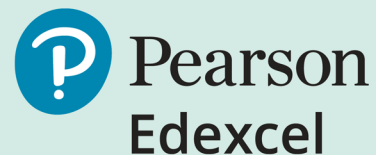


Functional Skills



# Quality Assurance Handbook

Year 2021-22

Functional Skills  
English Levels 1 and 2  
Speaking, Listening and  
Communicating



# Contents

Contents .....	2
Using this handbook .....	4
Additional Resources.....	4
Preparing to deliver Functional Skills Speaking, Listening and Communicating .....	5
Introduction to Functional Skills English Levels 1 and 2.....	6
Speaking and Listening Assessment Tasks .....	6
How many learners should make up a group?.....	7
How should learners prepare for the assessment? .....	7
Special educational needs and requirements .....	7
Assessment of Speaking, Listening and Communicating .....	8
Invigilation .....	8
Your quality assurance responsibilities.....	9
Internal quality assurance process .....	9
Online Standardisation for Centre Assessors (OSCA) .....	9
Assessment and Verification Timeline .....	11
Standards verification .....	13
The standards verification process .....	13
Your Standards Verifier .....	13
Internal quality assurance .....	14
Sampling .....	14
Advice for recording assessments .....	15
After your visit.....	15
Claiming certificates .....	16
Pearson Edexcel Centres .....	17
Centre administration responsibilities .....	17
Role of Assessor.....	17
Internal verification .....	17

The Lead Internal Verifier role .....	18
Developing and supporting Assessors .....	19
Internal Verification good practice tips.....	19
Submission of marks for FS English Levels 1 & 2 Speaking, Listening & Communicating .....	20
Registrations .....	20
Support .....	21

# Using this handbook

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This resource is designed to help you with your Functional Skills English Level 1 and 2 Speaking, Listening and Communicating delivery. We advise that all Examinations Officers, Programme Managers, Lead Internal Verifiers, Internal Verifiers and Assessors in centres offering Functional Skills English at Levels 1 and 2 familiarise themselves with the contents of this handbook.

## Additional Resources

You will find additional resources, including bitesize guides to Speaking and Listening assessment, on our website.

Centres must conduct all Functional Skills Level 1 and 2 examinations in line with the information in the *Instructions for Conducting Examinations* (ICE) document.

Your Examinations Officer should also access the [UK Information Manual](#) and the Instructions for Conducting Examinations. These documents are available on our website and contain information about entries and certification.

# Preparing to deliver Functional Skills Speaking, Listening and Communicating

Step	Activity
1	Download specification/s, Quality Assurance Handbook, and ICE document. Please ensure that you familiarise yourself with these each year, as changes take place annually.
2	Set up your team as per the roles and responsibilities within the QA Handbook.
3	Ensure your Functional Skills team has appropriate access to Edexcel Online:  Tutors, Assessors, Internal Verifiers (IVs) and Administrators
4	Ensure your Lead Internal Verifier (LIV) registers/renews their accreditation via Online Support for Centre Assessors (OSCA).  Accreditation runs from September to August every year. Completion of the OSCA process gives a centre Direct Claim Status for Level 1/2. You will only be able to claim certificates for English L1/2 if this has been completed.
5	Use exemplar videos from OSCA to standardise your team of Assessors and Internal Verifiers before assessments begin.
6	Register your learners.
7	Work with Assessors to create task outlines for the Speaking, Listening & Communication component of English. These can be contextualised for individual learners or groups of learners.
8	You will be contacted by your Pearson Standards Verifier (SV) by January, provided you have registered learners.
9	Carry out assessments with learners. Produce the required sample of video recordings for Standards Verification purposes. Internally verify assessment outcomes.
10	Prepare for your Standards Verification visit. Your Pearson Standards Verification visit will be carried out remotely. Following your Standards Verification visit, work on any actions or recommendations within the report provided by your SV.
11	Certificates will be issued automatically once your Lead Internal Verifier has completed OSCA (step 5). We will print certificates once all three units are completed (you will need to claim Speaking & Listening component on Edexcel Online.)

