



Functional Skills pass rates

24/25



2024/25 at a glance

The 2024/25 academic year brought significant changes to Functional Skills, particularly for adult apprentices. In February 2025, the government introduced reforms to English and maths requirements within apprenticeships. As part of these changes, English and maths qualifications were no longer mandatory for adult apprentices aged 19 and above on Level 2 or Level 3 programmes. Instead, the requirement became subject to employer discretion.

How we've calculated our pass rates

There is a significant amount of data available on pass rates, which can be interpreted in different ways. For this reason, we have set out clearly how our figures are calculated.

- **overall pass rate**
The number of passes expressed as a percentage of assessments taken. If a learner sat one attempt in 2023/24 and another in 2024/25, each attempt is counted in the relevant year.
- **first-time pass rate**
The number of first-time passes expressed as a percentage of first-time attempts.
- **centre type**
How we group centres, such as further education colleges, independent training providers and schools.
- **pass rate by format**
A comparison of pass rates for paper-based and online assessments.

Overall and first-time pass rates

First-time pass rates

- Level 1 maths: 47%
- Level 1 Reading: 67%
- Level 1 Writing: 68%
- Level 2 maths: 50%
- Level 2 Reading: 75%
- Level 2 Writing: 81%

Overall pass rates

- Level 1 maths: 47%
- Level 1 Reading: 67%
- Level 1 Writing: 68%
- Level 2 maths: 50%
- Level 2 Reading: 75%
- Level 2 Writing: 81%

Overall pass rates in 2024/25 were positive and showed improvement across all subjects compared to 2023/24. Level 1 Reading increased by 6%, while Level 2 maths increased by 4%. First-time pass rates also improved across all subjects compared to the previous year. Level 1 Reading and Level 2 maths again showed the strongest improvement. These results provide a strong foundation as we move into 2025/26, particularly following the launch of our new maths and English assessments in October 2025.

Pass rates by centre type

Employer

- Level 2 maths: 93%
- Level 2 Reading: 89%
- Level 2 Writing: 90%

Independent training providers

- Level 1 maths: 54%
- Level 1 Reading: 72%
- Level 1 Writing: 75%
- Level 2 maths: 52%
- Level 2 Reading: 76%
- Level 2 Writing: 83%

Further education colleges

- Level 1 maths: 42%
- Level 1 Reading: 56%
- Level 1 Writing: 54%



- Level 2 maths: 22%
- Level 2 Reading: 48%
- Level 2 Writing: 52%

Schools

- Level 1 maths: 36%
- Level 1 Reading: 61%
- Level 1 Writing: 59%
- Level 2 maths: 29%
- Level 2 Reading: 51%
- Level 2 Writing: 59%

Employers continue to record the highest pass rates for both first-time and overall results. These figures should be considered separately, as employer-based delivery often involves lower volumes. Learning integrated into the workplace may also support higher achievement rates.

Among higher-volume centre types, independent training providers outperform schools and further education colleges across most subjects and levels. This may reflect the flexibility available to independent training providers, who can embed Functional Skills within targeted learning plans.

Schools and colleges often deliver Functional Skills as part of a broader curriculum and may support learners who previously struggled with GCSEs. NCFE supports centres through established support mechanisms to help address these challenges.

Figures shown are overall pass rates by centre type.

Pass rates by format

Online assessments consistently show higher pass rates than paper-based assessments across both English and maths assessments for Level 2. Level 1 assessments are a little closer however, with paper-based assessments in English reading & writing outperforming their online counterpart. Online assessments are now widely used and offer several benefits for learners. Department for Education data published in November 2025 showed an increase of 0.5%, or 261,260 learners, with a learning difficulty or disability participating in education and training. Online assessments provide a more accessible assessment option for many learners, with this dependency likely to keep on growing.

Digital Functional Skills

First-time pass rates

- Digital Entry Level 3: 68%
- Digital Level 1: 58%

Overall pass rates

- Digital Entry Level 3: 67%
- Digital Level 1: 56%

Both first-time and overall pass rates for Digital Functional Skills increased in 2024/25. Compared to 2023/24, first-time pass rates increased by 3% at Entry Level 3 and 18% at Level 1. Overall pass rates increased by 3% at Entry Level 3 and 15% at Level 1. Although it is still early to report, 2025/26 figures show a positive start. This reflects the work of internal teams and the preparation undertaken by centres across further education colleges, schools, independent training providers and other settings.

What's to come in 2025/26

The pass rates outlined here highlight both strong performance and areas for further improvement. Functional Skills continue to provide an important route into further education and employment, and it is essential that learners are fully supported. In October 2025, we launched a new suite of English and maths assessments across all subjects and levels. These assessments were developed by NCFE using feedback from centres across the sector. Early feedback has been positive, and we look forward to seeing the impact of these assessments as more data becomes available.

Changes we've made to Functional Skills assessments

- smaller, more manageable activities in maths assessments
- removal of context from underpinning skills questions in maths assessments
- an increase in the number of multiple-choice questions in Level 1 and Level 2 maths
- spelling tests in Entry Level 1–3 Writing restructured into multiple-choice questions within the writing paper



- discrete punctuation tasks throughout writing assessments
- improved accessibility across Level 1 and Level 2 Reading assessments.

NCFE remains committed to supporting centres and learners to achieve strong outcomes in Functional Skills. For more information on how we can support your English and maths delivery, [speak to a member of our team](#).