

Functional Skills Qualifications

Specifications

English

Level 1 (4720) and Level 2 (4725)
For exams November 2010 onwards
For certification November 2010 onwards





Functional Skills

Specifications

English

Level 1 (4720)

and Level 2 (4725)

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1 Introduction



1a Why choose AQA?

We're proud to be one of the UK's largest exam boards with 3.5 million students sitting their exams with us in any given year.

As an independent registered charity, we invest all our income in the running of our examinations and in research and development to improve our qualifications and services. We focus on promoting education for the benefit of the public, drawing on years of experience of setting and marking public exams.

We are committed to delivering a straightforward and simple teaching experience, in a manageable timescale.

Why choose AQA's Functional Skills Qualifications?

Over the past three years, we have worked with over 21 000 students and their teachers, in more than 500 schools to refine and develop our Functional Skills qualifications which:

- can help students to achieve their full potential
- are relevant for today's challenges
- are manageable for schools and colleges
- are accessible to all ability levels
- are affordable and value for money.

We work closely with teachers to make sure the introduction of a new qualification is straightforward,

providing free resources to help them get ready to teach, and ongoing support throughout the life of the qualifications. Other benefits of choosing our Functional Skills qualifications include:

- access to subject departments
- training for teachers, including practical teaching strategies and methods, presented by senior examiners
- individual support for controlled assessment of Functional English speaking, listening and communication
- 24-hour support through our website and Ask AQA – an online searchable bank of frequently asked questions
- past question papers and mark schemes
- a wide range of printed and electronic resources
- free online results analysis, with Enhanced Results Analysis.

We are an educational charity focused on the needs of the learner. All our income is spent on improving the quality of our specifications, examinations and support services. We don't aim to profit from education, we want you to.

If you are already a customer we thank you for your support. If you are thinking of joining us we look forward to welcoming you.

1b Why choose Functional Skills English?

- These Functional Skills qualifications allow candidates to demonstrate the fundamental applied skills in English that help people to gain the most from life, learning and work. Candidates should be entered for either Level 1 or Level 2 when they can demonstrate all the skills standards outlined at that level.
- The specifications have been developed in consultation with practising teachers and subject associations.
- AQA's Functional English qualifications have a clear component structure with reading, writing and speaking, listening and communication being assessed in separate tests or tasks. This means that candidates can take the components in different examination series or all in the same series.
- There are unlimited re-sit opportunities for candidates who do not achieve the required level at the first attempt.
- AQA's Functional Skills qualifications are available four times each academic year in November, January, March and June. This gives you the flexibility to plan your course to meet the needs of your curriculum and candidates.
- AQA's tests and tasks are based on a range of real life texts, contexts and scenarios in a skills based approach to Functional English.
- AQA's reading test includes multiple choice questions. This means that candidates' reading abilities do not have to be mediated through their writing abilities.
- An on-screen option will be available from June 2011 as an alternative to the paper based reading test. This option may be more accessible for candidates who are familiar with reading on-screen.
- AQA's writing tasks allow candidates to demonstrate their ability to write for different audiences and purposes in various types of writing they will have to do at home, in educational contexts or at work.
- Speaking, listening and communication is assessed by controlled assessment, allowing you to set tasks that will engage your students and to make cross curricular links, for example in drawing on candidates' principal learning or in topics from another subject area. Speaking, listening and communication tasks can also be assessed for GCSE English or GCSE English Language.
- Functional English Level 1 offers progression from Entry Level Functional Skills and progression to Functional English Level 2. Functional English at both levels offers preparation for the functional elements of GCSE English or GCSE English Language.



1c How do I start using these specifications?

- You need to register at www.aqa.org.uk/aqa-english-resource-zone/aqa-english-resource-zone-functional-english to ensure that you receive regular updates and have access to mark schemes, past question papers, a whole range of teacher support materials and receive details of teacher support meetings.
- Once you have decided to enter candidates you need to tell us so we can make sure that you get all the material you need for the examinations. This is very important where examination material is sent to you before the final entry deadline. You can let us know by filling in the appropriate 'Intention to Enter' and 'Estimated Entry' forms. If your centre is registered on e-AQA you will receive an email prompting you to submit entry information online. If you are not e-AQA registered we will send copies to your exams officer. Both forms can be downloaded from our website (www.aqa.org.uk/admin/p_entries.php).
- If your centre has not used AQA for any examinations in the past, please contact our centre approval team at centreapproval@aqa.org.uk.

1d How can I find out more?

You can choose to find out more about these specifications or the services that AQA offer in a number of ways.

Ask AQA

You have 24-hour access to useful information and answers to the most commonly asked questions at www.aqa.org.uk/askaqa.php.

If the answer to your question is not available, you can submit a query through **Ask AQA** for our team. We will respond within 2 working days.

Speak to your subject team

You can talk directly to the Functional Skills English subject team about these specifications either by emailing functionalenglish@aqa.org.uk or by calling 0161 958 3856.

