

Functional Skills

Functional Skills Newsletter - October 2009

Dear Colleague,

Welcome back to the new academic year, we hope you had an enjoyable summer's break and that results day proved to be a success for you and your students.

Don't forget if you still have any queries regarding your results you can contact us via our [Enquiries about results service](#).

You can also use our free online [ResultsPlus service](#) to analyse how your students performed and produce simple reports that may support you in planning your teaching and learning of Functional Skills this term. In addition, copies of our Examiner's Feedback Reports and past papers can be found in the documents box on each subject page.

The autumn term is already looking busy with a number of updates and events taking place and we hope to meet many of you over this period. With *over 70,000 entries last summer term* alone we are pleased to be one of the largest awarding bodies to have delivered results this summer, and will be using the knowledge we have gained to support you as we move into 2010.

FREE Teaching and Learning Resources:

Don't forget our FREE downloadable resources can help you in the teaching and learning of Functional Skills and are a great way to support preparations for the 2010 exams. You can access each set of resources here:

- [Functional English resources](#)
- [Functional Mathematics resources](#)
- [Functional ICT resources](#)

If you're teaching our Entry Level qualification take a look at our [ALAN Entry Level materials](#) kept in the document box at the bottom of the page; you may find these a useful tool.

Remember all our Functional Skills resources are free for the duration of the pilot programme. Find out what resources we have planned for September 2010 and order a free evaluation pack [here](#).

Onscreen Pilot is now recruiting for Assessment in November 2009

Following a successful assessment window in June 2009, we are pleased to invite centres to join the [Onscreen Functional Skills Pilot](#). We are looking for adults and learners aged 16+ who are not in full-time education to take part in these exciting new onscreen assessments in maths and English at Level 1 and 2. These assessments are FREE, fully certificated and available to all eligible centres who agree to take part in our research activities.

For more information about the assessments please see section 5 in our [FAQ Document](#).

To apply to join the pilot you will need to complete our [Centre Agreement Form](#).

Please call James Haskins on 0207 190 4347 if you would like to speak to someone about the application process or any other aspect of the pilot.

Key deadline dates and assessment windows:

October 21 – your deadline date for January 2010 exam series.

In 2010 we will be providing four windows of assessment - January, June, March and November – you can download a list of the key deadline dates for entries and examination dates [here](#).

January's 2010 exam timetable is also available to be [downloaded](#).

Entry Level update

A new information manual especially for Entry Level Functional Skills is now available to download. It contains information on:

- Registrations (by Edexcel Online and EDI)
- Verification
- Reporting learner achievement
- Certification
- Centre self-assessment
- Access arrangements

The manual can be found within the 'specifications and supporting documents' row on the [Entry Level Functional Skills website](#).

Please also note that there are now two full sets of assessments for each entry sub-level in mathematics, English and ICT. If you are having any difficulty in accessing these, please email fspilot.recruitment@Edexcel.com.

Case study:

Excelsior Academy, Newcastle upon Tyne

Last term we met with staff and students at Excelsior Academy in Newcastle to find out about their experiences of teaching and learning Functional Skills. Excelsior was among the first centres to teach and test Functional Maths and ICT and staff have been encouraged by the enthusiasm pupils have shown for the new qualification.

Debbie Barakat, a mathematics teacher at the academy told us that Functional Skills are *"more engaging to the pupils because they revolve around relevance to real life and it encourages them to think independently and take charge of their own learning."*

For example, we set year 7 a series of topics to work on throughout the year. Because we are a design and technology academy, one of these is currently about how we would cope with no electricity. This could incorporate looking at history (such as what happened before electricity), basic mathematics skills like speed calculations and angles (such as how to harvest water by predicting where it runs), technology and problem solving."

Whilst Sara Reed, Development Leader for KS 4 and 5 ICT was pleased to find that *'looking at the skills pupils are developing the introduction of Functional Skills has been a big success.'*

Similarly students told us that they *'feel more confident'* that our course is *'interesting'*, that Functional Skills is *'real'* and that *'it's not just theory'*.

You can find out about Debbie's engaging classroom approach to Functional Skills and what other members of staff and students had to say about their experiences by watching the video on our [homepage](#) or on our new Youtube channel www.youtube.com/functionalskills

If you are interested in talking to us about your experiences of Functional Skills, email us at news@edexcel.com



Training, training, training....

The autumn term there are a number of training and exam feedback sessions taking place along with further subject events where Functional Skills is a key part of. In summary you can attend:

October: New to Functional Skills events – for centres new to FS this September
Online seminars - for Exams officers
GCSE Launch events – for the new English, Maths and ICT GCSEs
[Diploma Expo Events](#)

November: Functional Skills Overview events – for non-pilot centres
Online seminars - for all subjects, exams officers and entry level FS

December: Further Online seminars for all subjects and entry level FS

You can also now find downloadable online seminars on Entry Level and the Functional Skills pilot on our [training page](#).

These can be accessed and watched at your own computer.

Count down to Functional Skills

QCDA are also holding some key **'Count down to Functional Skills'** events from the 23rd September across the county. These are a great opportunity for pilot centres to find out about how Functional Skills is developing and speak to awarding bodies. You can find further details on our website or on [QCDA's website](#).

A new website for the **Functional Skills Support Programme** has also been launched this month at www.fssupport.org. This programme is delivered jointly by National Strategies (NS) and Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS), and will offer free support to all post 16 centres including Diploma consortia involved in the QCA Functional Skills pilot, as well as those preparing to offer functional skills qualifications from 2010.

GCSE 2010 training dates

Preparations for GCSE 2010 are now well underway, if you haven't yet had a chance to attend one of our exciting launch events a second series will soon be starting this autumn. For each subject you'll have the choice between attending a face-to-face seminar where you can meet our subject teams, or if getting out of the classroom is a problem, we are also running a series of online events. At all our events we'll be providing you with clear information to help you make the best decision about the new GCSEs.

Click to access dates and locations for:

[English](#) [Mathematics](#) [ICT](#)

Diploma Expo Events

For a chance to find out more about the Diploma and how Functional Skills fits together, visit us at our final expo event on the 13th October.

Held in Manchester, this event will:

- cover all 14 lines of learning plus projects, PLTS, case studies, moderation etc.
- be flexible and personalised to suit your needs
- host workshops that match your consortium's requirements
- enable you to meet with delivering centres to learn from their experience
- give you an opportunity to discuss plans with your Curriculum Development Manager.

Remember if you have a question you can contact us:

Pilot registration forms: functionalskills@edexcel.com

Mainstream and Entry level Functional Skills queries: fspilot.recruitment@edexcel.com

Onscreen pilot queries: fsonscreen@edexcel.com

Development Programme and general Functional Skills enquiries: fsdevelopment@edexcel.com

For queries relating to entries please telephone: 0844 576 0028

Subject specific queries for teaching Functional Skills contact, Ask the Expert:

English: functionalskillsenglish@edexcelexperts.co.uk

Mathematics: functionalskillsmaths@edexcelexperts.co.uk

ICT: functionalskillsict@edexcelexperts.co.uk

Entry Level: entrylevelfunctionalskills@edexcelexperts.co.uk

Alternatively why not have a read through our list of [FAQ's here](#).

If you think any of your colleagues would be interested in our newsletter, please pass this on or email us at the address above and we'll add their details to our list.

We would love to hear what you think of our 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!

From your Functional Skills Team