

**Revised
for 2004
standards**



Good practice guide



Key skills and the role of the tutor



department for
education and skills



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Contents

Introduction	1
How can the tutor support key skills?	2
Induction: the role of the tutor	8
Initial assessment: the role of the tutor	15
Building portfolios: the role of the tutor	18
Target setting: the role of the tutor	22
Assessment: the role of the tutor	27
Appendix 1 Checklist for key skills coordinators	30
Appendix 2 Glossary	31
Appendix 3 Useful addresses	37

Some publications from the Key Skills Support Programme

Adding value: integrating the wider key skills

Embedding key skills: assignments for GCSE in vocational subjects (CD-ROM)

Good practice guides:

Developing and managing portfolios

Integrating key skills and basic skills

Planning and delivering induction

Preparing for the tests

Using IT in delivering key skills

Writing assignments

Key skills: a handbook for coordinators

Key skills in A-levels (CD-ROM)

Key skills practice tests (CD-ROM)

Key skills professional development: planning and delivering key skills (manual and website)

Key skills resource manual

National Diploma assignments with integrated key skills (CD-ROM)

Posters promoting key skills to students

Speaking and listening: finding the level (DVD and commentary)

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Teaching and learning:

Application of Number

Communication

Improving Own Learning and Performance

Information and Communication Technology

Problem Solving

Working with Others

The wider key skills – enhancing learning (DVD and video)

Top tips 2

Top tips 3

Unlocking your future (DVD and video)

Vocational assignments with key skills 2 (CD-ROM)

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

Introduction

This guide is one of a series of Good practice guides produced by the Key Skills Support Programme (KSSP). It has been updated to take account of the 2004 key skills standards.

What is the purpose of the guides?

The guides are designed to provide practical advice and guidance to teachers who are delivering and assessing key skills in schools and colleges. Each guide 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. The guides are based on the experience of centres that have been delivering key skills in the last few years and particularly since September 2000.

Who are the guides for?

The guides are written primarily for staff who are new to key skills, though more experienced practitioners will also find them helpful. All the guides will be useful for key skills coordinators and managers.

This guide will be particularly useful to:

- key skills coordinators in schools and colleges who are planning how to make the most of the role of the tutor in ensuring a successful key skills programme
- tutors who will be working with students to support their progress and who have a brief to assist the key skills process.

What is this guide about?

This guide offers advice and guidance on how key skills can be supported and reinforced through the tutorial system in schools and colleges. It focuses on:

- the role of the personal tutor in the support and delivery of key skills
- how an effective tutorial programme can support the management of key skills.

This guide is not intended to tell you how you should organise your tutorial programme. Instead it offers practical suggestions for how the tutorial programme can contribute to and support key skills delivery. It is for each school and college to decide which of these ideas will work in their particular situation and to plan accordingly.

Throughout this guide, references are made to publications from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and from the Key Skills Support Programme (KSSP).

QCA publications can be ordered from QCA Publications, tel 01787 884444. Many can be downloaded from the website at www.qca.org.uk/keyskills.

KSSP publications can be ordered via the Helpline 0870 872 8081, or downloaded from the website at www.keyskillssupport.net.

How can the tutor support key skills?

What is a tutor?

While the exact responsibilities of the tutor vary from one institution to another, in most centres a personal tutor is responsible for students' progress in their studies as well as for their personal and social well-being. Many tutors are expected to help post-16 students to become more independent and to develop self-management skills. This role is in many ways an extension of the form tutor role that is common in Years 7 to 11. For the purposes of this guide the tutor will be defined as 'the member of staff who supports and extends the learning that takes place in the student's main programme'. The tutor may or may not teach the student and there may or may not be tutor or form groups.

Despite these varying roles, there is one role that is common across all institutions – supporting the students' progress and helping them to make the most of the opportunities offered in the courses they are studying.

In fulfilling this role, tutors may focus on developing students':

- study skills
- individual action-planning skills
- teamworking skills
- interpersonal skills
- review and self-assessment skills and hence
- each student's capacity for independent and non-directed study.

Effective tutors and tutorial programmes focus on equipping students to better understand the learning process they are engaged in and preparing them for the next stage in education, training or employment. Many centres have found that incorporating key skills adds value and structure to the tutorial and enables students to become more independent and reflective learners as well as preparing them for the challenges to come.

At a college in south-west England the tutors provide opportunities for students to develop their discussion and presentation skills (Communication 2.1a/3.1a and 2.1b/3.1b). These are integrated into the wider tutorial programme and enable tutors to give formative feedback on discussion and presentation techniques so that students can improve their skills. Some students generate evidence: witness statements are completed by the tutor and included in the portfolios. Other students practise their skills in tutorial sessions and obtain the actual evidence from their main subjects.

This process gives structure to tutorials and helps students to see them as more than just a 'talking shop'. By using the tutorial time more efficiently, students, teachers and tutors have introduced greater flexibility and integration into the key skills curriculum.

