Functional Skills Qualification in English

Entry Level 1

In partnership with

AIMQUALIFICATIONS

Contents

About the Qualification

Title	Open Awards Entry Level Functional Skills Qualification in English (Entry 1)
QAN	603/4894/X
Sector	14.1 Foundations for Learning and Life
Level	Entry Level 1
Funding	[Please click here for more information](#)
Pricing Information	[Please contact AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group for their pricing informationn](#)
Review Date	31/08/2024

Ofqual Purpose	Prepare for further learning or training and/or develop knowledge and/or skills in a subject area
Ofqual Sub-Purpose	Prepare for further learning or training

About Functional Skills

Functional Skills qualifications provide reliable evidence of a learner's achievements against demanding content that is relevant to the workplace. They provide assessment of learners' underpinning knowledge as well as their ability to apply this in different contexts. They also provide a foundation for progression into employment or further technical education and develop skills for everyday life. In some contexts, Functional Skills qualifications also play a part in the Government's accountability systems.

A key aim for Functional Skills English qualifications is that they should enable the learner to develop confidence and fluency in, and a positive attitude towards, English.
Learners are required to demonstrate their competence in English by using it in real-world situations as well as to demonstrate a sound grasp of basic English knowledge and skills.

Purpose of Functional Skills English for Entry Levels: a qualification to demonstrate the ability at an appropriate level to read, write, speak, listen and communicate in English, and to apply this knowledge and these skills in familiar situations. Achievement of these qualifications can provide the basis for further study at Levels 1 and 2.

About the Relationship between Open Awards and AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group

Open Awards and AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group have partnered to bring Functional Skills Qualifications to AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group approved centres.

AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group has been approved by Open Awards to deliver Functional Skills qualifications at Entry Level 1 – Level 2 in English and mathematics through their approved centres. This means that if you are an AIM centre, you can apply to deliver these qualifications through the MIA portal or the [website.](#)

Learners will be registered with AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group via the MIA portal, and these registrations will then be shared with Open Awards via their Secure Portal.

The roles and responsibilities for the delivery, assessment and quality assurance of Functional Skills qualifications will be managed by both awarding organisations as outlined below:

Open Awards	Aim Qualifications and Assessment Group
External Verification - SLC	Observations and Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) sampling of live SLC assessments
Marking and IQA sampling – Reading, Writing and Maths (Levels 1 and 2)	Short notice visits for Reading, Writing and Maths assessments
External Verification – Reading, Writing, Maths (Entry Level)	Annual Compliance checks: Policies Procedures
	Evidence of implement quality assurance procedures including IQA sampling
	Cascading of actions plans for centres
	Risk ratings of centres
Functional Skills training (online via Open Awards Learning Management Systems)	Customer service support and training
Desk review of centre recognition approval and qualification approvals	Centre recognition approval and qualification approval for
Reporting of concerns of malpractice or maladministration	

Achievement of the Qualification

To achieve the qualification, learners must successfully pass all three assessment components at Entry Level 1:

- One externally set, internally marked and externally quality assured assessment in reading
- One externally set, internally marked and externally quality assured assessment in writing
- One internally set, internally marked and externally quality assured assessment (comprising of two sub-tasks) in speaking, listening and communicating (SLC).

A learner is awarded 'pass' or 'fail' for each component. If a learner does not achieve a 'pass' result in any of the components, they will be issued with a 'fail' result for that component.

A learner must achieve a 'pass' result in all three components in order to achieve a 'pass' result for the qualification.

Learners who have met the pass threshold for all three components of the Entry Level 1 qualification in Functional Skills English will be issued with a certificate, notifying them of their 'pass' result and will be awarded with the Open Awards Entry Level 1 Functional Skills Qualification in English.

The three components can be achieved separately over time. However, certification will not take place until all three components have been achieved at Entry Level 1. Each component contributes equally to the achievement of the qualification. A learner is able to carry forward a 'pass' result for any of the single components from a previous attempt at the same level, either with Open Awards or any other awarding organisation. Please see the 'Assessment Methods' section below for more information.

Total Qualification Time/Guided Learning	
Total Qualification Time (hours)	55
Guided Learning (hours)	55

Age Range and Restrictions:	
Pre -16	✓
16 – 18	✓
19+	✓
Any other restrictions specific to the qualification(s)	None

Any specified entry requirements

There are no restrictions on learner entry to these qualifications. However, it is recommended that learners undertake a comprehensive initial diagnostic assessment to ensure that they are following an appropriate learning programme leading to a summative assessment.

