

Functional Skills Policy – Our Policy

Functional Skills

Version: 1.1; effective from March 2025

Policy Summary: This functional skills policy aims to promote and enhance the development of essential English and mathematics skills for all apprentices and learners who have not yet achieved Level 2 qualifications in these subjects. It supports the overall goal of raising achievement levels and preparing learners for successful employment and further education.

Our Commitment Statement for Functional Skills:

At Cheynes Training, we are committed to ensuring that all our hairdressing and barbering apprentices develop the essential English and maths skills necessary for success in their careers and in their personal lives. We recognise that functional skills abilities are fundamental to professional growth in the hair and barbering industry, they are crucial for effective communication, problem-solving, and career advancement.

Our commitment includes:

- i. Providing high-quality, tailored functional skills training that aligns with the hairdressing apprenticeship standards and industry needs.
- ii. Offering personalised support to help each apprentice achieve their full potential in English and maths, regardless of their starting point.
- iii. Integrating functional skills into vocational training to demonstrate their practical application in the hairdressing /barbering context.
- iv. Employing educators who are passionate about helping apprentices improve their functional skills.
- v. Regularly reviewing and updating our functional skills provision to ensure it remains relevant, engaging, and effective.
- vi. Supporting apprentices to achieve a minimum of Level 1 in English and maths, while encouraging and facilitating progression to Level 2.
- vii. Fostering a positive learning environment that builds confidence and encourages a growth mindset towards functional skills.

We believe that by prioritising functional skills development, we are not only meeting regulatory requirements but also empowering our apprentices to become well-rounded, confident professionals in the hairdressing/barbering industry.

Melanie Mitchell, Managing Director,
March 2025

1. Introduction

All apprentices will be given the opportunity to develop English and Maths skills as part of their apprenticeship and will need to develop skills sufficient for competence in their chosen apprenticeship standard.

- 1.1 Apprenticeship programmes also have requirements for achieving specific levels of English and maths qualifications or holding acceptable equivalents though these requirements are based on the age of the apprentice at the start date of the programme.

2. Exemptions

GCSEs/iGCSEs can be used as 'transferable skills' which permit functional skills exemptions.

- 2.1 To exempt an Apprentice from Level 1 functional skills English and maths evidence is required that s/he has a GCSE/iGCSE certificate in English Language/Literature and/or Maths grades A* - G (2017 onwards Level 1-9). They must be dated summer 2011 or after.
- 2.2 To exempt an Apprentice from Level 2 functional skills English and maths as part of an Advanced Apprenticeship in Hairdressing, evidence is required that s/he has a GCSE/iGCSE certificate in English Language/Literature and/or Maths grades A* - C (2017 onwards Level 4-9). They must be dated summer 2011 or after.

Table 1

	Exemption Level 1 Functional Skills	Exemption Level 2 Functional Skills
iGCSE/GCSE in English and maths	Grades 1-3	Grades 4-9

3. Requirements

16-18 years old on the start date

The individual will undertake an initial assessment to determine their current level of English and maths abilities but any previously attained qualifications in the subject area are taken into account with the planned programme, as per table 1.

- 3.1 Level 2 Apprenticeship Standards

If the individual does not hold existing qualifications at either Level 1 or 2 equivalents, the individual must study toward Level 1 and pass it and if meaningful time is remaining before the end of the practical training period, start working towards a functional skills Level 2.

- 3.2 If the individual holds Level 1 existing qualifications they must study and take all assessments at Level 2 but does not need to pass these assessments.

Continued...

3.3 Level 3 Apprenticeship Standards

If an apprentice does not hold existing qualifications either Level 1 or 2 functional skills equivalents, they must study the relevant subject(s) at the level above what was identified at initial assessment, but must eventually pass the Level 2 functional skill in the relevant subjects unless they have a learning difficulty or disability and an exception to the regular English and maths minimum requirements, for people with special educational needs, learning difficulties or disabilities can be applied.

3.4 **19 or over on the start date**

An apprentice aged 19 or over at the start of an apprenticeship at any level would not have to achieve functional skills or their equivalents before or during their apprenticeship if an employer agrees this was not needed, unless attainment of specific qualification levels are a requirement of the industry they intend to work in. Individuals without Level 2 qualifications in English and maths have a legal entitlement to funded English and maths qualifications outside of their apprenticeship and these could be obtained after the apprenticeship programme.

3.5 If the apprentice is aged 19 or over and their employer choose to have a functional skill course, the apprentice must commit to study towards and sit the assessments for these qualifications, participating in the planned curriculum. This course will be funded by government within the apprenticeship and the provider will deliver this course. The employer must support the apprentice to achieve this in paid time.

