

English and Maths Strategy

Introduction and Context

The increasing emphasis that is placed on the continuous development of English and maths skills both by the government and employers is influencing the development of a post-16 curriculum. As highlighted in the White Paper Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth January 2021:

“Most occupations require competence in English, maths, and digital skills. However, 49% of adults have numeracy skills no better than the level expected of an 11-year-old; for literacy, it is 15%. 52% of the workforce do not have essential digital skills for work. We need to address this so employers get the competent staff they need and people without these skills can develop them in order to find a good job or progress their careers.”

At MITSkills we see English and maths as qualifications that offer support and progression to higher level courses, apprenticeships, and employment. We are passionate about giving our learners the support they need to improve their confidence in English and maths, enabling them to function independently in all aspects of their life and work. These skills are essential for both progressing within further study and progressing to and within employment.

In response to research findings our ‘English and Maths Strategy’ has been developed to drive forward the development of all learners’ and staff’s English and maths skills, whether that is through Functional Skills English and maths qualifications on Study Programmes and Apprenticeships or through the ambition to develop these skills through the integration of new knowledge and skills within Apprenticeship standards.

In addition, our ambition is to further develop English and maths skills in all our learners, across all provision types, regardless of whether they have GCSE or Functional Skills qualifications on entry.

In the wake of the pandemic, we will carefully consider the impact of the TAG/CAG system where some learners may have inflated grades and need extra support to be working at level 2. These considerations will be taken into account and the necessary care will be taken when levelling learners to ensure that they are enrolled onto courses which are correct for their level of study.

The Strategy

MITSkills recognises the need for a whole organisational approach to English and maths, ranging from strong governance and accountability, and robust and relentless senior leadership, to the delivery of exceptional Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA) across all provision types. The English and Maths Strategy illustrates the steps that will be taken to achieve the identified objectives and give clarity to all staff and management.

Our Pledge

We are intent on delivering outstanding English and maths provision that enables our learners to make the most of their lives, contribute successfully to society and increase their social mobility.

Learner Entitlement

MITSkills have a responsibility to ensure all full time and substantive part time learners have the opportunity to develop and gain appropriate qualifications in English and maths up to Level 2 in line with Government policies.

English and maths development is a required and integral part of all provision types and will be promoted within all course literature and offered as a key component.

As a rule, to appropriately stretch learners, all learners that have not yet achieved a GCSE at grade 1 (F/G) in English and/or maths will initially study a Functional Skills Level 1, those who have achieved GCSE grade 2/3 will study Functional Skills Level 2.

The enrolment of each learner will be reviewed individually within the first 6 weeks of each course to ensure that learners have been enrolled onto a course that is suitable for them and to recognise the impact of any inaccurate TAGs learners may have achieved.

MITSkills will further develop English and maths skills in all our learners, across all provision types, regardless of whether they have GCSE or Functional Skills qualifications on entry. Our Specialist English and Maths team will carefully assess the impact of the TAG/CAG system where some learners may have inflated grades and may need extra support to be working at level 2.

Learners who are exempt from English and Maths study will continue their English and Maths development through activities embedded in their vocational study.

Accomplishing the Strategic Focus Areas:

English and maths as qualifications that offer support and progression to higher level courses, apprenticeships, and employment.

A cross-organisational approach to the co-ordination of English and maths ensures robust standardisation and facilitates sharing of high-quality resources and successful teaching methods. This will include targeted support for learners with TAG grades who initially assess at a lower level than their grades on entry using Skills Forward.

The importance of English and maths will be emphasised in our marketing materials, Induction programmes and Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG).

Everyone with responsibility for learners actively promotes the relevance and importance of English and maths with the learners from the time of their first interview.

MITSkills will monitor progress in English and maths within all aspects of the Quality Assurance (QA) cycle.

It is our intention for Tutor/Assessors in Apprenticeships to front-load functional skills and complete these in the first 6 months to ensure timely achievement in readiness for End point Assessment. Tutors will utilise the Skills Forward platform to personalise learning for apprentices and contextualise English and maths skills to workplace activity. Progress will be closely monitored monthly as part of caseload reviews.

Staff will support the view that acquisition of English and maths skills is equally as important as learners' vocational and academic aims.

A centralised English and maths Team, under the leadership of the Head of English and Maths, will drive forward the planning, delivery, and continuous improvement of our English and maths curriculum for all types of provision, including our Study Programmes and Apprenticeships.

Maximise learners' capability and confidence in maths, English, and communication, building skills for successful careers:

Learners gain the skills necessary to live fulfilling and exciting careers with confidence in their English and maths abilities and with the understanding that with strong skills in these areas, they can make a significant contribution to society and the economy.

All learners will benefit from initial and diagnostic assessment carried out expediently at the outset of their programme and utilised to inform Individual Learning Plans (ILPs). We utilise Skills Forward to help us to ensure that all learners are appropriately advised and that they have the ability to achieve the levels required in English and maths. Skills Forward also helps us to identify learners who may be able to accelerate their progress and progression.