Tutorials, enrichment and key skills

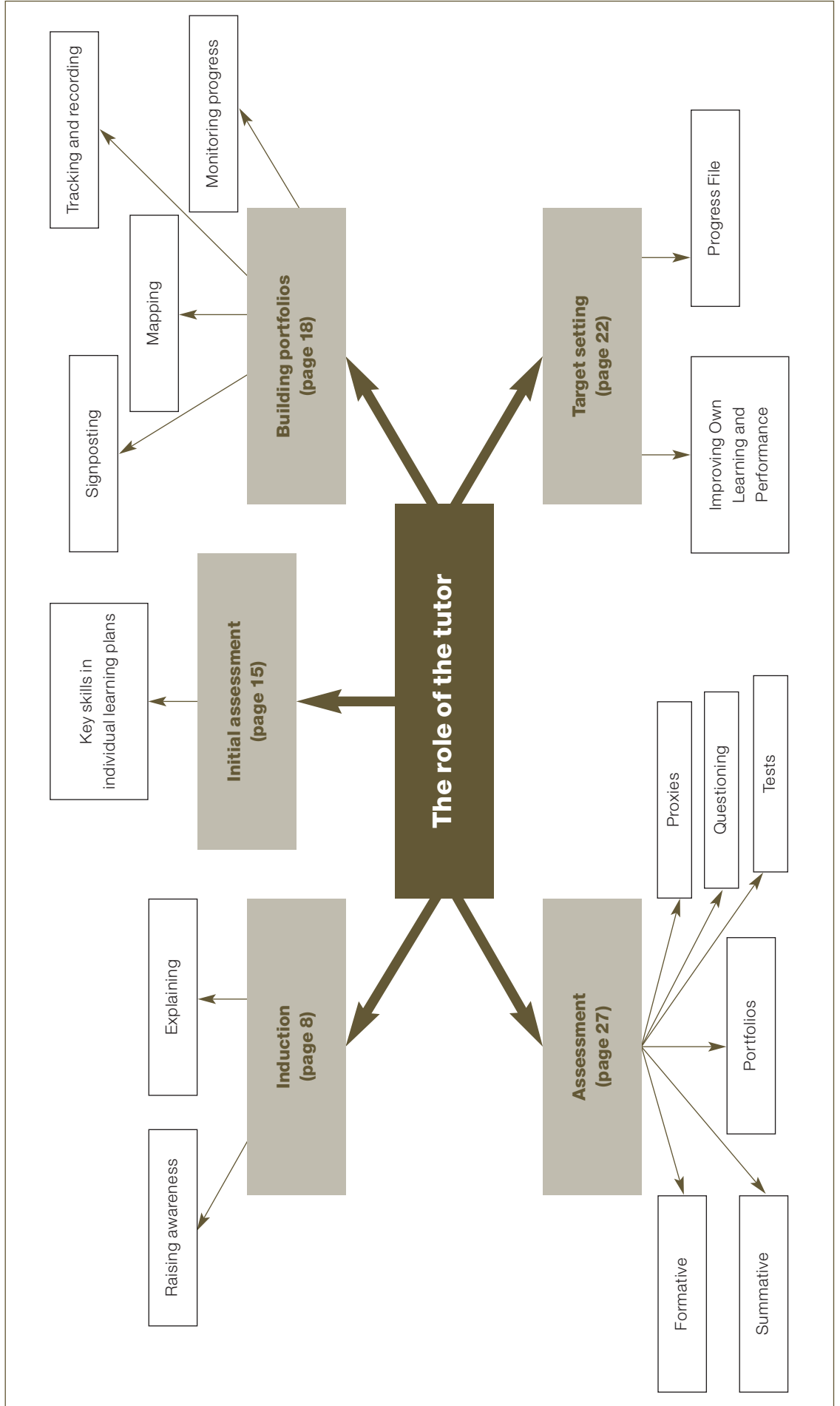
The more that tutorials, enrichment and key skills can be integrated with each other and with the mainstream curriculum, the more successful the outcomes will be. This calls for careful planning but, in the long run, reduces the day-to-day burden that may be experienced by tutors and students who perceive these three elements as an unnecessary 'add on' to the mainstream curriculum. The integration of key skills into tutorial and enrichment activities can provide structure and direction as well as giving students the chance to obtain further qualifications and awards.

The tutor as coordinator

The tutor is in a unique position to take an overview of a student's whole educational experience. It is the tutor who can bring together all the various aspects of skills development and ensure coherence and consistency. When opportunities for key skills development are clearly present in main subject areas, in enrichment and in tutorials, the tutor can help the students to see how the various elements of their course of study relate to and are integrated with each other.

Figure 1 The role of the tutor in key skills

In supporting key skills, the tutor may be involved in any or all of the following activities.



Possible roles for the tutor

In most schools and colleges, tutors are expected to be involved in a wide range of activities. Figure 1 shows some of these roles in relation to key skills. This is not to imply that the tutor will be involved in all of these (although they may be), but that these are the possible key skills roles that tutors may fill. Many centres have found that the more the tutors are involved in these processes the more likely it is that key skills will be supported by other subject staff.

There have been concerns that integrating key skills in schemes of work can be an extra burden to a subject teacher, especially when it is seen as an imposition. Equally, many centres have expressed concerns about students' ability to manage their own evidence-building and portfolio organisation. Where the personal tutor is involved in this work, it can be shared and managed more effectively. Tutors have a central role to play in promoting key skills; lack of their involvement and support has been a barrier to key skills development in some centres.

The needs of the tutor

Tutors should understand the rationale for key skills and be broadly familiar with the standards, the assessment process and the evidence requirements. Staff who are new to key skills need time to acquire this knowledge and it is important that an appropriate support structure is in place so that staff can seek advice and guidance on the key skills and how they work.

The *Key skills resource manual*, published by KSSP, contains a wealth of materials that can be used in training sessions for all staff concerned with delivering and assessing key skills.

The tutor's responsibilities will be more manageable if they have accurate and up-to-date information relating to:

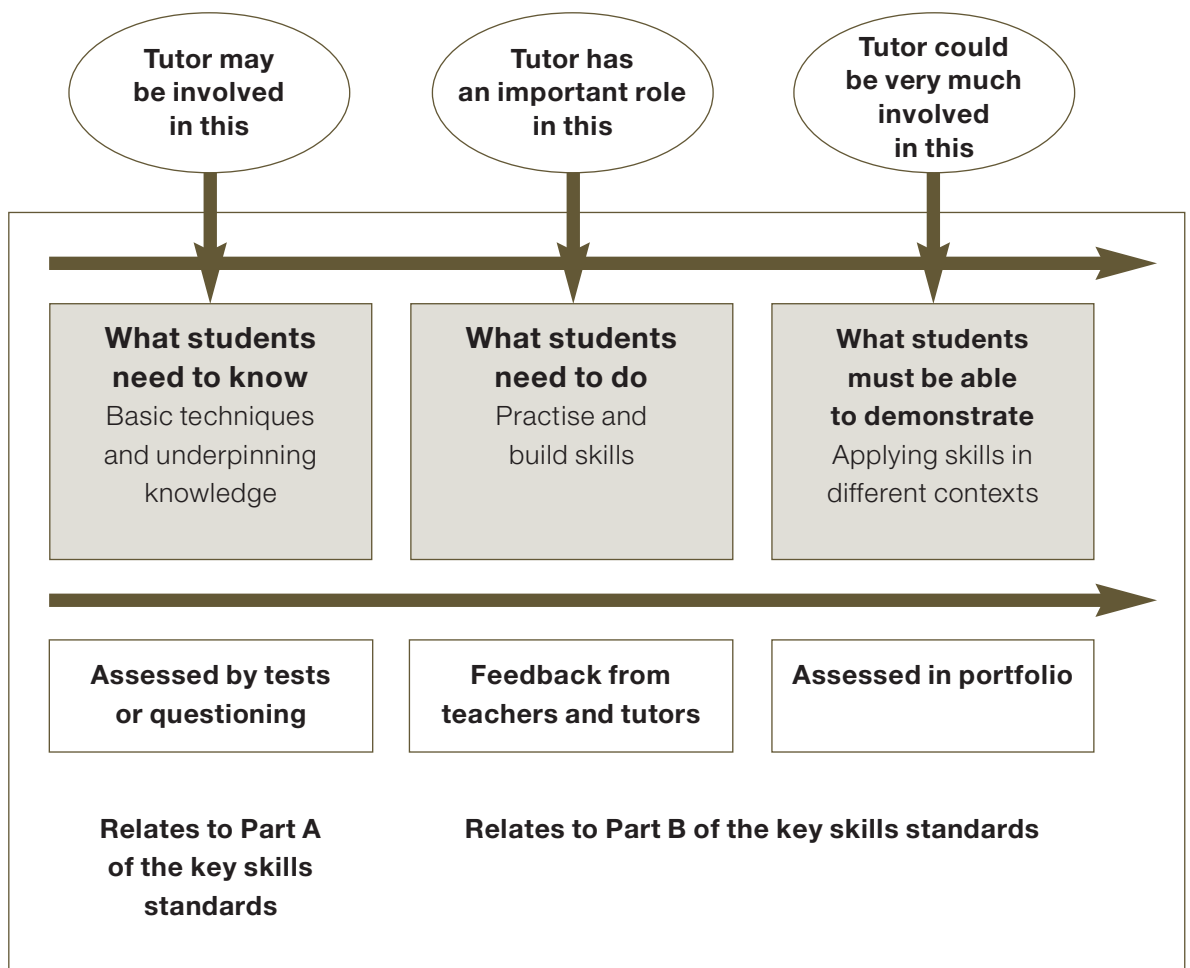
Information	Supporting documentation
The key skills policy of the school or college	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A copy of the key skills policy ■ A copy of the key skills handbook issued to students
The roles and responsibilities of all staff involved in delivering key skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Their own job description indicating key skills responsibilities ■ An organisational chart showing key skills responsibilities of other members of staff (eg the key skills coordinator, specialist key skills teachers)
The model of delivery for key skills (both Part A and Part B) in all areas of the curriculum, including key dates in the annual key skills cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ As above, plus an annual calendar ■ Examples of the documentation that is used throughout the delivery and assessment process
The procedures of the appropriate awarding body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Copies of relevant awarding body publications
Good practice in delivering key skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The relevant Good practice guides from KSSP ■ Information about training and staff development available from KSSP and from the awarding body
National developments in key skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A copy of <i>The key skills qualifications standards and guidance: communication, application of number, and information and communication technology</i> (QCA/04/1272) ■ A copy of <i>The key skills qualifications standards and guidance: working with others, improving own learning and performance, and problem solving</i> (QCA/04/1294) ■ A copy of <i>Key skills policy and practice: your questions answered</i> (DfES, LSC, QCA)

