

# English & Maths Strategy

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Review by	<b>August 2025</b>
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## **1. Introduction**

All learners are in work and are hoping to progress in their careers in a very competitive job market. Some 16–18-year-old learners enrol at Derwent Training who have not yet achieved a GCSE grade C/4 or above in English and/or maths and therefore need to either resit these exams or take functional skills in order to develop the skills needed to achieve a Level 2 qualification before leaving Derwent Training. Adult learners often return to study after a long break and may not have current English and maths qualifications that enable them to progress to university or within their chosen employment.

To meet our learner's needs, both currently and in the future, Derwent Training has developed an English and maths strategy to set out the provision, management, and assessment of learners. This is in line with both Government objectives and key priorities and with the Derwent Training's vision and mission statements.

### **Intended impact**

- A whole Company approach that ensures all staff has equal responsibility to develop and promote learners' English and maths skills.
- A clear focus on English and maths in all information, advice, and guidance sessions including interviews and progression discussions
- The embedding of English and maths into the curriculum planning so learners have the correct qualifications for progression
- Functional skills English and maths achievement rates at all levels and for all ages are at least at the national rate.
- GCSE English and maths achievement rates are at least at national rate

## **2. Aims**

We are committed to providing a high-quality learning experience that meets the needs of our learners, ensuring they can progress within their career or further or higher education.

English and maths are required to go through the Gateway on an Apprenticeship Standard unless a learner has achieved the appropriate grade for exemption. Apprentices will attend classes and achieve these.

This strategy sets out how we will ensure all apprentices will take English and maths as set out in the relevant Apprenticeship Standards.

### **Furthermore**

- Ensure every member of staff is aware that English and maths is at the core of the Derwent Training provision and should be a consideration within the decisions taken by the Company
- We will provide opportunities for learners to achieve more than one level in English and/or maths within an academic year where appropriate
- Embed English and maths into all courses to maximise learners' development of these skills in the context of their main subject area and to ensure learner success.
- All vocational trainers will have the appropriate Level 2 English and maths qualifications or be working towards one, thereby developing their skills and confidence to support learners with their English and maths skills.

- Ensure all English and maths trainers have a full Level 5 teaching qualification (or be working towards it) and the relevant subject specialism.
- Ensure qualified staff manage, deliver, and evaluate the effectiveness of English and maths teaching and learning.
- Provide up to date and effective operational framework for the delivery of the high-quality English and maths classes that is understood and promoted by all staff to the learners
- Ensure all learners take an initial and diagnostic assessment of their English and maths skills as part of their application and induction process to identify areas of support, relevant level of study and to check that the applicant has achieved entry level requirements in English & maths
- Use diagnostic assessment to help develop an individualised and relevant learning programme to ensure learners' English and maths skills are developed further
- Set developmental SMART English and maths targets which are monitored regularly for all learners
- Ensure admissions processes are aligned to achievable entry criteria and meet the requirements of programmes of study for both adults and young people.
- Develop clear ownership and responsibility of trainers for quality assurance and monitoring of the effectiveness of English and maths for their learners studying on their courses
- Embed a cross-Company approach and ensure all learners experience and have access to the same high-quality English and maths provision regardless of their course.

The Quality Manager will produce a yearly planner that will ensure

- The delivery of English and maths is front loaded on all apprenticeship Standard
- Accurate recording of each learner's English and maths level on the ILR based on the initial and diagnostic assessment within 6 weeks of the course starting, including evidence for exemptions
- Deadlines are set for exam entries
- Progress reviews periods for learners for their English and maths are set at 6 weeks
- Learners taking Functional Skills complete mock exams
- Exam scheduling is planned in advanced, including a full resit programme in order to maximise achievement
- Scheduling of revision classes, catch up sessions for at risk learners
- The English and maths trainers attend vocational team meetings as appropriate

### **3. Initial and diagnostic assessment and free writing exercise for all full-time learners**

All applicants, irrespective of age, who apply for a course, will take an initial assessment in English and maths. Additionally, as part of the English Initial Assessment learners will complete a piece of free writing (Appendix 1). Apprentices will complete the initial assessment prior to their interview to aid placement on the correct level of study.

