

Functional Skills and Apprenticeships in Thames Valley Primary Care



What are functional skills?



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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 (source: [HASO](#))



Why do I need them?

All apprenticeship programmes require learners to achieve a Level 2 in English and maths (and in some programmes ICT as well)



What do I need to achieve?

For a Level 2 apprenticeship you need to evidence learning towards and sitting the Level 2 Functional Skills exams

For Level 3 - 7 apprenticeships you need to achieve Level 2 in Functional Skills English and maths in order to fully qualify from your programme

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 CSEs/GCSEs 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 there 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

The funding rules require evidence of the specific English, maths and where required, ICT qualifications. In all of these scenarios – you will need to provide the evidence!

Functional Skills – requirement 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 English and maths / ICT qualifications if required from another country

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

I have my certificates

Yes

No

You do not need to achieve functional skills

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 my certificates

Yes

No

You may need a statement of comparability by UK ENIC (previously UK NARIC).

If you have the evidence then you do not need to achieve functional skills

Check your options with the Apprenticeship Training Provider. If the evidence cannot be obtained, you will need to achieve functional skills qualifications before or during the apprenticeship programme

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

Help and support with Functional Skills



How long does it take to achieve Functional Skills?

It can take between 3 to 18 months or more to achieve Level 2 functional skills, depending on your starting point



How do I establish my starting point?

You can take an initial assessment via [BKSB](#) – contact your local Training Hub or the Thames Valley Apprenticeship Lead Kusham.nijhar@nhs.net for more information



What if I need to gain the skills (i.e. I'm not ready for the exams yet?)

It is recommended that you achieve your functional skills qualifications before you commence your apprenticeship (as this learning is not included in the 20% off-the-job training time).

Consider your preferred learning style and which mode of study you can manage. For face to face classes (in class or virtual) your Apprenticeship Training Provider may be able to deliver these or make recommendations. You can also contact your local college or local authority for adult learning classes. HEE also link to some fantastic Skills for Life resources [here](#)

Health Education England fund the **BKSB** online learning tool if you prefer self-directed learning that you can fit around your work and life. If you are assessed as ready to sit an exam (a score of 2.6 or above), you could opt to sit for an exam via **Open Access**.

HEE Functional Skills Learning Paths



Watch this HEE [video](#) to find out more about these routes. To register for BKSb or Open Exams, please contact Kusham.nijhar@nhs.net or your local Training Hub for more information.

Health Education England are working with BKSb and Open Access to provide you with three online routes.

You start with an initial assessment of your subject – English, maths and/or ICT.

Depending on your results you can then take one of the following routes:

- **Upskilling route** – ideal for those who just want to refresh your skills for now. This is online learning with no commitment to sit the exam, but you can do this later when you are ready
- **Qualification only route** – if your initial assessment scores are 1.5 (for Level 1) or 2.5 (for Level 2) – you can sit the functional skills exam via online invigilation at your workplace or home!
- **Study and Qualification route** – learn BKSb alongside additional teaching with your preferred training provider. When you are ready, you can request the exam.

Resources

Qualification equivalence:

Check if your current qualifications are equivalent to Functional Skills Level 2 and acceptable by the ESFA: [English and maths requirements in apprenticeship standards at level 2 and above - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612222/ESFA-requirements-in-apprenticeship-standards-at-level-2-and-above.pdf)

Replacement certificates:

For replacement certificates click: [Get a replacement exam certificate - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612222/ESFA-requirements-in-apprenticeship-standards-at-level-2-and-above.pdf)

To register for BKSB and Open Access exams contact the Thames Valley Apprenticeship Lead: Kusham.nijhar@nhs.net or contact your local Training Hub

To access **further online resources** for Skills for Life, click on the HEE Functional Skills page: [Free Online Learning Tools - HASO \(skillsforhealth.org.uk\)](https://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/)