



Guide to Accreditation

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Introduction

Linwood School is proud to be able to offer a wide range of external accreditations to learners across all campuses, from Entry Level Awards through to GCSEs and A Levels. This guide has been developed to describe the various accreditations offered throughout Linwood School.

Not all of the following sections will be relevant to every learner. Learners and their parents/carers receive information about which accreditations the learner is undertaking.

It is our intention to provide learners with the best possible opportunity to achieve their full potential whilst at Linwood School.

Sarah Hawkins
Exams/Data Manager



Accreditations

Functional Skills

What are Functional Skills?

Functional Skills are practical skills in English, Maths and ICT for learners aged 14 and above. Functional Skills provide an individual with essential knowledge, skills and understanding that will enable them to operate confidently, effectively and independently in life and work.

They are learning tools that enable students to:

- apply their knowledge and understanding to everyday life
- engage competently and confidently with others
- solve problems in both familiar and unfamiliar situations
- develop personally and professionally as positive citizens who can actively contribute to society.

Functional Skills are important because they provide young people and adults with the skills, knowledge and understanding that they will need in order to progress and succeed in education, work and life.

Who are they for?

Functional Skills are available to all learners from Key Stage 3 upwards, whatever learning pathway they are taking. The skills taught will help students to participate and progress in education, training and employment. Working on Functional Skills helps to develop and secure the broader range of aptitudes, attitudes and behaviours that will enable students to make a positive contribution to the communities in which they live and work.



At what levels are Functional Skills qualifications available?

For Functional Skills assessment, learner performance will be measured on a pass/fail basis at five levels: Entry 1, Entry 2, Entry 3, Level 1 and Level 2. Learners are not required to move sequentially through each level but to take the Functional Skills qualification at the appropriate level when they are ready to do so.

Each subject area has a set of performance standards based on three key areas:

Maths Key areas:

- Representing – making sense of a situation and representing it mathematically.
- Analysing – processing and using maths.
- Interpreting – interpreting and communicating the results of analysis.

ICT Key areas:

- Use of ICT systems.
- Finding and selecting information.
- Developing, presenting and communicating information.

English Key areas:

- Speaking and listening – making an oral presentation or report.
- Reading – reading and understanding information and instructions.
- Writing – writing accurately so that meaning is clear.

When are Functional Skills Taken?

Functional skills Math and English can be taken at any point of the year when teachers assess students are at the appropriate level. Students will be told of their provisional grade but marks are subject to external moderation in July.

Functional Skills ICT is usually taken at the end of year 11 for students completing the course.



Entry Level Certificates (ELCs)

ELCs are qualifications for students who are working below Grade 1 at GCSE. They are available at Entry 1, 2 and 3.

Entry Level qualifications are made up of a number of separately assessed units so achievements are recognised as the learner completes each unit. The assessment is based on a combination of tests, assignments and tasks which can be written, oral or practical.

Different subjects and courses will vary in structure, content and the number of units. When all the units are completed, the full certificate is issued.



Where they can lead

You can progress from one entry level to the next. At entry 3, the qualifications are designed to help learners move on to further qualifications, such as:

- GCSEs
- Key Skills
- Skills for Life
- NVQs
- BTEC Introductory or Level 1 BTEC Awards, Certificates or Diplomas

They can also lead to work-based learning, like an apprenticeship, or employment.

ELC Qualifications offered at Linwood include:

AQA ELC Mathematics

Students complete a portfolio which contain eight components of work made up of internally and externally set assignments. Students submit all components that form the assessment at the end of the course.

AQA ELC Science

Students complete a portfolio which contain 12 components of work for a double award or 6 for a single award. Students submit all components that form the assessment at the end of the course. The assignments are divided equally between the 3 disciplines of Biology, Chemistry and Physics and half are written tests of knowledge and half are based on practical tasks.



ASDAN

ASDAN offers a wide choice of activity-based programmes for learners working at a range of levels. Their courses offer ways of developing, assessing and certificating young people's knowledge and skills development, to grow skills for learning, skills for employment and skills for life. Further information is available from the ASDAN website.

