

# **CANTERBURY COLLEGE POLICY**

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## **FUNCTIONAL SKILLS**

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**REVIEWED BY: Advanced Practitioner**

**NEXT REVIEW: 'as required'**

**POLICY LEAD: Mike Coleman**

# Functional Skills Policy 2011 - 2012

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## General

The College is fully committed to ensure that its learners are equipped with the Functional Skills to provide the essential knowledge, skills and understanding that will enable them to operate confidently, effectively and independently in life and work.

The primary aim of the Functional Skills Strategy is to raise levels and improve standards of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. This is necessary for improving employability, independent living and continued learning. In addition the College aims to:

- Develop a whole college approach to English, Maths and ICT gaining all staff commitment to the Skills Agenda.
- Work collaboratively with other partners including the Local Authority, schools and employers to raise participation and engagement of 14-19 year olds in education
- Improve standards in teaching and learning by ensuring that all staff are fully qualified and undertake continuous review and professional updating, especially in relation to their own English, Maths and ICT qualifications and skills.
- Raise achievements in English, Maths and ICT and increased learners' potential to achieve high grade qualifications and improve distance travelled.
- Have a responsive, flexible and professional workforce to deliver English, Maths and ICT in a vocational context.
- Use best practice to inform and drive curriculum change.
- Increase and improve use of interactive and on-line teaching, learning and assessment resources
- Keep staff informed of national curriculum developments in respect of English, Maths, ICT, GCSE and ESOL through appropriate training.
- Up-skilling and re-training staff especially in relation to their own English, Maths and ICT qualifications and skills to raise the quality of teaching, learning and training
- Ensure that the English, Maths, and ICT delivery is flexible in terms of location, time, method of delivery and vocational context so that the needs of learners are met as much as possible.
- Continuing to reinforce English, Maths and ICT in vocational programmes, within the college, community and workplace.

## Roles & Responsibilities

Detailed responsibilities are given in the Functional Skills Quality Handbook.

### Faculty Heads & Head of Sheppey

In relation to Functional Skills, Faculty Heads will be responsible and accountable for:

- Ensuring there are clear roles and responsibilities in the management and delivery of functional skills.
- Ensuring staff delivering functional skills meet the training requirements set out in this document.

### Section Managers & Sheppey VTLs

Section Managers have the overall responsibility for Functional Skills in their Section. They are responsible and accountable for:

- Ensuring every learner undertakes the initial and diagnostic assessments.
- Ensuring the staffing of Functional Skills.
- Signing off the ILR target level **by 21<sup>st</sup> October.**
- The successful delivery of functional skills, Learner progress and regular reporting.
- The quality and completeness of data in the Functional Skills Tracker.
- Creating and maintaining a viable functional skills timetable and its staffing.
- Raising the quality of teaching and learning and success.
- Ensuring staff delivering functional skills meet the training requirements.

### Functional Skills Officer

The Functional Skills Officer has the responsibility to support Section Managers and the College with Functional Skills. Lead Internal Verifier is responsible for:-

- The management of the qualification.
- Providing appropriate documentation and evidence that explains the internal verification process is in place.
- Preparing all relevant documentation and venues for a visit by the Standards Verifier.
- Undertaking developmental observations and observing assessments.
- Providing cross-College reports on Functional Skills.
- Reviewing functional skills processes and policies for approval by SMT.
- Drafting improvement plans for functional skills.

### Advanced Practitioners for Functional Skills

There is an Advanced Practitioner for each functional skill whose responsibility is to support Section Managers and staff with Functional Skills. They are responsible for:-

- Helping to raise the quality of teaching and learning and success.
- Supporting Assessors in delivery of functional skills in the classroom.
- Providing support for vocational content and planning.
- Ensuring quality resources are available to Assessors.
- Providing standard schemes of work and lesson plans to be used across the College.
- Identifying best practice and disseminating it.
- Undertaking developmental observations and observing assessments.

- Raising the quality of functional skills delivery.

### Course/Personal Tutors

In relation to Functional Skills, Course Tutors will be responsible and accountable for:

- The completion of the Initial Assessment for Maths and English prior to or during enrolment.
- The completion of the Diagnostic tests and Functionality tests for the proposed target level functional skill(s) **by 26<sup>th</sup> September.**
- Signing off the ILR target level **by 21<sup>st</sup> October.**
- The quality and completeness of data in the Functional Skills Tracker.
- Ensuring that in vocational sessions, functional skills are embedded/referred to at every opportunity through cross references and examples.
- Learner success.

### Functional Skills Assessors

The Functional Skills Tutor is known as the Assessor and will be responsible and accountable for teaching and assessing Functional Skills. Also:

- The completion of the Diagnostic tests and Functionality tests for the proposed target level functional skill(s) **by 26<sup>th</sup> September.**
- Signing off the ILR target level **by 21<sup>st</sup> October.**
- Managing the system of assessment from assessment planning, through to marking and recording assessment decisions
- Maintaining accurate and verifiable candidate assessment and achievement records.
- The quality and completeness of data in the Functional Skills Tracker.
- Ensuring that functional skills are linked to the vocation at every opportunity through cross references and examples.
- Undertaking internal verification of peer's assessments.