Teacher Support Meetings

Details of the full range of our Teacher Support meetings are available on our website at www.aqa.org.uk/support/teachers.php

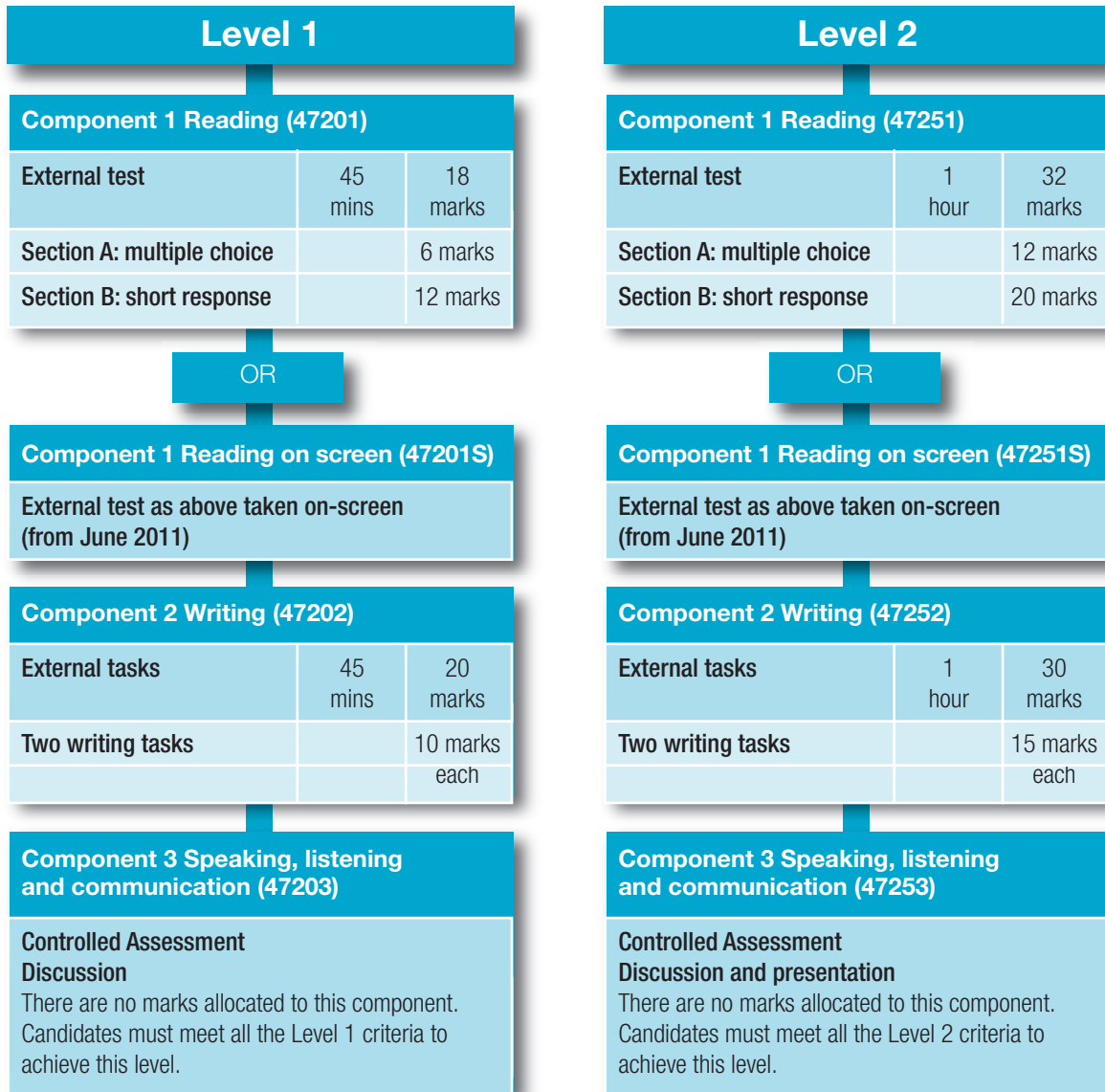
There is also a link to our fast and convenient online booking system for Teacher Support meetings at events.aqa.org.uk/ebooking.

If you need to contact the Teacher Support team, you can call us on 01483 477860 or e-mail us at teachersupport@aqa.org.uk.

Latest information online

You can find out more including the latest news, how to register to use Enhanced Results Analysis, support and downloadable resources on our website at www.aqa.org.uk.

2 Specification at a Glance



All of the components are equally weighted. Candidates must achieve the desired level in each component in order to be certificated at that level.

2a Summary of Assessment

The assessment:

- provides realistic contexts, scenarios and problems drawn from everyday life, the community, the workplace or educational settings
- specifies tasks that are relevant to the context
- requires application of knowledge, skills and understanding for a purpose
- requires problem solving
- assesses process skills and the outcome of their application in different contexts.

3 Subject Content

The assessment components assess the skills standards and content and range set out below and published in Ofqual's Functional Skills criteria for English.

3a Component 1: Reading

Reading Level 1

Skill standard	Coverage and range
Read and understand a range of straightforward texts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Identify the main points and ideas and how they are presented in a variety of texts R1.1 ■ Read and understand texts in detail R1.2 ■ Utilise information contained in texts R1.3 ■ Identify suitable responses to texts R1.4
	In more than one type of text.