Assessment Method Summary

Achievement of our English qualifications is through successful completion of three individual component task-based assessments at Entry Level 1 which are:

Reading
- Externally set by Open Awards
- Internally marked and quality assured by the centre
- Externally quality assured by Open Awards

(Total Marks Available: 12)

Writing
- Externally set by Open Awards
- Internally marked and quality assured by the centre
- Externally quality assured by Open Awards

(Total Marks Available: 30)

Speaking, Listening and Communicating
- Internally set by the provider (following the structure of the sample assessment set by Open Awards)
- Internally marked and quality assured by the provider
- Externally quality assured by Open Awards

Sample assessments are available on the Portal and can be accessed by the Assessment Administrator contact at your provider.

The assessment tasks are based on real-life contexts. Contexts may be based on:
- Work and education
- Community, citizenship and environment
- Family, home and social issues

The amount of time allocated for each assessment is:
- Reading: 40 minutes
- Writing: 40 minutes
- Speaking, Listening and Communicating: 15 minutes

The total assessment time is 95 minutes.

Please note, when taking the assessment for the writing component, learners are not be allowed access to external aids in relation to spelling, punctuation, and grammar including dictionaries and spelling and grammar checking software.

All assessments must be taken under controlled assessment conditions. Further guidance can be found in Open Awards' Instructions for Conducting Controlled Assessments or Open Awards' Instructions for Conducting Controlled Assessments Remotely.

The reading and writing assessments are only available as a paper-based mode of delivery. Assessments must be scheduled using Open Awards' XAMS assessment platform.

Once scheduled, paper- based assessments will be made available (2 weeks in advance) for providers to download and print. Once marked and internally quality assured, results must be entered onto the XAMS assessment platform and completed assessment scripts must be scanned into the providers secure SharePoint folder ready for external quality assurance. Results will not be confirmed until external quality assurance has taken place.

The speaking, listening and communicating component is assessed practically through two tasks. These tasks are devised by the provider using the set Open Awards assessment structure available via AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group. The results of the assessment must be entered into the XAMS system by the provider for processing. The provider must also upload the Record of Learner Achievement and Assessment Sheets (ROLAs) and assessment recordings to their allocated SharePoint folder.

If a learner has completed one or two English components for the reformed Functional Skills Qualifications with another awarding organisation then this achievement can be acknowledged by Open Awards. Please complete the Recognition of Prior Learning Request (RPL) Form or contact AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group for more information.

Reasonable adjustments and special considerations may be required for individual learners to enable them to undertake assessments fairly. Please see Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy available for details on how to apply for and implement these measures.

British Sign Language, as well as Sign Supported English, can be used as a reasonable adjustment for the Speaking, Listening and Communicating component. Please contact AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group for more information.

Subject Content

Open Awards Entry Level (1-3) Functional Skills Qualifications in English supports learners to be able to speak, listen, communicate, read and write with increasing clarity, accuracy and effectiveness at each level. They will be able to:

- Listen, understand and respond to verbal communication in a range of familiar contexts;
- Acquire an understanding of everyday words and their uses and effects, and apply this understanding in different contexts;
- Read with accuracy straightforward texts encountered in everyday life and work, and develop confidence to read more widely; and
- Write straightforward texts and documents with clarity and effectiveness, and demonstrate a sound grasp of spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Learners should, with some direction and guidance, be able to apply these functional skills to informal and some formal contexts, in familiar situations.

Scope of study: Speaking, Listening and Communicating
The scope of study (SoS) for Speaking, Listening and Communicating, including the SoS references from the DfE Subject Content is included below:

SoS1	Say the names of the letters of the alphabet
SoS2	Identify and extract the main information from short statements and explanations
SoS3	Following sing-step instructions, asking for them to be repeated if necessary
SoS4	Make requests and ask straightforward questions using appropriate terms and registers
SoS5	Respond to questions about specific information
SoS6	Make clear statements about basic information and communicate feelings and opinions on straightforward topics
SoS7	Understand and participate in simple discussions or exchanges with another person about a straightforward topic

Learners should be able to apply their speaking, listening and communicating skills in the following contexts at Entry Level 1:
- Simple narratives;
- Information and instructions;
- Short Statements;
- Explanations;
- Discussions;
- Questions; and
- Exchanges

The SLC assessment is made up of three sub-tasks:

- Task 1 (2 minutes): the learner says the names of the letters of the alphabet.
- Task 2 (3 minutes): the learner follows single-step instructions.
- Task 3 (10 minutes): the learner participates in simple discussions or exchanges
    - asking and responding to questions
    - making requests
    - making statements
    - communicating feelings and opinions.

At this level, learners can complete their SLC assessment as a 1-1 activity with their tutor or as part of a small group (3-5 learners).

The learner must achieve a pass on each scope of study to pass the assessment.