### Functional Skills Internal Verifiers

The Internal Verifier is at the heart of the quality assurance process. Their role ensures that assessments across the centre consistently meet national standards, thus Internal Verifiers must be competent in the assessment of the qualification offered. The Internal Verifier cannot internally verify their own assessment decisions. Internal Verifiers will be responsible and accountable for:

- Attending the Assessment Standards and Verification Standards Meetings.
- Sampling evidence of assessment decisions in accordance with the marking scheme and standards.
- Supporting the work of Assessors in conjunction with the Lead Verifier.
- The quality and completeness of data in the Verification Tracker.

- The quality of assessments.

## Delivery Model

Neither a totally generic delivery nor a totally embedded delivery of Functional Skills has gained any credibility. It has also been voiced that whilst the skills taught need to be transferrable the learner must see the relevance to the vocation they are studying. The Functional Skills Strategy at Canterbury College follows a model of discrete Functional Skills sessions delivered by trained staff with a requirement to clearly reference to vocational studies. To complement this vocational session will take every opportunity to refer learning elements to functional skills.

## Guided Learning Hours

<b>Level of course</b>	<b>No. of GLH for Functional Skills over the duration of the course</b>
Level 1 and below (Foundation Learning)	51-54 hours English 51-54 hours Maths 51-54 hours ICT
Level 2 or 3	51-54 hours (one Functional Skill)
Apprenticeships	30 hours per Functional Skill
Supported Learning Provision	144 hours per Functional Skill

## Learner Entitlement to Functional Skills

All students on any programme of study are entitled to develop their skills at an appropriate level on their main course of study. Learners enrolled on English, Maths or ICT GCSE programmes will not take the corresponding functional skill although they should have the opportunity to take a different functional skill.

### Foundation Learning

All learners undertaking Entry to Level 1 provision under the new FL curriculum will receive discrete 1.5 hr sessions per week of all or some of the elements of Functional Maths, English and ICT.

### Level 2 &3 Programmes

Learners will receive 1.5 hr per week timetabled sessions for Functional Skills. The Skill taught will be determined by the vocational team as the most necessary skill for the learners to achieve their vocational programme and progress onto a higher FE programme or into employment.

### Employer Responsive and Apprenticeship Framework

For Apprentices/Advanced Apprentices, the College offers scheduled sessions where appropriate using the resources and facilities of the main campus to facilitate delivery and assessment.

## Initial Assessment

### New Learners

- A new learner is defined as one who did not complete a programme at the College in the preceding academic year.
- Each new learner must undertake initial assessments for English and Mathematics.
- These must be undertaken prior to an interview and enrolment as they form an essential part of the decision process.

### Returning Learners

- A returning learner is defined as one who completed a programme at the College in the preceding academic year.
- Each returning learner must undertake the skillbuilder initial assessments for English and Mathematics if they have not achieved a functional skill in either subject in the preceding year.
- The assessment results will then be used to validate entry to the programme, establish progression over the previous year or set a baseline for diagnostics.

### Diagnostic Assessment

It is the responsibility of the Functional Skills Tutor and Course/Personal Tutor to ensure that each learner undertakes the relevant diagnostic tests in a timely manner. The purpose of the diagnostic assessment is to determine a learning plan for an individual learner. Learners need to do the skillbuilder diagnostic assessment for the functional skill and the level they are to undertake. Learners in foundation tier groups who will be undertaking all three functional skills will need to do both the Maths and English diagnostic assessments. Standard group references will be used in skillbuilder and diagnostic matrices generated for each group of learners.

### Functionality Tests

Functionality tests are being developed as part of the assessment of the learner's initial capability. These will be simple assessments that are intended to test the application skills of the learner and the results will be used as part of the determination of the target level. Initially there will only be a writing test available.

## Proxies/Exemptions

There are currently no specified proxies/exemptions for Functional Skills although some Apprenticeship frameworks have carried forward those that were applied to key skills. The new GCSEs with inbuilt functionality should provide an exemption but we should not see any of these coming through in the 2011-2012 intake.

## Functional Skills ILR Target

The basis for deciding the target functional skill and level for a learner is the initial assessment, diagnostic results and functionality test results. There may be other considerations such as

previous achievement. The responsibility for setting the target will be with the Section Manager, Course/Personal Tutor and Functional skills Tutor. Once decided the Functional Skills Tracker must be updated with the target level and skill because this will be the source used to submit the College targets. Each learner undertaking functional skills must have targets set by 21<sup>st</sup> October 2011. These actions must take place as follows:-

- **At Interview/Enrolment:** Initial Assessment. FS tracker updated.
- **26<sup>th</sup> September:** Diagnostic & Functionality Tests. FS tracker updated.
- **21<sup>st</sup> October:** Functional skills target decided. FS Tracker updated.

## Awarding Body & Assessment

The chosen awarding body is Edexcel. Entry level assessments will be paper based and level one/two assessments will be on-line.

## Quality Processes

The College has a detailed quality process which can be found in the Functional Skills Quality Handbook.