Reading Level 2

Skill standard	Coverage and range
Select, read, understand and compare texts and use them to gather information, ideas, arguments and opinions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Select and use different types of texts to obtain and utilise relevant information R2.1 ■ Read and summarise, succinctly, information/ideas from different sources R2.2 ■ Identify the purposes of texts and comment on how meaning is conveyed R2.3 ■ Detect point of view, implicit meaning and/or bias R2.4 ■ Analyse texts in relation to audience needs and consider suitable responses R2.5
	In three or more texts.

This component assesses candidates' ability to read and understand a range of texts. The texts are drawn from real life contexts and include, for example, instructional, informative and persuasive texts such as leaflets, reports or short articles.

Section A asks candidates to read one source and respond to six multiple choice questions at Level 1 and read two sources and respond to twelve multiple choice questions at Level 2. Each question specifically addresses one of the coverage and range statements within the skill standard for reading at that level. This section allows candidates to demonstrate

their understanding of texts no matter what their writing ability.

Section B asks candidates to read one further source and respond to questions with short written responses that demonstrate their understanding of the source text. In this section, candidates are expected to comment on how they would respond to the text in a real life context (i.e. to identify the purpose of the text and its anticipated response from readers). They will be expected to utilise information to perform a short task. They are also expected to comment on presentational features.

3b Component 2: Writing

Writing Level 1

Skill standard	Coverage and range
Write a range of texts to communicate information, ideas and opinions, using formats and styles suitable for their purpose and audience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Write clearly and coherently, including an appropriate level of detail W1.1 ■ Present information in a logical sequence W1.2 ■ Use language, format and structure suitable for purpose and audience W1.3
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Use correct grammar, including correct and consistent use of tense W1.4 ■ Ensure written work contains generally accurate punctuation and spelling and that meaning is clear W1.5
	In more than one type of text.

3

Writing Level 2

Skill standard	Coverage and range
Write a range of texts, including extended written documents, communicating information, ideas and opinions, effectively and persuasively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Present information/ideas concisely, logically, and persuasively W2.1 ■ Present information on complex subjects clearly and concisely W2.2 ■ Use a range of writing styles for different purposes W2.3 ■ Use a range of sentence structures, including complex sentences, and paragraphs to organise written communication effectively W2.4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Punctuate written text using commas, apostrophes and inverted commas accurately W2.5 ■ Ensure written work is fit for purpose and audience, with accurate spelling and grammar that support clear meaning in a range of text types. W2.6
	W2.5 and W2.6 must account for 40% of the total assessment in this component.

This component assesses candidates' ability to write a range of texts to communicate information, opinions and ideas. The tasks are based on real life contexts and scenarios and will include, for example, instructional, informative and persuasive texts, for

personal, practical and public purposes. The purpose, audience and genre of the required response are specified.

Candidates respond to two tasks. Tasks will include text for letters, emails, notices, leaflets and handouts.

3c Component 3: Speaking, listening and communication

Speaking, listening and communication Level 1

Skill standard	Coverage and range
Take full part in formal and informal discussions and exchanges that include unfamiliar subjects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Make relevant and extended contributions to discussions, allowing for and responding to others' input SL1.1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Prepare for and contribute to the formal discussion of ideas and opinions SL1.2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Make different kinds of contributions to discussions SL1.3
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Present information/points of view clearly and in appropriate language SL1.4

3

Speaking, listening and communication Level 2

Skill standard	Coverage and range
Make a range of contributions to discussions in a range of contexts, including those that are unfamiliar, and make effective presentations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Consider complex information and give a relevant, cogent response in appropriate language SL2.1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Present information and ideas clearly and persuasively to others SL2.2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Adapt contributions to suit audience, purpose and situation SL2.3
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Make significant contributions to discussions, taking a range of roles and helping to move discussion forward SL2.4

This component is assessed by controlled assessment.

This component assesses candidates' ability to participate in a discussion at Level 1 and to participate in a discussion and a presentation at Level 2.

The term discussion is used to mean the spoken exchange of information, ideas or opinions between two or more people in a formal or informal context.

The terms *formality* and *informality* belong to a sliding scale and are not absolute terms.

Formality in a discussion is likely to involve candidates discussing a serious topic and reporting back on their findings. They will therefore come across quite complex vocabulary in source material and will need to use quite complex vocabulary in their contributions. They will also need to present their

ideas in a serious manner, being careful to respect the turn being taken by others.

Informal discussion will have less rigid structures and less structured purposes. It will be the exchange of ideas between equals who are likely to share an interest in the topic under discussion. Presentation of ideas will be less driven by the need to take careful turns, and vocabulary will be varied, including perhaps regional and other variations.

The term *presentation* is used to mean an extended piece of talk from an individual. The talk should be informative and/or persuasive.

Candidates will take part in more than one discussion and more than one presentation in different contexts. Assessment is based on candidates' performance across the component and should be recorded on the Candidate Record Form (Appendix F).

