

# Functional Skills Learner Guidance

## Contents

Contents .....	1
Functional Skills qualifications: A learner guide .....	2
Functional Skills English .....	2
Functional Skills Maths .....	3
Functional Skills ICT .....	3
Your Functional Skills learning .....	4
Are you sitting comfortably? .....	4
Your online learning .....	4
Our commitment to you .....	5
Technical Issues .....	7
Accessing your learning .....	8
Functional Skills assessments .....	11
Revision .....	11
Your Future starts now! .....	11

## Functional Skills qualifications: A learner guide

Functional Skills qualifications were written to help people develop the practical English, maths and Information, Communication Technology (ICT) skills they need to live, study and work. Level 2 is the equivalent of a grade 4 (old grade C) or higher at GCSE, so they're perfect for you if you're looking to take the next step in your career or if you want to develop your skills and learn how to use them in real-life situations.

### Functional Skills English

Functional Skills English includes all the reading, writing and communication skills you need to progress in your job or your studies, or to just boost your confidence in day-to-day life. You'll complete sections on:

- **Reading** – This module looks at reading for information, including looking at biased pieces of work and will help you to work out how much the opinions of certain authors can be trusted. It also looks at the different types of layout features and how these can impact the reader.
- **Writing** – This module looks at the best way to write certain pieces. This may include letters, newspaper articles, emails and blogs amongst others. This area will also test your spelling, punctuation and grammar skills.
- **Speaking, Listening and Communication** – An important element of the English programme is the speaking, listening and communication (SLC) module. This module will help to prepare you for your own SLC exam by showing you the best ways to prepare and also giving you examples of the correct way to use various SLC skills on a daily basis.



## Functional Skills Maths

Functional Skills maths contains all the topics that people often use when working, studying or managing a home. You'll complete sections on:

- **Using numbers** – This section covers everything from whole numbers to fractions, decimals and percentages. You'll look at how to solve real problems using these skills, including making decisions about purchases, using ratios in recipes and in work or working out whether your bills are correct.
- **Measure, shape and space** – This section contains a wide range of topics from area and temperature to speed, distance and time. You'll look at how to solve problems involving time to plan your day-to-day or work life, and how to use your understanding of shape and area to do anything from read a map to plan a house renovation.
- **Handling data** – This section looks at working with information. You'll look at how to summarise and present information that you've found, and how to understand information that other people share with you. You'll also look at probability and how likely certain things are to happen. You'll learn how to spot patterns and see how even data and statistics can be biased.



## Functional Skills ICT

The Functional Skills ICT course covers a range of different ICT tasks that you are likely to encounter at work, or that might make things easier in day-to-day life. The course includes sections on:

**Fundamentals** - this module covers some of the fundamental aspects of using a computer. You will look at managing files and folders, passwords and security, and how to deal with common IT issues.

**Using email software and the internet** - this module teaches you how to use email software to send and receive emails, send attachments and organise your contacts in an address book. You will also look at ways of using the internet effectively and safely.

**Word processing** - In this section of the course you will learn about the different features of word processing software, which can be used to create all kinds of text-based documents.

You will learn how to create engaging documents using images, tables and other formatting features.

**Spreadsheets** - The module on spreadsheets is a key part of the ICT course. In this module you will learn how to use spreadsheets to record information, how to complete calculations to analyse your data in more detail and how to present your data using charts and graphs.

**Presentation** - Working through this module you will learn how to use a presentation software program to create a slideshow with text and images and expanding at the higher level to also include the use of transitions and animations.

**Database** - This advanced module looks at the use of database software to record larger amounts of data and complete more detailed searches for specific information.

## Your Functional Skills learning

### Are you sitting comfortably?

It's really important that you are sitting in a well-supported chair when using a computer, laptop or tablet for a prolonged period of time. You should take a short break every hour to avoid eye strain. For full details on computers and your health, please see: <https://www.highspeedtraining.co.uk/hub/computer-health-and-safety/>

### Your online learning

Our courses will work on desktops, laptops and tablets. It will work on smartphones, but the size of a smartphone screen means the learning content will be very small therefore we do not recommend smartphones as the best device to learn on. The content works best in Chrome or Firefox, but other browsers work too. Occasional learners have reported issues with Internet Explorer. Whatever you're using, **you must enable pop-ups** from the Atom site.

Our online learning has been developed by subject experts who have experience in Further Education. We've made a range of different resources to appeal to everyone's learning style. Whether you learn best by watching, listening, trying it yourself or reading and making notes, we've got resources to suit you.

Our **interactive tutorials** include videos and demonstrations of how to use skills in real-life situations. There are activities so that you can try your new skills out for yourself, and the tutorials will give you feedback to help you to learn. Each tutorial will take around ten minutes to work through, so everything's in bite-sized chunks that you can take in.

Our **fact sheets** are short summaries of each topic which are great for revision or just refreshing your knowledge. You can print these out if you'd rather have something paper-based to revise from.