Appendix 1 is a checklist for key skills managers and coordinators to use when evaluating the quality of the support given to tutors in their role in delivering key skills.

The key skills continuum

The key skills continuum is a model of key skills delivery that is widely used to explain many aspects of the process. Figure 2 shows how it relates to the role of the tutor.

Figure 2 The key skills continuum and the role of the tutor



Induction: the role of the tutor

What is induction?

While there is no common framework for induction across all sixth forms and colleges the induction process has some common aims:

- to ensure that each student is enrolled on the right course at the right level (initial assessment)
- to introduce students to the ways of working within the school or college
- to introduce students to their learning programme
- to ensure that students are aware of the responsibilities and commitments they have made to the college or school and to each other
- to raise students' awareness of all the opportunities available to them outside their main programme of study.

The goals of induction can be summarised as:

- **getting the student to know the institution and the learning programme**
- **getting the institution to know the student**
- **getting the students and staff to know each other.**

For guidance on induction to key skills, see *Good practice guide: planning and delivering induction* produced by KSSP.

A school sixth form in the West Midlands devotes a day to key skills as part of its week-long induction. Tutors work through a series of activities that are designed to show the importance of key skills in students' studies and academic development, as well as for employment and higher education. This day includes input from past students currently at university who have used key skills in their courses, and from representatives of employment and higher education. The value of this approach is that it is the students themselves who talk about the value of key skills.

As key skills develop in a centre it is worth keeping a record of students who do well in the key skills, to invite them back to take part in induction.

Possible roles for the tutor in introducing the key skills

At induction, the tutor could have a role in:

- raising students' awareness of the importance of key skills
- explaining how the key skills qualifications work
- explaining how key skills are delivered in the school or college.

Raising students' awareness of the importance of key skills

Tutors can play an essential role in 'selling' the key skills to students.

One of the main lessons learned by successful key skills centres is that students should be made aware as early as possible that key skills are an integral part of their studies. If students are aware of this and have knowingly 'signed up' to it, this should prevent them seeing key skills as an unwanted 'add on'.

Tutors should emphasise that key skills have always been an important element of success. They are not an extra and not a burden. Key skills are simply a more formal extension of the skills that students are already using and developing.

The views of their tutor will have particular influence on students. Experience in many centres has shown that, where the tutor is positive about key skills from the start and promotes key skills in terms of the value they will add to students' studies and future education, training and employment, the more likely it is that students will participate. Conversely, where tutors are negative about key skills it can be very hard to undo this damage.

Progression

Into work-based learning

Students need to be aware that key skills, in various combinations and at various levels, are a requirement in Apprenticeship frameworks. Employers' representatives can be invited to talk to students about key skills during induction.

Into higher education

The UCAS tariff includes 20 points for achieving Communication, Application of Number, or Information and Communication Technology at Level 3 and 10 points for achieving at Level 2. These three key skills qualifications at Level 3, therefore, have the same points value (60) as an AS level at grade A or an A-level at grade D.

A sample survey of offers in 2002 showed that around 50% of the offers made by HEIs (excluding the universities which existed before 1992) allowed key skills points to be counted towards the points needed. For 2003 entry to higher education, there were more than 45,000 courses for applicants to choose from. Of these, one-third were set to accept tariff points for key skills in their offers to applicants. HEIs place great emphasis on the value of key skills in their entry profiles. They do not always use the same terminology as the QCA key skills but the range of skills and personal characteristics identified, particularly communication skills, are very similar.

Following the pilot of the wider key skills qualifications in 2004–05, it is anticipated that they will attract UCAS points from September 2005.

Even if tutors have reservations about the key skills, it is important that these are discussed among colleagues and not communicated to students. Experience has shown that tutors' attitudes to the key skills play a pivotal role in the students' attitudes. Any concerns should be dealt with among colleagues 'behind closed doors'.

A large college in south London has spent a great deal of time and energy in ensuring that information about key skills is part of all its promotional literature, course materials and student advice.

- Key skills are mentioned in the initial interview.
- Key skills are explained on the college website.
- The college policy on key skills has been re-written to be easy to understand by students and parents and is heavily promoted across the college.
- All students receive a pack that explains the key skills.
- The first meeting with tutors is devoted to key skills.
- Students from the previous year are invited to contribute to the key skills induction.

The Key skills resource manual and Key skills: a handbook for coordinators, both produced by KSSP, include suggestions about how to promote key skills to students, staff, governors, parents etc.

Copies of Key skills – your way forward, KSSP's full-colour booklet produced for students, are available free of charge from the Programme.

Explaining how the key skills qualifications work

While it may be best to leave the task of explaining the technical detail of the standards to key skills specialists, tutors can play an important part in explaining key skills at induction and in giving well-informed advice and reinforcement later in the programme. The tutor can be the first point of reference for students with questions on how the key skills work and how to make the most of the opportunities offered.