# Introduction to Functional Skills English Levels 1 and 2

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The Functional Skills English qualification consists of three components:

- Speaking, Listening & Communicating
- Reading
- Writing

Learners **must complete all units** to gain their Functional Skills English Level 1 and 2 certificate.

## Speaking and Listening Assessment Tasks

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Learners must complete all activities to pass the Speaking, Listening & Communicating unit. The assessment time at each level should total approximately **25-30 minutes**, depending on group size.

At both levels the assessment can be completed across more than one session.

There is no limit to the number of times a learner can retake their Speaking, Listening & Communicating assessment.

Level 1 tasks	Level 2 tasks
Talk (3-4 minutes) and Q&A	Presentation (4-5 minutes) and Q&A
Group discussion (10 minutes)	Formal discussion (15 minutes)

Level 1 and Level 2 learners may be assessed together for the talk and presentation tasks. However, it is not recommended that Level 1 and Level 2 learners are assessed together for the discussion tasks due to the differing requirements of Level 1 and Level 2 discussions. If centres decide to assess Level 1 and Level 2 learners together for the discussion then they must ensure that no learners are disadvantaged and that all participants are able to meet the standards. This will be checked as part of a standards verification visit.

If you have any queries about assessing Level 1 and 2 learners together, please get in touch with the Assessment team using the Support Porta

## How many learners should make up a group?

A maximum of **five** participants must make up the discussion group, although not all those involved need to be assessed. The minimum number of participants required for the Level 1 and Level 2 discussion activities is **three**.

A maximum of **four** participants must make up the group for talks (Level 1) and presentations (Level 2), although not all those involved need to be assessed. The minimum number of participants required for the talk/presentation and Q&A is **three**.

Members of teaching or support staff should not be used to make up the discussion group numbers. If there are less than three learners who require assessment, then it is acceptable for a learner or colleague who is not being assessed to take part in the discussion. If you must use a colleague to make up the numbers please ensure that they are not involved in the assessment of Speaking, Listening and Communicating.

## How should learners prepare for the assessment?

- Learners may prepare notes on the set Speaking, Listening and Communicating activity to be used during the designated formal assessment.
- These notes can include bullet and numbered points. Notes must **not** include prepared responses (e.g. continuous phrases and paragraphs).
- Group work and individual study can be used to complete this preparation.
- There is no set date or assessment window for Speaking, Listening & Communicating. Learners should be assessed when the Assessor believes they are ready and able to attain the criteria of the assessment.

## Special educational needs and requirements

Learners with additional requirements in relation to their mode of learning or assessment can have their usual support, unless this compromises the outcome of the assessment. Please see our [Access Arrangements](#) webpage for more information.

If you have any specific queries about access requirements, please contact us using the Support Portal.

# Assessment of Speaking, Listening and Communicating

Learners must achieve all the set criteria for each activity at each level. To record the attainment of criteria, we ask Assessors to complete an Assessment Record Sheet for each learner. For guidance on completing the Assessment Record Sheets please see the Assessment Record Sheet guidance document on our website.

The completed Assessment Record Sheet for each learner should be retained at the end of the controlled assessment for verification purposes and kept securely for 2 years. The completed Assessment Record Sheets should not be sent to Pearson.

The completion of the Speaking, Listening & Communicating assessment must be under controlled conditions. During the assessment, the learner must always be in the direct sight of the Assessor. The Assessor should clarify the requirements of the assessment for the learners but must not participate in the assessment.

Learners must be provided with a suitably quiet, undisturbed location. The learners can be assessed in their normal environment. There is no need to remove posters, displays or materials containing information relevant to what is being assessed.

Assessment can also be undertaken remotely using a suitable online meeting platform. Remote assessments should be recorded and normal rules on group size and assessment lengths apply.

