

# **ESSENTIAL SKILLS GOOD PRACTICE:**

## **THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

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## **ESSENTIAL SKILLS GOOD PRACTICE: THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

### **Introduction**

The guidelines represent examples of good practice and aim to ensure consistency and understanding by tutors of the assessment process across different sectors and providers of Essential Skills.

*According to the recent Chief Inspector's Report 2004-06, "inspection continues to highlight the need for teachers to ... use assessment more skilfully to track and support learners' progress". (page 18 Executive Summary).\**

Assessment in its different forms plays a key role in the learning process. It includes the initial assessment process as well as formative and summative assessment, and is integral to the learner's learning journey.

Within the assessment process a range of terms will be used, for example, an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) or Action-based Activity (ABA). It is important that all of these terms are clearly defined and their role within the assessment process articulated. A glossary of terms is included at the end of the guidance materials that provides a detailed definition of the terms commonly used by Essential Skills tutors.

### **Who are the guidelines for?**

The guidelines are to help the managers and tutors of Essential Skills to understand the assessment process, and the inter-relationships between the different forms of assessment during the learning journey.

### **What is the purpose of the document?**

To help every organisation to deliver Essential Skills by helping them to:

- review its current initial assessment processes with a view to improvement;
- raise awareness that the initial assessment process may vary according to the type of learner;
- establish robust initial assessment processes within its Essential Skills provision;
- understand the positioning and inter-relationship between the different types of assessment;
- understand the importance of formative assessment in the learning journey; and

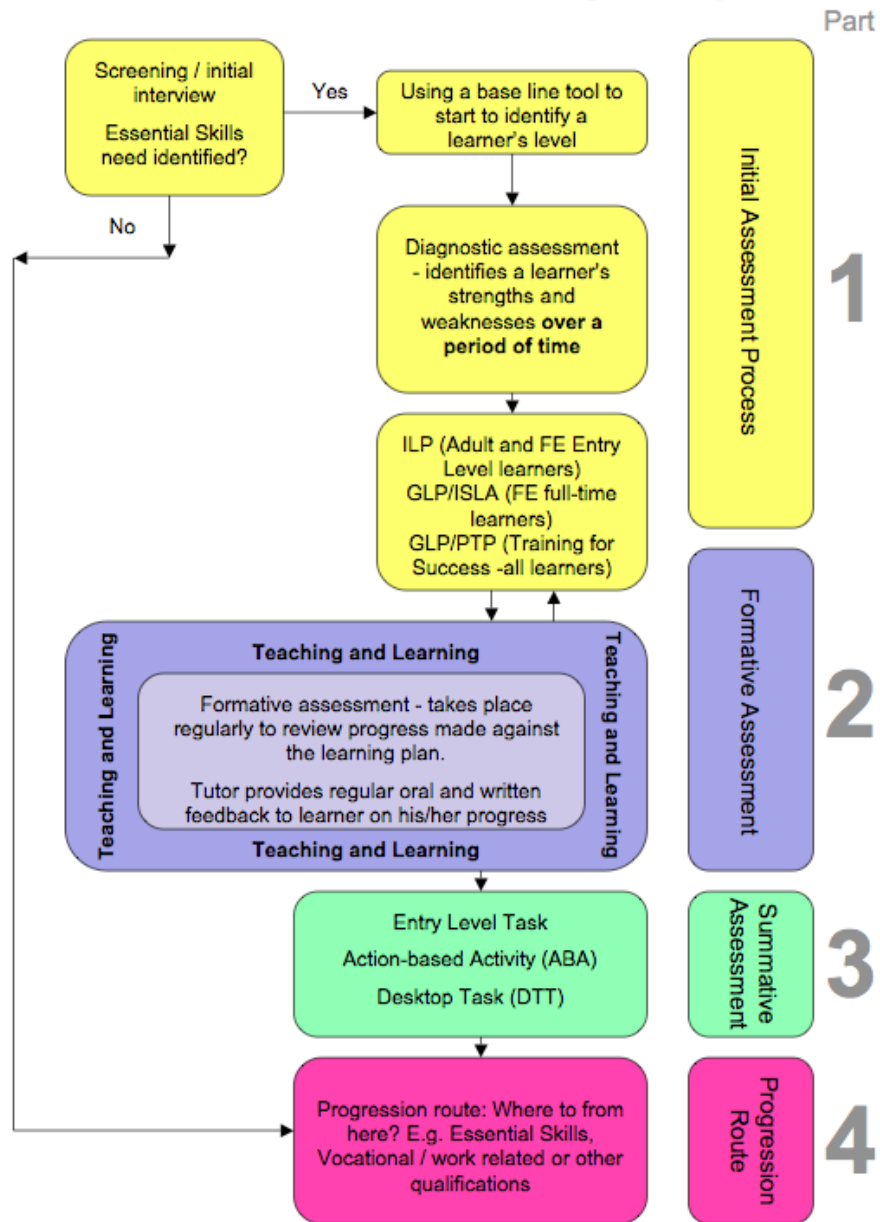
- be aware of the role of the progression route in the learning journey.

