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## Catherine Christy, Principal HR Advisor – Development, Human Resources, Belfast City Council

“The commitment that Belfast City Council has made to the provision of Essential Skills learning for its workforce is paying off already. Front line employees have reported greater confidence in their ability to deal with the public as representatives of the Council and the employees are much more open to and enthusiastic about participating in job related learning and development opportunities since completing their Essential Skills courses”.

## Liam Greene, General Manager, Wheelers Fast Food Restaurant

“I firmly believe that it is impossible for an employee to fully deliver in the hospitality industry without possessing Essential Skills qualifications. I have found that employees are now able to complete reports within the workplace that adhere to environmental health guidelines and they are able to deal with customer requests more efficiently and effectively thus increasing the footfall into the restaurant”.

## What should you do next?

For FREE advice on literacy and numeracy in the workplace, phone the Essential Skills Team at **0800 731 2426**; or visit the website at **[www.delni.gov.uk](http://www.delni.gov.uk)**

For FREE Essential Skills Awareness Training programmes to help managers identify, support and motivate employees to address their Essential Skills needs contact Paula Kelly at EGSA on **028 90244274** or **[paula.kelly@egsa.org.uk](mailto:paula.kelly@egsa.org.uk)**

**Further information:**  
telephone: 0800 731 2426  
web: [www.delni.gov.uk](http://www.delni.gov.uk)

# The Essential Skills Qualification

What it means for your business



# Essential Skills Qualifications

## What your business needs to know

If you are involved in the recruitment of new staff you need to know about the Essential Skills qualifications in Northern Ireland and how they can benefit your business.

Essential Skills qualifications are designed to prepare people for work. The courses are practical and are intended to help people apply their communication and numeracy skills in real life career contexts.

### **There are two Essential Skills qualifications:**

- Essential Skills Communication Levels 1 & 2
- Essential Skills Application of Number Levels 1 & 2

Both qualifications give learners the opportunity to demonstrate how they select and apply speaking, listening, reading and writing skills for different purposes and to demonstrate their numerical skills in interpreting information.

The practical nature of the courses means employees arrive focused and ready to contribute effectively to your workforce.

## How do Essential Skills qualifications compare with other qualifications like GCSEs?

- An Essential Skills qualification in Communication or Application of Number at Level 2 is comparable in standard with GCSE English or Maths at grades A\*, A, B & C.
- An Essential Skills qualification in Communication or Application of Number at Level 1 is comparable in standard with GCSE English or Maths at grades D, E, F & G.

## Adding value to your team

Since more people are now listing Essential Skills qualifications when applying for jobs, you need to educate all your staff with recruitment responsibilities about these qualifications and their value to your business.

You may also want to include Essential Skills Communication and Application of Number as alternatives to GCSE English and Mathematics in job advertisements.

## What can you do to increase the Essential Skills levels of your existing workforce?

If your staff have poor Essential Skills then they are undoubtedly costing you money. Research has shown that one in four people in Northern Ireland has poor reading, writing or numeracy skills. If your staff are lacking in any of these Essential Skills your business could be losing as much as £86,000 per year.

### **Staff with Essential Skills Communication qualifications will be more competent at, for example:**

- Reading reports, manuals and staff information;
- Writing messages, memos and progress reports; and
- Communicating with customers and contributing in meetings.

### **Staff with Essential Skills Application of Number qualifications will be more competent at, for example:**

- Carrying out calculations; and
- Interpreting results and presenting findings.

**Essential Skills courses are provided FREE and can be delivered in your workplace.**