We've got **activity sheets** which give you a chance to practice your skills. You can complete these onscreen or print them out and answer them on paper if you'd prefer. The **answer sheets** are all available with step-by-step explanations of our solutions, so you can mark your own work and see how you're getting on.

Once you've completed all of these resources, our **quizzes** can be used to check your understanding and let you know whether you need to revisit anything. If you pass a quiz, you can be confident that you've got a good grasp of the skills you've learnt.

## Our commitment to you

We want you to get the most out of your learning with learndirect. When you buy a Level 2 package from us, we commit to giving you excellent customer service. The table below outlines our commitments to you, and your commitment to us.

Point in your course	Our commitment to you	Your commitment to us
Within two working days of purchase	We will send you a welcome email and guidance about Functional skills, using your online content and how to contact us with issues. In addition, for Supported and Specialised learners, we will send you guidance on how to get the most out of your support, and we'll share contact details of your named tutor.	Contact us at <a href="mailto:upskilluk@learndirect.com">upskilluk@learndirect.com</a> with any issues or questions.
Before learning - IAG and ILP – <b>Specialised learners only</b>	We will offer you the option of IAG (Initial Advice and Guidance) and an ILP (Individual Learning Plan) to help you to focus and structure your studies.  Once the call is booked, we will give you two working days' notice if we need to postpone.	Send us some dates and times when you're free to have this call, if you would like one.  Give us two working days' notice of cancellation, once the call is booked.
During learning – regular contact – <b>Supported and Specialised learners only</b>	We will contact you at least every six weeks to check how everything is progressing and to remind you of the support you have purchased.	Get in touch if you want to book a tutorial, a mock or if you're having problems of any kind. Contact your personal tutor or the team at <a href="mailto:upskilluk@learndirect.com">upskilluk@learndirect.com</a>

Point in your course	Our commitment to you	Your commitment to us
Tutorials – <b>Supported and Specialised learners only</b>	<p>We will provide tutorials using online classroom technology, focussing on the areas you want or need to revise.</p> <p>In the unlikely event that we need to cancel or postpone, we will give you two working days' notice.</p>	<p>Get in touch (with your tutor or the team) and let us know dates and times you're free to have a tutorial. If you also know what you'd like to cover, please let us know that too.</p> <p>If you need to cancel or postpone a booked tutorial, you must give us two days' notice, or the tutorial will be classed as not attended and you will lose it. (Extenuation circumstances excluded).</p>
Accessing mock exams – <b>Supported and Specialised learners only.</b>	<p>We will send you mock exam(s) in line with the package you have purchased, within two working days of your request for one.</p> <p>If you're on the Specialised package, we'll make sure you get a different mock for each attempt.</p>	<p>Let us know (your personal tutor or the team) when you want a mock exam.</p> <p>Complete the mock exam under exam conditions and email it back to your personal tutor.</p>
Feedback on mock exams – <b>Supported and Specialised learners only.</b>	<p>We will mark and provide feedback indicating any further areas for study within five working days of receiving your completed mock. We'll also send you our guide to finding an exam centre.</p>	<p>Let your tutor know if you want any further help with the feedback or with which areas to revise.</p>
All learner correspondence	<p>We will respond within two working days to all emails to the <a href="mailto:upskilluk@learndirect.com">upskilluk@learndirect.com</a> email.</p>	<p>Use the <a href="mailto:upskilluk@learndirect.com">upskilluk@learndirect.com</a> email for all general enquiries and any technical issues.</p>
Found an error?	<p>It's highly unlikely that you will find an error in our content, but we are human! If you find something that doesn't seem quite right, please let us know. A screenshot of the full screen would be helpful too.</p>	<p>Send a screen shot and a summary of the error to <a href="mailto:upskilluk@learndirect.com">upskilluk@learndirect.com</a></p>
Compliments and complaints	<p>We always want to hear about when you're happy with things, but more importantly when you're not.</p>	<p>Use the guidance on the learndirect website:  <a href="https://www.learndirect.com/help/legal-information/terms-and-conditions">https://www.learndirect.com/help/legal-information/terms-and-conditions</a>            and let us know!  <a href="mailto:upskilluk@learndirect.com">upskilluk@learndirect.com</a></p>

## Technical Issues

Our content has been fully tested on desktop computers, laptop computers and common tablets. It works in all common browsers. If you experience technical issues, here's how you can help us to help you quickly:

