

All about...

ISSUE 12 – JUNE-JULY 2015

The monthly update from City & Guilds on anything to do with numbers, words or digital/ICT skills across **England, Northern Ireland** and **Wales**.

In this *super-sized* issue:

- Functional Skills assessment changes from this autumn: new samples available
- Functional Skills external assessments: invigilation and conduct requirements
- Future of Functional Skills: Government responds to ETF report by announcing further review
- DfE approves maths and English qualifications for 16-18 condition of funding
- Essential Skills Wales: final design principles now published
- Level 3 Core Maths: more resources available to support delivery
- ESOL Skills for Life: more sample assessments coming
- Initial and Diagnostic White Paper: explaining the methodology behind the e-Toolkit resource
- Centre staff completing City & Guilds qualifications: what are the restrictions?
- Review, develop and implement maths and English strategies: consultancy support from City & Guilds Advance
- Apprenticeships survey: how comfortable are providers delivering maths and English?

Functional Skills assessment changes

Relevant to: Functional Skills (3748) (**England** only)

Purpose: qualification developments/updates

As we've indicated in recent issues of *All About...*, we're making a number of improvements to our Functional Skills qualification offer.

For further information about all of the recent/pending improvements, please visit our **Improving Functional Skills** webpages.

To sign up to receive **All About...** please visit www.cityandguilds.com/mypreferences.

Please ensure you select 'Skills for Work and Life' as one of your Industry Preferences, and 'Maths and English' as one of your Areas of Interest.

Functional Skills, Essential Skills, ESOL, Core Maths, Framework qualifications, pedagogy, digital/learning resources, research, policy/funding...



Changes to externally-marked Functional Skills English and Mathematics assessments at levels 1 and 2

A number of sample assessments in the *new* format are now available from the **3748 qualification documents webpage**. These are located within the Level 1 and Level 2 ‘Assessment materials’ drop-downs – in each case inside a new folder labelled ‘Functional Skills from September 2015’.

Onscreen samples in the new format are also in the process of being added (links can be found within the **Level 1** and **Level 2** dropdowns on the 3748 qualification information webpage). Again, these are labelled ‘September 2015’.

Look out for the worked examples...

The new assessments are accompanied by a series of ‘worked examples’ to help illustrate how mark schemes will be applied. These include commentaries on learner scripts of varying standard (eg strong pass, borderline). Each new example has initially been developed as a PDF, although in each case we will also be providing an ‘onscreen’ (Flash-based) sample to replicate the e-volve testing environment (see below for further details).

...and new Guidance for Delivery

We’ve also developed two new **Guidance for Delivery** documents, compiled by our chief examiners for FS Mathematics and FS English, and explaining in much greater detail:

- how each of our external FS assessments are structured
- the likely range of scenarios/tasks candidates can expect to encounter.

It’s important to appreciate that one of the key differences with the new assessments is they will be less ‘predictable’ in the way they pose questions and structure activities – so there will be far less to gain from trying to infer this from sample papers.

The Guidance for Delivery documents effectively replace the examiner reports we have periodically produced for each external Functional Skills assessment – they’re effectively a super-charged examiner report with much more comprehensive guidance on how to prepare learners for assessment and a full atlas of what’s ever likely to be assessed. Like the old examiner reports, they’ll still be updated periodically to comment on any recent trends.

