

A guide to using the Entry Diagnostic Assessments

The decision regarding a learner's starting point with their English and Mathematics is **crucial to motivation and success**. The diagnostic assessments offer a **flexible tool** which can be used with learners on Entry programmes or for **any learner with learner needs**.

Q. How do we use the assessment?

- A. You may decide to **administer the assessment in sections**. Once again, you know what is most appropriate for your learners. The tool has been designed to facilitate this building up of a profile over several occasions.

We advise that learners are told that you are looking for strong areas so that you do not waste time explaining things they already know. You should also explain that **all learners have to have help** with lots of the work. In this way, the learner should feel encouraged and motivated.

Q. How do we choose the level of diagnostic assessment?

- A. Through an initial assessment which advises the level of diagnostic to take. If no initial assessment is possible, the following guidelines can be used:

- If learners are on a **foundation programme** or **NVQ Level 1** and have **low GCSE** grades, we suggest Entry Level 3 as a starting point;
- **Where no previous results are available, the pre-assessment questionnaire may be used:**
 - ask the learner to complete Part B;
 - if the learner asks the tutor to complete it, this suggests Entry 1 diagnostic assessment;
 - if the learner **attempts to complete** it, **but struggles** with responses, the tutor should be able to judge whether Entry Level 1 or Entry Level 2 diagnostic assessment is most appropriate;
 - if the learner has **few problems** with completion, Entry Level 3 diagnostic assessment is appropriate for English;
 - Part A should then be completed by the tutor to give further information on the learner's knowledge and abilities and an indication of the level for mathematics diagnostic assessment.

Q. *When do we administer the diagnostic assessment?*

- A. At induction and throughout the programme.** You are the professionals and have the experience of working with learners. In addition, your organisation may have a policy regarding screening, initial assessment and diagnostic assessment. Without doubt, **best practice** for this type of assessment is regular assessment throughout a learner's programme.

This assessment should be used at commencement of learning to **highlight English/Mathematical gaps to be addressed** and to aid **choice of level** of vocational units to be studied. The resulting action plan offers the opportunity to address gaps in 'bite size' chunks. Assessment should then be used again to **assess added value** after addressing weak areas.

Q. *How does this assessment facilitate progression?*

- A. It offers a coherent assessment/development path from Entry 1 to Level 3 and can underpin the seamless curriculum.** However long the learner remains at Entry Level, the assessments afford continuity and coherence. If a learner **has the ability to move on**, after literacy and numeracy development, the next level of assessment can be used to highlight strengths, weaknesses and potential. This assessment progression can determine whether the Entry Programme learner should attempt subsequent vocational units at higher levels.

For some learners, the results of diagnostic assessment will indicate that they may need more than one year to move to a higher level. Others will move from Entry Level 3 to Level 1 in the following year. Whatever the case, the assessment package will support both learner and tutor.