Key Skills
SUPPORT PROGRAMME

Good practice guide

Using ICT in delivering key skills

department for
education and skills

learning
and skills
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agency

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For the full range of Key Skills Support Programme publications and online resources, please visit the website at www.keyskillssupport.net.

Introduction

What is the purpose of this guide?

This publication is one of a series of *Good practice guides* published by the Key Skills Support Programme (KSSP). All the guides are designed to provide advice and guidance to staff delivering and assessing key skills in centres. The guides can be used as an introduction, as the basis of training sessions, as a source of ideas, for reference, as a handbook, or just for reassurance. They are based on the experience of centres that have been delivering key skills for a number of years.

This guide is designed to provide teachers, trainers and managers with ideas about how ICT can be used to support all aspects of key skills delivery.

Who is this guide for?

This guide is for any member of staff who wishes to use ICT as a tool to support the delivery of key skills. They may be key skills coordinators, ICT coordinators, specialists in any of the key skills, or teachers/trainers aiming to integrate the ICT key skill into their programme.

- **This guide assumes only basic ICT literacy and confidence. It is not designed for staff who are already ICT-skilled or have some experience of e-learning.**

- **It is in the nature of ICT and e-learning that parts of a publication such as this will become out of date relatively quickly. It is important to check the key websites regularly for the latest developments. See Appendix 2.**

What is this guide about?

This guide provides information about how ICT can support the delivery of key skills and how centres can make best use of their ICT resources.

Clearly, the extent to which the potential of ICT can be realised will depend in part on the hardware and software available and on the ability of staff to exploit the technology. This guide illustrates that quite basic, as well as highly sophisticated, ICT tools and approaches can be used to support the delivery of key skills.

This guide does not include:

- detailed advice and guidance on interpreting the key skills standards and on the summative assessment of learners' work. Summative assessment is the responsibility of the awarding bodies, which provide specialised training. For contact details, please see Appendix 4

- advice on technical specifications for hardware and/or software

- guidance on the use of particular software packages or hardware resources

- recommendations about the quality or appropriateness of specific ICT equipment, resources, materials or sources.

In this publication, the abbreviation 'ICT' (information and communication technology) will be used to refer to ICT, IT (information technology), and ILT (information and learning technology).

ICT and the key skills learning process

ICT can help at each stage of the learning process, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 The key skills learning process

| Summative assessment | | Initial assessment | → | Diagnostic assessment |

The learner

| Teaching and learning | ← | Formative assessment | ← | Teaching and learning |
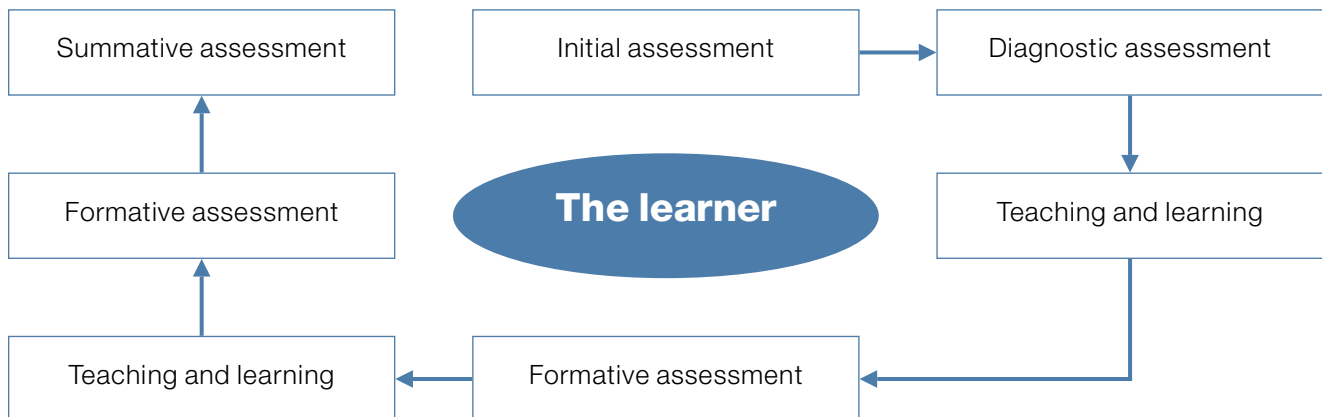
A wide range of research and development projects in the last two to three years have shown that using ICT and e-learning can help to:

- enhance the experience and quality of learning
- extend and improve access, participation and engagement
- identify skills gaps and needs
- motivate learners
- develop skills
- show how skills can be applied in context.

However, even the most committed supporters of e-learning do not suggest that it can replace face-to-face interaction between teacher or trainer and learner and between learner and learner. Instead, e-learning should be seen as complementary to and supportive of more traditional approaches.

The potential role of ICT in delivering key skills is well illustrated by the Key Skills Support Programme's online resource 'Key Skills Trainer' at www.keyskills4u.com. This resource is described on pages 22–23.

Initial and diagnostic assessment

Initial assessment is the process whereby we build up a clear, accurate and relevant picture of an individual's attainment and potential. It aims to establish the level at which a learner should be working.

Centres can use a range of techniques when initially assessing learners including:

- documentary evidence, eg qualifications, records of achievement, etc

- reports from previous teachers and trainers

- learners' knowledge of their own strengths and weaknesses

- interviews and discussions

- observations

- induction tasks or assignments

- formal tests.

Diagnostic assessment involves a detailed appraisal of a learner's skills and knowledge, to identify their specific strengths and weaknesses. It is designed so that an individual's particular learning needs can be met and to provide the basis of their individual learning plan.

Some initial and diagnostic assessment techniques can be ICT-based, making them:

- more attractive and accessible to learners

- quicker and easier to mark

- more readily available to staff who need to know the outcomes as soon as possible so that they can provide timely feedback to the learner.

'Staff have access to learners' initial assessment results via a secure area of the college's intranet. This provides "instant access" which enables subject tutors, personal tutors, key skills tutors and learning support tutors to get the information they need. Before we had this computerised system we couldn't mark and distribute the results much before the first half-term – by that time we had inevitably lost some of our "at risk" students.'

Course leader, sixth form college

Initial assessment in centres

Different types of centre will have different attitudes and approaches to initial assessment, based on their levels of prior knowledge of learners. However, there is a growing recognition that GCSE results, for example, do not provide a full and accurate picture of learners' needs in respect of key skills development and achievement. Increasingly, centres are using a variety of tools and processes for initial and diagnostic assessment.

Learning for Work, the work-based arm of the Key Skills Support Programme, is developing a new set of free resources for initial and diagnostic assessment. See the website for details, www.ksspforwork.org.uk.

'Key skills induction takes place during students' first week at college. Each student receives a generic induction booklet, which gives information on key skills. The course coordinators are responsible for introducing key skills and explaining their importance and how they will be delivered.

'An ICT-based initial and diagnostic assessment is completed during the third week of term, using a commercially available resource. From these results, action plans are drawn up. Most students are directed towards Levels 1 or 2 and progress onto a higher level in their second year. Some students move directly to Level 3.

'The students respond well to the assessment; they seem to prefer a screen-based assessment as opposed to paper. Computer marking certainly speeds up the results, so we can respond more quickly to individual needs and, in some cases, individual strengths. We can also draw off a profile of a whole group, which enables us to address some of the support and development needs in the group.'

Key skills coordinator, FE college

Initial assessment tools: to buy or develop in-house?

Buying

For many centres, the cost of a commercial tool, whether ICT- or paper-based, is prohibitive. Some have used the sample tests that are available on the QCA website as initial or diagnostic tests, but they are of limited use since they only sample from the standards and are, in any case, not designed for this purpose.

A number of initial and diagnostic assessment tools are available commercially. It is not appropriate for this guide to list all those that are available, or to make recommendations. However, descriptions of five of these products, together with a free one from ABSSU, is available on the KSSP website www.keyskillssupport.net.

The Basic Skills Agency has published a range of initial assessment materials, linked to the adult literacy and adult numeracy standards, which relate to the key skills Communication and Application of Number at Levels 1 and 2. For details, visit the Agency's website at www.basic-skills.co.uk and search under 'Publications'.

KSSP's website for learners at www.keyskills4u.com includes sets of questions for Communication, Application of Number and Information and Communication Technology at Levels 1 and 2. These can be accessed free of charge. See pages 22–23.

Developing in-house

Some centres have chosen to develop their own initial assessment materials. The advantages are clear. An in-house system:

- will meet your own particular needs
- can easily be amended to suit changing circumstances
- does not involve up-front or ongoing payments of fees or charges.

However, developing an in-house system is a complex and specialised task.

- Considerable expertise is needed to develop such a system.
- It will take some time to become fully operational and bug-free.
- The development cost in terms of staff time will be considerable.
- It will require ongoing updating and maintenance.

The KSSP website includes a substantial section on initial and diagnostic assessment. Go to www.keyskillssupport.net and click on 'Assessment'.

Making the choice

The checklist overleaf lists the main criteria for an effective initial assessment system. You could use this as a quality checklist for an in-house package or a commercial product.

You may wish to draw this checklist to the attention of your manager or whoever is responsible for purchasing or developing assessment materials.

These criteria are also valid when applied to paper-based tools and processes for initial assessment. If your centre is using such a system you may like to evaluate it against the criteria.

Whatever choice you make, the initial and diagnostic assessment process must be fit for purpose, ie it must enable your centre to respond to each individual learner's key skills development needs.

'Our initial assessment process is a very useful tool, but it provides only part of the story. We need to interview our learners and maintain an ongoing dialogue with them to ensure that progress is maintained.'

Personal tutor

Figure 2 Checklist for an initial assessment system

Criterion	Yes/No	Evidence
Is the system fair? Are all learners treated equally, without explicit or implicit discrimination? Are any learners put at a disadvantage?		
Is the system acceptable to learners? Is the experience of initial assessment positive for learners, with minimum stress? Is it appropriate in terms of length, age, language, content?		
Is the system reliable? Are you confident that the results of initial assessment are right first time and every time? Has the system been trialled and checked for accuracy?		
Is the system valid? Does the system really assess what you want it to assess, and what it claims to assess?		
Is the scope of the system suitable for your purpose? Does it cover the key skills you are concerned with, at the levels required, and in sufficient depth?		
Is the system properly documented? Does the system generate key skills records which are simple to use, easy to understand and accessible?		
Is the system linked to a means of developing individual learning plans that can be continually reviewed and updated?		
Is the system practicable in your situation? Do you have the hardware, staff expertise, time and resources to use it properly?		

