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[Department
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Guidance

English and maths requirements in apprenticeships guidance

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Applies to England

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Apprentices aged 16 to 18 at the start of their training are required to achieve English and maths qualifications to complete their apprenticeship, if they do not already hold suitable equivalent qualifications. Apprentices who do not already hold a suitable equivalent qualification in either English or maths or both subjects are funded to achieve up to an approved level 2 qualification in these subjects.

Apprentices aged 19+ at the start of their training can also be funded to study up to an approved level 2 qualification in English or maths or both, if they do not already hold suitable equivalent qualifications and their employer agrees that this should be

part of their training plan.

The requirements for English and maths are set out in the [apprenticeship funding rules](#).

This guidance sets out which qualifications or evidence are accepted as a suitable equivalent qualification. Apprentices who already hold suitable equivalent qualifications are not eligible for this funding under the apprenticeship funding rules.

Guidance on qualification types

This section gives more information on some of the UK English and maths requirements in apprenticeships qualifications, and how apprenticeship providers can interpret documentary evidence that apprentices supply to show they have achieved the qualifications.

Functional Skills qualifications

Only Functional Skills qualifications regulated by Ofqual can be acceptable equivalents for English or maths in an apprenticeship. Certificates in Functional Skills under the Quality Licence Scheme (QLS) are not regulated by Ofqual and are not acceptable equivalents.

Scottish qualifications

Qualifications from Scotland are part of the Scottish Curriculum and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). To be acceptable equivalents for an apprenticeship in England, an apprentice must have achieved:

- English or maths to at least SCQF level 4 for a level 2 apprenticeship
- English or maths to at least SCQF level 5 for a level 3 apprenticeship

Scottish certificates of achievement indicate that a student has met the evidence requirements to pass a qualification or unit, and therefore achieved the SCQF level

displayed against that particular qualification or unit.

On older Scottish certificates of education, issued between 1962 and 1999, the [English](#) and [maths](#) tables show:

- the grade, including which type of qualification is achieved, such as ordinary grade or standard grade
- the award, which shows the overall outcome that the student achieved in each subject
- the profile of performance, which breaks down the overall outcome into its component parts, components on their own are not acceptable equivalents for English and maths

On newer Scottish Qualifications Certificates, issued from January 2000 onwards:

- the qualification shows which type of qualification is achieved (such as ordinary grade or standard grade), and the subjects under those headings relate to each qualification type
- the grade shows the overall outcome that the student achieved in each subject, if the qualification is awarded on a graded scale
- the SCQF level qualifications show the level that a qualification or unit or module was achieved, if it was awarded on a pass or fail basis instead of a lettered or numbered grading scale (such as core skills units and national units)

Qualifications using a numbered grade outcome scale are graded from 1 to 5, where 1 is the highest grade and 5 is the lowest grade.

Where core skills units in communication or numeracy are offered as evidence, all the achieved units within the core skills must have grade outcomes that are equal to or above the minimum level specified for the apprenticeship.

We do not offer a service for checking or validating Scottish certificates of education. You can find more information about comparing new and old Scottish qualifications on the [Scottish government's website](#). Apprentices can also [contact the Scottish Qualifications Authority \(SQA\)](#) to establish if older Scottish qualifications are equivalent to newer Scottish qualifications.

Access to Higher Education diplomas

Access to HE diplomas awarded after 31 July 2014 are not equivalent. This is because the last GCSE equivalent qualifications delivered as part of access to HE qualifications recognised by QAA were awarded in July 2014.

Access to Higher Education (HE) diplomas will be equivalent if:

- the qualification was awarded on or before 31 July 2014
- the apprentice has achieved 12 credits at level 2 in English
- the apprentice has achieved 12 credits at level 2 in maths

If an apprentice has a transcript that has less than 12 credits at level 3 in English or maths, the access to HE diploma is not equivalent. The requirement to be an equivalent is 12 credits at level 2, because the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) set the GCSE equivalency to be 12 credits at level 2.

