

# Skills for Life



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Skills for life are the basic and key skills that we need for everyday life. For example, we calculate what we can afford to spend in the supermarket, we use websites to find information, and we might work with neighbours to organise an event or a Neighbourhood Watch scheme.

## Basic skills

Basic skills underpin everyday activities. They include:

<b>Literacy</b> – the ability to read, write and speak in English	<b>Numeracy</b> – the ability to add, subtract, multiply and divide	<b>Information and communication technology (ICT) skills</b> – the ability to use ICT systems
<b>Examples of situations when these skills are used:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Completing a form</li><li>• Phoning for a doctor's appointment</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Understanding an electricity bill</li><li>• Checking your change in a shop</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Using websites to find information</li><li>• Sending a text message</li></ul>

## Key skills

Key skills build on basic skills. They help people to apply literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in everyday situations, such as at work, in training or at home. For example, a learner may need to write a letter to get a job that they really want. Good communication skills will help them to achieve this. Key skills also include 'wider' skills that help people get on in life – working with other people, setting personal targets, meeting deadlines and solving problems.

There are six Key Skills qualifications:

Key Skill	Examples of situations when these skills are used:
Application of Number	Working out how much wallpaper you need to decorate a room
Communication	Having a discussion with colleagues at work
Information and Communication Technology	Designing a poster for an event
Working with Others	Working with neighbours to organise a Neighbourhood Watch scheme
Improving Own Learning and Performance	Deciding which course to attend to help get into university
Problem Solving	Making sure the mail is sent to customers on time, even though the photocopier is broken

Many adults leave school without the necessary skills for life. This can mean they find it difficult to make the most of the opportunities available. However, there is a full suite of Basic Skills and Key Skills qualifications that can help them gain the skills to enable them to achieve their full potential. Getting a qualification won't just improve people's skills – it will help others judge what they can do and how well they can do it.



## Why choose OCR qualifications?

OCR is a leading awarding body with many years' experience and a proven track record in Basic Skills and Key Skills qualifications. We can offer your centre the full suite of Basic Skills and Key Skills qualifications.

OCR's suite of Basic Skills and Key Skills qualifications		Entry 1	Entry 2	Entry 3	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
<b>Basic Skills</b>	OCR Certificate in Adult Numeracy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	-
	OCR Certificate in Adult Literacy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	-
	OCR Certificate in ICT Skills for Life	✓	✓	✓	-	-	-	-
<b>Key Skills</b>	OCR Certificate in Application of Number	-	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓
	OCR Certificate in Communication	-	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓
	OCR Certificate in ICT	-	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓
	OCR Certificate in Working with Others	-	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓
	OCR Certificate in Improving Own Learning and Performance	-	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓
	OCR Certificate in Problem Solving	-	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓

### Support for teachers and assessors

We offer a very high level of support and guidance to teachers and assessors delivering our qualifications, including:

- A nationwide programme of training events to help staff teach and assess our qualifications
- Assessment recording documents
- Sample assignments
- Example portfolios
- Principal moderators' and principal examiners' reports
- Tutor's handbooks
- Our website - [www.ocr.org.uk](http://www.ocr.org.uk)

We are recognised as being extremely friendly and helpful. Our highly competent and knowledgeable customer support staff are available to give advice and guidance, including centre visits.

### Support for candidates

As well as providing practice tests and evidence recording documents, we have a section on our website just for candidates. It's packed with information to help candidates prepare for and take our qualifications.

Visit [www.ocr.org.uk](http://www.ocr.org.uk)

### Innovative solutions

We've developed our systems in direct response to centre feedback to reduce the workload for centre staff. We have the expertise and operating systems that fully support centres. OCR Interchange is the free, secure part of our website that enables centres to interact with us directly. In many cases, centres can export data from OCR Interchange straight into their own systems and vice versa. The result is a paper-light administrative process and less work for centres.