Always choose a system that suits your needs, rather than changing your arrangements to suit a system.

Teaching and learning

The role of e-learning

There has been a huge growth in e-learning in recent years, with substantial investment in infrastructure in centres, and the development of an increasing range of resources by agencies such as the National Learning Network (NLN), DfES Curriculum Online, the National Grid for Learning (NGfL) and others. Becta (British Educational Communications and Technology Agency) is the government's lead agency for e-learning and manages many of these initiatives. It also manages Ferl, the information service for all staff working in post-compulsory education, which aims to support individuals and organisations in making effective use of information and learning technologies. For details of how to contact these and other relevant agencies, please see Appendix 3 and 4.

None of these agencies suggests that technology can or should replace more traditional teaching and learning methods. The emphasis is on promoting 'blended learning', ie the use of ICT to enhance and supplement more traditional methods.

In this guide, 'e-learning' is taken to mean any form of learning that is delivered electronically. This, therefore, includes both CD-ROM and online content, whether delivered through an intranet, virtual learning environment (VLE), or over the internet.

The DfES issued a policy document, *Harnessing technology*, in March 2005. This identified six areas for priority action. Chapter 11 spells out what this means for 14–19 and the post-16 sector.

The e-learning fan

The fan diagram in Figure 3 has been adapted to relate to key skills from the original which was developed by Becta.

This modified version of the diagram shows how electronic media and resources can enable and support the effective teaching and learning of key skills. At the left of the fan, e-learning is used to support traditional teaching. As we move clockwise round the fan, the degree of learner autonomy increases as the degree of intervention and direct control by teachers/trainers decreases, until the learner is able to access learning resources anytime and anywhere. This increasing autonomy aligns well with the independence required as learners develop their key skills and progress through the levels.

Teachers/trainers and learners will need to identify which segment of the fan most closely meets the needs of each individual learner and how a learner may be encouraged to use e-learning to develop greater autonomy.

Figure 3 The e-learning fan (adapted from the Becta original)

Enables key skills learners to access some or all of their key skills resources, activities, etc, whenever the centre is open and there is access to computers, even between split sites, possibly with the use of an intranet.

Enables access to learning materials, tutor feedback, etc, at any time via the internet, including when the centre is closed.

Initial and diagnostic assessment will usually show that each learner has different gaps in their underpinning knowledge of key skills. ICT can enable the planning and delivery of an individualised programme for each learner, based on learning materials that may be a mixture of electronic and paperbased. Each learner's work can be supported, tracked and assessed electronically.

The use of ICT can enable learners to proceed at their own pace in a group following a common programme. ICT can support the tracking of each learner's progress and facilitate individual support.

The potential of ICT to support learning can be brought together with traditional resources to make a coherent whole. For example, learners could be introduced to an assignment via a written brief. They could then do research on the internet and word-process a first draft and perhaps including images (Information and Communication Technology and Communication key skills).

This could be e-mailed to the tutor who would give feedback, also by e-mail (see page 15). Learners could develop collaborative learning activities through an e-mail or chat room facility on a centre's intranet (supporting Information and Communication Technology and Working with Others key skills). The final version of the assignment could meet the requirements of the Information and Communication Technology key skill.

Staff can model best practice in giving presentations by using presentation software, interactive whiteboards, etc, and in word-processed handouts and other documents. Learners can be supported in the development of their ICT skills when giving talks or presentations including the use of images (Communication key skill), in presenting information (Information and Communication Technology key skill), and in producing graphs and charts (Application of Number key skill).

As learners seek to develop the independent learning skills embodied in key skills, ICT can provide opportunities outside scheduled learning time that complement or support the main programme, eg research on the internet, reinforcement or revision exercises, additional practice, online communication with peers and tutors.

Anytime learning

Differentiated programme

Remote learning – anytime anywhere

Differentiated pace

Blended learning

Traditional teaching tool

Supporting learning

KSSP's learner website www.keyskills4u.com includes an online programme for learners to practise the key skills Communication, Application of Number and Information and Communication Technology at Levels 1 and 2 at their own pace, anytime and anywhere. See pages 22–23.

This flexibility in learning is clearly in line with what inspectors wish to see in relation to the quality of learners' experience.

For example:

'Good access to computers across the curriculum enhances development in key skills.'

School inspection report

Sport, leisure and tourism

'Key skills form part of most lessons and students are able to understand their significance within the leisure and tourism industry … students' ICT skills are particularly well developed.'

College inspection report

One centre used ICT to address a specific problem.

'The course team recognised that their students' number skills were poor, with a consequent lack of the underpinning skills required to achieve the key skill of Application of Number. The team decided to exploit the students' primary interest – ICT – to develop number skills. They searched the internet and located a large number of websites that included interactive learning materials for number skills. These were evaluated by the staff and students, and materials deemed suitable were linked into the college intranet. Students are now using these resources to develop their underpinning skills for Application of Number while using their favourite medium for learning – ICT. Student engagement, motivation and application have all improved.'

Key skills coordinator, FE college

The successful use of ICT cannot be achieved through technology alone: it requires skilled staff to support and manage the process. Learners who have little or no previous experience of ICT-based learning will need to be advised and supported as they develop their skills.

'Very few of our students are "self-starters" – they need a lot of tutor support to make use of internet or intranet resources. You cannot just leave them to it.'

Key skills coordinator, school

Using ICT to support the delivery of Part A

For many learners ICT is a medium of choice – it improves their motivation to learn.

The following pages show Part A of the standards for Communication at Level 1, Application of Number at Level 2 and Improving Own Learning and Performance at Level 3. On each page there are some suggestions as to how ICT could be used to facilitate the development of the underpinning skills. You can probably think of many other examples across all the six key skills.

You may like to consider using this approach to stimulate discussion during a staff training session that focuses on using ICT to support the teaching and learning of key skills.

Learners' information research and evaluation skills need to be developed. This could be done in study skills workshops but there are also online development opportunities such as the Virtual Training Suite (VTS). This is a set of free teach-yourself tutorials, designed to teach information skills for the internet environment. Learners are shown how to use the internet to help with coursework, literature searching and research. The material is, broadly, suitable for learners at Level 2/3 and is integrated in curriculum areas, rather than simply developing generic skills.

The tutorials are delivered over the web by the Resource Discovery Network (RDN), a national internet search service that aims to provide access to high-quality internet resources that can support learning, teaching and research (www.vts.rdn.ac.uk).

Communication Level 1 Part A

Learners could find out about the subject on the internet or an intranet. They will need to know how to search effectively using search criteria and hyperlinks. This skill also underpins ICT at this level.

Learners can practise this skill by highlighting key sentences on-screen, then copying them to a new document as bullet points.

Learners could use an internet dictionary to find out the meanings of words.

Learners could use a group bulletin board or chat room to ask others for help. The tutor could view this to see what contribution each learner is making.

You could use your word-processing application or software such as 'Hot Potatoes' to develop gap exercises using drop-down multiple-choice menus. This is a more 'fun' way of practising spelling, grammar, etc.

You could give your learners documents to edit into different formats. They could delete, insert, cut and paste, etc, perhaps using the 'Track changes' facility in their word-processing application.

Part A

YOU NEED TO KNOW HOW TO:

Discuss

- prepare for the discussion so that you can say things that are relevant
- judge when to speak and how much to say
- say things that suit the purpose of the discussion
- speak clearly in ways that suit the situation
- listen carefully and respond appropriately to what others say
- use body language to support what you are saying and to show you are listening.

Read and obtain information

- identify the main points and ideas in different types of documents
- obtain information from images
- find out the meanings of words and phrases you do not understand
- ask others when you are unclear about what you have read.

Write documents

- use different formats for presenting information, including business letters, memos, forms and short reports
- judge the relevance of information and the amount of detail to include for your purpose
- use relevant images to help the reader understand your main points
- proof-read and where necessary, re-draft your documents so that:
  - words you use most often in your work or studies and daily life are spelled correctly
  - sentences are formed correctly with consistent use of tense and accurate subject verb agreement such as 'she was' and 'we were'
  - sentences are marked by capital letters, full stops and question marks
  - your writing is organised into paragraphs where appropriate
  - your meaning is clear.

Communication: level 1

Application of Number Level 2 Part A

Part A

YOU NEED TO KNOW HOW TO:

Interpret information

- get relevant information from different sources *(eg from written and graphical material, first-hand by measuring or observing)*
- read and understand tables, charts, graphs and diagrams
- read and understand numbers used in different ways, including negative numbers *(eg for losses in trading, low temperatures)*
- estimate amounts and proportions
- read scales on a range of equipment to given levels of accuracy *(eg to the nearest 10mm or nearest inch)*
- make accurate observations *(eg count the number of customers per hour)*
- select appropriate methods to get the results you need, including grouping data when this is appropriate *(eg heights, salary bands)*.

Carry out calculations

- carry out calculations involving two or more steps, with numbers of any size with and without a calculator
- show clearly your methods of carrying out calculations and give the level of accuracy of your results
- work with and convert between fractions, decimals and percentages
- convert measurements between systems *(eg from pounds to kilograms, between currencies)*
- work out areas and volumes *(eg area of an L-shaped room, number of containers to fill a given space)*
- work out dimensions from scale drawings *(eg using a 1:20 scale)*
- use proportion and calculate using ratios where appropriate
- compare sets of data of an appropriate size such as 20 items each *(eg using percentages, using mean, median, mode)*
- use range to describe the spread within sets of data
- understand and use given formulae *(eg for calculating volumes, areas such as circles, insurance premiums, V=IR for electricity)*
- check your methods in ways that pick up faults and make sure your results make sense.

Interpret results and present your findings

- select effective ways to present your findings
- construct and use tables, charts and graphs and label with titles, scales, axes, and keys as appropriate
- highlight the main points of your findings and describe your methods
- describe what your results tell you and how they meet your purpose.

Application of number: level 2

The internet or intranet can provide the learner with the opportunity to search for 'real' data, making the task more real and often more relevant.

You can create or find a wide range of on-screen graphs and charts for learners to discuss in pairs.

There are many websites with excellent resources for learning numeracy and mathematics. Try www.bbc.co.uk/skillwise or www.curriculumonline.gov.uk.

Learners can use spreadsheet formulae to convert between different measurement systems, though they must show that they understand the calculation and can check it.

