



**Rt Hon Anne Milton MP**  
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*See Sally*

*17th January 2019*

In June I wrote to you setting out my priorities for the reform of basic digital skills qualifications. Many thanks for working with my officials to progress these reforms at pace. I am delighted we have published our plans to improve basic digital skills qualifications for adults and you have published proposals for their regulation.

I promised to write to you separately concerning the reform of Functional Skills qualifications (FSQs) in ICT. I am keen these qualifications are replaced by new digital FSQs that reflect the new national standards for basic digital skills that my department is currently consulting on. It is also important that they benefit from the improvements we have made to FSQs in English and maths.

To reinforce understanding of the Functional Skills brand, I expect new digital FSQs to use a pass-fail grading system and be the same size as the new FSQs in English and maths. Reflecting our proposals to improve basic digital skills courses for adults, I envisage that new digital FSQs be made available at two levels- beginner (entry level), and essential (level 1). You should also note that the qualifications will not play a part in the Government's accountability system, with the exception of qualification achievement rates.

As is the case for the new FSQs in English and maths, I expect new digital FSQs to provide reliable evidence of learners' achievements against demanding content that is relevant to the workplace and everyday life. They also need to provide a foundation for progression into further study or employment. Employers and learners should have confidence that the level of qualification achieved is comparable irrespective of the awarding organisation they choose or the year in which exams are taken.

The basic digital skills entitlement will fully fund post 19 learners to study new digital FSQs alongside other basic digital skills qualifications approved for full funding. Recognising the time needed to develop subject content and regulations for the new digital FSQs, I propose we work towards first teaching from 2021. I look forward to working with you further on introducing these qualifications.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Anne Milton'.

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