At induction, tutors could explain how the standards are presented (Part A, Part B etc), the assessment structure and how evidence is to be gathered. To do this, they need to be secure in their understanding of the following:

- The **college or school policy** on how key skills will be delivered.
- The **standards and guidance documents** for the key skills at the appropriate level. Tutors should know how Part A (underpinning knowledge) and Part B (the evidence requirements) operate and have a good understanding of the guidance documents from QCA and the awarding body.

- **Progression** between the levels of key skills.
- How **initial and diagnostic assessment** will be used. Each student should tackle the key skills at the levels most appropriate to their learning needs. Tutors will be more or less involved in initial and diagnostic assessment (see pages 15 ff) but they should at least know how the assessment works, how the data is used and how a student's target levels are determined. Tutors will often have a central role in advising the student about the key skills they should be working towards.
- The **assessment, internal verification and moderation** procedures that operate within the college or school. To help the student plan their time and organise their studies, the tutor needs to know the deadlines for portfolio completion and the dates for assessments.
- The frequency, timings and locations of the **tests**. While the paper-based tests at Levels 1 and 2 will be available 12 times in 2004–05 and six times at Level 3, each centre will decide how many of these opportunities it will take advantage of. Alternatively, the centre may wish to take advantage of on-screen, on-demand testing at Levels 1 and 2.
- The arrangements about **'proxy' qualifications**. The list of proxy qualifications can be accessed from the QCA website www.qca.org.uk/keyskills and should be checked regularly. Tutors are in a very good position to coordinate claims for proxy qualifications in the context of each student's individual learning plan.

Explaining how the key skills are delivered

The tutor is well placed to explain the centre's policy on key skills and how key skills are integrated into the main programme, tutorials and enrichment. During the discussion, the tutor can also explain their own role in, for example, initial assessment or tracking evidence for portfolios.

Some centres, recognising that students have heard negative messages about key skills, have 're-branded' their key skills teaching sessions, for example as, 'ICT skills for business studies' or 'essential skills'.

From the student's perspective, they don't have three lessons a week on their main subject and then a key skills lesson, which is taught by someone from outside the department. Instead they have four sessions a week, one of which is their normal subject matter but with an ICT slant. The session is team-taught by the main subject teacher and a specialist ICT teacher.

Centres that have tried this approach find that students are more willing to participate because they can see the link to the main subject and don't feel that key skills are an unconnected 'bolt on'.

Documents

It is helpful if students have their own copies of the following documents.

- **A guide to key skills**

Ideally, this should be a handbook that explains what key skills are, how the college/school policy operates, what is expected of the students and what they have an entitlement to. All aspects of the key skills such as the model of delivery, the assessment, the qualifications and the value of key skills should be explained in a language that is accessible and easy to understand.

The leaflet *Introducing key skills*, addressed to students, can be downloaded in Word format from KSSP's website www.keyskillssupport.net and customised to the context of a particular centre.

- **The standards**

While students should have their own copies of the key skills standards as published by QCA and by the awarding bodies, most students will need help and guidance to develop a full understanding of them. It may be worth producing a student-friendly version. Check on the 'Shared Resources' section of the KSSP website www.keyskillssupport.net to see if there is anything produced by another centre that may be suitable.

Staff at a school in Kent reviewed the school's key skills materials and, while they were generally happy with their content, they realised that the quality of reproduction and presentation did not match other material produced for new students at induction. They felt that students coming into the sixth form would make judgements about the relative value of key skills by comparing the quality of the key skills promotional materials with that of other materials.

As a result they improved the quality of printing, layout and presentation of key skills materials to bring them up to the standard of other subject and school documents.

- **Timelines showing deadlines and assessment dates**

These could be included as a section in a key skills handbook. They should specify deadlines for portfolio completion and identify dates of test opportunities.

- **Examples of tracking documents**

Students need to be familiar with any logbook or learning log that will go in their portfolio, plus any other documents that are used to manage, track and record key skills. These can be made available on a school/college intranet as well as being included in the student handbook.

- **A description of the responsibilities of different staff (eg key skills coordinator, key skills specialist teachers etc)**

It is important that both the students and the tutors know which members of staff have responsibility for which aspects of key skills. This is especially true in a large college.

- **An introduction to the support that is available (eg workshop times, support staff, resources in the learning centre etc)**

This can appear in the student handbook as well as on a school/college intranet.

It is important that, from the very start of their time at the school or college, students are made aware that key skills are taken seriously and are an integral part of their studies. There is no better time to do this than at induction. With everyone 'singing from the same song sheet' students will receive a positive message about key skills and start to build a positive culture. The tutor plays a central role in this, whatever their involvement later in the process.

A college in the Midlands felt that the role of the tutor with regard to key skills had developed to such an extent that they needed to revise their tutors' handbook to give details not only about the key skills but also about the exact roles and responsibilities of the tutor.

The revised handbook included a section where staff could indicate how confident they felt in their role in delivering key skills and could ask for support and training to bring them up to speed on any areas they were concerned about.

Checklist for tutors

Students will tend to expect tutors to be experts on key skills; at the very least the tutor is the person they will come to first with questions. The tutor will, therefore, need to know where to go for help, information and training.

Do you know...?	Yes	No	N/A	Action needed
which key skills are offered in your centre and at what level/s				
how they are delivered (your curriculum model)				
your exact role in key skills delivery in your centre				
what support and training are available to you				
the roles of other people involved in key skills delivery in your centre				
the key skills support staff and how to contact them				
how portfolio evidence will be assessed				
deadlines for completing portfolios				
how the internal verification/moderation process works				
dates of the tests				
dates for standards moderation/external verification of portfolios				
the addresses of relevant websites				
how to keep up to date with developments in key skills				
Do you have a copy of...?				
your centre's key skills policy				
<i>The key skills qualifications standards and guidance</i> (both volumes)				
KSSP's Good practice guides				
the student key skills handbook used in your centre				
the tracking and other documents used in your centre				
examples of completed portfolios				
examples of the test papers				

Initial assessment: the role of the tutor

In relation to key skills, the purpose of initial assessment is to determine which key skill each student will aim for and at what level.

The *Key skills resource manual* and *Key skills: a handbook for coordinators*, produced by KSSP, both include advice and guidance on initial assessment. The KSSP website www.keyskillssupport.net includes a section on initial assessment, including a review of some of the initial assessment tools that are available.

There are a number of ways in which initial assessment could be done in a centre. Initial assessment could be:

- carried out by specialist staff
- carried out by the tutor
- based on student self-assessment
- based on a combination of these.

Whatever their particular role in this process, the tutor can always:

- explain the process and guide the student through it
- help the student to understand the results of the assessments
- hold assessment information and disseminate it to other parties
- ensure that the results are reflected in the student's individual learning plan and are included in periodic reviews.