ASDAN Qualifications offered at Linwood include:

Personal Development Programme (PDP)

ASDAN's Personal Development Programme (PDP: Bronze, Silver and Gold) offers imaginative ways of developing, recording and certificating a wide range of young people's personal skills, qualities and achievements, as well as introducing them to new activities and challenges.

Students gain one or two credits for each section completed, with each credit representing approximately 10 hours of activity. Six credits are needed to complete Bronze, 12 for Silver and 18 for Gold.



- Students are required to plan and review their work at key points explaining how they have developed their skills in six areas: Ability to learn, Teamwork, Problem Solving, IT Skills, Literacy and Numeracy. They compile a portfolio of evidence, which documents the challenges they have completed.
- These programmes are aimed at learners working at Entry 3 and Level 1. They have been designed to be used in special schools as a major part of the curriculum, to enable tutors to engage learners in developing relevant life skills.
- Learners select a number of challenges from the 12 modules that make up the Personal Development Programmes.
- Learners can progress from Bronze to Silver and Gold.

Personal and Social Development (PSD)

PSD at Entry 1, 2 and 3 is used by students aged 14+ and adults in the Foundation Learning stage of their development. PSD Levels 1 & 2 is used by SEND and mainstream establishments for students aged 14-19, and also for adults. Students complete a number of units to reach the required number of credits for a particular size of qualification they are studying. Each credit is equivalent to around 10 hours of learning time, and students complete units set at their ability level. Students can advance each year either from PSD award (6 credits) to PSD certificate (13 credits) or to a higher-level PSD qualification.

My Independence

My Independence is a suite of four certificated programmes for young people with a range of special educational needs. Mapped to the preparing for adulthood (PfA) pathways, My Independence is ASDAN's key programme to achieve positive outcomes for young people with an education, health and care plan (EHCP).

My Independence offered at Linwood include:

Exploring Aspirations

The Exploring Aspirations course aims to better prepare young people for the next stage in their education and for good life outcomes.

The Exploring Aspirations activities support the delivery of PSHE, Citizenship and Careers Education and are mapped to the four Preparing for Adulthood pathways:

- friends, relationships and community
- employment
- good health
- independent living

Each of the pathways includes seven activities, Students must complete a minimum of four of these activities to complete each pathway. Certificates are available on completion of each pathway and a final certificate completion of the full course once all four pathways completed.



Supporting Aspirations

The aim of the Supporting Aspirations course is to better prepare young people to plan for good life outcomes.

Supporting Aspirations has been developed around the four preparing for adulthood pathways, each pathway comprises three modules:

- friends, relationships and community
- employment
- good health
- independent living

The course contains 12 modules, 3 under each pathway. Certificates are issued for completion of each module, pathway and completion of the course.

Life Skills Challenges

Lifeskills Challenges are designed to meet students' individual needs by providing a personalised curriculum for young people with SEND or those facing barriers to learning from pre-Entry to Level 3.

The challenges recognise learners' progress in curriculum areas that are important for success in adult life – they are usually about being able to do things, rather than about a significant body of knowledge. Learners work through the challenge and collect evidence of their achievements. Challenges take from 10 – 30 learning hours to complete and have been mapped to the four Preparing for Adulthood pathways and cover subject areas such as English, Mathematics, ICT and PSHE.



BTEC

- **BTEC** stands for '**Business and Technology Education Council**', which used to run the award, first introduced in 1984.
- BTECs are now awarded by the [Edexcel exam board](#) and are taken in more than 100 countries at all levels, from pre-GCSE to Degree equivalent.
- They are vocational and work-related courses, designed to accommodate the needs of employers and allow students to progress to further and higher education.
- A BTEC takes a practical approach to learning, without missing any of the important theory on the subject
- BTECs are extremely reputable, having been around for 25 years
- BTECs are recognised by a large number of companies across a wide range of industries.
- As well as being developed in partnership with industry representatives so all employer and student needs are met, many professional bodies offer successful BTEC students exemptions for their own accredited qualifications.
- BTECs allow a learner to undertake a number of units for which they will present evidence, based on real-life work and studies, removing the pressure to perform in exams.



How do BTEC qualifications work?

There are different sizes of BTEC qualification at each level. Generally:

- The smallest is the **Award**, then the **Certificate** and the largest is the **Diploma**

Unit results may be graded as Pass, Merit or Distinction.