Learners can use a spreadsheet to gather their data and then experiment with the graph and chart facility to decide which is the most effective way to present findings.

Groups of learners can gather and share either primary or secondary data. They could use e-mail or a group chat room facility to transfer data. If using the latter, the tutor could see what contribution each learner is making.

Improving Own Learning and Performance Level 3 Part A

Part A

YOU NEED TO KNOW HOW TO:

Set targets and plan how these will be met

■ make sure you understand:
  – how planning and reviewing your learning, and effective time-management, can help to improve your performance
  – what is meant by constructive feedback and reflection
■ seek information from appropriate people on ways to achieve what you want to do and identify factors (financial, legal, health and safety, available opportunities, your motivation, other commitments) that might affect your plans
■ develop an individual learning plan that includes:
  – targets that say exactly what you want to achieve, how you will prove you have met them and clear action points, using the information you have obtained from appropriate people
  – how you will manage your time to meet deadlines, use support, review your progress and overcome possible difficulties.

Take responsibility for your learning and using your plan

■ manage your time effectively, by prioritising action, dealing with any difficulties to meet your deadlines, and revising your plan to take into account any changed circumstances
■ choose different ways of learning (learning styles) and decide on the methods that best suit you (eg pictures/diagrams, reading/talking/writing, listening to others, watching or doing something practical)
■ work independently at times, so you take responsibility for organising your learning, choosing resources and adapting your approach to meet new demands
■ reflect on your own progress by taking time out to think about what is going well and less well and how you might improve your performance, seeking constructive feedback and relevant support to help you meet targets.

Review progress and establish evidence of achievements

■ provide information on:
  – how you have used your learning from one task to meet the demands of another task
  – how the quality of the outcome was affected by factors such as your motivation, the learning situation, your choice of learning style(s) and methods, the quality of feedback and support
■ identify targets you have met and gather evidence to support what you say about your achievements
■ consult appropriate people to agree ways to further improve your performance.

Improving own learning and performance: level 3

When inspectors are evaluating how well learners are 'guided and supported' they like to see them using the internet to research higher education, future careers, etc. This would be an excellent opportunity for learners to use ICT in a truly relevant way. Learners could access a website and use the e-mail link to make an enquiry.

The individual learning plan could include a simple Gantt-style chart, showing action points, deadlines and review dates.

An electronically produced plan can readily be amended, with different versions being saved and annotated to show how the learner had responded to changed circumstances. Alternatively, a 'track changes' facility could be used.

E-mail or even text messaging could be used to seek feedback. Also, the learner could keep a 'learning log' on-screen.

ICT could provide opportunities for learners to study independently, eg to conduct their own search for and use ICT-based distance learning materials.

As well as using this idea with staff in training sessions, as suggested on page 10, you could ask learners to identify where, when and how they could exploit ICT in relation to Part A of the key skills standards.

Working in groups

Learners are often asked to work together on curriculum projects. ICT provides many opportunities for collaborative working and opens up the possibility of addressing more than one key skill within the same activity, as well as creating opportunities for informal peer assessment.

Learners can keep in touch with each other via e-mail and/or e-groups. If learners have access to ICT equipment at home, they can continue their collaboration outside the working day. This is particularly useful for learners following part-time or block courses, who may not see each other for quite long periods.

'As part of Working with Others, a group of five learners agreed the structure of a questionnaire on rural transport. Each learner collected 20 responses from people in their own villages, entered their results into a pre-prepared database and sent copies of the data (as an e-mail attachment) to each of the others. Once combined, the data provided a much more detailed database than each of the individuals would have been able to create on their own in the time available, and formed the basis for further study.'

Key skills tutor

ICT also facilitates the combination of a series of items into a larger document or report. For example, a group of learners working on a newsletter could each prepare their own part of the document (eg one working on the sports section, one producing a report on learner facilities, one compiling a puzzle page, etc). Having word-processed and exchanged the individual sections, each learner could then further develop the 'raw material' and produce their own version of the finished newsletter. In this case, early collaboration by using a common piece of software enables each learner to work with a richer collection of source material. It also provides an opportunity for comparison and discussion about the different end products. Depending on how it was managed, this type of activity could provide evidence for Working with Others, Communication and Information and Communication Technology.

Assessment for learning

'Assessment for learning is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there.'

QCA Assessment Reform Group

Assessment for learning (AfL; sometimes known as formative assessment, by contrast with summative assessment) is attracting a great deal of attention. The QCA website www.qca.org.uk has a substantial section about AfL including advice, guidance and a range of downloadable materials and other links.

Feedback

A crucial element of successful AfL is providing learners with positive feedback. ICT can play a valuable role in this in any context but is particularly appropriate in key skills, where learners are encouraged to become independent, capable of asking for and responding to advice.

Using ICT at the simplest level, learners can give a draft of their work to a tutor on disk or by e-mail, perhaps with some self-assessment or requests for guidance. The tutor can give positive feedback in their response. The learner could include notes and questions to the tutor simply by using a different colour font. The tutor can respond using a third colour. This process also gives the learner practice in, and possibly evidence for, the 'exchanging information' aspects of the Information and Communication Technology key skill.

A slightly more elaborate approach would be for the learner to use a 'track changes' facility when revising and developing a document. This facility enables the final document to be printed showing all the changes that have been made, which would provide evidence of proofreading and redrafting.

A more sophisticated approach makes use of the wealth of editing, review and comment facilities that are available in word-processing, spreadsheet and presentation applications. While some learners may find some of these facilities difficult to use, they should be within the range of those working towards the Information and Communication Technology key skill at Levels 2 and 3 and will provide opportunities to practise developing information.

Peer assessment and online discussions

Some centres have set up discussion groups and chat rooms for learners to exchange ideas, comment on each other's work and generally provide mutual advice and support, perhaps in the context of a VLE (see page 19). Teachers and trainers may wish to take part in these discussions or simply to keep a watching brief to see which learners are making best use of this opportunity. A college in Wales has used printouts of such discussions as portfolio evidence of Working with Others.

Using ICT-based learning resources

There are many ICT-based resources available to support the teaching and learning of key skills and *Skills for Life*. These can be obtained from a number of national agencies and commercial companies. Appendix 2 has a list of websites that include key skills resources. Many of these can be accessed via the 'Resources' section of the KSSP website www.keyskillssupport.net.

Many centres have found that using e-learning materials of this kind helps to ensure differentiation in the teaching and learning of key skills. Learners can focus on their own areas of weakness, as demonstrated by diagnostic assessment, at their own speed, in their own time, and in confidence, especially where they feel uncomfortable with revealing what they may regard as their inadequacies.

The National Learning Network has developed a wide range of resources and learning objects for online learning of the underpinning skills for Communication and Application of Number and for all three of the wider key skills. These include sound and moving images and can be found at www.nln.ac.uk/materials, together with documentation for teachers and trainers and outline lesson plans. Some are mapped to particular programmes.

It is not appropriate for this guide to recommend specific resources, particularly from commercial providers. However, it is essential that you review any material before purchase or use. Teachers and trainers need to ensure that learners access materials that are of good quality and have content that is appropriate to key skills and to the level and age of the learner.

It is also important to check with your technical support staff before purchasing any resource, to confirm that the resource is compatible with your equipment or network. They will also be able to advise you on the technical issues involved.

When reviewing key skills resources you may find it helpful to refer to the checklists in Appendix 1. These are equally valid for the evaluation of commercial resources or for materials produced in-house.

> **Teaching staff in colleges who would like to develop learning resources in-house may wish to consider staff development via Strand 1 of the Ferl Practitioners' Programme (FPP). This is a modular programme with five 'strands', each aimed at a different group of staff. For more information, see www.ferl.becta.org.uk.**

> **Digital cameras are particularly effective for capturing evidence of work-in-progress and images which can be used in portfolios for Communication, Information and Communication Technology, and the wider key skills.**

Resources from the Key Skills Support Programme

The KSSP website has a range of materials and resources to support the teaching and learning of key skills.

The website has two areas: one for schools, colleges, adult and community learning and learners in secure environments, and the other for work-based training providers. Colleagues from all centres will find useful resources in both areas of the site.

The work-based arm of the KSSP has developed a website called Key-line (www.key-line.org.uk) which provides a growing number of self-study modules designed for trainers to develop their professional skills. Each module – available from the members' area of the website – covers a different aspect of delivering key skills. All the modules include practical activities and an assignment to help the trainee put into practice what has been learned. The modules are closely linked to the National Standards for Learning and Development and are free of charge to work-based practitioners in England.

The website includes a section called 'Shared resources'. This is a searchable database of resources that have been produced by centres, some as part of KSSP development or research projects and some contributed by centres that are willing to share their practice with others. These resources can be downloaded in pdf or Word formats and can be adapted for use in your centre.

There is also a section called 'Effective practice'. This includes a growing collection of ideas and suggestions for delivering key skills, also contributed by centres.

The publications listed at the beginning of this guide are aimed at teachers and trainers. They have been distributed free of charge to schools and colleges in England and can also be downloaded from the website www.keyskillssupport.net.

Don't forget the KSSP website designed for learners 'Key Skills Trainer' (www.keyskills4u.com). This includes online learning materials for Communication, Application of Number and ICT, as well as tests, quizzes and video clips. See pages 22–23 for details.

Preparing learners for the key skills tests

When preparing for the key skills tests in Communication, Application of Number and Information and Communication Technology, learners should practise taking tests. Many examples of questions are available from, for example:

- the QCA website at www.qca.org.uk/6445_6480.html
- many awarding bodies' websites
- the CD-ROM publication *Key skills practice tests* (available from the Key Skills Support Programme)
- the BBC, at www.bbc.co.uk/keyskills
- the KSSP learners' website www.keyskills4u.com.

The QCA/DfES 'Item Bank' (www.itembank.org.uk) holds a very large number of key skills and *Skills for Life* questions. These can be used to create tests to help learners practise for the tests in literacy/Communication, numeracy/ Application of Number and ICT at Levels 1 and 2.

Item Bank enables the learner to recreate past papers to help with revision and simulating test conditions. It also allows learners to create their own test papers on particular topics (or groups of topics) if they have specific areas they want to test. Learners can choose the number of questions and the time limit they have.

Once the test is created, the learner can choose how it is delivered. The test can be taken online on-screen there and then, it can be delivered to an email address to take at a later date, or it can be printed out on paper.

The Information and Communication Technology tests at Levels 3 and 4 are based on data sets which are made available on the QCA website well in advance of the test dates. You should download these and make them available to your learners so that they can become familiar with the data and can, therefore, concentrate on demonstrating their ICT skill in the test.

On-demand, on-screen, online

Many awarding bodies offer on-demand assessment for key skills. The on-demand system allows centres to offer the tests for Application of Number/adult numeracy, Communication/adult literacy and Information and Communication Technology at Levels 1 and 2, as required, outside the test dates scheduled by QCA. Using this system, centres can offer the tests as often as once a week.

In addition, a number of awarding bodies have developed systems for on-screen delivery of the tests. It has become clear that many candidates feel more comfortable taking the tests in this way; results are better than for the on-paper tests. An added advantage is that results can be given within 24 hours of a candidate sitting the test. Some awarding body systems provide instant feedback on results.

'QCA is committed to the development of on-screen testing of basic and key skills. We are currently exploring the development of enhanced, interactive versions of the tests and plan to pilot these in late 2005. In addition, we are working with awarding bodies to ensure that all candidates have the opportunity to take the tests in this way.'

QCA 2005

For more information about offering Level 1 and 2 tests on-demand, on-screen, or online, you should contact your awarding body.

'We downloaded the practice tests from the QCA website www.qca.org.uk and put them onto the school intranet. We found that, when the test dates were approaching, the learners began to panic; they used these sites a lot. Now we schedule mini-tests at regular times throughout the year. This has proved to be a successful way of identifying additional learning needs and preparing learners effectively for the tests.'

Key skills coordinator, school

Using a virtual learning environment (VLE)

There is fast-growing investment in VLEs in many centres. This guide can only outline some of the characteristics and the potential of VLEs. If you would like to know more, you could visit the website of organisations such as Becta at www.becta.org.uk/research or JISC (the Joint Information Systems Committee) at www.jisc.ac.uk.

The terms 'MLE' and 'VLE' are sometimes used interchangeably. However, an MLE (managed learning environment) is overarching and includes 'the whole range of systems and processes [of an organisation] that contribute directly or indirectly to learning and the management of that learning (including VLEs)' (JISC 2005).

For a brief but informative introduction to VLEs and MLEs, see JISC Briefing Paper no. 1 *What are VLEs and MLEs?*

The JISC website says that the principal functions of a complete VLE include:

- *enabling controlled access to curriculum that has been mapped to elements (or 'chunks') that can be separately assessed and recorded*

- *tracking student activity and achievement against these elements, using simple processes for course administration and student tracking that make it possible for tutors to define and set up a course with accompanying materials and activities to direct, guide and monitor learner progress*

- *supporting online learning, including access to learning resources, assessment and guidance. The learning resources may be self-developed, or professionally authored and purchased materials that can be imported and made available for use by learners*

- *enabling communication between the learner, the tutor and other learning support specialists to provide direct support and feedback for learners, as well as peer-group communications that build a sense of group identity and community of interest*

- *enabling links with other administrative systems, both in-house and externally.*

Source: www.jisc.ac.uk

Becta suggests that VLEs usually include some or all of the following features:

- communication tools such as e-mail, bulletin boards and chat rooms
- collaboration tools such as online forums, intranets, electronic diaries and calendars
- tools to create online content and courses
- tools for online assessment and marking
- integration with centre management information systems
- controlled access to curriculum resources
- learner access to content and communications from outside the centre.

Source: www.becta.org.uk/research

'Without any prompting from me the students started using the communication tools in the VLE to hold group meetings out of college time. They were clearly enjoying this way of learning and for me there was the added bonus of improved retention and achievement.'

Key skill tutor, FE college

Case study

'The college's policy emphasises relevant, high-quality key skills development and accreditation for all learners. The model of delivery is full integration into all AS programmes of study.

'We undertook a KSSP-funded development project, which aimed to:

- develop exemplar key skills portfolios for Communication, Application of Number and Information and Communication Technology in specific AS subjects
- implement a targeted programme of staff development
- develop a VLE site as a resource, support, and teaching tool for both staff and students.

'The college VLE site is proving to be effective in supporting both staff and learners, and will also serve a useful function in future staff training and in the dissemination of good practice throughout the college.

'The development of the key skills VLE site is ongoing. One of the things that we plan to do is to video student presentations and discussions (Communication Level 3) and digitise them onto the VLE site with commentaries on elements of good practice and explicit highlighting of presentation and discussion techniques. We believe that the VLE site will become the key instrument for sharing good practice relating to key skills throughout the college.'

Key skills coordinator, FE college

Copyright

Copyright law derives from the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act (1988) and relates to work published on CD or on the internet just as much as to printed and literary work. Failing to clear copyright can lead to legal action and the payment of damages. Basic copyright guidelines are available from the HMSO website at www.hmso.gov.uk.

Issues for centres

Centres that are considering producing their own teaching and learning materials, in any format, should make sure they are familiar with copyright law. Conversely, centres will wish to protect copyright in their own materials.

Key points include:

- a computer program in any format is copyright

- copying all or part of a copyright item onto the internet or an intranet without permission is an infringement of copyright

- a web server which does not itself contain any infringing material, but which has links to sites that do, may infringe copyright law.

Issues for learners

Learners should be reminded that everything that appears on paper, on CD, or on the internet is copyright. This means that the source of any material that is downloaded from CD or from the internet must be acknowledged in exactly the same way as if the source was printed material.

Plagiarism

Learners should understand the difference between plagiarism and the legitimate use of ideas and material that they have found during their research. Essentially, plagiarism is a matter of passing off ideas, images, data or text as if you had created them yourself when you have in fact copied them from someone else's work.

Some learners are particularly tempted to plagiarise from the internet but, if you are at all familiar with a learner's work, it is usually easy to spot a change of style. You may also be able to search the internet for a particular phrase or clause; this often turns up the site from which plagiarised material has been taken.

Accidental plagiarism can happen when a learner takes verbatim notes without recording the source. When they return to their notes later, the learner may genuinely believe that the material is in their own words.

Key Skills Trainer – www.keyskills4u.com

A blended e-learning package

Key Skills Trainer is a blended e-learning package developed by the Key Skills Support Programme and designed to help learners check, learn and apply their key skills. It covers Application of Number, Communication, and Information and Communication Technology at Levels 1 and 2. It can be accessed through the KSSP website www.keyskillssupport.net or directly from www.keyskills4u.com.

The package includes:

- a skills check
- key skills learning materials
- two games designed to develop learners' key skills:
  - The Symtel Files
  - The Serpent's Curse
- practice tests
- a short list of FAQs
- a glossary.

The entire package is addressed directly to the learner and includes audio and video cartoon content.

Key Skills Trainer aims to identify gaps in learning and to help learners build and develop the skills required in Part A of the key skills units. It will also help learners to prepare for the tests. The package does not focus on Part B.

> **The tasks in The Symtel Files and The Serpent's Curse are designed to develop learners' skills. They will not generate the evidence required for portfolios.**

Target audience

Key Skills Trainer is designed for learners aged 16–19, whether at school, college, the workplace (including those on apprenticeship programmes), or at home. Adults on *Skills for Life* programmes in literacy, numeracy and ICT will also find this a valuable resource.

Learners can use **Key Skills Trainer** with or without tutor support and in many contexts – as part of a key skills session (or other session with key skills content), in a learning resource centre, in a tutorial programme, at home, or in a work-based learning environment.

Additional integrated support is available for users who have audio or visual impairments.

How long does it take?

The whole package involves approximately 500 notional guided learning hours across Levels 1 and 2, as follows.

- Check your skills and learn: 430 notional guided learning hours.
- The Symtel Files: 60 hours of work-based tasks and game play.
- The Serpent's Curse: 10 hours of work-based tasks and game play.

However, the package is not intended to be used as a course where the learner starts at the beginning and works through. It is a bank of resources and tasks to dip into and use in different ways. For example, it will be valuable to learners who have had a specific skill weakness identified by initial or diagnostic testing, as it allows the user to select specific skills development exercises.

What is The Serpent's Curse?

The Serpent's Curse is a game designed to develop the learner's ICT skills. The game contains integrated tasks mapped to the key skills curriculum.

In the game, the learner is an ICT expert who has come to Egypt to join an archaeological dig team and to find out who stole the Serpent King's diamond. The dig's project leader, Sam Masterson, used to deal with this but he has disappeared in mysterious circumstances. The locals think it has got something to do with the Serpent's Curse.

Isabella Martinez, the temporary project leader, asks the learner to keep their eyes and ears open while they complete the tasks. The learner interacts with the dig employees, carrying out tasks mapped to the key skills standards, learning, building their skills and eventually finding out who stole the Serpent King's diamond.

The package is available online at www.keyskills4u.com or can be downloaded to your local network. Instructions are on www.keyskillssupport.net under the 'Resources' link. There is also a downloadable tutor guide.

What are The Symtel Files?

The Symtel Files is a whodunit virtual office game, enabling learners to apply key skills in a real-world situation. The game contains integrated tasks mapped to the key skills standards.

The game is set in a fictional mobile phone company called Symtel. Symtel aims to provide the latest mobile phone technology direct to the customer. They pride themselves on giving quality support and advice, both before and after sales. It is a customer-focused company, with a free customer helpline.

The learner plays the role of a private investigator who has been employed by Symtel to work undercover to identify an employee who has sold confidential information to a rival company.

Sharing procedures, formats and resources

'We had a poor inspection, during which it was noted that we used all sorts of different formats for assignments, learning plans, etc. As a result, the senior management recruited a Quality Manager who totally overhauled our paperwork systems. All our templates have been quality tested and are available on the network. We use a standard format for our schemes of work, which makes it easier for key skills and vocational staff to work together to plan course delivery and collaborate on developing assignments and activities.'

Learning support coordinator, agricultural college

Procedures

Signposting and mapping

'Signposting' is the process of identifying the opportunities for developing and/or assessing key skills that teachers and trainers will offer in the context of their programmes. For details, please see *Good practice guide: Developing and managing portfolios* and Section 3.5 of *Key skills resource manual*, both published by KSSP in printed formats and also available on the website www.keyskillssupport.net.

'Mapping' is the process whereby each individual learner, with help from a teacher or trainer, identifies how they will develop their skills and produce the evidence they need for their key skills portfolio, according to their own particular combination of subjects and options.

Signposting and mapping can be entirely paper-based but there are obvious advantages in using ICT. While some commercial packages are available, standard software packages can be used to develop a simple but efficient system.

'One of the most effective ways of identifying how best to develop the Information and Communication Technology key skill through programmes and of boosting the confidence of non-specialist staff in their use of ICT has been joint assignment and activity planning sessions. In these sessions the ICT specialists have worked alongside main programme staff.

'Although our original aim was to integrate the Information and Communication Technology key skill into main programmes, we found that staff were recognising how they could use ICT to benefit their subject and key skill teaching more widely. Once the staff had the time to share ideas and discuss the issues there was a lot of "thinking outside the box" and we now have many more staff switched on to the use of ICT in their teaching, and to key skills. Unsurprisingly, the learners have responded with enthusiasm and we are finding that they are putting forward new ideas all the time.'

Key skills coordinator, comprehensive school

Tracking and recording

'Tracking' is the process of checking that learners, both individually and collectively, are successfully following their 'map' so that progress and achievement can be recorded. As with signposting and mapping, this can be a paper-based exercise but there are obvious advantages in using ICT.

'Our Head of ICT has designed a database which we use as follows:

- *Each teacher has identified where their scheme of work can support either the development or the assessment of key skills (each teacher has undertaken to "deliver" one appropriate key skill).*

- *We "log" our learners into this system and we can then see where they can acquire their key skills, or spot any gaps that we need to fill.'*

Key skills coordinator,
sixth form college

'Management of key skills is a formal part of the personal tutorial process. We use Improving Own Learning and Performance to provide the structure for this.

'The personal tutors help their learners identify opportunities to develop their key skills and to produce portfolio evidence.

'When learners wish to present work for summative assessment for key skills, they agree this with their personal tutor and submit the work to their subject tutor, who assesses it. The subject tutor then uses the database to record whether the work meets the key skills assessment criteria.'

Key skills coordinator,
sixth form college

Many key skills awarding bodies offer ICT-based packages for tracking and recording key skills achievements. Some of these also cover signposting and mapping. You should check with your awarding body to see what it offers and whether you are required to use its software.

Developing or buying a software package

KSSP produced a report, *Software for tracking key skill evidence*, in January 2004. This can be downloaded from the KSSP website. While some aspects of this report are out of date, it includes guidance on choosing or developing a software package.

The report suggests that using ICT to track key skills evidence can improve efficiency by:

- releasing managers' time
- giving accurate and useful information
- offering additional information which would not be readily available through a paper-based system
- increasing learners' ownership and motivation
- providing a uniform, coherent system for key skills across the centre
- providing information which can be fed into other information systems (eg management, examinations, achievement, awarding bodies).

The report points out that such a system will not necessarily result in an overall saving of time in terms of personnel hours, inputting and maintenance, nor will it result in a paperless system. However, it should reduce the amount of paper and provide more accurate and up-to-date information.

If you are thinking about developing or purchasing a key skills tracking system, you should consider the following questions.

- **How will the system contribute to the management of key skills across your centre including signposting, mapping, tracking, recording, internal verification and the provision of data to the Standards Moderator?**
- **Which key skills are supported, at what levels, and in what depth (eg Part B components? Part B assessment criteria?)**
- **How far can the system be tailored to the particular needs of your centre?**
- **How far does the system enable you to design your own reports?**
- **How will you ensure that the data on the system is accurate?**
- **Who will have access to the system?**
- **Who will be able to amend the data?**
- **How will confidentiality be ensured?**
- **What additional useful information could the system store and make accessible?**
- **How will the system give learners the opportunity to take increased ownership of their key skills development and assessment?**
- **How far can the system be effectively linked to other information systems?**
- **How is year-on-year tracking managed?**
- **What staff training will be needed?**
- **What are the hardware requirements?**
- **What level of support does the supplier offer?**

'The Standards Moderator is happy with the information held on our database.

'Although the database doesn't automatically link in with our other information systems, it is relatively easy to transfer the information as and when required.'

Key skills coordinator,
sixth form college

Formats

While small centres may not find it worthwhile to use ICT for their procedures, it is always helpful both to staff and to learners if you can develop standard forms and templates for the paperwork associated with delivering key skills. The main advantages are to help ensure that:

- crucial information is always included in forms and reports

- good-quality standards are maintained

- staff and learners immediately recognise and understand what is required on any particular form

- learners working across different programmes use materials with a consistent layout

- teachers and trainers can more readily share and adapt materials.

Centres have developed standard forms and templates for:

- schemes of work

- lesson plans

- individual learning plans

- signposting

- mapping and tracking

- assessing learners' work (both formative feedback and summative assessment)

- learners' self-assessment

- assignment briefings

- assignment front sheets

- portfolio front sheets.

Important note

You should always check whether your awarding body has produced any of these forms and, if so, whether you are required to use them and how far you can customise them for use in your centre.

Sharing resources

ICT makes it easier to share all kinds of resources, both in-house and through external links. The sharing process can range from relatively 'low-tech' (eg via a floppy disk or CD), through the use of e-mail attachments (to individuals or to groups), to relatively 'hi-tech' (eg a dedicated area of an intranet or a VLE). Don't forget that, if you want to make a web page available to learners but feel that they may not be able to access it online, it is possible to make it available offline. Your ICT specialist will be able to advise you about this.

All the materials that you develop or that you take from another source, including electronic sources, are protected by copyright. Please see page 21 for details.

The 'Effective practice' area of the KSSP website depends on receiving materials from centres who are willing to share their ideas, innovative or otherwise, with others. Please submit your materials via the KSSP website (www.keyskillssupport.net) and clicking on 'Effective practice ideas'.

Ferl, the information service for all staff working in post-compulsory education, has a similar facility through its web-based information service 'Contribute' and 'Current favourites' at www.ferl.becta.org.uk.

Case study

A rural comprehensive school used the funding from a KSSP development project to develop its intranet to support teaching and learning of the Information and Communication Technology key skill.

'We were aware from our audit and review of existing resources that we already had access to a lot of material that would be useful for Information and Communication Technology key skills development. However, the materials were in a variety of formats and locations, were not easily accessible and were not organised in a way that made it easy to find and use them. Our aim was to ensure that staff and learners would have quick, easy and effective access to the resources.

'When designing the key skills area on our existing intranet, we decided that it must:

- *integrate with the existing intranet/internet area*
- *be simple to maintain and update*
- *have links to external resources via the internet*
- *be easy to navigate*
- *be organised by programme categories*
- *be visually appealing*
- *encourage self-supported study*
- *be accessible by either the internet or the intranet, so that learners can use it even if the internet connection is down.*

'The **development process** was to:

■ decide on the appearance and design of the pages, including a logo

■ at the same time, devise a sitemap, to ensure that there would be a clear vision of how the area was to be organised.

'Then, for our own existing resources, we:

■ assembled the relevant resources

■ converted them to a suitable format

■ used Part A of the key skill standards to identify gaps in our resources and generated or located suitable materials to fill them

■ trialled the materials on a sub-web before going "live"

■ when satisfied, put them onto the intranet.

'For the **external resources**, we included links to:

■ general information about key skills on the QCA website www.qca.org.uk

■ a range of resources to support skills development

■ resources to support test preparation, including the sample tests from the QCA website.

'Now, learners undertake an **initial assessment**. Once their learning needs have been identified, they can locate the resources that will enable them to develop their skills. They can work on particular topic areas and at a speed that is right for them. The area helps differentiate by study programme, key skill, level and pace.

'**What have we gained?**

■ a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning

■ learners with a more positive approach; they see the area as an attractive resource dedicated specifically to their work for the Information and Communication Technology key skill

■ a raised profile for the Information and CommunicationTechnology key skill

■ the staff have found that the area helps them to plan and deliver the key skill

■ the information and guidance included is helping to develop staff skills

■ an excellent start, which we will continue to expand and develop.

'Our **advice to other centres** is:

■ start with an audit of your existing resources – you will probably be pleasantly surprised at what you already have

■ do not underestimate how long it will take to put your resources into the correct format for the intranet area

■ make sure you produce a sitemap right at the start so that you have a clear vision of the organisation of the site

■ take it one step at a time – break the tasks down into manageable chunks.'

Making the most of your ICT resources

The quantity, quality and accessibility of ICT equipment varies greatly from one centre to another. The level of ICT literacy of learners and staff is also variable. How far you can exploit the potential advantages of ICT will depend on the level of resources available to you, both human and material.

You will need to consider:

■ what ICT hardware and software is needed to support key skills teaching and learning

■ what ICT hardware and software is needed to support the processes associated with key skills delivery, from initial assessment through to final certification

■ how to ensure that equipment is accessible to staff and to learners

■ how learners are supported in their use of ICT for developing key skills

■ how staff are supported in their use of ICT for teaching and assessing key skills

■ how to ensure that security is maintained and that copyright regulations are complied with.

Material resources – hardware and software

There is a tendency for staff and learners to assume that the most up-to-date equipment (ie the most expensive) is necessarily the best for every ICT task. This is not the case. 'Fitness for purpose' is the crucial criterion. If the task is to produce an all-text document, then a stand-alone machine with a reasonably up-to-date version of any word-processing application, plus access to a printer, is all that is needed.

Even quite limited resources can contribute to the teaching and learning of key skills. Not every machine has to be of the highest specification and software does not have to be the latest version. A mix of equipment will make the budget go further.

Auditing

The first step is to find out what resources are available and where they are located. If it has not already been done, you will need to carry out an audit of both hardware and software, and communicate the results to staff and to learners. Encourage them to use equipment that is fit for their purpose at the time, rather than 'blocking' access to higher-level facilities which they don't need.

Questions to check on audit

■ **How many workstations do we have?**

■ **Where is each one located?**

■ **What are their specifications?**

■ **What applications are available on each one?**

■ **What is each location's availability – fully timetabled, open access, etc?**

■ **What technical support is available?**

■ **What are the arrangements for reporting faults?**

Coding equipment

Some centres have found it helpful to 'code' equipment to show what each machine can do. For example:

Main applications

Code	Specification
B	Basic use – limited word-processing and spreadsheet activities; access to clipart libraries and electronic encyclopaedias
A	Advanced use – advanced word-processing, presentation, spreadsheet and database applications; access to clipart libraries and electronic encyclopaedias
I	Internet linked – internet browsing and research facilities

Specialist applications

Code	Specification
CA	Creative Arts – image manipulation and image creation software
PA	Performing Arts – music notation and music composition software
SC	Science – astronomy software

Alternatively, you may wish to code machines according to which applications they support (eg PP for PowerPoint), or whether they have a CD or DVD writer/rewriter.

