

# EMPLOYERS GUIDE 2026

## ENGLISH & MATHS REQUIREMENTS



# ENGLISH & MATHS REQUIREMENTS

Apprentices are required to meet certain English and Maths standards, which vary depending on their age at the start of the programme and the level of their apprenticeship. Employers play a key role in supporting apprentices to achieve the minimum requirements and ensuring compliance. The following outlines when English and Maths qualifications are mandatory, optional, and how Functional Skills are delivered alongside the apprenticeship.

The table below shows the key grade equivalents for English and Maths qualifications, which are used to determine an apprentice's eligibility and requirements.

Current	Old	
9		If the learner has already achieved GCSE English and Maths at grade 4/C or above, or Functional Skills Level 2, then no additional English or Maths is required as part of their apprenticeship.
8	A*	
7	A	
6	B	If the learner has not achieved these qualifications, the requirements depend on their age at the start of the apprenticeship.
5	C	
4	D	
3	E	<b>AGES 16-18 AT START</b>  For apprentices aged 16-18, English and Maths requirements are mandatory if they do not already hold GCSE grade 4/C or Functional Skills Level 2.
2	F	
1	G	
U	U	Apprentices must achieve at least the minimum level required for their apprenticeship standard

**For Level 2 apprenticeships:**

The minimum requirement is Functional Skills Level 1 (or equivalent) to enter Gateway. Apprentices who do not hold suitable Level 1 qualifications in maths and English at enrolment will be required to study towards and achieve Level 1 Functional Skills. Once Level 1 is secured, apprentices must work towards Level 2 Functional Skills where it is determined there is time to make meaningful progress towards these qualifications. If they already hold Level 1 prior to enrolment, they must study towards and attempt the Level 2 Functional Skills exams, but do not need to pass Level 2 to progress to Gateway.

**For Level 3+ apprenticeships:**

The minimum requirement is Functional Skills Level 2 (or equivalent), which must be achieved before progressing to Gateway.

**Ages 19+ at Start (New rules from Feb 2025)**

For apprentices aged 19 or over at the start of the programme, English and Maths are no longer automatically required if they do not already hold GCSE grade 4/C or Functional Skills Level 2. Instead:

- Standalone English and Maths Functional Skills qualifications are optional.
- The decision to opt in must be agreed between the learner, employer, and training provider, and documented in the training plan.
- If a 19+ apprentice chooses to opt in, they will be enrolled on Functional Skills English and/or Maths and must study towards and attempt exams during their apprenticeship, but are not required to pass in order to enter gateway.

## HOW FUNCTIONAL SKILLS ARE DELIVERED

Any apprentice enrolled on Functional Skills will study these alongside their main apprenticeship, in addition to their normal off-the-job (OTJ) hours.

Their Apprenticeship Tutor will support their development toward exam readiness, using BKSb to identify areas for improvement and check-point mock exams to measure progress and exam readiness.

The aim is for all Functional Skills to be completed within the first 12 months of the programme.

## EMBEDDED AND CONTEXTUALISED MATHS AND ENGLISH DEVELOPMENT

Regardless of an apprentice's age at the start of programme, prior attainment or enrolment on standalone maths and English Functional Skills qualifications, all apprentices will develop vocational maths and English skills throughout their apprenticeship.

Our curriculums are designed to embed maths and English development through contextualised activities linking to the knowledge and skills criteria of the apprenticeship standard. All apprentices will benefit from vocational skills development in maths and English.

## MORE INFORMATION

To find out more about our Apprenticeships and how we can support our apprentices, please contact our team at [training@bpif.org.uk](mailto:training@bpif.org.uk) or call us on 01676 526 060.



[WWW.BPIF.TRAINING](http://WWW.BPIF.TRAINING)

