



# **Foundational Learning Competence Information Booklet**

## **What is the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations?**

The Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) was established in 2010 in terms of section 26G of the Skills Development Act of 1998 as a juristic person. It was listed as a public entity in Government Gazette No. 33900 of 31 December 2010 - effective from 1 April 2010 - to establish the Sub-Framework for Trades and Occupations. The QCTO is responsible for the development, maintenance and quality assurance of qualifications within its sub-framework.

The Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) manages the Occupational Qualifications Sub-framework (OQSF). The purpose of the QCTO is to ensure quality in the development, provision and certification of occupational qualifications.

The QCTO was established to perform certain functions which include, but are not limited, to the following:

- Design and develop occupational standards and qualifications and submit them to the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) for registration on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF);
- Ensure the quality of occupational standards and qualifications and learning in, and for the workplace.

## **What is the Foundational Learning Competence?**

Foundational Learning Competence (FLC) is a part qualification that consists of two learning areas: Communications and Mathematical Literacy. It outlines the minimum level of competence required for optimal functioning in the world of work and for occupational learning at NQF Levels 2 - 4. It is a part qualification registered at NQF Level 2 and carries 40 credits in total. Each learning area carries 20 credits.

The FLC is directed at learners in occupational qualifications registered on the NQF at Level 2, 3 and 4. It is a compulsory component for all new qualifications developed by the QCTO at NQF levels 3 and 4. This does not mean that developers of qualifications at NQF Level 2 cannot include Foundational Learning as a requirement.

Each learning area consists of components that are 'foundational' to occupational qualifications at NQF Levels 2 to 4. The FLC is intended to address the skills and knowledge required for occupational learning across the Further Education and Training (FET) band.

The following documents describe the learning required for the FLC:

1. The Foundational Learning Competence Part Qualification (which contains the Exit Level Outcomes and Associated Assessment Criteria for both Communications and Mathematical Literacy).
2. The Foundational Learning Competence Communication in English: Curriculum Framework.
3. The Foundational Learning Competence Communication in Mathematical Literacy: Curriculum Framework.

These documents outline the knowledge, content, applied skills, range statements and assessment requirements of the FLC. The curriculum documents for Communications and Mathematical Literacy outline the necessary 'learning' skills for the learner to succeed in occupational or trade training. The curricula set out the areas of knowledge, skills and processes that should be covered in each learning area. They include learning outcomes and the scope and contexts in which these can be learned or practiced, as well as learning activity guidelines and illustrative exemplars for different skills and tasks. The curricula do not represent actual learning programmes. Providers will need to develop or adapt their own materials. The learning materials should be contextualised to suit a particular occupational sector. The curriculum documents are available on the QCTO and Independent Examinations Board (IEB) websites.

The focus in FLC Communications is on developing reading, writing, speaking and listening skills that will enable the learner to function optimally in the workplace, to enable the learner to deal with further learning and to access occupational training materials and related assessments. The focus in Mathematical Literacy is on using and responding to mathematical ideas and applications in an occupational learning content and the application of knowledge at different levels of complexity.

### **What is the duration of a FLC programme?**

FLC programme length will vary depending on the competence of the learner. It is suggested that an average FLC programme could be four months in duration. This will depend on the method of delivery – (part time or full time) and the ability of the learner.

### **Who will deliver the FLC?**

It is recommended that facilitators of the FLC be subject area specialists in the learning area that they deliver. Qualified Mathematics and English teachers should teach the FLC programme. The QCTO is developing an FLC facilitator part qualification to assist qualified adult learning facilitators to become familiar with the content of the FLC. The part qualification will prepare them to teach the FLC.

## **What materials should be used to deliver the FLC?**

Providers will need to develop learning materials for the FLC or buy them commercially, or encourage their SETA to develop learning materials for the sector, or adapt existing materials to suit the FLC context. Programme development must be done in relation to the curriculum frameworks. Compliance with curriculum frameworks is part of the provider accreditation process to offer the FLC.

## **What is the reason for the FLC?**

The skills developed in the two learning areas, Communications and Mathematical Literacy, have been identified as foundational for learners wanting to progress in their occupation and skills development. Thus it is advisable to do the FLC before embarking on an occupational learning programme or qualification.

Language proficiency is closely linked to success in learning. Many adult learners have a gap in their understanding of, and ability to apply language and mathematical literacy concepts in the workplace. Learners are often able to perform a task in an occupational environment, however, their language skills in English (normally the language of teaching and learning) are at a much lower level. They are often unable to deal with theoretical concepts in learning material and the acquisition of new skills and knowledge in the occupational training, thus hampering their progression.

The FLC provides the minimum competence required in each learning area in order to function optimally in the world of work. It supports the objectives of the NQF that the fundamental unit standards were intended to achieve in terms of redress, access to meaningful learning, the achievement of qualifications and providing a basis for lifelong learning.

Learners need only do the FLC once as it is applicable to NQF levels 2 - 4. Successful learners should gain increased confidence and expertise in applying language and mathematical skills in different real-life situations and contexts, and especially those related to uses in the workplace.

Qualifications that require additional mathematical or communication knowledge to that provided in the FLC will include these requirements in the curriculum of those qualifications.

## **Who is the Assessment Quality Partner?**

The QCTO delegated the IEB as the Assessment Quality Partner (AQP) for the FLC. AQPs are delegated by the QCTO to develop standardised assessment instruments for external summative assessment and to manage external assessment for qualifications or part qualifications registered by the QCTO.

## **What is the Foundational Learning Competence in Communications?**

The Foundational Learning Competence in Communications describes the knowledge of language and the thinking processes required to communicate effectively in the workplace.