Each machine can then be labelled with a combination of codes according to its specification (eg B – I shows that that the machine has basic software and is linked to the internet; A – I – CA shows that the machine has advanced software, is linked to the internet and has image creation software). The site and code of each workstation can then be collated into an information sheet that is distributed to staff and learners, perhaps at induction. You might even set up an online searchable database (eg 'Which workstation has a word-processing facility but doesn't have internet access?').

This will enable staff and learners to locate workstations that are appropriate to their specific needs at the time, and enable timetable planners to situate classes in rooms with appropriate ICT facilities.

'We need to balance the learning needs of our learners with the budgetary "realities". If we have inadequate ICT resources, we disadvantage our learners who want and need to use ICT as a learning and research tool. However, if we provide state-of-the-art ICT resources that are underused we will face serious questions about how we are allocating our budget. We also need to ensure that we are purchasing "fit for purpose" hardware; not every workstation has to be of the same or the highest specification. It is vital that we have ready access to technical support staff who can keep the equipment up and running, as well as teaching staff who can exploit the potential of ICT to enhance their teaching and the students' learning.'

ICT manager, FE college

Supporting learners in using ICT for key skills learning

In principle, there is nothing special or different about how learners use ICT to learn key skills, as opposed to any other area of the curriculum.

However, there are two important differences:

1 learners may be aiming to achieve the Information and Communication Technology key skill qualification

2 learners should be helped to recognise that using ICT is an essential skill in all areas of their lives – learning, work, leisure. They should learn that ICT really is a key skill, not just another subject to be learned.

This makes it even more important that all key skills staff, including ICT specialists, ensure that learners are given the support they need to make the most of ICT in developing their key skills.

'ICT is a useful stimulus for disaffected/disadvantaged learners. Although it can be expensive to provide, there is an expectation among learners that ICT is a standard part of the delivery of our learning packages.'

Course tutor, FE college

For learners to make the best use of your ICT facilities they will need:

- equipment close to their main study point – eg in or near their classroom, workshop or training area

- available hardware (no queues; arrangements made for timed access)

- technical support to help with queries and faults

- learning support appropriate to ICT and learning needs

- stable and reliable systems.

Your arrangements for induction (see *Initial and diagnostic assessment* on page 3) should include assessment of learners' ICT skills.

- **Does our induction and/or initial assessment process assess each learners' ICT skills?**

- **Are learners' ICT strengths and weaknesses identified and communicated to those that need to know?**

- **Do we respond effectively to ensure that all our learners have their ICT skills developed to the level they need to succeed in their key skills and other learning programmes?**

- **Does our induction process include an introduction to our ICT facilities? How do we check that this is effective?**

Supporting staff in using ICT for key skills teaching

The same point that was made about learners' use of ICT applies to staff, ie all staff need to recognise that ICT is a key skill in their own work as well as something that learners need to learn about. If learners gain the impression that ICT is a matter only for ICT specialists (or, worse, only for ICT key skills specialists) then a central message about key skills will be lost and learners will be seriously disadvantaged.

Despite the substantial investment in ICT training for teachers and trainers in recent years, the levels of ICT skills and knowledge in any centre are likely to range from 'absolute zero' to 'serious techie'. It is not the responsibility of the key skills team to organise general ICT training for staff but it is in your interests to support and encourage colleagues to take advantage of what is on offer.

KSSP runs regular training days, free of charge, in the delivery of the Information and Communication Technology key skill. Details of forthcoming sessions can be found on the website www.keyskillssupport.net.

Encouraging staff to achieve the Information and Communication Technology key skill

Often, the best way to understand the difficulties learners face in achieving a qualification is to aim for it yourself. This is just as true of key skills as for any other qualification.

'We invited our staff to undertake their own Information and Communication Technology key skill at either Level 2 or 3. Not everyone has been equally enthusiastic but the results have been successful. Staff have developed their ICT skills to a level where they can more fully exploit the potential for ICT to enhance teaching and learning. They have also developed a real understanding of what building a portfolio of evidence involves.'

Key skills coordinator, school

Checklist for evaluating ICT-based learning resources

Learning design

Does the resource:	Yes/No	Comments
clearly state the learning objectives (eg which key skill/s at which level/s)?		
support the development of underpinning skills and knowledge, or the production of portfolio evidence, or both?		
have a level of demand that is consistent with the demands of the key skills level to which it relates?		
have a consistent approach to layout and interaction?		
enable learners to 'pick up where they left off' without having to repeat earlier steps?		
through its design, include all learners who could achieve the key skill, including those with a learning difficulty or disability?		
enable the learner to keep track of their progress and development?		
take the learner from the known to the new in appropriately sized steps?		
help the learner to reflect on, review and digest new learning and not just regurgitate facts?		
demonstrate how new knowledge and skills can be transferred and applied to real problems?		
include material that accommodates a variety of learning styles?		
give useful and supportive feedback to the learner?		
use language appropriate to the level of the key skill?		
include media (eg video clips, sound files, animations) appropriate to the learning objectives (ie not used gratuitously)?		
include appropriate help facilities for the learner?		

Note

These questions are adapted from the Institute of IT Training's *Standards for technology based training materials* (www.iitt.org.uk) and from the National Learning Network publication *Paving the way to excellence in e-learning* (2004). This can be downloaded from www.becta.org.uk/corporate/publications.

Is the resource:	**Yes/No**	**Comments**
accurate, valid and up to date in relation to the key skills standards?		
stimulating and motivating for learners? (eg is it relevant to the learners' main programmes and/or interests?)		
easy to navigate?		
genuinely interactive, with activities that require a response from the learners that keeps them involved?		
user-friendly? Can it be used reasonably intuitively?		

Support issues	**Yes/No**	**Comments**
Is there documentation to support effective use of the resource?		
Does use of the resource require key skills and/or ICT expertise?		
For independent learning materials, is the level of tutor support required clearly stated?		

Technical issues	**Yes/No**	**Comments**
Are the materials free of software bugs and broken links?		
Do all the pages display properly at all the supported screen resolutions, and/or at the specified minimum bandwidth?		
Where delivered as a web application, does the programme run without error on all supported brands and versions of browsers and browser add-ons such as plug-ins, and on all supported types of computers, at the minimum supported specification?		
Are the materials compatible with Internet Explorer and Netscape browsers version 4 and above?		

Cost	**Yes/No**	**Comments**
What is the up-front cost of the software?		
What is the cost of the licence (if any)? (You should avoid any materials that have run-time software licences.)		
What is the cost of any additional hardware that you will need?		
What are the running costs?		

Websites

A straightforward internet search on the phrase 'key skills', using Google or a similar search engine, produces a large number of results, of which perhaps the first 20 are relevant to this guide. Inevitably, some of these sites are a little dated and others, especially from universities, use the phrase 'key skills' more loosely than simply in relation to the QCA key skills. However, they still contain teaching and learning materials that can be adapted for use with the current QCA key skills.

> **All the relevant government agencies and the awarding bodies have websites, whose addresses can be found in Appendix 4.**

The website www.keyskillssupport.net describes the work of the Key Skills Support Programme. It was completely redesigned at the end of 2005. The site includes a very wide range of advice, guidance and resources to support the delivery of key skills in schools, colleges, work-based provision, adult and community learning, pupil referral units, young offender institutions and prisons. Special features include:

■ a 'Shared resources' database that includes a wide range of teaching and learning materials developed in centres

■ an 'Effective practice' database that includes a growing collection of ideas for delivering key skills that have been contributed by centres

■ a module for Continuing Professional Development which can be delivered in and by centres and carries credits at Level 4 for those who achieve the qualification.

All these resources can be downloaded and adapted for use in your own centre.

The Programme's website for learners 'Key Skills Trainer' at www.keyskills4u.com includes initial and diagnostic tests, learning materials and sample tests. See pages 22–23.

Key skills learning materials can also be found on the following websites:

■ National Learning Network
www.nln.ac.uk

■ National Curriculum website
www.nc.uk.net

■ Ferl website
www.ferl.becta.org.uk
(this includes many links to other sites)

■ Learning for Work
(KSSP for work-based learning providers)
www.key-line.org.uk

At the time of writing (November 2005), other websites that contain key skills learning materials include:

www.bbc.co.uk/keyskills
www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise
www.direct-ed.com
www.fenc.org.uk
www.keyskillsincontext.co.uk
www.keyskillsonline.co.uk
www.londonmet.ac.uk
www.mindtools.com
www.move-on.org.uk
www.open.ac.uk/keyskills
www.shu.ac.uk/keytokey/index.htm
www.support4learning.org.uk/
    education/key_skills.cfm
www.sykeyskills.co.uk

Materials to support the five core skills that are delivered in Scotland can be adapted for use in England and can be found at www.ltsscotland.org.uk/coreskills.

> **It goes without saying that you should check regularly for new sites, and also whether the materials on the sites you use are up to date with the 2004 key skills standards or need to be adapted.**

Appendix 3
Glossary

Note

The following abbreviations are used in this glossary.

Guidance; Comm, AoN, ICT
for *The key skills qualifications standards and guidance: communication, application of number, and information and communication technology; Levels 1–4 2004*.

Guidance; WWO, IOLP, PS
for *The wider key skills qualifications standards and guidance: working with others, improving own learning and performance, and problem solving; Levels 1–4 2004*.

Key skills policy and practice
for *Key skills policy and practice: your questions answered*.

Accuracy

a *In Communication*

Accuracy in written communication 'includes the ability to punctuate, spell and apply the rules of grammar with accuracy at increasing levels of sophistication.' Part A of the standards prescribes the skills required at each level. At Level 1, 'one or two' spelling mistakes may be tolerated, 'as long as these are not repeated in the second document'. The same applies at Levels 2 and 3, but only 'providing meaning is still clear'. However, fitness for purpose is an important factor. (Guidance; Comm, AoN, ICT page 29).

At all levels, learners must demonstrate the skill of proofreading, whether of hand-written or word-processed material.

b *In Application of Number*

The requirements for accuracy vary between the levels. For details on accuracy and checking, see Guidance; Comm, AoN, ICT: Level 1 pages 55–56, Level 2 page 60, Level 3 page 66.