Speaking, listening and communication Controlled Assessment Advisers are available to give advice on all aspects of the controlled assessment. A rota of advisory visits will include advice on marking of candidates' performance, task setting and record keeping.

Task Setting

The following examples offer guidance on the nature of tasks to be undertaken and you will then set tasks that meet the needs of your candidates and enable a variety of approaches.

Possible discussion tasks for Level 1 include:

- a problem solving activity which encourages a group to discuss and explore different options or points of view and negotiate an outcome. An example task might involve a local issue, ideally a 'real' one, such as an environmental issue. A simulation could involve prioritising a fixed sum of money among various charities. This would constitute a formal task.
- discussions which require the group to interact with a third party (maybe an unknown adult). An example would be a discussion with an employer about the preparations needed before going on a work placement. This would constitute a formal task.
- a discussion of a topical issue, which could be in group format with discussion among a number of participants. Participants would be expected to listen and respond to each others' views. This could be done either formally or informally.
- a group discussion based on a review of a film, book, musical event etc. This would involve listening and responding to others as well as the candidate providing their own views. This would constitute an informal task.

Possible discussion tasks for Level 2 include:

- a group activity which requires the planning of an event or trip. An example would be to plan a trip to London for a group of colleagues based on various promotional literature which is made available. This would be a formal discussion.
- discussions which require the group to interact with a third party (typically an unknown adult). An example would be a discussion with a site manager about ways of improving the working environment within a given context. This would be a formal discussion.

- a group discussion of an issue such as the use of surveillance cameras in the local area. Participants would be expected to listen and respond to others' views. This could be undertaken either formally with a concluding report, or informally.
- a group discussion based on current social and cultural issues arising from topics such as celebrity culture, reality television etc. This would involve listening and responding to others as well as the candidate providing their own views. This would be an informal discussion.

Possible presentation tasks might include:

- a talk on an area of interest. This would need a suitable focus, ie 'Exeter's Day at Wembley' rather than 'Football' and may or may not include formal questions.
- an explanation of a specific process. How to do something, which could be technical or could be more social in its focus. How to book a holiday online, and the choices you face, might be an example, which could be accompanied by an online demonstration.
- an individual review, giving a review or account of a film, book, musical event etc to the rest of the class. This could take the form of a simulated radio/TV programme such as Mark Kermode on Radio 5. It could be recorded for a 'podcast'.
- an individual presentation, such as a request to the local council for a grant for a suitable cause in the neighbourhood. This could involve unknown adults as the audience. There would be an element of role play here, but the main focus would be on the quality of persuasion and argument. The presentation could include use of IT.
- a paired presentation could do any of the above tasks, with each member of the pair taking a clearly defined role.
- a speech in a debate. These should be relatively brief in terms of time. The subjects under debate are often the most successful when linked to issues of current interest. Again they could simulate a TV current affairs programme with more than one student involved at the same time.
- summarising a group discussion, synthesising points of view and perhaps giving a personal view too.

Preparation and planning

Assessment can take place at any point during the course of study.

Having introduced relevant material and studied relevant examples of how speech is used in different contexts:

- you should give candidates the relevant task
- you may wish to provide stimulus materials for group discussions
- you are advised to give the candidates chance to practise speaking, listening and communication in similar contexts to that in which they will be assessed and to prepare ideas after you have given them the task.

You may give feedback to individual candidates during the planning phase.

Task Taking

Candidates complete their discussion or presentation under formal supervision. During task taking, the supervisor may provide limited guidance to candidates. The Component 3 record form allows teachers to record details of activities undertaken and brief notes on any guidance given to the candidate.

The assessment of speaking, listening and communication will take place at different times over the duration of the course. Candidates will need to be informed that assessment is taking place, but clearly all members of a class will not be assessed at the same time.

Candidates must be assessed by a teacher either directly at the time of the response or by viewing an electronic visual recording of a candidate's response.

Prompts or visual slides may be used in addition to any resources you provide.

Task Marking

Candidates will be working with others during the discussion task but will be assessed on their individual performances. Candidates may also work with others during the presentation but will be assessed on their individual performances.

You must judge all controlled assessments using the criteria published in Appendix A of this specification. You should use your judgement to select and apply the criteria appropriately and fairly to the work of candidates.

Candidates should be awarded the appropriate level if they meet the requirements of the descriptors, making allowance for balancing strengths and weaknesses within each response.

Controlled assessment will be moderated by AQA according to the procedures outlined in Section 7.

4 Scheme of Assessment

4a Aims

Functional Skills courses based on these specifications should help people to gain the most out of life, learning and work.

The skills are learning tools that enable people to:

- apply their knowledge, skills and understanding in order to participate and progress in everyday life, education, training and employment
- engage competently and confidently with others
- solve problems in both familiar and unfamiliar situations
- develop personally and professionally as positive citizens who can actively contribute to society.

4b Skill standards

The assessment will assess the Skill standards in the context of the coverage and range set out in Section 3 (Subject Content).

Weighting of Skills standards for Functional Skills English Level 1 and Level 2

The table below shows the approximate weighting of each of the Skills standards in the Functional Skills English components.

