

Idea Store Learning

Course Information 2025/26



www.ideastore.co.uk/learning





Faruk Miah MBE
Principal/Head of
Idea Store Learning

Welcome

Welcome to Idea Store Learning, the
London Borough of Tower Hamlets
Adult & Community Learning provision.

Whether you've studied with us before, or you are a new learner, we're delighted that you have chosen Idea Store Learning.

Our aim is to enable you to achieve your full potential. Whatever your ambitions, we can work together to help you achieve it.

Our tutors and learning managers are dedicated professionals with years of experience in industry and adult education. We work together to make sure that you get all the support you need to help fulfil your ambitions.

About our courses

You can find out more about the courses we teach by visiting our website www.ideastore.co.uk/learning
If you have questions about enrolment or your course, please visit www.ideastore.co.uk/learning/how-toenrol/frequently-asked-questions so that we can help you.

What you need to know about us

Idea Store Learning get support from Tower Hamlets Council and an annual grant from the Greater London Authority (GLA). The GLA regulate us and work with Ofsted to inspect us. We offer a wide variety of courses and classes that are good value for money.

Every year we ask for feedback from our learners through surveys and the results show our learner satisfaction is very high.

All courses are subject to change. Idea Store Learning reserves the right to close or amend courses including fee amendments.

Where there is low enrolment, courses advertised will be closed before the start date. It is recommended that you enrol at least one week before the start date of your chosen course.

Our Vision: Our learners enhance their physical and mental well-being; their life and job prospects and their sense of belonging and social responsibility.

Our Purpose: Building stronger connected communities through the joy of shared learning, innovating, achieving and progressing.

To read more about Idea Store Learning Values & Priorities please visit our website.

Learner Information

Attendance and punctuality

We expect 100% attendance on courses. We know that you may not be able to attend each session so please tell us if you are going to be absent. If you miss three consecutive weeks, you will be removed from the course. Please remember we expect you to attend all of your scheduled sessions and to do so promptly. If you know you are unable to attend 2 or more sessions before the course starts please contact learnerservices@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Punctuality is also very important - if you do not come to class on time, you will miss important work. It can also be disruptive to other students in the class. To support, we track these areas to increase your chances of success at the end of your course and obtaining high grades, where appropriate.

Under 19 year olds

Unfortunately, you cannot enrol on one of our courses if you are under 19 years of age. We are funded by the government to run courses for learners who are aged 19 and over.

Refunds and cancellations

If you can no longer take part in the course you have enrolled on, please tell Idea Store Learning, in writing, at least two weeks before the course starts.

We will only issue a refund if this is done. You can write to us at learnerservices@towerhamlets.gov.uk

We will charge an administration fee of £11 for processing your refund.

Where we close a course, you will be given a full refund. If we change the published details of a course, those learners for whom the course is no longer suitable will receive a full refund.

Refunds will not be given in any other circumstances.

Learner Experience:



Andy - Spanish learner

Taking this Spanish language beginners' class has changed me and expanded my horizons. It has provided me with a solid foundation in the basics, making the process of learning both enjoyable and approachable.

My Spanish wife, though supportive, simply doesn't have the time to teach me her native tongue. This course has bridged that gap and has made a difference for us as we can communicate more effectively and see the world in a shared way.

I have loved learning more about Spanish culture too and since starting the course I have grown in confidence and have travelled more in Spain, something that means a lot to both of us.

The engaging and supportive environment of the class has helped my progress. The lessons were thoughtfully designed, and the teachers made sure every step felt manageable and rewarding.

I wholeheartedly recommend this course to anyone eager to learn Spanish—it's not just a language class; it's a gateway to better connections and a richer life.

Comments and complaints

We aim to operate a complaints procedure that is fair, responsive, and effective. You can expect us to deal promptly and courteously with your complaints.

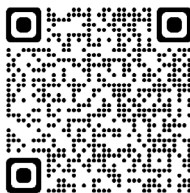
Please discuss any concerns or complaints with your tutors first. We will try and resolve the issue there and then. Alternatively email learnerservices@towerhamlets.gov.uk

We aim to acknowledge your email and respond within 10 working days. Where it takes longer to resolve an issue, we will keep you informed.