Evidence of checking for accuracy is required at all levels. At Levels 1–3 'where there is a series of calculations of the same type, evidence of checking at least the first few of each type should be recorded for assessment purposes. For the remainder, accurate results should confirm that effective checking has taken place.' (Guidance; Comm, AoN, ICT pages 55–56, 60, 66).

Adult literacy and adult numeracy
QCA adopts the Basic Skills Agency's definition of adult literacy and adult numeracy skills as 'the ability to read, write and speak in English/Welsh and to use mathematics at a level necessary to function at work and in society in general.' (Guidance; Comm, AoN, ICT page 4). The standards for adult literacy and adult numeracy at Levels 1 and 2 (which are designed for learners aged 16+) are aligned to the standards for Communication and Application of Number key skills, respectively, at these levels. The key skills tests at Levels 1 and 2 in Communication and Application of Number also act as the tests for adult literacy and numeracy. Candidates who gain the adult literacy and adult numeracy certificates by passing these tests can progress to achieving the full key skills qualifications if they wish. In order to meet the full requirements of the internal assessment component of the key skills qualifications, candidates have to develop a suitable portfolio of evidence. (Guidance; Comm, AoN, ICT page 4). See also 'Basic skills' and '*Skills for Life*'.

Advanced
Advanced level qualifications are at Level 3 of the National Qualifications Framework and include AS levels, A-levels, BTEC and OCR Nationals, NVQs at Level 3 and key skills at Level 3.

Assessment

a *Formative assessment*

This is part of the feedback that a teacher or trainer provides during a learning programme to help the learner reflect on and review their progress. It is often referred to as 'assessment for learning' in contrast to 'assessment of learning' or summative assessment. It has no direct effect on the learner's final result.

'Assessment for Learning is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there.' (Assessment Reform Group, 2002).

For more information, see www.qca.org.uk/7659.html.

b *Summative assessment*

This is the assessment which determines whether a candidate has achieved a qualification and, if appropriate, with what grade. See also 'Internal assessment' and 'External assessment'.

Assessor
The person responsible for the initial judgment of a candidate's performance against defined standards expressed as assessment criteria or mark schemes.

Awarding body
There are 16 awarding bodies offering key skills qualifications, including the unitary awarding bodies in England (AQA, Edexcel, OCR), WJEC in Wales and CCEA in Northern Ireland. They are listed on the QCA website www.qca.org.uk/603.html under 'Contacts'.

Basic skills
The term '*Skills for Life*' has largely replaced the term 'basic skills' and refers to a set of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills and associated curricula and qualifications designed for use with adult learners. These are available at Entry level and at Levels 1 and 2 of the National Qualifications Framework. '*Skills for Life*' also includes ESOL (English for speakers of other languages). See also 'Adult literacy and adult numeracy' and '*Skills for Life*'.

Chart
For the purpose of the Application of Number key skill, it is not necessary to distinguish between 'chart' and 'graph'. QCA defines these as 'a representation of the relationship between variables such as categories and frequency data, or x and y coordinates. Examples include: pie or bar chart, histogram, pictogram, frequency polygon, frequency chart or diagram, single or multiple line graph, scatter graph with or without line of best fit.' (Guidance; Comm, AoN, ICT page 51). See also 'Diagram'.

Complex

For the Communication key skill at Level 3, complex subjects include those that deal with abstract or sensitive issues, and lines of enquiry dependent on clear reasoning. The subject matter, as well as having a number of strands, must also be challenging to the individual candidate in terms of the ideas it presents. (Guidance; Comm, AoN, ICT pages 43–44). At Level 3, the candidate must write two different types of documents, each one giving different information about complex subjects.

For Application of Number at Level 3, the activity from which evidence is taken must be complex, requiring candidates to consider carefully the nature and sequence of tasks when planning how to obtain and use information to suit their purpose. (Guidance; Comm, AoN, ICT page 68).

Diagnostic assessment
In the context of key skills, diagnostic assessment is the process which helps to identify the skill areas in which learners are already competent and those in which they are in need of further development. See also 'Initial assessment'.

Diagram
QCA defines a diagram as any graphical method of representation other than a chart or graph where scale is or is not a factor. (Guidance; Comm, AoN, ICT page 51). Examples include: scale drawing, plan or workshop drawing, circuit drawing, 3D representation, flow chart, critical path or network diagram, and organisation chart. See also 'Chart'.

e-Learning
Any form of learning that is delivered electronically. This includes both CD-ROM and online content, whether delivered standalone, or via an intranet, a VLE (virtual learning environment) or the internet. The term 'e-learning' is becoming more widely used than 'ILT' (information and learning technology).

Entry level
Entry level qualifications recognise basic knowledge and skills and the ability to apply learning in everyday situations under direct guidance and supervision. Key skills are not available at Entry level.

Exemption
Key skills candidates can claim exemption from all or part of particular key skills qualifications (most commonly the test) for up to three years from the date of the award of specific accredited proxy qualifications. See also 'Proxy qualifications'.

Expectation
The Secretary of State wishes to see key skill programmes offered to all post-16 learners. Where learners have not already achieved A*–C grades in GCSE English, Maths or Information and Communication Technology, their programmes should lead to the formal acquisition of the relevant key skills qualification/s at Level 2. Where young people are starting on advanced-level programmes with the aim of pursuing a professional or higher-level qualification post-19, then institutions should support them in gaining at least one relevant key skills qualification at Level 3. (*Key skills policy and practice* page 7).

Extended period
For the first three key skills at Level 4, an extended period of time is about three months.

External assessment

In England and Northern Ireland, the external assessment for the first three key skills takes the form of a test which samples from the whole standard at the appropriate level. The tests are externally set, taken under supervised conditions and externally marked. (Guidance; Comm, AoN, ICT page 14). See also 'Tests' and 'Exemption'.

From September 2004, candidates for the wider key skills qualifications are required to give satisfactory answers to questions asked by an assessor (eg tutor, trainer, supervisor).

The assessor will select these questions (the 'Part A questions') from a list supplied by the awarding body, in order to confirm candidates' knowledge and understanding of areas of Part A where the assessor cannot infer this from the portfolio of evidence. This will mean that some candidates are asked more questions than others. Where a candidate has clearly covered the whole of Part A in their portfolio, no questions need be asked. Candidates' answers should be recorded in note form, or in an audio or video format. These notes or records should be available to standards moderators/verifiers if required. Guidance on the effective use of Part A questions will be provided by the awarding body.

Fitness for purpose
Key skills portfolio evidence should be appropriate for the wider context and purpose for which it was produced. See also 'Purposeful'.

Foundation
Foundation level qualifications are at Level 1 of the National Qualifications Framework and include GCSEs at grades D to G, NVQs at Level 1 and key skills at Level 1.

Funding
Brief guidance on the funding of key skills and basic skills provision in schools, colleges and work-based training can be found in *Key skills policy and practice*.

Grading
There are no grades for key skills.

Graph
See 'Chart'.

Image

Information and Communication Technology and Communication both require the use of images. Examples include models, plans, sketches, diagrams, pictures, graphs and charts. Whatever form the image takes, it must be fit for purpose and must aid understanding of the written or spoken text.

At Levels 1 and 2 of Communication, candidates must use at least one image **either** to obtain information **or** to convey information in a discussion **or** a talk **or** a document they write. At Level 3, candidates must use an image or other support material in their presentation and at least once more – either to obtain information or to convey information in a document they write.

At Levels 1, 2 and 3 of Information and Communication Technology, candidates must use at least one example of an image (as well as examples of text and of number).

A table of text or numbers does not count as an image for Information and Communication Technology or for Communication. (Guidance; Comm, AoN, ICT page 27).

Independent assessment
All qualifications in the National Qualifications Framework must include a form of independent assessment or an alternative approved by the regulatory authorities (QCA, ACCAC, CCEA). For key skills, this requirement is met by external assessment (qv).

Information
Where the standard for the key skill Information and Communication Technology, at every level, refers to 'information', this can take the form of text and/or images and/or numbers.

Initial assessment
In the context of key skills, initial assessment is the process of identifying the appropriate level at which a learner should start their key skills learning programme. This may vary from one skill to another. See also 'Diagnostic assessment'.

Inspection
Brief guidance on Ofsted and ALI inspection of key skills provision in schools, colleges and work-based training can be found in *Key skills policy and practice*.

Intermediate
Intermediate level qualifications are at Level 2 of the National Qualifications Framework and include GCSE at grades A*–C, NVQs at Level 2 and key skills at Level 2.

Internal assessment
Internal assessment of key skills is organised by the centre. It focuses on the requirements of Part B of the standards, is based on a portfolio of evidence, is internally assessed, internally verified, and externally moderated. (Guidance; Comm, AoN, ICT page 14).

Internal verification
This is the process through which an identified person in a centre ensures that the standards of assessment in the centre are consistent both across the centre and with national standards. There are no formal qualification requirements for internal verifiers but the awarding bodies provide training and internal verifiers should aim to achieve the appropriate Verifier units that replaced the D units in 2003. An internal verifier is often referred to as an 'IV'. Internal verification is sometimes referred to as ' internal moderation' and sometimes as 'internal standardisation'. Whatever name is used, the key point is that this is a process of quality assurance that is carried out by staff of the centre. See also 'Standards moderation'.

Interpersonal skills
Candidates for the wider key skills are encouraged to develop and apply their interpersonal skills. eg skills in responding appropriately to others, offering support and encouragement, communicating their ideas and needs, accepting constructive feedback, helping to resolve conflict. (Guidance; WWO, IOLP, PS pages 20, 40). See also 'Process skills'.

National Qualifications Framework
The National Qualifications Framework was created by the 1997 Education Act and includes all external qualifications that are accredited by QCA (ACCAC in Wales and CCEA in Northern Ireland), plus degrees and other higher-level qualifications which are regulated by the universities and QAA. A revised version of the NQF came into effect on 1 September 2004. See www.qca.org.uk/493.html.

Objectives
The purposes for working together that are shared by the people involved in an activity for Working with Others. They may be set by a tutor, supervisor or project leader, or by members of the group or team, depending on the level. (Guidance; WWO, IOLP, PS pages 22, 28, 34).

Portfolio
Key skills candidates have to organise and present evidence of how they have met the requirements of the standards, normally in a portfolio. This is usually a file of hard copy but may be an electronically based storage-and-retrieval system. (Guidance; Comm, AoN, ICT page 14).

Problem
There is a problem when there is a need to bridge a gap between a current situation and a desired situation. (Guidance; WWO, IOLP, PS pages 60–61, 65, 71).

