

# Examiners' Report

February 2017

Pearson Edexcel Functional Skills  
Mathematics Level 1 (FSM01)

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## **Introduction**

### **General comments**

It has been pleasing to see that the majority of learners engaged with all questions, with a significantly smaller number of blank responses compared to previous examination series. This implies that learners were relatively well prepared to sit this Level 1 paper.

The majority of learners presented their calculations throughout each question but there were a few instances where these were not clearly organised or were missing completely. This led to some learners missing process marks. Learners should be encouraged to present all of their calculations, however simple, in a clear and organised way.

It is critical that learners state their decision clearly (Yes or No usually suffice) as a mark in the majority of questions is awarded for a correct conclusion that is accompanied by accurate figures. Accurate figures also require learners to include the units they are working with, i.e. cm, £, minutes etc.

Learners engaged with a variety of contexts and responded to tasks well in most cases. However, there were some instances where learners misinterpreted the results of their calculations and their final answer was incorrect. Learners should be encouraged to carefully consider the context, practise extracting essential information (highlighting key data is advisable) and focus on what the demand asks for when making their final decision. They should also develop knowledge on how to show a check of their calculations, especially when explicitly asked to do so.

## **Section A**

### **Question 1a**

In this question, many learners lost marks because they did not use a calculator and/or did not show the process they used. Learners should be reminded to show each step of their working.

### **Question 1b**

Many learners had difficulty dealing with the fraction in this question. Most knew they had to multiply and divide but were confused about which numbers to use. If they were aware that  $\frac{3}{4}$  is equal to 0.75 they scored more marks.

Not all learners checked their working.

### **Question 2a**

Some learners stated the method they use to find the mean but did not write out the calculation so did not gain process marks if anything was incorrect. Learners should be reminded to show each step of their working. There is some confusion between mean, mode, median and range. Learners need to be shown a few ways to remember which average is which.

### **Question 2b**

Many learners found the correct total needed for this ratio question but did not divide and/or multiply by the correct numbers to score any further marks. Learners need practice picking out the required information from word questions

### **Question 3**

This question required learners to not only know about probability, but also to read and interpret the question carefully. Learners need to practise working out the likelihood of things happening using every day and real life examples. They should also be given the opportunity to practise using the vocabulary of likelihood.

## **Section B**

### **Question 4**

Learners can demonstrate their ability to work with time. Again, evidence of process was helpful here. Two routes were available but many only worked with one and failed to spot the shorter journey. Some may find drawing on the given diagram helpful to follow their route and ensure all stages are included.

### **Question 5a**

Many learners calculated the perimeter for the shape despite the question clearly asking for the area and referring to floor covering. Learners should be offered several ways to remember the difference between area and perimeter and the processes to calculate them.

### **Question 5b**

Most learners dealt with the constraints and identified the correct item. It might help some to choose the correct answer by crossing out the eliminated options before making a final decision.

### **Question 5c**

Most learners answered this decimal calculation accurately.

### **Question 6a**

Learners continue to lose marks for labelling graphs inadequately. They often fail to give a linear scale and lose plotting marks as well as a result. Learners should work on using an appropriate linear scale and plotting accurately. The range of the scale needs to cover all numbers plotted and the labels should detail the units required.

### **Question 6b**

Learners are generally able to make a valid comment about the graph. It may help learners to practise commenting on a range of graphs and to identify and describe general trends in the data.

## **Section C**

### **Question 7**

Learners need to be able to calculate percentages consistently accurately and clearly demonstrate how they do this. Many lost marks when using a build-up method without showing full process and giving incorrect answers thus losing process marks.

Not all learners checked their working.

### **Question 8**

Few learners used the working page to plan their diagrams or calculate using scale or measures. Those that did were able to demonstrate working in consistent units. Most learners could meet at least one of the constraints. It may help learners to shade the areas in that cannot be used meaning that any subsequent drawing is in the right place.

### **Question 9**

The most common error here was incorrect conversion of kilograms to grams which lead to incorrect figures. Learners still need more practice converting between units in the same number systems.

### **Question 10a and 10b**

Most learners could enter data into the two-way table correctly and identify and work with data from the table accurately.

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