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# Functional skills subject definitions

## Generic definition

Functional skills are those core elements of English, mathematics and ICT that provide an individual with the essential knowledge, skills and understanding that will enable them to operate confidently, effectively and independently in life and at work. Individuals of whatever age who possess these skills will be able to participate and progress in education, training and employment as well as develop and secure the broader range of aptitudes, attitudes and behaviours that will enable them to make a positive contribution to the communities in which they live and work.

In the case of **English** this means that:

- Each individual is confident and capable when using the skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing and is able to communicate effectively, adapting to a range of audiences and contexts. This will include being able to explain information clearly and succinctly in speech and writing, expressing a point of view reasonably and persuasively and using ICT to communicate effectively.
- In life and work each individual will be able to read and understand information and instructions, then use this understanding to act appropriately and to analyse how ideas and information are presented, evaluating their usefulness, for example in solving a problem. They will be able to make an oral presentation or report, contribute to discussions and use speech to work collaboratively in teams to agree actions and conclusions.

In the case of **mathematics** this means that:

- Each individual has sufficient understanding of a range of mathematical concepts and is able to know how and when to use them. For example, they will have the confidence and

capability to use maths to solve problems embedded in increasingly complex settings and to use a range of tools, including ICT as appropriate.

- In life and work, each individual will develop the analytical and reasoning skills to draw conclusions, justify how they are reached and identify errors or inconsistencies. They will also be able to validate and interpret results, to judge the limits of their validity and use them effectively and efficiently.

In the case of **ICT** this means that:

- Each individual is confident and capable when using ICT systems and tools to meet a variety of needs in a range of contexts. For example they will use ICT to find, select and bring together relevant information and use ICT to develop, interpret and exchange information, for a purpose.
- In life and work each individual will be able to apply ICT safely to enhance their learning and the quality of their work.

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