Assessment Objectives	Unit weightings (%)			Overall weighting (%)
	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3	
Speaking, listening and communication			33.3	33.3
Reading	33.3			33.3
Writing		33.3		33.3
Overall weighting of units (%)	33.3	33.3	33.3	100

4c National criteria

These specifications comply with:

- the Functional Skills Criteria for English including the rules for controlled assessment
- the Functional Skills Qualification Criteria
- the Arrangements for the Statutory Regulation of External Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland: Common Criteria
- the requirements for qualifications to provide access to Levels 1 and 2 of the National Qualification Framework.

4d Prior learning requirements

There are no prior learning requirements.

However, any requirements set for entry to a course based on this specification are at your centre's discretion.

4e Equality, access and inclusion

Functional Skills are those intrinsic to English, Mathematics and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) that enable learners to gain the most from life, learning and work.

The Functional Skills pilot awarding organisations worked with the regulators to finalise the Functional Skills criteria for all three subjects. The criteria were reviewed to see whether any of the skills or knowledge needed by the subjects presented a possible difficulty to any candidates, whatever their ethnic background, religion/belief, gender, age, disability or sexual orientation. If there were difficulties, the criteria were reviewed again to make sure that such tests of specific competences were only included if they were important to the subject. The findings were discussed with groups who represented the interests of a diverse range of candidates during an extensive consultation exercise.

When designing Functional Skills specifications and assessments we have ensured that all materials:

- provide fair and equal access to all candidates regardless of their ethnic background, religion/belief, gender, age, disability or sexual orientation
- provide a reliable measure of a candidate's abilities in line with the requirements of the criteria to ensure that the qualification is not devalued in any way
- maximise inclusion but minimise the need to make access arrangements/reasonable adjustments or exemptions.

Speaking, listening and communication

Speaking, listening and communication within Functional Skills qualifications are defined as non-written communication, normally conducted face-to-face.

In exceptional circumstances, assessment may take place remotely, provided that the medium through which remote assessment takes place:

- does not create barriers to achievement and success

- enables candidates to demonstrate achievement against the full range of standards using the full range of permitted strategies

- meets the security requirements specified in criterion 58f of "The statutory regulation of external qualifications" (QCA/04/1293).

The term 'speaking, listening and communication' as used by these standards is intended to be interpreted in a broadly inclusive way and is not intended to create any unnecessary barriers to candidates with speech or hearing impairment.

The needs of individual candidates will vary but as guidance, the term should be interpreted as meaning communication, discussion and presentation that:

- can include use of sign language (e.g. British Sign Language, sign-supported English) provided this is made accessible to all participants in the discussion. (It is recognised that BSL is a language in its own right and not a form of English. BSL is, however, permitted as an alternative to English for the assessment of speaking, listening and communication where BSL is the candidate's normal way of communicating in the contexts described by the standards. No other languages are permitted as alternatives to English)
- can include access to augmentative speech equipment and such software as constitutes the candidate's normal way of working
- does not depend solely on the use of written language or require the individual/s with whom the candidate is communicating to be able to read (as these skills are covered by the requirements for reading and writing).

Reading

Reading within Functional Skills qualifications is defined as the independent decoding and understanding of written language and text in a purposeful context.

'Text' is defined as materials that include independent decoding and understanding of written language and the use of words that are written, printed, on screen or presented using Braille.

As a reasonable adjustment, candidates who are classed as disabled under the terms of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and use assistive technology as their normal way of reading can demonstrate that they are able to independently meet the requirements of the reading standards through use of screen reader software.

A human reader cannot be used to demonstrate the requirements of the standards as this does not meet the requirement for independence. As a last resort, an exemption from the reading requirements can be requested for candidates with disabilities who cannot use assistive technology.

Writing

Writing within Functional Skills qualifications is defined as the independent construction of written text to communicate in a purposeful context.

'Text' is defined as materials that include the use of words that are written, printed, on screen or presented using Braille, and which are presented in a way that is accessible for the intended audience.

As a reasonable adjustment, candidates who are classed as disabled under the terms of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and use assistive technology as their normal way of producing written texts can demonstrate that they are able to independently meet the requirements of the writing standards through use of a computer and appropriate software.

A human scribe cannot be used to demonstrate the requirements of the standards, as this does not meet the requirement for independence. As a last resort, an exemption from the writing requirements can be requested for candidates with disabilities who cannot use assistive technology.



5 Administration

5a Availability of assessment components and certification

Examinations and certification for Level 1 and Level 2 are available for the first time in November 2010 and then every January, March, June and November thereafter throughout the life of the specification.

	Availability of components			Availability of qualification
	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3	FS English
November 2010	✓	✓	✓	✓
January 2011	✓	✓	✓	✓
March 2011	✓	✓	✓	✓
June 2011 and after	✓	✓	✓	✓

5b Entries

Please check the current version of **Entry Procedures and Codes** for up-to-date entry procedures. You should use the following entry codes for the components and for certification.

Component 1 Reading Level 1 – 47201 (paper) or 47201S (on-screen)

Component 1 Reading Level 2 – 47251 (paper) or 47251S (on-screen)

Component 2 Writing Level 1 – 47202

Component 2 Writing Level 2 – 47252

Component 3 Speaking, listening and communication Level 1 – 47203

Component 3 Speaking, listening and communication Level 2 – 47253

Functional Skills English certification Level 1 – 4721

Functional Skills English certification Level 2 – 4726

Candidates should be entered for the overall qualification award at or after the series in which they complete the three components.

5c Private candidates

These specifications are available to private candidates under certain conditions. Because of the controlled assessment of speaking, listening and communication, candidates must attend an AQA centre, which will supervise and mark the controlled

assessment. A copy of the **Supplementary Guidance for Private Candidates** (for controlled assessment specification with practical activities) can be downloaded from <http://store.aqa.org.uk/admin/library/AQA-PRIVCAND-GUIDE.PDF>

5d Access arrangements, reasonable adjustments and special consideration

Access arrangements/reasonable adjustments are allowed for candidates with special needs and disabilities to help them access the assessments as long as the demands of the assessment are not changed. Such arrangements must not give an unfair advantage or disadvantage compared with candidates not using the arrangements. Because of this, most candidates will be able to access any part of the Functional Skills assessments.

We have worked closely with the regulators to determine which access arrangements/reasonable adjustments and exemptions can be allowed in each Functional Skills qualification to ensure maximum inclusion whilst maintaining the integrity of the qualifications. These decisions can be found in the regulator's Functional Skills qualifications criteria within the Inclusion statements (Appendix C) for each subject.

We have taken note of the equality and discrimination legislation and the interests of minority groups in developing and administering these specifications.

We follow the guidelines in the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) document: *Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration: General and Vocational Qualifications*. This document gives guidance to centres on how these arrangements should be administered. It is available to centres via the JCQ website (www.jcq.org.uk) or by following the link from our website (www.aqa.org.uk).

Access arrangements

We can arrange for candidates with special needs and disabilities to access an assessment. These arrangements must be made **before** the examination. For example, we can produce a Braille paper for a candidate with sight problems.

Reasonable adjustments

An access arrangement which meets the needs of a particular disabled candidate would be a reasonable adjustment for that candidate. For example a Braille paper would be a reasonable adjustment for a Braille reader but not for a candidate who did not read Braille. Equality legislation requires us to make reasonable adjustments to remove or lessen any disadvantage affecting a disabled candidate.

Special consideration

We can give special consideration to candidates who have had a temporary illness, injury or serious problem such as death of a relative, at the time of the examination. We can only do this after the examination.

The Examinations Officer at the centre should apply online for access arrangements and special consideration by following the eAQA link from our website (www.aqa.org.uk).

5e Examination language

We will only provide components for these specifications in English.

5f Qualification titles

Qualifications based on these specifications are:

- AQA Functional Skills qualification in English at Level 1 and AQA Functional Skills qualification in English at Level 2

5g Certification and reporting results

Where a candidate's performance is sufficient to meet the level requirements, a Functional Skills qualification pass certificate is awarded. No grades are issued with respect to these qualifications.

Candidates entered for Functional Skills in English are entered at either Level 1 or Level 2, but not both.

Candidates will either be awarded a pass at the level they are entered for or will be recorded as 'U' (unclassified).

5h Re-sits and how long component results remain available to count towards certification

Component results remain available to count towards certification within the shelf life of the specification, whether or not they have already been used.

There is no limit to the number of times that a candidate may re-sit individual assessment components. The better result for each component

will count towards the final qualification. Candidates can re-sit the qualification as many times as they want to.

Candidates' grades are based on the work they submit for assessment.

6 Controlled Assessment administration

The Head of Centre is responsible for making sure that controlled assessment work is conducted in line with our instructions and JCQ instructions.

6a Authenticating that controlled assessment work is genuine

To meet the requirements of the specifications, we need the following:

- **Candidates** must sign the Candidate Record Form to confirm their individual performance in the oral work marked by the assessor
- **Teachers and assessors** must confirm on the Candidate Record Form that the work marked is only that done by that candidate and was conducted in line with the conditions in the specification document (authentication declaration)
- **Centres** must give a fail if candidates did not make an individual contribution to the oral assessment.

You should complete a Candidate Record Form for each candidate. The assessor must sign the declaration that the work is genuine.

If you have doubts about signing the authentication declaration, you should follow these guidance points:

- if you believe that a candidate had additional assistance and this is acceptable within the guidelines for the relevant specification, you should award a level which covers only the candidate's achievement without any help. (You should sign the authentication declaration and give information on the relevant form.)
- if you cannot sign the authentication declaration, the candidate's work cannot be accepted for assessment.

If there is no evidence that the work has been authenticated, we will award a fail.

6b Malpractice

You should let candidates know about our malpractice regulations:

Candidates must **not**:

- give other candidates access to, or the use of, their own independently-sourced research material or prompt notes for use in the discussion (this does not mean that candidates cannot lend their resources to another candidate, but that candidates should be stopped from copying other candidates' notes).

These actions are considered malpractice, for which a penalty (for example being disqualified from the exam) will be applied.

If malpractice is suspected, your Examinations Officer should be consulted about the procedure to be followed.

Where you suspect malpractice in controlled assessments after the candidate has signed the declaration of authentication, your Head of Centre must submit full details of the case to us at the earliest opportunity. The form JCQ/M1 should be used. Copies of the form can be found on the JCQ website (<http://www.jcq.org.uk>).

Malpractice in controlled assessments discovered prior to the candidate signing the declaration of authentication need not be reported to us, but should be dealt with in accordance with your centre's internal procedures. We would expect you to treat such cases very seriously. Details of any work which is not the candidate's own must be recorded on the Candidate Record Form or other appropriate place.

6c Teacher standardisation

We will hold standardising meetings for teachers each year, usually in the autumn term, for controlled assessment. At these meetings we will provide support in explaining tasks in context and using the marking criteria. These materials will also be available on-line.

All centres must send a representative to one of the meetings each year. If you have told us you are a new centre, either by sending us an intention to enter

or an estimate of entry, or by contacting the subject team, we will contact you to invite you to a meeting. It is likely that during the lifetime of this specification on-line teacher standardising meetings will be made available as an addition to face-to-face meetings.

AQA also provide a speaking and listening DVD and a commentary demonstrating how candidates are marked against the marking criteria.

6d Internal standardisation of marking

Centres must have consistent marking standards for all candidates. One person must be responsible for ensuring that work has been marked to the same standard, and they need to sign the Centre Declaration Sheet to confirm that internal standardisation has taken place.

Internal standardisation may involve:

- all teachers marking some sample oral assessments and identifying differences in marking standards

- discussing any differences in marking at a training meeting for all teachers involved in the assessment

- referring to reference and archive material, such as the DVD and commentaries from our standardising meetings.

6e Annotation of controlled assessment work

It is a requirement of the specification that teachers marking controlled assessments clearly show how the levels have been awarded in line with the criteria shown in the specification. This helps our advisers to see as precisely as possible where the teacher has identified that candidates have met the criteria in the specification.

As this specification requires the controlled assessment of speaking, listening and communication only, teachers will make comments that refer to the assessment criteria on the Candidate Record Form (CRF).

6f Submitting confirmation of achievement

Confirmation that each candidate has achieved either Level 1 or Level 2 must be sent to us on the mark forms provided, by Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) or electronically by the date given (see www.aqa.org.uk/deadlines.php).

6g Factors affecting individual candidates

You should be able to accept the occasional absence of candidates by making sure they have the chance to make up missed controlled assessments. You may organise an alternative supervised time session for candidates who are absent at the time the centre originally arranged.

Where special help which goes beyond normal learning support is given, use the Candidate Record Form to inform us so that this help can be taken into account.

Candidates who move from one centre to another during the course sometimes need additional help to

meet the requirements of a scheme of controlled assessment work. How this can be dealt with depends on when the move takes place. If it happens early in the course the new centre should be responsible for controlled assessment work. If it happens late in the course it may be possible to accept the assessments made at the previous centre. Centres should contact us as early as possible for advice about appropriate arrangements in individual cases.



7 Moderation

7a Moderation procedures

Centres will normally receive routine advisory visits from an adviser once every three years. The adviser will advise on speaking, listening and communication. The adviser will ask to see a range of candidate performances. Centres must keep the Candidate Record Forms of every candidate entered for this

component under secure conditions and be prepared to show this to the visiting adviser if required.

Additional visits may be triggered if there is any doubt about a centre's accuracy in oral assessment.

7b Consortium arrangements

If you are a consortium of centres with joint teaching arrangements (where candidates from different centres have been taught together but where they are entered through the centre at which they are on roll), you must tell us by filling in the JCQ/CCA form [Application for Centre Consortium Arrangements for centre-assessed work].

You must choose a consortium co-ordinator who can speak to us on behalf of all centres in the consortium.

If there are different co-ordinators for different specifications, a copy of the JCQ/CCA form must be sent in for each specification.

We will allocate the same adviser to each centre in the consortium.

7c Procedures after moderation

When the results are published, we will give centres details of the final levels for the controlled assessment work.

You will receive a report after your advisory visit giving feedback on assessment procedures for speaking, listening and communication within your centre.

Appendices

A Component 3 Controlled Assessment Criteria

Teachers should use their professional judgement to select and apply the criteria appropriately and fairly to the work of the candidates.

Level 1: The candidate must take full part in formal and informal discussions and exchanges that include unfamiliar subjects.

Working towards Level 1

The candidate listens to others and recalls the main features of what they hear. They show some recognition of the functions of formality and of the need to adapt speech depending on your audience and purpose. In particular they:

- listen to discussion
- occasionally make contributions
- express a point of view, using generally appropriate language.

Achieving Level 1

The candidate speaks clearly, adapting talk to audience and purpose. They recognise the different levels of formality required, depending on audience and purpose. They listen carefully and respond to others' ideas and views. In particular they:

- prepare for and contribute to the discussion of ideas and opinions
- make relevant and extended contributions to the discussion, allowing for and responding to others' input
- make varied contributions to the discussion
- present information/points of view clearly and in appropriate language.

Each of the four bullet points in Achieving Level 1 should be evident in both a formal and an informal discussion before Level 1 can be awarded.

Level 2: The candidate must make a range of contributions to discussions in a range of contexts, including those that are unfamiliar, and make effective presentations.

Working towards Level 2

The candidate speaks clearly adapting talk to audience and purpose. They recognise the different levels of formality required, depending on audience and purpose. They listen carefully and respond to others' ideas and views. In particular they:

- prepare for and contribute to the formal discussion of ideas and opinions
- make relevant and extended contributions to the discussion, allowing for and responding to others' input
- make varied contributions to the discussion
- present information/points of view clearly and in appropriate language.

Achieving Level 2

The candidate makes relevant contributions to talk and is able to organise speech in collaborative context varying the formality of delivery as appropriate. They listen attentively and make responses that show understanding. They make a range of contributions to discussion and make an effective presentation. They are increasingly aware of the need for and the use of formal vocabulary and tone of voice. In particular they:

- consider complex information and give a relevant, cogent response in appropriate language
- present information and ideas clearly and persuasively to others
- adapt contributions to suit audience, purpose and situation
- make significant contributions to discussions, taking a range of roles and helping to move discussion forward.

Each of the four bullet points in Achieving Level 2 should be evident in both a formal and informal discussion before Level 2 can be awarded.

B Level descriptors

Ofqual have not produced any level descriptors for Functional English as it is a pass/fail qualification and as such, the criteria make clear what is required to warrant a pass within the 'skill standards'.



C Spiritual, moral, ethical, social, legislative, sustainable development, economic and cultural issues, and health and safety considerations

We have taken great care to make sure that any wider issues (for example, spiritual, moral, ethical, social, legal, sustainable development, economic and cultural issues), including those relevant to the education of students at Key Stage 3 and 4, have been taken into account when preparing these specifications. They will only form part of the assessment requirements where they are relevant to the specific content of these specifications and have been identified in Section 3.

European Dimension

We have taken the 1988 Resolution of the Council of the European Community into account when preparing these specifications and associated specimen components.

Environmental Education

We have taken the 1988 Resolution of the Council of the European Community and the Report 'Environmental Responsibility: An Agenda for Further and Higher Education' 1993 into account when preparing these specifications and associated specimen components.

Avoiding bias

We have taken great care to avoid bias of any kind when preparing these specifications and specimen components.



D Overlaps with other qualifications

From 2010 the Functional Skills Standards will form a significant part of new specifications in GCSEs in English, Mathematics and ICT.

Underpinning Functional Skills for all England's young people is their inclusion within the Key Stage 3 curriculum (11–14), and the embedding of the skills within the revised programmes of study for Key Stage 4 (14–16). The Key Stage 4 Programme of Study can be found at <http://curriculum.qca.org.uk/key-stages-3-and-4/subjects/key-stage-4/english/programme-of-study/index.aspx>

GCSE English and GCSE English Language

53.33% of the GCSE English and English Language specifications are Functional. In preparing schemes of work and delivery, the Functional Skills Standards will be covered in the following GCSE Units:

Functional Skills English	GCSE English
Component 3 Speaking, listening and communication	Unit 2 13.33%
Component 1 Reading	Unit 1 20%
Component 2 Writing	Unit 1 20%

Candidates preparing for this specification will therefore cover the functional elements required for GCSE English and English Language.

Note that centres entering candidates for both Functional Skills English and GCSE English or GCSE English Language can use the same assessment opportunity to assess speaking, listening and communication. Centres must assess the activities against both sets of relevant criteria.

E Achievement and attainment

Functional Skills have point scores for the Assessment and Attainment Tables. The confirmed points allocations are:

- Level 2 = 23 points
- Level 1 = 12.5 points
- Entry 3 = 7 points
- Entry 2 = 6 points
- Entry 1 = 5 points

(The points for levels 1 and 2 are **in addition** to points allocated for other qualifications such as GCSEs, adult literacy and adult numeracy.)

The School Report Card will set the framework for accountability for schools. The School Report Card Prospectus published on 30 June 2009 included Functional Skills attainment in the minimum set of Key Stage 4 indicators



F Link to the Component 3 Controlled Assessment Candidate Record Forms

www.aqa.org.uk/coursework



Functional Skills Qualification in English Level 1 (4720) and Level 2 (4725)
from 2010 onwards.

Qualification Accreditation Number Level 1: 500/8701/0

Qualification Accreditation Number Level 1: 500/9126/8

Every specification is assigned a national classification code indicating the subject area to which it belongs. The classification code for this specification is HD2.

Centres should be aware that candidates who enter for more than one Functional Skills qualification with the same classification code will have only one grade counted for the purpose of the School and College Performance Tables.

Candidates who have any doubts about their subject combinations should check with the institution to which they wish to progress before embarking on their programmes.

To obtain specification updates, access our searchable bank of frequently asked questions, or to ask us a question, register with Ask AQA:

aqa.org.uk/ask-aqa/register

You can also download a copy of the specification and support materials from our website:

aqa.org.uk/englishzone

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