

Functional Skills

Functional Skills Newsletter - January 2009

Happy New Year and welcome back to the second edition of our Functional Skills e-newsletter. We have been busy putting together, all the latest updates, exam date reminders and policy information to help you plan your year ahead.

News and Updates

New Entry Level Functional Skills

Entry Level Functional Skills qualifications will be available for first assessment in May 2009, with specifications for all three subjects available from the end of January. Available across English, maths and ICT and at Levels Entry 1-3 they consist of on-demand assessments that follow a similar operational model to our Entry Level Adult Literacy and Numeracy and Entry Level ICT qualifications.

For a full announcement on Entry Level qualifications see our new notice board at www.edexcel.com/fs

Further details will be appearing over the coming months, until then please direct any questions to fspilot.recruitment@edexcel.com

Wish you were here?

Join our Development Programme for Functional Skills

You will have recently received our Functional Skills Development Programme postcard, inviting you to join our pilot. If you are a centre that isn't yet eligible to join the pilot, or undecided as to which Awarding Body to go with then our Development Programme will provide you with all the information you need. To join the simply return your completed postcard via the pre-paid address, or email us at fsdevelopment@edexcel.com

New Online Model to Pilot

This year, Functional Skills qualifications tailored towards adult learners are being developed with first assessment to take place this summer. The new model will not replace the current Functional Skills pilots, but is designed to provide a framework that will offer more flexibility in future modes of assessment. It will include onscreen assessment and internally assessed papers, facilitating a faster turnaround of results, and moving further towards assessment 'on-demand'. This new strand of the pilot is available to a limited number of centres with learners aged 19+ who are currently working on ALAN qualifications with Edexcel.

If your centre is interested in taking part in this pilot please email us at fspilot.recruitment@edexcel.com for further details.

We have a new website

www.edexcel.com is now up and running, and over the course of the next few weeks our Functional Skills microsite will be migrating across to this [new page](#). All current information and resources will still be made available and will be easy to navigate and find.

Dates for the calendar

January Test Dates

The test dates for January 2009 are as follows:

Maths (Level 1&2)

27 January 09 (AM)

English: Reading and Writing (Level 1&2)

28 January 09 (AM)

ICT (Level 1&2)

28 - 30 January 09

Candidates may sit the ICT test at any point within the 3-day window. A copy of the examination series for [January](#) and the provisional dates for [June 2009](#) can be downloaded from our website.

If you have any queries relating to assessment windows please email our [pilots team](#).

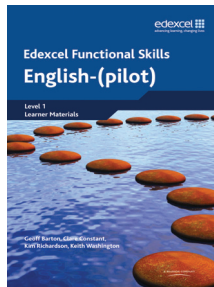
Datafiles for Functional ICT Tests

The datafiles for Functional ICT tests are now available on our website and can be accessed by following this link www.edexcel.com/fs-datafiles. These datafiles have been released earlier than the test date so centres can ensure they work correctly. They must be placed in a secure area on the ICT system, and not released to candidates prior to the test.

Supporting and informing our centres

Published Resources

We are delighted to provide free comprehensive teaching and learning resources for centres on the Edexcel Functional Skills Pilot and Development Programme. The resources develop the skills your learners need to succeed in Level 1 and Level 2 Functional English, maths and ICT. Key features:



- written by expert teams, including senior examiners for Functional Skills
- learner materials focus clearly on each of the Functional Skills standards, so you can be confident your learners have developed all the skills they need
- practice tests ensure your learners are prepared for assessment and can identify their strengths and where they need to improve
- teacher materials ensure you are fully supported, with further support for assessment, and unit-by-unit guides to the learner materials including answers and mapping charts.

[Click here](#) to access an overview of each set of resources for English, maths and ICT.

Gain extra AAT points with ALAN and prepare for Functional Skills



Look out for your new CD ROM which will be in centres by the end of this month. Containing onscreen practice tests for Level 1 and 2 ALAN qualifications they will help your centre prepare for Functional Skills. By taking ALAN your students can achieve point's equivalent to one GCSE – these are in addition to those achieved for Functional Skills. To find out more about ALAN and onscreen testing [click here](#).

