

Functional Skills Qualifications Information Pack

Thames Valley Primary Care



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What are Functional Skills Qualifications (FSQ)?



What are Functional Skills?

Functional Skills are defined as the fundamental applied skills in literacy, numeracy and digital literacy that help people to gain the most from life, learning and working. Level 2 is equivalent to a GCSE grade C or 4 and above or a CSE level 1.



Why do I need them?

Age 16 – 18: It is a Department for Education requirement that young apprentices are required to secure up to a Level 2 FSQ in English and maths, if they do not already hold one.

Age 19+ : From February 2025, the requirement for all adult apprentices in all sectors to study functional skill qualifications (FSQs) is now determined by the apprentice's employer. Some qualifications require professional body standards for maths and English, which include functional skills. Currently this includes nursing apprenticeships



What do I need to achieve?

For level 2 apprenticeships you need to evidence **learning towards** level 2 functional skills exams.

For levels 3 - 7 apprentices many learners will require FSQs, as across many roles in health and social care these qualifications are still required by the HEI or employer.

There are exemptions for special education needs, learning difficulties or disabilities – please check with your training provider.

NHS England highly advocates for appropriate training in numeracy and literacy alongside apprenticeships, wherever possible.

What are Functional Skills qualifications equivalent to?



FUNCTIONAL SKILLS LEVEL		SCHOOL EQUIVALENT
LEVEL 2	↔	NEW GCSE 9-4 / OLD GCSE A* - C
LEVEL 1	↔	NEW GCSE 3-1 / OLD GCSE D - G
ENTRY LEVEL 3	↔	BELOW GCSE

<https://haso.skillsforhealth.org.uk/>

I have a degree – surely this is evidence of my maths and English GCSEs?

I did my GCSEs/CSEs years ago – I have no idea where my certificates are!

I write reports and manage budgets in my current role – why do I need to evidence functional skills level 2?

“But why?!”

If you can relate to any of these comments, read on for help and support!

I have a learning difficulty and didn't achieve the maths and English grades at school – what support is available now?

I achieved maths and/or English in another country – I don't have my certificates.

I hated maths at school and this is really putting me off doing an apprenticeship.

Functional Skills requirements check

I have GCSE grades A – C / CSE Level 1 / Functional Skills Level 2 or equivalent qualifications in maths and English or a higher level qualification (e.g. A Levels or a Degree) in maths or English

I have my certificates

Yes

No

You do not need to achieve functional skills. All apprentices are required to complete an initial assessment to see where skills can be improved

If the qualification and/or employer requires FSQs, evidence is required to be exempt from Functional Skills

Click [here](#) for more information about obtaining a copy

If the evidence cannot be obtained you will need to achieve functional skills qualifications before or during the apprenticeship programme

I have FS qualifications from another country

I have my certificates

Yes

No

If you have the required evidence you do not need to complete functional skills

You may need a statement of comparability by UK ENIC and this is funded via NHSE (see 'additional support slide')

Check your options with the apprenticeship training provider

If the evidence cannot be obtained, you will need to achieve the functional skills qualifications if required for your apprenticeship.

I have a learning difficulty assessment and/or a Education Health Care Plan (EHCP)

Various rules apply depending on your assessment. Contact your training provider or apprenticeship co-ordinator for more information

Thames Valley Functional Skills training options

Region	Training
Berkshire West	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• West Berkshire Training Consortium: English and Maths Functional Skills - West Berkshire Training Consortium (wbtc-uk.com)• Activate Learning: Berkshire Archives - Activate Learning - Adult Education• New Directions College in Reading: English - New Directions College (newdirectionsreading.ac.uk)• Functional maths courses for adults WEA
Buckinghamshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adult Learning Buckinghamshire Council: English Functional Skills - Online (adultlearningbc.ac.uk)• Buckinghamshire College Group: Maths and English (buckscollegegroup.ac.uk)
Oxfordshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Activate Learning: Functional Skills English: Online - Activate Learning - Adult Education• Abingdon and Witney College: English Functional Skills and GCSE - Abingdon & Witney College email oaenglishmaths@abingdon-witney.ac.uk• WEA Wallingford Functional maths courses for adults WEA
East Berkshire, Surrey Heath and NEHF areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Slough, Windsor and Maidenhead Community Learning and Skills: Web.Enrol (webenrol.com)• Bracknell Council: English and maths Bracknell Forest Council (bracknell-forest.gov.uk)• Surrey Heath Council: English and maths courses for adult learners - Surrey County Council (surreycc.gov.uk)• Farnborough College: https://www.farn-ct.ac.uk/courses/adult-essential-skills/• WEA Berkshire: Functional maths courses for adults WEA

Self-study

For learners who are close to achieving a level 2 grade, self-study is a good option if this support is available in your area:

bksb – Basic Key Skills Builder online learning:

- NHS England has commissioned bksb to give free access to online learning
- Individual staff members can study at their own pace and access the system at any time.
- This offer is also open to those in the pipeline to the workforce e.g. on a supported internship programme

Open Awards – virtual exams

- Health or Social Care Employers whose employees or apprentices need to access an assessment to progress and are ready to sit an assessment can access Functional Skills training support through Open Awards at no direct cost.

For your options, contact england.primarycareschooltvw.se@nhs.net

For Practices based in East Berkshire, the Frimley Health Foundation Trust may be able to provide access, please contact n.morgan@nhs.net

Additional support

- **Qualifications mapping:** check if your current qualifications are equivalent to Functional Skills Level 2 and acceptable by visiting [English and maths requirements in apprenticeship standards at level 2 and above - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- **ENIC** – self-service free to use help area: [MES: empowering members to self-serve for | UK ENIC](#) or [request an ENIC comparison via NHSE: england.nhsapprenticeships@nhs.net](mailto:request.an.ENIC.comparison.via.NHSE:england.nhsapprenticeships@nhs.net) (must explain that you work in a GP Practice)
- [National Numeracy](#) is a great place to start improving your confidence with number calculations and is great for explaining how to work answers out. You can even use the app when you're on the go!
- [Skills for Life](#) webpage provides access to training, support and advice in your area
- [BBC Bitesize Functional Skills](#) offer bite-sized learning modules
- [YouTube](#) video tutorials are available

- **Dyscalculia or Dyslexia**
 - Local Dyslexia organisations: [Local Dyslexia Associations - British Dyslexia Association](#)
 - Dyscalculia: [Dyscalculia - British Dyslexia Association](#)