And it's not just the administrative process that is streamlined – our on-demand assessment package includes on-screen tests. Candidates can sit these tests at any time on any day to suit the needs of the centre and the learner. There are no set-up fees and there is no need for a dedicated server. You can use your existing network, a desktop PC, or even portable laptops. Results are instantaneous and a diagnostic report is also provided, detailing candidates' performances.

# Basic Skills qualifications

## OCR offers three Basic Skills qualifications:

- OCR Certificate in Adult Literacy
- OCR Certificate in Adult Numeracy
- OCR Certificate in ICT Skills for Life

Each is available at Entry 1, Entry 2 and Entry 3 level. The Adult Literacy and Adult Numeracy qualifications are also available at Level 1 and Level 2.

These are all accredited qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework. Each qualification is based on, and referenced to, the national standards for adults.

### What do Basic Skills qualifications cover?

Adult Numeracy	Adult Literacy	Adult ICT Skills for Life
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• using number</li> <li>• using common measures, shape and space and data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• speaking and listening</li> <li>• reading</li> <li>• writing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• using ICT to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– display information</li> <li>– find information</li> <li>– communicate information</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

### How are Basic Skills qualifications assessed?

Basic Skills	Short Tasks	Test
Level 1 and 2 Adult Literacy*		✓
Level 1 and 2 Adult Numeracy*		✓
Entry Level Adult Literacy	✓	
Entry Level Adult Numeracy	✓	
Entry Level ICT Skills for Life	✓	

\* Candidates who wish to progress to a Key Skills qualification can use their Basic Skills Adult Literacy or Adult Numeracy qualification as a proxy for the relevant Key Skills test.



### Entry Level Basic Skills:

- Qualifications are assessed in the centre by the tutor and externally moderated by OCR.
- The literacy and numeracy qualifications allow units to be taken at different levels, to reflect the candidate's skills profile.
- The unit-based structure enables candidates to be entered for either individual units or the full qualification.
- There are no fixed assessment dates – candidates can be assessed at any time.
- OCR assignment templates are provided for the literacy and ICT qualifications. These can be used as they are or adapted to make the context relevant for candidates.
- OCR set tasks are provided for the numeracy qualification.
- Sample tasks and assignments are provided to enable candidates to practise their skills.
- Candidate Evidence Sheets are provided to enable candidate evidence to be recorded and tracked.

### Level 1 and Level 2 Basic Skills:

- At Level 1 and Level 2, the Adult Literacy and Adult Numeracy qualifications are assessed by a multiple-choice test that is marked by OCR.
- The tests are available as e-tests on-screen. Many candidates find this form of assessment exciting and motivating. These tests can be sat at any time on any day of the year to suit the needs of the centre and candidate. There are no set-up fees and there is no need for a dedicated server. Centres can use their existing network, or a desktop PC, or even portable laptops. Results are instantaneous and a diagnostic report is also provided, detailing candidates' performance.
- In addition to on-screen tests, paper tests are available on demand. There are no fixed assessment dates, giving you great flexibility when scheduling suitable test opportunities. Results are issued within ten working days and a diagnostic report detailing candidates' performance is also provided for those candidates who do not pass.
- Test entry is easy and includes electronic and unnamed entries.



# Key Skills



## OCR offers six Key Skills qualifications:

- OCR Certificate in Application of Number
- OCR Certificate in ICT
- OCR Certificate in Communication
- OCR Certificate in Improving Own Learning and Performance
- OCR Certificate in Working with Others
- OCR Certificate in Problem Solving

Each certificate is available at Levels 1–4 and each is an accredited qualification on the National Qualifications Framework. The standards for Key Skills qualifications are national and are produced by the regulatory authorities (QCA, ACCAC and CCEA).

Key Skills are included in the UCAS tariff:

- Level 2: 10 points
- Level 3: 20 points
- Level 4: 30 points

Key Skills qualifications are also included in the DfES School and College Achievement and Attainment Tables.