## Invigilation

The class teacher or tutor may act as the Invigilator/Assessor, however they must not perform any other task in the room other than that of Invigilator/Assessor. The Invigilator/Assessor must not take part in the assessment. It is their role to assess the learners and not participate.

Whilst it is at the discretion of the Head of Centre to decide who is suitably qualified and experienced, and to ensure adequate training has been provided, we require the Head of Centre to maintain a **record of approved invigilators**, for instances where the teacher or tutor is undertaking sole invigilation duties. This must include the Invigilator names and the rationale for their selection. We reserve the right to request this information if required as part of our quality assurance measures.



# Your quality assurance responsibilities

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## Internal quality assurance process

Your centre should develop a suitable quality assurance strategy. This strategy must guarantee internal standardisation for all Assessors within the centre (and across all sites where applicable), ensuring the understanding and consistent application of criteria for each level of Speaking, Listening & Communicating.

Examples of internal standardisation processes:

- Internal Verifier visiting classroom
- Completion of OSCA
- joint marking exercise
- regular training sessions (especially for large centres).

## Online Standardisation for Centre Assessors (OSCA)

We ask that centres identify a Lead Internal Verifier to complete the OSCA training. The OSCA training is designed to ensure that all centres are standardised to the same level and all Lead Internal Verifiers, Internal Verifiers and Assessors understand how to assess Speaking and Listening and verify assessment decisions applying the national standards. For QMA centres, please request the OSCA materials by contacting us using the Support Portal.

## OSCA Training

**Please note:** OSCA operates in monthly windows. OSCA windows are open between September and August, the final OSCA window open through July. However, centres must ensure that OSCA training is completed by the Lead Internal Verifier no later than **31<sup>st</sup> October 2021**. This will ensure that any issues with accreditation can be resolved as soon as possible and reduce the risk of delays in the issue of certificates.

For instructions on registering for and completing OSCA, please see this OSCA guidance document on our website.

### **Important points on OSCA:**

- Due to the set up of the OSCA platform, Lead Internal Verifiers are only able to attempt Reform OSCA once in a monthly OSCA window. This means that if the LIV logs out during the training and log back in again to complete it, they will be unable to access the materials again until the next monthly window.
- It is the responsibility of the Lead Internal Verifier to cascade the information to Internal Verifiers and Assessors.
- If you have not received a confirmation email, you are not accredited. You must tick the confirmation box at the end of the training in order to receive accreditation.
- Standardisation must be carried out within the centre using the current OSCA training materials for each level of FS English.
- Commentaries completed by the Senior Standards Verifier should then be used for reference. This should happen before any assessment or internal verification takes place.
- The internal verification process should then take place, monitoring these Assessors.

# Assessment and Verification Timeline

Month	Who?	Activity
September	Exams Officer/ Assessors/ LIV	Download specification/s, Quality Assurance Handbook, and ICE document. Please ensure that you familiarise yourself with these each year, as changes take place annually.
September/ October	LIV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Register/renew OSCA accreditation with Pearson.</li> <li>• Access training video and complete LIV declaration.</li> <li>• Submit completed LIV declaration to Pearson confirming exemplar videos have been viewed.</li> <li>• Plan internal training and keep a record of this.</li> </ul>
October/ December	LIV/ Assessors	<p>Video record learners so that these are in place for your Standards Verification visit. The minimum requirements are below:</p> <p><b>Level 1</b></p> <p>X 1 Talk and Q&amp;A activity (including at least three learners giving their talks)</p> <p>X 1 Formal group discussion</p> <p><b>Level 2</b></p> <p>X 1 Presentation and Q&amp;A activity (including at least three learners giving their presentations)</p> <p>X 1 Formal group discussion</p> <p><i>Please note - The Standards Verifier (SV) may request a second sample, so please make extra video recordings. This will be made clear in the visit.</i></p>
November	Pearson/ LIV	<p>Allocate SVs to centres.</p> <p>All centres will receive an SV visit</p> <p><b>Please note, deferring or failing to organise a Standards Verification visit when requested will result in a block from certification. A visit can <b>ONLY</b> be deferred once.</b></p>
December/ January	SV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make initial contact with LIV.</li> <li>• Discuss training videos with LIV to ensure materials have been viewed and fully understood.</li> <li>• Confirm dates with LIV when internal standardisation is taking place.</li> <li>• Once contact established, start to plan for SV visit</li> </ul>
	LIV/SV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with SV to agree date for visit.</li> </ul>

