

List of Recognised Proxy Qualifications for Essential Skills (Wales)

Status and purpose

This document sets out the Recognised Proxy Qualifications for Essential Skills (Wales) (the "Proxy List") for the purposes of the Apprenticeships Specification Cymru (ASC).

The Proxy List specifies qualifications which may be accepted in place of Essential Skills qualifications where Essential Skills are required by an apprenticeship framework published under section 117(2) of the Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Act 2022 (TERA). The Proxy List applies as in force on the date the relevant apprenticeship framework comes into force, unless otherwise stated.

General principles

A recognised proxy qualification may be accepted only where it evidences achievement at an equivalent or higher level to the Essential Skill it replaces.

Where a framework specifies Essential Skills requirements, it must also specify which proxy qualifications are accepted and the minimum level at which the proxy must have been achieved. Unless otherwise stated, proxy qualifications may be accepted regardless of the date of achievement; partial achievement does not constitute a recognised proxy.

Reasonable adjustments and equality considerations

Nothing in this Proxy List prevents the application of reasonable adjustments for learners with learning difficulties or disabilities, or the use of professional assessment to determine the most appropriate evidence of competence, provided that occupational competence and minimum standards are not diluted.

Framework developers, providers and Medr must have due regard to the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Publication, maintenance and review

The Proxy List is published by the Welsh Ministers for the purposes of ASC and forms part of the requirements specified under section 115 TERA.

Any revision to the Proxy List will be published separately and clearly dated. Revisions do not apply retrospectively unless expressly stated.

Essential Communication Skills – Proxy List

Communication – Level 1 (Foundation Apprenticeships)

Qualification	Level / Grade criteria
Essential Communication Skills or Essential Skills Wales in Communication 1	Minimum Level 1
GCSE/IGCSE English – any with English in the title (including English Literature, English Language, English Studies, English Communication; Welsh Language; short courses; pilot courses; double awards).	Minimum Grade 1 or Minimum Grade G
IELTS or other relevant equivalent ESOL qualification	IELTS, minimum grade 5.5
Functional Skills – English	Minimum Level 1
A/AS Level English – any with English in the title (including English Language, English Literature, English Language and Literature; Welsh Language)	Minimum Grade E or pre-1986 A Level “O” grade (Ordinary Grade equivalent)
O Level English (English, English Language, English Literature, English Language and Literature)	Minimum Grade E or pre-1975 evidence of a pass
Key Skills Communication / Literacy	Minimum Level 1
CSE English	2 or 3
Pre-U Certificate Literature in English	P3
Northern Ireland Certificate in Essential Skills Communication	Minimum Level 1
British Sign Language – regulated qualification (only where British Sign Language is the apprentice’s primary language)	Minimum Level 1 or Minimum SCQF Level 4

Scottish Advanced Higher in English (SCQF Level 7)	Minimum Grade C
Scottish Higher in English (SCQF Level 6)	Minimum Grade C
Scottish National 4 in English (SCQF Level 4)	Pass
Scottish Intermediate 1 in English (SCQF Level 4)	Minimum Grade C
Scottish Standard Grade General in English (SCQF Level 4)	Minimum Grade 3
Scottish National Certificate Unit Communication (SCQF Level 6)	Pass
Scottish Core Skill Unit in Communication (SCQF Level 4)	Pass
Scottish Workplace Core Unit in Communication (SCQF Level 4) (Oral Communication and Written Communication)	Pass
Scottish National Unit in Literacy (SCQF Level 4)	Pass
Scottish Ordinary Grade in English (SCQF Level 5)	Minimum Grade C
International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme Level 1/2 Certificate in Language and Literature	Minimum Grade 2
International Baccalaureate Diploma Standard or Higher Level Qualification in English A: Literature; English A: Language and Literature; or English Literature and Performance	Minimum Grade 3
Overseas qualifications (with UK ENIC/NARIC statement of	Minimum grade equivalent to GCSE A*–C

comparability showing equivalence to minimum SASW requirements and confirmation equivalent to GCSE A*–C)	
Welsh Baccalaureate – only where the Essential Skills Wales / Essential Skills Qualifications Communication element is demonstrated	Minimum Level 1

