**Professional Skills Tests in Literacy and Numeracy**

The professional skills tests (skills tests) for prospective teachers assess the core skills that teachers need to fulfil their professional role in schools, rather than the subject knowledge needed for teaching. This is to ensure all teachers are competent in numeracy and literacy, regardless of their specialism.

All current and prospective trainee teachers must pass the skills tests in numeracy and literacy before they can be recommended for the award of qualified teacher status (QTS).

Initial teacher training (ITT) providers are responsible for checking that all trainees meet the current ITT entry requirements for the skills tests, before they start the course.

The skills tests:

* are in addition to the GCSE grade C equivalence entry requirement
* are set in the context of the professional role of a teacher
* assess the use of real data and information which teachers are likely to encounter
* are computerised
* go through a stringent quality assurance procedure
* are extensively piloted and the performance of each test is regularly monitored

These tests are not designed to assess candidate knowledge of the national curriculum or on how to teach it. The tests contain items relating to spelling, punctuation, grammar and comprehension.

**Spelling**

The spelling section is an audio test, the words tested are those that the candidate could reasonably be expected to use in their role as a teacher. The words used are not especially obscure or technical and, would be used frequently in professional writing.

**Punctuation**

This tests the candidate’s ability to understand and apply punctuation rules. They will be required to insert punctuation into a piece of writing. They are not required to remove or rewrite any sections.

**Grammar**

This tests the candidate’s ability to identify text that does not conform to good grammatical practice. They will be expected to distinguish between text that makes sense and clearly conveys its intended meaning, and text that does not. They will not be tested on their knowledge of grammatical terms, but on their knowledge of how to use grammar correctly. The grammar section requires the construction of a short, continuous prose passage.

**Comprehension**

This section tests a candidate’s ability to:

* identify main points in a text
* distinguish between facts and opinions
* retrieve facts and key points
* make inferences and deductions
* evaluate meaning and status

They will be asked to re-work, organise and structure information.

The test uses texts such as documents published by local and national government bodies, schools and the educational press. Extracts from websites and national newspapers are also used.

**Professional Skills Tests in Numeracy**

These tests are not designed to assess candidate knowledge of the national curriculum or on how to teach it.

The numeracy skills test is divided into 2 areas, mental arithmetic and a written section (written arithmetic and written data)

Each test contains twenty-eight questions, twelve mental arithmetic questions and sixteen written questions, plus a practice question that is not scored. All questions carry 1 mark regardless of the number of responses required.

**Mental arithmetic questions**

The mental arithmetic section is an audio test, which assess the candidate’s ability to carry out mental calculations using:

* addition, subtraction, multiplication and division
* time
* fractions, decimals and percentages
* proportions involving fractions, decimals and percentages
* measurement, including money, distance, area and volume
* conversions

Questions are timed, and use of a calculator is **not** permitted.

**Written section (written arithmetic and written data)**

Questions are presented on-screen, candidates will be tested on their ability to interpret and use written data to:

* identify trends correctly
* make comparisons in order to draw conclusions
* interpret information accurately

They will be tested on their ability to solve written arithmetic problems, which include:

* time
* money
* fractions, decimals and percentages
* proportions and ratios
* measurements (e.g. distance, area)
* conversions
* averages (including mean, median and mode)
* range
* using simple formulae

Use of an on-screen calculator **is** permitted