### What do Key Skills qualifications cover?

Application of Number	ICT	Communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• interpreting information involving numbers</li> <li>• carrying out calculations</li> <li>• interpreting results</li> <li>• presenting findings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• using ICT to find, develop and present information</li> <li>• working with numbers, text and images</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• taking part in discussions</li> <li>• giving talks or presentations</li> <li>• reading and obtaining information</li> <li>• writing documents</li> </ul>

### Wider Key Skills:

Improving Own Learning and Performance	Working With Others	Problem Solving
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• process skills of target setting, planning, learning and reviewing progress</li> <li>• interpersonal skills (eg negotiating learning opportunities and support)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• process skills of target setting, planning, learning and reviewing progress</li> <li>• interpersonal skills (eg responding appropriately to the views of others, resolving conflict)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• process skills of exploring problems and options, planning and trying out options, checking and reviewing solutions</li> <li>• interpersonal skills (eg asking for help, consulting others)</li> </ul>



### How are Key Skills qualifications assessed?

Key Skill	Portfolio of evidence	Test
Application of Number	✓	✓*
Communication	✓	✓*
Information and Communication Technology	✓	✓*
Improving Own Learning and Performance	✓	
Working With Others	✓	
Problem Solving	✓	

\* Not applicable in Wales

If a candidate has recently achieved a similar qualification (eg GCSE in Mathematics), they may be able to use this as a proxy for part or all of the Key Skills qualification requirements.

#### Portfolios of evidence

The portfolio of evidence demonstrates that the candidate can apply their skills to real-life situations. These situations can be part of another qualification, from a candidate's workplace or from activities outside formal education, eg the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.

Accredited Centre Status (ACS) is awarded to centres with a track record of accurate assessment. ACS lets experienced centres make portfolio claims directly, without the need for the OCR moderator to check portfolio work first. ACS enables centres to have greater autonomy in their assessment and moderation process, helping to spread the burden of assessment and enabling candidates to receive credit for their achievements quickly.

OCR visits centres to moderate their assessment, enabling centre staff to have instant face-to-face feedback and advice.

#### Tests

The test is set externally and is marked by OCR. At Levels 1 and 2 the test is a multiple-choice test; at Levels 3 and 4 it is a short-answer test.

Level 1 and 2 tests are available as e-tests on-screen. Many candidates find this form of assessment exciting and motivating. These tests can be sat at any time on any day of the year to suit the needs of the centre and candidate. There are no set-up fees and there is no need for a dedicated server. Centres can use their existing network, or a desktop PC, or even portable laptops. Results are instantaneous and a diagnostic report is also provided, detailing candidates' performances. In addition to on-screen tests, Level 1 and Level 2 tests are available on paper every month.

Level 3 and 4 tests are available on paper six times a year. Centres therefore have great flexibility when scheduling suitable test opportunities.

We offer a variety of test entry routes, including electronic, named and unnamed.

### What next?

If you want to offer any of the Basic Skills and/or Key Skills qualifications, you must first gain approval from OCR. If you're not sure about your centre's approval status, call our Customer Contact Centre on 024 76 851509 and we can quickly check for you.

We can also send you all the information you need to get started.

For more detailed information about our Basic Skills and Key Skills qualifications, call us on 024 76 851509 or visit our website: [www.ocr.org.uk](http://www.ocr.org.uk)

**[www.ocr.org.uk](http://www.ocr.org.uk)**

OCR Customer Contact Centre

**Vocational qualifications**

Telephone 024 76 851509

Facsimile 024 76 421944

Email [cib@ocr.org.uk](mailto:cib@ocr.org.uk)

**General qualifications**

Telephone 01223 553998

Facsimile 01223 552627

Email [helpdesk@ocr.org.uk](mailto:helpdesk@ocr.org.uk)

**Head office**

9 Hills Road, Cambridge CB2 1PB

Telephone 01223 552552

Facsimile 01223 552553



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