3.6 If the apprentice is aged 19 or over and their employer chooses not to have a functional skill programme, they are waiving the right to have a functional skill course within the planned apprenticeship and will instead need only develop appropriate maths and English skills necessary for competence in their occupation.

3.7 In all instances, Cheynes Training will ask the apprentice and their employer to complete a Functional Skills Declaration or Waiver form (**See Annex A**) as part of their training plan.

3.8 For apprentices with an education, health and care plan or a legacy statement, the minimum requirement is Entry Level 3 English and maths.

3.9 A British Sign Language (BSL) qualification can be an alternative to the English qualification for those whose primary language is BSL.

4. **Initial Assessment - Maths and English Skills Scan**

Cheyne Training will conduct a thorough initial assessment before the apprentice is signed up to their apprenticeship to determine apprentices' current skill levels and learning needs.

4.1 Part of the initial assessment will incorporate an English and maths skills scan. Having already gathered information on prior English and maths qualifications to determine exemptions as set out in Section 2, a skills scan at the appropriate Cheynes Training Academy will be arranged (most likely in conjunction with the completions of the Apprentice Details and Eligibility Checks - ADEC – form). This skills scan shall be carried out using One Advanced BKS Live and this will determine the apprentice's current working level in English and maths.

4.2 See Section 6 with regards to additional support that can be available.

5. Delivery Methods

Cheyne Training delivers functional skills through a combination of methods:

- 5.1 **Integrated Learning:** Functional skills are embedded within the vocational training, with naturally occurring opportunities to improve English and maths skills identified throughout hairdressing /barbering sessions at Cheynes Training academies. For example:

English

- developing communication skills through client consultation, including writing notes and recommendations,
- practice reading and interpreting manufacturer instructions for products,
- writing promotional content or social media posts for salon marketing.

Maths

- calculating ratios for mixing hair colourant,
- measuring angles for cutting techniques,
- calculating percentages for discounts or promotions on salon services.

- 5.2 **Blended Approach:** A mix of educator-led activities, both one-on-one and in groups, combined with online and distance learning resources.

- 5.3 **Supporting Materials:** Delivery is supported by various resources, including:
- PowerPoint presentations
 - workbooks
 - student tasks/modules

- 5.4 **Regular Assessments:** Apprentices are continually assessed through practical work, both in the workplace and at their Cheynes Training academy.

- 5.5 **Personalised Support:** Apprentices have access to their Head of Centre face-to-face during their time at their Cheynes Training academy and via email, telephone, and through online platforms such as BKSB Live between their academy visits.

- 5.6 **Targeted Learning:** Training is tailored based on initial assessments to meet individual apprentice needs and skill levels.

- 5.7 **Preparation for Assessments:** Includes mock tests and practice sessions to prepare apprentices for their functional skills assessments.

- 5.8 Our multi-faceted approach aims to ensure that apprentices develop the required Level 1 or Level 2 functional skills in English and maths alongside their hairdressing qualifications, supporting their overall professional development.

6. Learning support for Functional Skills

Cheyne Training is committed to ensuring all hairdressing and barbering apprentices receive appropriate support to achieve their functional skills qualifications.

- 6.1 At initial assessment, we carry out an assessment of learning support needs. If the apprentice is found to have a specific learning difficulty or disability, they will be referred to the Cheynes Training Above & Beyond Lead (Melissa Birch) for more in-

depth screening, which will help identify what adjustments are needed to ensure the apprentice is able to complete their apprenticeship (including functional skills when applicable). Adjustments in for functional skills may include:

- One-on-one specialist functional skills tutoring sessions
- Focus on specific elements where online resources are insufficient
- Support to develop skills and confidence in particular areas

6.2 For full details of Cheynes Training's Learning Support policy and procedures, please refer to our Learning Support Policy (available on our website)

7. Employer Support

Employers will be expected to support apprentices in achieving their functional skills qualifications during working hours.

8. Staff Functional Skills Qualifications

To ensure high-quality delivery of functional skills education, Cheynes Training sets clear qualification expectations for educators.

8.1 Subject Knowledge:

- Strong understanding of functional skills content and the ability to break down complex concepts into practical applications.

8.2 Competencies and Skills

- Effective communication and the ability to engage learners of varying abilities.
- Patience, critical thinking, and creative problem-solving to adapt teaching methods to individual learning styles.
- Familiarity with digital tools and resources for delivering functional skills content effectively.

9. Continuous Professional Development

At Cheynes Training, we are dedicated in maintaining the highest standards of education for our hairdressing and barbering apprentices. This commitment extends to the continuous professional development (CPD) of our staff involved in functional skills delivery...