The number of units varies according to the design and focus of each qualification, and all students complete realistic work-based assignments, which are internally assessed. Assessment decisions and quality assurance procedures in each centre are regularly checked by [EdExcel](#).

What are the different BTEC levels?

BTECs are offered at a number of different levels, from Entry Level to Level 4. The levels we currently offer at Linwood are outlined below, however this list is not exhaustive and could change depending on the ability of the cohort.

How long does a BTEC take?

- A BTEC will generally take one to two years to complete, depending on whether you study for the course full time or part time.
- BTECs are flexible. They can be taken alongside, or in place of, [GCSEs](#) and [A levels](#) and alongside Diplomas in schools and colleges.
- BTECs are mode-free and the time taken to complete them depends on the size and level of the qualification.
- Each BTEC programme has identified guided learning hours.

What is a BTEC qualification worth?

BTEC qualifications are fully recognised as holding equivalences to GCSEs and A Levels (dependent upon the level of BTEC qualification taken), and can be used towards the UCAS points needed for a university application.

BTEC Qualifications offered at Linwood include:

BTEC Workskills

WorkSkills is a suite of BTEC qualifications designed to equip learners with the essential skills for job success and career development. The main purpose is to develop learners' employability skills. There is a large choice of units that fully reflect the realities of the modern workplace. Students complete units that best suit programme and fit into the qualification that is the right size. The level of qualification gained is determined by how many units they students complete. There is a range of qualification sizes at Entry 1,2,3, Level 1 and Level 2 to ensure that there is one to suit everyone. On completion of one of these qualifications, learners have the opportunity to progress to related general and/or vocational qualifications, or employment in a particular vocational sector.



BTEC Home Cooking Skills

Home cooking skills is designed to teach students essential knowledge and skills such as:

- **kitchen basics:** what equipment you need and the best way to stock your store cupboard, fridge and freezer
- **food safety and hygiene:** knife safety, fridge management and rotation
- **how to shop cleverly:** shopping lists, seasonal food and planning ahead
- **preparing ingredients and understanding confusing food labels.**

There are two levels of Home Cooking Skills which are both delivered at Linwood. Students may either progress from level 1 to level 2 or start on Level 2 depending on ability levels.

Level 1 (4 credits) - Focuses on giving all young people the skills to prepare delicious and nutritious home-cooked food using fresh ingredients, as well as an understanding of the value of passing on cooking knowledge.

Level 2 (6 Credits) - Develops the student's ability to plan and prepare a series of nutritious home-cooked meals for breakfast, snacks, lunch and dinner, and helps them understand how to cook economically.

Unit Award Schemes (AQA)

The Unit Award Scheme (UAS) offers learners the opportunity to have their achievements formally recognised with a certificate issued by AQA each time a short unit is successfully completed.

There are no limits on:

- what can be accredited, as long as it is worthwhile and meaningful for the learner
- who can achieve, in terms of age or ability
- how long it takes to achieve or when this takes place
- how learning can be evidenced.

TLM – IT User Skills in Open Systems & Enterprise (ITQ)

These IT qualifications are designed for a wide range of abilities and for people who require skills in IT. They range from 1 unit with 6 Guided Learning Hours, to many units and 100 Guided Learning Hours. There are a wide range of units available for all skill levels and interests. There is an emphasis on open systems as required in the UK Government Cabinet Office Policy. There are many opportunities to provide learning contexts that strengthen numeracy, and literacy, as well as supporting other subjects across the curriculum.

BSC Health & Safety in the Workplace

This is a six-week online course and provides a basic introduction to health and safety in the workplace. The course includes a range of e-Learning interactions and a downloadable study text. Throughout the course, students can see and interact with the tutor and with each other. Students complete an online assessment at the end of the course to gain the accreditation.



Food Safety/Hygiene Training

This is an induction programme for those undertaking work-experience in a food business, and for anyone with a keen interest in learning more about the basic principles of food safety and hygiene.

This online course, throughout the course, students can see and interact with the tutor and with each other. Students complete an online assessment at the end of the course to gain the accreditation.

