

Qualification Specification

NOCN Functional Skills Qualification in English at: Entry 1 Entry 2 Entry 3

**Entry 1
Qualification Approval No. 500/8835/X**

**Entry 2
Qualification Approval No. 500/9334/4**

**Entry 3
Qualification Approval No. 500/9320/4**

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Introduction

NOCN has been providing a qualification and accreditation service to providers across the UK for over 25 years and is justifiably proud of its reputation as, "...a provider of fully accessible, trusted and flexible qualification and accreditation services".

Over the years, NOCN has worked effectively with centres for the benefit of learners across the country, with a mutual interest in providing a continuously improving service. NOCN, whilst retaining all the advantages of being a national body, has always provided a personal, bespoke service to its customers and prides itself on its local presence and expertise within communities.

This document details the qualification specification and provides guidance to the training provider on assessment criteria and evidence requirements.

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1. About the Functional Skills qualifications

Introduction to Functional Skills

Functional Skills are practical skills in English, mathematics and Information and Communication Technology (ICT). They are defined as:

....practical skills in English, mathematics and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) that allow individuals to operate confidently, effectively and independently in everyday life, including in the workplace.¹

Development of Functional Skills

Following the *14-19 Education and Skills White Paper* (February 2005) and the *Skills White Paper* (March 2005), the DfES gave QDCA a remit to develop Functional Skills in English, mathematics and ICT.

Employers and educators have identified these skills as vital for enabling young people and adults to have the practical skills to succeed in further learning, employment and life in modern society.

In 2006 the FE Reform White Paper: *Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances* built on the existing *14-19 Education and Skills White Paper* and the *Skills Strategy* to set out a series of reforms which will raise skills and qualification levels for young people and adults to world standards.

These reforms, including the introduction of Functional Skills qualifications, will all contribute to addressing the skills shortages identified in the 2006 Leitch Review of Skills: *Prosperity for all in the global economy – world class skills*. The Government response to this is included in *World Class Skills: Implementing the Leitch Review of Skills in England*.

To ensure that Functional Skills are readily accessible to the full range of learners, they will be available as an integral part of the new Diplomas, Foundation Learning and Apprenticeships.

The qualifications have been designed to be suitable, therefore, for a wide range of candidates, from young people involved in GCSEs in schools to adults involved in learning programmes to help them find and progress in work.

¹ QDCA <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.ofqual.gov.uk/68.aspx>

Functional Skills Criteria

Working with a wide range of partners, QCDA produced final versions of the Functional Skills criteria. These were published in November 2009. Functional Skills criteria are available for English, mathematics and ICT at Entry Level 1, Entry Level 2, Entry Level 3, Level 1 and Level 2. The criteria determine the knowledge and skills proficiency required by learners at each level.

The Functional Skills criteria are designed to provide a framework for assessment and to be sufficiently flexible to be interpreted in a variety of contexts, for example in school and workplace settings, and by a range of users.

This criteria has since been updated by Ofqual and can be found on their website www.ofqual.gov.uk/qualifications-assessments.

Functional Skills Assessments

Functional Skills assessments are based primarily on task-based scenario questions with a limited duration. All three components of speaking, listening and communication, reading and writing are internally assessed under controlled assessment conditions. The assessments will use and reinforce skills-based, problem-solving learning techniques. Assessment opportunities will be offered throughout the year, on demand so that learners may access the assessments when their tutors feel they are ready. Assessments may be taken on different days to support the needs of learners. Learners may also complete the assessments task by task with short breaks in between, provided that the short assessment sessions do not total more than the permitted duration of the assessment and that learners cannot access the assessments or further teaching between the sessions.

Centres may download the assessments from the secure Functional Skills section of the NOCN website (www.nocn.org.uk). Centres should contact functionalskills@nocn.org.uk if they do not have a Functional Skills login for the site. The assessments may be contextualised by the centre using the guidance on the assessment mark sheet. A copy of the contextualised assessment should be made available to NOCN or the regional External Verifier on request. If a centre decides to design a totally new assessment, they should submit it to NOCN at least 15 working days before the planned use of the assessment with learners to allow the assessment to be standardised in the same way as other NOCN devised assessments. When NOCN is satisfied that the assessment meets the criteria, the centre will receive confirmation that it has been approved. The centre must give permission for the assessment to be added to the assessment bank available to all other centres.