For SLC, there is no boundary mark. A 'Pass' is awarded to learners who meet the Pass criteria (outlined below).

	The criteria for a Pass Performance descriptor
Pass	• Learners generally demonstrate the requirements for the level - consistently, - effectively, and - to an appropriate degree for that level. • Overall performance across the range of requirements for the level is secure; any insufficient demonstration of any individual content statement is balanced by appropriate demonstration of that same content statement elsewhere.

The assessment criteria that learners are required to meet in order to demonstrate this performance (described by the pass descriptor) are listed under the Scope of Study above and set out in the 'Record of Learner Achievement and Assessment Record Sheet'. Each Scope of Study must be achieved in order for a 'Pass' to be awarded for this component.

Scope of study: Reading

The scope of study (SoS) for Reading, including the SoS references from the DfE Subject Content is included below:

SoS8	Read correct words designated for Entry Level 1
SoS9	Read simple sentences containing one clause
SoS10	Understand a short piece of text on a simple subject

Learners should be able to apply their reading skills in the following contexts at Entry Level 1:
- Short, simple texts that inform, describe and narrate.

Learners are required to achieve a controlled assessment to pass the Reading Component. The assessment for the Reading component will include a representative sample of the words from the list included in the DfE subject content (provided below).

Scope of study: Writing

The scope of study (SoS) for Writing, including the SoS references from the DfE Subject Content is included below:

Spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG)

SoS11	Punctuate simple sentences with a capital letter and full stop
SoS12	Use a capital letter for the personal pronoun 'I' and the first letter of proper nouns
SoS13	Use lower-case letters when there is no reason to use capital letters
SoS14	Write the letters of the alphabet in sequence and in upper and lower case
SoS15	Spell correctly words designated for Entry Level 1

Please note that 66% of the total marks available for the Writing component will be allocated to SPaG. Please see the sample mark schemes for more information.

Writing Composition

SoS16	Communicate information in words, phrases and simple sentences.

Learners should be able to apply their writing skills to short simple texts such as
- Messages
- Notes

Please note that for the Writing component, learners must not have access to external aids in relation to spelling, punctuation and grammar. This includes dictionaries, spelling, and grammar checking software.

Learners are required to achieve a controlled assessment to pass the Writing Component. The controlled assessment will include a given spelling test, made up of a representative sample of the word included in the DfE subject content (provided below).

Interpretation of lists within the subject content (eg / ie)
Where the Subject Content includes an item or list of items with the term 'e.g.' or 'for example', the items listed are to be interpreted as illustrative examples of the content statement which precedes them.

Where the Subject Content includes a statement with 'including', the statement indicates a specific expectation within the broader scope of study statement that precedes it. As such, the content in the specific expectation should be taught and will be assessed.

Additional Guidance

1. Glossary for use with this Subject Content[1]

Appropriate	Describes a text, word or style that is suitably phrased for its intended audience and form. 'Appropriate' accepts that different contexts require different treatments and is in this respect to be differentiated from 'correct', which is more concerned with the right grammatical formulation of an expression.
Basic information	Includes factual information such as personal details, and everyday situations such as directions, weather etc.
Context	The purpose and audience for which spoken or written language is used.
Formal	Formal language tends to be characterised by more elaborate grammatical structures and sophisticated language, and is typically used to convey a more serious tone (e.g. receive rather than get, gratuity rather than tip).
Format	The way in which a text is arranged or presented, e.g. as a book, leaflet, essay, film/animation, audiotape, or the way in which it is structured, e.g. the use made of headings, subheadings, diagrams/photographs with captions.
Gist	The main point or idea of a text. Reading for gist is thus reading for identification of the main points only.
Common words	Words that occur frequently; someone who is unable to read or spell these words will therefore be at a disadvantage. A number of attempts have been made (notably by Dolch) to identify those words that students most need to acquire in order to advance in their learning.
Linking words	Words used to link sentences and to show the relationship between information or ideas. Linking words can be used to show a sequence (e.g. first, next, finally), results (e.g. therefore, so) and addition (e.g. and, also).
Medium	The way in which language is transmitted from one person, or an agency, to another. The three basic media of language are phonic (speech), graphic (writing) and signing (sign 18 language for the hearing impaired). The term is also used to denote the means of communication (e.g. television, telephone, film, radio, computer, press).
Narrative	Describes text that re-tells events, often in chronological sequence.
Organisational features	Refers to those visual aspects of text that give a clue to its status and to its relation to other pieces of text. Such features include: contents pages, chapter headings and other sub-headings, bullet-point lists, captions to photographs and illustrations, text presented in special display boxes, tables, footnotes, indexes, etc. Reading this is decoding and establishing the meaning of written text.

