



# Foundational Learning Competence Framework

**FLC Framework**



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## 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 Foundational Learning Competence?

Foundational Learning Competence (FLC) is a part qualification that consists of two learning areas: Communication 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 Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) at NQF levels 3 and 4 (see exemptions in page 10).

This does not mean that developers of qualifications at NQF Level 2 cannot include Foundational Learning Competence 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 FET sector.

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 Communication and Mathematical Literacy, SAQA ID: 88895).
2. The Foundational Communication in English: Curriculum Framework.
3. The Foundational Mathematical Literacy: Curriculum Framework.

These documents outline the knowledge, content, applied skills, range statements and assessment requirements of the FLC. The curriculum documents for Foundational Communication and Foundational 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 practised, 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 suite the particular occupational sector. The curriculum documents are available on the QCTO and Independent Examinations Board (IEB) websites.

The focus in Foundational Communication 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 Foundational 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.

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

The QCTO approved the Independent Examinations Board (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 assessments for qualifications or part qualifications registered by the QCTO.

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

The FLC programme length will vary depending on the competence of the learner. It is suggested that an average FLC programme could be 4 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. The QCTO is developing an FLC facilitator part qualification to assist 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. The AQP may develop learning materials for the sector or adapt existing materials to suite 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, Communication 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 'do' 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 progress.

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 have 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 which is provided in the FLC will provide for these requirements in the curriculum of those qualifications.

## What is Foundational Communication (FC)?

The Foundational Communication (FC) describes the knowledge of language and the thinking processes required to communicate effectively in the workplace.

The FC provides the basis 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, reading and writing skills. People who attend an FC learning programme are given practice in speaking, listening, reading and writing meaningfully and effectively in the language of instruction. On completion of the Foundational Communication programme learners will be able to cope with further learning more easily.

Communication in ABET and at NQF Level 1 is centred around learning how to read whereas the FC may be thought of as using reading to learn. The focus of the Foundational Communication (FC) 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.

Foundational Communication 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 Foundational Communication carries 20 credits.

## **What is Foundational Mathematical Literacy (FML)?**

The Foundational 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.

Foundational 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 Foundational Mathematical Literacy 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 an FLC learning programme. Learners doing the FLC have an entry level of ABET 4/NQF Level 1 or grade 9. This does not exclude learners with ABET 3 from doing the FLC but they need to be aware that they may take longer to achieve the FLC.

It is advisable that learners undertake a placement assessment with the relevant provider before doing the FLC. A placement assessment assesses the learner's understanding and level of competence in a particular learning area. 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 assessment 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 of what is being assessed.

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 familiarise their learners with the assessment method.

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

The Foundational Communication programme 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 future, extended writing will be assessed in the following ways: report writing, summarising, evaluating and substantiation of a particular position.

The external assessment for Foundational Communication 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 Foundational Mathematical Literacy assesses the use of numbers to describe and make sense of real life situations. It assesses reading, interpretation and use of different numbering conventions in different contexts and identifies the ways in which different conventions work.

## **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.

## **Further recommendations about FLC**

- a) Learners who obtained a Grade 12 or National Senior Certificate (NSC) may be exempt from the FLC.
- b) Many learners may feel that they have acquired sufficient skills and experience during their working life to be able to achieve the FLC. Such learners may do the FLC summative or final assessment to ensure that they have the required literacy and numeracy of the FLC.
- c) All learners who seek to obtain occupational qualifications at NQF Levels 3 and 4 will be required to prove competency in the FLC in order to be granted an occupational certificate.
- d) All learners that have done the fundamentals of the legacy qualifications and have proof of being found competent in them should be exempted from the FLC.
- e) All learners that have done FLC and have proof of being found competent in it should be exempted from the fundamentals of legacy qualifications at NQF levels 2 and 3, should they wish to enroll for a legacy qualification which is still being rolled out.
- f) Further impact focused research will be conducted to determine the impact of FLC on work performance, productivity and to identify any other issues around implementation.





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