All assessments must be assessed by the Functional Skills English tutor at all Entry levels. To check the conduct of the assessments and to verify the assessment decisions made by the tutor, a minimum of 10% of speaking, listening and communication assessments at all levels must be observed by an experienced internal verifier and a written record made of the observation. The internal verifier should have a good level of understanding and knowledge of the Functional Skills English criteria. An exemplar Observation of Internal Assessment Record Sheet may be found in Appendix 2 which identifies the minimum information required, but centres may develop their own recording sheet as long as it captures the minimum information

required by NOCN. Once the assessment records are completed by the Functional Skills English tutor, the centre should complete an internal verification sample of the documents.

When the assessments have been internally verified, the NOCN will appoint an external verifier who will visit the centre to check the quality of the assessment and verification systems and to recommend achievement of the components or qualification. See section 7 for further details of quality systems.

The NOCN Functional Skills qualification in English at Entry 1, 2 and 3 qualifications comprise of three separate summative assessments which focus on the three component skill areas of speaking, listening and communication, reading and writing. The assessments contain a number of tasks which cover the whole of the criteria and the whole of the coverage and range statements at this level, whilst sampling from the range of contexts. The assessments of the three components are equally weighted.

Writing assessments are one hour in duration. Reading assessments are 45 minutes in duration.

Speaking, listening and communication assessments are 15 minutes in duration, but learners may have an additional 30 minutes preparation time if required before the assessment begins. Learners must be supervised throughout the whole of the preparation time.

All tasks must be completed. All assessments are internally assessed and centres may use either the NOCN devised assessment or contextualise the assessment in line with the guidance in the assessment mark scheme. Each component assessment has detailed guidelines which outlines how the assessment must administered and the level and type of support available to the learners and a detailed mark scheme identifies how marks should be allocated by assessors.

2. NOCN Functional Skills qualification in English at Entry 1, 2 and 3

Aims and Objectives of the Qualifications

The term *functional* should be considered in the broad sense of providing learners with the skills and abilities they need to take an active and responsible role in their communities, in their workplace and in educational settings. It requires learners to be able to communicate in ways that make them effective and involved as citizens, operate confidently and to convey their ideas and opinions clearly in a wide range of contexts.

The Functional Skills criteria in English aim to equip learners with the skills and confidence to apply, combine and adapt their English knowledge and skills to new situations in their life and work in a range of contexts and for various purposes.

The aim of the NOCN Functional Skills qualification in English at Entry 1, 2 and 3 qualifications are therefore to equip learners with the skills and confidence to apply, combine and adapt their English knowledge to new situations in their life and work. They are concerned with developing and recognising the ability of learners to apply and transfer skills in ways that are appropriate to their situation. The assessments therefore focus on functionality and the application of skills as articulated by the Functional Skills criteria in English.

The NOCN Functional Skills qualification in English at Entry 1, 2 and 3 qualifications are designed to assess Functional Skills in English at each sub-level of Entry as determined by the Functional Skills criteria. The qualifications require learners to successfully achieve summative assessment tasks that are externally set. Candidates can take these when they have undergone a relevant teaching and learning programme that covers the skills criteria in their entirety at the relevant sub-level of Entry and have developed the appropriate skills ready for assessment.

Subject Matter and Content of the Qualifications

To achieve the NOCN Functional Skills qualification in English at Entry 1, 2 and 3 qualifications learners would be expected to:

- Apply their knowledge and understanding to identify the approaches required to communicate with others in increasingly unfamiliar and non-routine contexts and situations (**complexity**).
- Apply a range of techniques across an increasingly wide range of texts, formal and informal situations and contexts (**technical demand**).
- Use English skills with increasing levels of independence, drawing on a range of approaches to each skill area (**independence**).
- Apply their knowledge, skills and understanding within familiar contexts across a range of situations and text types (**familiarity**).

There are no units of assessment within the Functional Skills qualifications, which are achieved by successful completion of externally set summative component assessments in reading, writing and speaking, listening and communication. Normally learners would have to achieve a pass in each of the components to achieve an overall pass in Functional Skills English at Entry

Level 1, 2 or 3. However, see section 3 for further information on learners with particular requirements.

Administrative guidance may be found in the Centre Guidance for Functional Skills document.

Assessments focus on functional real-life situations. They assess the effective application of English skills in purposeful familiar contexts and straightforward scenarios at each sub-level of English. They assess how learners approach familiar tasks in a range of contexts and straightforward situations, using a range of techniques to communicate with others, read and understand texts of an increasing range of text styles and to write texts using an increasing range of skills to present information. Assessments are developed around a broad theme, for example, Getting Fit.

Guided Learning Hours

Guided Learning Hours (GLH) are a guide to the amount of teacher-supervised or directed study time a learner will need to complete the learning needed for a qualification. NOCN recognises that every learner is different and the actual time taken may vary beyond the maximum and minimum shown.

