

# ESOL

## (English for Speakers of Other Languages)

<b>TRAIN TO GAIN FACTSHEET</b>	
<b>Summary</b>	<p>ESOL provision has tripled since the launch of the Skills for Life strategy. Demand remains high but resources are finite, and the current level of growth is unsustainable. While the Government remains committed to providing support for ESOL learners, public funds must be focused on those who are most in need of help. Whilst fee remission will still be available to the most disadvantaged, those who can afford to pay should contribute to the cost of their learning.</p> <p>Providers are tasked with various challenges:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Assessing the needs of potential ESOL learners – individuals for whom English is not their first language will normally have widely varying skills in English, e.g. speaking and listening skills are often higher than their reading and writing skills. Diagnostic assessment may indicate that an individual may not be at an overall E3 level and therefore not suitable for an ESOL Skills for Life qualification at levels 1 or 2, bearing in mind that this would involve passing the National Test which is based on reading and comprehension. They would therefore not be eligible for Train to Gain funding.</li> <li>2) Putting together a viable group of learners (ESOL learning is most effective when delivered in groups). This can be difficult because migrant workers often work variable shift patterns, travelling can be difficult, learners have other commitments such as childcare. In addition to this, fee contributions can prevent a learner/employer from committing to a programme.</li> </ol>
<b>Location</b>	9 LSC regions of England
<b>Timing</b>	ESOL is part of the national Skills for Life strategy which aims to improve literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy skills of the adult population.
<b>Why</b>	The Leitch Review of Skills highlighted that skills shortages continue to have a negative impact on UK productivity and competitiveness in the face of fast growing economies. One of the main recommendations includes improving adult functional skills in both Entry Level 3 in numeracy and Level 1 in Literacy, including ESOL learners. The target set by Leitch is 95% by 2020 – current levels are 85% in literacy and 79% in numeracy (2005).

<b>How</b>	<p>An individual's learning needs must be assessed through a recognised diagnostic assessment tool, to ensure that "spiky" profiles are correctly identified and the learners' needs can be adequately met. In some cases, a Skills for Life ESOL qualification at level 1 or 2 might not be the most appropriate qualification; individuals/employers may want to consider the new ESOL for Work qualifications which focus on language skills for employment purposes (contact providers direct to see if they are offering this new qualification).</p> <p>Other available qualifications include ESOL International qualifications which have a more academic focus and are aimed at the full fee paying market.</p> <p>Entry level Skills for Life ESOL qualifications are funded through LSC mainstream provision. Providers will need to be contacted direct to ascertain whether they deliver this type of provision which is normally "classroom" based.</p>
<b>Key contact</b>	<p>Most FE colleges and many private training providers offer ESOL provision. In the first instance contact their Skills for Life department/manager and they will be able to advise of their capacity and capability to deliver ESOL.</p> <p>For more general information on ESOL provision, contact the SW Skills for Life Team on 01752 754095 or visit <a href="http://www.sfl-sw.org.uk">www.sfl-sw.org.uk</a></p>
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.traintogain.gov.uk">www.traintogain.gov.uk</a>

### Key messages

- Although ESOL is part of the Skills for Life agenda, it differs from literacy and numeracy, especially in terms of mode of delivery and fee remission.
- Although automatic fee remission has been removed, some individuals are still entitled to full fee remission, e.g. those who are unemployed or receiving income-based benefits, low waged or spouses.
- For employed learners undertaking ESOL Skills for Life qualifications, the LSC will fund £444 of the current basic skills funding rate of £772 within Train to Gain. Employers are therefore required to contribute £328 and Providers will need to claim this contribution from Employers and record on the Individualised Learning Record.
- The ESOL needs of migrant workers differs from individuals from settled ethnic communities, therefore provision reflects this.
- Employers who have recruited workers from outside the UK are expected to pay for their employees' English language needs.
- Providers may have access to alternative routes for funding ESOL provision for lower level learners, e.g. via ESF projects or the Discretionary Learner Support Fund.
- A "New Approach to ESOL" is currently being rolled out nationally: see [http://www.dius.gov.uk/skills/skills\\_for\\_life/esol](http://www.dius.gov.uk/skills/skills_for_life/esol). At the time of writing (August 2009) Bristol City Council is the only Local Authority "pathfinder" in the South West.