

FUNCTIONAL & DIGITAL SKILLS POLICY

Issue	Date	Sections Affected	Description of Change / Change Request Reference / Remarks	Amended & reviewed by
9	28/02/25	N/A	Reviewed per guidance change	CC
10	13/03/26	All	Reviewed	CC

Purpose

This policy communicates Training Works' commitment to delivering high-quality Functional Skills English, Maths, and digital skills as part of our apprenticeship programmes. It outlines how Functional Skills will be taught, monitored, and embedded to support apprentices' progression, personal effectiveness, and employability.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure apprentices develop the essential skills required for everyday life, work, and further learning, and to comply with DfE and awarding body funding requirements.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All apprentices enrolled in Training Works programmes
- Trainers, assessors, and quality assurance staff involved in delivery

FUNCTIONAL & DIGITAL SKILLS POLICY

- Employers supporting apprenticeships
- Third parties and partners involved in training delivery

It covers:

- Initial and diagnostic assessment
- Functional Skills delivery and progression
- Digital skills development and embedding
- Monitoring, tracking, and quality assurance
- Staff training and professional development

Policy Review & Communication

- Reviewed annually in line with self-assessment procedures and updated as required in response to apprentice/employer feedback or new guidance from DfE or awarding bodies.
- Accessible via the company website and the Policies & Procedures File.
- Staff involved in management, delivery, assessment, and quality assurance are made aware during induction.
- Apprentices and their employers receive information during their apprenticeship induction.

Policy Principles

Training Works recognises that apprentices without Level 2 Functional Skills (or GCSE Grade 4/C+) in English and Maths face long-term barriers, including reduced access to higher education, apprenticeships, and employment. Approximately 1 in 5 young people fail to meet this standard by age 19.

Therefore:

FUNCTIONAL & DIGITAL SKILLS POLICY

- Apprentices without L2 Functional Skills or equivalent will be supported to complete them alongside their apprenticeship standard, where agreed with the employer.
- All apprentices will complete initial assessments, and those sitting functional skills exams will need to complete diagnostic assessments to determine current skill levels and starting points.
- Functional Skills will be embedded into vocational and apprenticeship delivery, using workplace-relevant contexts wherever possible.
- Digital skills will be integrated to ensure apprentices are digitally literate and employable.

Key Age Requirements

Age Group	Requirement
16–18-year-olds	Mandatory to study and pass Functional Skills in English and Maths if they do not hold GCSE Grade 4/C or higher. This is a condition of funding.
19+ Adult Apprentices	Following February 2025 reforms, passing Functional Skills is no longer a mandatory exit requirement. Apprentices may opt in or out, but Training Works will continue to support skills development.
19–25 with EHC Plan	Mandatory to continue studying Functional Skills if they do not hold GCSE Grade 4/C or higher.

FUNCTIONAL & DIGITAL SKILLS POLICY

Apprentice Entitlement

All apprentices are entitled to:

- Initial and diagnostic assessments to identify starting points
- A training plan detailing Functional Skills and digital skills progression
- Up-skilling to the next level of Functional Skills (e.g., Entry Level 3 → Level 1 → Level 2)
- Support to maintain or challenge skills at Level 2, even if already achieved
- Embedded Functional Skills tasks within the apprenticeship standard, including spelling, punctuation, and grammar (SPaG)
- Access to specialist Functional Skills support if additional support is required
- Planned progress reviews to track progress and introduce interventions as needed

Organisation Commitment

- Training Works is committed to a whole-organisation approach for Functional Skills:
 - Coordinated delivery across vocational and Functional Skills teams
 - Defined support systems: management, resources, learning support, and staff development
 - Effective assessment and review procedures
 - Internal verification, standardisation, and moderation
 - Clear communication to apprentices, trainers, and employers
 - Maintaining standards set by awarding bodies and DfE funding rules
 - Embedding continuous quality improvement

FUNCTIONAL & DIGITAL SKILLS POLICY

Leadership and Management

Responsible for:

- Effective delivery of Functional Skills programmes
- Ensuring trainers hold relevant teaching and assessment qualifications
- Implementing Functional Skills reforms
- Leading standardisation and embedding digital skills
- Overseeing initial assessments, registration, and assessment arrangements.

Trainers

Responsible for:

- High-quality teaching and learning
- Setting stretching targets for apprentices
- Monitoring and tracking apprentice progress
- Screening, initial, and diagnostic assessments
- Planning schemes of work and assessments
- Embedding SPaG and digital skills into all learning

FUNCTIONAL & DIGITAL SKILLS POLICY

- Ensuring apprentices are supported to progress through Functional Skills levels

Quality Manager

Responsible for:

- Ensuring robust curriculum and sector leadership
- Monitoring quality of Functional Skills teaching and learning
- Supporting staff to embed Functional Skills in vocational programmes
- Overseeing quality assurance for Functional Qualifications

Delivery Model

- Functional Skills is delivered flexibly, partially or fully embedded in vocational content
- Apprentices practice skills in realistic, meaningful contexts
- Iterative cycle: Build Skills → Practice → Demonstrate Functionality
- Delivery aligns with apprentices' individual learning plans

Quality Assurance

- Functional Skills are included in Quality Reviews, Standardisation, and Observations of Teaching, Learning, and Assessment
- Standardisation through: staff development, team discussions, peer observation, and external moderation
- Continuous professional development ensures all trainers are:
 - Qualified in Functional Skills teaching and assessment

FUNCTIONAL & DIGITAL SKILLS POLICY

- Fully conversant with awarding body standards and assessment criteria
- Confident in digital skills delivery

Employer Engagement

- Employers will be encouraged to support apprentices to complete Functional Skills alongside apprenticeship standards
- For apprentices whose employers opt out, skills development will still be embedded in vocational tasks and training

Monitoring and Review

- All apprentices' Functional Skills progress tracked via learning plans and milestone reviews
- Policy reviewed annually or when DfE, awarding body, or guidance changes
- Apprentices and staff feedback incorporated to improve policy and practice