Application of Number – Level 1 (Foundation Apprenticeships)

Qualification	Level / Grade criteria
Essential Application of Number Skills or Essential Skills Wales in Application of Number	Minimum Level 1
GCSE/IGCSE Mathematics – any with Mathematics in the title (including short course/pilot; double awards; linear/modular; application/methods/additional/use of mathematics)	Minimum Grade 1 or Minimum Grade G
Functional Skills – Mathematics	Minimum Level 1
A/AS Level Mathematics – any with Mathematics in the title (including Pure, Further, Use of Mathematics)	Minimum Grade E or pre-1986 A Level “O” grade (Ordinary Grade equivalent)
O Level Mathematics	Minimum Grade E or pre-1975 evidence of a pass
Key Skills Application of Number (Numeracy)	Minimum Level 1
Northern Ireland Certificate in Essential Skills Application of Number	Minimum Level 1
CSE Mathematics	Minimum Level 2
Core Mathematics Level 3 (where included in performance tables) – Mathematical Studies; Using and Applying Mathematics; Quantitative Problem Solving; Quantitative Reasoning; Mathematics in Context; Mathematics for Work and Life	Minimum Grade E
Level 2 Freestanding Mathematics qualification – Foundations of Advanced Mathematics	Minimum Grade E

Pre-U Certificate in Mathematics or Further Mathematics	Minimum P3
Scottish Advanced Higher in Mathematics or Further Mathematics	Minimum Grade C
Scottish Higher in Mathematics (SCQF Level 6)	Minimum Grade C
Scottish National 4 in Mathematics / Life Skills Mathematics / Applications of Mathematics (SCQF Level 4)	Pass
Scottish Intermediate 1 in Mathematics (SCQF Level 4)	Minimum Grade C
Scottish Standard Grade General in Mathematics (SCQF Level 4)	Minimum 3
Scottish Core Skill Unit in Numeracy (SCQF Level 4) – Graphical Information and Using Number	Pass
Scottish Workplace Core Skill Unit in Numeracy (SCQF Level 4)	Pass
Scottish National Unit in Numeracy (SCQF Level 4)	Pass
Scottish Ordinary Grade in Mathematics (SCQF Level 5)	Minimum Grade C
International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme Level 1/2 Certificate in Mathematics or Mathematics Extended	Minimum Grade 2
International Baccalaureate Diploma Standard or Higher Level Qualification in Mathematical Studies; Mathematics; or Further Mathematics	Minimum Grade 3
Overseas qualifications (with UK ENIC/NARIC statement of	Minimum grade equivalent to GCSE A*–C

comparability showing equivalence to minimum SASW requirements and confirmation equivalent to GCSE A*–C)	
Welsh Baccalaureate – only where the Essential Skills Wales / Essential Skills Qualifications Application of Number element is demonstrated	Minimum Level 1

Digital Literacy – Level 1 (Foundation Apprenticeships)

Qualification	Level / Grade criteria
Essential Skills Wales in Information and Communication Technology	Minimum Level 1 'Pass' or above
Functional Skills – Information and Communications Technology (ICT)	Minimum Level 1
GCSE ICT (with or without Enhanced Functional Content) at any tier – including International GCSEs; short courses/pilot courses; double awards; applied ICT	Minimum Grade 1 or Minimum Grade G
GCSE in Computing / Computing Studies / Computer Science (from 2016) / Digital Technology	Minimum Level 1 or Minimum Grade G
Key Skills ICT (including awards by NI and England awarding organisations)	Minimum Level 1
A/AS level in ICT / Applied ICT / Computing / Computer Science / Digital Technology	Minimum Grade E
O Level ICT	Minimum Grade E
Level 1/2 qualifications – BTEC First in Information and Creative Technology (Award/Cert/Dip/Ext Dip)	Level 1 outcome or above
Level 1/2 – Pearson BTEC Tech Award in Digital Information Technology	Level 1 Pass or above
Level 1/2 – OCR Cambridge National in ICT (Award/Cert/Dip)	Pass at Level 1 (P1) or above
Level 1/2 – WJEC Level 1/2 Vocational Award in ICT (Technical Award)	Level 1 Pass or above