Where learners are exempt from the need to complete English and maths qualifications staff will have the ambition to ensure that all learners are provided with continuous opportunities to enhance and develop their English and maths skills throughout their full learning journey. English and Maths will be contextualised throughout main aim study regardless of learners' prior attainment, and staff will attend Standardisation meetings to provide feedback on completed work and assignments from an English and Maths perspective.

The English and Maths Team will support staff training and delivery of Initial and Diagnostic Assessments.

Learners enrolled on Functional Skills qualifications will be expected to complete Initial & diagnostic assessments as well as a Distance Travelled assessment demonstrating progress on Skills Forward before, they can be booked onto an exam.

Staff have high aspirations to prepare learners who can fulfil employers' needs for English and maths skills at the highest industry standards.

All staff model high expectations in their own execution of English and maths through their delivery and their support activities, providing a model for outstanding practice.

Learners invest in the transferable skills of English and maths for future careers and 'jobs not yet invented':

Where appropriate, learners will receive advice and guidance that includes information on the portability and versatility of English and maths. They will learn how these areas of thinking and understanding contribute to the wider skills of problem solving, analysis and critical thinking in a wide variety of roles.

All staff will demonstrate the importance of English and maths in their vocational field. This will be achieved through integration of English and maths into a project-based approach to delivery of sports programmes.

The English and maths team will work closely with Careers Leads to ensure that essential numeracy and literacy skills are integrated through our Personal Development Programme and Work Experience/Industry Placements including where guest speakers will promote English and maths as vital employability skills.

Learners will be provided with examples of outstanding English and maths practice through a wide variety of delivery methods, including ICT, providing them with a breadth of learning experiences from which they derive transferable skills to use in their future careers.

MITSkills will work to fully understand the developing needs of employers and observe the research and guidance from Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) to ensure that delivery of English and maths replicates the needs of the future workforce.

MITSkills will provide appropriate facilities, including effective materials, to support learners' personal and independent development in English and maths.

Staff deliver English and maths using creative, innovative, and engaging methods:

Barriers to progression and into employment created by skills gaps in English and maths will be challenged and overcome through the embedding of English and maths into all teaching and learning situations.

High expectations for learners' achievement in English and maths will be paramount and accomplished through effective target setting, stretch and challenge activities, differentiation and raising aspirations.

Assessment of the quality of teaching and learning will highlight English and maths as a key area of focused activity for development and as an expected inclusion when assessing any teaching and learning. This will help continually increase standards of delivery in all areas.

Standards for teaching and learning will carry inherent expectations for the inclusion of high-quality English and maths content.

Quality Assurance processes will detail learners' experience and understanding and evaluation of their English and maths experiences and will be used to constantly improve provision.

To meet current awarding body criteria a dedicated team of admin staff is required to conduct exam invigilation for Functional Skills.

MITSkills approach is that all Teachers, Tutor/Assessors, and Learning Coaches maximise opportunities to develop English and maths skills for all learners where appropriate using the delivery models.

Maximise opportunities for staff to progress their skills in English and maths:

Staff will have the opportunity to develop their own English and maths skills from their existing personal starting point.

MITSkills engenders a culture whereby staff are enabled to share their areas for improvement in English and maths and receive appropriate support to develop.

Staff utilise the experience of their peers to develop good practice in the embedding of English and maths in vocational delivery through a series of peer observations and standardisation meetings.

The Training and Development Policy will be reviewed to meet the professional development needs of the workforce.

Employer and other stakeholder involvement will be planned into the learner journey, so that learners get maximum exposure to the world of work and potential career opportunities.

Delivery Model for Functional Skills

Functional Skills delivery will be delivered either online or in centre to flexibly work around working schedules.

Tutor/Assessors will work collaboratively with employers to embed and support the development of numeracy and literacy skills needed in the workplace.

To ensure learners are enrolled on a course suitable for them, learner progress will be closely monitored. Course enrolment for English and Maths is subject to change if learners demonstrate that they are working above or below the course on which they have been enrolled.

Tutor/Assessors will work with the quality team to develop milestones for functional skills English and Maths on delivery plans.

Learners will complete Distance Travelled assessments and/or practice papers in advance of being registered to sit a Functional Skills exam to assess their aptitude.

English and Maths delivery will be frontloaded at the beginning of apprenticeship courses while being embedded and contextualised within core apprenticeship delivery.

Learners will receive up to 2 hours per week delivery and support to develop their aptitude in English and Maths.

A comprehensive catalogue of bitesize learning videos have been created by English & Maths Specialists to offer asynchronized learning and support learners of all ability, and support Tutor Assessors in delivery.

Quality of lessons will be assessed through developmental and formal observations, with support from the Quality Team to upskill Tutor Assessors.

Tutor Assessors are continuously upskilled by the central English and Maths Team with regular Standardisation meetings.