

Functional Skills

Functional Skills Newsletter - January 2010

Welcome to 2010 and the new edition of the Functional Skills e-newsletter. 2009 was a busy year with announcements on the hurdle, the continuation of the Functional Skills pilot and the accreditation of the new core GCSE specifications - which include embedded functional elements. In 2010 we will be working hard on the live launch of our Functional Skills offer, and will endeavour to keep you up-to-date with our progress. Please keep visiting www.edexcel.com/fs where we will be posting some key documents shortly.

From your Functional Skills team - fsdevelopment@edexcel.com

News and updates on our pilot

Entry Level registration – on-demand testing

All pilot centres are eligible to register learners for Entry Level Functional Skills. These qualifications are available on-demand and are internally-marked. Sample assessments, support documents and an introductory presentation are available on our website www.edexcel.com/fs.

A couple of common FAQs for Entry Level FS are:

How do I register learners for Entry Level Functional Skills?

Via the BTEC tab on Edexcel Online. All pilot centres should have unique programme codes for each Entry Level FS subject and full instructions on registration can be found in the Entry Level FS Information Manual. If you cannot find your programme codes, please email us at fspilot.recruitment@edexcel.com

Entry Level Functional Skills are externally-verified. How do I find out who my EV is?

External Verifiers (EVs) are automatically assigned to centres within a month of registering learners and you will be sent their contact details in a welcoming letter. If you have registered learners but not received any EV details, please email fspilot.recruitment@edexcel.com

Pilot centre teaching and learning resources

Available for Functional English, mathematics and ICT are our FREE downloadable resources. These are ideal for helping you in the teaching and learning of Functional Skills.

You can download each set of resources by visiting www.edexcel.com/fs and clicking on the 'Resources' tab.

Remember all our Functional Skills resources are free for the duration of the pilot programme.

Upcoming dates for the diary

January 2010 assessment / examination series

The test dates for January 2010 are as follows:

Maths (Level 1 & 2) - 27 January (AM)

English: Reading and Writing (Level 1 & 2)
28 January (AM)

Mark submission deadline for Speaking and
Listening - 29 January

ICT (Level 1 & 2) 5 day window
25 January - (AM) - 29 January (PM)

Centre authentication submission - 29 January

Datafiles for ICT Jan 2010 are now available on
our [website](#).

Results Day - 11 March (online and via EDI), with
hard copy results - 18 March

Certificates in centres - 31 May

March 2010 assessment / examination series

Entry deadline - 28 January 2010.

Maths (Level 1 & 2) - 10 March (AM/PM - TBC)

English: Reading and Writing (Level 1 & 2)
- 09 March (AM/PM - TBC)

Mark submission deadline for Speaking and
Listening - 15 March

ICT (Level 1 & 2) 5 day window
08 March - (AM) - 12 March (PM)

Centre authentication submission - 15 March

Datafiles will be available - 01 February

Results Day - 15 April (online and via EDI),
with hard copy results - tbc

Certificates in centres - 31 May

Feedback and FAQs on our Autumn training

We'd like to say thank you to all the centres that attended the Autumn Functional Skills training sessions. We hope you found these beneficial. We will continue to work closely with the regulator on some of the issues you have raised.

Below are some of the common questions raised at the training sessions.

- **Who do I contact if I have a special consideration that I need to discuss?**

If you have a query relating to access arrangements, special consideration, timetable variations or transfer of credit arrangements, please call 0844 576 0028. Ask for our Special Requirements Team, giving your centre number and nature of your enquiry. Alternatively you can contact them by email at: special.requirements@edexcel.com

- **How many assessment windows per academic year will there be from September 2010?**

We are currently finalising the details of our FS offer for first teaching in September 2010. We are aware of the need to offer FS assessments as flexibly as possible and are doing our best to meet these needs whilst working with the new criteria.

- **If and when will you be offering Onscreen Functional Skills?**

We are working on technical developments that will enable an onscreen assessment of FS in the near future. Look out for our new research programme launching in the Spring term.

- **Why can't January results be released before March exams?**

January 2010 results are released in line with the JCQ published results date. The March 2010 exam series has been introduced as an additional opportunity for centres and learners. The introduction is not intended to replace June 2010 as the potential re-sit exam series.

For future pilot centre events please visit www.edexcel.com/fs and click on our 'events' tab where we will be posting some dates of our Spring events shortly.

If you have any questions that still need to be answered please let us know.

News on the launch of Functional Skills for 2010

We are pleased to announce that we have taken our first steps towards accreditation of our Functional Skills offer. In line with QCDA's requirements we have submitted an initial outline of our proposal for the live qualification in 2010.

After initial feedback we hope to be able to share with you our first full draft specifications in line with the early February submission date. The date for final accreditation for Functional Skills is 01 April.

You can view the regulatory criteria for Functional Skills released by Ofqual [here](#).

Please keep visiting our [website](#) in the new year for information and updates on 2010.

Functional Skills 'Next Steps' Events for 2010

Commencing in February, we will be running a series of FREE 'Next Steps' events providing an introduction to our new Functional Skills qualifications. These events will be FREE half day sessions tailored to meet the needs of Schools and FE Colleges/WBL centres.

