

Functional skills transition arrangements update

February 2010

English components

Ofqual has announced that learners who have passed either or both components of the pilot functional skills (FS) English qualification (Speaking, Communication & Listening, Reading and Writing) by August 2010, will be able to have their achievement recognised in the new accredited qualifications which will be available from September 2010.

This is a time limited arrangement that will last for a period of 12 months only (September 2010 to August 2011) and only apply to FS English as FS Mathematics and ICT are single component qualifications.

The management of the carry-forward of English components will be the responsibility of each individual awarding organisation. Pilot centres are advised to contact the awarding organisation(s) they have been working with for further information.

Functional skills and UCAS points

In the interests of parity across the UK, UCAS have agreed that, with immediate effect, each certificated level 2 functional skills qualification will attract 10 UCAS Tariff points.

No changes are planned to Tariff points allocations for other skills qualifications, and the intention remains that all level 2 (or equivalent) qualifications will be removed from the UCAS Tariff for entry to higher education from 2011 onwards.

Post-16 functional skills funding

[Essential information on funding](#) for functional skills is now available from the LSC

Functional skills and Apprenticeships

From September 2010, functional skills in English and mathematics will replace the equivalent Key Skills qualifications as a mandatory component of all Apprenticeship frameworks. This requirement is stated in the Specification for Apprenticeship Standards in England (SASE) which sets out the minimum requirements to be included in a recognised English Apprenticeship framework. Compliance with the SASE will be a statutory requirement of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning (ASCL) Act. For those apprentices who registered for Key Skills before September 2010, they will still be able to complete the Key Skills component up to the end of August 2012.

Apprentices will be required to gain functional skills in English and mathematics (and ICT if required by the framework) at a minimum of Level 1 for Apprenticeships and Level 2 for Advanced and Higher Apprenticeships.

There are no proxy qualifications for Functional Skills. But to ensure a smooth transition from Key Skills to Functional Skills, government is extending the relaxation rule that currently applies

for Key Skills so that learners starting an Apprenticeship before September 2016 will satisfy the Apprenticeship requirement for the relevant Functional Skills qualification if they have achieved:

- Key Skills Communication at the equivalent level or GCSE English (Grades A* - C) or A level or AS Level English Language, English Literature, or English Language and Literature (Grades A – E)
- Key Skills Application of Number at the equivalent level or GCSE Mathematics (Grades A* - C) or A level or AS level Mathematics, Pure Mathematics, or Further Mathematics (Grades A - E),
- Key Skills ICT at the equivalent level or GCSE ICT (Grades A* - C) or A level or AS level ICT

within the previous five years and before September 2012.

In most cases, Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) will be the Issuing Authority for Apprenticeship frameworks and will ensure that frameworks comply with the Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for England (SASE). The SASE allows an Apprenticeship framework to specify exemptions from Functional Skills qualifications in line with the relaxation rule set out above. The SASE also allows a framework not to allow exemptions from Functional Skills qualifications. In either case the framework would comply with the SASE.

This transitional arrangement allowing the existing relaxation rule to continue for a limited period is to provide those who might not have had chance to take functional skills at Key Stage 4 (i.e. by age 16) a window of opportunity to count their Key Skills qualifications, GCSEs or A/S and A levels towards their apprenticeship for a period until 2016.

It is expected that students starting Key Stage 4 from September 2010 will be learning functional skills as part of the curriculum and should have the opportunity to take functional skills qualifications. These students who will be aged 16 in 2011/2012 will be required to have functional skills qualifications in order to achieve their Apprenticeship; the relaxation rule described above will not apply to them and therefore other qualifications will not be allowed to count in place of Functional Skills qualifications.

To promote progression, where an individual has achieved functional skills qualifications at level 1 in English, mathematics or ICT (if the framework requires this) or has the relevant Key Skills qualification (or one of the qualifications mentioned above) prior to starting a Level 2 Apprenticeship, the employer may allow the individual to study for a functional skills qualification at Level 2 as part of the Apprenticeship framework. The issuing authority must actively encourage employers to allow individuals (particularly young people up to 19) to progress to functional skills at Level 2 as part of the Apprenticeship framework.

To access the SASE and guidance documents, follow this link to BIS publications:

<http://www.bis.gov.uk/publications> and search for apprenticeship'.

Wider Key Skills

Wider Key Skills will remain for now, while a decision is taken on their future.

Skills for Life

A decision has not yet been taken on whether FS will replace Skills for Life.