Accessibility

All our main Idea Store sites are accessible for those with reduced mobility. However, at the Shadwell Centre only classes on the ground floor are accessible to people with reduced mobility. Please check when you enrol.





Adult Community Learning



We have a fantastic range of courses for you to join, learn new skills, explore your creativity, get fit or update your existing knowledge, whilst making new friends along the way.

We pride ourselves on delivering the highest quality teaching; we focus on supporting you to make improvements as you develop your skills. You will be taught by a dedicated team of friendly and highly skilled tutors. So, why not browse the course search to discover our range of courses on offer.

The majority of courses are run at the Shadwell Centre and Idea Store Whitechapel, which have fully equipped studios to support your learning.

Visual Arts

Whether you are new to visual arts or have some experience, we have a range of courses for you to enjoy learning.

You could be learning to paint for the first time or you may be renewing your skills. You may be making your own prints, drawings, paintings or ceramics. The creative writing classes are aimed at developing your creativity, imagination, and confidence - catering for all levels of learners.

You will be taught to use a range of excellent resources by our friendly and highly skilled team. We have a course for you.

A taste of some of the courses on offer:

- Creative Writing
- Figure Drawing
- Painting and Drawing
- Printmaking
- Screen Printing on Paper and Fabric
- Oil Painting
- Pottery and Ceramics



Learner Experience:



Gandha - Printmaking student

I had no idea what to do when I started, but being in a group helped with the idea to produce an artist's book based on my family and my memories of where I was born. I have made several prints and two book-works. The Shadwell studio is a very friendly space to work and I have really enjoyed my time there.

Photography

The photography courses are designed to increase your confidence, understanding and knowledge of photography, whether you are a beginner or have some experience. We offer a range of courses to suit your needs and you will be taught by experienced tutors in well-equipped studios at the Shadwell Centre.

A taste of some of the courses on offer:

- Introduction to Basic Digital Photography
- Learn Creative Digital Photography
- Photography in the Studio
- Portrait Photography
- Street Photography
- Cyanotype Printing



Fashion and Textiles

You do not need to own a sewing machine or have any previous experience as we have courses from beginner levels through to more advanced levels.

You can learn how to sew, make a garment, knit, cut a pattern for a garment that correctly fits.

A taste of some of the courses on offer:

- Introduction to Sewing using a Sewing Machine
- Basic Clothes Making
- Get Started in Sewing
- Sewing and Garment Pattern Cutting
- Improve your Clothes Making Skills Fashion Workshop
- Textile Crafts
- Crochet



Fitness and Wellbeing

Whatever your goals are, whether you are interested in developing strength and flexibility, boost your mood, wellbeing and self-esteem, or simply stay active while meeting new people, we have a course for you.

Improve your fitness through our courses at the Shadwell Centre and Idea Store Whitechapel.

A taste of some of the courses on offer:

- Pilates
- Tai Chi
- Yoga
- Women only courses
- Holistic Therapies and Massage
- Fitness
- One Day Workshops
- Learn Tour Guiding in Tower Hamlets
- Oral Presentation Skills



Performing Arts

We offer you the chance to learn to dance, play an instrument, perform, or sing. Enjoy learning in an energetic, creative, and supportive atmosphere. You will be taught by skilled and experienced dance tutors, choreographers and musicians supported by a range of excellent resources.

A taste of some of the courses on offer:

- African Dance
- Ballet
- Jazz Improvisation Skills
- Belly Dance (Women Only)
- Salsa
- Contemporary Dance
- Jazz Dance
- Flamenco
- Singing
- Hand Drumming and Percussion Skills
- Jazz Genres Drumming



Learners' Performing Arts End of Year shows

I would recommend the dance classes at Idea Store Learning because this is such a unique safe space where we feel supported to learn and we are empowered to perform in public. All this contribute to enhance both physical and mental health.

Technical and DIY skills

We offer a range of courses aimed at helping you learn or develop your technical and DIY skills in a friendly and supportive environment.

You do not need to have any previous experience as we have courses from beginner through to improver levels. You may be working on individual projects or developing more advanced skills and techniques. The sessions are taught by highly skilled tutors and supported by a range of excellent resources.