January onwards	SV	<p>Carry out face to face centre visits to review SLC assessments.</p> <p>SV will observe live or video recorded assessments alongside the centre assessor to ensure they are applying the standards correctly.</p> <p>SV will also carry out checks on centre policies, internal verification and standardisation.</p> <p>Outcome of Assessment sampling will be one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Approved - no further action (no block)</li> <li>● Approved with improvements points - minor follow up action required (no block)</li> <li>● Not approved - actions to complete - immediate action required (block).</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Please note - Centres should receive their report within 10 working days of the SV visit.</i></b></p>
	Pearson	<p>Monitor completion of centre visits.</p> <p>Monitor any centre blocks and analyse reasons for blocks.</p> <p>Ensure SVs are following up action points as required with centres.</p>

# Standards verification

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## The standards verification process

As part of our quality assurance process, all centres will be visited by a Standards Verifier (SV). As of the 2021/22 academic year, all Standards Verification visits will be completed remotely.

In order to complete their visit, your SV will ask to see a sample of learner work and Assessment Record Sheets. They will also speak to you about your Internal Verification and Quality Assurance strategies. To prepare for your SV visit, please see the centre visit checklist. This can be provided by the FS Assessment team or your SV.

**Please note**, deferring or failing to organise a Standards Verification visit when requested will result in a block from certification. A visit can **ONLY** be deferred once.

## Your Standards Verifier

Your allocated Standards Verifier will contact your centre to arrange their visit and request your sample and information about your quality assurance procedures.

During the visit, your SV will provide advice and guidance, and a standards verification report will be completed after the visit.

Your SV will:

- Agree a schedule with your centre for the visit
- Learners and levels to be verified
- Request necessary materials such as live assessment recordings, evidence of OSCA accreditation and Assessment Record Sheets
- Validate the work of the of Assessor against national standards by sampling assessment decisions
- Check Lead Internal Verifier OSCA status and quality assurance procedures
- Communicate any areas of improvement points and agree an action plan
- Review your centre's processes for meeting the conditions in the Instructions for Conducting Examination (ICE) document.

## Internal quality assurance

The starting point for the Standards Verifier is to review the quality of internal verification.

Your centre must provide copies of:

- sampling plans
- sampling records, including feedback to Assessors
- details of OSCA accreditation
- date/s of internal standardisation, names of Assessors who attended and Assessment Record Sheets completed by Assessors
- records of any discussion points or clarifications required.

The Standards Verifier will want to be assured that all Internal Verifiers and Assessors understand centre systems and procedures.

## Sampling

If the number of registrations and entries is below the number required to conduct the group activities then this must be declared to the Standards Verifier so they can advise accordingly.

**Your sample should include the following video recorded evidence:**

<b>Level 1</b>	1 Talk and Q&A Activity (min 3 learners, max 4 learners)
	1 Formal Discussion (min 3 learners, max 5 learners)
<b>Level 2</b>	1 Presentation and Q&A Activity (min 3 learners, max 4 learners)
	1 Group Discussion (min 3 learners, max 5 learners)

**Note:** For centres with a large number (100+) of learners the SV may ask to see a larger sample range. More recordings may be requested so you may wish to video more than the requirement. **Audio recordings will not be accepted as appropriate forms of assessment.**

The Assessment Record Sheets (ARS) of all the assessed learners in the video recorded assessments must be sent to the Standards Verifier. Your Standards Verifier will also ask to see an additional sample of Assessment Record Sheets so these must be kept for a minimum of two years

**The deadline for visits is 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022.** Visits must be completed before this.