*\* Within the Chief Inspector's report the term teacher is used generically to include lecturers and tutors.*

### **The Learning Journey**

To assist tutors in their understanding of the assessment process, and the relationship between the different types of assessment, the flow chart below illustrates the learning journey from the start of the initial assessment process, through the formative and summative assessment stage through to the progression route.

## Assessment within the Learning Journey



### The Learning Journey

#### PART 1

#### The Initial Assessment Process

What is meant by the term “an initial assessment process”?

Confusion has arisen about what is meant by an initial assessment process. First and foremost it is a process, it is not just the administration of a single test such as one of the commercially produced assessment tools (often labelled initial assessment test). The initial assessment process may include the appropriate administration of such an assessment tool to provide a baseline level. On its own, however, such a test provides insufficient data for a tutor to determine accurately a learner's strengths and weaknesses, and therefore the most appropriate level of Essential Skills qualification for the learner to work towards.

### **Why do learners need to undergo an initial assessment process?**

- The initial assessment process serves a number of crucial functions. By determining the learner's skills mastery/competence and deficits against the National Standards the initial assessment process serves to:
  - (i) identify if the learner has an Essential Skills need;
  - (ii) establish an agreed starting point for the learner;
  - (iii) help determine the most appropriate level of Essential Skills qualification for the learner to achieve;
  - (iv) inform the preparation and development of a teaching and learning programme; and
  - (v) establish contexts for the development of the Essential Skills which are meaningful and motivational to the learner.
- If the initial assessment is not seen as a process by both the tutor and the learner, this may result in a learner working on a programme that fails to meet his/her needs and non achievement.
- The initial assessment process, however, is not the sole responsibility of the Essential Skills tutor. The learner must take responsibility for assuring that the results reflect his/her competence. The importance of the initial assessment process should be explained to learners, in particular to the 16-19 age group, by both the Essential Skills tutor and by the programme/vocational tutors where the learners are on a vocational course.
- The purpose of the initial assessment process and the inclusion of Essential Skills as an integral part of the learning programme should be emphasised by the programme and vocational tutors during induction. The Essential Skills tutor's presence should be visible during induction. Establishing links with the programme and vocational course team are necessary, not only for the initial

assessment process but for the inclusion of appropriate contexts and materials to develop the learners' Essential Skills.

- The initial assessment process may vary for different types of learners, for example, the Adult learner in an FE college, Community or Workplace setting; the Further Education (FE) full-time 16-19 learner and the trainee on the Training for Success Programme. Appendices A, B and C provide specific detail on how the initial assessment process should be administered for each of these different types of learners. However, irrespective of the context, the initial assessment process is completed for a definite purpose, in that it allows the tutor to make a professional judgement on the current competence of the learner, and to plan a teaching and learning programme appropriate to his/her needs.