[1] DfE – Subject content functional skills: English. February 2018. Pp17-19

Registers	A variety of language selected for use in a specific social situation. In particular, the register differentiates formal from informal use of language.
Regular	A term used to describe words, typically verbs and nouns, that conform to general rules. It is possible to predict the plural form of a regular noun, or the simple past and past participle forms of a regular verb; it is not possible to do so with irregular nouns and verbs.
Sentence	In writing, sentences are marked by using a capital letter at the beginning, and a full stop (or question mark or exclamation mark) at the end. A simple sentence consists of a single clause with a single subject. A compound sentence consists of more than one subject or more than one independent clause. A complex sentence consists of a main clause and one or more subordinate clauses (e.g. Although it was late, I wasn't tired).
Short	Denotes words, sentences and texts of such a length as to be accessible to students and to enable them to experience a sense of achievement at having successfully decoded them. Short and long are terms which are also applied to vowel sounds. A short text is typically used to communicate everyday or functional information such as in notices, announcements, instructions, messages and invitations.
Simple	When applied to narratives, words or sentences, this means a basic, uncomplicated structure. A simple sentence structure, for example, follows the standard pattern of subject, verb and, optionally, object; a simple narrative will follow a chronological sequence and be told from one viewpoint only.
Specialist words	Specialist words are those that have a specific meaning within a certain context, such as words related to a specific job or work environment, a pastime or hobby, or a certain area of study.
Straightforward	Describes subjects and materials that students often meet in their work, studies or other activities. Straightforward content is put across in a direct way with the main points easily identifiable; usually the sentence structures of such texts consist of more than one subject or more than one independent clause (i.e. compound sentence), and students will be familiar with the vocabulary. Straightforward texts are more demanding than simple texts containing simple sentence structure. The vocabulary of straightforward texts will typically consist of a range of familiar and common words, and some specialist words.
Style	Style can be defined as the selection of certain linguistic features in relation to context (audience and purpose), e.g. formal or informal, non-specialist or technical. All language users have the opportunity to make linguistic choices that will determine the style of a piece of writing or an utterance.

2. Expectations for Word Reading Entry Levels 1-3[2]

Learners are expected to read words which consist of the letter-sound correspondences in the following table. The words in brackets are examples of words to illustrate these correspondences. They are not specific words to be learned.

Learners are not expected to spell all these words correctly. The words they are expected to read and spell correctly are detailed in the next section.

A representative sample of these words will be included in the externally set Reading assessment.

Letter/s-sound correspondences	
Letters	**Sounds**
p (pan), pp (supper)	/p/
t (tap), tt (letter)	/t/
3 c (cat), k (key), ck (duck)	/k/
ch (chip), tch (fetch)	/tʃ/
f (fish), ff (coffee), ph (photo)	/f/
th (thin)	/θ/
s (sun), ss (dress), c (city)	/s/
sh (ship)	/ʃ/
h (hat)	/h/
r (run), rr (cherry), wr (write)	/r/
l (lip), ll (bell)	/l/
b (boy), bb (rabbit)	/b/
d (dog), dd (ladder)	/d/
g (go), gg (bigger)	/g/
j (jet), g (gem), ge (large), dge (bridge)	/dʒ/
v (vet), ve (have)	/v/
th (then)	/ð/
z (zip), zz (fizz), s (his), se (cheese), ze (sneeze)	/z/
m (man), mm (hammer)	/m/
n (nut), nn (dinner), kn (knee)	/n/
ng (ring), n (sink)	/ŋ/
w (wet), wh (wheel)	/w/
y (yes)	/j/
ee (feet), ea (beach), e (me), y (pony), e-e (these), ey (key), ie (chief)	/iː/
i (big) y (gym)	/ɪ/
e (egg), ea (head)	/e/
a (mat)	/æ/
u (but)	/ʌ/
o (on), a (want)	/ɒ/
oo (book), u (put)	/ʊ/

oo (moon), ue (clue), u-e (flute), ew (flew), ou (soup)	/uː/
ai (rain), ay (play), a (baby), a-e (ape), ey (they)	/eɪ/
igh (light), i (mind), y (fly), ie (pie), i-e (kite)	/aɪ/
ou (out), ow (down)	/aʊ/
oa (boat), ow (snow), o (go), oe (toe), o-e (bone)	/əʊ/
oi (coin), oy (boy)	/ɔɪ/
aw (law), au (sauce), al (talk)	/ɔː/
or (fork)7, oor (door), ore (store)	/ɔː/ or /ɔːr/
er (person), ur (burn), ir (bird), or after 'w' (work)	/ɜː/ or /ɜːr/
ar (far), a (fast)	/aːr/ or /aː/
air (hair), are (square), ear (bear)	/ɛə/ or/ɛər/
ear (near)	/ɪə/or /ɪər/
a (zebra)	/ə/
qu (queen)	/kw/
x (box)	/ks/
u (unit), ue (due), u-e (tune), ew (few)	/juː/
-le (little), -il (pencil), -al (metal), -el (tunnel)	/əl/

For more information, please see the DfE's Subject Content: Functional Skills English (February 2018) Document available here.

