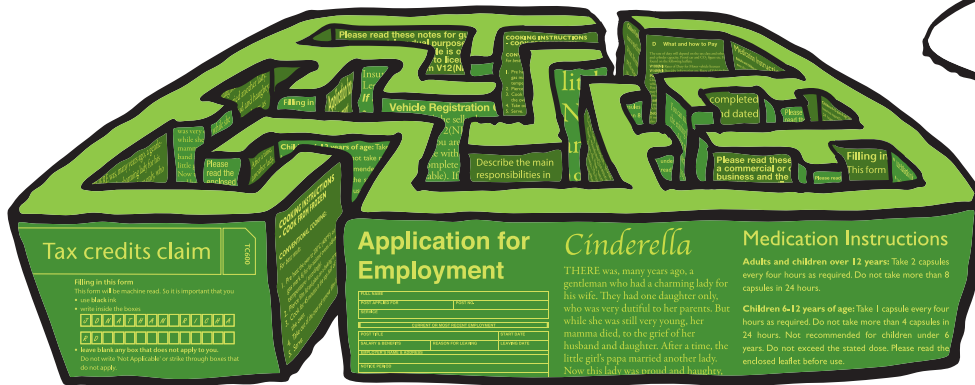
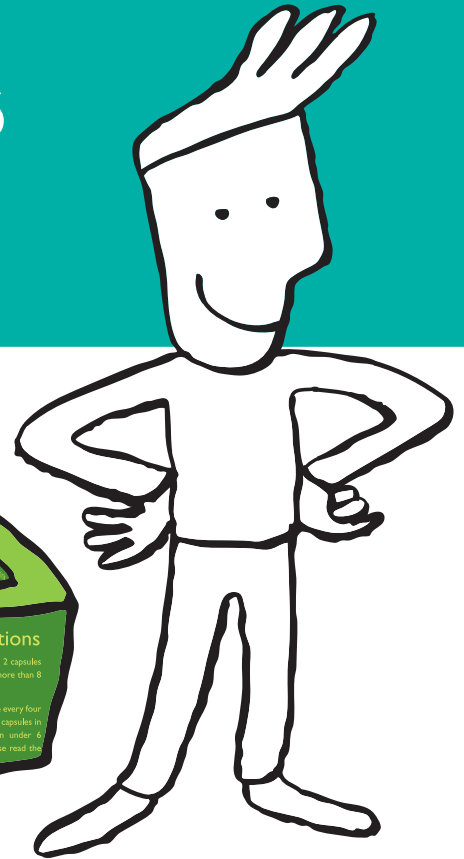




# Essential Skills

## - Employer's guide



A lack of good Essential Skills can prevent employees from carrying out their jobs to the best of their abilities. Improved Essential Skills in the workplace can assist with improved performance, quality and accuracy.

### What is an Essential Skills qualification?

Essential Skills qualifications are designed to prepare people for work or help those already in work. The courses are practical and allow people to apply their skills in real life work situations, giving them the learning tools to;

- apply their knowledge and understanding to everyday life;
- engage easily with others;
- solve problems; and
- develop personally.

### There are three Essential Skills:

#### Communication

Essential Skills Communication aims to give the learner the opportunity to develop and apply speaking and listening, reading and writing skills.

#### Application of Number

Essential Skills Application of Number aims to give the learner the opportunity to develop and demonstrate skills in understanding numerical information, for example, carrying out calculations, interpreting results and presenting findings.

#### ICT

Essential Skills ICT aims to give the learner the opportunity to develop practical work related computer skills.

Essential Skills qualifications can be achieved at a range of different levels, from complete beginners to achievement at Level 2, which is comparable to GCSE standard.

**All qualifications are nationally recognised.**



## Who can apply?

Essential Skills are available to any adult and delivered free of charge. However, the cost of **not** training your workforce is much higher.

The UK Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Survey estimated that poor literacy costs an average of £165,000 for companies employing over 50 people.

Training can be delivered on your premises if appropriate or at a local college.

The classes can be tailored to meet both the needs of the learner and your company by contextualising delivery, ensuring that the content is work related.

## FAQ



### How can I arrange classes for my workforce?

Contact your local Further Education College or speak to your Union Learning or Sector Skills Representative. Alternatively visit [www.nidirect.gov.uk/knowhow](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/knowhow)

### How long will it take to complete a course?

It typically involves 40 hours of study to complete a course but the actual time will be determined by the tutor's assessment of the learner's needs.

### Is workplace learning successful?

Since 80% of the 2020 workforce have already completed their compulsory education, the workplace is an ideal place in which to engage learners. The University of London's Institute of Education has highlighted some significant findings:

- Workplace courses successfully reach adults who do not participate in other formal learning;
- Learning programmes initiated by and within workplaces are the ones that survive long-term;
- Adults who participate in workplace learning are more likely to continue with formal learning in later years;
- Workplace learning has the potential to change individuals' learning journeys and encourage them to rethink their ambitions and capabilities;
- Learners continue to show improved performance over a two year post-training period;
- The most marked benefit for individuals participating in learning is in personal and/or work satisfaction.



## What are the benefits?

Studies undertaken have shown that firms report the following benefits from introducing literacy programmes in the workplace:

- Decreased error rates;
- Better team performance and improved participation in team meetings;
- Growth in employee confidence;
- Improved flexibility;
- Improved labour relations;
- Increased output;
- Perceptible cost saving.

A statement issued by some of the UK's leading companies and the TUC advises that companies that don't train are 2.5 times more likely to fail than those who do.

## Employer Quotes

### Moyra Rafferty, HR Manager, Irwins Bakery

"The company provides a fully functioning computer suite where the ICT and essential skills courses are held. We provide match time for people to participate and in partnership with the union (BFAWU) provide the appropriate materials.

The company sees clearly that those who have participated in the projects so far have grown greatly in confidence and are able to perform a greater degree of functions on the shop floor."

### Lawrence Flavelle, Director, KNI, formerly Kedington NI Ltd

"The flexible approach to site based learning resulted in a high employee interest whilst ensuring minimum disruption to the operational/day to day workings of the company's business. KNI will certainly support further Essential Skills courses, as the benefits are immediate and assist with employee development, retention and recruitment."