

# Mathematics and English Policy



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## Introduction

Tower College of Further and Higher Education (Tower College) is committed to supporting employability, excellence, enterprise for all students.

Senior leaders and managers recognized that the development of mathematics and English skills enables students to achieve their full potential and function independently in all aspects of their personal and professional life. Tower College provide opportunities for students to improve their confidence and competence in mathematics and English and to develop the skills that enables them to progress to and within employment or further study.

## Context

The Mayor of London '[Skills for Londoners Framework](#)' prioritizes the need to develop basic English and mathematics skills as part of the pan London framework for the transition of adult funding to the Mayors Officer. The research and resulting evidence used to inform the framework equally applies to students accessing learning via Adult Learner Loans.

A good level of basic English and mathematics is critical to improving the life chances of many Londoners. Often employers require a "standard pass" in English and mathematics for the jobs they have available. Without securing qualifications in these subjects, young people and adults may struggle to secure or progress in work. Additionally, these qualifications enable students to access higher level qualifications that can unlock roles in many professions. Recent research has shown that narrowly missing the expected standard in English language at 16 decreases the probability of enrolling in a higher-level (academic or vocational) qualification by at least nine percentage points. Narrowly missing this mark also increases the probability of dropping out of education altogether at age 18 and increases the chances of being Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET).

There is evidence that achieving basic qualifications in English and mathematics boosts earnings and yields good labour market returns. Moreover, literacy and numeracy are the ultimate transferable skills. In a rapidly changing labour market, the adaptability of these skills means they will continue to be highly valued by both employers and individuals

Good literacy and numeracy skills also bring wider benefits to individuals and society. These skills are associated with higher levels of confidence and well-being. A recent longitudinal study by the DfE found that many students on basic English and mathematics courses reported a positive improvement in their levels of personal confidence during and after the course. An impact evaluation of students studying the English and mathematics Skills for Life courses in 2002-3 identified positive impacts on students' self-esteem and attitudes towards education and training.

## Tower College Approach

Senior leaders and managers are committed to developing English and mathematics skills through vocational programmes, that supports students to progress to further study, training and skilled employment. All staff have the responsibility for the positive promotion of the organisation's inspirational vision for promoting learner's mathematics and English skills through embedded learning and development activities.

It is essential that we meet the English and mathematical needs of all our students and staff. To do so we will ensure:

## Policy and curriculum

- The implementation of an English and mathematical skills framework that ensures English and mathematics are an integral part of all curriculum modelling and planning
- Strategies are in place to embed English and mathematics in all programmes including assessment, skills development, reviews, information advice and guidance, progression activities and links with industry and employers.

## Initial assessment

Initial assessment provides the means for you and your students to arrive at a mutually acceptable and realistic starting point. As you plan how to do this, bear in the mind the following suggestions.

- Identify the most crucial things you need to find out about students at the start of their programme.
- Work out how to structure the process so that students provide the information and the insights that you need to begin to plan learning.
- Find ways to make the process accessible to people who aren't fluent in written and/or spoken English, to people with disabilities and sensory impairments and to newcomers.
- Organise any support necessary for these potential students.
- Keep the arrangements as straightforward as possible.
- Make sure students don't feel threatened by the experience: give it the human touch!
- Work out how to maintain confidentiality where this is an important factor.

## Use of initial and diagnostic assessment to inform students programmes and targets

Tower College uses Skills Forward as a tool to carry out initial and diagnostic assessment.

As part of the enrolment process students will complete the Skills Forward initial and diagnostic assessment. The results from the initial and diagnostic assessments will be recorded on the students ILP and provided to the tutor/assessor to support planning of mathematics and English that meet the differentiated levels and promote continuous skills development.

Tutors and assessors will use the results of initial assessment from Skills Forward and prior achievement prior to enrolment and during the learner induction to ensure the English and mathematics needs of students are identified, discussed, planned and implemented in accordance to the needs and career aspirations of the learner.

## How is prior learning assessed?

ESFA does not mandate how a provider assesses or determines prior learning, just that it must be done, and the findings taken account of.

Models for assessing prior learning vary, but some good examples include:

- A professional discussion with the student to discuss their current mathematic and English skills; and
- Evidence of competency at a lower level, indicating the individual is ready for progression

## Delivery of mathematics and English

Mathematics and English are delivered through a combination of standalone and embedded learning and development activities including accessing the mapped resources via Skills Forward. Students seeking to progress to higher education or employment where they will require a functional skills

qualification will be offered IAG to identify a suitable college/training provider that delivers functional skills qualifications or access the distance learning materials available via the Open University [Open Learn website](#). Tutors/assessors will work with the functional skills tutor to implement an appropriate plan for students.

#### In class development of English and mathematics skills

- Course planning for all courses must specifically identify English and mathematics skill development in curriculum schedules and must be evident in all session planning where appropriate.
- Front loading the development of relevant vocational English and mathematics skills should be planned for to ensure students have the necessary skills to enable successful progression.
- Clear use should be made of English and mathematics initial assessments and diagnostic test results in the planning of sessions. These should be evident in group profiles.
- Activities should be differentiated to take into account differing levels of ability with English and mathematics.
- Vocational tutors should ensure all students make appropriate progress in developing their English and mathematics in their skills lessons. They should also make clear the relevance to their occupations and the impact on future career options.
- All lessons must ensure a range of strategies are adopted to support students in understanding and using the vocabulary and language style appropriate to a particular subject or vocational area.
- Broad English skills should be developed covering reading, writing, speaking and listening. This might include:
  - Developing research skills
  - Developing reading techniques e.g. skimming/scanning
  - Spelling practice
  - Writing using writing frames
  - Practice discussions
  - Presentation skills
  - Modelling answers
  - Plan activities that provide opportunities for students to practice the use of their verbal and written language in a wide range of contexts including presentations, written reports, role plays, professional discussion and the working environment.
- Marking of student work should identify spelling, punctuation and grammar issues and provide strategies to address these issues.
- Broad mathematics skills should be developed covering handling data, measurement, shape and space and number. This might include:
  - Deriving information from pie charts
  - Understanding and calculating averages
  - Use of metric measures
  - Understanding and calculating areas
  - Acknowledging different strategies for the use of the 4 rules of numbers (Adding, Subtraction, Multiplying, Division).
  - extend the opportunities for the use of data in coursework e.g. using graphs and charts in presentations

## Roles and responsibilities

### Senior Managers role:

- implement and deliver the mathematics and English policy.
- support and deliver staff development for tutor/assessors on the embedding of mathematics and English in main learning.
- support the improvement of teaching, learning and assessment in mathematics and English through, for example, specific workshops and sharing of good practice as identified through observations of learning.
- be accountable for the mathematics and English success rates for students in their area of responsibility

### Tutor/assessors role:

- Ensure that every learner has taken and there is a record of their initial and diagnostic assessment
- Check and confirm that every learner's prior achievement in mathematics and English
- Set clear and relevant learning objectives and targets for each learner in mathematics and English throughout their programme
- Plan and deliver mathematics and English support to meet learner needs
- Promote and encourage accurate and consistent use of mathematics and English skills
- Seek ideas, consult with colleagues including mathematics and English specialists to introduce innovative ways to embed mathematics and English in planned learning
- Check and record the progress of every learner in mathematics and English in relation to their individual targets

## Quality assurance and moderation of the observation policy

Quality assurance activity will take place at least annually to ensure the mathematics and English activity is having a positive impact on improving teaching, learning and assessment practice.

## Documents associated with this procedure

Name	Stored
Individual learning plan	Learner file