Process skills
All the wider key skills standards include process skills, eg skills in planning, target-setting, organising and carrying out activities and reviewing progress. These skills are the main focus of assessment. (Guidance; WWO, IOLP, PS pages 20, 40). See also 'Interpersonal skills'.

Proxy qualifications
Proxy qualifications are qualifications that have been agreed to assess the same knowledge and skills as aspects of the key skills qualifications. Because of this overlap, key skills candidates can claim exemption from all or part of particular key skills qualifications (most commonly the test) for up to three years from the date of the award of the specific proxy qualification. For a current list of proxy qualifications, see the QCA website www.qca.org.uk/603.html. See also 'Relaxation'.

Purposeful
Key skills evidence must be generated in the context of a task or activity that satisfies some purpose in the learner's work or leisure. Evidence that is collected simply to satisfy the requirements of the key skills portfolio is not purposeful and does not meet the assessment requirement. See also 'Fitness for purpose'.

Qualification
All six key skills are qualifications and are included in the National Qualifications Framework (qv).

Relaxation

The relaxation ruling allows Apprentices and Advanced Apprentices who started on or after 1 September 2001, and who have achieved a grade A*–C GCSE in English and/or Mathematics to complete their frameworks without being required to take the Level 2 Communication and/or Application of Number key skills qualifications. This also applies to those who have achieved a GCE A/AS level at grade A–E in English or Mathematics. Achievement of the GCSE/A/AS level must be no longer than five years before the date of registration on the Apprenticeship framework. This five-year limit took effect on 1 August 2004 and replaced the previous three year limit. See *Key skills policy and practice* paragraph 9.5.

This is distinct from the use of proxy qualifications (qv).

Skills for Life

'*Skills for Life*', the government's strategy for improving adult literacy and numeracy skills, was launched in January 2001, largely in response to the Moser report *A fresh start* (1999). The term '*Skills for Life*' is preferred to the term 'basic skills' and includes key skills, adult literacy, adult numeracy, adult ICT, ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) and, for LSC funding purposes, GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics. See the QCA websites www.qca.org.uk/7423.html and www.qca.org.uk/596.html.

Specification

The complete description – including mandatory and optional aspects – of the content, the assessment arrangements and the performance requirements for a qualification. In the past, this has often been referred to as a 'syllabus'. See also 'Standards'.

Standards

From September 2004, the key skills units (specifications) are referred to as the 'key skills standards'.

Standards moderation

The process through which internal assessment/verification is monitored by an awarding body to ensure that it is valid, reliable, fair and consistent with the required national standards. Each centre will be allocated a standards moderator for key skills. This process is sometimes referred to as 'external verification' or 'external moderation'. Whatever name is used, the key point is that this is a process of quality assurance that is carried out by the awarding body. Some awarding bodies are piloting a system of 'approved centres' where standards moderation will involve a 'lighter touch', subject to regular checks of the centre's arrangements for internal verification. See also 'Internal verification'.

Straightforward

a Straightforward subjects and materials are those that candidates commonly meet in the context in which they are working or studying. The content is put across in a direct way so that candidates can easily identify the information they need for their task. In Communication, sentence structures are simple and candidates will be familiar with the vocabulary.

b Straightforward tasks can be broken down into easily managed steps and involve familiar resources and situations. (Guidance; WWO, IOLP, PS page 23).

Targets

Targets are the steps for helping to achieve personal, learning and/or career goals. Targets should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound (SMART) (Guidance; WWO, IOLP, PS pages 41, 48).

Tests

In England and Northern Ireland, assessment of the first three key skills includes a written test. Details can be found on the QCA website www.qca.org.uk/603.html. There are no written tests for the wider key skills. Increasingly, tests at Levels 1 and 2 are available on-screen and on-demand. The tests for Communication and for Application of Number at Levels 1 and 2 also act as the tests for adult literacy and adult numeracy at these levels. (Guidance; Comm, AoN, ICT page 26). See also 'External assessment'.

Transferable

Key skills are transferable. This means simply that, once a learner has developed a skill for the purpose of one context, they should be able to identify when and how to apply the same skill for another purpose in another context.

Witness statement

A statement signed by a competent person which confirms that the candidate has completed the activity in question at the required standard. A witness statement should not be the sole form of evidence. Assessors are responsible for judging the validity of witness statements. They are most likely to be used in Communication (Guidance; Comm, AoN, ICT pages 33, 37, 43 and 49), Information and Communication Technology (Guidance; Comm, AoN, ICT pages 80 and 84–85) and in the wider key skills.

Note

Copies of the following publications can be ordered from:
QCA Publications
PO Box 99
Sudbury
Suffolk CO10 2SN
Tel 01787 884444
Fax 01787 312950

The key skills qualifications standards and guidance: communication, application of number, and information and communication technology
(ref. QCA/04/1272, price £10)

The wider key skills qualifications standards and guidance: working with others, improving own learning and performance, and problem solving
(ref. QCA/04/1294, price £10)

Copies of *Key skills policy and practice: your questions answered* can be ordered free of charge from:
Key Skills Policy Team
Room E3c
Moorfoot
Sheffield S1 4PQ
Tel 0114 259 3759
key.skills@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

All three publications can be downloaded from the QCA website www.qca.org.uk/603.html.

Appendix 4

Useful addresses

ACCAC
(Qualifications, Curriculum and
Assessment Authority for Wales)
Castle Buildings
Womanby Street
Cardiff CF10 1SX
Tel 029 2037 5400
www.ccw.org.uk

ALI
(Adult Learning Inspectorate)
Spring Place
Coventry Business Park
Herald Avenue
Coventry CV5 6UD
Tel 0870 240 7744
www.ali.gov.uk

AQA
(Assessment and
Qualifications Alliance)
Devas Street
Manchester M15 6EX
Tel 0161 953 1180
Publications 0161 953 1170
www.aqa.org.uk

ASDAN
(Award Scheme Development
and Accreditation Network)
Wainbrook House
Hudds Vale Road
St George
Bristol BS5 7HY
Tel 0117 941 1126
Publications 0117 941 1448
www.asdan.co.uk

Becta
(British Educational
Communications and
Technology Agency)
Milburn Hill Road
Science Park
Coventry CV4 7JJ
Tel 024 7641 6994
www.becta.org.uk

BSA
(Basic Skills Agency)
Commonwealth House
1–19 New Oxford Street
London WC1A 1NU
Tel 020 7405 4017
Publications 0870 600 2400
www.basic-skills.co.uk

CCEA
(Northern Ireland Council
for the Curriculum, Examinations
and Assessment)
Clarendon Dock
29 Clarendon Road
Belfast BT1 3BG
Tel 028 9026 1200
Publications 028 9026 1228
www.ccea.org.uk

CfBT
(Centre for British Teachers)
60 Queens Road
Reading RG1 4BS
Tel 0118 912 1000
www.cfbt.com

City & Guilds
1 Giltspur Street
London EC1A 9DD
Tel 020 7294 2468
www.city-and-guilds.co.uk

DfES
(Department for
Education and Skills)
Key Skills Policy Team
Room E3c
Moorfoot
Sheffield S1 4PQ
Tel 0114 259 3759
Publications 0845 602 2260
www.dfes.gov.uk/keyskills

Edexcel
One90 High Holborn
London WC1V 7BH
Tel 0870 240 9800
Publications 01623 467467
www.edexcel.org.uk

Ferl
See Becta
www.ferl.becta.org.uk

Key Skills Support Programme
(LSDA)
Regent Arcade House
19–25 Argyll Street
London W1F 7LS
Helpline 0870 872 8081
kssp@LSDA.org.uk
www.keyskillssupport.net

Key Skills Support Programme
(Learning for Work)
The Cottage Office
Eightlands Road
Dewsbury
West Yorkshire WF13 2PF
Helpline 0845 602 3386
Publications 0117 971 9583
www.keyskillssupport.net

LSC
(Learning and Skills Council)
Cheylesmore House
Quinton Road
Coventry CV1 2WT
Tel 0845 019 4170
www.lsc.gov.uk

LSDA
(Learning and Skills
Development Agency)
Regent Arcade House
19–25 Argyll Street
London W1F 7LS
Tel 020 7297 9000
Information Services 020 7297 9144
enquiries@LSDA.org.uk
www.LSDA.org.uk

National Learning Network
See Becta
www.nln.ac.uk

OCR
(Oxford Cambridge
and RSA Examinations)
Coventry Office
Westwood Way
Coventry CV4 8JQ
Tel 024 7647 0033
Publications 0870 870 6622
www.ocr.org.uk

Ofsted
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE
Tel 020 7421 6800
Publications 0700 263 7833
www.ofsted.gov.uk

QCA
(Qualifications and
Curriculum Authority)
83 Piccadilly
London W1J 8QA
Tel 020 7509 5555
Publications 01787 884444
www.qca.org.uk/keyskills

UCAS
(Universities and Colleges
Admissions Service)
Rosehill
New Barn Lane
Cheltenham GL52 3LZ
Tel 01242 222444
Publications 01242 544903
www.ucas.ac.uk

What is the Key Skills Support Programme?

This support programme for centres with post-16 provision is funded by the DfES and the European Social Fund. The Programme provides trainers, tutors and managers with information, advice, materials and training.

What are the priorities of the Programme?

The priorities of the Programme are to:

- raise awareness and understanding of key skills
- produce materials on teaching and learning key skills
- provide practical advice, solutions, exemplars and models
- provide training at conferences, workshops, courses and regional sessions.

The Programme is run by a consortium led by LSDA with partners including AoC, BTL e-learning, CDELL and CfBT.

What services are available?

A dedicated Key Skills Helpline is available on 0870 872 8081 every weekday to answer questions on key skills and provide information updates. The website on www.keyskillssupport.net provides news and information on key skills developments, resources, publications, consultancy support, training and conferences, contacts and links. Newsletters are published each term and sent to all maintained schools with post-16 provision and colleges in England.

There are links with the awarding bodies and with the parallel support programme for trainers in work-based learning, managed by Learning for Work (Helpline 0845 602 3386).

How can I find out more?

- You can contact the Key Skills Helpline tel 0870 872 8081
- or e-mail kssp@LSDA.org.uk
- or visit the website www.keyskillssupport.net or the student website on www.keyskills4u.com.

Key Skills
SUPPORT PROGRAMME

department for
education and skills

learning and skills development agency

EUROPEAN UNION
European Social Fund