The tutor is usually the person with the best overview of a student's progress. Typically, they will receive much of the information gained from initial and diagnostic assessment. They are, therefore, in the best position to know which key skills and what levels are most appropriate to meet each student's needs. They are also often well placed to help the student decide when they should develop a piece of work for assessment or when they are ready for the test.

Diagnostic assessment is used to identify specific areas for development in each of the key skills. This is usually carried out by specialist key skills staff, but the tutor still has an important role in explaining the purpose of the assessment to students and in ensuring that they understand and act on the outcomes.

Individual learning plans

Information from initial and diagnostic assessment should inform the development of the key skills component of students' individual learning plans.

There is no universally agreed format, structure or content for an individual learning plan. However, an individual learning plan typically includes the following elements:

1 Records

- screening or interview
- initial assessment and placement of learner
- diagnostic assessment.

2 Targets

- learning objectives that are SMART
- a statement of the skills and knowledge required to meet these objectives, possibly referenced to the adult literacy and/or numeracy core curriculum
- the learning methods and resources that the tutor and learner will use
- a timescale for review.

3 Regular reviews of progress

- formative assessment
- feedback on progress from the tutor to the learner
- an opportunity for the learner to reflect on their learning
- feedback from the learner to the tutor
- opportunities to revise the learning plan
- opportunities to record achievements.

4 Record of achievement and progression

- for the learner (for transfer to further courses, further training or employment)
- for the institution's records and funding data
- for audit.

A SMART target is:

Specific: precise and clearly defined

Measurable: progress and achievement can be measured

Achievable: challenging for the student but not too difficult

Realistic: the student has the opportunity and resources to achieve it

Time-bound: there are interim and final deadlines.

Key skills assessment data needs to be included in the planning process and learning targets set for key skills in the same way as for any other course of study.

Proxy qualifications

There are some proxy qualifications that can be claimed to exempt candidates from part or all of the key skills assessment requirements. The list of proxies is updated regularly and can be found on the QCA website www.qca.org.uk/keyskills. The individual learning plan should take account of any proxies which the student has already achieved and the tutor should ensure that this information is made available to the person responsible for coordinating entries for the key skills tests.

Government expectations and policy

Tutors should be aware of the government's expectations and policy regarding key skills. This may have an impact on the decision about which key skills are appropriate for each student.

The DfES/LSC/QCA publication

Key skills policy and practice: your questions answered states that:

Where [post-16] learners have not already achieved A–C grades in GCSE English, Maths or ICT, their programmes should lead to the formal acquisition of the relevant key skills qualifications at Level 2. Where young people are starting on advanced level programmes with the aim of pursuing a professional or higher qualification post-19, then institutions should support them in gaining at least one relevant key skills qualification at Level 3.*

The document 14–19 opportunity and excellence (2003) states:

To help ensure that all young people are well equipped with literacy, numeracy and computer skills, we will introduce an entitlement for them to continue studying up to age 19 until they reach the standard of a good GCSE or the corresponding Level 2 key skill qualification ... Those going on to higher education or professional study after 19 should be encouraged to achieve a Level 3 qualification in at least one of these skill areas.

Inspection

Ofsted is responsible for inspecting sixth forms, tertiary, general FE and specialist colleges. From the autumn of 2002, Ofsted has required a paragraph on the coordination of key skills to be included in Part B of the inspection report. This will be informed by inspection evidence from all curriculum areas. Inspectors will consider the extent to which learners reach levels in key skills consistent with their needs and main programme. Inspectors' judgements on key skills may affect the grade for the curriculum area.

Progression

Progression in key skills may be vertical or horizontal. In vertical progression the student moves from one level to the next higher level in one or more key skills.

Horizontal progression can take at least two forms.

- 1 The student gains accreditation for a skill that they already have. For example, a student may arrive with a very good understanding of ICT but no formal qualification. In this case, getting an ICT key skill qualification without adding to the knowledge of the student would count as horizontal progression.**
- 2 The student passes the test and achieves the qualification in adult literacy or numeracy at Level 1 or Level 2. They then build a key skills portfolio of evidence at the appropriate level and achieve a key skills qualification in Communication or Application of Number at the same level.**

In every case, meeting the individual learning needs of the student should be the paramount aim.

Building portfolios: the role of the tutor

For detailed guidance on the process of building key skills portfolios, see *Good practice guide: developing and managing portfolios produced by KSSP*.

What is a key skills portfolio?

A key skills portfolio is the evidence that a student can meet the assessment criteria specified in Part B of the key skills standards.

Typically a portfolio is a file of written work produced by the student but it can also include witness statements, tapes, printouts, photos, models or references to where evidence can be found. Portfolios can be in an electronic format.

It may be helpful for a student to have two folders of key skills work. One is work in progress and typically kept by the student. The other is the portfolio proper and contains work that is ready for assessment or has been assessed as a pass. This should be kept somewhere secure and ideally on school or college premises. Storage is easier if all the folders are a standard size and shape.

The completed portfolio should contain:

- an index showing where the evidence can be found in the portfolio or in another location
- the assignment briefs or tasks
- the candidate's work
- assessment sheets and records
- records of internal verification/moderation.

Evidence

Portfolio evidence must be:

- **purposeful** – the evidence should be generated as part of a task that the student had to carry out in the context of another activity, and the activity must have a purpose and relevance of its own; evidence that has been generated simply for the sake of generating evidence is not purposeful
- **authentic** – it must have been produced by the student, with no more help than the specification allows
- **valid** – evidence must show what it claims to show
- **sufficient** – it must include all that is required by Part B of the key skills standard/s at the relevant level/s.

Where the key skills evidence is integrated into coursework or assignments from another qualification this evidence may need to be copied for the portfolio.

QCA recommends that portfolios should not be overloaded with evidence and that volume is not a measure of quality.

Who has an interest in the portfolio?

- The **student** should take some responsibility for managing their portfolio.
- The **teacher** is responsible for integrating the key skills into a scheme of work and developing appropriate key skills assignments.
- The **tutor** is responsible for supporting or mentoring the student through their key skills programme.
- The **assessor** assesses the work for its key skills content.
- The **internal verifier** or **internal moderator** checks that standards of assessment are consistent across the centre.
- The **standards moderator** or **external verifier** checks, on behalf of the awarding body, that the centre's standards are in line with national standards.
- The **key skills coordinator** is ultimately responsible for completed portfolios being in the right place at the right time for assessment, internal verification and standards moderation.

Signposting = drawing the map

Mapping = planning the route

Tracking = following the route

Recording = noting where you've been

Examples of paperwork for signposting, mapping and tracking can be downloaded from KSSP's website www.keyskillssupport.net.

The process of building a portfolio

The process of building a portfolio will vary between centres depending on the programmes of study and the model of delivery. Various members of staff will be involved. However, there is a core process that needs to take place and tutors can play an important role in this.

Signposting

The first step is for teachers and lecturers to 'signpost' the key skills opportunities that exist in their schemes of work. These 'signposts' indicate to students where they will have the opportunity to develop their key skills and/or to generate evidence for their key skills portfolio.