GCSEs

What are GCSEs?

- GCSE stands for General Certificate of Secondary Education.
- GCSE examinations are taken by most pupils at the end of compulsory school education (year 11) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- GCSE provides a uniform framework for assessment.
- Each GCSE subject is assessed by formal examinations or by coursework, or by a combination of the two.

GCSE represents Key Stage 4 of the National Curriculum, and although GCSE provides a uniform framework of assessment, in fact it represents two "levels" of the National Qualifications Framework. Grades 9 to 4 are Level 2 (intermediate) qualifications, while grades grade 3 to U are Level 1 (foundation) qualifications.

Depending on their expected grades, pupils in a few subjects, such as Science and Maths, will be entered for the "higher" or the "foundation" tier GCSE exams. Pupils expected to achieve grades 9 to 3 take the higher tier and can achieve any grade; pupils taking the foundation tier can only achieve grade 5 or below.

GCSE offered at Linwood include:

- AQA English Language
- AQA English Literature
- AQA Science : Combined Synergy
- Pearson Edexcel Mathematics

A Levels

AS and A levels are the traditional qualifications offered by schools and colleges for 16-19 year olds. They are highly valued by universities and employers and focus on academic subjects, although some are work-related.

AS/A levels are mostly assessed by written exams. In subjects like science and art, practical skills are also assessed.



Access Arrangements

Access Arrangements are pre-examination adjustments for candidates based on evidence of need and normal way of working. Access Arrangements fall into two distinct categories: some arrangements are delegated to centres, others require prior JCQ^{CIC} awarding body approval.

Access Arrangements allow candidates/learners with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment without changing the demands of the assessment. For example, readers, scribes and Braille question papers. In this way Awarding Bodies will comply with the duty of the Equality Act 2010 to make “reasonable adjustments”.

Linwood School's phase leaders, teachers and the Exams Officer work closely together to identify the specific Access Arrangements each individual child needs to apply for, early in the academic year. As and when it is necessary to apply for Access Arrangements parents/carers will be notified by the Exams Office. Some accreditations do not require an application for Access Arrangements and the centre (school) are able to delegate specific arrangements without permission. The nature of various accreditations such as ASDAN and BTEC mean that Access Arrangements do not apply as they are not necessary.

Students will be notified of their access arrangements and students, parents and carers have the right to appeal.



Exam Conditions

All schools have to follow a set of guidelines and procedures for exams which are regulated by the Joint Council for Qualifications (www.jcq.org.uk).

The number of pupils we have sitting exams and the type of accreditation and access arrangements taken into consideration mean that we do not hold exams in a large exam hall. To avoid anxiety most assessments take place in the learner's usual classroom. It is entirely possible that the learner may not be aware they are undergoing an assessment in order to avoid anxiety.

For GCSE examinations there is a more rigorous procedure in place. However, where possible the exams are located in a familiar and routine venue, with a familiar invigilator.





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Results & certificates

All results are notified in August by first class post to the home address. This is to coincide with GCSE results day.

Certificates are usually delivered to centres from the accrediting bodies by the end of the following November.

Certificates are collated and issued in the November following the June exam series – regardless of awarding body or accreditation type. For current students, certificates are delivered in person. Recent leavers are notified by telephone that their certificates are ready and a mutually convenient time arranged for collection. Under exceptional circumstances will the certificates be posted to students.

Useful websites/links

AQA - <https://www.aqa.org.uk> (GCSE, AQA Unit Awards, Entry Level Certificates, Functional Skills)

Edexcel - <https://qualifications.pearson.com> (GCSE, BTEC, Functional Skills)

OCR - <https://www.ocr.org.uk> (ELC)

ASDAN - <https://www.asdan.org.uk> (PDP, PSD, My Independence, Lifeskills)

ASDAN – Exploring Aspirations – Information video <https://youtu.be/AkpxzGWU9Ao>

ASDAN – Supporting Aspiration – Information Video <https://youtu.be/HviK1JqjZsQ>

JCQ - <https://www.jcq.org.uk> (information on Access Arrangements, Information for Candidates for Assessments & Examinations).

Ofqual - <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofqual> (Ofqual regulates qualifications, examinations and assessments in England.)