

Functional Skills

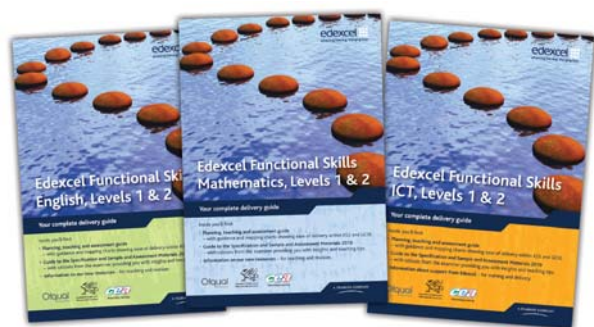
Functional Skills Newsletter - July 2010

Welcome to the new edition of our Functional Skills Newsletter - bringing you the latest news in functional skills development and delivery. All of our functional skills qualifications have now been fully accredited by Ofqual (English, maths and ICT at Entry Levels 1, 2 & 3 and Levels 1 & 2). You can view our specifications and sample assessment materials online at www.edexcel.com/fs

FREE teaching resources offering you unbeatable support

We have produced a suite of 'Complete Delivery Guides' for Levels 1 & 2 ICT, mathematics and English. These contain annotated versions of the specifications with tips from the examiner. They also show you how to teach functional skills alongside GCSEs and how you can contextualise learning to suite different learners.

You can view these guides on our website at www.edexcel.com/fs - please select either English, mathematics or ICT, Levels 1 & 2 from the subject list on the home page. Within the list of documents, under 'Specification', you'll find a pdf of the guide to view and download. If you'd like to receive a hard copy, please drop us a line at functionalskills@edexcel.com. Please ensure you provide your full contact details (please note we can only offer one copy per centre).



A big thank you to our pilot centres

With our functional skills pilot drawing to a close, we'd like to give an enormous thank you to all the 1,500 centres who took part over the last three years. Our pilot became the largest national effort to trial functional skills qualifications with some 250,000 assessment entries in total. We are grateful for the many experiences you have shared with us and the lessons we have learnt. The invaluable feedback from hundreds of teachers enabled us to refine our assessments in the best way possible to benefit every learner.

Latest announcements

We are pleased to announce we have been accredited to offer **five-day assessment windows** for functional mathematics and English. In addition to the eight assessment opportunities per year, five day assessment windows gives you flexibility to enter learners for a functional skills assessment when they are ready. This is in addition to five-day windows we already have in place for functional ICT, four times a year.

Support and resources – latest developments

Onscreen functional skills – coming soon

We are working hard behind the scenes to make onscreen functional skills available for all our centres soon. For centres used to offering keys skills and ALAN tests, these maths and English functional skills tests will enable you to offer tests flexibly with a faster turnaround of results. In October 2010, we are looking for cohorts of about 100 learners to take part in a Level 2 trial. If you want to find out more and get involved please drop us a line at fsonscreen.research@edexcel.com

Our Functional Skills Initial Assessment Tool – this is on schedule for launch in the Autumn term. This service is free to Edexcel functional skills centres and comprises a short, online test for functional mathematics and the reading component of English. The result of the tests will help you determine the appropriate skills level for each of your learners. We understand that your students want to be stretched and to do well, but it's also important that they are entered for an assessment at the appropriate level. Our Initial Assessment Tool will help you to analyse your learners' skill to better achieve this balance.

Resources for functional skills in ICT – our student and teacher resources for functional ICT will be free to download from www.edexcel.com/fsict in September. These will include a lesson plan, scheme of work and student exemplar material. Don't forget we have a FREE 'Complete Delivery Guide' for Functional Skills ICT, Levels 1 & 2 for you to download now – please visit the homepage of our website.

Latest news on policy and funding

For schools

In May 2010, we received confirmation that the School Report Card will no longer come into effect from September this year. This does have implications for how functional skills achievement is reported on in schools, however a Level 2 functional skills qualification still has a half GCSE equivalence in respect to attainment points. This means that two functional skills passes at Level 2 will count as one of the five GCSEs at A*- C. Also, don't forget that your students can gain attainment points for both ALAN (Adult Literacy and Adult Numeracy) and functional skills qualifications until Summer 2011.

For post-16 providers

Some key information around funding.