A taste of some of the courses on offer:

- Upholstery
- Stained Glass
- Soft Furnishing for Upholstery
- Woodwork



Learner Experience:

Graham - Upholstery student

I restored a wingback chair which was given to my great-grandfather in 1908. This chair, which is a family heirloom, was a challenging project. I proudly restored it in several terms.

I like working with my hands and was keen to learn a new skill. I was encouraged to do a course to help with my mental health, having suffered from depression for several years.

I learnt many different upholstery techniques quickly. Each different part of the chair - seat, back, arms and wings - needed a different technique so I developed a wide range of skills, with Sylvie's guidance. These included fixing springs, blind stitching and packing, bridle ties, cutting, stretching and sewing leather.

I greatly enjoyed working as part of a friendly group of learners. I have recently been able to begin returning to work part-time. However, the mental health benefits of the course meant that I have decided to continue with the course during my transition to full-time work.

Languages

We offer a range of language courses from complete beginners to more advanced levels.

These courses will help you improve your listening and speaking skills to confidently connect with native speakers and add an extra layer of fun when you are on holiday. Courses are held at Idea Store Whitechapel and Idea Store Watney Market.

A taste of some of the courses on offer:

- French
- Spanish
- Italian
- Arabic
- Chinese Mandarin



Graham's Chair Before



Graham's Chair After

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

Come to our classes and learn the English you need to:

- achieve your goals and ambitions
- participate in your communities
- make progress in work and studies
- express your feelings and opinions

Develop your speaking and listening skills to talk with neighbours and friends, take part in meetings inside and outside work, speak well on the phone, understand the TV, radio and podcasts.

Improve your reading and writing skills so you can fill in forms correctly, read newspapers, write reports and case studies, and send formal and informal emails. And much more!

From beginner to advanced, we have classes in our Idea Stores and other venues in Tower Hamlets. Most courses are free or low-cost. You do not need to live in Tower Hamlets.

ESOL Qualification Courses

Do you want a qualification in English? Join our classes at all levels to improve your:

- speaking and listening
- reading and writing
- grammar
- pronunciation

These Skills for Life courses will help you with work and everyday life. We will support you to achieve your goals.



Hello, my name is Bahar, I'm studying with Idea Store Learning to improve my skills in ESOL and to build a stronger foundation for my career. I aim to start my own business.

Studying at Idea Store Learning has given me the confidence to pursue my goals more effectively. I've gained valuable skills that have helped me perform better in my current job, especially in speaking. It has also opened up new opportunities.

The learning environment is supportive, which makes me feel more motivated to keep improving. I can now speak English much more fluently than before these classes. I can see my progress through the assessments, and I feel more comfortable applying what I've learned in my daily tasks. I also receive regular feedback from my teachers, which helps me understand where I'm excelling and where I need to improve.

I really appreciate the support and guidance I've received at Idea Store Learning.

Bahar, ESOL learner



Specialist ESOL Classes - Without Exams

Do you need to focus on specific skills such as grammar? Do you want to improve your English skills without doing an exam? Would you like extra classes to help you in your exam classes including functional skills?

Join our classes from beginner to advanced and focus on skills such as:

- grammar to speak and write well
- discussion, conversation and pronunciation to help you express yourself
- literacy and phonics to help you with beginner reading and writing
- writing different texts clearly and with confidence

ESOL for Work

Join our special classes to help you with your work skills including our **ESOL for work and life** courses, and our **qualification courses in volunteering and becoming an ESOL teaching assistant**. See the Employability and Work Skills/Job Skills section for more details.

How can you join?

You need to book a pre-course assessment to find the best courses for you. To do this:

- visit www.ideastore.co.uk/esol
- contact ESOLAdvice@towerhamlets.gov.uk
- come into an Idea Store and ask a member of staff

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Please note: A place on our ESOL courses is not guaranteed as we are heavily over-subscribed.

Vicky
ESOL Manager
and Safeguarding
Officer.



Hi - I am the ESOL Manager and a Safeguarding Officer. Come and join our Skills for Work and Life courses. With our ESOL classes, you learn more than English. You develop the most important skills needed in work and life, such as problem-solving, team-work and decision-making. You learn by doing creative tasks that are interesting and fun and help you in your daily life and work. You can join Digital Skills and Maths classes too.