## **PART 2**

### **Formative Assessment (Teaching and Learning)**

- The teaching and learning programme developed by a tutor, based on the findings of the initial assessment process, will be most effective where a tutor uses good formative assessment to support the learners and monitor progress.
- The tutor should plan an appropriate programme of work that allows the learners to develop and apply the skills that were identified as areas for improvement through the initial assessment process and on going formative assessment.
- Tutors are expected to build a programme of developmental learning based on the Adult Literacy and /or Adult Numeracy Core Curriculum that makes full use of the learners' social and personal interests, and in the case of the full-time Further Education and Training for Success learner their vocational programme.
- Literacy and numeracy skills are not developed in a vacuum. The tutor, therefore irrespective of the learning programme, should provide opportunities for the learners to develop and apply their skills using interesting and motivational contexts.
- In the case of the FE and Training for Success learners the tutor is developing the Essential Skills that will help the learners' retention, success and progression in their vocational/training programme. According to the *National Research and Development Council (NRDC)* "You wouldn't expect a maths teacher to teach plumbing" Nov 2006, learners who are helped to address their weaknesses in literacy and numeracy skills are more likely to complete and achieve their vocational qualification. For the adult learners, they are developing Essential Skills that they can apply in their everyday lives.

- At the end of the initial assessment process, and prior to the learner beginning the summative assessment, the tutor will provide opportunities for the learner to develop and apply his Essential Skills. During this teaching and learning time the tutor and learner, on an ongoing basis, will be carrying out/taking part in formative assessment activities to allow both the tutor and the learner to review progress made against the learning plan. Formative assessment is an important part of the learning process and feedback can be provided in both oral and written form for the learner.
- Research supports the view that good formative assessment will raise standards. However, currently tutors over focus on the assessment of learning (summative assessment) rather than assessment for learning (formative assessment). As a result they miss opportunities to use assessment to improve their learners' learning. Informal classroom assessment with constructive feedback to the learner will raise levels of attainment as it informs the learner how to make progress in his/her own further learning.
- There needs to be more focus by tutors on:
  - (i) the quality of work presented rather than the quantity and presentation, the giving of advice on how to improve the quality of the learner's work rather than just grading and marking;
  - (ii) knowing the learning needs of their learners;
  - (iii) the sharing with their learners the assessment objectives/goals/standards they are aiming for;
  - (iv) the involvement of the learners in decisions about their work rather than being passive recipients of the tutor's judgement of it;
  - (v) the planning of how and when to assess the learners' attainment when originally planning the work;
  - (vi) the use of a range of assessment techniques, for example, open questioning, setting tasks which require learners to use certain skills, talking to learners about their work, paired and group work, group work, and peer and self-assessment ; and
  - (vii) the use of a manageable system to record the progress of individual learners.
- Assessment is about supporting learning. Learners, particularly those low achievers in Essential Skills classes, too often see it as something which labels them and confirms their weaknesses and demoralises, rather than something that helps them to improve.



## **PART 3**

### **Summative Assessment**

- This is the final piece of assessment completed in the learning journey.
- The Essential Skills summative assessment process includes the completion of:
  - (i) the Entry Level Task ; or
  - (ii) the Action-based Activity (ABA) and Desktop Task (DTT) at Levels 1 and 2.
- The tutor should not begin the summative assessment until he or she has addressed the learner's weaknesses identified through the initial assessment process.
- The tutor should be confident that the learner, through formative assessment, has mastered the skills he/she must demonstrated independently in the ABA and the DTT before commencing this summative assessment process.
- The guidelines for summative assessment are clearly outlined in the guidance materials provided by the awarding bodies, available in both hard copy and from the awarding bodies' web sites.

## **PART 4**

### **The Progression Route**

- The progression route is the mechanism within an organisation that allows the learner to discuss his/her future aspirations. As a learner comes towards the end of his/her identified learning journey it is the responsibility of the organisation and/ or Essential Skills tutor to take time to discuss with the learner the possible progression route he or she may wish to select. This should take the form of an informal interview where the learner has the opportunity to discuss with the tutor what his aspirations are for the future.
- For some learners this may be progression within the range of Essential Skills qualifications. If this is the case, the discussion should include how to enrol in a class that offers the appropriate progression level within the organisation or with another provider. It is the organisation's responsibility to have the necessary

information to hand on the provision within its own organisation, as well as provision by other local providers.

- Where the learner wishes to progress away from Essential Skills the tutor may decide it is appropriate to set up an interview with the college's Careers Adviser, or to make the learner aware of organisations that can provide information on appropriate courses. For the adult learner, for example, the Educational and Guidance Service (EGSA) or the Department for Employment and Learning Careers Service.
- Where learners are required to contact outside organisations the tutor should confirm that the learner is aware of the organisation's phone number. Tutors should also check at a later date that the learner has made an appointment. Where the learner is particularly reticent about contacting another organisation then the tutor should volunteer to ring the organisation and make an appointment.
- It is the responsibility of providers of Essential Skills to record the progression of their learners. This includes not only the learners' progression within Essential Skills but also beyond.

