

Functional Skills Qualifications Specifications English

Entry 1 (4971) Entry 2 (4972) Entry 3 (4973)
For exams November 2011 onwards
For certification November 2011 onwards





Functional Skills

Specifications

English

Entry 1 (4971)

Entry 2 (4972)

Entry 3 (4973)

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Component 2
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Trafford Park
Manchester
M17 1EH

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1 Introduction



1a Why choose AQA?

We are proud to be one of the UK's largest awarding bodies with 3.5million 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
- 24-hour support through our website and Ask AQA – an online searchable bank of frequently asked questions
- past assessment materials
- a wide range of printed and electronic resources.

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 Entry Level Functional English?

- These specifications allow learners 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 this specification when they can demonstrate all the skills standards outlined at the appropriate level.
- These specifications have been developed in consultation with practising teachers and subject associations.
- AQA's Entry Level Functional English specifications have a clear component structure with Reading, Writing and Speaking, Listening and Communication being assessed in separate 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 specifications 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.
- All components at Entry 1, 2 and 3 are assessed by controlled assessment. This allows centres to assess candidates when they feel they are ready.
- Tasks for a particular Entry Level will have synergy in terms of topic area as the tasks for each component at that level will be based around a certain theme.
- Speaking, Listening and Communication allows centres 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 other subject areas. Depending on the level of demand of the task, Speaking, Listening and Communication tasks can also be assessed for GCSE English or GCSE English Language.
- Entry Level Functional English offers progression to Functional Skills Level 1. It also offers preparation for the functional elements of GCSE English or GCSE English Language.
- Entry Level Functional English can be taught alongside the Entry Level Certificate in English. The skills for the two subjects are transferrable and are complementary to each other.

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 past assessment materials, 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 assessments. 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 Examinations 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@aqqa.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@aqqa.org.uk.

Latest information online

You can find out more including the latest news, support and downloadable resources on our website at www.aqa.org.uk



2 Specifications at a Glance

Entry 1

Component 1 Reading

Controlled Assessment Task	45 mins	16 marks
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Component 2 Writing

Controlled Assessment Task	45 mins	16 marks
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Component 3 Speaking, Listening and Communication

Controlled Assessment Discussion	There are no marks allocated to this component. Candidates must meet all the Entry 1 criteria to achieve this level	
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Entry 2

Component 1 Reading

Controlled Assessment Task	45 mins	16 marks
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Component 2 Writing

Controlled Assessment Task	45 mins	16 marks
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Component 3 Speaking, Listening and Communication

Controlled Assessment Discussion	There are no marks allocated to this component. Candidates must meet all the Entry 2 criteria to achieve this level	
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Entry 3

Component 1 Reading

Externally Set Controlled Assessment Task	45 mins	16 marks
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Component 2 Writing

Externally Set Controlled Assessment Task	45 mins	16 marks
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Component 3 Speaking, Listening and Communication

Controlled Assessment 1 informal discussion and 1 formal discussion	There are no marks allocated to this component. Candidates must meet all the Entry 3 criteria to achieve this level	
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All of the components are equally weighted. Candidates must achieve the desired level in each component to be certificated at that level.

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.

A certain theme will run through the Component 1 Reading, Component 2 Writing, and Component 3 Speaking, Listening and Communication, for each level. These themes could change year on year.

There will be a choice of three tasks per component for each level. Teachers may use different tasks and contextualise in different ways for different candidates.



3a Component 1: Reading

Skill Standards	Coverage and Range	Notes
Reading Entry 1		
Read and understand short, simple texts that explain or recount information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read and understand simple regular words and sentences 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand short texts on familiar topics and experiences 	
Reading Entry 2		
Read and understand straightforward texts that explain, inform or recount information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the main events in chronological texts 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read and understand simple instructions and directions 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read and understand high frequency words and words with common spelling patterns 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use knowledge of alphabetical order to locate information 	
Reading Entry 3		
Read and understand the purpose and content of straightforward texts that explain, inform and recount information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the main points of texts 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain specific information through detailed reading 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use organisational features to locate information 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read and understand texts in different formats using strategies/techniques appropriate to the task 	

This component assesses candidates' ability to read and understand straightforward 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.

Task setting

At Entry 1 and Entry 2 candidates will complete one controlled assessment task where they will be expected to demonstrate their understanding of the texts through a series of short, simple tasks. Each year AQA will provide three assessment tasks for Reading at each level. These will be reviewed / replaced annually. Centres are only required to submit one task per candidate. Centres have the option of contextualising the tasks so that candidates are not disadvantaged and to make best use of resources available at the centre. This could mean that centres adapt the tasks provided in the exemplars or that they devise their own tasks. Centres must ensure that contextualisation does not alter the level of assessment or change the skills standards. If a centre is devising their own tasks, then they should compare their own texts and tasks against the exemplars provided by AQA to ensure that the level of assessment and the skills standards have not been changed.