Key skills funding

Key skills and functional skills are funded separately from the entitlement funding. Each of the three main core key skills has a listed Standard Learner Number (SLN) value based on 36 glh (guided learning hours). Wider key skills will continue to be funded in 2010/11 and they will be renewed at Level 1 during 2010/11 and at Level 2 during 2011/12. However funding for standard key skills will not continue beyond 31st August 2010.

Key skills	SLN glh	SLN
Standard	36	0.08
Wider	unlisted	glh/450

Useful links

Source of info: YPLA Funding Regulations

http://readingroom.ypla.gov.uk/ypla/ypla_funding_regulations_version_14-june_2010.pdf

Information correct as from 7th July 2010.

Other useful sources of information are:

- Functional Skills Support Programme <http://www.fssupport.org/>
- Skills Funding Agency <http://nationalemployerservice.org.uk/resources/functional-skills-qualifications-criteria/>
- DCEF <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/>

Important announcement about key skills

John Hayes, Minister of State for Further Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning, announced yesterday at the Association of Learning Providers (ALP) conference that key skills in Apprenticeship frameworks will be extended until March 2011. This means that as a provider, you now have the choice of offering your learners either functional skills or key skills until 31 March 2011.

Functional skills funding

Functional skills in English, mathematics and ICT at Entry Levels 1, 2 & 3 and Levels 1 & 2 are being rolled out across England in 2010/11 and replace the key skill qualifications in communication, application of numbers and ICT from September 2010 at Levels 1 & 2.

Functional skills feature in all of the four national routes for 14-19 year olds, so will impact all learners and it is expected that providers will deliver functional skills to young learners wherever possible.

In 2010/11 functional skills delivered through 16-18 and Adult Learner Responsive will be unlisted. This is to reflect the varied client group, and therefore the differential number of hours they will require to complete the qualification. Where functional skills are delivered in a school sixth form, or as part of an Apprenticeship framework as a direct replacement for key skills, they will continue to be listed at 36 glh (0.08 SLN). This applies to all ages enrolled on Apprenticeships.

Functional skills will not be eligible for funding through Train to Gain as stand alone qualifications in 2010/11. Train to Gain will continue to fund the Certificate in Adult Literacy, Certificate in Adult Numeracy, Certificate in ESOL Skills for Life and Certificate in ESOL for Work.

Functional skills	SLN glh	SLN
Colleges, 16-18	unlisted	glh/450
Colleges, 19+ (Adult Learner Responsive)	unlisted	glh/450
School sixth forms	36	0.08
Apprenticeships, 16-18	36	0.08
Apprenticeships, 19+ (Adult Learner Responsive)	36	0.08
Train to Gain	Not eligible	Not eligible

Functional skills results – FAQ

August 19 is the final results day for our pilot functional skills qualifications at Levels 1 & 2. For those of you awaiting results, we have included some of the questions we get asked most frequently.

Q: Can I still enter marks for ICT Unit 2 (FT102/FT202) – Centre Authentication?

A: Yes. Please make sure the pass/fail mark is entered through Edexcel Online as soon as possible. You will need to enter a '1' for pass or '0' for fail.

The centre authentication document (witness statement) template forms can be found through the following link: <http://www.edexcel.com/quals/func-skills/ict/Pages/Documents.aspx>

A form for each candidate needs to be filled in and signed by the teacher, assessor or supervisor. You don't need to send these forms to Edexcel, but please do file them safely in your centre and store them for 12 months, in case we need to see them.

Q: Can I still enter marks for English Unit 1 (FE101/FE201) – Speaking & Listening?

A: Yes. Please make sure the pass/fail mark is entered through Edexcel Online ASAP. You need to enter a '1' for pass or '0' for fail.

The speaking & listening record sheet template forms can be found through the following link: <http://www.edexcel.com/quals/func-skills/english/Pages/Documents.aspx>

A form for each candidate needs to be filled in and signed by the teacher, assessor or supervisor. We do not need you to send these forms to Edexcel, but please do file them safely in your centre and store them for 12 months, in case we need to see them.

Q: Can I still cash-in?

A: Yes - please make sure you have cashed-in in order to gain a result in August.

The cash in codes are as follows:

Level 1 English	ZFE10
Level 2 English	ZFE20
Level 1 ICT	ZFT10
Level 2 ICT	ZFT20
Level 1 Maths	ZFM10
Level 2 Maths	ZFM20

Learners who are unsuccessful in one or both ICT components this summer will need to enter for the live functional skills ICT award which is available from September 2010 (first assessment November 2010). Please note that the new Functional Skills ICT award is a single component qualification, unlike English, learners will not be able to transfer any credit from the pilot ICT award into the new qualification.