9.1 Our educators are subject to annual teaching and learning observations. Outcomes identified, such as CPD, are identified and reported in an action plan.

9.2 Our team members are encouraged to engage in CPD activities, including participating in webinars and online courses, and pursuing additional qualifications in education or their subject area.

9.3 Cheynes Training also foster a culture of peer-to-peer learning through:

- Regular team meetings to share best practices and challenges
- Cross-company collaborations to ensure functional skills are effectively integrated into the broader apprenticeship curriculum

9.4 We maintain a strong partnership with City & Guilds (the awarding body for functional skills) to stay updated on qualification changes and requirements as well as industry experts to ensure our functional skills delivery aligns with workplace needs.

10. Assessment Procedures

We assess functional skills during an apprenticeship through a combination of formative and summative methods, ensuring apprentices meet the required standards in English and maths.

10.1 Formative Assessment

Formative assessments are conducted throughout the apprenticeship to monitor progress and provide ongoing feedback. These include:

- Regular Progress Checks: Educators assess apprentices' development in functional skills through informal observations, quizzes, and practice tests.
- Embedded Learning Activities: Functional skills are integrated into vocational tasks, making the learning relevant to the hairdressing context.
- Feedback: Apprentices receive constructive feedback on their performance, both informally and formally (via Progress Reviews) highlighting areas for improvement and helping them build confidence.

10.2 Summative Assessment

Summative assessments evaluate apprentices' mastery of functional skills and are typically conducted at key milestones:

- Formal Written Tests: Apprentices must complete Level 1 qualifications in English and Maths and attempt Level 2 exams as part of their apprenticeship requirements.
- Unit Assessments: practical observations tied to specific hairdressing and barbering modules, ensuring apprentices demonstrate their functional skills in real-world scenarios (for example, during consultations).
- End-Point Assessment (EPA): Functional skills are assessed alongside their vocational skills during the EPA. Apprentices must meet minimum standards in English and Maths to pass the EPA and achieve certification.

10.3 Apprentices receive detailed feedback after formative assessments to guide their learning journey. Summative assessments provide results and actionable feedback, with opportunities for resits if necessary. Our Educators use feedback reports to tailor support for individual apprentices, ensuring they meet functional skill requirements.

11. Quality Assurance

To ensure the integrity and quality of functional skills qualifications we implement both internal and external verification processes.

11.1 Internal Verification

Cheyne Training has a dedicated Functional Skills Lead to ensure that assessment practices are consistent, fair, and meets the awarding body requirements.

11.2 The majority of completed assessments are IQA's by our Functional Skills Lead or a competent Head of Centre.

11.3 Regular standardisation meetings ensure consistency in assessment decisions across all assessors and academies. Additionally, our Functional Skills Lead monitors assessor practice through observations during the assessment process to help ensure

adherence to agreed marking schemes and procedures. Ongoing support and feedback are provided to assessors to improve their practices.

- 11.4 Detailed records of sampling plans are maintained by the Functional Skills Lead, verification outcomes, and any actions taken to address discrepancies are recorded.

11.5 External Verification

External verification via the awarding body for functional skills, City & Guilds, ensures that Cheynes Training's assessments align with awarding body requirements. This involves verifying that we have the appropriate policies, procedures, and resources in place to deliver functional skills qualifications effectively. Confirming that learner profiles are accurate and that learners are enrolled at the correct levels based on initial assessments is also necessary.

- 11.6 City & Guilds sample assessment decisions to ensure consistency with national standards. Their sampling may include:

- reviewing live Speaking, Listening, and Communication (SLC) assessments or marked written tasks,
- observing live assessments or reviewing recorded evidence helps validate the integrity of assessment delivery.
- Assessing whether invigilation processes for controlled assessments comply with regulations is also important.

- 11.7 City & Guilds provide detailed feedback on assessment practices and identify areas for improvement.

- 11.8 Cheynes Training also partnership with Mesma, who complete a "deep dive" into our functional skills provision on an annual basis.

12. Review and Evaluation

We commit to regularly review and update the policy to ensure it remains effective and relevant

Last update: March 2025

Next Update: March 2026

Annex A

FUNCTIONAL SKILLS DECLARATION OR WAIVER – NEW STARTS

All apprentices have the opportunity to develop English and maths skills as part of their apprenticeship and will need to develop skills sufficient for competence in their chosen apprenticeship standard. Apprenticeship programmes also have requirements for achieving specific levels of maths and English qualifications or holding acceptable equivalents though these requirements are based on the age of the apprentice at the start date of the programme.

A **16-18 year old** has mandatory functional skills qualifications to achieve if they do not hold acceptable existing qualifications¹.