Changes to our onscreen assessments – visual and other improvements

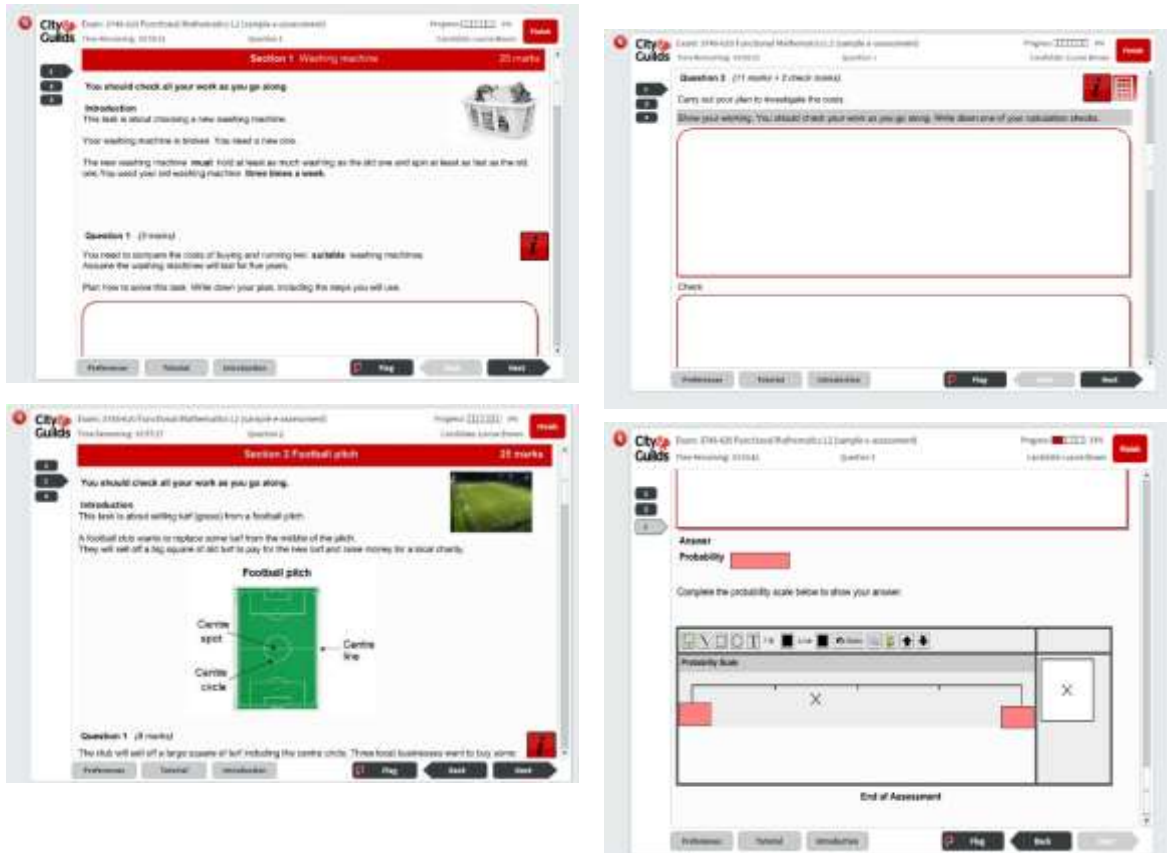
At the same time as introducing new FS Mathematics and FS English external assessments from this autumn, we’re also making some changes to the way the onscreen-delivered version of these assessments appear on the e-volve system.

Most of these changes are cosmetic – designed to make the assessments easier to navigate and some of the inbuilt tools a little easier to use. However, in the case of FS Mathematics there will be an important change to the design of the **onscreen calculator** (see screenshot).

The calculator will no longer act as a ‘till roll’, capturing key strokes automatically; instead, candidates will need to use it like a normal hand-held calculator – making sure they transfer any workings and answers they would like to be considered into the answer box.



Another improvement we are making is the introduction of **'scrolled' screens** for each of the three FS Mathematics tasks, as the screenshots below illustrate:



We're also changing the **text boxes** within the FS English Writing assessments; in future these will have **rich text** functionality (so it will be possible to format/align text). Because of the way these assessments are hosted inside the e-volve system, it isn't technically possible to incorporate a fully functioning spell/grammar checker – although candidates may use paper dictionaries or hand-held electronic dictionaries (as long as these do not have internet access). Performance feedback for FS English Writing is also being made more detailed for assessments taken through the e-volve system.

When do these changes take effect?

The revised external FS Mathematics and FS English assessments are due to be introduced from **September 2015**. We're currently finalising some of the operational detail around the precise go-live date, and especially how any assessments booked *immediately* before or after that date ceased. **i n this more fully during August**

Will the old assessments still count towards certification?

Whilst we are making changes to the design of our assessments, the Functional Skills qualifications or qualification numbers (QANs) are **not** changing. Candidates' certificates won't distinguish in any way between the 'old' or 'new' style assessments, and there'll be no change to the assessment booking processes (for paper or onscreen) for FS Mathematics or FS English.

In the case of FS English, where Reading, Writing and Speaking, Listening & Communication are each separately reportable components, it **won't matter** for the purposes of certification whether candidates completed old or new assessments, or a mixture of both.

Changes to FS ICT – are you ready for in-app?

Following the successful introduction of our ‘in-application’ (in-app) onscreen Functional Skills ICT assessments at the end of April (see *Issue 11*), we are **withdrawing** the old ‘simulation’ based assessments at the end of July 2015.