3. Expectations for both reading and spelling (Entry Level 1)[1]

Learners are expected to both read **and** spell correctly all the words listed in the following table. They are **not** examples and will be included in the spelling test section of the Writing Component assessment.

Letter/s-sound correspondences	
Letters	**Sounds**
can, act, look, back, school	/k/
off	/f/
miss, cross, house	/s/
who	/h/
write, wrote, wrong	/r/
will, well, tell, still, hello	/l/
get, give	/g/
change, large	/dʒ/
have, give, live, of	/v/
is, his, as, has, Wednesday	/z/
come, some	/m/
know, done, one, gone	/n/
think	/ŋ/
when, which, what, while, white	/w/
see, seem, feel, meet, week, eat, real, be, he, me, we, she, even, every,	/iː/
enjoy	/ɪ/
head, any, many, anyone, thank, said, again, says	/e/
come, done, some, other, brother, money, Monday, does	/ʌ/
was, want, what, because	/ɒ/
put, push, pull would, could, should, full, look, good	/ʊ/
do, to, into, who, too, you, group, two,	/uː/
day, say, way, made, make, take, came, same, late, they	/eɪ/
high, right, might, find, mind, child, Friday, by, my, myself, reply, like, time,	/aɪ/
out, about, without, around, now, how,	/aʊ/
own, follow, so, no, go, old, over, open, most, only, both, told, hold, don't, close,	/əʊ/
boy	/ɔɪ/
saw, draw, walk, all, call, small, also, water	/ɔː/
or, for, morning, door, floor, poor, more, before, warm, four, your	/ɔː/ or /ɔːr/
her, person, Thursday, Saturday, girl, first, work, word, world, were	/ɜː/ or /ɜːr/
fast, last, past, plant, path, ask, after	/æ/ or /aː/
are, our	/aː/

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or	/aːr/
air, where, there, their	/ɛə/ or/ɛər/
near, here, dear, year	/ɪə/or /ɪər/
the, between, until, today, together, number, other, after, never, under	/ə/
Tuesday, use, new, few	/juː/
little	/əl/
one, someone, anyone	/wʌ/

In addition, students are expected to both read and spell correctly the words described below. Words in brackets are examples. Words and letters in bold are not examples; they are specific words or spellings that students are expected to both read and spell correctly.

- all common words with one or two syllables, where the most probable correspondences between sounds and letters are the correct ones (e.g., it, nut, and, stop, rush, thing, himself)
- common two syllable words where /iː/ at the end is spelled with 'y' (e.g., twenty)
- common one or two syllable words with ay and oy, knowing that ay and oy usually correspond to /eɪ/ and /ɔɪ/ at the end of words (e.g., day, runway, boy)
- **-ed** for the past tense, when the root word remains unchanged (e.g., wanted, opened, jumped)
- the following contractions:
  - **Mr, Mrs**
  - **n't** (e.g., didn't)
  - **'ll** (e.g., I'll)
  - **'re** (e.g., we're)
  - **'s** (e.g., it's)

For more information, please see the DfE's Subject Content: Functional Skills English (February 2018) Document available here.

Delivering this Qualification

Becoming a Provider

To deliver this qualification you must be a recognised AIM provider (AIM/Open College Network West Midlands or legacy One Awards centres). For more information, visit AIM Qualification and Assessment Group website or contact the team on 0844 225 3377.

How to Deliver

You can apply to deliver this qualification through the MIA portal or through the website.

You will be required to provide details of the staffing and resources you have in place for the delivery of Functional Skills qualifications and to confirm you can fulfil the requirements of this Qualification Guide and supporting policies.

For more information, visit AIM Qualification and Assessment Group website or contact the team on 0844 225 3377.

Registering Learners

Once you are approved to deliver this qualification, you will need to register your learners in line with the timescales below: Short courses (15 weeks or less) within 25 working days of the course start date. Full year long courses (over 15 weeks) within 60 working days of the course start date.

You will need to register your learners via the Open Awards Secure Portal. Please ensure all learner details are provided to avoid delays to your learner registrations being processed. If an end-date for the course is not provided, the Functional Skills registration will last for a period of two years.