Podcast 1: King Edward VI School visit www.edexcel.com/notices/Pages/alan-podcast.aspx to see how staff and students at King Edward School have been using ALAN to prepare for Functional Skills with outstanding success.

Policy Update from Gerry Rogers

At the end of last year, our policy manager Gerry Rogers led a seminar on Functional Skills. Attended by over 30 university admissions tutors, a wide variety of issues regarding the impact of Functional Skills on HE were raised and explored.

Delegates discussed:

- the impact of Functional Skills on the evolving secondary curriculum
- experiences of pilot centres in accessing assessment material for their students
- examples of the Functional Skills Standards
- ways of supporting learning, especially in the light of the Skills for Life embedded resources used successfully with adults
- the training support provided in 2008 by the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust, Secondary National Strategies and the Quality Improvement Agency/Learning and Skills Improvement Service.

The outcome of the meeting was positive. Many tutors expressed their support for the Functional Skills programme, envisaging its widespread introduction would raise the calibre of their intake, reducing the need for support activities and allowing teaching staff to remain focussed on core academic content.

ResultsPlus

ResultsPlus - raising performance levels

Did you know that you can use ResultsPlus to see how your students are performing with Functional Skills assessments? For a demo of the ResultsPlus system, and examples of how it can help your centre improve their performance visit www.edexcel.com/resultsplus

Training

FREE Training

This January and February we are running a series of FREE half-day training events aimed at centres on our Functional Skills Development Programme. These subject specific events will provide you with the ideal opportunity to find out more about the assessment and teaching of Functional Skills. Events will cover:

- an examination of effective models for teaching Functional Skills
- examples of the ways learners can prepare for assessments, including the scrutiny of assessed work samples and associated examiner feedback
- the opportunity to ask questions linked to Functional Skills standards and receive guidance on resources and support.

For further detail on these events and information on how to book, download a copy of our Functional Skills [events flyer](#) online.

Leap into Spring – New Conference events!

This Spring term we will be running a series of three overview events for Functional Skills. These events will be open to anyone who has an interest in how Functional Skills is developing and its interaction with related curriculum areas and 2010 developments. Look out on our [website](#) for an announcement coming soon.

Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS)

The LSIS is offering in-house training for Functional Skills pilot centres until March 2009. To find out how these events can help you implement, plan and deliver Functional Skills visit the www.lsneducation.org.uk/functionalskills

Also of interest...

ESOL for Schools

From this January, we will be offering ESOL Skills for Life qualifications to schools. ESOL qualifications develop the literacy skills and capabilities that speakers of languages other than English need in every day life, learning and work.

ESOL is a unitised qualification and is available from Entry Level 1 through to Level 2. It is linked to the National Standards for Literacy and, as a result, attracts attainment points. If you would like any more information or a practice disk, please email esol@edexcel.com

GCSE ICT10 – Keeping you in the picture

We are redeveloping our GCSE ICT specification for first teaching in 2010! The new specification will replace the current GCSEs in ICT and Applied ICT and reflect the requirement for functional ICT skills. [Sign up](#) for our new e-newsletter to keep up to date with the latest developments. www.edexcel.com/ict

GCSE English10 – Writing a winning specification

We are currently in the early stages of specification development for our new GCSEs in English. We intend to carry forward features in the current GCSE English pilot that have been so positively received by centres. The new GCSEs in English will be flexible and well supported, allowing teachers to build courses appropriate for their particular subject interests and students cohorts. If you would like to join any of our upcoming focus groups and discussions, please register your interest by emailing englishinformation@edexcel.org.uk

Verbatim Newsletter

Providing you with updates and news and as well as the chance to engage in debates with leading experts, our English newsletter is an ideal resource for those wanting to be kept up to date with all the latest developments. [Click here](#) to register for your copy.

GCSE Maths10 – The formula for success

In 2010 a new GCSE in Mathematics will be introduced, designed to assess the new KS4 programme of study. It will have a greater emphasis on mathematical problem solving and applying mathematics. Alongside this, we will be piloting a pair of GCSEs which together cover the programme of study.

We would love to hear what you think of our new 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 our newsletter, please pass this on.

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