Come and gain the skills you need to be an active member of your community and workplace!



English and Maths

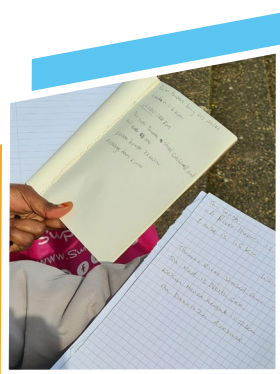
Do you need English and maths functional skills qualifications for further studies or a better job? Do you want to become a more confident communicator in speaking and writing? Would you like to work on your maths and numeracy skills to improve your finances, your DIY, your problem-solving or your data analysis skills?

Come to our courses at the Idea Store or other venues in Tower Hamlets and gain key skills in communication, numeracy and data analysis.

Most courses are free or low-cost. You do not need to live in Tower Hamlets.

Functional Skills English and Maths Level 1 and Level 2

Gain a nationally recognised qualification in English or Maths at Level 1 or 2, and use these skills to enhance your career prospects, secure better job opportunities, or further your education.



Learner Experience:

Our learners discovering maths in the world!

We went to the river Thames to measure it. Syeda from Cubitt Town Maths class said, "We wouldn't know the fun of measuring conversion until we experience it".



Courses without exams in English, communication skills and maths

Specialist ESOL skills classes

We advise many English learners to enrol on some of our high level ESOL classes before or at the same time as their functional skills classes to work on their languages skills such as grammar, vocabulary and spelling. It is important you have the right level of language before you join a functional skills course.

Getting ready for English and Maths Functional Skills

We recommend many of our learners complete our Getting Ready courses before starting the Functional Skills qualification. These courses boost your confidence and help you transition to exam courses.

Communications skills for work and life

Are you looking to improve your reading and writing for work? Do you want to become a more confident speaker in meetings and when talking to customers? Do you need to develop your communication skills to become a teaching assistant, care worker or administrator? Join these specialist courses now and improve your work skills.

Maths for Life and Work

Do you need to improve your key maths skills? These courses enhance your skills for both workplace and everyday activities.

How can you join?

You need to book a pre-course assessment to find the best courses for you.

- visit www.ideastore.co.uk/learning/skills-for-life/english-and-maths
- contact functionalskills@towerhamlets.gov.uk
- come into an Idea Store and ask a member of staff

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I am doing functional skills maths level 2 course to improve my confidence and skills, especially for work and everyday life. My aim is to get a better job in the future.

This course is helping me because I am learning problem solving, organisational skills and understanding data better. The teacher explains everything deeply which helps me to understand better. I feel like I am making good progress!

Sayed, Functional Skills



Digital and Computer Skills for Work and Life

Are you a complete beginner on a computer or an experienced office worker who needs to develop their Excel and data analysis? In our digital skills curriculum you can progress step-by-step or choose short courses to address specific learning needs.

From booking an online appointment to giving a work presentation, you will develop the key skills you need to become an active citizen, able to express yourself digitally, and make progress at work.

First Steps Courses

Do you need to learn the basics of using computers and smartphones, emailing and texting, searching the internet and managing files?

Join one of our friendly and supportive First Steps classes and begin your digital skills journey.

Becoming confident in digital skills.

After you have the basics, join our Becoming confident classes and learn how to complete everyday work and life tasks using digital tools. From researching information to online banking, from organising your work emails to formatting letters to work colleagues, you will feel confident you can function well in the digital world.

Qualify in Digital Skills

Gain nationally recognised qualifications in Essential Digital Skills for life and work at Entry 3 and Level 1. These qualifications ensure you have the skills to stay safe online, communicate socially and professionally, shop, bank, access services and apply for a job online.



Enrolling on the course Essential Digital Skills, Level 1 allowed me to gain valuable, necessary practical knowledge of editing documents, working with spreadsheets, and making PowerPoint presentations.

Vicki, our exceptional tutor, creates a unique atmosphere, an outstanding and inspirational class, a positive environment, where every student can thrive and achieve their maximum, exceeding their expectations.