Q: Is it possible to transfer credit from another awarding organisation to Edexcel?

A: Yes. However this is for functional English only.

Transfer of credit is available for learners who have not achieved an overall functional skills English award but who have achieved individual components and now wish to transfer to another awarding organisation. The form can be found on the Edexcel website here:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/default.aspx>

Please select: Special consideration and reasonable adjustment.

Completed forms should be posted to:
Special Requirements Team
Edexcel, 190 High Holborn
London, WC1V 7BH

Alternatively email to special.requirements@edexcel.com

Fax to: 020 7190 5606 or 020 7190 5607

Q: Can my learners continue with Functional Skills, Entry Level?

A: Yes. In September 2010 new Functional Skills, Entry Level assessments will replace the pilot assessments in line with the new regulatory criteria. We will also be refining the quality assurance process used to ensure that your centre assessors are meeting the standards.

This means that registrations for all candidates on Functional Skills, Entry Level Pilot, for whom certification has not been claimed will be closed. If you have learners registered on these courses intending to continue with Functional Skills, Entry Level assessments within the same subject in 2010/11 we will transfer these candidates onto the appropriate new qualification free of charge. Please email serviceoperations@edexcel.com giving the following details for each learner that is to be transferred to the new Functional Skills, Entry Level qualification. The subject line of your email should read 'Entry Level FS Transfer from Pilot to Live' and the email should contain:

Centre Number
Edexcel Student Registration Number
Candidate Name
Candidate date of birth
Existing Programme Number

Alternatively, speak to your exams officer who will receive a template to fill in shortly.

From September, these learners should sit the new Functional Skills, Entry Level assessments, which will be available on our secure site.

Any new candidates for Functional Skills, Entry Level from September 2010 should be registered on the new qualifications using EDI and Edexcel Online. Codes for these qualifications will be available shortly.

Tips from a pilot centre

To support centres that will be delivering functional skills for the first time in 2010, we asked one of our pilot centres to give us their top tips for a successful programme:

- Establish the functional skills level that is appropriate for each learner and monitor learners to ensure the correct decision has been made. If you have Diploma or Apprenticeships learners, make sure they can access functional skills at the required level before they commence the course.
- Be aware that except where specified, learners taking more than one functional skills assessment can take each one at a different level – this is likely to be particularly important for learners on foundation learning programmes.
- Deliver Entry Level where learners cannot yet access Functional Skills, Level 1. It's a recognised qualification in its own right and carries attainment points for schools.
- Make sure you prepare learners for the tests so that they are familiar with the look at feel of them. This does not simply mean giving learners repeated test papers to attempt. Practice and revision is key.

Upcoming dates for the diary

Results day – 19 August (online and via EDI) with postal results arriving on 26 August.

Let us know what you think!

We would love to hear what you think of our newsletter and whether there's anything you'd like to know more about. Please email us at functionalskills@edexcel.com to let us know.

If you think any of your colleagues would be interested in subscribing to receive this newsletter, please drop us an email at the above email address giving their contact details.

Your key contacts at Edexcel

We have expert people on hand to ensure your functional skills queries are answered promptly. Our free Ask the Expert service puts you in direct contact with senior examiners, moderators and external verifiers. Please visit www.edexcel.com/asktheexpert to find out more.

In the meantime, for general enquiries, please call our customer service team on **0844 844 0655** who will be happy to help.

Our published resources for English and mathematics functional skills

If you've not had the chance to do so already, make sure you order your free evaluation pack for our English and mathematics functional skills published resources.

Our published resources build upon the experiences of the pilot schools to provide exactly what students need to focus on to help them pass their assessments. Available at Level 1 and Level 2, they provide plenty of assessment-style practice, model answers and examiner insight to give you and your students complete confidence.

Each evaluation pack includes a free copy of the Level 2 student book and sample material from other components – please visit www.pearsonschools.co.uk/edexcelfs to request your copy today (free evaluation packs available while stocks last).

'Supporting Functional Skills Delivery' events

Due to popular demand we are running more 'Supporting Functional Skills Delivery' events in the autumn term. These free events are ideal for those who are new to functional skills qualifications or have been on the pilot but want to get up-to-speed with the live qualifications running from September. If you're interested in finding out more, please email functionalskills@edexcel.com

"the free training offered by Edexcel is excellent"

Rose-Marie D'Ambrosio-Winter, Norton Radstock College