When every teacher in a centre has identified and signposted these opportunities, a master matrix or grid should be produced for students to use when they are mapping their own route to the key skills qualifications.

Mapping

Mapping is the process by which each student works out how, in their particular programme, they will develop their skills and collect the evidence they need for their portfolio.

Tracking and recording

Once students have their map of how they will develop their key skills and where they will get their portfolio evidence, they need to track and record their progress, marking off each step on their planned route.

The role of the tutor

In signposting

Depending on the policy in a centre, tutors may be responsible for offering certain key skills opportunities in the context of the tutorial programme.

If this is the case, the tutor should:

- identify each opportunity in the tutorial programme
- develop them to ensure that they allow for appropriate evidence to be gathered
- produce the necessary documentation (eg assignment briefs)
- assess the evidence that students produce and provide appropriate feedback.

These opportunities can then be included in the master matrix or grid.

For advice and guidance on writing key skills assignment briefs, see *Good practice guide: writing assignments* produced by KSSP.

In mapping

The tutor has a unique cross-curricular overview of each student's programme and can, therefore, be the key person to support the student as they use the master matrix to create their own personal map of evidence opportunities in their programme of study. The tutor can ensure that the student's map contains sufficient evidence opportunities to meet the requirements of the particular key skills at the specified levels.

Experience of the key skills over the last few years has shown that students need opportunities to practise the skills and get formative feedback before moving to the actual assessment. Tutors need to be aware of this when supporting the mapping process.

In tracking and recording

The tutor is in an ideal position to support the student as they gradually assemble the portfolio evidence. The tutor can regularly check with the student that the portfolio is being built and that evidence is being generated correctly. At Level 1, this may require a good deal of encouragement and supervision but students are expected to demonstrate increasing levels of independence in the key skills as they move up through the levels. Tutors helping students to build their portfolios at Level 3 need to recognise that students should be given the opportunity to demonstrate independence in bringing together their evidence and planning the whole process.

Towards the end of the programme, the tutor can make a final check to ensure that the portfolio evidence is ready for assessment and internal verification/moderation, with all the necessary documentation in place and by the agreed deadline.

In providing evidence opportunities

The best key skills evidence is derived from situations that are realistic and relate to the experiences of students in their learning programme, work experience, everyday lives and leisure activity. The tutorial programme can provide such opportunities but it is important that both students and staff can see the activity as worthwhile in itself, rather than simply being a contrived vehicle for generating key skills evidence.

The next section (pages 22–26) considers how tutorials can provide an excellent context for developing and generating evidence for the key skill Improving Own Learning and Performance, but opportunities also exist for aspects of other key skills, for example:

Communication:

- group discussions on tutorial topics (Communication C2.1a/C3.1a)
- talks or presentations about school/college committee business (Communication C2.1b/C3.1b, ICT2.3/ICT3.3)
- reading health and safety documentation (Communication C2.2/C3.2)
- writing CVs, letters of application etc (Communication C2.3/C3.3).

Application of Number and ICT:

- researching the costs of different mobile phone tariffs
- researching and calculating the effect of tax and National Insurance deductions on wages
- researching the local labour market
- researching UCAS choices
- researching the cost of living in different university towns.

For advice and guidance about teaching the key skills, see the *Teaching and learning guides* produced by KSSP.

Traffic flows outside the school

A school in the home counties carried out an analysis of the traffic flow outside the school in order to produce a report to encourage the local council to install speed bumps.

The research was sufficiently complex to enable some students to complete a Level 3 Application of Number portfolio. It was valid and meaningful to the students because it was about their school and local area. The results were also used for a real-life purpose, which made it all the more authentic for the students.

Target setting: the role of the tutor

The key skills standards have been designed to support candidates' learning and development programmes. As a means of demonstrating how this can be achieved, all candidates should be encouraged to include the key skill of Improving Own Learning and Performance within their programme of study.

*The review of key skills: the final report.
QCA (December 2001)*

In most centres, the tutor is responsible for supporting students in planning their work and setting targets as part of the process of helping them to become independent learners. Many centres have found that integrating Improving Own Learning and Performance (IOLP) into their tutorial programmes has given them greater structure and purpose. Many of the skills that are part of the IOLP process are already part of active tutorial programmes, for example:

- identifying and setting personal, learning or career targets
- planning how to achieve them
- following the plan, with help when needed
- reviewing how the plan worked and what might be done differently next time.

What is Improving Own Learning and Performance?

The aim of IOLP is to help students to become independent learners who know what they want to achieve and can work towards their targets. It is the key skill that underpins effective performance in education, training and employment. It is particularly suited to delivery in the context of tutorial programmes.

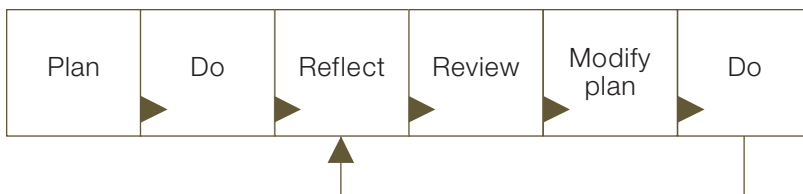
Years ago, courses and learning programmes were structured to prepare the student for an external exam at the end of the course. Now, with coursework and internal assessment, a student may have as many as twenty deadlines to meet in a year. Students have to learn to plan their work and get organised. IOLP helps to structure this process.

College tutor

IOLP focuses on the student's ability to:

- set targets
- plan how these will be met
- take responsibility for their learning and for using their plan
- reflect on their own learning and performance
- learn from experience
- become independent learners.

The essence of IOLP is the plan–do–reflect–review cycle.



Above all, IOLP is a process of continuous development and improvement. It provides students with a structured approach to learning and self-management.

IOLP can be delivered through main subject areas or through tutorial or enrichment activities. The tutor's role will vary depending on the model of delivery in the centre but, whatever the model, the personal tutor has an important role.

Tutors need to understand the process of developing an IOLP portfolio and how tutorial activities can support the development of the underpinning skills (Part A) and the production of evidence for the portfolio (Part B).

For advice and guidance on these matters, see *Teaching and learning: Improving Own Learning and Performance* produced by KSSP.

Setting targets and making plans

The ability to set targets and make plans is the first step to improving own learning and performance in any context.

- If students don't know what they are aiming to achieve, they cannot know whether they have achieved it.
- If students don't have a plan, they cannot review how well it worked and learn from the experience.

Effective plans use SMART targets and clearly set out what needs to be done to achieve the targets.

Following the plan and using support

Students need to have the ability to:

- follow a plan
- ask for and use support when it is needed
- try out different ways of learning
- make changes to improve performance.

These skills are central to IOLP at every level and the support of the tutor is a critical factor. Students should become self-motivating and develop independence, while knowing when to ask for support.