If an apprentice has a certificate of GCSE equivalency that was issued with their access to HE diploma, the apprenticeship provider must check that number of credits for English or maths meets the minimum values listed. If the credits don't meet this requirement, the apprenticeship provider must ask the [Access Validating Agency \(AVA\)](#) that awarded the certificate to confirm which of the units listed on the transcript were used to award the GCSE equivalence. The number of credits must meet the minimum levels listed.

There is no definitive list of English and maths units in access to HE diplomas, but the titles of these units must be explicitly linked to specific aspects of English language, English literature, or maths. English units could be about:

- speaking
- listening
- reading
- writing

Maths units could be about application of:

- number
- algebra
- shape
- volume
- area

Units that are indirectly linked to English and maths (such as exam preparation, applying for courses or accounting) are not equivalent for English and maths in an apprenticeship.

English proficiency tests

English proficiency certificates and tests are not acceptable equivalents because they don't have the same breadth and depth of content as a GCSE. This includes, but is not limited to:

- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) qualifications
- International English Language Testing System (IELTS) qualifications
- Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA)
- Certificate of Advanced English

English or maths units within vocational qualifications

If an apprentice holds a qualification certificate or transcript that explicitly lists key skills or functional skills units that were studied as part of that qualification, these can be acceptable evidence. The certificate or transcript must state the level of the key skills or functional skills qualification. Examples can include, but are not limited to:

- Functional skills units in Higher National Certificate (HNC) and Higher National Diploma (HND) qualifications
- Key skills units in General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs)

All other units, components and modules for English or maths within another vocational qualification (for example, maths units within an electronics or engineering qualification) are not acceptable equivalents for English and maths in an apprenticeship.

GCSE English speaking and listening components

The speaking and listening component of a GCSE in English can sometimes be listed separately from the main overall awarded grade on a certificate or provisional statement of results. This component on its own is not an acceptable equivalent for English in an apprenticeship.

You must use the main overall awarded grade for GCSEs in English when assessing if an apprentice has met the minimum grade requirements.

Key skills qualifications

A key skills qualification is equivalent where a student has already completed and passed both a portfolio of work and an external exam. There should be evidence that they have completed and passed both elements. This could be either individual certificates for each part, or the certificate showing that the apprentice has achieved the overall qualification.

O levels achieved before 1975

O levels that were achieved before 1975 were mainly awarded on a pass or fail basis, but awarding organisations also used varying numbered grading scales alongside the standard pass or fail outcomes.

If an apprentice has a certified statement of O level results that shows both a number and a 'P' (for pass) next to English or maths, this is equivalent. The pass outcome on the statement is what determines English or maths equivalency for an apprenticeship, rather than the number.

Degrees and higher level qualifications (at level 4 and above)

Degrees and higher level qualifications may be equivalent where they are mostly in the subject of English or maths. By this, we mean that the qualification's content is at least 50% in the subject of English (language or literature) or at least 50% in maths.

Providers should look at evidence of their degree or qualification content to assess this. This could be a breakdown of the modules in their degree and the weighting those modules carried.

If the degree or higher level qualification has English content, the apprentice must have been taught and assessed through the English language, rather than through any other language to be considered equivalent. Qualifications in English are not equivalent if English is studied as a second language.

The guidance for degrees only applies to full degrees. It does not apply to components of degrees (such as a foundation programme) or to non-regulated provision accredited by a provider or university.

Acceptable evidence for UK qualifications

This section gives additional guidance on how apprenticeship providers can interpret the various types of documentary evidence that apprentices have, to show they have achieved the qualifications listed in the tables.

Qualification certificates from awarding organisations

Certificates of achievement for qualifications must be from an awarding organisation regulated in the UK. They must clearly show the:

- apprentice's name
- qualifications achieved
- grades or outcomes for those qualifications
- dates of achievement

If an apprentice no longer has the certificate for a qualification they achieved, they can [ask the current awarding organisation for a replacement certificate](#) or a [certified statement of results](#). The awarding organisation might charge a fee for this.

