[New free online learning platform to boost workplace skills](#)

A new [online learning platform](#) to help boost the nation's skills while people are staying at home, has been launched today (28 April) by Education Secretary Gavin Williamson.

Free courses are available through a new online platform hosted on the gov.uk website, called [The Skills Toolkit](#). The new platform gives people access to free, high-quality digital and numeracy courses to help build up their skills, progress in work and boost their job prospects.

These are the skills which are highly valued by employers and sought after in a wide range of jobs. With more people expected to be working and studying remotely in the coming months, the platform offers a great opportunity to learn new skills to help to get ahead online and gain the knowledge we'll all need for the future. The platform also offers employees who have been furloughed an opportunity to keep up their skills development while they are at home.

Courses on offer cover a range of levels, from everyday maths and tools for using email and social media more effectively at work to more advanced training. Individuals will be able to access courses helping them to create great online content developed by the University of Leeds and the Institute of Coding, to understand the Fundamentals of Digital Marketing from Google Digital Garage and to learn how to code for data analysis from the Open University. All courses are online and flexible, so people can work through them at their own pace.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

> I know how difficult the recent months have been and the huge changes the coronavirus has brought on the daily lives of us all.
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> The high-quality and free to access courses on offer on our new online learning platform, The Skills Toolkit, will help those whose jobs have been affected by the outbreak, and people looking to boost their skills while they are staying at home, protecting the NHS and saving lives.
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> I want businesses to encourage their furloughed employees to use The Skills Toolkit to improve their knowledge, build their confidence and support their mental health so they have skills they need to succeed after the coronavirus outbreak.

Digital Secretary Oliver Dowden said:

The impact of Covid-19 has shown how important digital skills are — both for work and other aspects of our lives. Technology is going to play a hugely important role in our economic recovery and this new platform will help ensure everyone is able to improve their digital skills and take advantage of the opportunities ahead.

The Skills Toolkit is designed to help people gain new skills while they are staying at home and boost their confidence. The courses have been selected on the advice of experts and leading employers to make sure they meet the needs of business, not just for today but in the future. This is just a first step towards assisting with the longer-term recovery to boost employability across the country, helping people to build up the skills employers need during time spent at home.

Employers are also encouraged to use The Skills Toolkit to help to support and develop furloughed employees who are interested in learning from home.

Matthew Fell, CBI Chief UK Policy Director said:

Online learning is a great way for people to upgrade their skills at any time, but never more so than during a lockdown.

The toolkit's heavy emphasis on the skills that businesses need are welcome.

Maths and digital skills are highly prized by employers, so for those who take the chance to upskill they can help improve their job prospects and career progression. I'd encourage all businesses to make their staff aware of this learning opportunity.

Julian David, CEO of techUK said:

techUK is pleased to see Government taking an active role in signposting and motivating the public to take advantage of the digital skills training industry offers, techUK has long advocated for a move in this direction. Digital skills will be crucial to the future of the UK economy and our recovery from the COVID crisis.

techUK is passionate about ensuring everyone has access resources to improve their skills and retrain at any age and at all skill levels and we expect this initiative to be a great start on the journey to upskilling Britain.

Simon Nelson, CEO of FutureLearn, said:

At FutureLearn our mission has always been to transform access to education and we are proud to be working with the Department for Education to deliver on that shared vision. We hope that the free

digital skills courses included within the Skills Toolkit, which were built in partnership with Accenture, the Institute of Coding, and the University of Leeds, will bring practical and accessible support to people across the country, and ensure that individuals and businesses are able to access the skills and training opportunities they need to keep thriving and moving forward, not just during this challenging period, but beyond it.

Helen Milner, Chief Executive of Good Things Foundation said:

It's at times like this that people start to think about the skills they might want for the future.

With 11.9 million people in the UK still without the essential digital skills for life and work, from adding an email attachment to two-step security verification, we're delighted to be helping the nation learn and gain confidence through our free Learn My Way online courses and Make It Click directory.

David Meads, Chief Executive UK & Ireland, Cisco said:

The pandemic has escalated the need to challenge inequities and drive inclusivity, so the public sector, education providers, businesses, charities and communities can safely and securely embrace digital ways of working.

The Skills Tool Kit is a step towards providing equal access to opportunity and ensuring we develop diverse talent and skills that meet the needs of society today — and in the future.

Nick Williams, Transformation Director, Lloyds Banking Group said:

Now more than ever we're really happy to share our Lloyds Bank Academy digital skills as part of this important Government and industry collaboration. Providing practical support to help more people, small businesses and charities across Britain build the confidence they need to adapt their skills and aspirations has come into even sharper focus. We're all learning new ways of doing things during these challenging times, and whatever we can do to support others makes great sense to us.

Professor Tim Blackman, Vice-Chancellor of The Open University said:

Online learning with The Open University allows anyone, whatever their educational background, to gain new skills and improve their knowledge in a subject, ready for when they return to work. Our

world leading expertise and capability in online teaching shapes our free, short courses on our OpenLearn platform. Learners can start at any time and study at their own convenience, balancing learning with other responsibilities, especially in these unprecedented times.

Rachid Hourizi, Director of the Institute of Coding said:

We are delighted to be part of government's Skills Toolkit. The Institute of Coding was created with support from the Department for Education to make digital skills education available to a larger and more diverse group of people. To do this, we work with our partners to produce a variety of courses, including some that are short, online and free. Developed with input from industry, the Institute of Coding courses in The Skills Toolkit enable you to access learning when it suits you, gain the skills employers are looking for, and learn useful information for your life and career during this challenging period.