



Skillsfirst
growth through learning

Transforming the delivery of Functional Skills and awarding organisation services

Four highly respected sector specialist Awarding Organisations have come together to transform the way Functional Skills will be offered to centres.

EAL (EMTA Awards Ltd), IMI Awards, ITEC and Skillsfirst Awards will jointly develop and offer, from September 2010, Functional Skills qualifications at Levels 1 and 2 in English, Maths and ICT.

These qualifications will be available on-screen and on-demand initially through 10 assessment windows at a single price of £12.50 per learner per subject. The aim is to move to a fully all-year round and on-demand model and an offering in Entry Level qualifications in 2011.

This revolutionary collaboration came about following extensive research into the needs of, and feedback from, our sectors' employers and centres. The awarding organisations have listened to their requests for flexible and cost effective Functional Skills which, whilst complying with strict regulatory expectations and quality standards, will result in responsive and employer friendly arrangements for learners, employees and apprentices.

From September 2010, the awarding organisations will also begin to offer a practical one-stop-shop for various awarding organisation processes such as appeals and enquiries, whilst putting in place arrangements to converge other processes such as "centre approval" and "on-going monitoring" activities where possible.

Ann Watson, Managing Director of EAL commented "For the last few years we've seen a real change in the needs and requirements from new and existing centres and a real drive to **reduce costs and burden** whilst not losing the support they receive from specialist organisations. By working together we can ensure that **we continue to meet and exceed these needs.**"

Alan Mackrill Managing Director at IMI Awards added "Each organisation has a real commitment to their sectors and a **refreshing approach to customer services and delivery**. We have come together to build upon this expertise and offer – what we believe – is the **most flexible and cost effective Functional Skills offering in the market**".

Jane Foulston Chief Executive at ITEC said “Going forward we will aim to build upon this agreement to deliver a truly effective and responsive **one-stop approach across our qualification ranges** so centres and employers can access the outstanding knowledge and customer service that specialist awarding organisations offer **without incurring unnecessary or duplicated processes and requests**”.

Myra Wall, Managing Director at Skillsfirst concluded “This is an exciting prospect for our companies, customers and sectors. Working hand in hand we’ve developed **high quality Functional Skills qualifications** that meet the real needs of our centres and employers. This unique collaboration could potentially **transform the way centres and employers procure qualifications from awarding organisations in the future**”.

The announcement has met with support from employers looking for a solution to their Functional Skills needs.

“JTL has an excellent working relationship with EAL. If this partnership (between the four specialist organisations) saves time, reduces costs and bureaucracy in training it can only benefit the employers and learners who work with us” Denis Hird, Chief Executive, JTL

“The concerns we raised around access for apprentices to take these qualifications are being addressed by this group of awarding organisations. This solution shows they clearly understand the difficulties we were facing with such rigid restrictions when first presented with the functional skills delivery methods. The number of windows offered will be a great advantage when planning training programmes for apprentices.” Tony Hetherington, Technical Training Manager, Mercedes-Benz UK Limited

“Yorkshire College of Beauty Therapy were delighted to discover that ITEC are to develop a Functional Skills qualification which will work alongside the NVQ level 2 and 3 in Beauty Therapy. The additional benefit of on line testing which can be booked on demand further instilled our confidence in the ITEC Functional Skills qualification, a necessary component of the Apprenticeship.” Framework Rebecca O’ Farrell Yorkshire College of Beauty Therapy

“The approach that Skillsfirst Awards and this collaboration has taken to Functional Skills has been very refreshing. Having an employer

focused, flexible delivery model, is key to the way both Elmfield Training and our customers work.” Ged Syddall, CEO of Elmfield Training

EAL (EMTA Awards Limited), IMI Awards, ITEC and Skillsfirst Awards Ltd will be holding separate events and briefings for their centres who will be delivering the new Functional Skills where they will provide more details including assessment window timings. For general information please contact the relevant organisation.

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