## Advice for recording assessments

Please ensure that learners introduce themselves on the recording. All learners should be visible in the recording.

Please save your video recordings in MP4, AVI or MOV formats to ensure that your SV can open the files.

It is essential that the observed assessments are 'live', i.e. actual assessments with current registered learners and not 'mock' assessments. Some live assessments **must** be video recorded prior to the Standards Verification visit as evidence. The Standards Verifier will also need to view the Assessment Record Sheets of the learners that were assessed.

## After your visit

The findings of the SV visit will be discussed with the Lead Internal Verifier at the end of the visit. Actions for improvement will be identified by your Standards Verifier. It is important that any actions and target dates agreed are clear and realistic. The Lead Internal Verifier should ensure that they understand any required action and that they clarify any issues.

If the visit reveals serious inaccuracies in the assessment quality, the Lead Internal Verifier accreditation will be suspended. This means that marks submitted for learners will not be accepted by us and certificates will be withheld. The Standards Verifier will advise on appropriate actions and the timescale in which the agreed actions are to be taken.

### SV visit outcomes explained

- **Approved** - no further action and centre will not be blocked – future annual monitoring will usually be remote, unless we have concerns about verification.
- **Approved with improvement points** - minor follow up action required and centre will not be blocked – future annual monitoring will usually be remote; a visit may take place approximately every 3 years. Sooner if we have concerns about verification.
- **Not approved – actions to complete** - immediate action required and centre will be blocked – once improvements have been put in place, the centre will be released, however, a face to face visit will take place next year.

You will receive your Standards Verification Report via email within 10 working days of the visit.

If there are no significant issues identified during the Standards Verification visit, the Lead Internal Verifier will retain their accredited status for the remainder of the academic year (i.e. until 31 August 2022).

**Please note, a decision to block the centre will apply to both levels.**

# Claiming certificates

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## Centres with an accredited Lead Internal Verifier

Centres with an accredited Lead Internal Verifier can submit marks for Functional Skills English Speaking, Listening & Communicating on Edexcel Online. Certificates will be automatically generated once all units are present on a learner's record.

## Centres without a Lead Internal Verifier

If the Lead Internal Verifier does not complete OSCA training, centre marks for learners will be accepted by us. However, learners will not receive certificates until OSCA has been completed.



# Pearson Edexcel Centres

## Communicating with us

Pearson communicates with centres by newsletter, telephone and email. To make sure we reach you, please ensure that you maintain accurate contact details on Edexcel Online.

You can submit any queries to us using the [Support Portal](#). By using the Support Portal, you can get in touch with Functional Skills Assessment directly. We aim to respond to you within 5 working days.

## Centre administration responsibilities

Centres are responsible for identifying staff members to hold the roles of Assessor, Internal Verifier and Lead Internal Verifier.

### Role of Assessor

Assessors will be responsible for:

- managing assessment planning, marking and recording assessment decisions
- maintaining accurate and verifiable learner assessment and achievement records.

All Assessors must be standardised by the Lead Internal Verifier and an accurate record of this activity must be kept. This applies to all centres regardless of the number of Assessors. If a centre has various sites, Assessors and Internal Verifiers must be standardised across all sites.

## Internal verification

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Please ensure that your centre has a robust internal verification strategy by considering these key areas:

- schedule internal verification when the programme delivery is being planned
- provide feedback to Internal Verifiers and Lead Internal Verifiers
- in large centres, a team of Internal Verifiers may be established to check the validity and consistency of assessment decisions across Assessors. The Lead Internal Verifier is responsible for the standardisation and monitoring of the team of Internal Verifiers
- in small centres, it is acceptable to have only one Internal Verifier who is registered as the Lead Internal Verifier on OSCA
- under no circumstance can the role of the Assessor and the Lead Internal Verifier be covered by only one person.

