

Functional Skills Reform Update 2

Welcome to the second update on the reform of Functional Skills. Since the last update, a lot has happened, with the Department of Education releasing the finalised subject content documents for [English](#) and [Mathematics](#) and Ofqual publishing their revised conditions and requirements for [English](#) and [Mathematics](#).

In this issue we will be looking at the headline changes for both English and Mathematics and how Pearson are engaging with our customers on the reform.

Headline Changes

There have been changes to the subject content across all levels for both English and Mathematics, which has to be assessed. There have also been changes in the way awarding organisations can assess the content.

Ofqual have produced guidance on the minimum and maximum assessment times (see below).

	Minimum times		Maximum times	
	Proposed	Change from current	Proposed	Change from current
English Levels 1 & 2	2hrs	n/a	3hrs	n/a
English Entry Levels	1hr 30mins	+30mins	2hrs	n/a
Mathematics Levels 1 & 2	1hr 45mins	+15mins	2hrs 30mins	+30mins
Mathematics Entry Levels	1hr 15mins	+15mins	1hr 45mins	+15mins

Taken from: [Decisions on Functional Skills reform](#)

There will be no changes in the availability of assessment, and Pearson will continue to offer both on demand onscreen and on demand paper based assessments.

English

There is new content across all the levels for Functional Skills English. Dictionaries and spell checks will no longer be allowed on writing papers at all levels.

There will be discrete spelling tests at all Entry Levels. These will test words from the DfE subject content list. Pearson will set the tests.

Learners will continue to be allowed to use British Sign Language for their Speaking and Listening assessment if desired.

Mathematics

There is new content across all the levels for Functional Skills Mathematics.

For the first time, there will be a calculator and a non-calculator paper at all levels. This split will be 75% / 25% (as decided by Ofqual).

In addition, underpinning skills and problem solving skills will be assessed discreetly. Again, this split will be 75% / 25% (as decided by Ofqual).

We have decided on the following interpretation of what problem solving is:

- Be presented in a relevant context whether the mathematics is used functionally or not
- Be presented in such a way that the learner should find their own solution without explicit guidance

How we are engaging with our customers on the reform

Contexts

Working with a number of practitioners we've reviewed the contexts we use for our Functional Skills assessments to understand what contexts your learners find engaging, and we're working to incorporate this feedback into our SAMs and future test papers.

Network Events

We ran 12 events across the country in June and July, looking specifically at the reforms, allowing us to get feedback from practitioners on our assessments and our proposed support offer moving forward. We will be running further events later in the year.

Trialling of the New Assessments

We are trialling our Sample Assessment Materials with learners to ensure they are accessible.

Work on Administration

We are working with Quality Nominees and Exams Officers to ensure that the administrative burden continues to be minimal with new Functional Skills assessments.

Trialling of Onscreen Updates

We are working with learners to ensure the best functionality for our onscreen platform.