From **1 August 2015** it will no longer be possible to book any further simulation-based assessments (ie 3748-224 or 3748-225); any simulation-based assessments already booked will

The new in-app delivery method allows candidates to complete their assessments using standard Microsoft Office software rather than simulated office applications. Further information and guidance for booking, administering and delivering Functional Skills ICT assessments using in-app is available on the **in-app web page**.

We’ve also produced a **short video**, explaining how in-app works and how to use it.

Look out for more update events

Following the recent series of ‘Functional Skills – changes to assessments’ events, we’ll be holding a follow-up series early in the autumn once the new assessments have gone live. For further details, please look out further information on our **Events Calendar**.

If you missed the recent series of events...

...don’t worry! We’ve recorded a special **webinar** for you to view in your own time, featuring a detailed overview of what’s changing and presentations from our chief examiners.

To access the recording:

- Click on the **view recording** link
(you may be asked to enter your email address and company name)
- Click ‘playback’
(the recording should then start streaming).

Whilst the recording should be accessible on a PC or other JAVA-compatible device, unfortunately it isn’t possible to play it on some tablets.

Have we got your details?

We’ve set up a separate Functional Skills contacts database to provide information *specifically* about the changes and improvements to these qualifications. **Sign up here**.

There’s no limit on the number of people who can sign up from each centre, although you will need to complete the form for each individual.

Functional Skills external assessments: invigilation and conduct requirements

Relevant to: *Functional Skills (3748) (England only)*

Purpose: *operational note*

As we make clear in our revised Functional Skills handbook documents, our externally-marked Functional Skills assessments have **never** been formally subject to the Joint Council for Qualifications Instructions for Conducting Examinations ('ICE') conditions.

The main handbook document (see the **Functional Skills qualification webpages**) separately sets out our conduct expectations for centres administering these assessments. It's important to appreciate that exempting these qualifications from ICE doesn't mean that 'anything goes' (eg the old Basic and Key Skills tests were exempt from ICE), in particular the need for continual supervision and to ensure City & Guilds is aware of any assessment sites being used remain crucial. What is/isn't acceptable is explained more fully on pages 22-30 of the handbook.

Future of Functional Skills: Government responds to ETF report by announcing further review

Relevant to: *Functional Skills (3748) (England only)*

Purpose: *public policy/strategy/funding*

The Government has now responded to the **Making Maths and English Work for All** report that the Education and Training Foundation published at the end of March (see *Issue 10*).

In his **termly letter to providers (PDF)**, Skills Minister Nick Boles confirms that Functional Skills should continue to be the main alternative maths and English qualifications to GCSE, although emphasises the need for these qualifications to be well respected and credible. He particularly talks about the need to ensure they suit employers' needs, as well as being properly taught and assessed.

As a next step, the Education and Training Foundation has been asked to set out a programme of reform to refresh these qualifications, working with both the Department for Education (DfE) and Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS).

City & Guilds will obviously work closely with the Foundation once the details of this review's remit becomes clear. It's clearly welcome that the emphasis is upon strengthening Functional Skills rather than trying to replace it with something else, and it's pleasing to see the focus on meeting employers' needs.

How these qualifications might change in the future as a result of this further review remains to be seen; undoubtedly the changes we are making to our Functional Skills assessments from this autumn will help to secure their future.

DfE approves Framework maths and English qualifications for 16-18 condition of funding

Relevant to: Principles of Using English/Mathematics and English/Mathematics Skills (3844 and 3847) (**England** only)

Purpose: public policy/strategy/funding

The Department for Education (DfE) has recently approved a number of our Entry level English/Mathematics Skills qualifications (3847) as so-called 'stepping stones' qualifications (ie qualifications intended to support learners' progress towards GCSE) that can be counted towards the maths and English condition of funding within full-time 16-18 study programmes.

A full list of the qualifications that have recently been accepted is **available from the DfE**. It's important to note:

- These only include Entry level qualifications within the 3847 suite, since the DfE require any qualifications at/above Level 1 to involve external assessment in order to count towards the condition

NB: we are currently enquiring about whether the Principles of English/Mathematics suite (3844) suite could potentially be added to this list.

- Qualifications have to be at least 45 Guided Learning Hours (GLH) in size – so a couple of the Mathematics Skills 'themed' Awards have unfortunately not been included

We're currently investigating a possible way around this, so do watch this space...

Condition of Funding guidance updated

The Education Funding Agency (EFA) has also recently **updated its guidance on the condition of funding** that was originally published in December 2014. There aren't any fundamental changes, although it reiterates the new expectations from this autumn for learners who have previously achieved GCSE at grade D.

