# 

# Frequently Asked Questions

## *Support for English, Maths, and Digital Skills* – 19.04.2022

### Is there a maximum or minimum duration in which to complete Functional Skills learning?

No, there is no time limit. Staff can pursue their learning journey at their own pace according to their needs. The guided learning hours for Functional Skills is 55 hours in total but this will vary from individual to individual, based on personal need.

### Is it still the case that training providers will cover Functional Skills learning as part of the apprenticeships they offer?

This is very much still the case, and is a requirement for all apprenticeships. HEE’s offer can supplement this Functional Skills learning and/or provide a solution for those not on apprenticeships.

### Am I eligible to access this offer if I have already achieved my Functional Skills, but no longer have the certificates to prove this to my training provider?

Yes, however we would encourage you first contact the institution that awarded your original qualifications and request that they re-issue your certificates to you.

### What are Functional Skills Qualifications equivalent to?

Functional Skills can be studied at several levels. For completion of level 3 apprenticeships and above, apprentices will require Functional Skills Level 2.

Functional Skills Level 2 is equivalent to A\*- C GCSE (formerly O-Levels). If you already have GCSEs or O-Levels in maths and English graded at a C or above, and can produce certificates verifying this, you will not need to study Functional Skills.

It is also possible to study functional skills at lower levels. Further details on these levels [here](https://haso.skillsforhealth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/2020.10.26-Level-equivalencies.png).

### Is there a cost associated with accessing bksb and Open Awards?

No, this offer is free.

### Can learners study more than one subject at once with bksb?

Yes – bksb is fully learner-led, so if a learner wants or needs to study multiple subjects at one time they are free to do so.

### Is there a minimum bksb initial assessment result required to proceed with HEE’s support offer? No. There is no minimum result required to access the offer. The purpose of the initial assessment is to provide recommended resources based on individual learners’ goals, needs, and starting point.

### Would I be eligible to access the offer if I have already achieved Functional Skills Qualifications, but wanted to refresh my learning? For self-directed learning on the bksb platform – yes.

Unfortunately, staff who already hold Functional Skills Qualifications are not eligible to access our offer with Open Awards to re-sit their exams, even if they achieved their qualifications under the legacy system (pre-2019).

### Are employers required to provide teaching and tutelage to learners, or is it fully self-managed?

This depends on the specific needs of the learner. There will be individuals who are capable of pursuing their learning self-sufficiently, whereas others – particularly those starting with lower confidence levels – might need further guidance.

For learners who do need extra help, HEE is hoping to provide maths support in the upcoming financial year. This is dependant on an announcement from the Department for Education. In the meantime, employer-led interventions, such as providing coaching or mentoring, are encouraged where possible.

### How do learners sit the speaking and listening sections of an Open Awards exam?

There are multiple options for this, the most suitable of which will depend on the number of learners ready to sit their exam at the same time.

Where there are multiple learners sitting the exam at once, Open Awards can offer both invigilation and assessment of the speaking and listening section of the exam.

Alternatively, Open Awards runs *SLC assessment days*, wherein employers using the HEE support offer can book individual learners into a slot to sit the speaking and listening section of their exam. Open Awards will then facilitate the completion of this assessment alongside colleagues from other organisations.

### Is there face-to-face contact for learners who have accessed the support offer?

There is currently no face-to-face contact when accessing bksb, since it is an online self-study platform. Whilst there is no mandated in-person learning through bksb, learners who need extra support might need face-to-face teaching to support their learning journe.

There is an opportunity for learners to sit their Open Awards exam in real life (non-virtual) if this would be preferred.

### Is there a limit on the number of times a learner can access HEE’s support offer if they are initially unsuccessful in their Functional Skills exam?

Open Awards does not set a hard upper limit on resit attempts. If a learner were to be unsuccessful after a second resit (that is, having sat the exam a total of three times), Open Awards would be in touch to discuss what extra support needs to be put in place for that learner to ensure success at the next attempt.

Please note that the Open Awards offer is fully-funded regardless of the number of times a learner needs to resit their exam.

### Does bksb provide support for people lacking digital proficiency to access their learning resources?

Learners can pursue digital skills training through bksb in the same way they would English or maths. Bksb offers a digital skills initial assessment, and will provide tailored resources based on this result to support those who are starting with a low level of digital proficiency.