## The Lead Internal Verifier role

The Lead Internal Verifier ensures that assessments across the centre consistently meet national standards.

The Lead Internal Verifier is responsible for:

- sampling assessment decisions made by all Assessors across all sites, where applicable
- completion of OSCA training
- cascading information in the OSCA training to Assessors
- supporting the work of Assessors within the centre to monitor and ensure consistency in the interpretation and application of standards
- maintaining up-to-date records of internal verification and sampling activity and ensuring that these are available for standards verification

All centres should have an internal verification schedule for each programme. The Lead Internal Verifier is the person responsible for managing the process.

## Developing and supporting Assessors

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The Lead Internal Verifier must ensure that all Assessors have:

- a copy of assessment requirements as specified in the Assessment Record Sheets
- a copy of the Instructions for the Conduct of Examinations (ICE) document
- access to appropriate training and support materials, including the Quality Assurance Handbook.

### Internal Verification good practice tips

- there is a recognised team of Internal Verifiers across the centre who meet regularly to ensure standardisation of procedures and application of standards is robust; minutes from these meetings should be kept for the purpose of Standards Verification
- internal verification processes are agreed and made available to centre staff so that they are clearly understood by all Assessors, Internal Verifiers and the Lead Internal Verifier
- all Assessors are involved in, and understand, the internal verification role
- a Lead Internal Verifier, who manages the process and provides support, is identified
- standardisation meetings are regularly held
- the time required to carry out internal verification is recognised.

# **Submission of marks for FS English Levels 1 & 2 Speaking, Listening & Communicating**

## **Registrations**

Registrations are made using your centre number on Edexcel Online or QMA.

For information on how to submit marks on Edexcel Online, please refer to [this guidance page](#).

For information on how to submit marks on QMA, please refer to [this guidance page](#).

### **Onscreen model and Paper Based On-Demand (PBOD)**

There are no deadlines for submitting marks for the Functional Skills English onscreen and PBOD model. For the Speaking, Listening & Communicating units, marks are to be submitted when the learner is ready to receive the certificate.

# Support

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## Documentation

We contact your Quality Nominee or, for administration and certification information, the Examinations Officer. We do not usually issue information directly to Programme Managers/Lead Internal Verifiers. However, a variety of qualification specifications, policy documents and information booklets are produced to assist teaching teams.

## Pearson Edexcel Functional Skills homepage

Located on: <https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-functional-skills.html>

Our website pages are regularly updated with all the most current information and documents.

## Edexcel Online

Edexcel Online, [www.edexcelonline.com](http://www.edexcelonline.com), is an invaluable service for administrators, providing support from approval through to registration and entry, reporting of achievement, and results and post-results services.

It also includes access to services for teaching staff, including OSCA, online booking for training events and Pearson publications ordering. In addition, your Edexcel Online username and password will give you access to ResultsPlus.

## Customer Services

We pledge to provide excellent service in all your dealings with us. Each centre will have a dedicated Accounts Specialist that will be their first point of contact.

All contact details for the appropriate teams can be found under the Contact Us tab on: <http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/contact-us.html>

## Curriculum Development Managers

Curriculum Development Managers are an important part of our Pearson UK FE and Schools teams. They provide a range of professional advisory support across all Pearson qualifications.

A key responsibility of Curriculum Development Managers is to build relationships with schools, colleges and Local Authorities to raise achievement and promote our drive for excellence in education. Work Based Learning centres are supported by their Account Manager.

If you would like your Curriculum Development Manager or Account Manager to contact you, please get in touch with our Customer Services team and they will be able to guide you through this.

## Functional Skills Assessment Team

Our Functional Skills Assessment team is responsible for the production of papers, the assessment of externally assessed units and the administration of internally assessed units and can be contacted on via <http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/contact-us.html>