Level 2 Principles of Mathematics no longer eligible for Adult funding As we've indicated in previous issues of *All About...*, as well as in our **Maths and English Funding/Policy Guide**, the Skills Funding Agency will not fund any Framework maths or English qualifications at Level 2 for **19+ learners** after 31 July 2015. The only Level 2 qualifications in maths or English eligible for Adult Skills Budget (ASB) funding in 2015-16 will be Functional Skills or GCSE (although the Agency is increasing the ASB funding rate for GCSE, partly to reflect a likely dip in success rates).

The only City & Guilds qualification directly affected by this change is the Level 2 Certificate in the Principles of Using Mathematical Techniques (3844-22). The Skills Funding Agency introduced a number of restrictions on Level 2 qualifications last year, which excluded all the Level 2 qualifications within the 3847 suite as well as the Principles of Using Written and Spoken English (3844-21).

Unit funding remains available (for some adult learners)

The Skills Funding Agency has also confirmed it will continue to operate a 'unit offer' for some learners (eg OLASS and unemployed adults). There are no changes to the unit eligibility rules – ie the unit must appear within the rules of combination for a qualification that has been approved for Adult Skills Budget funding. We're therefore pleased to be able to advise that all of the units within the 3847 suite that were eligible for unit funding in 2014-15 will continue to be so for 2015-16 (NB: there's a complete list of these units in our **Maths and English Funding/Policy Guide**).

Nevertheless, it is important to check any units you intend to use are listed on the Learning Aims section of the **Hub** (they're no longer listed in the Skills Funding Agency's Simplified Funding Rates Catalogue). The Agency has issued the following guidance on searching for units:

- Select 'units' from the drop down section for the 'Type of Learning' search (make sure you select '2015 to 2016' in the Teaching Year before clicking 'Search').
- This will identify all units available within the academic year for both new and continuing learners. To identify those available for new starts, look for units with a Last Date for New Starts (LDNS) of 31/07/2016.
- Alternatively you can access this information by downloading the latest database from the 'Links' section on the right hand side of the webpage.

Further information on the unit offer is available in the **Qualifications Information Guide**.

Please note we will be updating our **Maths and English Funding/Policy**

Essential Skills Wales: final design principles now published

Relevant to: Essential Skills Wales (3768 and 3868) (Wales only)

Purpose: qualification developments/updates; public policy/strategy/funding

The Welsh Government has now published its final design principles for the new Essential Skills Wales qualifications. We're currently working with them (and the three other awarding bodies that will be offering these qualifications) to finalise an initial set of sample and live assessments ready for the launch of these qualifications on 1 September 2015.



More information about the changes to Essential Skills is available from www.cityandguilds.com/changestoessentialskills. This includes:

- overview of what is/isn't changing and timelines
- more information about the new controlled tasks, confirmatory tests and structured discussions (you'll get used to seeing those terms used throughout the new qualifications)
- a 'Readiness' guide and editable transition checklist
- a guide to the broader Essential Skills offer from City & Guilds in Wales (eg Essential Skills for Work and Life and the Essential Skills practitioner qualifications)
- how the changes and repurposing of the Essential Skills qualifications fit into the broader programme of qualification reform in Wales.

If you missed our recent Essential Skills network events about the changes, don't worry – there'll be more of these in the autumn. Content from our recent events is available on the **Essential Skills support** web page.

Have we got your details?

We're also setting up a separate Essential Skills Wales contacts database to provide regular information *specifically* about changes to our Essential Skills offer in Wales. **Sign up here**. There's no limit on the number of people who can sign up from each centre, although you will need to complete the form for each individual.

Level 3 Core Maths: more resources available to support delivery

Relevant to: Level 3 Using and Applying Mathematics (Core Maths) (3849) (**England only**)

Purpose: qualification developments/updates; teaching and learning support updates

We've recently added a number of additional documents to support the delivery of Level 3 Core Maths from this autumn:

- **Starting Points for Delivery**
introduces the structure of the qualification, how it relates to real world activities and structuring teaching around the three main areas it focuses on (modelling, comprehension and communication).
- **Tutor guidance**
includes example activities to form the basis of sequences of lessons. Three example activities are available now, with more to follow.
- **Sample assessment materials**
one sample paper is currently available (with two more to follow), and in addition we will be adding a set of annotated worked example scripts to further support exam preparation.
- **Scheme of work**
a detailed scheme of work will be available shortly.

