

**Subject:**  
**REFRESH OF ESSENTIAL SKILLS**

**Date of Issue:**  
9 February 2016

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**Target Audience:**

- Directors/Principals of Further Education Colleges
- FE College Governing Bodies
- FE College Finance Officers
- Colleges NI
- CCEA
- City & Guilds
- OCNNI
- Pearson

**Summary of Contents:**

- This Circular provides advance information about the Refresh of Essential Skills in Application of Number and Communication

**Enquiries:**

Any enquiries about the contents of this Circular should be addressed to:

Curriculum and Essential Skills Policy Branch  
Department for Employment and Learning  
Adelaide House  
39-49 Adelaide Street  
BELFAST  
BT2 8FD

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**Status of Contents:**

Information

**Related Documents:**

None

**Superseded Documents:**

None

**Expiry Date:**

N/A

**DEL Website:**

<http://www.delni.gov.uk/home.htm>

**Email:**

essentialskills@delni.gov.uk

**Tel:** (028) 902 57443

## **Introduction**

1. Work to refresh the standards, curriculum and assessment arrangements was led by the Department's Quality Improvement Adviser who drew together a Steering Group comprising membership from Further Education Colleges, Training Organisations, the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) and the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA Regulation).
2. International examples of good practice were reviewed and an international expert with experience of the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) was appointed to provide support and advice.
3. This work is now complete and we will implement the new arrangements from September 2016.

**An outline of the changes is as follows:**

### **Refreshed standards and curriculum**

4. The Application of Number and Communication standards and curriculum have been refreshed to make them current and relevant to a wider cohort of learners. The refreshed product provides tutors with a range of current and varied examples to draw upon in the classroom.
5. The standards themselves have changed only slightly. Tutors will notice a change in the examples used to demonstrate the various skills. Examples are provided across three contexts as follows:
  - personal/community
  - economy/workplace
  - education and training.

6. These contexts enable the curriculum to be readily applied to a range of learners encompassing those still engaged in education or training, to those in employment as well as life skills. Tutors will continue to be able to draw upon other examples relevant to their own group of learners as well as to use ideas from across the three contexts.

### **Refreshed approach to assessment**

7. Assessment arrangements for Entry Levels one to three remain unchanged.

Assessment arrangements for Levels one and two in Application of Number and Communication have been revised to introduce more rigour and to reaffirm the focus on teaching and learning.

An external end test assessment model for Application of Number and Communication (reading and writing) at Levels one and two will be launched in September 2016. The speaking and listening element of communication will continue to be assessed as before.

### **Further information**

8. The Department is working with awarding organisations to hold information sessions across the various sectors, to promote awareness of the refreshed standards and curriculum. Information about these sessions will be published separately by awarding organisations.

The refreshed curriculum will be published shortly and will be available on the DEL website in due course.

Information regarding the revised assessment method at Levels one and two in Application of Number and Communication will be available from awarding organisations.