## **Conclusion**

Assessment is integral to the learning journey. The purpose of the initial assessment process is to identify need, the formative assessment is to support learning and monitor progress, and the summative assessment is to achieve accreditation through an awarding body. Towards the end of the period of learning the tutor should begin to explore the possible progression route for the learner, either in terms of a further qualification in English or mathematics or in another curriculum/learning or work area.

## **Appendix A**

### **The Initial Assessment Process for an Adult Learner within a Further Education, Community or Workplace Setting**

For the adult learner the initial assessment process will include:

- (i) an initial interview;
- (ii) a base line tool (preferably completed on paper); and
- (iii) a diagnostic assessment.

#### **The Initial Interview**

The interviewer should:

- (i) put the learner at ease by asking some general questions about his/her previous learning experience, life and work, and future plans;
- (ii) give the learner a chance to ask some questions; and
- (iii) provide the tutor with sufficient information to enable them to select tasks for the rest of the initial assessment process that are appropriate to the learner.

#### **Requirements for the Tutor Completing the Interview**

- The tutor carrying out the interview should have received some training/guidance in the interview process, as successful interviewing of a prospective Essential Skills learner needs to be dealt with sensitively. The tutor needs to be able to:
  - (i) put the learner at ease;
  - (ii) listen sensitively;
  - (ii) know when to prompt and when to wait for a response;
  - (iv) explore the learner's aspirations;
  - (iv) know what learning opportunities are available in the organisation; and
  - (vi) gauge how much information the learner can cope with at this stage.

- Information from the initial interview should be recorded in a standardised format and forwarded to the class tutor.

### **After the Interview**

- Based on the findings of the initial interview the learner should be placed in a class according to his/her preferred time and/or the appropriate level. In best practice classes should comprise of no more than two adjacent levels, for example, Entry Level 3 and Level, or Level1 and Level 2. Where Entry Level and Level 1 and 2 learners are in the same group the tutor needs to be supported by volunteer tutor/s, who have received appropriate training, and/or the numbers within the class should be capped to allow the tutor to meet the needs of the learners.
- During the first class the tutor will begin the remainder of the initial assessment process. This may include a base line tool to help establish a level but more importantly the diagnostic assessment. The latter will take place over a number of weeks using a range of materials and scenarios that are of interest to the learner. Tutors should bear in mind that interactive computer based assessment tasks may not be suitable for adult learners. It is important that tutors ascertain if the learner has any basic ICT skills before administering this type of assessment.
- Where possible Essential Skills tutors should be involved in cross marking/moderation and the sharing of evidence on how judgements are made, and should be part of the standardisation process. For new and inexperienced tutors, who are less confident at working at different levels, this is an important exercise in developing their confidence in completing the initial assessment process and making judgements on a learner's attained level. It will also help them in marking the summative assessment tasks.
- The adult learner should be fully informed of the purpose of the initial assessment process. Both oral and written feedback should be provided so they are able to understand how the tutor has come to a decision regarding the level of accreditation to be targeted. Learners often underestimate their skills, and positive feedback can enhance their self-confidence. Learners need privacy when receiving feedback as they may be sensitive about assessment issues.
- Following the initial assessment process the tutor in conjunction with the learner will draw up an Individual Learning Plan (ILP), irrespective of the level of the learner.
- There is no agreed format for the ILP, however, it will take into account the results of the initial assessment process, and include:

- (i) assessed and targeted level;
  - (ii) learner's background and past learning experiences;
  - (iii) learner's learning style;
  - (v) details of the class and tutor name;
  - (v) short and long term targets;
  - (vi) reasons for inclusion of identified skills;
  - (vii) resources required to bring the plan into action;
  - (viii) review dates;
  - (ix) a section for the tutor to review and record progress with the learner to include the learner's comments;
  - (x) end of course review and progression route; and
  - (xi) accreditation achieved.
- The summative assessment process should not begin until the tutor is confident through formative assessment that the learner has mastered the skills he/she must demonstrate in the ABA and independently in the DTT.