FLC Communications provides a base in the language of instruction to enable a learner to deal effectively with occupational training, and communication in the workplace. The purpose of this component is to enable individuals to deal confidently and successfully with the language of learning and teaching (LOLT) of formal occupational training, in relation to oral skills, reading and writing. People who attend a FLC learning programme are given practice in speaking, listening, reading and writing meaningfully and effectively in the language of instruction. On completion of an FLC Communications programme learners will be able to cope with further learning more easily.

Communications in Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET), and at NQF Level 1, is centred around learning how to read whereas the FLC may be thought of as using reading to learn. The focus of FLC Communications is to use reading, writing and speaking skills to convey meaning in a logical and orderly fashion. Learners will extract relevant information from a text, infer meaning, make deductions, develop logical arguments, organise thinking and extract key messages from an extended piece of writing.

FLC Communications consists of:

- Writing
- Speaking and listening
- Visual literacy
- Language structure and usage
- Study skills
- Workplace terminology

The curricula describe the learning outcomes, the scope and contexts in which these can be learned or practiced, as well as activity guidelines and illustrative exemplars for different skills and tasks. The curriculum documents do not represent actual learning programmes – teachers of the FLC will need to contextualise the learning in relation to the occupational sector or trade of specific learners.

The FLC Communications is registered at NQF Level 2 and carries 20 credits.

## **What is the Foundational Learning Competence in Mathematical Literacy?**

The Foundational Learning Competence in Mathematical Literacy is the minimum, generic mathematical literacy that will provide learners with an adequate foundation to cope with the mathematical demands of occupational training and to engage meaningfully in real-life situations involving mathematics.

Foundational Mathematical Literacy will provide the foundation for further development of an individual in mathematical literacy contexts and mathematical concepts that may be specific to an occupation or trade.

Learners who have met all the requirements of Foundational Mathematical Literacy are able to solve problems in real contexts by responding to information about mathematical ideas that are presented in a variety of ways. They will be able to solve problems by defining the problem, analysing and making sense of the information provided, planning how to solve the problem, executing their plan, interpreting and evaluating the results, and justifying the method and solution. In solving problems, individuals will apply skills such as identifying or locating relevant information, ordering, sorting, comparing, counting, estimating, computing, measuring, modelling, interpreting and communicating. Using their mathematical literacy and understanding of numbers, they will make sense of the workplace and the world in which they live.

FLC Mathematical Literacy consists of:

- Number and quantity
- Finance
- Data and chance
- Measurement
- Space and shape
- Patterns and relationships

The curricula describe the learning outcomes, the scope and contexts in which these can be learned or practiced, as well as activity guidelines and illustrative exemplars for different skills and tasks. The curriculum documents do not represent actual learning programmes – teachers of the FLC will need to contextualise the learning in relation to the occupational sector or trade of specific learners.

The FLC Mathematical Literacy is registered at NQF Level 2 and carries 20 credits.

## **What are the entry requirements for the FLC?**

Learners who are competent at ABET Level 4 in English or Maths Literacy should be able to manage a FLC learning programme. The learning assumed to be in place for the FLC is ABET Level 3 or its equivalent in English or Maths Literacy. Learners who do not have the minimum level of competence will struggle with the FLC. It should be

noted that it is extremely demoralising for a learner to embark on a learning programme that they are not able to attain. This puts extreme strain on the facilitator and endangers the success of learners who are at the appropriate entry level. The FLC is a requirement for qualifications at NQF level 3 and 4.

It is advisable that learners undertake a placement assessment with the approved provider before doing the FLC. A placement assessment assesses the learner's understanding and level of competence in a particular learning area. It assesses skills and knowledge across a range of competence levels in order to determine the level of the learning programme into which a learner should be placed to continue learning. A placement assessment tries to ensure that the demands of the learning programme match the learner's level of competence in the learning area.

### **What is the external summative assessment?**

The purpose of the external summative assessments is to check whether learners have the required foundational skills and knowledge in each learning area in order to engage effectively in formal occupational training. The external summative assessment is a proficiency assessment that tests whether or not the learner has acquired the necessary skills to access occupational learning.

Each learning area is assessed separately. Each assessment is 2.5 hours long and consists of 60 multiple-choice questions. Assessments are machine scored. Assessments are conducted at IEB assessment centres.

Exemplar assessment papers for both subject areas are available for download on the IEB website. Many candidates are not familiar with multiple choice testing thus it is advisable that Skills Development Providers sensitise their learners to the assessment method.

Learners will be enrolled for external summative assessment with the IEB by providers. The IEB will issue statements of results to FLC Skills Development Providers. The IEB will upload learner results to SAQA. Learners need to be found competent in both learning areas in order to achieve the part qualification. Competent learners will achieve 50% or above for each learning area. Competence is achieved if a learner gets 50% or above in each learning area. Fees are published on the IEB website.

FLC Communications programmes must include speaking and listening activities. Speaking and listening is assessed internally and must meet the requirements for internal programme-based assessment. Extended writing is not currently assessed in the external summative assessment. In the future extended writing will be assessed in the following ways: report writing, summarising, evaluating and substantiation of a particular position.

The external assessment for Communications focuses on reading with comprehension and processing information in different ways as the minimum requirements for engaging in further learning. It targets the reading of a variety of texts (including diagrams, graphical representations), understanding what is being said and then using the information provided in decision-making. The targeted skills then include extracting relevant information from text, making deductions and inferences from the material provided, making decisions based on the information provided, following an argument and arranging ideas to construct a coherent message.

### **Can the FLC be achieved through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)?**

Learners may write the FLC external summative assessment without going through an FLC learning programme. If they are found to be competent they will receive the credits for the FLC. It is advisable for learners to do a placement assessment to ascertain their level of competence before writing the external summative assessment. Learning assumed to be in place for the FLC in both learning areas is ABET level 3.

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