

## Changes to the Literacy and Numeracy Assessment process (October 2018)

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### **What is the reason for the change?**

The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) accepts that their previous criteria for assessing all Level 2 trainees is not the most effective way of identifying adults with Literacy & Numeracy (L&N) learning needs. They recognise that many organisations have entry-level qualifications at Level 2 or 3 and they know from research, that about 30 – 40% of these trainees will need L&N support. They are concerned that literacy and numeracy learning needs contribute to non-completion rates in tertiary education.

Research indicates that adults change careers about 2-3 times in their working lives and people are sometimes entering new careers at lower-levels of study even though they have higher-level qualifications from previous careers. It is a waste of time assessing these employees for L&N learning needs when their academic record proves they are unlikely to need learning support.

#### **What if my trainees have already done literacy and numeracy assessments?**

The TEC requires initial assessments and progress assessments if the initial scores were low (Step 3 and below – literacy, Step 4 and below – numeracy). So, if your trainee has completed these assessments before, they will not have to repeat them with future enrolments. However, if a trainee's previous scores are a concern, and you notice they struggle with reading or numeracy tasks, you can request new assessments to help you decide the supports they may need for their next course of study.

#### **Why do trainees need to have qualifications at Level 3 or higher to be exempt from literacy and numeracy assessments?**

The TEC considers successful experience at tertiary-level (minimum Level 3 qualification) examples the trainees skills, knowledge and ability to engage in tertiary level qualifications.

#### **Will apprentices and trainees enrolling in diploma-level courses be expected to do a literacy and numeracy assessment?**

Only if they do not have a tertiary qualification at Level 3 or above (achieved in the English language).

#### **Why does a trainee's tertiary qualification need to have been delivered in English to be exempt from the literacy and numeracy assessments?**

The TEC experience of trainees with tertiary qualifications achieved in another language indicate that the trainee may struggle with the reading and writing required to utilise online learning resources because their English reading and writing skills are not always sufficient to meet course demands.

#### **What do the results tell me about my trainee's learning needs?**

##### ***Reading Assessment:***

Steps 1 and 2 indicate that trainees will be struggling with everyday life reading tasks and will not be reading most workplace documents accurately. Step 3 is considered as the minimum step to be able

to actively participate in everyday life and work situations. Steps 4 – 6 indicate strong reading literacy. The Careerforce Level 2 learning guides have been mapped at a Step 4-5 reading demands.

**Numeracy Assessment:**

Steps 1 – 3 indicate that trainees will be struggling with everyday life numeracy tasks. A Step 4 outcome indicates the trainee has a range of strategies for dealing with everyday numeracy. Steps 5 and 6 demonstrate strong numeracy skills.

**What should I do if the literacy and numeracy outcomes of a trainee are below step 3?**

- If the trainee is enrolling in a Level 2 qualification, they are eligible for free specialist literacy tuition that can be embedded into and delivered alongside, their Level 2 course. *Contact Cushla about literacy provision in your area.:*
- If the trainee wants to enrol in a Level 3 (or higher) qualification, consider a discussion with them about building their confidence and skills by enrolling in a lower level qualification first.
- Some literacy providers will develop programmes designed to prepare learners for a qualification course. You could talk to these providers about setting up a “pre-Level 3” or “pre-Level 4” programme. *Contact Cushla for further information.*
- For employees who are motivated to work independently on their literacy and numeracy skills, there is a FREE online adult learning programme called Pathways Awarua [www.pathwaysawarua.com](http://www.pathwaysawarua.com). This tool assists adults to build, numeracy, reading, writing, listening, number facts and vocabulary skills. It is FREE to everyone, including staff on temporary work permits (who are not eligible for specialist literacy tuition).
- A long-term solution is to build internal capability in your trainers / learning facilitators, so you can address trainees’ literacy and numeracy learning needs. Careerforce supports the New Zealand Certificate of Literacy and Numeracy Education (for Vocational / Workplace Tutors). This is a Level 5, 40-credit, 12-month qualification, funded by a TEC Educator Grant. Careerforce facilitates study groups and 1:1 support for workplace trainers undergoing this qualification. *Contact Cushla for details.*

**What if my trainee is anxious about the TEC assessments?**

Please assure your trainees that these are not “pass or fail” tests. They are just a snapshot of where the trainee’s literacy (reading) and numeracy skills are, at this time. These assessments are not the whole picture. People in our industry often demonstrate effective oral communication (speaking and listening skills). Assure them that you consider the whole picture when looking at the best ways to support their learning and development.

If you have any other questions about literacy and numeracy assessment or literacy support, please contact: Cushla Wilson, Careerforce Literacy and Numeracy Advisor.

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