenges.

3.8.2. From 11th February 2025, apprentices who started their programme on or after their 19th birthday will no longer be required to achieve Functional Skills qualification in English and maths at the level stipulated in the apprenticeship standard in order to complete their apprenticeship or enter end-point assessment (EPA) if the employer, training provider and learner agree. NB: some qualifications e.g. Student Nursing Associate will still require maths and English qualifications so no changes will be made.

The Centre is mindful that for some apprentices the barrier to completion could be the functional skills qualifications for a range of reasons e.g. SEND, maths anxiety and the option to not complete these will now enable professional learning to continue through the apprenticeship standard.

The national change in February 2025 makes the definitions in 3.8 relevant for all current and future learners.

- 3.9. Aside from the qualification, it is very likely that functional skills development during the apprenticeship learning will be completed as part of the programme or to support the individual's ability to do their role; having good maths and English skills is paramount to us being effective and efficient employees and students.
- 3.10. Consideration should be to the apprentices current and future career needs too when making decisions on none completion of formal qualifications are being made. If the learners ambition

is to be a different role in the future e.g. nurse, and that role requires a level of maths and English, they should, wherever possible, still be supported to achieve the relevant qualifications alongside their apprenticeship (noting they won't be needed for EPA).

4. Quality

- 4.11. The college will manage the quality and delivery of the provision of IAG and Functional Skills training in line with the contract and their professional obligation.
- 4.12. The college will share CV's of Functional Skills tutors who are involved directly or indirectly with delivery through the contract with the Centre, updating these immediately (within 7 working days) a tutor changes.
- 4.13. The college will evaluate the learners' experience and progress through a combination of activities e.g. learner voice, evaluations, progress and achievement results. This will take into account the encouragement to learn outside the boundaries of the classroom, the types of learning and the administration of the programme.
- 4.14. The Centre will ensure that a learner voice activity for each Functional Skill takes place at least annually; more frequently if concerns are identified by either a learner or a member of the Centre staff.
- 4.15. The Centre will carry out an annual joint observation as a minimum of each functional skill and level taking into account the college's calendar of observations.
- 4.16. All Centre staff will be supported and challenged to complete CPD. College staff will be expected to participate in regular, relevant CPD as per the college policy with confirmation of this provided to the Centre annually.
- 4.17. The college will successfully plan, establish and manage the curriculum and learning programmes to meet the needs of learners and employers.
- 4.18. The college will update the curriculum accordingly to ensure it takes into account and reflects national reforms and requirements.
- 4.19. The college will actively promote equality, diversity and safeguarding at all times ensuring an inclusive and thriving learning environment for learners to succeed and progress in.
- 4.20. The college will share with the Centre, generic information on the spelling, punctuation, grammar and maths development needs of learners that arise from their teaching and assessment. Centre staff will enable use these and areas for development arising from the BKSB to embed in reviews and learning.

5. Quality Assurance Governance

- 5.11. Quality Assurance of Functional Skills will follow the governance, policies and processes of Leicester College. It will include self-assessment, curriculum review and development, standardisation, and observations of teaching, learning and assessment.
- 5.12. Functional skills contract performance meetings will be held regularly between the College and the Centre to ensure performance, curriculum, and evaluation are reviewed. Leicester College will provide a report, at least termly, to the Centre detailing relevant information on learners, outcomes and progress. These meetings will be fed into Centre governance reporting lines for monitoring.
- 5.13. Updates on progress and homework set for learners will be shared to the Centre by the College to ensure partnership working in progression of skills development between sub-contractor, employer and training provider.
- 5.14. At least annually joint quality reviews will take place between the college and the Centre which will include joint observations of learning in line with the college calendar and procedures. The findings of these will be brought to the Centre Governance meetings and to joint party contract performance review meetings.
- 5.15. Should apprentices/learners have any concerns over their functional skills qualification programme they should in the first instance speak to Leicester College. If they are not able to resolve the issue they should then speak to a member of the Centre who will liaise with the college to resolve the matter.