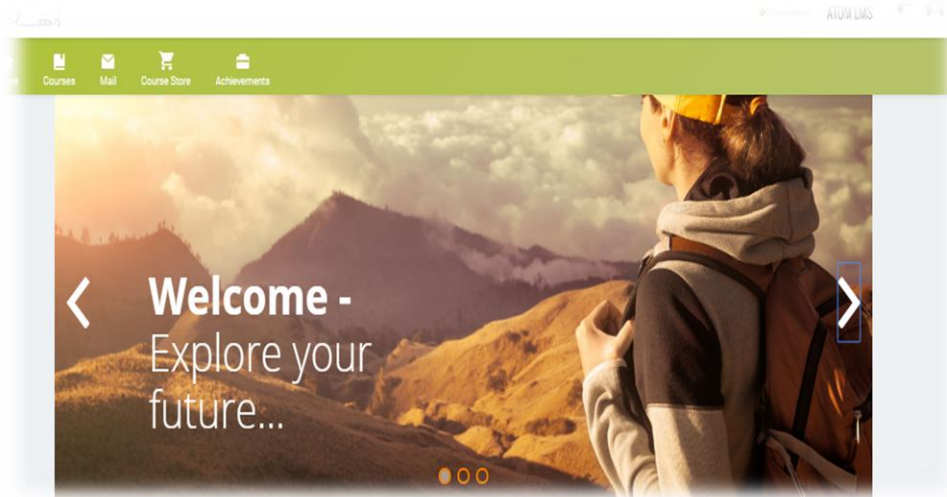
1. **First make sure you have allowed pop-ups.**
2. Send in a detailed description of the issue, along with screen shots to [upskilluk@learndirect.com](mailto:upskilluk@learndirect.com)
3. ALWAYS tell us what device you're using and which browser (Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox etc.).

## Accessing your learning

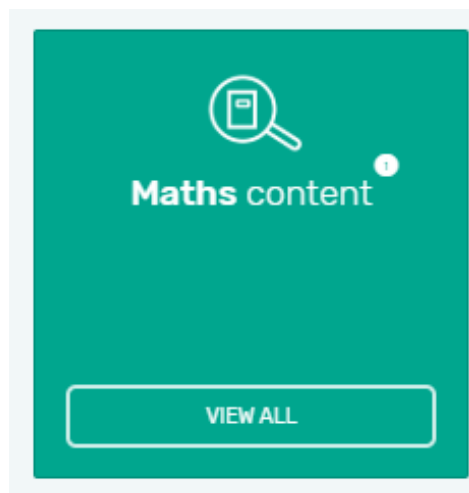
Login to your learning: <https://atomlms.co.uk/>

**You must enable pop-ups for this site.**

Once logged in, you will see your home screen (ribbon colours may vary):



Click onto “courses” then “English” (or “maths”) and you will be taken to the subject content:





Reading      View Writing      View Speaking, Listening & Communication

The learning content is broken up into three small areas. For English, these areas are:

- Reading
- Writing
- Speaking, Listening and Communicating (SLC).

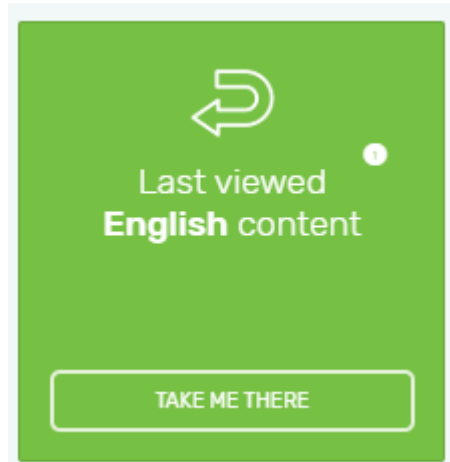
In maths, the three areas are:

- Number
- Measure, Shape and Space (MSS)
- Handling Data.

Once in your learning, you need to complete every resource from the top to the bottom. Different types of resource are displayed in different colours, tutorials are pink and worksheets and factsheets are blue. Once you've completed a resource, you will be able to see how long you've spent on it:

Punctuation and grammar lesson		Time Viewed
Grammar and reading	Launch Tutorial	00:37:00
Grammar in reading	Practice Materials	See Answers
Punctuation and reading	Launch Tutorial	
Punctuation in reading	Practice Materials	See Answers
Features of language	Launch Tutorial	
Understanding texts lesson		Time Viewed
Reading and understanding	Launch Tutorial	
Reading and understanding	Practice Materials	See Answers
Reading between the lines	Practice Materials	See Answers
Understanding the right level of detail	Launch Tutorial	
Identifying the main points and details	Practice Materials	See Answers

Once you've accessed some learning, every time you login you have the option to jump quickly to where you last studied. To do this, use the light green box "Take me there":



If you find you are struggling at any time and would like to upgrade to one of our Supported or Specialised packages, please email [UpskilUK@learndirect.com](mailto:UpskilUK@learndirect.com)

## Functional Skills assessments

Once you've completed your Functional Skills learning on our online platform, you'll be ready to sit your assessments, if you want to.

Results are easy to understand – you'll get a 'Pass' grade if you show that you understand most of the skills you've learnt, or a 'Fail' if you don't quite make it. The average pass mark is around 70%.

Remember, a 'Pass' grade at Level 2 shows that you are confident in using your skills in real-life situations and is equivalent to a high pass (A\*-C, or 4-9) at GCSE.

All Functional Skills exams are taken onscreen and can be taken at one of our centres or at home, depending on the option you purchase. If you're ready to book your exam, please contact us at [upskilluk@learndirect.com](mailto:upskilluk@learndirect.com)

## Revision

Once you have booked your exam, the next step is to think about revision. You will still have access to all of your course material.

**Your Future starts now!**

It's time to start your journey to improving your skills and confidence!