Reviewing progress and learning from experience

The review process underpins the whole of IOLP. Reviewing progress at intervals throughout the learning activity helps students to:

- identify targets they have met
- revise targets, plans and timescales if necessary
- reflect on and learn from experience.

IOLP is about encouraging students to become aware of their own learning in a realistic environment. The specific skill that students need is the ability to reflect on what they do and to learn from this.

The college recently introduced review days. As a tutor I was expected to spend time discussing with each of my tutees the progress they were making and the areas that needed to be developed. Typically students would be too general and vague about what they would improve and how. Using IOLP in this process has given the whole thing a lot more structure. It pins down exactly what the student will be working on and how this will benefit them. It gives clear targets and criteria to measure them by. It also gives me a lot of information to use when talking to parents. We no longer talk in generalities; parents now know exactly what their son or daughter is doing to improve their learning.

Year 12 tutor, Hertfordshire

Producing the evidence

Evidence for the IOLP portfolio at Levels 1 and 2 must include at least two examples of meeting the standard for the whole of Part B, each of which should cover at least two targets. At Level 3, at least one example is needed, which should cover at least three targets. Overall, evidence must show that the student can use at least two different ways of learning to improve their performance. Evidence could include notes and records (including audio recordings) of how they:

at Level 1

- confirmed their targets and identified clear action points and deadlines
- worked through their action points
- used at least two ways of learning and made changes when needed
- used support
- reflected on what they learned and how they learned
- identified the targets they met and their achievements
- checked what they needed to do to improve their performance.

at Level 2

- helped set their targets and identified clear action points
- planned how they will manage their time
- took some responsibility for their learning
- worked through their action points, using time well and revising the plan when needed
- chose ways of learning to improve their performance
- worked for short periods without close supervision

- identified when they needed support and used it effectively
- identified and reflected on what they learned and how they learned
- identified the targets they met and their achievements
- identified how they learn best and how to further improve their performance

at Level 3

- sought information on how to achieve what they wanted to do
- identified factors that might affect their plans
- set realistic targets and identified clear action points
- planned how they would manage their time, use support, review progress and overcome difficulties
- managed their time effectively, revising the plan when needed
- chose ways of learning to improve their performance
- worked at times independently
- adapted their approach to meet new demands
- reflected on their progress, seeking feedback and relevant support
- provided information on how they used their learning to meet new demands and on factors that affected the quality of the outcome
- identified the targets they met and gathered evidence of their achievements
- consulted appropriate people to agree how they will further improve their performance.

The key skills continuum

Tutors will find it helpful to refer to the key skills continuum on page 7. It is this process that will inform the development of IOLP. The tutor needs to ensure that the underpinning skills of IOLP are taught and learned and have a chance to be bed in through various practice and formative assessment activities. There should be no rush towards summative assessment. There should be plenty of time in a one-year course for the true learning needs of the student to become apparent so that an IOLP portfolio can be developed that will be of real benefit to the student.

Progress File

Progress File is becoming an increasingly important resource for tutors. It has many uses as both a formative and a summative document. Progress File can be used in active tutorial programmes to support the development of IOLP.

What is Progress File?

Progress File is replacing the National Record of Achievement which is withdrawn from 2004. It is a set of interactive guidance materials in paper and CD-ROM formats for use with young people and adults in education, training and employment. A web-based version is being developed.

Progress File consists of a ring binder and presenter plus the following materials:

- *Getting started* – for students aged 13–14 years
- *Moving on* – for students aged 14–16 years
- *Widening horizons* – for students aged 16–19 years in education and training
- *Broadening horizons* – for adults.

Progress File is a means of addressing a wide range of curriculum and pastoral issues including:

- recording achievement
- target setting
- building and recording generic skills
- informing, reporting and monitoring
- assessing achievement
- managing own learning
- presenting achievements more effectively to others
- developing skills and competencies for use in different contexts.

Progress File is very much directed at the learner and their needs. While it can act as a summative document, its strength is in the formative process. It is not an end in itself.

Progress File is increasingly used in many schools and colleges as part of tutorial and PSHE programmes. It has a close relationship with IOLP and gives a context for much of the teaching and learning of the underpinning knowledge and skills to take place. It can provide a context for generating evidence for IOLP but this should not be taken for granted.

For full information about Progress File, see the website www.dfes.gov.uk/progressfile. To order materials, call 0845 602 2260.

Assessment: the role of the tutor

As in all areas of the formal curriculum, key skills assessment may be formative or summative.

Formative assessment

Formative assessment is part of the feedback that a teacher or tutor provides during a learning programme to help the candidate reflect on and review their progress. It is often referred to as ‘assessment **for** learning’ – in contrast to ‘assessment **of** learning’ or summative assessment. Formative assessment is centred on the student. It has no direct effect on the student’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.

QCA Assessment Reform Group

The QCA website at www.qca.org.uk/ages3-14/66.html includes a substantial section on assessment for learning. It lists ten principles:

- assessment for learning should be part of effective planning of teaching and learning
- assessment for learning should focus on how students learn
- assessment for learning should be recognised as central to classroom practice
- assessment for learning should be regarded as a key professional skill for teachers
- assessment for learning should be sensitive and constructive because any assessment has an emotional impact
- assessment for learning should take account of the importance of learner motivation
- assessment for learning should promote commitment to learning goals and a shared understanding of the criteria by which they are assessed
- learners should receive constructive guidance about how to improve
- assessment for learning develops learners' capacity for self-assessment so that they can become reflective and self-managing
- assessment for learning should recognise the full range of achievements of all learners.

The role of the tutor

The tutor has a crucial role in developing the student's learning skills and encouraging independent and creative working, where the student is aware of their own learning strengths and weaknesses. This is a central feature of key skills development. The quality of feedback the student receives on the progress they are making in key skills will be a vital element in how much they achieve.

Progress review

Many centres report on key skills achievement during the regular tutorial assessment and review of progress. When key skills are part of this process it reinforces the message that they are as much a part of the student's curriculum as any other subject. In addition, key skills are common to many different subject areas and link together different experiences. Thus, where key skills are delivered in an integrated way, it is possible for the tutor to see how the student is using their key skills in a variety of subjects and to heighten the student's awareness of this.

Review days are becoming increasingly common in colleges and sixth forms. Parents are invited in for a discussion of the student's progress, taking account of the full range of educational and vocational experiences. Reporting on key skills can be an important and valuable part of this exercise.

Summative assessment

This is the assessment of a candidate's performance in relation to national standards and determines whether they have achieved the qualification for which they were aiming and, if appropriate, with what grade.

Evidence from successful centres confirms that students should not be moved towards assessment too early. They need time to 'embed' the skills and to see how they can be applied in different contexts. The tutorial provides an opportunity to identify and discuss how skills can be adapted for use in different contexts.

Communication, Application of Number, and Information and Communication Technology are assessed through a portfolio of evidence and a test. The wider key skills are assessed by portfolio, supplemented if necessary by questioning.