For more information about the range of support available from City & Guilds for Level 3 Core Maths, please visit www.cityandguilds.com/coremaths. Alternatively, to access the above documents you can go straight to the **3849 qualification documents webpage**.

Support for Level 3 Core Maths from ETF

The Education and Training Foundation is offering a range of support for teachers in the FE sector to rise to the challenge of delivering Level 3 Core Maths. Anyone within the sector is eligible provided they are currently employed by an institution with a current Skills Funding Agency contract that is represented by the Education and Training Foundation.

We understand places for the first round have now all been allocated, although it's still possible to add your name to the waiting list by visiting www.etftraining.co.uk.

Nuffield mathematics resources

The Nuffield Foundation is also offering a range of **freely available resources** to support the teaching of post-GCSE mathematics for learners working towards Level 3 Core Maths.

ESOL Skills for Life: more sample assessments coming

Relevant to: *ESOL Skills for Life (4692) (England, Northern Ireland and Wales)*

Purpose: *qualification developments/updates; public policy/strategy/funding*

We're in the process of rolling out some additional assessment topics for our ESOL Skills for Life qualifications. We've recently added a number of additional topics to the bank of multiple choice tests used to assess Reading at levels 1 and 2, and we'll also be releasing some more assignments for Reading at Entry level, as well as for Writing and Speaking & Listening at all five levels.

Topics coming soon include:

- social media
- sport and keeping fit
- hobbies and interests.

We're also working on some further sample papers – look out for these too.

Audio recordings for Speaking & Listening

Each of the Speaking & Listening assignments includes a listening activity, for which we supply a transcript within the Assessment Pack as well as an audio recording of the passage.

We took a decision last year when we launched the 4692 suite that we would use a professional recording studio for the audio passages. Because our access to these facilities are limited to certain times of the year, there will sometimes be a slight delay between when we release new assessment topic and when we're able to supply the accompanying audio recording. We are anxious not to let this constrain the availability of new topics, although where we do release these ahead of the recording it may be necessary to record the audio passage locally in the meantime.

Where this is done, the voice should not be candidates' main tutor, although the recording can be made in an accent familiar to them.

Cut to ESOL Plus Mandation Funding

Just before this issue went to press, we received notice from the Skills Funding Agency that the additional 'ESOL Plus Mandation' funding for unemployed adult learners in England is being cut from 1 August 2015.

This additional funding for ESOL providers in certain 'high demand' areas was introduced in April 2014 (see *Issue 01*), alongside the compulsory language screening of claimants by Jobcentre Plus. It was due to be worth £45 million in 2015-16.

There's been considerable consternation about this announcement within the ESOL community, as the **statement from NATECLA** indicates. Certainly, it seems extraordinary of the Government to introduce a cut of this magnitude with less than two weeks' notice – as well as an unfortunate coincidence that the announcement came on the same day as the Prime Minister made a speech about integration and de-radicalisation!

Initial and Diagnostic White Paper: explaining the methodology behind the e-Toolkit resource

Relevant to: *any English or mathematics learning*

Purpose: *teaching and learning support updates*

As well as an extensive range of multi-media teaching and learning resources, the Maths and English e-Toolkit also includes a highly effective **Initial and Diagnostic assessment** tool.

We've drawn on our experience and expertise in assessment design to create an adaptive onscreen experience that is intuitive and non-intimidating for learners, whilst using an advanced test engine to enable accurate screening of their existing skills and areas for development. The rationale and methodology behind the Initial and Diagnostic assessment resource is explained more fully in a **White Paper** – now available to download from our **Initial and Diagnostic assessment webpage**.

Centre staff completing City & Guilds qualifications: what are the restrictions?

Relevant to: *any City & Guilds qualification (England, Northern Ireland and Wales)*

Purpose: *operational note*

A number of centres recently have asked us whether there are any restrictions on their own staff being allowed to register and work towards City & Guilds.

Section **5.1.7** of our **Centre Manual** contains the following statement:

If a member of staff or invigilator at the centre is registered for a qualification, the centre must inform the Quality Teams. This must be done before they undertake any assessments. Failure to notify City & Guilds could affect the Qualification Approval Risk status and/or may constitute malpractice.

Members of staff should only undertake assessments if they are registered to complete the qualification. Centre staff cannot undertake a City & Guilds qualification while they are teaching or assessing that qualification.

The crucial phrase here is “*while they are teaching or assessing that qualification*”. We fully recognise that it can be valuable experience for tutors/assessors and internal quality assurers to work towards qualifications they intend to deliver as part of their CPD; however, it is **not** appropriate for this to happen at the same time as being actively involved in delivering the same qualification to learners. In **all** cases, City & Guilds must be informed where centre staff are undertaking qualifications.

