

## LMP Group Functional Skills FAQ

### 1. What has changed regarding Functional Skills requirements for apprenticeships?

The government has revised the Functional Skills requirement for apprentices aged 19 and over, meaning they are no longer required to pass Functional Skills English and maths to complete their apprenticeship. However, all apprentices must still be assessed in these subjects, and they are encouraged to continue their studies to enhance their employability and workplace skills. There are no changes for apprentices aged 16-18 at the start of their programme; they must still work towards and achieve their Functional Skills qualifications where required.

### 2. Can apprentices defer and re-enrol at 19 to avoid Functional Skills?

No. Apprentices cannot defer their programme, withdraw, and then re-enrol at age 19 to bypass the Functional Skills requirement. If an apprentice begins their programme at 16-18, they remain subject to the Functional Skills rules that applied at the start of their apprenticeship, even if they turn 19 during their studies. Additionally, if an apprentice re-enrols onto the same programme, their original start date will still be used to determine their Functional Skills requirements. This rule also applies if an apprentice withdraws from a programme with one training provider and signs up for the same programme with another provider—their Functional Skills requirement will still be based on their original enrolment age in the initial programme.

### 3. Why is the 1 April deadline important for Functional Skills decisions?

The 1 April deadline ensures that each apprentice and their employer confirm their decision regarding Functional Skills training. **This must be a collaborative process between the learner and employer, with the decision jointly agreed upon.** Until a formal decision is made and documented, all apprentices must continue engaging with Functional Skills learning. This discussion must be evidenced in learner records to comply with funding regulations and quality assurance standards.

LMP Education has proactively reached out to apprentices and employers to discuss their options. Our guidance strongly encourages learners to continue Functional Skills training due to its long-term career benefits. This is especially relevant for industries such as Early Years education, where Functional Skills qualifications directly impact employability, workforce compliance, and career progression.

### 4. How do Early Years regulations impact Functional Skills decisions?

For Early Years apprentices, the 1 of April deadline aligns with key sector regulations. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework mandates that all early years providers meet specific educational standards to ensure high-quality care and learning. From 1st September 2025, all registered Early Years settings must comply with the updated EYFS framework, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2> which includes strict qualification requirements for English and maths:

- (3.37) Managers appointed on or after 4 January 2024 must hold a Level 2 maths qualification or obtain one within two years of appointment. This also applies to existing managers transitioning into new managerial roles.

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- (3.37) Managers must ensure that their staff possess adequate maths knowledge to effectively deliver the EYFS curriculum.
- (3.38) To be counted within staffing ratios at Level 3, Early Years Educators must hold a Level 2 qualification in English.

For apprentices pursuing the Early Years Lead Practitioner Level 5 qualification, achieving maths is essential for managerial roles. However, they must also have a Level 2 English qualification to be counted within staffing ratios.

Employers in the sector continue to prioritise staff with strong Functional Skills due to their impact on children's learning and development.

Employers should consider these sector requirements when deciding whether their apprentices should continue Functional Skills training. If an apprentice opts out and later needs these qualifications for career progression, they may have to complete them at their own cost and outside of an apprenticeship framework.

## 5. What happens if Functional Skills decisions are not finalised by 1st April?

The purpose of the 1st April deadline is to ensure that all decisions regarding Functional Skills are documented and aligned with learner goals and employer expectations. Training providers will not be able to continue drawing down funding for Functional Skills after this date unless there is clear evidence that the apprentice has chosen to continue their studies. Employers and apprentices must therefore make an informed decision in a timely manner to avoid disruption to learning and funding compliance issues.

Once a decision has been made by the deadline, a new training plan reflecting this opt out choice must be signed by all relevant parties no later than the next progress review. The first document that must be signed following discussions with a member of the LMP team over the coming weeks is a jot form. This form will serve as the official record of the decision made by the apprentice and employer and must be completed and signed by all parties before the 1st April deadline.

## 6. What should I do if a learner is on a Break in Learning (BiL)?

If a learner is currently on a Break in Learning, we will make all efforts to contact both the learner and employer to confirm their decision before the 1st April deadline. If the learner is available and willing to discuss their options before their return, this should be documented and reflected in their updated training plan. If we are not successful in making contact by the deadline, we will assume that the apprentice wants to continue their learning towards Functional Skills.

## 7. Are there any changes to End-Point Assessment (EPA) requirements?

Yes, all End-Point Assessment Organisations (EPAOs) now require a **Functional Skills Declaration Form**. This must be completed and signed by the training provider on behalf of the apprentice and employer, confirming the apprentice's Functional Skills status at the Gateway stage. Apprentices who have opted out of Functional Skills must have their training plan accurately reflect this decision, and all documentation must be up to date to avoid delays in scheduling their EPA.

## 8. Why does LMP Group still encourage apprentices to complete Functional Skills?

Functional Skills qualifications in English and maths are crucial for workplace success. Strong literacy and numeracy skills contribute to better communication, problem-solving, financial literacy, and overall confidence in professional environments. Many employers,

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particularly in education, business administration, and early years sectors, value these qualifications as they directly impact job performance and career progression opportunities.

By completing Functional Skills, apprentices enhance their CVs and open doors to further training, including higher-level apprenticeships, university courses, and career advancement. Many professional roles and sectors, including teaching, management, and technical occupations, require a minimum level of English and maths competency for employment or promotion.

### 9. What options do apprentices have regarding Functional Skills?

Apprentices aged 19+ now have three options:

- **Continue to study Functional Skills, take the assessments, and achieve the qualification.** This remains the best option for long-term career prospects and employability.
- **Continue to study Functional Skills and attempt the assessments but not be required to pass to complete their apprenticeship.** This means they will still gain valuable learning and experience, and employers may still favour those who attempt to achieve the qualifications.
- **Opt out of Functional Skills training altogether.** However, once an apprentice withdraws, they will not have the opportunity to return to funded Functional Skills training later in their apprenticeship.

### 10. How does this affect funding and training plans?

If an apprentice decides to stop Functional Skills training, providers can only claim funding up to the last recorded date of learning. Training plans must be updated to reflect this decision and require signatures from both the apprentice and employer. Employers should carefully consider the long-term impact of removing Functional Skills before finalising decisions.

### 11. How is LMP Group supporting learners in Functional Skills?

LMP Group remains committed to delivering high-quality Functional Skills support through:

- **Initial and diagnostic assessments** via BKSBS to identify skill levels and learning needs.
- **Personalised learning plans** to help apprentices develop in key areas of English and maths.
- **Dedicated tutors and online resources** offering flexible learning opportunities.
- **Mock assessments and test readiness support** to improve confidence and success rates.
- **Employer engagement** to ensure workplaces recognise the value of Functional Skills and encourage continued learning.

LMP Group remains committed to supporting learners in achieving Functional Skills qualifications where appropriate. We will continue to provide tailored support and collaborate with employers to ensure apprentices receive the essential skills required for long-term success.

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While we acknowledge the flexibility introduced by this policy change, our focus remains on maintaining high educational standards and equipping learners with the necessary skills to thrive in their careers.