The portfolio

The tutor will normally be responsible for assessing only those parts of the portfolio evidence which are delivered in the context of the tutorial programme. However, as described above, the tutor is in a very good position to check that the portfolio is complete and ready for final assessment and internal verification/moderation by the due date.

The test

It is typically not the role of the tutor to prepare students for the specialised content of the tests. However, the tutor may be responsible for ensuring that students know the time, date and venue of the test and may also be able to help prepare students by providing guidance on test and examination technique in general.

A college in the North Midlands has made use of the key skills 'on-demand' testing opportunities at Levels 1 and 2 to enter students for the tests when they are ready. The decision is made jointly by the student, the tutor and the key skills specialist teacher. As a result the college has greatly improved not only the pass rate in the tests but also the number of students who turn up for them.

For more details of the test, see *Good practice guide: Preparing for the tests*, produced by KSSP. For the test specifications and past papers, see the QCA website www.qca.org.uk/keyskills.

Proxy qualifications

As explained on page 11, the induction and initial assessment of the student should have identified any proxies which can be claimed at that point but the tutor will need to be aware of any new qualifications the student has attained or is working towards by the time they enter for the key skills tests. The tutor should ensure that this information is made available to the person responsible for coordinating entries for the key skills tests.

Questioning

From September 2004, the wider key skills (Working with Others, Improving Own Learning and Performance, and Problem Solving) will be available as pilot qualifications within the National Qualifications Framework.

There will be no written tests but awarding bodies will provide centres with a set of questions designed to check candidates' knowledge and understanding of Part A. Assessors should ask questions that allow the candidate to demonstrate any Part A knowledge and understanding that is not explicitly shown in their portfolio. 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.

The candidate's answers will be internally assessed and verified/moderated and externally verified/moderated by the awarding body.

Answers to questions must be recorded. Possible formats include:

- candidate writes answers, either on paper or electronically
- recorded on audio tape
- recorded on video tape
- assessor records answers given.

Guidance on the effective use of Part A questions will be provided by the awarding body.

Clearly, many tutors will be very well placed to ask the Part A questions, where this is necessary.

Appendix 1

Checklist for key skills coordinators

This checklist can be used when evaluating the support given to tutors in their role in delivering key skills.

Question	Yes	No	N/A	Action
Do we arrange key skills INSET that is appropriate to the needs of our tutors?				
Do we induct new tutors in respect of key skills?				
Are all tutors positive advocates of key skills?				
Does our key skills policy clearly state the roles and responsibilities of tutors?				
Are the roles and responsibilities of tutors documented in their job description?				
Has time been allocated for tutors to fulfil their roles and responsibilities?				
Do we provide tutors with the documentation they need to complete their role in respect of key skills (eg for mapping, tracking and recording)?				
Does our generic documentation for tutorials (eg for individual learning plans) include appropriate references to key skills?				
Are there systems in place for tutors to receive key skills information about their students?				
Are there systems in place for tutors to send key skills information about their students to the right people?				
Do we keep tutors up to date with key skills information (eg about proxies, test dates etc)?				
Do we seek and act upon feedback from tutors vis-à-vis the manageability of their role in respect of key skills?				
Are tutors included in the meetings schedule for key skills?				
If tutors are expected to deliver IOLP, do they have all the training and documentation they need?				
Are there systems in place that enable tutors to share good practice in respect of key skills and key skills support?				
Are tutorial schemes of work designed to support portfolio development and management?				
Are we exploiting all the key skills possibilities in the tutorial process?				
If tutors play a role in key skills assessment, are they also included in standardisation and verification activities?				
Do we include tutorial sessions in our class observation process?				
Do we consider tutoring skills within our appraisal system?				
Do our tutors evaluate the effectiveness of their sessions in respect of key skills?				

Appendix 2

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 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*.

Details of these publications are provided at the end of the glossary.

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 defines 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 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’.

Advanced

Advanced level qualifications are at Level 3 of the National Qualifications Framework and include AS levels, A-levels, A-levels in vocational subjects, 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 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 student's final result. For more information, see www.qca.org.uk/ages3-14/66.html.

(b) *Summative assessment*

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

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 17 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/keyskills under 'Contacts'.

Basic skills

A set of literacy and numeracy skills and associated qualifications designed for use with adult learners and available at entry level and Levels 1 and 2 of the national qualifications framework. These skills are increasingly referred to as 'Skills for Life'. QCA has developed standards for an Information and Communication Technology skill for life. See also 'Adult literacy and adult numeracy'.

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 students 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'.

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 external 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'.

For the wider key skills from September 2004, candidates will be 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. 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. Candidates will also have to include in their portfolio a completed pro forma that will help structure and order the portfolio. The blank pro forma (or similar) will be supplied 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 grade D to G, Foundation GNVQs, 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 student 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 grade A*–C, Intermediate GNVQs, 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 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. Key skills internal verifiers do not require particular qualifications but should be competent at the level of key skill that they are verifying. The awarding bodies offer training for internal verifiers. An internal verifier is often referred to as an 'IV'.

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'.

Moderation

The process through which internal assessment 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 role is sometimes referred to as external verifier.

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 comes into effect on 1 September 2004.

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, usually 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 external 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/keyskills. See also 'Relaxation'.

Purposeful

Key skills evidence must be generated in the context of a task or activity that satisfies some purpose in the student'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 Foundation and Advanced Modern Apprentices who started on or after 1 September 2001, and who have achieved a grade A*–C GCSE in English and/or Maths within five years of the date of registration for the MA framework, to complete their frameworks without being required to take the Level 2 Communication and/or Application of Number key skills qualifications. This is distinct from the use of proxy qualifications (qv).

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) will be referred to as the ‘key skills standards’.

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 goal. 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 (see ‘External assessment’). Details can be found on the QCA website www.qca.org.uk/keyskills. 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).

Transferable

Key skills are transferable. This means simply that, once a student 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, 49), ICT (Guidance; Comm, AoN, ICT, pages 80, 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 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:

Department for Education and Skills
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/keyskills.

Appendix 3

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

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

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

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme
Gulliver House
Madeira Walk
Windsor
Berkshire SL4 1EU
Tel 01753 727400
www.theaward.cix.co.uk

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

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

Outward Bound Trust
Watermillock
Penrith
Cumbria CA11 0JL
Tel 0870 5134 227
www.outwardbound-uk.org.uk

The Prince's Trust
18 Park Square East
London NW1 4LH
Tel 020 7543 1234
www.princes-trust.org.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

Young Enterprise
Peterley House
Peterley Road
Oxford OX4 2TZ
Tel 01865 776845
www.young-enterprise.org.uk

What is the Key Skills Support Programme?

This support programme for schools and colleges with post-16 provision is funded by the DfES and the European Social Fund. The Programme provides teachers, lecturers 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.



department for
education and skills

