



Pearson

Level 1 Functional Skills English: overview guidance for new centres (November 2016)

Who can take Functional Skills (FS) and does it count in performance measures?

FS is available to learners in England. It is usually sat by learners who are aged 14 or over. FS does not count in performance measures and does not have a CEFR equivalence.

What documents must I read?

[Specification](#)

[Quality Assurance Handbook](#) (QAH) (renewed each academic year)

[Information on audio-visual recording for Speaking, Listening and Communication \(SLC\) and other verification updates for 2016/17](#)

Guided learning hours: 45

What do I need to do to get started?

Register learners (page 222 of the [Information Manual](#) 2016)

Appoint a Lead IV. (Please note that the Lead IV registration and OSCA training needs updating each year on 1 September.)

Have the Lead IV complete OSCA training.

Send the Lead IV declaration form (page 31 of the QAH) to fsassessment@pearson.com prior to the Standards Verification visit.

Can I start at any time in the academic year?

Yes, you can, but if you are following a paper-based model, you will need to consider the gap in assessment windows between July and October.

What support is available?

[Level 1 and 2 Speaking, Listening and Communication assessment videos](#)

[Past papers, lesson plans, schemes of work etc](#)

Structure of the qualification

Components worth 33.3% each: Speaking, Listening and Communication, Reading and Writing.

Speaking, Listening and Communication (SLC)

Tasks: Teachers devise their own tasks based on their students' interests and the skills criteria. Any topic that allows learners to demonstrate the skills required is acceptable e.g. something in the news, football, healthy eating, travel etc. **Edexcel does not provide tasks.** You can see [videos](#) of learner performances to get an idea. You can email teachingenglish@pearson.com if you'd like to discuss tasks further.

Students will need to complete a formal discussion and an informal discussion.

Time: The total assessment time should be approximately 30 minutes. The two activities do not need to be exactly 15 minutes each.

Can Assessors take part in the SLC discussion?

No, they can't.

What if there is only 1 learner taking the test?

If there is only 1 candidate taking the test, other learner/s (working at the same level) can participate even if they are not taking the test. If no other learners are available, other adult/s can participate providing they do not give any additional support to the candidate. For discussions, a minimum of 3 participants are required.

Do both tasks need to be done on the same day?

No, learners can do 1 SLC task on one day and the second on another.

What percentage of candidates need to be internally verified for S&L?

There is no fixed percentage.

Is there a set date for completing the assessment?

There is no set date or assessment window, but, please see page 5 of the Quality Assurance Handbook (and the table later in this document) for the deadlines by which SLC marks must be submitted in order to get complete results to students on the results day for each paper-based assessment window.

Can I 'double-use' the Spoken Language Endorsement (SLE) from GCSE English Language if my students are also sitting that qualification?

Yes, you can, providing the tasks set will allow learners to meet the criteria of the FS L1 SLC task.

Reading

Tasks: Learners answer a question on a narrative text and an informative text. 50% of questions will require a fixed response.

Time: The assessment must be completed in 45 minutes.

Writing

Tasks: Learners complete 2 writing tasks with separate contexts. 40% of marks for each task are allocated to SPAG.

Time: The assessment must be completed in 45 minutes.

Sittings for paper-based Reading and Writing exams in 2016-17 are available [here](#).

Standards Verification

How many Speaking and Listening assessments need to be recorded?

Centres are required to make two video recordings of live assessments per task, per level. These need to take place prior to the standards verification visit taking place, if a centre is having a visit. This is to ensure that the centre can provide sample assessments to the Standards Verifier during a visit.

When does the standards verification visit take place and how is this communicated?

Centres usually receive a visit on a three-year cycle. You will usually be notified by email in October if you are receiving a visit. The standards verifier will agree a date for the visit with you. The visits usually take place between October and July of the academic year.

Do Speaking and Listening assessments need to be video recorded?

Yes, audio recordings are not sufficient.

When are the windows for me to complete my OSCA training?

There are no windows for FS English OSCA, although it is advisable to complete it in September or October. The training materials are available all year round. The Lead Internal Verifier can go online at any time and complete training.

How do I complete the OSCA training?

A step by step guide with screenshots is available from page 12 of the [Quality Assurance Handbook](#). The Lead IV watches the videos and then completes and returns the Lead IV Declaration form to fsassessment@pearson.com. The Lead IV will receive email confirmation that their Lead IV status has been updated.

Can I use the OSCA materials to train other members of the department?

Yes, you may.

What information do centres have to provide the Standards Verifier?

Your centre must provide copies of:

- sampling plans
- sampling records, including feedback to Assessors
- records of monitoring assessment practice, including feedback to Assessors.

Important changes to Speaking and Listening for 2016-17 are detailed [here](#).

Deadlines

Paper based model

Series	Submission Deadline
October 2016	21/10/2016
November 2016	18/11/2016
January 2017	20/01/2017
February 2017	17/02/2017
March 2017	24/03/2017
May 2017	19/05/2017
June 2017	23/06/2017
July 2017	28/07/2017

Onscreen model

There are no deadlines for submitting marks for the onscreen, on demand model. For the Speaking, Listening & Communication unit, marks are to be submitted when the learner is ready to receive the certificate.

Access Arrangements

Details of access arrangements are available from [JCQ](#).

Details about the use of computer and human readers, voice recognition technology, 'human' scribes and exemptions are on page 15 of the [specification](#).

FAQs

What is the qualification number? 500/8700/9

Are dictionaries allowed? Dictionaries and bilingual dictionaries are allowed for Reading and Writing. Please see the full guidance in the JCQ access guidance document [here](#).

How do I decide which level my students should be entered for? Our free [Initial Assessment Tool](#) (IAT) can help teachers and tutors decide which level of Functional Skills English a learner should study.

If our Lead Internal Verifier leaves the centre, do we need to appoint a new Lead Internal Verifier?

Yes, each centre is required to appoint a Lead Internal Verifier so, as soon as one leaves, the centre needs to appoint a new Lead Internal Verifier. They are then required to complete the OSCA training and fill out a new Lead Internal Verifier Declaration Form. If the outgoing Lead IV does not withdraw before leaving, please email fsassessment@pearson.com with the name of the outgoing and new Lead IV.

If there is only 1 teacher delivering the qualification, can they also be an invigilator?

Only in circumstances in which an alternative sole invigilator is not practicably possible, for example, a remote learner sitting the test in the work place. This will not be acceptable for large centres using an exam hall.

How is remote sampling completed? Details are available from page 28 of the [Quality Assurance Handbook](#).

If we have more than 1 centre number (sub-sites) do we need more than 1 Lead IV?

You can tell us that you have 1 for each site or that it will be the same person for both, by emailing fsassessment@pearson.com.

If a learner has completed a unit with one awarding body and then moves to a new centre, can they make use of the reading/writing/SLC result that they already have to complete FS L1?

Yes, they can. The new centre needs to complete and return a [transfer of credit form](#).

Where do I find grade boundaries? Grade boundaries are available [here](#).

How long is this specification valid? The review date is 31st August 2018.

Last updated, 23 November 2016.