6. Continuing Professional Development

- 6.11. Staff delivering functional skills at Leicester College on the Centre's behalf will be appropriately qualified and experienced. The College are responsible for ensuring their professional and occupational teaching is in place and remains up to date.
- 6.12. Centre staff will be confident and competent to support the development of Functional Skills during their Apprenticeship Education Programme and ensure they are appropriately embedded into the curriculums, relevant to the employer needs.
- 6.13. Centre staff not holding a relevant qualification will be supported to attain this as required.

7. Implementation of Policy


- 7.11. The policy will be monitored through the Centre Governance meetings.
- 7.12. The provision of Functional Skills is monitored through the contract review process.

Appendix A UHL Apprenticeship Guide for Centre Programmes

FUNCTIONAL SKILLS

Introduction	For Employers	For Apprentices
<p>The UHL Apprenticeship and Development Centre is committed to delivering high-quality functional skills support, ensuring every apprentice has the opportunity to develop these vital skills – without them becoming a barrier to completion.</p> <p>This helps us and employers support and develop our future workforce.</p>	<p>Higher Productivity Employees complete tasks more efficiently, which can sometimes also reduce costly errors.</p> <p>Better Communication Strong speaking, listening and literacy skills improves the internal and external customer (patient, visitors, contractors and colleagues) experience and workplace collaboration.</p> <p>Stronger Problem Solving Employees are able to confidently analyse data, manage budgets and interpret business metrics.</p> <p>Improved Compliance and Safety Essential for reading and understanding safety instructions, contracts and legal documents, internal and external regulations, patient safety requirements and health measurements.</p> <p>Greater Adaptability Employees are more prepared to learn new processes and engage in new technology, service improvement opportunities and change.</p>	<p>Employability Many roles and career pathways require English and maths. Gaining these qualifications can increase career progression, social mobility and increase job opportunities. In turn this can impact on income and lifestyle of the individual and community.</p> <p>Personal Skills Maths and English qualifications may have been missed at school for a range of reasons including content, group size and teaching style. Gaining these can boost confidence and independence. Stronger capabilities including workplace communication to managing personal finances are supported.</p> <p>Financial Security Research has linked strong numeracy skills to better personal financial management and stability. This provides individuals with the opportunities to budget, forecast and plan their financial future.</p> <p>Greater Adaptability Employees are more prepared to learn new processes and engage in new technology, service improvement opportunities and change. This increases job satisfaction, resilience and motivation.</p>



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FUNCTIONAL SKILLS

Who needs Functional Skills?

Most employers prefer their employees to have a good level of knowledge and skills for maths and English. Job descriptions and Person Specifications often request a level of qualification or proven ability to perform certain maths and English skill activities.

For Apprentices there is national guidance.

What is the right level of learning?

Every apprenticeship is different, and the level of English and maths required will vary based on the age of the apprentice, the role and industry and the career ambitions of the apprentice.

16–18 Year Old Apprentices

For apprentices aged 16–18 when they started their apprenticeship, Functional Skills requirements remain unchanged, meaning they must still complete English and maths qualifications at the level required by their apprenticeship standard, or a lower level if they have recognised learning challenges.

NB: The guides on the following pages are superseded by the Government requirement and level set out in the apprenticeship standard they are studying.

19 Year+ Apprentices

From 11th February 2025, apprentices who started their programme on or after their 19th birthday will no longer be required to achieve Functional Skills qualification in English and maths at the level stipulated in the apprenticeship standard in order to complete their apprenticeship or enter end-point assessment (EPA) if the employer, training provider and learner agree.

NB: some qualifications e.g. Student Nursing Associate will still require maths and English qualifications so no changes will be made.

Consideration should be given to the apprentices current and future career aspirations when making decisions on functional skill qualifications. If an apprentices ambition is to be a different role in the future e.g. nurse, and that role requires a level of maths and English, they should, wherever possible, still be supported to achieve the relevant qualifications alongside their apprenticeship (noting they won't be needed for EPA).



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FUNCTIONAL SKILLS; STUDENT NURSING ASSOCIATE LEVEL 5

Required Level

Maths

2

Your paragraph text

Rationale

Student Nurse Associates must be confident in finding, interpreting, analysing and recording numerical data to support patient care.