Level 2 Cambridge Technical in IT (Award/Cert/Ext Cert/Dip)	Pass grade or above
Level 3 – Pearson BTEC in IT (various sizes)	Pass grade or above
Level 3 – Pearson BTEC in Computing (various sizes)	Pass grade or above
Level 3 – Cambridge Technical in IT (various sizes)	Pass grade or above

Communication – Level 2 (Apprenticeships)

Qualification	Level / Grade criteria
Essential Communication Skills or Essential Skills Wales in Communication 1	Minimum Level 2
GCSE/IGCSE English – any with English in the title (including English Literature, English Language, English Studies, English Communication; Welsh Language; short courses; pilot courses; double awards).	Minimum Grade 4 or Minimum Grade C
IELTS or other relevant equivalent ESOL qualification	IELTS, minimum grade 6.0
Functional Skills – English	Minimum Level 2
A/AS Level English – any with English in the title (including English Language, English Literature, English Language and Literature; Welsh Language)	Minimum Grade E or pre-1986 A Level “O” grade (Ordinary Grade equivalent)
O Level English (English, English Language, English Literature, English Language and Literature)	Minimum Grade C or pre-1975 evidence of a pass
Key Skills Communication / Literacy	Minimum Level 2
CSE English	Minimum Grade 1
Pre-U Certificate Literature in English	P3
Northern Ireland Certificate in Essential Skills Communication	Minimum Level 2
British Sign Language – regulated qualification (only where British Sign Language is the apprentice’s primary language)	Minimum Level 2 or Minimum SCQF Level 5

Scottish Advanced Higher in English (SCQF Level 7)	Minimum Grade C
Scottish Higher in English (SCQF Level 6)	Minimum Grade C
Scottish National 5 in English (SCQF Level 5)	Minimum Grade D
Scottish Intermediate 2 in English (SCQF Level 5)	Minimum Grade C
Scottish Standard Grade General in English (SCQF Level 5)	Minimum 2
Scottish National Certificate Unit Communication (SCQF Level 6)	Pass
Scottish Core Skill Unit in Communication (SCQF Level 5)	Pass
Scottish Workplace Core Unit in Communication (SCQF Level 5) (Oral Communication and Written Communication)	Pass
Scottish National Unit in Literacy (SCQF Level 5)	Pass
Scottish Ordinary Grade in English (SCQF Level 5)	Minimum Grade C
International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme Level 1/2 Certificate in Language and Literature	Minimum Grade 3
International Baccalaureate Diploma Standard or Higher Level Qualification in English A: Literature; English A: Language and Literature; or English Literature and Performance	Minimum Grade 3
Overseas qualifications (with UK ENIC/NARIC statement of	Minimum grade equivalent to GCSE A*–C

comparability showing equivalence and confirmation equivalent to GCSE A*–C)	
Welsh Baccalaureate – only where the Essential Skills Wales / Essential Skills Qualifications Communication element is demonstrated	Minimum Level 2

Application of Number – Level 2 (Apprenticeships)

Qualification	Level / Grade criteria
Essential Application of Number Skills or Essential Skills Wales in Application of Number	Minimum Level 2
GCSE/IGCSE Mathematics – any with Mathematics in the title (including short course/pilot; double awards; linear/modular; application/methods/additional/use of mathematics)	Minimum Grade 4 or Minimum Grade C
Functional Skills – Mathematics	Minimum Level 2
A/AS Level Mathematics – any with Mathematics in the title (including Pure, Further, Use of Mathematics)	Minimum Grade E or pre-1986 A Level “O” grade (Ordinary Grade equivalent)
O Level Mathematics	Minimum Grade C or pre-1975 evidence of a pass
Key Skills Application of Number (Numeracy)	Minimum Level 2
Northern Ireland Certificate in Essential Skills Application of Number	Minimum Level 2
CSE Mathematics	Minimum Level 1
Core Mathematics Level 3 (where included in performance tables) – Mathematical Studies; Using and Applying Mathematics; Quantitative Problem Solving; Quantitative Reasoning; Mathematics in Context; Mathematics for Work and Life	Minimum Grade E
Level 2 Freestanding Mathematics qualification – Foundations of Advanced Mathematics	Minimum Grade C