At Entry 3 candidates will complete one externally set controlled assessment task from a choice of three. Centres are able to contextualise by choosing which of the three tasks are most suited to their candidates. They will be expected to understand and obtain information to perform a series of short tasks. They will read three texts and be asked to respond to multiple choice or fixed response questions and also questions with short written responses.

Candidates can only be assessed on a given context for a given task once per year.

Candidates should not be permitted access to the tasks until the final assessment.

Task taking

Tasks should take place under formal supervision. Assessment can take place at any time during the course of study. Candidates must produce work in a period of up to 45 minutes.












The rubrics for Reading tasks at all levels may be read to candidates. However, it is not permissible for the Reading texts at any level to be read to candidates.

Task marking

You must mark the assessment tasks using the marking criteria provided by AQA on the Candidate Record Form for Entry 1 and 2 or the mark scheme for Entry 3. After the first Awards meeting, centres will be informed of existing level boundaries, although these boundaries will be subject to the agreement of AQA's Award of Grades committee and may consequently change. Centres should therefore mark only against the criteria.

You should use your judgement to select and apply the criteria appropriately and fairly to the work of the candidates. At Entry 1 and 2 you should also make a note of any contextualisation of the tasks on the Candidate Record Forms. Controlled assessment will be moderated by AQA according to the procedures outlined in Section 7.

3b Component 2: Writing

Skill Standards	Coverage and Range	Notes
Writing Entry 1		
Write short, simple sentences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Use written words and phrases to present information  Construct simple sentences using full stops  Spell correctly some personal or very familiar words 	
Writing Entry 2		
Write short texts with some awareness of the intended audience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Use written words and phrases to record and present information  Construct compound sentences using common conjunctions  Punctuate correctly, using upper and lower case, full stops and question marks  Spell correctly all high frequency words and words with common spelling patterns 	
Writing Entry 3		
Write texts with some adaptation to the intended audience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Plan, draft and organise writing  Sequence writing logically and clearly  Use basic grammar including appropriate verb-tense and subject-verb agreement  Check work for accuracy, including spelling 	

This component assesses candidates' ability to write short texts. The tasks are based on real life contexts and scenarios.

Task setting

At Entry 1 and Entry 2 candidates will complete one controlled assessment task and will be expected to complete two short tasks which could include text for application forms, posters or letters. Each year AQA will produce three assessment tasks for Writing for each level. Centres are only required to submit one task per candidate. Centres have the option of contextualising the tasks so that candidates are not disadvantaged and to make best use of resources available at the centre. This could mean that centres adapt the tasks provided in the exemplars or that they devise their own tasks. Centres must ensure that contextualisation does not alter the level of assessment or change the skills standards. If a centre is devising their own tasks, then they should compare their own texts and tasks against the exemplars provided by AQA to ensure that the level of assessment and the skills standards have not been changed.

At Entry 3 candidates will complete one externally set controlled assessment task from a choice of three. Centres are able to contextualise by choosing which of the three tasks are most suited to their candidates. For this task they are expected to complete two questions with some adaptation to the intended audience.

Candidates can only be assessed on a given context for a given task once per year.

Candidates should not be permitted access to the tasks until the final assessment.

Task taking

Tasks should take place under formal supervision. Assessment can take place at any time during the course of study. Candidates must produce work in a period of up to 45 minutes.

















The rubrics for Writing tasks at all levels may be read to candidates.

Task marking

You must mark the assessment tasks using the marking criteria provided by AQA on the Candidate Record Form for Entry 1 and 2 or the mark scheme for Entry 3. After the first Awards meeting, centres will be informed of existing level boundaries, although these boundaries will be subject to the agreement of AQA's Award of Grades committee and may consequently change. Centres should therefore mark only against the criteria.

You should use your judgement to select and apply the criteria appropriately and fairly to the work of the candidates. At Entry 1 and 2 you should also make a note of any contextualisation of the tasks on the Candidate Record Form. Controlled assessment will be moderated by AQA according to the procedures outlined in Section 7.