Maths at level 2 will be required to complete this apprenticeship and gain the Higher Education qualification award.

Required Level

English

2

Rationale

Strong communication skills across a range of mediums e.g. phone, in person and electronic are required to work in a multidisciplinary team and provide effective, safe care for patients.

Reading comprehension skills are required when reviewing data, policies, reports, regulations and when handling patient information.

Writing skills are required for preparing reports, managing care documentation, and maintaining compliance records.

Listening skills are required with internal and external stakeholders to enable the best health outcome.

English at level 2 will be required to complete this apprenticeship and gain the Higher Education qualification award.



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FUNCTIONAL SKILLS; TEAM LEADER AND SUPERVISOR LEVEL 3

Recommended Level		Recommended Level	
Maths	2	English	2
Your paragraph text			
<h3>Rationale</h3> <p>Team Leaders must be confident in budget management, resource allocation, and financial forecasting.</p> <p>They must understand how to analyse business data and optimise efficiency, based on the role and industry.</p> <p>When undertaking projects and service improvements budgeting, timelines and savings will need to be considered.</p> <p>As team leaders allocation of shifts, annual leave and management of employee attendance require good numeracy skills.</p> <p>Maths at level 2 will typically be required to progress into more senior leadership careers.</p>		<h3>Rationale</h3> <p>Strong communication skills are required for managing teams, dealing with stakeholders, including patients where relevant, delivering presentations, developing teams running meetings and providing leadership.</p> <p>Reading comprehension skills are required when reviewing data, policies, reports, regulations and when handling complaints as well as when reviewing workforce planning and industry trends.</p> <p>Writing skills are required for preparing reports, managing project documentation, and maintaining compliance records.</p> <p>Listening skills are required with internal and external stakeholders to enable an effective and efficient outcome.</p>	




FUNCTIONAL SKILLS; BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION LEVEL 3

Recommended Level

Maths

1

Your paragraph text

Rationale

Business administrators must have strong numerical skills for maintaining accurate financial records, processing transactions, and managing data. Administrators often lead on managing annual leave, patient or absence data which require good numeracy skills.

They need to understand sequencing, timescales, and formulas to perform calculations efficiently. They must also be able to work with reverse calculations and negative numbers to ensure data precision.

Administrators may be involved in resource allocation, stock control and data to support reports. They must understand the basics of analysing business and project data.

Recommended Level

English

2

Rationale



Effective communication skills are essential for preparing agenda's and minutes, servicing meetings, summarising key points in written content and responding professionally to internal and external emails and reports.

Writing skills are required for structuring business correspondence, preparing reports, and maintaining detailed administrative records. The ability to write and record good quality, professional style communication and information for patients and the Trust e.g. patient letters, patient records, clinic records, report collation is paramount.

Reading comprehension is necessary for interpreting policies, financial documents, and procedural guidelines as well as patient records and needs.





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FUNCTIONAL SKILLS; HEALTH LEVEL 3

Recommended Level		Recommended Level	
Maths	1	English	2
Your paragraph text			
<h3>Rationale</h3> <p>Senior Health Care Support Workers must be able to manage care budgets, allocate resources effectively and analyse cost-saving strategies. They need strong numerical skills for monitoring patient ratios, scheduling staff, and tracking performance data.</p> <p>They need to understand sequencing, timescales, volume conversions, health data and formulas to perform efficiently.</p> <p>Senior Health Care Support Workers may be involved in supervising students or junior staff so numerical confidence is paramount.</p> <p>Level 2 maths will be required for career progression</p>		<h3>Rationale</h3> <p>Strong communication skills are required for senior Health Care Support Workers to enable team collaboration, patient, relative and stakeholder engagement.</p> <p>Reading comprehension is necessary for reviewing regulations, policies, patient records and reports.</p> <p>Writing skills are essential for documenting care, application of policies, maintaining professional records.</p> <p>Strong speaking and listening skills are required to both support multidisciplinary team working and supporting the mentoring of students and junior colleagues.</p>	

FUNCTIONAL SKILLS; CUSTOMER SERVICE LEVEL 2

Recommended Level

Maths

1

Your paragraph text

Rationale

Customer Service Practitioners must be able to interpret numerical data, track business performance, and manage timings to optimise service delivery.