Pre-U Certificate in Mathematics or Further Mathematics	Minimum P3
Scottish Advanced Higher in Mathematics	Minimum Grade C
Scottish Higher in Mathematics (SCQF Level 6)	Minimum Grade C
Scottish National 5 in Mathematics / Life Skills Mathematics / Applications of Mathematics (SCQF Level 5)	Minimum Grade D
Scottish Intermediate 2 in Mathematics (SCQF Level 5)	Minimum Grade C
Scottish Standard Grade General in Mathematics (SCQF Level 5)	Minimum 2
Scottish Core Skill Unit in Numeracy (SCQF Level 5) – Graphical Information and Using Number	Pass
Scottish Workplace Core Skill Unit in Numeracy (SCQF Level 5)	Pass
Scottish National Unit in Numeracy (SCQF Level 5)	Pass
Scottish Ordinary Grade in Mathematics (SCQF Level 5)	Minimum Grade C
International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme Level 1/2 Certificate in Mathematics or Mathematics-Extended	Minimum Grade 3
International Baccalaureate Diploma Standard or Higher Level Qualification in Mathematical Studies; Mathematics; Further Mathematics	Minimum Grade 3
Overseas qualifications (with UK ENIC/NARIC statement of	Minimum grade equivalent to GCSE A*–C

comparability showing equivalence and confirmation equivalent to GCSE A*–C)	
Welsh Baccalaureate – only where the Essential Skills Wales / Essential Skills Qualifications Application of Number element is demonstrated	Minimum Level 2

Digital Literacy – Level 2 (Apprenticeships)

Qualification	Level / Grade criteria
Essential Skills Wales in Information and Communication Technology	Minimum Level 2 'Pass' or above
Functional Skills – Information and Communications Technology (ICT)	Minimum Level 2
GCSE ICT (with or without Enhanced Functional Content) at any tier – including International GCSEs; short courses/pilot courses; double awards; applied ICT	Minimum Grade 4 or Minimum Grade C
GCSE in Computing / Computing Studies / Computer Science (from 2016) / Digital Technology	Minimum Level 4 or Minimum Grade C
Key Skills ICT (including awards by NI and England awarding organisations)	Minimum Level 2
A/AS level in ICT / Applied ICT / Computing / Computer Science / Digital Technology	Minimum Grade E
O Level ICT	Minimum Grade C
Level 1/2 qualifications – BTEC First in Information and Creative Technology (Award/Cert/Dip/Ext Dip)	Level 2 Pass or above
Level 1/2 – Pearson BTEC Tech Award in Digital Information Technology	Level 2 Pass or above
Level 1/2 – OCR Cambridge National in ICT (Award/Cert/Dip)	Pass at Level 2 (P2) or above
Level 1/2 – WJEC Level 1/2 Vocational Award in ICT (Technical Award)	Level 2 Pass or above

Level 2 Cambridge Technical in IT (Award/Cert/Ext Cert/Dip)	Pass grade or above
Level 3 – Pearson BTEC in IT (various sizes)	Pass grade or above
Level 3 – Pearson BTEC in Computing (various sizes)	Pass grade or above
Level 3 – Cambridge Technical in IT (various sizes)	Pass grade or above

Use at Levels 4 and 5 (Higher Apprenticeships)

Where Essential Skills are specified in frameworks at Levels 4 and 5, the Level 2 proxy qualifications apply unless a higher requirement is explicitly stated.