Whilst it is unacceptable for tutors/assessors to work towards the *same* qualification as their learners at the *same* time, they may attempt other qualifications within the same subject area whilst delivering – eg it would be acceptable to work towards Functional Skills English at Level 2 whilst delivering Functional Skills English at Level 1.

Review, develop and implement maths and English strategies: consultancy support from City & Guilds Advance

Relevant to: any English or mathematics learning (England, Northern Ireland and Wales)

Purpose: teaching and learning support updates

With maths/numeracy and English/literacy remaining priorities for all types of provision across England, Northern Ireland and Wales, and with an ever-changing policy landscape, we recognise the challenges that many providers are currently facing. That's why we're introducing a new **consultancy service** to support maths and English.

Developed as part of **City & Guilds Advance**, this new service has been designed to explore opportunities to help you raise standards.



How does Advance's consulting process work?

Our experienced consultants will work with you to review, develop and implement a maths and/or English strategy that reflects your needs. There are three phases as part of the consulting process:

Phase 1 – current strategy review

One of our consultants will spend time with you to review and critique your current maths and/or English strategy. This will include the quality of the existing provision, identifying the level of current staff skills as well as their capacity to deliver the new strategy. We will then provide feedback and work with you to produce an operational action plan.

Phase 2 – developing the action plan

We work closely with your strategy owner and key stakeholders to develop the action plan. This may be a full action plan which focuses on the full learner journey or alternatively it may focus on a specific aspect of the strategy, for example: classroom delivery, staff development or assessment.

Phase 3 – implementation

Through the final stage we will support the strategy owner to bring the action plan to life by providing relevant training, guidance and coaching for all involved.

What can you expect to receive as a result of the consulting process?

- Improved outcomes for learners
- Improved quality of provision
- Improving success and progression rates
- Identifies current staff skills and capacity to deliver the new strategy
- Curriculum managers, team leaders and key delivery staff to ensure the strategy is embedded and owned consistently throughout the organisation.

If you think you could benefit from this area of our consultancy service, please **get in touch**.

Apprenticeships survey: how comfortable are providers delivering maths and English?

Relevant to: all Apprenticeship programmes (**England** only)

Purpose: public policy/strategy/funding; general information

We recently conducted a survey amongst apprenticeship providers in England, to try and find out a bit more about their attitudes to the current reforms. We deliberately includes a couple of questions about math and English, testing their perceptions of the current range of accepted qualifications and what's likely to be allowed in the future.

In summary:

1. A majority of respondents (62.47%) are either comfortable or very comfortable delivering the maths and English components of apprenticeships. However, 24.94% are unsure, 8.06% uncomfortable and 4.53% very uncomfortable.
2. 71.03% of respondents feel that Mathematics and English GCSEs and Functional Skills qualifications adequately provide learners with the literacy and numeracy skills and competences required for the workplace.
3. Common themes around the relevance of GCSEs and Functional Skills for the workplace include:
 - Functional Skills is more appropriate for preparing learners for the workplace
 - maths and English should be tailored to the qualification area
 - challenges covering full syllabus in the duration of an apprenticeship
 - challenges motivating learners to study maths and English.

Tell us what you think

All About... is published monthly and brings together all of the key developments from City & Guilds relating to maths/numeracy/number, English/literacy/language/communication and ICT/digital skills learning and qualifications. You'll find information about **all** of the 'maths and English' qualifications that we offer across **England, Northern Ireland** and **Wales** – including **Functional Skills** and **Essential Skills**.

All About... also includes updates on teaching and learning resources, as well as relevant public policy or other information we think you might be interested in. We've tried to categorise each article by indicating any specific City & Guilds qualification(s) it relates to, and/or if it applies only to England, Northern Ireland or Wales.

Each edition is numbered, so we can refer back to previous issues or tell you when information has been superseded.

If there's anything else you'd particularly like us to cover or explain more fully in future issues of *All About...*, please feel free to drop us a line to mathsandenglish@cityandguilds.com or tweet using the hashtag **#CGMathsEnglish**.

For more information about City & Guilds' entire range of 'maths and English' products and services, please visit www.cityandguilds.com/mathsandenglish.

To sign up to receive *All About...* please visit www.cityandguilds.com/mypreferences.

Be sure to select 'Skills for Work and Life' as one of your Industry Preferences, and 'Maths and English' as one of your Areas of Interest.

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