This digital journey was a happy one for us, filled with the pure joy of learning, knowledge, challenge, meeting new people, broadening horizon(s) and good feelings

Yulia, Digital Skills student



Digital skills for work and business

- Focus on how to analyse and organise data with Excel.
- Learn the key skills to present well or give a sales pitch on PowerPoint.
- Explore the key features of Word to create professional looking documents.
- Work with our digital marketing expert and learn how to think like an entrepreneur and set up and promote a business or event, reaching a wide audience using the right digital tools.
- Learn how to be an administrator, use AI tools to simplify your work. And much more!



My name is Shahena.

I am studying at the Idea Store because it is actually a pretty cool place to study. It's not just a library - it's designed to welcome the community to use.

Studying with Idea Store Learning helped make a big difference in my life and work because of its practical courses. I do: Entry 3 Speaking and Listening, Maths and Digital Skills.

Studying with Idea Store has also helped me gain confidence and meet new people. My ambition is to have a job in school as a dinner lady and to work with young children.

Studying at Idea Store Learning has really helped me get better at my subjects. I've learnt things I didn't know before and feel more confident now. The teacher explains everything in a way that is easier to understand and if I get stuck there is always support.

Shahena, Maths, ESOL and Digital Skills student



How can you join?

You need to book a pre-course assessment to find the best courses for you.

- visit www.ideastore.co.uk/learning/skills-for-life/digital-skills
- contact digital.ideastore@towerhamlets.gov.uk
- come into an Idea Store and ask a staff member

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Employability and Work Skills

Do you need help finding a new job? Would you like to practise your interview skills? Are you looking to improve your skills for work?

You can find many courses in our ESOL, English, maths and digital skills sections which will improve your skills for work. We also have some specific courses and qualifications to increase your employment skills. These include:

- **How to become a volunteer.** We will also place you in a volunteer post
- **How to become an ESOL teaching assistant.** We will also place you in a class for experience
- **British Sign Language (BSL).** Learn to communicate using British Sign Language (BSL) on a range of topics using simple everyday language and gain a level 1 qualification.

For further information go to www.ideastore.co.uk/learning/skills-for-life/bsl-interpreting

How can you join?

You need to book a pre-course assessment to find the best courses for you.

- visit www.ideastore.co.uk/learning/skills-for-life
- contact workskills.ideastore@towerhamlets.gov.uk
- come into an Idea Store and ask a staff member



Workpath

Join our 'into work' programme, run by WorkPath, to help you find a way into meaningful employment and improve your work skills.

Sessions, run at the WorkPath offices, include:

- writing effective CVs and job applications
- developing successful interview skills
- communicating well at work
- preparing for an apprenticeship

How can you join?

If you are looking to increase your opportunities for employment and would also like further information about these courses, please register with **WorkPath** by scanning the QR code below.



To register your interest, and for further details, please email workskills.ideastore@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Here's what you can do with your Idea Store card



Books

Borrowing books is FREE.



Reserving books

If you can't find what you want on our shelves you can reserve it yourself for FREE



Computers and the Internet

All Idea Stores and Libraries have public computers for free. We also have FREE Wi-Fi



Local History

Our Local History Library and Archives holds outstanding and unique resources



Free Online Services

Free access to a huge range of online resources.



Activities and events

A wide range of free activities and events for adults, families and children.



Council Services

Access to Council services



**FREE eBooks
and Magazines**

**Access thousands of
eBooks, download digital
magazines and newspapers for FREE.**

Download the Idea Store App
Visit our website for more details: www.ideastore.co.uk



Learning venue addresses

- ISW** • **Idea Store Whitechapel**, 321 Whitechapel Road, London E1 1BU
- ISB** • **Idea Store Bow**, 1 Gladstone Place, Roman Road, London E3 5ES
- ISCW** • **Idea Store Canary Wharf**, Churchill Place, Canary Wharf, London E14 5RB
- ISCS** • **Idea Store Chrisp Street**, 1 Vesey Path, East India Dock Road, London E14 6BT
- ISWM** • **Idea Store Watney Market**, 260 Commercial Road, London E1 2FB
- SHC** • **Shadwell Centre**,* 455 The Highway, London E1W 3HP

Outreach Venues, details of venues will be given to you at assessment