## **Appendix B**

### **The Initial Assessment Process for a 16-19 Student on a Full-time Further Education (FE) Programme.**

For the full-time FE student the initial assessment (IA) process will include:

- (i) a screening of his/her current highest level of English and mathematics qualifications;
- (ii) the use of an initial assessment base line tool; and
- (iii) the use of diagnostic assessment.

#### **The Screening and Use of Initial Assessment Tool**

- (i) and (ii) may take place during induction week, and it is the responsibility of the vocational lecturer to inform the student of its importance as part of the initial assessment process.
- For those students for whom the screening process has identified they have already achieved a level 2 qualification in English/Communication and/or maths/Application of Number, then they will not normally progress to stages (ii) and (iii) of the IA process.
- Some colleges, however, choose to use an initial assessment tool for all students to help them identify learning support needs.
- During induction the Essential Skills lecturer's presence should be visible to the student to place Essential Skills at the centre of the student's learning programme. (During the enrolment process the college's recruitment and entitlement policy re English and mathematics qualifications to be achieved during the student's programme of study should already been made known to the learner).
- Identification of an Essential Skills need should also be the responsibility of the vocational/course lecturer, who during the vocational programme may identify weaknesses in aspects of literacy and numeracy that will need to be addressed if the student is to be successfully retained on the vocational programme. This intervention may require support in specific topics, for example, report writing, presentation skills, data handling or algebra for engineers rather than a full Essential Skills course.

## After the Screening and Use of Initial Assessment Tool

- As a result of the findings of the screening and initial assessment base line tool those students who are placed in an Essential Skills class should undergo a diagnostic assessment. This is designed to provide a detailed assessment of a student's skills and abilities against the requirements set out in the national standards. This should be completed by the Essential Skills lecturer over a period of time.
- Diagnostic assessment tasks are available commercially or can be downloaded (or requested) free. Many literacy diagnostic assessment tools, however, do not assess (or adequately assess) writing. Therefore, for literacy one of the tasks **must** include a piece of free writing. Most students perform at a lower level in writing than in reading or speaking and listening. Consequently, the level at which a student can perform in writing would normally be the better indicator of attainment, to help ascertain the right Essential Skills qualification level for that student. The topic/s for the piece of free writing should be of sufficient interest to the students, that they are able to produce a piece of writing of an appropriate length that allows the lecturer to confidently make a judgement. To encourage students in their writing they can be provided with prompts around the subject of the piece of written work.
- In the case of numeracy, where online diagnostic assessment tools have been used, it is good practice to include some paper-based activities. These will allow the lecturer to assess the nature of errors and explore the thinking behind the error. For example, an error in a question relating to area may actually be due to an incorrect recall of multiplication tables, or a misconception in place value when multiplying rather than a misconception of area.
- Packs of diagnostic assessment materials at **different levels** can be prepared by the Essential Skills team and the appropriate level of materials given to the student. Where possible paper based materials should be contextualised to NI. The lecturer should give the learner diagnostic assessment materials at a level determined by the evidence gathered up to that point in the initial assessment process. The literacy diagnostic assessment materials should include :
  - (i) a piece of free writing (free writing task assessment checklist provided by LSDA attached- Appendix E);
  - (ii) extracting information from a number of texts; and
  - (iii) identifying errors in a piece of text to include verb and subject agreement, spelling and punctuation errors.
- All of the above should be appropriate to the level of the Adult Core

Curricula. The outcomes of this assessment, however, may indicate that the student requires further diagnostic assessment tasks at a lower or higher level to enable the lecturer to make a more refined judgement. Throughout the IA process the student should be made aware of the purpose of each part of the process.

