

## **FLC specific**

### **What is 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 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 skills, reading and writing. It is the language of most external assessments such as trade tests. People who attend a FLC learning programme are given practice in speaking, listening, reading and writing meaningfully and effectively in the language of instruction. Once they have achieved their part qualification in Communications they will be able more easily to progress further in their chosen occupational pathways and workplace contexts.

The FLC is not ABET. Communications in ABET and NQF Level 1 focus on using reading for learning rather than learning how to read. So while the function of reading programmes up to and including NQF Level 1 focused on being able to identify the vocabulary and the language structures in context to be able to understand and comprehend what was being said, the focus in Foundational Learning Competence is to read for information. Gathering information is not only about extracting relevant information from a text but also to infer meaning, to use the information gathered to make deductions, to develop the logic of an argument, to organise thinking and to extract the key messages from an extended piece of writing.

The content of the FLC Communications learning programme covers the following:

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

The knowledge, skills and processes for FLC: Communications 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 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 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 also serve as the foundation for further development of an individual in mathematical literacy contexts and mathematical concepts that may be specific to an occupation or trade.

Individuals 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 is presented in a variety of ways. Individuals will 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. Using their mathematical literacy and understanding of numbers, they will make sense of the workplace and the world in which they live.

The content of the FLC: Mathematical Literacy curriculum covers the following:

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

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.

The knowledge, skills and processes for FLC: 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 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 curricula are used for Foundational Learning Competence?**

There are three documents that describe the learning required for the FLC, namely the Foundational Learning Competence Part Qualification (which contains the Exit Level Outcomes and Associated Assessment Criteria for both Communications and Mathematical Literacy), the Foundational Learning Competence Communication in English: Curriculum Framework and the Foundational Learning Competence Communication in Mathematical Literacy: Curriculum Framework. These are registered with the QCTO, and provide detailed specifications of knowledge, content, applied skills, range statements and assessment requirements.

The curriculum documents for Communications and Mathematical Literacy outline the necessary 'learning' skills for the learner to succeed in occupational or trade training. The focus in FLC Communications learning programme is on using reading, writing, speaking and listening skills that will enable the learner to function optimally in the workplace, also to deal successfully with further learning and finally to access occupational training materials and related assessments. The focus in Mathematical Literacy is on using and responding to mathematical ideas and applications as these relate to occupational learning content, and to contexts of different levels of complexity;

The competencies in each learning area are seen as 'foundational to' occupational qualifications at NQF Levels 2 to 4. While the part qualification is registered at NQF Level 2, the curricula are not pegged tightly to a specific NQF level but address the skills and knowledge required for learning in occupational learning in the FET band, with the emphasis on entrenching and re-inforcing skills and knowledge at NQF Levels 1-2.

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, as the assumption is that providers working in the field will develop or adapt their own materials. These can be contextualised in relation to the occupational sector or trade of specific groups of learners.

The length of the Foundational Learning Competence programmes will vary, depending on the competence level of the learners taking the course. For example, the lower the competence level of the learners on a programme, the longer they will need to reach a competent level. However, it seems that plans are that the programme will be approximately 4 months in length.

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.

## **Do all learners have to do the Foundational Learning Competence assessment?**

In general, learners that have passed English and Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy at Grade 12 do not have to complete the FLC. There are however some very important considerations and possible exceptions.

For learners who have a National Senior Certificate i.e. have passed Grade 12 since 2008, and have passed both English and Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy, the Foundational Learning Competence is not compulsory.

A key consideration for a learner, the employer or trainer in deciding whether exemption from the FLC is in the best interests of the learner is the nature of the pass achieved in the language and mathematics components.

For example, in language study if a learner has studied English at Home Language level and passed, or if they have offered it at First Additional Language and have passed with 60% or higher, they will in all likelihood cope adequately with the language demands of occupational learning. Similarly, if a learner has passed Mathematics or has passed Mathematical Literacy in the NSC at 60% or more, they will in all likelihood cope adequately with the mathematical literacy demands of occupational learning.

However if they have not achieved a reasonably good pass in the language or mathematics component of the NSC, they will probably find that they will struggle to understand and cope with the occupational training, simply because their language or mathematical competence is not adequate. In such cases, it is advisable for a learner to write the FLC assessment just to be sure that their competence in one or other or both learning areas is adequate. In this way one can avoid wasting time and money on occupational training that the learner cannot engage with meaningfully. In cases where language or mathematical competence is weak, it would be better for the learner to complete an FLC programme before embarking on the occupational training.

Prior to 2008, study of Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy at the Grade 12 level was not compulsory. Hence for learners that have a Grade 12 certificate prior to 2008, consideration has to be given to the subjects that were offered. In cases where the subject offering at Grade 12 includes a pass in Mathematics (at any grade), the FLC in Mathematical Literacy is voluntary. In cases where the subject offerings do not include Mathematics, the learner will need to complete the FLC in Mathematical Literacy. Furthermore, even if a learner has offered some form of mathematics at Grade 12 (Or Standard 10) or English as second language level, the nature of the pass achieved should be considered. In mathematics especially, the time passed since passing the subject at Grade 12 is a serious consideration.

Despite these possible exemptions, employers or training centres may require that everybody does the FLC assessment in one or both of the learning areas. Should the learner not be successful, they may be required to complete a FLC learning programme.

To summarise then, people who have passed Grade 12 since 2008 and hold the NSC with passes in both English and Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy may be exempt from the FLC. The employer or training centre however may require that they complete the FLC assessment even if they have completed Grade 12. The key consideration in this decision will possibly be where the pass achieved in the learning area is of a very low level. People with a Grade 12 certificate prior to 2008 that does not include mathematics will be required to at least do the FLC assessment for Mathematical Literacy.

**What level of competence should be in place before a learner enters a Foundational Learning Competence learning programme?**

A learner who is competent at ABET Level 3 in the learning area should be able to manage the FLC learning programme.

The *Foundational Learning Competence* assumes that learners entering a foundational learning programme have a minimum competence level in the relevant learning area at ABET Level 3 or its equivalent. This is not a formal certification requirement, as there are no certification requirements for entry to the external assessment process.

It must be emphasised that entering learners onto a programme for which they do not have the pre-requisite knowledge is demoralising for the learner and wasteful in terms of costs. It also makes the work of the facilitator much harder as s/he has to manage a wider competence range of learners than is advisable. In addition, because the facilitator has to try and accommodate the learners who are not yet at the required competence level, the opportunities of success for learners who do qualify for entry to the FLC learning programme are compromised.

**Can the part qualification be achieved through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)?**

Yes, learners may write the Foundational Learning Competence assessment without going through a FLC learning programme. If they pass the assessment, they will receive the credits for the FLC.

For the purpose of recognising prior learning, learners will be required to undertake the formal external assessment.

Candidates may present themselves for the external assessment without first going through a Foundational Learning Competence learning programme. However, candidates wishing to follow this route should take cognizance of the learning required for FLC. Learners who have no idea of their competence level are advised to write a Placement Assessment which will provide a clearer indication, more or less, of the learner's chances of success in the external assessment.