Provisional notifications or statements of results from awarding organisations

Provisional notifications or statements of results can be accepted as evidence. This can apply to academic qualifications such as GCSEs, A levels, and AS levels or vocational qualifications.

The apprenticeship provider must check that the grade achieved on the provisional statement did not change when the apprentice's final results were confirmed. Provisional grades may have changed if the school, college, parent or student asked the awarding organisation to re-mark one or more of the exam papers.

The provider can ask the apprentice to confirm if their grade changed after the provisional statement of results was issued by the awarding organisation. If the grade did change, the provider must ask the apprentice for evidence of the final grade.

If the provisional grade is different to the final grade, the provisional grade will remain acceptable as long the final grade has not decreased from the provisional grade.

Certified confirmation of results from awarding organisations

If an apprentice does not have a [certificate](#) or a [provisional notification or statement of results](#) from the awarding organisation, they can ask the awarding organisation for a certified confirmation of their results. This could be a letter or an email from the awarding organisation, and must include:

- the apprentice's full name
- the full name of qualification
- the awarding organisation name for the qualifications or the qualification number
- the grade awarded (where applicable)
- the date of achievement

Apprenticeship providers may need to validate an apprentice's date of birth through

other appropriate evidence.

Apprenticeship providers must validate that:

- the document is genuine and has been issued by the awarding organisation
- the qualification is included in the acceptable equivalent lists for English qualifications for either [apprenticeships at level 2](#) or [apprenticeships at level 3 to level 7](#) or the qualification is included in the acceptable equivalent lists for maths qualifications for either [apprenticeships at level 2](#) or [apprenticeships at level 3 to level 7](#)
- the overall grade for the qualification is given on the statement, not just for individual units or modules
- the overall grade has met or exceeded the minimum acceptable grade for that qualification stated in the published list

Statements of recognition from awarding organisations

An awarding organisation may issue a statement of recognition where a student has been fully prepared and entered for a qualification but was unable to sit any exams or assessments, due to exceptional circumstances beyond their control.

The statement of recognition is based on the information supplied by the school or training provider to the awarding organisation. It shows the qualification grade(s) the student was likely to achieve if they had sat the exams or assessments set by the awarding organisation.

Statements of recognition issued by awarding organisations are acceptable evidence for English and maths.

National Record of Achievement

A National Record of Achievement (NRA) can be acceptable evidence where it contains verifiable evidence from regulated awarding organisations about qualifications the apprentice has achieved.

Personal learning record

The personal learning record (PLR) is a statement of a student's achievements on qualifications, showing the outcomes or grades and achievement dates for those qualifications. A PLR must include:

- the apprentice's full name
- the full name of qualification
- the awarding organisation name for the qualifications or the qualification number
- the grade awarded (where applicable)
- the date of achievement

Apprenticeship providers may need to validate an apprentice's date of birth through other appropriate evidence.

A PLR may sometimes only show either a pass outcome or an achievement date where qualification assessments are taken on demand, such as for functional skills and key skills. This means that if an apprentice has either a pass outcome or an achievement date in their PLR for a qualification with an on-demand assessment, they have achieved the qualification stated in the PLR.

SIMS and CMIS reports from schools

Schools may use either a school information management system (SIMS) or a candidate management information system (CMIS). These systems can produce reports that show a student's statement of results. This can include results from multiple awarding organisations and from multiple exam series.

A SIMS or CMIS report must include:

- the apprentice's full name
- the full name of qualification
- the awarding organisation name for the qualifications or the qualification number
- the grade awarded (where applicable)
- the date of achievement

- the stamp of the relevant school, college or provider
- the signature of examinations officer in the school, college or provider (or an equivalent authority)

Apprenticeship providers may need to validate an apprentice's date of birth through other appropriate evidence.

Letters with results from schools or providers on headed paper

A letter or statement of results on headed paper from a school, college, or other provider is not acceptable evidence of achievement in English or maths. Only [SIMS and CMIS reports](#) are acceptable evidence from these types of providers.

