



Essential Skills

- Learner's guide



Do you have problems with reading, writing, working with numbers or computers? Or do you know someone who has a problem with these Essential Skills? If so, don't worry. Studies have shown that up to one in four adults need to improve their English and Maths skills and with the increasing use of computers, an Essential Skills course may help you to get on at home, work or in life.

What is an Essential Skills qualification?

Essential skills are the learning tools that enable you to:

- get the most out of life;
- engage easily with others;
- solve problems; and
- develop personally.

There are three Essential Skills:

Communication

Essential Skills Communication will give you the opportunity to develop and use your speaking and listening, reading and writing skills.

Application of Number

Essential Skills Application of Number will give you the opportunity to use your skills in working with figures and numbers.

ICT

Essential Skills ICT aims to give you the opportunity to develop practical computer skills to use in your current or future workplace and for your own personal need.

Essential Skills qualifications are nationally recognised and can be achieved at a range of different levels to suit you, from complete beginners to achievement at Level 2, which is comparable to GCSE standard. All classes are tailored to meet your needs making it an enjoyable and learning experience.

Who can apply?



Classes are available **free** to any adult. When you join a class, your tutor will carry out a short confidential assessment to help put you on the right level of study.

How do I apply?



To find a class close to you, check our database of courses at www.knowhowNI.info, contact your local college or call the free helpline: **0800 66 0800** where trained advisers can guide you.

FAQ



How many will be in my class?

Classes are small, with on average 8 – 12 people attending.

How long will it take to complete a qualification?

Classes last either one or two hours and usually run weekly. On average, it takes 40 hours to complete a course but this will be determined by your needs and your tutor's assessment.

When are classes held?

Classes are held in a range of venues, from your local community hall to your local college, throughout the day and evening. If you are in work, speak either to your training department, Union Learning or Sector Skills Representative or contact your local Further Education College to ask if a class can be arranged within your workplace.

Will an employer consider an Essential Skills qualification?

Employers are increasingly accepting Essential Skills qualifications as an alternative to more traditional qualifications such as GCSEs.

Why is it necessary for me to up-skill when I am already employed?

Upskilling brings many benefits to both personal and working life. It may lead to promotion opportunities and increased job stability. It can also assist in achieving greater job satisfaction and fulfilment.

Benefits



An Essential Skills qualification can help you get a job but it also gives you the skills which you can use in your everyday life, for example:

- helping with homework;
- managing your finances;
- accessing the internet; and
- exchanging emails.

Learners' Stories



William Stewart

William was the Overall 2009 Essential Skills Awards Winner. William has managed to get through life by hiding his lack of good reading and writing skills. However last year he decided to address the problem and signed up to an Essential Skills course at the Lisburn campus of the South Eastern Regional College. His 'learning journey' is an inspiration to any adult learner, especially anyone who might feel they have left things too late.



Jim Connolly

Jim is employed as a manager in Moy Park. In this fast changing world of technology, Jim realised he lacked the computer skills to carry out his job effectively. With the increased use of e-mails as a means of communication and computer based tasks he faced at work, Jim decided to take a course. Through his Union Learning Representative, a class was arranged within his workplace.



Bridin Holland

Bridin commenced Essential Skills training in 2007 as she wanted to help with her children's homework. She found the Essential Skills classes a much more pleasant experience than her memories of school. Bridin felt comfortable, unafraid of making a mistake and found her tutors to be helpful, encouraging her all the way. Bridin has used her learning experience to help other women within her community to improve their lives through adult education.