At these events centres will:

- receive an overview of our engaging new qualifications
- find out about the success of our FS pilot to date
- discuss different curriculum models and see how FS relates to current qualifications
- receive information on the accreditation timeline
- find out about our excellent support services
- hear from case-study centres about their experiences and best practice.

To find out more about these events and to secure your place please visit www.edexcel.com/fs.

These events will be followed up by a series of implementation events - dates to be announced soon.

Upcoming dates for the diary continued

June 2010 assessment / examination series

Entry deadline - 21 March 2010.

Maths (Level 1 & 2) - 12 May (AM/PM - TBC)

English: Reading and Writing (Level 1 & 2) - 11 May (AM/PM - TBC)

Mark submission deadline for Speaking and Listening - 15 June

ICT (Level 1 & 2) 5 day window - 10 May - (AM) - 15 May (PM)

Centre authentication submission - 15 June

Datafiles will be available 29 March.

Results Day - 19 August (online and via EDI), with hard copy results - 26 August

Certificates in centres - 31 October

Information on assessments dates and entries is available in the Information Manual - section 12 and the ICE document - both available from www.edexcel.com

Congratulations and thank you

Thank you to all those of you who took part in the Functional Skills Summer 09 survey. Congratulations to James Phillips at Ashcroft Technology Academy for being the lucky winner of the survey, James won £50 vouchers - thank you and well done James.

Your views are very important to us and will help us to continue to develop qualifications that meet the needs of you and your learners.

More surveys and prizes to come this year.

If you would be interested in taking part in our online surveys and helping to shape the future of our qualifications and support services, please visit www.theedexcel-BTECpanel.com to read about our Teachers' Panel.

Functional Skills published resources for 2010 - Tailored support for success in Functional Skills

Available from Summer 2010, our published resources enable students to develop the essential skills needed to pass the Functional Skills tests for English, mathematics and ICT, and provide you with the support you need to deliver these brand new qualifications.

Features:

- **tailored to our Functional Skills tests** and written by expert author teams, including senior examiners and teachers of the pilot, so you know you're covering everything you need to
- **show students what is required to succeed** with accessible Student Books containing plenty of assessment practice and materials, including mock papers and end of chapter tests
- **comprehensive support and guidance** direct from examiners provide you with the tools to teach and assess progress, all in an easy-to-use format.

Free Evaluation Packs for each subject, containing a Student Book worth £8 - £12, will be available from Summer 2010. Please visit www.edexcel.com/quals/func-skills/pages/resources.aspx to find out more.

Related qualifications, notices and information

Unlocking Learners' Potential (ULP) - FREE events this spring term

After a successful first series of ULP events, aimed at schools and colleges looking to support and develop Entry Level and Level 1 learners, we are launching a second series starting in January. At these events you will find out about our Foundation Learning framework and how Functional Skills, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and WorkSkills can benefit your learners. **To find out more download a copy of our events leaflet and booking form at www.edexcel.com/trainingbookings.**

Dates for events tailored to WBL centres will be posted in January, please keep checking our website for further information.

NEW accredited GCSE specifications for English, mathematics and ICT 2010

We are delighted that our new specifications for **English, Mathematics and ICT** for first teaching in September 2010 are now live. Please visit www.edexcel.com/gcse10 to:

- download copies of our accredited specifications
- request a FREE evaluation pack of published resources
- book a place on one of our FREE 'Getting Ready to Teach' events
- find out about our outstanding support services.

Let us know what you think!

We would love to hear what you think of our e-newsletter; the things you love, would like to see more of, or the areas that you want to know more about. Email us at fsdevelopment@edexcel.com to let us know!

If you think any of your colleagues would be interested in subscribing to our newsletter, please drop us an email with their email address.

Case-studies

Functional Skills in the news

Thank you to those centres that have been working with us to create case-study articles and features on our Functional Skills pilot. Below are a few links to presentations and articles that have recently been published on our website and externally. If your centre has been making headway with Functional Skills or has some interesting teaching and learning strategies, please contact us at fsdevelopment@edexcel.com and we'll be in contact.

Djanolgy Academy

Amos Wardell at Djanolgy Academy in Nottingham spoke to us about their experiences of the Functional Skills pilot to date, and provided us with tips on their teaching and learning practices. You can read about the great work Djanolgy Academy is doing on **iQ Media** at www.iqmedia.co.uk/content.php?contentid=1413.

Excelsior Academy

In October we sent you information on Excelsior Academy's approach to piloting Functional Skills. Chris Murphy has kindly sent us a copy of his presentation that you can download from the **'Key Documents'** tab at www.edexcel.com/fs. You can also view Excelsior Academy on our Youtube channel at www.youtube.com/user/FunctionalSkills.

Liverpool College

Jacqueline Marshall is a teacher of ICT and Business Studies at Liverpool College where they have been piloting Functional Skills. You can download a copy of Jacqueline's invaluable presentation on Functional Skills by visiting www.edexcel.com/fs and clicking on the 'Key documents' tab.

Your key contacts

If you have any queries regarding Functional Skills don't forget you can email our *Ask the Expert* service on one of the following subject emails:

functionalskillsenglish@edexcel.com

functionalskillsmaths@edexcel.com

funtionalskillsict@edexcel.com

Our inbox is also open for further information and registration details fsdevelopment@edexcel.com