The results of the Initial Assessment will determine the level of Diagnostic Assessment that is taken during the induction period.

The Business Support Manager is responsible for ensuring that all applicants take the initial assessment before the interview. This will involve planning to ensure that arrangements are in place to allow access to computers and that they are staffed appropriately.

### **4. Interpreting spikey Initial & Diagnostic Assessment levels**

It would normally be expected that learners study English and maths at one level above their Initial and Diagnostic Assessment result. For example,

- Working at Entry Level 3 – enrol on Level 1
- Working at Level 1 – enrol on Level 2

If the free writing assessment indicates a level lower than the initial assessment result, the learners will assume the level based on the free writing level.

It is essential that the interview is used to find out about the applicant and at that stage; the interviewer will make a professional judgement based on all the information they have on the applicant.

**The rationale for undertaking initial assessment this to ensure an applicant is capable of achieving the qualification. Where the judgement is that an applicant is not at the appropriate level of literacy or numeracy to start an apprenticeship, it is important that they are not signed up. The Quality Manager must be informed where an applicant is not ready, and the Quality Manager will discuss this with the employer. An alternative delivery plan may be devised.**

### **5. Diagnostic Assessment**

Once an apprentice is formally signed up, they will undertake a diagnostic assessment based on their initial assessment.

Ideally, this is carried out before the first formal teaching session. This will provide a detailed analysis of the areas that require further development in both the English and maths classes and the vocational classes. The results of both the initial and diagnostic assessment must be recorded on the group profile sheet and shared with the whole delivery team so that every trainer knows what each learner's strengths and areas for development are. These should then be addressed in lesson planning and delivery.

## **6. Summary**

Acceptance onto an Apprenticeship must only occur where the applicant's initial assessment result is no more than one level below the required attainment level for the Standard. This ensures the Apprentice is capable of making sufficient improvement during the programme.

Our intention is to ensure that all of our learners experience high quality and relevant English and maths development whilst at Derwent Training. It is therefore everyone's responsibility to stress the importance of gaining these qualifications. It is also the responsibility of all trainers to reinforce and embed these skills through their teaching practice.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Initial Assessment Free Writing**

#### **Free writing task: 20 minutes maximum**

Write about an event or something you have done recently. It could be something that has changed your life, something exciting that has happened to you or a special event. Make sure you write at least 2 paragraphs and maximum 1 side of A4.

## Marking grid for the free writing exercise

	E1	E2	E3	L1	L2
Presentation	Mix of capital and lower-case letters; unclear, uneven handwriting	Writing is legible but with mix of size and position on line	Legible and reasonably neat	Legible and neatly presented	Legible, neat with minimum number of changes
Amount of writing	2-3 lines	10 lines	A full page but not broken into paragraphs	Appropriate paragraphs	Complete task
Does the writer answer the question?	No	Some attempt to answer question with an introduction	Writing is relevant and in a clear sequence with an ending, though may be limited	Writing is relevant and well laid out with clear introduction and ending	Good, full introduction and ending related to question
Punctuation	Some use of full stops but not always correct	Capital letters and full stops used accurately most of the time. No punctuation used in sentence.	Accurate use of capitals and full stops. Some use of commas but not always accurate.	Accurate use of capitals, full stops, and commas	Accurate use of all punctuation
Spelling	A few common words spelt correctly	Most common words spelt correctly.	Accurate spelling of all common words	Extended range of words mostly spelt correctly	Extended range of words all spelt correctly
Language	Limited language	Limited language but some attempt to vary.	Wide range of language used with attempt to vary vocabulary	Full range of vocabulary used	Full range of vocabulary used

## Interpretation guidelines for the initial assessment

The functional level at which an applicant is currently working in either English or maths and the time taken to obtain this level will be clearly indicated on the results sheet of the initial assessment they have taken. It is recommended that the time taken to complete the assessment should be reviewed as this can help the interviewer to understand how easy or difficult the applicant found an assessment. For example,

0-10 minutes: probably did not take long enough for true assessment to be reached so may need to repeat it.

10-35 minutes: valid results

35-60 minutes: may indicate a further additional learning support need so refer for further assessment

60+ minutes: may indicate fundamental support needs that require investigating