



Foundation learning (FL)

I've heard about FL but I'm not really sure what it is. What is it?

FL is one of the pathways open to you if you are aged 14 to 19-years-old — or 14 to 25-year-olds if you have learning difficulties or disabilities. In Derbyshire and Derby City, it is only available to young people aged 16 to 18-years-old. If you turn 19 before the end of your FL programme you can carry on learning until you complete it. FL is offered by colleges and training providers. Besides FL, the other main pathways that you can choose are Apprenticeships, Diplomas and general qualifications.

So FL is a course I can take when I leave school at the end of Year 11?

Not exactly. FL is a programme of learning rather than a course. What this means is that you decide what you want to do and agree this with your provider — either a college or training provider. You will get an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) which shows what you will do. On a FL programme, you will:

- do some vocational learning — this can be in an occupational area such as catering, sport, or business or you can try out different areas before you decide which is best for you
- work on building your confidence and independence skills
- learn job hunting skills and write a CV, and
- improve your English, maths and ICT skills — these are called Functional Skills.

To begin with, you will have an assessment with your provider to help decide what's right for you. This will depend on what you want to do at the end of the programme. If you don't know what you want to do, the FL programme can help you make your mind up. You will get help, advice and support all the way through the programme.

FL is a programme which is offered at entry level and level one. See how this fits into the overall National Qualifications Framework and with all the other options.

FL isn't just about classroom learning, there are a lot of other things you will get involved with; including practical work-related activities, leisure activities and work placements.

Is FL for me?

It could be if you:

- are aged 16 to 18-years-old
- are not in employment, education or training
- have an idea about what sort of job you may be interested in but are not ready to study at level 2 or start an Apprenticeship
- are not sure about your job ideas and want to get some experience to help you decide



- want a more practical approach to learning
- think you need to build your confidence and gain independence skills, and
- need more help with your maths and English.

You can discuss with your Connexions Personal Adviser if FL would be right for you and what would be the best programme for you.

I know that qualifications are important if I want to get a good job. Will I get any if I go on a FL programme?

Yes, there are a number of different qualifications you can get from FL, including Awards, Certificates and Diplomas. The qualifications you get depends on what is on offer through the different providers, as well as what you want to do. Your learning will be split up into bite-sized chunks of learning in a vocational area, for example retail or engineering, and you will build up credits for each chunk. The credits will help you when taking further courses or training after FL.

To find out what FL programmes are available locally and the qualifications you could get on them, go to **www.routes-ahead.org**

All FL programmes will offer qualifications in Functional Skills — English, maths and ICT.

If I go on a FL programme, will I get paid?

You will usually get help with your travel costs while on FL, and there may be help with childcare costs if needed. If you live at home, your parents will usually be able to continue claiming Child Benefit and Child Tax Credits for you while you are on FL. There can also be financial support for any special equipment that's needed if you are a disabled person.

How long would I be on FL and how many hours a week would I do?

This depends on how much time you need to be on FL before you are ready to move on to a level 2 course or into employment. Some people may only need a few months, others may need longer.

The number of hours you attend each week depends on the type of programme you have agreed with your provider. On average, a programme will involve between 16 to 30 hours a week.

Will I be able to get a job at the end of FL?

The whole idea of FL is to prepare you for work or to move onto a level 2 course. The bite-size chunks of qualifications which you gain on a FL programme fit in with the qualification units you will take on a level 2 course. After FL, there will be a number of options open to you, including:



- an Apprenticeship
- employment with training
- supported employment
- a Diploma, or
- a vocationally related course at level 2.

Can I change my mind about what I want to do on an FL programme?

Yes, FL is flexible so at any time you can talk to your tutor and work out a different programme or you can look at what other providers are offering. Some FL providers give you the chance to keep your work options open and give you tasters to try out different jobs.

How do I find out about who offers FL and where?

Programmes vary between different providers, so it is a good idea to look around to see what's on offer and what would suit you. To find out what FL is available locally go to **www.routes-ahead.org**