- Where possible Essential Skills lecturers should be involved in cross marking/moderation and the sharing of evidence on how judgements are made, and this should form part of the standardisation process. For new and inexperienced lecturers, who are less confident at working at different levels, this is an important exercise in developing their confidence in completing the initial assessment process and making judgements on a student's attained level. It will also help them later in marking the summative assessment tasks.
- The findings of the initial assessment process should be fed back to the student individually and confidentially. Managing this process can be difficult. However, when there are large number of students, individual interviews can be arranged during class time whilst the other students are given work to complete, or at another agreed time. Students need privacy when receiving feedback as they may be sensitive about assessment issues. It is important that students are made aware of the results of the initial assessment process, and how the decision regarding their target qualification level has been arrived at.
- The outcomes from the diagnostic assessment will be used to ascertain the correct Essential Skills qualification level and they are also used as the basis for the development of a student's Essential Skills individual learning plan (ILP) for an Entry level learner and to complete a group learning plan (GLP) for learners at Levels 1 and 2.
- The findings from the initial assessment process should be fed into the individual student learner agreement (ISLA), or its proposed replacement, alongside the other elements of the vocational programme. Thus providing visibility for the learner and vocational course lecturer of the Essential Skills needs of the student, and places them at the centre of the learning programme.
- It is the responsibility of the Essential Skills lecturer to communicate the results of the initial assessment process to the vocational lecturer, to assist the latter in actively promoting the development and consolidation of the learner's Essential Skills.
- The GLP should not cover more than a term's work approximately 12 weeks and should be reviewed at this time.



## **Appendix C**

### **The Initial Assessment Process for a Trainee on the Training for Success Programme**

- The initial assessment process for a trainee will include:
  - (i) a screening of his/her current highest level of English and mathematics qualification;
  - (ii) the use of an initial assessment base line tool; and
  - (iii) the use of diagnostic assessment.

#### **The Screening and Use of Initial Assessment Tool**

- Point (i) and (ii) may take place during induction week, and it is the responsibility of the course/vocational tutor to emphasise its importance as part of the initial assessment process.
- For those trainees for whom the screening process identifies have already achieved a level 2 qualification in English/Communication and/or maths/Application of Number then they will not progress to stages (ii) and (iii) of the IA process.
- During induction the Essential Skills tutor's presence should be visible to the trainee, to place Essential Skills at the centre of the trainee's learning programme in both the Jobready and the Apprenticeship programmes.
- For those trainees on an Apprenticeship programme the vocational tutor will emphasise the importance of the achievement of the Essential Skills qualifications in terms of achievement of the full National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Framework.

#### **After the Screening and Use of Initial Assessment Tool**

- For those trainees who are identified with an Essential Skills need, as a result of the screening process and the use of an initial assessment tool, it is the responsibility of the Essential Skills tutor to carry out a diagnostic assessment of each trainee. This is designed to provide a detailed assessment of a trainee's skills and abilities against the requirements set out in the national standards and should be completed by the Essential Skills tutor over a period of time.
- The diagnostic assessment may include one of the commercially or freely available assessment tools for literacy or numeracy. Many literacy diagnostic assessment tools, however, do not assess (or adequately assess) writing. Therefore, a piece of

free writing must be included. The topic for the piece of free writing should be sufficiently **interesting** to the trainee that they are able to produce a piece of writing of an appropriate length that will allow the tutor to confidently make a judgement. To encourage learners in their writing they can be provided with prompts around the subject of the piece of written work.

- In the case of numeracy, where online diagnostic assessment tools have been used, it is good practice to include some paper-based activities. These will allow the tutor to assess the nature of errors and explore the thinking behind the error. For example, an error in a question relating to area may actually be due to an incorrect recall of multiplication tables, or a misconception in place value when multiplying rather than a misconception of area.
- Most trainees perform at a lower level in writing than in reading or speaking and listening. Consequently the level at which a trainee can perform in writing would normally be the better indicator of attainment, to help ascertain the right Essential Skills qualification level for that trainee.
- Diagnostic assessment tasks are available commercially or can be downloaded (or requested) free. However, packs of diagnostic assessment materials at **different levels** can be prepared by the Essential Skills team and the appropriate level of materials given to the trainee. Where possible paper based materials should be contextualised to NI. The tutor should give the trainee diagnostic assessment materials at a level determined by the evidence gathered up to that point. The literacy diagnostic assessment materials should include:
  - (i) a piece of free writing ( free writing task assessment checklist provided by LSDA attached –Appendix E);
  - (ii) extracting information from a number of texts; and
  - (iii) identifying errors in a piece of text to include verb and subject agreement, spelling and punctuation errors.
- All of the above should be appropriate to the level of the Adult Core Curricula. The outcomes of this assessment may indicate that the trainee requires further diagnostic assessment tasks at a lower or higher level to enable the tutor to make a more refined judgement. Throughout the initial assessment process the trainee should be made aware of the purpose of each part of the process.
- Where possible, Essential Skills tutors should be involved in cross marking/moderation. The sharing of evidence on how judgements are made should be part of the standardisation process. For new and inexperienced tutors, who are less confident at working at different levels, this is an important exercise in developing their confidence in completing the initial assessment process and

making judgements on a trainee's attained level. It will also help them in marking the summative assessment tasks. In smaller Supplier Organisations where there is only one Essential Skills tutor this may not be possible.

- The findings of the initial assessment process should be fed back confidentially and individually to the trainee. Managing this process can be difficult, however, when there are a large number of trainees in one class individual interviews can be arranged during class time whilst the other trainees are given work to complete, or at another agreed time in agreement with the programme/vocational tutor. Trainees need privacy when receiving feedback as they may be sensitive about assessment issues. It is important that trainees are made aware of the results of the initial assessment process, and how the decision regarding their target qualification level has been arrived at.
- The outcomes from the diagnostic assessment will be used to ascertain the correct Essential Skills qualification level, and are also used as the basis for the development of a learning programme.
- The findings from the initial assessment process should be recorded.
- Detailed information on the trainee's Essential Skills needs, including the findings of the initial and diagnostic assessment, should be recorded in the Personal Training Plan (PTP), **regardless of the level of Essential Skills identified**. The PTP provides visibility for the trainee and course tutor of the Essential Skills needs of the trainee, and places the Essential Skills at the centre of the training programme. Progress within the Essential Skills programme should be monitored by the tutor and recorded on the Personal Training Plan.
- For **\*all trainees** there should be evidence of a group learning plan (GLP), based on the findings of the initial assessment process, to assist tutors in planning their teaching and monitoring the progress of their trainees.  
(See Jobskills Memo T 10/05 issued 2 September 05) \* *For trainees who are identified with Essential Skills at Entry level there is no longer the requirement to develop an ILP.*
- The tutor should not begin the summative assessment process, that includes the Entry Levels Task and the ABA and DTT at levels 1 and 2, until the trainee has addressed his /her weaknesses identified through the initial assessment process. The tutor should be confident that the learner has mastered the skills he/she must demonstrate independently in the Tasks, and the ABA and the DTT.
- Within the Training for Success Programme trainees on the Apprenticeship programme are required to achieve their Essential Skills at the level agreed by the Sector Skills Council for the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) they are registered for.

- Trainees on the new Job Ready programme are allowed to achieve, and organisations can claim output related funding (ORF) for the achievement of an Essential Skills qualification up to and including Level 2.
- For those trainees who are still registered on the Jobskills Access programme they can achieve, and organisations can claim output related funding (ORF) for the achievement of an Essential Skills qualification up to and including Level 1, according to the trainee's identified need.(See Jobskills Memo A5/07 issued May 07 Training Programmes Branch).

## Appendix D

### A Glossary of Terms used in the Assessment Process

**Action-based Activity (ABA)** - the first part of the summative assessment is a portfolio that assesses all of the skills areas. The subject of the portfolio is set within the six broad adult curriculum themes, for example, citizen and community. Within each of the six themes 36 templates have been provided (18 for literacy and 18 for numeracy) to guide the learner and tutor. These include, for example, law and order, and buying a car. There are also vocational ABAs (25 literacy and 20 numeracy).

**Desktop Task (DTT)** - the DTT is completed when the learner has completed his/her ABA. The DTT takes 75 minutes to complete and assesses reading and writing. It is taken under controlled and time constrained conditions, and confirms that the learner can demonstrate the skills independently and competently at the level shown within his/her ABA. It is externally set, internally marked and externally moderated.

**Diagnostic Assessment**- Diagnostic assessment is designed to provide a detailed assessment of a learner's skills and abilities against the requirements set out in the National Standards. It identifies a learner's strengths and weaknesses over a period of time, and is used to help the tutor ascertain the correct essential skills qualification level and inform the learning plan (Individual Learning Plan/Group Learning Plan/Personal Training Plan).

