

SKILLS FOR LIFE

ESOL FOR WORK – A NEW SUITE OF QUALIFICATIONS



New ESOL Qualifications

English language skills, clear comprehension and confidence in communicating are critically important for life, work and social cohesion.

In response to the English language needs of employers, employees and providers alike, the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS), and our partners at LSC, QCA and NATECLA, are pleased to launch a new suite of 'ESOL for Work' qualifications. The new qualifications complement the current range of *Skills for Life* ESOL* assessments.

Why ESOL for Work?

ESOL for Work forms part of a wider drive to address the challenges faced by people for whom English is a second or other language and their employers.

The new qualifications offer greater flexibility and choice to learners with a variety of needs. The new qualifications are directly focused on the needs of employers and learners and will enable them to quickly and effectively get the functional language skills demanded across a variety of employment sectors.

How are the new qualifications different from *Skills for Life* ESOL?

The new qualifications are shorter and more work-focused than *Skills for Life* ESOL. They cover all skill modes – speaking, listening, reading and writing – but with the main focus on the first three skill modes. The level of writing is one level below the other skill modes and writing is also narrower in coverage. The content is focused on the workplace, with topics such as customer care and health and safety. They are initially offered at Entry Level 3 and Level 1, with other levels following later.

How will they be funded and delivered?

They will be funded as listed qualifications at a rate of 1.0 and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has set the tariff at £880. In 2007/08 the fee element is £330, for which the learner or learner's sponsor (employer) is responsible. The qualifications will generally be delivered in the workplace with contextualised materials. It is expected there will be around 150 guided learning hours, with assessment available as and when learners are ready.

What more can you tell me about the new qualifications?

The suite comprises eight different versions of the qualifications produced by the eight awarding bodies (see back page for details.) They are not identical – each qualification has a slightly different focus and takes a differing approach to assessment. All are based on the ESOL/Literacy national standards but, unlike the *Skills for Life* qualifications, will not cover all of them at each level. Discussions are taking place about their relationship to citizenship/settlement applications. These qualifications will provide a sound foundation for onward progression to *Skills for Life* and other learning. More information can be found by contacting the individual Awarding Bodies as listed on the back page of this leaflet.

* ESOL = English for Speakers of Other Languages



How were they developed?

The new qualifications were developed by the eight awarding bodies following consultation with learners, providers and employers.

Who are the new qualifications aimed at?

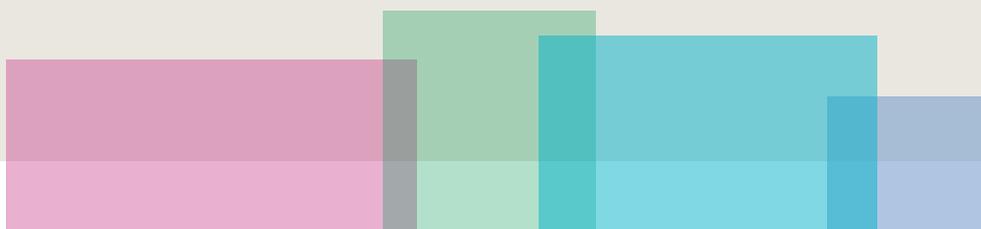
They are not aimed at any one group of learners. The initial market is expected to be those people who are involved in transitory work and who need skills to function in work, as well as those seeking work at the end of often short periods of employment. They offer greater choice to learners who want to learn English for work, but don't need the full support from a *Skills for Life* ESOL course.

What are the advantages for learners?

The new qualifications offer greater choice and flexibility, enabling learners to decide which English language qualifications best suit their needs. ESOL for Work offers the opportunity quickly gain more work-focused language skills and requires a shorter time commitment, which is particularly useful for those who may not wish to reside in the UK long-term. Learning is directly relevant to the learner's job, providing a motivating context and enabling them to apply their new skills immediately.

What are the advantages for employers and businesses?

Good English language skills are crucial for a successful business. The new qualifications have been tailored directly to the needs of employers and are flexible enough to meet the requirements of various sectors. They focus on the core linguistic requirements of working life across a range of key areas, including health & safety and customer care. The fee element (£330) is known up front, giving employers a clear view of costs, and there is enhanced flexibility in terms of assessment. Overall, ESOL for Work offers a more cost and time effective route to skills development: shorter, more job-focused and less expensive than many of the alternatives. Many employers have seen the direct benefits of investing in ESOL. For example, First UK Bus's ESOL and basic skills strategy has enabled them to attain 94% retention of drivers and engineers recruited from EU accession states.



What are the advantages for colleges and learning providers?

ESOL for Work allows increased choice for providers, with a range of approaches to assessment that will be relevant within varying settings and sectors. Content will be more relevant to learners, encouraging better motivation and achievement.

What next?

The *Skills for Life* team in DIUS are working with the QCA, Awarding Bodies, the Quality Improvement Agency (QIA) and other key partners on an ESOL for Work support process. This is designed to enhance the delivery of the qualifications on the ground and will start with some targeted work with large employers and Sector Skills Councils (SSC) to pilot teaching and learning across a range of environments. DIUS will also be facilitating the development of learning materials and teacher support.

The awarding bodies responsible for the design and development of the new ESOL for Work qualifications are:

Cambridge ESOL	esolhelpdesk@cambridgeesol.org
City and Guilds	skillsforlife@cityandguilds.com
EDEXCEL	www.edexcel.org.uk
English Speaking Board	admin@esbuk.org or sbrowningol@yahoo.com
NOCN	www.nocn.org.uk
OCNW	b.rockliffe@lancaster.ac.uk
SQA	Eunice.McAllister@sqa.org.uk
Trinity College London	glyn.jones@trinitycollege.co.uk

We would like to acknowledge the hard work from the partners and awarding bodies involved in creating and developing these qualifications.

Visit the Read Write Plus website for more information on *Skills for Life* and ESOL: www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus

