

Foundation learning

Building the foundation for future success

Key points

- Foundation Learning (FL) is for 14 to 19-year-olds — 14 to 25-year-olds with LDD — who are working at entry level or level 1.
- FL is one of the four curriculum pathways – the other three are Apprenticeships, Diplomas and general qualifications. FL replaces existing programmes, such as e2e, Jigsaw, Junction 16 and Link.
- FL is not a qualification — it's a **flexible and personalised learning package**, offering bite-sized chunks of learning from a range of qualifications drawn from the Qualifications Credit Framework (QCF).
- FL is a **destination led pathway** to enable learners at entry level and level 1 to progress onto level 2 where possible.
- FL integrates the three key elements of:
 - vocational and subject learning
 - personal and social development and
 - functional skillsIAG and learner support are integral components of all FL courses.
- FL aims to reduce the number of young people not engaged in education, employment or training (NEET).

Why Foundation Learning?

FL offers a **much broader and more flexible approach** to learning than previous programmes, such as e2e, and is **more closely linked to the structure of the course and programmes that can be taken after FL**. Flexibility extends to start dates, levels of study, length of study and building a personalised programme of learning. FL allows a learner to take small steps of learning — these are negotiated with the provider.

Who can benefit from FL?

- Young people in secondary schools and further education who are already working at level 1 or below.
- Young people who are not ready to undertake learning at level 2 but who are ready to take a learning programme and may need help to build confidence.
- Young people with SEN.
- Young people in special schools.
- Post-16 learners who have previously accessed pre-e2e and e2e programmes.

How does Foundation Learning work?

Learners undertaking FL will have an **Individual Learning Plan (ILP)**. This will include an initial assessment to make sure the learner is on an appropriate level and that necessary support is provided. The ILP will be agreed with the learner and their provider. It will outline what they will learn whilst on the course, the support they will be offered, and the qualifications they will achieve. The ILP will help them to see how they are doing, what they need to do to progress and how to get there.

A FL programme consists of:

- **vocational or subject learning** — including generic skills for working, subject sector specific skills and the possibility of work tasters
- **personal and social development** (PSD), and
- **Functional skills** in English, maths and ICT.

As the programme is destination led, the balance of the programme will depend on the needs and aims of the young person. For example, someone with learning difficulties moving towards independent learning may have a focus mainly on PSD, whereas a young person progressing towards a Diploma or an Apprenticeship will have a much larger vocational programme.

Crucial to FL is the initial assessment, ongoing information advice and guidance and learner support that young people will receive — as outlined on the ILP.

What qualifications are available in FL?

FL makes use of the QCF entry and level 1 qualifications offered by colleges and training providers. Within the QCF, every unit — or small step of learning — and qualification has a credit value. One credit equates to ten hours of learning and a level between entry level and level 8. There are three sizes of qualifications:

- **Awards – 1 to 12 credits**
- **Certificates – 13 to 36 credits**, and
- **Diplomas – 37 plus credits**.

The Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) is a new framework for creating and accrediting qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland
www.qcda.gov.uk/qualifications/60.aspx

Learning providers can offer separate qualifications to cover the PSD, Functional Skills and vocational or subject learning, or combined qualifications which contain both PSD and vocational units, such as:

- Award and Certificate in Employability and Personal Development
- NPTC Skills for Working Life, and
- NOCN Step-up.

For more information, go to www.qcda.gov.uk and choose **Qualifications** then **Foundation Learning** and then **Qualifications and Units**.

Each provider has their own particular menu of vocational and subject learning Awards, Certificates and Diplomas. There is the opportunity for a young person to focus on a specific vocational area to develop skills in, or to undertake tasters from different vocational areas to help them decide on their career path. Work placements may be available as part of the vocational and subject learning.

Some providers offer programmes at entry level and level 1, while others offer just entry level or just level 1. Learners can take level 2 units as part of a level 1 qualification or add units to grow a small sized qualification into a larger one.

A key benefit of FL is that the structure allows young people to transfer between options and providers and still gain a qualification.

What FL programmes are available locally?

To find out what FL programmes are available in your area, including the names of qualifications and content of programmes, go to www.routes-ahead.org. Providers will be updating their information on an ongoing basis to ensure current and accurate information is available. For those providers who are committed to receive online applications, young people can apply for FL through the **Routes Ahead** online application system. Updates on which providers will receive online applications are available at www.connexions-derbyshire.org go to **Practitioners** then **Curriculum Support** then **Routes Ahead** and then **Routes Ahead news and developments**.

If a provider is not accepting online applications, young people can find out how to apply in the **Want to apply?** section on each course page.

It is important to be familiar with the **programmes your local providers offer** and how they will build a personalised programme based on the young person's functional skills, vocational interests and personal and social development needs.

How are functional skills delivered?

Functional Skills will be available as free standing qualifications at entry level, level 1 and level 2. Functional Skills are part of Foundation, Higher and Advanced Diplomas, are a replacement for key skills qualifications and form part of Apprenticeship frameworks. A learner will not need to repeat accredited achievement that they have already gained in Functional Skills. If a learner has Key Skills qualifications, they will be required to undertake Functional Skills due to the differences between the two.

What are progression routes?

Young people on FL will agree an intended destination with their provider which should be onto level 2 learning opportunities wherever possible, such as Apprenticeships, further education or Diplomas. For some learners, independent living, supported employment or employment with training may be the intended destination.

How long does FL take?

The length of FL courses varies depending on the individual learner. FL will be completed when the learner is ready to move on to and remain in learning at level 2. Some young people will move on quickly after a few months, whereas others will need more than a year on FL before they are ready to progress. Learners on FL will usually undertake 16 to 30 hours of learning a week, but this is dependent on the needs of the learner.

What financial support is available on FL?

Post-16 learners on FL can claim EMA, but they will need to have submitted their application form before 31 December 2011. Application forms received on or after 1 January will not be processed.

For more information on EMA go to www.direct.gov.uk choose **Education and Learning** then **14 to 19 your life, your options** then **Money to learn** and then **EMA**.

Parents will continue to be able to claim Child Benefit and Child Tax Credits. Support may be available for childcare costs — through **Care to Learn** — travel from a centre to placements and any special equipment that's needed for disabled people. Financial support is available for some people through the provider's **Discretionary Learner Support Fund**.

How many places are available on FL?

The main source of current real time places on FL provision is **Provision Tracker**. Providers will keep **Provision Tracker** updated on an ongoing basis to ensure current and accurate information is available.

Will FL be available in Key Stage 4?

There are plans to phase this in by 2013. There is work going on to assess current course provision to identify what further action is required to comply with the FL framework. Information on Key Stage 4 FL programmes will be available on **Routes Ahead** when they are ready.

What role will personal advisers (PAs) have in supporting young people who are on FL?

As the aim of FL is to provide an individual programme of learning which is personalised for each young person, PAs will need to support young people depending on their individual needs. It is beneficial for PAs to be involved at the programme planning stage, in agreement of ILP and at the progression planning stage. Roles and responsibilities are outlined in the Partnership Agreements between Connexions Derbyshire and providers.

Where can I get further information about Foundation Learning?

Go to www.qcda.gov.uk choose **qualifications** then **foundation-learning**.

www.excellencegateway.org.uk choose **Programmes and services** then **Programmes** and then **Foundation Learning Support**.