



Skillsmart Retail

Policy Statement: Definition of what can and cannot be considered a retail outlet for the purpose of assessment of the competence-based qualifications in the retail sector

Skillsmart Retail, as the Sector Skills Council, is the licensed authority at the heart of the retail skills system. Both this organisation and its predecessors have had occasions when either the wrong qualification has been delivered to retail staff e.g. Customer Service or when the retail qualifications have been wrongly used in other sectors e.g. hairdressing, garages, public houses, fast-food outlets.

The fact that the Retail qualification is very flexible will allow for people outside of mainstream retail to achieve it but that is not the same as saying learners should be given access to it. Skillsmart Retail understands that providers may consider retail qualifications when offering competence-based qualifications and Apprenticeships but that is not to say that these qualifications are fit for purpose, rather that the appropriate qualification may not be best fit. In these cases they should approach the relevant SSC with these findings so that the qualifications can be amended.

To demonstrate which outlets we would class as retailers and those which may appear on the surface to be similar we have listed below the key types of retailers and those which are not within Skillsmart Retail's remit and provided further exemplification through examples of brands/formats.

Retailers

- *New goods in specialised stores (52% of retail businesses)*

These make up the vast majority of stores found on the High Street, shopping mall or on the edge/out-of-town. There are many thousands of independent retail clothing boutiques, shoe shops, jewellers, music shops, fabric shops and hardware stores to be found in these traditional shopping environments selling every product except food. These shops or sales premises also include wood yards and builder's merchants who may also hire tools and equipment.

Examples of chains include: Russell & Bromley, Faith, Comet, Dixons, Monsoon, Primark, Matalan, Top Shop, Zara, Carphone Warehouse, Wickes, B&Q, Halfords, WH Smith, Liberty's, Signet, Dunelm Mill, Staples, Mothercare.

- *Non-specialised stores (19% of retail businesses)*

These stores are identified by having the biggest formats in retail. Supermarkets will also have a petrol forecourt which also falls within our remit. They may also sell

financial products from a head office or other location which falls within the remit of FSSC.

Examples of chains include: Tesco, Sainsburys, Morrison's, Asda, Waitrose, Booths, Marks & Spencer, Bhs, House of Fraser, Debenhams, John Lewis Partnership.

- Food, beverages & tobacco in specialised stores (15% of retail businesses)

Normally operating in smaller retail formats as independents e.g. bakers, butchers, fishmongers, greengrocers, grocers, delicatessens, specialist cigar shops, newsagents, kiosks; or as convenience stores either with an attached fuel forecourt or as a small store format of a supermarket chain.

Examples of chains include: Spar, Co-operative, Henderson's (NI), GT News.

- Pharmaceutical, medical goods, cosmetic & toilet articles (3% of retail businesses)

These stores include both small independents such as opticians, chemists and chains who sell a wider range of merchandise. In-store pharmacies will also be found in supermarkets. Professionals and specialists in independent and chain store opticians and chemists have their skills defined by Skills for Health rather than Skillsmart Retail however sales colleagues in both types of store will carry out normal retail duties and their qualifications will represent a mix from both sectors. If a colleague has no dispensing duties, Retail Skills can be used on its own.

Examples of chains include: Boots, Superdrug, Bodycare, Scholl.

- Not in stores (9% of retail businesses)

These retail outlets maybe totally on-line or multi-channel e.g. businesses may have all or a number of formats such as on-line, catalogue, specialogue, internet trading sites like ebay, wholesale and concession. These businesses may not require retail qualifications but a mixture of other cross functional roles such contact centres, distribution, logistics, marketing, IT, marketing. Not-in-store businesses also include temporary sites like market stalls.

Examples of chains include: Amazon, Waitrose, Tesco, Next, GUS, Joules, Calvin Kline.

- Second-hand goods sold in stores (2% of retail businesses)

These businesses include charity shops and auction houses although some photographic stores also buy and sell used camera equipment. Pawnbrokers may also fit into this category but we have no experience to draw upon in this area.

Examples of chains include: Oxfam, Cancer Research.

Businesses with a high street presence which are not retailers

These include:

- a. florists - Lantra
- b. garage showrooms or repair/spares counters – Automotive Skills
- c. hairdressers - Habia
- d. public houses – People 1st

- e. fast-food premises such as Subway, MacDonalds, Greggs – People 1st
- f. independent cafes, tea shops and coffee shops such as Cafe Nero, Starbucks – People 1st

Colleagues operating in restaurants inside retail stores such as Fortnum & Masons, Selfridges, and Debenhams need to be looked at very carefully to see if their skills would be better recognised with a People 1st qualification rather than retail. We would suggest that if they are required to work throughout the store Retail Skills may be the better option but conversely if they only work in the restaurant and they carry out tasks like preparing food they should be working towards a catering qualification.