Training providers not reliant on public funding measured by glh may find them a useful guide to the recommended length of a programme of study. The learning hours can be divided in any way, for example, a 20 glh hour programme could be delivered in 2 hours a week for 10 weeks or 8 hours a day for 3 days, depending on the course and learners.

Relationship with National Criteria

The NOCN Functional Skills qualification in English at Entry 1, 2 and 3 are qualifications related to the Functional Skills criteria: English November 2009 developed by QCDA. They assess understanding and skills development that underpins functional competence in English as identified in these criteria. The Functional Skills criteria for English Entry Level 1, 2 and 3 can be found in Appendix 1.

Language Requirements

The Functional Skills qualifications are only available in England and therefore these qualifications are only available in English.

Progression Opportunities

NOCN Functional Skills qualification in English at Entry 1, 2 and 3 enable progression to further learning, employment, and learning and development opportunities within employment.

Functional Skills qualifications are designed from Entry 1 to Level 2 to ensure clear progression pathways and personal development opportunities. The levels comply with the level descriptors for positioning units within the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF). This will ensure that learner achievement is clearly understood by both the learner and audiences outside of the education environment.

The NOCN Functional Skills qualification in English at Entry 1 and 2 allows learners to progress to:

- higher levels of Entry Level Functional Skills English qualifications;
- further study for vocational, vocational-related or general qualifications at Entry Level or Level 1 (for example, Level 1 NVQs or Level 1 Diplomas).

After successfully achieving the NOCN Functional Skills qualification in English at Entry 3 learners may be able to progress to:

- Level 1 Functional Skills English;
- further study for vocational, vocational-related or general qualifications at Entry or Level 1 (for example, Level 1 NVQs or Level 1 Diplomas).

The NOCN Functional Skills qualification in English at Entry 1, 2 and 3 qualifications will support study in the full range of subjects and sectors.

3. Who are the qualifications for

There are no age restrictions for these qualifications.

Functional Skills are vital to the personal development of all learners.

The qualification is suitable for a wide range of candidates including:

- adults involved in learning programmes to prepare them for work;
- adults in work to provide progression opportunities;
- young people involved in GCSEs in schools;
- those involved in Diplomas and Apprenticeships.

These new qualifications are assessed primarily through tasks, rather than traditional knowledge-based tests, helping learners to enhance and apply their problem solving skills effectively.

Adults and young people will develop vital problem-solving skills, ensuring that they are well equipped for success in employment, further learning and life.

Employers will also benefit as Functional Skills qualifications will help to ensure that employees are able to apply fundamental problem-solving skills in work situations, improving effectiveness and productivity.

Functional Skills Assessments

Functional Skills assessments are designed:

As summative assessments, for example they can be used when the learner is ready for assessment, that is, they have developed the appropriate skills through a teaching and learning programme. This should cover the Functional Skills criteria in their entirety at the relevant sub-level of Entry Level.

- To assess the whole of the Functional Skills criteria and the whole of the coverage and range statements.
- To assess confident and competent use of the three component skills of speaking, listening and communication, reading and writing.

The assessments will be externally developed by NOCN and will be designed as assessment tasks based on 'real life' contexts. Contexts may be based on for example:

- Work and education.
- Community, citizenship and environment.
- Family, home and social issues.

All assessments at Entry Level 1, 2 and 3 are internally assessed and externally verified and the assessments should take place under controlled conditions. These assessments are downloaded from www.nocn.org.uk with a secure Functional Skills login and may be contextualised by the centre in line with the guidance available on the assessment mark sheet or centres may use the NOCN devised assessments. Further guidance on the controlled assessment may be found in the Centre Guidance for Functional Skills document, within the assessment mark sheet or in section 1 of this qualification specification.

Restrictions on Learner Entry

There are no restrictions on learner entry to these qualifications. However learners should have undertaken relevant initial assessments to ensure that they are following an appropriate learning programme leading to the summative assessment.

Recommended Prior Learning

There is no recommended prior knowledge, attainment or experience needed by learners wishing to enrol on these qualifications.

Learners with Particular Requirements

Assessment within the NOCN Functional Skills qualification in English at Entry 1, 2 and 3 is designed to be accessible and inclusive. The assessment methodology is appropriate and rigorous for individuals or groups of learners.

If you have learners with particular requirements you should refer to the 'Access to Fair Assessment Policy and Procedure' which can be found in the NOCN Centre Handbook area of the NOCN website within the Learning Providers section.