Expected results or estimated grades from schools

Statements of expected results or estimated grades given by a school or teacher before a student sits an exam are not acceptable evidence. Only official [statements of provisional results](#) or [statements of recognition](#) issued by an awarding organisation can be acceptable evidence.

Certificates issued by training providers and non-regulated provision

Certificates relating to provider accredited provision or non-regulated provision are not acceptable evidence. For apprenticeships, English and maths qualifications must be regulated by Ofqual and awarded by a regulated awarding organisation.

Qualified teacher status (QTS)

Qualified teacher status (QTS) is evidence that a student has met the required standard for teaching in England. It is not a qualification in English or maths, so it

can't be used as evidence of achievement of a qualification in English or maths.

Differences in names on an apprentice's evidence

If an apprentice has changed their name and their current name is different from the name on their evidence, the apprenticeship provider must make sure that the apprentice can prove who they say they are. We are unable to advise providers how to verify an apprentice's identity.

Acceptable evidence for overseas or international qualifications

Overseas or international qualifications can be equivalent where there is clear evidence from [UK ENIC](#) (previously known as UK NARIC) that the qualification achieved is an equivalent level and grade to the minimum requirements for English or maths.

This can be demonstrated through a statement of comparability from UK ENIC that confirms their qualification in English or maths is an equivalent level and grade to the minimum requirements for English or maths.

If the apprentice doesn't have a statement from UK ENIC but their apprenticeship provider has access to UK ENIC's international comparisons database, the provider may use the database to check that the qualifications are at least equivalent to GCSE for English or maths.

The evidence from UK ENIC must include:

- comparison to the relevant framework level in England (such as level 1 or level 2)
- comparison to the relevant qualification in England (such as GCSE or A level)
- comparison the required minimum grades (such as GCSE 9 to 4 or A* to C for level 2 apprenticeships)

We can't advise you on whether a qualification gained overseas is an equivalent level and grade to the minimum requirements for the apprenticeship. Only UK ENIC can confirm equivalency for overseas qualifications.

Overseas or international qualifications in English are only acceptable if English was studied as a first language. By this, we mean that the apprentice must have been taught and assessed through the English language, rather than through any other language. Qualifications in English studied as a second language are not acceptable equivalents.

Provisional statements of results for overseas or international qualifications are not acceptable evidence of achievement.

Overseas or international certificates for O levels and A levels

UK awarding organisations may have established partnerships to award UK qualifications in association with national exam boards or councils in overseas countries. These may include qualifications like O levels and A levels, but not international GCSEs.

If a certificate issued overseas includes results for UK qualifications, these can be acceptable evidence if the apprentice has met or exceeded the minimum acceptable grade for the qualifications.

Evidence for Home Office visa and immigration purposes from UK ENIC or UK NARIC

[UK ENIC](#) can issue statements or letters for visa and immigration purposes, to assist the Home Office in determining a person's immigration status. These statements or letters are not acceptable evidence for the English or maths requirements.

Help and support

You can find more information about the English and maths requirements in the [apprenticeship funding rules](#).

We do not provide a service to check and validate if qualifications, certificates or documents meet the requirements to be an acceptable equivalent for an apprenticeship. Apprenticeship providers or end-point assessment organisations are responsible for ensuring that an apprentice's evidence of achieving English and maths equivalent qualifications is valid and acceptable, using this guidance.

If you are an apprentice and you have a query about the English and maths requirements for your apprenticeship, please discuss your situation with your apprenticeship training provider in the first instance. If they are unable to support you, you can email nationalhelpdesk@apprenticeships.gov.uk or call 0800 0150 400.

If you are an employer, apprenticeship provider, or an apprenticeship endpoint assessment organisation and you have queries about the English and maths requirements for apprenticeships, contact our apprenticeship service support by email on helpdesk@manage-apprenticeships.service.gov.uk or call on 0800 0150 600.

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