



## FOUNDATIONAL LEARNING COMPETENCE

### Foundational Learning Competence

In 2007 the process for the development of the Foundational Learning Competence (FLC) was begun by the Department of Labour. The FLC has replaced the fundamental unit standards in Mathematics and Communications that were required in all SAQA qualifications at NQF Level 2 – 4. Essentially the fundamental unit standards were not done for a variety of reasons. The FLC supports the objectives of the NQF that the fundamental unit standards were intended to achieve in terms of redress, access to qualifications and providing a basis for lifelong learning.

There is much research that shows that language proficiency is closely aligned to success in learning in other domains. In addition, success in industry does require a minimum level of mathematical literacy competence. The FLC will remove barriers to learning and assist in a smooth progression in occupational pathways and skills development. The FLC aims to remove the problems that arose with the implementation of the fundamental unit standards.

The FLC is the minimum competence needed in the two key areas of Communication (read, write, speak, listen) and Mathematical Literacy that is required by people to function optimally in the world of work up to NQF Level 4. The FLC also assists learners to deal successfully with occupational learning at NQF Levels 2–4.

The FLC is not ABET. ABET is learning how to read, write, whereas the FLC is using reading and writing to learn. The FLC is registered as a part qualification on the NQF at Level 2 and has 40 credits. An outline of the content of the FLC is below:

Communication	Mathematical Literacy
Writing	Number
Speaking and Listening	Finance
Visual Literacy	Data and chance
Language Structure and Usage	Measurement
Study Skills	Space and Shape
Workplace Terminology	Patterns and Relationships

The knowledge, skills and processes for Communication and Mathematical Literacy are set out in the curricula and describe the learning outcomes, 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 as teachers of the FLC will contextualise the learning in relation to the occupational sector or trade of specific groups of learners.

Some occupations or trades have specific requirements beyond the general platform for learning such as basic calculus in mathematics for engineering and specialist terminology and concepts for banking and insurance. These requirements will not be met through the FLC, but through the occupational qualification. The FLC is compulsory for occupational qualifications at NQF Levels 3 and 4. The teaching of the FLC for occupational qualifications at NQF Level 2 may be negotiated by the affected parties.

The FLC will have a final external assessment which will be conducted by the Assessment Quality Partner, the Independent Examinations Board. Each subject will be assessed separately using a multiple choice, machine scored format. Learners who have completed ABET Level 3 or preferably ABET Level 4 / NQF 1 should be able to cope with the FLC. Once a learner has the FLC, they can enter into an occupational learning programme at NQF Levels 3 and 4. However, as the FLC is not an entry requirement for an occupational programme, the FLC may be obtained while a learner is already registered on an occupational learning programme at NQF Levels 3 and 4.

The FLC must be obtained before an occupational qualification at NQF Levels 3 and 4 can be awarded. Learners who have not got a Matric certificate will be required to obtain an FLC if they enter into an occupational learning programme at NQF Levels 3 and 4. Learners who have an FLC will not be required to do the FLC again for another occupational learning programme at NQF Levels 3 and 4. Learners who have an FLC and who wish to improve their career prospects by obtaining their National Senior Certificate (Matric) or National Senior Certificate for Adults (NASCA) will have a good foundation for further academic study.

## Appointment of Independent Examinations Board as the Assessment Quality Partner for Foundational Learning Competence



QCTO CEO, Ms Joyce Mashabela presents the appointment certificate for the Foundational Learning Assessment Quality Partner to the IEB CEO, Ms Anne Oberholzer.

On 18 May 2012, the IEB was appointed as the Assessment Quality Partner (AQP) of the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) for the part qualification, Foundational Learning Competence.

The IEB has a long history with the assessment of adult learners, particularly in industry, where the learning environment differs substantially from a traditional institutional environment. The different learning environment however does not diminish the need for a well-articulated learning programme in these fundamental areas of learning. There is enough research that shows that language proficiency is closely aligned to success in learning in other domains. In addition, success in industry does require a minimum level of mathematical literacy competence.

Foundational Learning Competence refers to the minimum competence needed in the two key areas of Communication and Mathematical Literacy in order to deal successfully with occupational learning at NQF Levels 2 – 4. Its key purpose is to remove barriers to learning and assist in a smooth progression in occupational pathways and skills development.

The Foundational Learning Competence is a compulsory part of all new qualifications that will be developed under the auspices of the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) at NQF Levels 3 and 4. It has replaced the 'fundamentals' in Mathematics and Communications that were required previously in all qualifications at NQF Levels 2 to 4.

The National Artisan Moderating Body was established, by law, as the first Assessment Quality Partner to the QCTO in July 2011. The IEB is the first non-legislated body to be appointed as an Assessment Quality Partner for the QCTO. The IEB is a non-profit organisation, dedicated to providing adults in industry with reliable and valid assessment of competence in the fundamental learning areas since its inception in 1989.

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As part of its Service Level Agreement with the QCTO, the IEB will be establishing a record of providers of Foundational Learning Competence and also a database of assessment centres for the FLC. Information about these processes will be made available shortly and interested organisations will be invited to participate.

The IEB is proud and honoured to be involved in building the skills base of our country – we are Proudly South African and dedicated to doing the best we can to overcome the education deficit that our democracy has inherited. The IEB will work closely with the QCTO to ensure that learners, providers and industry are provided with information about the curriculum and the assessment processes. This information will be made available shortly on the IEB website ([www.ieb.co.za](http://www.ieb.co.za)) under the heading of Foundational Learning Competence in the Adult section of the website.