Once your learners are registered, you will then be able to schedule assessments via the XAMS assessment platform.

Identification Requirements and Learner Authenticity

It is the provider's responsibility to confirm the identity of a learner as part of its registration process. A provider may do this by requesting sufficient personal data and a unique learner number (ULN) to ensure the learner can be clearly and uniquely identified. The use of a ULN is now a mandatory requirement for publicly funded education and when submitting Individualised Learner Record (ILR) returns.

Providers must have systems in place to ensure that an individual completing an assessment is the person they are claiming to be. Therefore, providers are required to ensure that each learner's identification is checked and that the type of identification provided by each learner is recorded before assessments are undertaken.

Open Awards' Quality and Standards Advisors (QASA) will check this record during quality assurance monitoring activities.

The following would be permitted proof of a learner's identity:
- A valid passport (any nationality).
- A signed UK photo card driving license.
- Valid warrant card issued by HM Forces or the Police.
  Oother photographic ID card, e.g. employee ID card (must be current employer), student ID card, travel card.
- UK biometric residence permit.

If an assessment is taking place in a learner's place of work and a learner is unable to supply any of the above, authentication of a learner's identity by a third-party representative, for example his/her line manager or a member of his/her workplace Human Resources Team can be accepted.

Scheduling Assessments

Learners must be registered in accordance with Open Awards policy prior to scheduling learners for a Functional Skills assessment. .

Once the learner has been registered, their assessments can be scheduled via the XAMS assessment platform.

Providers can schedule learners up to 24 hours before the set assessment date/time.

Assessments will be made available for Assessment Administrators at the providers to download from the XAMS assessment platform from 2 weeks before the assessment is due to take place.

Please see our XAMS User Guidance for further information.

Once scheduled, you cannot change the date or time of the assessment. Providers can, however, withdraw the learner from the scheduled assessment and re-schedule within the timescales outlined above.

Adapting Assessments

Contexts in the English assessments can be adapted by providers. However, no amendments to the knowledge, skills, understanding or level of demand are permitted. All adaptations need to be approved in advance by Open Awards Quality Assurance team. Further information is provided in Guidance for Adapting Functional Skills Assessments.

Marking Assessments

All Entry Level Functional Skills assessments are marked by the provider and externally quality assured by Open Awards. Standardisation and marker monitoring activities are carried out regularly to ensure quality of marking.

Provider markers must use the provided mark schemes and accompanying guidance to mark the completed assessments. Any queries that arise should be directed to the AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group Quality Assurance team in the first instance.

Providers must have a policy and process in place to internally quality assure provider-marked assessments before results are submitted to Open Awards.

Once assessments have been marked and internally quality assured, results must be entered into the XAMS assessment platform and the scripts (including any unused scripts and invigilation reports) uploaded to the provider's secure SharePoint folder ready for external quality assurance. In addition, providers are required to enter the individual marks for each question in the provided tracker spreadsheet in SharePoint. This is to support external quality assurance activities.

Please note, results will not be confirmed until the marked scripts have been externally quality assured by Open Awards. Providers should not inform learners of their expected result until it has been confirmed by Open Awards.

Provider markers are required to complete training with Open Awards before their first marking activity takes place, and to attend annual training and standardisation.

Internal Speaking, Listening and Communicating assessments are assessed and internally verified by the provider and externally quality assured by Open Awards. There is a standard Record of Learner Achievement and Assessor Sheet for the English Speaking Listening and Communicating Entry Level assessment components which should always be used. This clearly states how skills are observed and recorded, and when to award a Pass or Fail grade.

Quality Assurance

Delivery of this qualification must be in accordance with Ofqual regulatory guidelines and in line with Open Awards' and AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group quality assurance processes.

Provider Staff Requirements

Providers are responsible for ensuring that their staff are occupationally competent and have access to appropriate training and support. They are also responsible for notifying Open Awards of staff changes.

To deliver our Functional Skills qualifications you must have appropriate staff in place to fulfil the following essential roles:
- Tutor/Teacher
- Marker (Reading and Writing)
- Tutor/Assessor (SLC only)
- Internal Quality Assurer
- Invigilator
- Administrator

These roles must be covered by a minimum of 2 separate individuals to avoid potential or actual conflicts of interest. For more information, please see the Conflicts of Interest Policy for more information.

In addition, it is Open Awards expectation that staff at providers meet the following minimum requirement:
- Tutors have relevant teaching experience and/or a qualification, and experience and/or a qualification in the relevant subject area, as a minimum at a level above that being taught
- Although not mandatory, best practice would be for Assessors to hold the relevant D32/D33/A1/AQA unit(s) and Level 3 Award in Education and Training. Likewise, best practice would be for Internal Verifiers to hold the relevant D34/V1/IQA unit(s)

For the roles of Marker and Assessor, staff will be required to complete Open Awards' internal training and ongoing standardisation. Please visit our [website](#) for more information on upcoming training and events.

