

Oxford Professional Education

Policy Date: December 2019

Reviewed: December 2022

Policy Review Date: December 2024

Reference number 1

Functional Skills Policy & Procedure

Policy Statement

Oxford Professional Education (OxPE) recognises the need to promote and develop all learners' skills within Maths, and English irrespective of their prior achievement or ability, at all levels through to level 2. This will encourage and promote personal development and has the potential to raise the learner's professional aspiration in terms of their own career progression.

Learners are required to achieve (or attempt to achieve) level 2 qualifications in Maths and English whilst undertaking apprenticeship programmes with OxPE, depending on their apprenticeship level.

Higher and Advanced apprentices are required to achieve functional skills at level 2 or have evidence of approved prior achievement. Intermediate apprentices must achieve a minimum of level 1 in functional skills, although all have the right (and will be encouraged and supported) to upskill to level 2 whilst on programme.

All functional skills should aim to be delivered at the beginning of their apprenticeship to provide the best opportunity for achievement and learner development. A list of acceptable transferable skills (exemptions) are available from Apprenticeship Certificates England.

It is OxPE's policy that all members of staff involved in teaching, learning, assessing and/or quality assurance will have achieved, or be working towards, both functional skills at level 2 within their probationary period.

Procedures

Initial Assessment

All learners, regardless of their proposed programme levels, will undergo a robust initial assessment with OxPE with a view to establishing their starting point, current abilities, and to identify their learning and support needs to support their progression. The learner lies at the centre of this process and needs to be an active participant so that they feel that the initial assessment process is something that is completed with them rather than for them. Initial assessment

involves the collection of a wide range of information to form a detailed picture of the learner – our initial assessment process involves the completion of:

- Maths, English assessments online via BSKB or paper-based, followed up by specific diagnostics where required;
- Enquiry form, including education history, including details on any transferable or skills towards functional skills;
- Qualification based skills-scan completed between the learner and manager to establish current abilities against future requirements;
- Discussion and feedback from both the learner and their manager, about their development needs and the learners' career aspirations;
- Completion of the Individual Learning Plan which will pull together the learners' starting point and detail their challenges and barriers to learning.

All the above encompasses the whole initial assessment process, not just functional skills, for OXPEG to determine the learners needs and support requirements as a whole. The rest of these processes deal specifically with the functional skills elements.

Functional Skills Delivery

Following diagnostic, Apprentices will participate in e-learning lessons to upskill their weaker areas using a range of media (video, learning and interactive activities) in preparation for sitting a mock test.

If a learner prefers a paper-based approach, downloadable materials are available for use.

External Assessment

OxPE primarily prefer for learners to sit tests online, due to it being a fast, effective and efficient process which produces results quickly and effectively. Employees should be aware of the following:

- At present our preferred awarding organisation for Functional Skills tests is NCFE. We are approved to facilitate online and paper-based testing of Maths and English on demand;
- Trainers should promote the use of online testing where possible;
- The Functional Skills English Speaking & Listening element must be observed by the trainer, and recorded where possible, in combination with the agreed assessment record. The recording is to be uploaded to our allocated secure area or the learners' e-apprenticeship;
- QAs' will periodically carry out an observation of the Trainer facilitating Speaking & Listening assessments to ensure quality and consistently.

As OxPE is a national provider, we have the facility for tests to take place anywhere in the country using the online, offline or paper-based options via their usual trainer. It is our policy to ensure inclusivity and flexibility to give the learner the opportunity to undertake and achieve their tests, therefore, locations, timings and test media are all learner-led. It is the trainers' responsibility to ensure the test room and environment is suitable for testing – and that OxPE's procedures are followed. Regardless of location, all tests will be/have:



- Planned and requested by the relevant trainer;
- Registered and booked by the administrator;
- Diarised on the exams calendar;
- Have a trained and allocated QA and Invigilator attached;
- Exam paperwork will be kept secure as per the Registration and Invigilation Procedure. Following the exam, it is the trainers' responsibility to ensure the exam is uploaded (if online or offline), or that any paper-based tests are returned to the awarding organisation via recorded delivery;
- The administrator will check for results at least twice weekly.

Please note: It is the trainer's responsibility to ensure the learner feels ready to sit their test(s) and to ensure that training and mock testing has taken place prior to the formal test.

Guidelines

This strategy sets out OxPE's system to ensure the functional skills element of our programmes is widely understood, embedded and ultimately provides the learner the opportunity to achieve or upskill their abilities within maths and English.

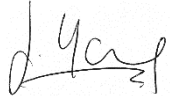
- As per our Staff Training and Development Policy, all members of the team who facilitate Functional Skills with learners will be qualified or developed to the correct standard (even though there is no awarding organisation requirement for them to be qualified);
- All employees who facilitate Functional Skills with learners will need to achieve their Level 2 Functional Skills across both areas (maths and English) within their probationary period. They will be encouraged to undertake their initial assessments and diagnostics and access the e-learning platform for development. If 1:1 development is required, the Functional Skills trainer will be asked to teach, support and mentor them through the qualifications during their probationary period;
- All trainers are required to update their Functional Skills competency as part of the company's CPD Strategy;
- The Quality & Development Team will ensure that a minimum of 2 Functional Skills English Speaking & Listening standardisations take place bi-annually with a view to share good practice and discuss emerging issues. This is planned and monitored by the Apprenticeship Lead using the OTLA & Staff Development Tracker;
- Trainers delivering Functional Skills qualifications must take responsibility for ensuring that Functional Skills are fully embedded across each individual learners' programme, regardless of if they have exemptions in place or not. If Functional Skills are a required aim, these must be achieved as per the relevant Delivery Model;
- Where it has been identified by a trainer that a learner requires additional support, they should have a discussion with the Functional Skills Tutor and/or Apprenticeships Lead to ascertain the specific support required;
- If the learner requires intensive support from the Functional Skills Tutor, this should be discussed and agreed between the learner, Trainer and Apprenticeships Lead prior to submitting a formal request to an OxPE Director;
- Functional Skills success rates will be collated on a monthly basis for reporting to OxPE's Governing Body;



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- The Apprenticeships Lead in conjunction with the Functional Skills Quality Assurer will be responsible for facilitating all EQA visits from awarding organisations throughout the year and reporting to Governors.

Signed: 

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