3c Component 3: Speaking, Listening and Communication

Skill Standards	Coverage and Range	Notes
Speaking, Listening and Communication Entry 1		
Participate in and understand the main points of simple discussions/exchanges about familiar topics with another person in a familiar situation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Understand the main points of short explanations  Understand and follow instructions  Respond appropriately to comments and requests  Make contributions to be understood  Ask simple questions to obtain specific information 	
Speaking, Listening and Communication Entry 2		
Participate in discussions/exchanges about familiar topics, making active contributions, with one or more people in familiar situations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Identify the main points of short explanations and instructions  Make appropriate contributions that are clearly understood  Express simply feelings or opinions and understand those expressed by others  Communicate information so that the meaning is clear  Ask and respond to straightforward questions  Follow the gist of discussions 	
Speaking, Listening and Communication Entry 3		
Respond appropriately to others and make some extended contributions in familiar formal and informal discussions and exchanges.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Follow the main points of discussions  Use techniques to clarify and confirm understanding  Give own point of view and respond appropriately to other's point of view  Use appropriate language in formal discussions/exchanges  Make relevant contributions, allowing for and responding to others' input 	

This component assesses candidates' ability to participate in a discussion. 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. At Entry 1 and 2 candidates complete one discussion. At Entry 3 candidates need to complete both a formal and informal discussion.

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 discussions 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.

Component 3 Speaking, Listening and Communication controlled assessment advisers are available to give advice on all aspects of the component. A rota of advisory visits will include advice on assessment of candidates' performance, task setting and record keeping.

Task Setting

Each year AQA will provide a choice of three tasks for Speaking, Listening and Communication for each level. These tasks will be reviewed/replaced annually. Centres are only required to submit one task per candidate. Centres have the option of contextualising the tasks so that candidates are not disadvantaged and to make the best use of resources available at the centre. This could mean that centres adapt the tasks provided or that they devise their own tasks. Centres must ensure that contextualisation does not alter the level of assessment or change the skills standards.

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 discussions

- you are advised to give the candidates a chance to practise speaking or listening 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.

Candidates can only be assessed on a given context for a given task once per year.

Task Taking

Candidates complete their discussion under formal supervision. During task taking, the supervisor may provide limited guidance to candidates.

Candidates must produce a response to the task in a period of up to 15 minutes.

Assessment can take place at any time during the course of study. 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 may be working with others during this task but will be assessed on their individual performances.

You must judge all controlled assessments using the criteria provided by AQA on the Candidate Record Form. You should use your judgement to select and apply the criteria appropriately and fairly to the work of candidates. You should also make a note of any contextualisation of the tasks on the Candidate Record Form. These forms should be submitted for verification and copies should be kept securely for your own records and also to be made available to an adviser when they visit. Candidates should be awarded a pass or a fail at Entry 1, Entry 2 or Entry 3 if all of the criteria at that level are evident. There are no marks attached to this component. You should submit the pass or fail on a Centre Grade Form to AQA.

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 and understanding to everyday life
- to engage competently and confidently with others
- to solve problems in both familiar and unfamiliar situations
- to develop personally and professionally as positive citizens who can actively contribute to society.

4b Skills standards

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

Weighting of skills standards for Functional Skills English Entry 1, Entry 2 and Entry 3

All of the components (Reading, Writing and Speaking, Listening and Communication) are equally weighted. Candidates must achieve the desired level in each component to be certificated at that level.

4c National criteria

These specifications comply with:

- the Subject Criteria for Functional Skills 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
- 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 these specifications 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) 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 appropriate software.

When reading texts to teachers, similar provision can be made for candidates as for Speaking, Listening and Communication.

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 certification

Certification for Entry 1, Entry 2 and Entry 3 is available as follows.

	Availability of certification
November 2011	✓
January 2012	✓
March 2012	✓
June 2012	✓

Tasks will be available by October of each year

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.

Entry 1 – 4976

- Component 1 Reading – 4971R
- Component 2 Writing – 4971W
- Component 3 Speaking, Listening and Communication – 4971S

Entry 2 – 4977

- Component 1 Reading – 4972R
- Component 2 Writing – 4972W
- Component 3 Speaking, Listening and Communication – 4972S

Entry 3 – 4978

- Component 1 Reading – 4973R
- Component 2 Writing – 4973W
- Component 3 Speaking, Listening and Communication – 4973S

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 not available to private candidates.

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 B) 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 assessment. 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 assessment. We can only do this **after** the assessment.

The Examinations Officer at the centre should apply online for access arrangements and special consideration by following the e-AQA 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 Entry 1
- AQA Functional Skills qualification in English at Entry 2

- AQA Functional Skills qualification in English at Entry 3

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.

Centres will be informed of the existing level boundaries with the disclaimer that we reserve the right to change it.

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 these specifications, 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. Candidates must take a different task to

the one originally taken. The best result for each component will count towards the final qualification. Candidates can re-sit the qualification as many times as they want to.

Candidates' levels 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 these specifications, we need the following.

