

John Hayes MP

Minister of State for Further Education,
Skills and Lifelong Learning

Jill Lanning
FAB

Our ref: 2010/0093055POJH
Your ref:

Email to: MParsons@learningproviders.org

7
December 2010

Dear Jill,

Thank you for your letter of 8 November, regarding the implementation of Functional Skills in Apprenticeships.

Thank you also for your contribution to the recent Functional Skills in Apprenticeship workshops. I know that my officials found it valuable to hear from providers and others about the issues involved in delivering Functional Skills in a work based setting and some of the approaches being taken.

I understand your concerns about the delivery and assessment of Functional Skills in Apprenticeships. I recognise that further work is needed to make the Functional Skills qualifications an integral part of Apprenticeships; however I do remain committed to principle that Apprenticeship frameworks should deliver Functional Skills. Consequently, I do hope that you will continue to work with my officials, as a matter of urgency, to make progress towards resolving the issues that you have so constructively worked with us to identify.

You make the point that Apprenticeships should build on Functional Skills delivery in schools so that they can be developed and applied in a work context. I strongly endorse the principle that Functional Skills must add value within an Apprenticeship. An Apprenticeship should not simply replicate learning delivered in schools. Where a young person or adult has achieved a Functional Skills qualification at the level required for the Apprenticeship, they will not be required to repeat the qualification. Furthermore, an employer may allow exemptions to Functional Skills for apprentices with recent and equivalent qualifications. In such cases, the apprentice will begin work on their competence qualification, where it is likely that they will be required to demonstrate and apply skills in English, maths and possibly ICT through on the job training in a specific occupation or job context. We strongly encourage Sector Skills Councils (SSCs), employers and others to support individual progression to higher levels of Functional Skills where it is appropriate for them to do so.

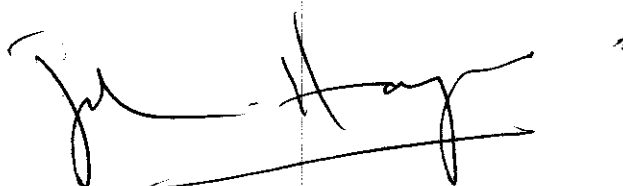
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These are important challenges for us collectively and I recognise that it will take time to ensure that we are in the best possible position to deliver Functional Skills in a way that is entirely consistent with the Apprenticeship ethos. This is why I have decided to allow a period of parallel running between Functional Skills, the new GCSEs (with enhanced functional content) and Key Skills from April 2011 to the end of September 2012. I confidently expect full implementation of Functional Skills in Apprenticeships from the end of September 2012. The National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) will communicate this decision publicly following this letter. Full details of the arrangements for parallel running will be announced in the Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for England (SASE) due to be published next month.

Finally you suggest a piece of research to identify the effects of good practice in Key Skills within Apprenticeships. Whilst it would be useful to draw on the experiences of delivering Key Skills in Apprenticeships, Functional Skills is a different type of qualification altogether and I think therefore that such research would have limited value.

Thank you again for your continued support and commitment to skills and Apprenticeships. At this stage, I look to you to work with my officials to make progress in resolving issues in the delivery and assessment of Functional Skills within Apprenticeships. I would be happy to meet at a later stage to discuss progress. My officials will be in touch with you to discuss taking forward future work.

Yours sincerely,



JOHN HAYES

Cc: Graham Hoyle OBE - ALP
Martin Doeal OBE - AoC
John McNamara - TASSC