**Entry Level Task** - a bank of tasks has been developed by the awarding bodies. The tutor selects a task that they believe will be of interest to the learner. Tasks are administered in a non threatening manner within the ordinary classroom setting without a time constraint. The literacy task assesses the learner's speaking and listening, reading and writing. It is externally set, internally assessed, internally moderated and externally moderated. The numeracy task uses a variety of activities to assess three skill areas: number, measure shape and space, and handling data.

**Group Learning Plan (GLP)**- is developed by the tutor from the findings of the initial assessment process (initial and diagnostic assessment) of the group to develop a learning programme with both short and long term targets for full-time learners in Further Education (FE) and trainees on the Apprenticeship strand of Training for Success programme working at Levels 1 and 2.

*(Refer to the LSDA website for further details on the GLP - Introduction to Essential Skills Qualifications and Delivery).*

**Individual Learning Plan (ILP)**- is developed by the tutor from the findings of the initial assessment process (initial and diagnostic assessment) to develop a learning programme with both short and long term targets for learners at Entry level, all adult learners and those on a Job Ready programme irrespective of their level.

**Individual Student Learner Agreement (ISLA)**- the findings from the initial assessment and diagnostic assessment for full-time FE students will be recorded on the ISLA (Individual Student Learning Agreement), or its proposed replacement, with the other elements of the learning programme. Progress made by the students identified through the formative assessment process will also be recorded.

**Initial Assessment** -identifies a learner's level through a base line tool

**Initial Assessment Process**- all forms of initial and diagnostic assessment that the tutor uses to make a judgement on the learner's current competency and targeted level.

**Personal Training Plan**- the findings from the initial assessment process will be included in the PTP with the other elements of the training programme. The progress towards achievement and the final achievement in Essential Skills should be recorded on the PTP.

**Progression Route** - the learning or employment route that learners select based on advice and guidance from the provider on having completed their Essential Skills qualification.

**Screening** - Screening is a mechanism to identify whether or not a learner has or is likely to have a literacy and/or numeracy need. Screening is **not intended** to assess the extent of need, only to help ascertain if there is one. A simple screening process would be, for example, for a 16-19 full-time FE learner to consider the highest level of literacy/numeracy qualification the learner has achieved to date, or in the case of the adult learner to complete a 1:1 interview.

**Summative Assessment** - this occurs only when the tutor is confident that the learner has developed and can apply his/her essential skills at the targeted level. At Entry level learners complete a Task. At levels 1 and 2 it includes both the Action Based Activity (ABA) and the Desktop Task (DTT).

**Teaching and Learning/Formative Assessment** – is the opportunity learners have to develop and apply their Essential Skills in meaningful and motivational contexts. During this time **formative assessment**, this is sometimes referred to as assessment for learning, will be ongoing to allow both the tutor and learner to review progress against the learning plan. It identifies where the learner is in their learning, where he/she needs to go, and how best to achieve this.

## Appendix E : Free Writing Task Assessment Checklist

	✓	Additional comments
Tasks that an adult at this level can complete		
<b>Entry Level 1</b>		
Write a simple sentence.		
Punctuate a simple sentence with a capital letter and a full stop.		
Spell correctly some personal key words and familiar words.		
<b>Entry Level 2</b>		
As above plus ... Write compound sentences using common conjunctions. (eg as, and, but)		
Use adjectives in writing.		
Use punctuation correctly. (eg capital letters, full stops and question marks)		
Use a capital letter for proper nouns.		
Spell correctly the majority of personal details and familiar common words.		
<b>Entry Level 3</b>		
As above plus ... Organise writing in short paragraphs.		
Use correct basic grammar. (eg appropriate verb tense, subject-verb agreement)		
Use punctuation correctly. (eg capital letters, full stops, question marks, exclamation marks)		
Spell correctly common words and relevant key words for work and special interest.		
<b>Level 1</b>		
As above plus ... Write in a logical sequence using paragraphs where appropriate		
Use correct grammar. (subject-verb agreement, correct use of tense)		
Punctuate sentences correctly and use punctuation so that meaning is clear. (eg capital letters, full stops, question marks, exclamation marks, commas)		
Spell correctly words used most often in work, studies and daily life.		