For the role of the administrator, providers must ensure that the confidentiality and security of assessments is maintained at all times.

Administration includes initial receipt of confidential materials, secure storage, movement and preparation of materials for scheduled assessments, and registration, secure storage and return of materials to the awarding organisation after scheduled assessments are completed.

No tutor of a Functional Skills qualification can be involved in the invigilation or administration of the assessment materials in that subject, regardless of the level they teach. Nobody with a vested interest in the outcome of the assessment may be involved in the administration or invigilation.

For the role of Invigilator, staff will be required to complete Open Awards' online training before the first assessment.

External Assessment (Reading and Writing)

Assessment of Entry Level 1 Functional Skills in English is through two externally set and marked assessments (reading and writing) and one internally set and marketing assessment (Speaking, Listening and Communicating). These can currently be delivered as paper-based assessments only.

Providers must ensure that assessments are carried out in controlled conditions to minimise the potential for plagiarism and to ensure security of the assessment materials. In order to ensure these conditions are enforced external assessments must be delivered in accordance with our policy, Instructions for Conducting Controlled Assessments or Instructions for Conducting Controlled Assessments Remotely.

Invigilator reports must be completed for every assessment and retained in line with Open Awards' Instructions for Conducting Controlled Assessments and uploaded to the Provider's secure SharePoint folder at the same time as assessment papers.

Providers must ensure that there are no conflicts of interest between the invigilator and learners by checking in advance of the assessment. The invigilator(s) **must not** be the same Functional Skills tutor used for the delivery of the relevant Functional Skills course the learner, or group of learners, is undertaking the assessment for. The only exception to this is where it is required as a reasonable adjustment for a learner with specific support needs. In this case, a request for a reasonable adjustment should be made to AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group in advance of the assessment.

Once completed, marked and internally quality assured, external assessments must be uploaded to the provider's SharePoint folder. This includes any scripts that were not attempted due to learner absence. The original copies must be securely retained by the provider in line with Open Awards' Instructions for Conducting Controlled Assessments.

Internal Assessment (SLC)

The Speaking, Listening and Communicating component is assessed internally in line with set requirements. A Record of Learner Achievement and Assessment Record Sheet must always be used for the assessment of the SLC component. Assessment decisions are then entered onto the XAMS system and evidence uploaded to the provider's SharePoint folder for external quality assurance.

Providers must ensure that assessments are carried out in controlled conditions to minimise the potential for plagiarism and to ensure security of the assessment materials. In order to ensure these conditions are enforced external assessments must be delivered in accordance with our policy, Instructions for Conducting Controlled Assessments.

Providers **must** provide the assessment instructions to their learner in advance of the SLC assessment to ensure learners know what they are being assessed against. The instructions can be distributed as a handout to learner (shown as an appendix in the SLC assessment materials for the tutor/assessor) or providers can choose to display the instructions on a notice board.

Tutors/Assessors are required to complete and retain a Record of Learner Achievement and Assessment which clearly specifies how the learner has met the assessment criteria, any audio or visual recordings, and any additional evidence requirements for every learner. Providers are required to keep all evidence related to SLC for a minimum of three (3) years.

Storing Confidential Materials

Question papers and any other confidential material, e.g. answer booklets, must be stored securely at the provider's registered address in a safe or secure lockable cupboard with restricted access in a secure locked room. The contents of all materials must be treated as strictly confidential and should not be shared with anyone other than those taking or administering the assessment. Copies may not be issued to anyone, including teaching staff. AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group and Open Awards must be notified immediately if any known or suspected infringement of these conditions takes place. Should the provider be found responsible for compromising the security of the assessment then they may be charged for redevelopment costs.

External Quality Assurance

External quality assurance includes the following activities:
- Sampling of marking decisions at a provider
- Provider performance review of results at task/question/assessment level.
- Annual quality compliance visits/activity
- Unannounced visits and spot checks; and
- Reviews of administration, reports, and internal quality assurance activities.

External quality assurance will ensure that:
- All learners' assessment responses are rigorously and fairly marked within agreed timescales;
- Open Awards receives accurate information about learner performance;
- marking is consistent and that required sampling takes place across the quality assurance team;
- item level performance can be monitored on an ongoing basis across a range of providers to provide early feedback on the effectiveness of questions and mark schemes;
- any anomalies in marking decisions can be identified and addressed early on and measures put in place to provide further training and support to a provider and improve their marking performance;
- risk ratings can be constantly reviewed and amended (either increased or decreased) at any time to reflect a change in the risks presented by a provider.

