

# Functional Skills Policy & Procedure

## Introduction

This procedure sets out the process for implementing the Tolley®Exam Training policy for the development and delivery of functional skills.

All learners, regardless of their proposed programme levels, will undergo a robust initial assessment (see **Initial Assessment Policy and Procedure**) with Tolley®Exam Training with a view to establishing their starting point, current abilities, and to identify their learning and support needs in order to support their progression.

All apprentices are required to achieve Level 2 qualification (equivalent GCSE Grade 4 and above) in Maths and English. In most cases, apprentices will have already achieved this prior to joining their employer and the standards we offer require Maths and English skills above Level 2. However, in some cases the apprentice will not currently meet the required level and will need functional skills incorporated into their apprenticeship plan.

Development of functional skills for all apprentices, regardless of their starting point, will be expected throughout the programme and will be monitored through the progress reviews. Coaches will ensure that apprentices are provided with opportunities for learning and practice in the workplace and as part of the off-the-job aspect of the programme.

## Initial assessment

The application form requires that apprentices must provide details of prior academic qualification and achievement. In addition, prior learning records will be checked on the LRS Organisation Portal <https://idp.lrs.education.gov.uk>.

In addition, all apprentices complete an online assessment (BKSB) as part of the onboarding process. This will identify specific areas that should be targeted for development. Access to the tool will be given on confirmation that the apprentice meets the eligibility requirement. The results are recorded in the apprentice's evidence pack.

## Ongoing review

Development of functional skills will be considered as part of the coaching programme and apprentices will be asked to provide evidence of progress. At the discretion of the coach, apprentices may be asked to repeat the online assessment.

## Developing functional skills during an apprenticeship programme

Where the apprentice certifies functional skills are at the appropriate level, no specific actions are needed in the apprenticeship plan. However, all apprentices are expected to naturally develop their functional skills due to the nature of the professional environment in which they are working.

Maths and English are embedded in all modules of the structured learning programme. During technical tax classes, learners will work with numerical examples and will be required to read and understand pieces of legislation. Functional skills will be tested through the completion of practice and mock exams.

English writing skills are developed as part of the curriculum for all standards, although the method is less formal than with maths skills. Apprentices work with both tutors and coaches to develop their English skills as well as their line manager and colleagues in the workplace. Within the skills and behaviour modules, apprentices will be able to practice and develop skills through the completion of activities and attendance at workshops and webinars.

Feedback given by coaches allows apprentices to develop a variety of English skills, including Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar (SPaG). Apprentices are also encouraged to consider their English skills whilst in the workplace. This can be through both their written and verbal communications with clients and colleagues.

Coaches ask the apprentices to explain how they have, or will, develop their Maths/English during progress reviews and support them in meeting milestones, such as being 'signed off' for direct client contact.

Additional resources on functional skills can be accessed via Tolley Academy.

## Apprentices not meeting minimum requirements

If an apprentice does not hold a GCSE Level 5 or above in Maths and English, they will be required to complete a further BKSB diagnostic assessment which will identify specific gaps in knowledge and understanding. Additional learning will be specifically incorporated in the apprenticeship plan. All functional skills should aim to be delivered at the beginning of their apprenticeship to provide the best opportunity for achievement and learner development.

The additional training will be tailored for each apprentice and will be designed to ensure that they are subsequently able to meet the requirements of the apprenticeship standards, before passing through the gateway. Training will be provided through BKSB and the apprentice will be required to work through an online programme, which will be assessed at the end of each module. Progress will be monitored by the coaches.



Jonathan Scriven – Director of Tax Markets