- **Candidates** must sign the Candidate Record Form for all components at Entry 1 and Entry 2, or the script or the Component 3 Speaking, Listening and Communication Candidate Record Form for Entry 3, to confirm their individual performance in the work marked by the assessor.
- **Teachers and assessors** must confirm on the above documents that the work marked is only that done by the candidate and was conducted in line with the conditions in the specification document (authentication declaration).
- **Centres** must give a mark of zero, or record a fail for Component 3 Speaking, Listening and Communication, if candidates cannot confirm that the work handed in for assessment is their own or if the candidate did not make an individual contribution to the oral assessment.

You should complete the correct 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 mark 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 mark of zero.

6b Malpractice

You should let candidates know about our malpractice regulations.

Candidates must **not**:

- submit work that is not their own
- lend work to other candidates
- hand in work typed or word processed by someone else without acknowledgement.

These actions are considered malpractice, for which a penalty (for example being disqualified from the qualification) 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, script 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 online in due course.

All centres must send a representative to one of the meetings in the first year of entry. 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 these specifications on-line teacher standardising meetings will be made available.

6d Internal standardisation

Centres must have consistent standards for all candidates. One person must be responsible for ensuring that work has been assessed 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 assessing some sample assessments and identifying differences in standards
- discussing any differences in assessment at a training meeting for all teachers involved in the assessment
- referring to reference and archive material, such as previous work or examples from our teacher standardising meetings.

6e Annotation of controlled assessment work/Candidate Record Forms

It is a requirement of these specifications that teachers assessing candidates' work clearly show how the levels have been awarded in line with the criteria provided by AQA. This helps our verifiers, moderators and advisers to see as precisely as possible where the teacher has identified that candidates have met the criteria in these specifications. Candidate Record Forms for recording marks will be provided.

For all components at Entry 1 and Entry 2 and Component 3 Speaking, Listening and Communication at Entry 3, summative comments must be provided on the Candidate Record Forms which are submitted to the verifier. For Component 1 Reading and Component 2 Writing at Entry 3, annotation could be pieces of evidence commented on in the margin or text or comments on the work that refer to the assessment criteria.

6f Submitting confirmation of achievement

The total mark for each candidate, or confirmation that each candidate has achieved the desired level in Component 3 Speaking, Listening and Communication

must be sent to us, on the mark forms provided, 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 comments section of the Candidate Record Form or add a note with the script 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/verification procedures

Written controlled assessment

At Entry 1 and Entry 2 all Candidate Record Forms must be sent to AQA for verification

For Component 1 Reading and Component 2 Writing at Entry 3, moderation of the controlled assessment task is by inspection of a sample of candidates work sent by post from the centre to a Moderator appointed by AQA. The centre marks must be submitted to AQA and to the Moderator by the specified deadline.

Centres entering fewer candidates than the minimum size should submit all the work of their candidates. Centres entering larger numbers will be notified of the candidates whose work will be required in the sample submitted for moderation.

Following the re-marking of the sample work, the moderators marks are compared with the centre marks to check whether any changes are needed to bring the centre's assessments in line with agreed standards. In some cases the moderator may need to ask for the work of other candidates in the centre. To meet this request, centres must keep the controlled assessment work for every candidate entered for the assessment under secure conditions, and they must be prepared to send it to us or the moderator when it is requested. Any changes to marks will normally keep the centre's rank order, but where major

differences are found, we reserve the right to change the centre's rank order.

AQA has the aspiration to move to centre accreditation.

Spoken controlled assessment

For Component 3 Speaking, Listening and Communication at all levels, all Candidate Record Forms must be sent to AQA for verification.

Centres will also 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 copies of 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.

Moderation and verification for all components at all levels will take place in **November, January, March** and **June**.

It is likely that at some point during the life of these specifications, on-line teacher standardising meetings will be made available.

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 enrolled), 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 verifier, moderator or adviser to each centre in the consortium and the candidates will be treated as a single group for moderation.

7c Procedures after moderation

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

For Reading and Writing at Entry 3, we will return candidates' work to you. You will receive a report, at the time results are issued, giving feedback on any adjustments that were made to your marks.

We may keep some candidates work for awarding archive or standardising purposes and will inform you if this is the case.

You will receive a report after your advisory visit for Component 3 Speaking, Listening and Communication giving feedback on assessment procedures within your centre.

Appendices

A 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 skills standards.

B 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.

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.

C 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

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





Functional Skills Qualification in English Entry 1 (4971), Entry 2 (4972) and Entry 3 (4973) from 2011 onwards.

Qualification Accreditation number Entry 1: 600/0115/X

Qualification Accreditation number Entry 2: 600/0116/1

Qualification Accreditation number Entry 3: 600/0117/3

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

The classification code for this specification 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 at:

aqa.org.uk/ask-aqa/register

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

aqa.org.uk/englishzone

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