In addition, with regards to SLC, the external quality assurance monitoring visit will:

- ensure that assessment and internal verification arrangements are fit for purpose and are being delivered in accordance with the requirements specified for each SLC assessment task;
- ensure the provider is taking all reasonable steps to prevent the occurrence of malpractice or maladministration;
- confirm that assessments are conducted by appropriately qualified and occupationally expert tutors/assessors;
- sample previously conducted Speaking, Listening and Communicating assessment records and interview learners both in progress and having completed;
- ensure that provider staff have access to up-to-date versions of: Assessment Tasks & Assessment Documentation Setting Provider Devised SLC Assessment Tasks.

Unannounced and Short-notice Visits

Open Awards operates a system of unannounced and short-notice visits in order to ensure that providers are complying with the rules set out within this specification, and associated policies, around the delivery of assessments. These visits ensure ongoing confidence in the qualification as well as maintaining and improving quality and standards. Such checks will create the opportunity to comment on good practice and to identify areas for improvement. Short-notice or unannounced visits will be completed by the team at AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group.

Guidance on unannounced and short-notice visits is available via AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group.

External Quality Assurance and Results

All provider-marked assessments will be externally quality assured by Open Awards before results are confirmed. This includes second-marking and sampling by a Lead Marker in line with Open Awards sampling policy.

Following completion of the marking process, learners' results will be available to the provider through the XAMS assessment platform. Providers should not inform a learner of the expected result before it has been confirmed by Open Awards.

Verification and Standardisation

Verification is the process by which assessment decisions are confirmed. Providers delivering this qualification have a responsibility to conduct internal verification led by a trained internal verifier.

Ongoing compliance monitoring is carried out by AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group on behalf of Open Awards, and external verification is carried out by Open Awards Quality Reviewers/External Verifiers who will confirm that the provider is assessing to the required standard and ensure that there are robust quality assurance systems embedded.

Providers are required to contribute to national standardisation as requested by AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group and Open Awards, and to carry out appropriate internal standardisation. Open Awards offers standardisation events that are held throughout the year. Such events will also provide an opportunity to identify and share best practice. Up to date details of training and standardisation events can be found on the Open Awards website.

Internal standardisation involves ensuring that, where there is more than one tutor/assessor delivering Open Awards provision or at more than one site, internally set tasks and the outcomes of internal assessment are consistent across the range of courses.

Resits

Learners are permitted to resit an external assessment where they are issued a fail result. Resit charges will apply.

Providers are responsible for preparing their learners for the assessment and should ensure that the approach to resits is appropriate. Learners should be discouraged from repeated resits and be provided with further teaching and learning to support successful achievement of the qualifications where learners have not passed the assessment.

A learner can be re-scheduled for a resit in the XAMS assessment platform after a period of two weeks from the time that a 'fail' result is released. This is to ensure that learners receive further teaching and learning and that they are fully prepared for the resit.

Please note, providers should not re-schedule an assessment until results have been received and it is confirmed that a learner has failed an assessment attempt.

If a learner has had three (3) attempts and not yet passed, please contact the Quality Assurance team at AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group before scheduling a fourth attempt.

Enquiries and Appeals

Providers and learners have the right to appeal against the results issued. Providers must ensure that learners are made aware of this.

There are three stages of appeal depending on the nature of the decision at each stage:
- Enquiry (Stage 1)
- Appeal (Stage 2)
- Independent Appeals Review (Stage 3)

Each stage must be completed before progressing to the next stage.

More information can be found in the policy for Enquiries and Appeals.

Provider Monitoring

Providers delivering Functional Skills English at Entry Level will receive (as a minimum) an annual quality compliance visit from AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group. This will include a check of policies, procedures and controls for ensuring the provider undertakes the delivery, invigilation and administration of assessments in line with guidance and policies provided.

Providers are required to schedule all assessments to enable the completion of observations of on-screen and online assessments, unannounced visits and spot-checks.

Providers are required to contribute to national training and standardisation events as requested by AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group and Open Awards, and also to carry out appropriate internal standardisation and/or peer observations for tutors and assessors involved in the delivery of Functional Skills.

Open Awards offers training and standardisation events that are held throughout the year. Such events will also provide an opportunity to identify and share best practice. Up to date details of training and standardisation events can be found on the Open Awards website.

Appendices and Links

Appendix Name
[Complaints Policy](#)
[Enquiries and Appeals Policy](#)
[Equality and Diversity Policy](#)
[Privacy Policy](#)
[Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy](#)
[XAMS Guidance](#)

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