An individual **aged 19 or over** that does not hold acceptable existing qualifications, should decide with their employer if they would like to achieve functional skills but these would not be needed to achieve their programme.

Individuals and employers must read the information below. The planned programme must be agreed upon in the declarations following this information:

16-18 Years old on the start date

The individual will undertake an initial assessment to determine their current level of maths and English abilities but any previously attained qualifications in the subject area are taken into account with the planned programme. See below:

Level 2 Apprenticeship Standards

-If the individual does not hold existing qualifications at either level 1 or 2 equivalents, the individual must study toward level 1 and pass it and if meaningful time is remaining before the end of the practical training period work towards level 2.

-if the individual holds level 1 existing qualifications they must study and take all assessments at level 2 but does not need to pass these assessments.

Level 3 -7 Apprenticeship Standards

-If the individual does not hold existing qualifications either level 1 or 2 equivalents, the individual must study the relevant subject(s) at the level above what was identified at initial assessments but must eventually pass the level 2 functional skill in the relevant subjects unless they have a learning difficulty or disability and an exception to the regular English and maths minimum requirements, for people with special educational needs, learning difficulties or disabilities can be applied.

The employer must support the apprentice to achieve these objectives in paid time.

19 or over on the start date

An individual aged 19 or over at the start of an apprenticeship at any level would not have to achieve functional skills or their equivalents before or during their apprenticeship **if an employer agrees this was not needed**, unless attainment of specific qualification levels are a requirement of the industry they intend to work in. Individuals without level 2 qualifications in English and maths have a legal entitlement to funded English and maths qualifications outside of their apprenticeship and these could be obtained after the apprenticeship programme.

If the individual aged 19 or over and their employer choose to have a functional skill course, the individual must commit to study towards and sit the assessments for these qualifications, participating in the planned curriculum. This course will be funded by government within the apprenticeship and the provider will deliver this course. The employer must support the apprentice to achieve this in paid time.

If the individual aged 19 or over and their employer choose not to have a functional skill programme, they are waiving the right to have a functional skill course within the planned apprenticeship and will instead need only develop appropriate maths and English skills necessary for competence in their occupation.

¹ See acceptable qualifications list here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-and-maths-requirements-in-apprenticeship-standards-at-level-2-and-above>

The Provider commitment to maths and English development

1. **Skill Development:** We aim and encourage all apprentices to enhance their English and maths skills so that they are well prepared for their future careers through the option of functional skills or occupationally relevant English and maths activities. If a functional skill course is agreed upon, we will deliver it with our best endeavours in line with the dates shown within this plan.
2. **Flexibility for Employers:** Employers can however decide if qualifications in English and maths are necessary for apprentices aged 19 and over at start and we expect that decision to be made mutually with the apprentice. All apprentices can continue to develop their English and maths skills as part of their job-specific training.
3. **Changes of circumstances:** If an apprentice aged 19 or over and their employer originally declines the functional skills offer, the delivery of functional skills aims could only be added to a programme later if all parties (apprentice, employer and provider) agree this is possible. We reserve the right to limit access to the aims if originally refused subject to there being sufficient time remaining in a practical training period for the aim(s) to be delivered and appropriate resources being available.

Functional skills declaration and waiver: Please indicate the agreed choice regarding the functional skills programme (tick one option):		
The apprentice is 16-18, does not hold acceptable equivalents and must undertake functional skills training and all parties agree to the programme as described above	<input type="checkbox"/>	
The apprentice is aged 19 or over and it is agreed that a functional skills programme will take place and that the apprentice commits to participate fully and sit all necessary assessments	<input type="checkbox"/>	
The apprentice is aged 19 or over and it is agreed that a functional skills programme will not take place . Parties choose to decline functional skills training and understand the implications of this decision by waving their right to have a functional skills programme.	<input type="checkbox"/>	

<i>Apprentice and employer agreement to the above</i>			
Apprentice Full Name	X		
Signature	X	Date	X
Employer Full Name	X	Position	X
Signature	X	Date	X

This document was designed based on version 2 of the Apprenticeship Funding Rules 24/25 and the February 11th introduction of the amendment to functional skills exit requirements.

Only apprentices who began their apprenticeship training when aged 16-18 will continue to be subject to the mandatory requirement to study towards and achieve English and maths, or hold the acceptable equivalents. Apprentices who began their apprenticeship training when aged 19+ are no longer be subject to the mandatory requirement to study towards and achieve English and maths. However, for apprentices aged 19+, the apprentice or their employer can still choose for the apprentice to study towards an English and maths qualification. The government will continue to fund those apprentices that wish to study towards an English and maths qualification.

For more information see the funding rules (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apprenticeship-funding-rules>)