They may need numerical skills for maintaining accurate records, processing transactions, and managing stock or patient flow data.

They need to understand sequencing, timescales and averages.

Recommended Level

English

1

Rationale

Excellent communication skills are necessary for handling internal and external customer queries through a range of mediums e.g. phone, in person and email.

Comprehension, listening, speaking and writing skills to enable practitioner to respond to and resolve complaints are paramount.

Relevant levels of speaking, listening and writing are needed to provide professional support.

Writing skills are required for documenting customer interactions and business communications.

FUNCTIONAL SKILLS; HEALTH LEVEL 2

Recommended Level

Maths

1

Your paragraph text

Rationale

Health Care Assistants (or other care assistants within different professions) must be able to interpret numerical data, track patient results, and manage timings to optimise patient care and service delivery.

They may need numerical skills for maintaining accurate records, care of patients, raising concerns on patients health stats and managing stock or patient flow data.

They need to understand conversions, timescales and averages.

Recommended Level

English

1

Rationale

Excellent communication skills are necessary for handling internal and external customer care and queries with a range of stakeholders including patients, relatives and the multidisciplinary team.

Comprehension, listening, speaking and writing skills to enable care assistant to respond to and resolve care concerns and complaints are paramount.

Relevant levels of speaking, listening and writing are needed to provide care and professional support.

Writing skills are required for documenting patient care provided.



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FUNCTIONAL SKILLS; ADMINISTRATION ASSISTANT LEVEL 2

Recommended Level

Maths

1

Your paragraph text

Recommended Level

English

1

Rationale

Administration Assistants must be able to interpret numerical data, track business performance, and manage timings to enable service delivery, data inputting and report content.

They may need numerical skills for maintaining accurate records, processing transactions, and managing stock or patient flow data.

They need to understand sequencing, timescales, estimates and averages.

Rationale

Excellent communication skills are necessary for handling internal and external customer queries through a range of mediums e.g. phone, in person and email.

Comprehension, listening, speaking and writing skills to enable administrators to respond to and resolve complaints and queries.

Relevant levels of speaking, listening and writing are needed to provide professional support including planning and serving meetings.

Writing skills are required for documenting patient/staff interactions and business communications.



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Appendix B Centre Overview for Supporting the Provision of Functional Skills

- ✓ Ensure a co-ordinated approach between the Centre and the college
- ✓ Have in place learner support systems at both the Centre and college
- ✓ Have effective registration, examination entry arrangements in line with awarding body regulations
- ✓ Perform screening, initial and diagnostic assessment and use this to set challenging tasks for learners to build on, and extend their learning
- ✓ Set and achieve high but realistic expectations and targets for achievement to motivate learners
- ✓ Plan, establish and manage a Functional Skills curriculum effectively, through Leicester College, to meet the needs and interests of learners and employers; supporting apprentices with progression into further qualifications and/or employment in line with apprenticeship requirements
- ✓ Enable programmes, wherever possible, to be delivered in the context of the Apprenticeship Education Programme, the employer's main business and the learners needs
- ✓ Provide high quality learning experiences through active and innovative teaching; learning and coaching methods that inspire and challenge learners, enabling them to extend their knowledge, skills and understanding.
- ✓ Provide opportunities for learners to develop their English and maths beyond their IAG level at entry
- ✓ Monitor and track learner's progress via Leicester college through assessment processes
- ✓ Provide supportive feedback to learners so they understand how to improve following an assessment of their learning
- ✓ Have in place processes to support a quality learning experience through the college, ensuring external standards are met and maintained using a variety of assessment and moderation processes with robust comprehensive continuous quality improvement plans in place
- ✓ Oversee the effective delivery of Functional Skills Programmes through the college, ensuring that learners achieve at least the national minimum standard.
- ✓ Plan Centre schemes of work and assessments during the apprenticeship in line with functional skills
- ✓ Continually develop teaching, learning and assessment practices through reflection and evaluation of sessions.