This section gives clear guidance on the reasonable adjustments and arrangements that can be made to take account of disability or learning difficulty without comprising the achievement of the assessment criteria.

The NOCN Centre Recognition process requires policy statements on Equal Opportunities and Diversity and Disability Discrimination. These policy statements are then checked and confirmed through the Quality Review and Risk Assessment processes.

In addition, the Functional Skills English criteria outline additional support which may be made available to the learners (see the next 2 pages for details).

Functional Skills English (Speaking, Listening and Communication):

Scope: The arrangements described here apply only to assessment leading to the awarding of the speaking, listening and communication component of Functional Skills in English qualifications.

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

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

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

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

Functional Skills English (Reading):

Scope: The arrangements described here apply only to assessment leading to the awarding of the reading component of Functional Skills in English qualifications.

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 the use of words that are written, printed, on screen or presented using Braille.

As a reasonable adjustment, learners 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 criteria through use of screen reader software.

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

Functional Skills English (Writing):

Scope: The arrangements described here apply only to assessment leading to the awarding of the writing component of Functional Skills in English qualifications.

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, learners who are disabled under the terms of the Equality Act 2010 and who 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 criteria through use of a computer and appropriate software.

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

4. Achieving the qualifications

Learners will undergo appropriate teaching and learning programmes as would normally be delivered by centres. Curriculum teaching and learning must cover the Functional Skills criteria for English in their entirety at Entry Level 1, 2 or 3. Learners can take the summative assessment for the qualifications when they have developed the appropriate skills and are ready for assessment.

The summative assessment consists of externally set assessment tasks that assess the whole of the skill criteria and the underpinning coverage and range. Sample assessments and detailed mark schemes, which are mapped to the Functional Skills criteria for English, are available on the NOCN website in the Learning Providers section under Functional Skills.

The assessment tasks must be taken under controlled conditions. The duration of the assessments will be 45 minutes for reading and one hour for writing at all sub-levels of Entry Level. The assessments may take place in the classroom but the learners should not be disadvantaged by the environment. The speaking, listening and communication assessment at all levels is 15 minutes long but learners are permitted 30 minutes preparation time prior to the assessment. The preparation time must be supervised at all times.

Assessment Conditions and Procedures

Full guidance on the administrative procedures may be found within the Centre Guidance for Functional Skills.

It is intended that learners will take assessments for the qualifications 'on demand' when they are ready.

Centres may download the assessments from the secure Functional Skills section of the NOCN website www.nocn.org.uk. Centres should contact functionalskills@nocn.org.uk if they do not have a Functional Skills login for the site. The assessments may be contextualised by the centre using the guidance on the assessment mark sheet. A copy of the contextualised assessment should be made available to NOCN or the regional External Verifier on request. Centres should use the NOCN devised speaking, listening and communication and writing mark schemes and should amend the reading mark scheme as required to meet the requirements of the task.

Where a centre wishes to write their own totally new assessments, these must be submitted to NOCN for standardisation in line with all other NOCN devised assessments a minimum of 15 working days before the planned assessment date with learners. NOCN will confirm to the centre that the assessment is approved and the assessment will form part of the live assessment bank available to all centres. Full details of the standardisation process may be found in the NOCN Administrative Guidance for Functional Skills which is available from functionalskills@nocn.org.uk. The assessments are internally marked and internally verified.

All assessments must be conducted by the Functional Skills English tutor. To check that the assessments are being conducted in line with the requirements in the mark scheme and to verify the assessment decisions of the tutors, a minimum of 10% of speaking, listening and communication assessments at all levels must be observed by an experienced internal verifier

as well as the tutor and a written record must be made by the internal verifier of the observation. An exemplar Observation of Internal Assessment Record Sheet may be found in Appendix 3 which identifies the minimum information required, but centres may develop their own recording sheet as long as it captures the minimum information required by NOCN. Once the assessment records are completed by the assessor, the centre should complete a further 10-25% moderation sample of the assessment documents. The sample should cover all levels, components and tutors.

Following internal verification, the centre should request an external verification visit from the NOCN External Verifier to externally verify the assessment decisions and to award achievement of the components. After two clear external verification visits, the centre may gain Direct Claims status and be able to sign off achievements of the component/qualification.

Embedding Functional Skills Assessments

The qualifications can be delivered on a standalone basis or embedded into vocational/other qualifications.

The Functional Skills Entry Level 1, 2 and 3 English assessment is delivered as a qualification at a stage when the learner has developed the appropriate skills following a relevant teaching and learning programme. The assessment could therefore be used alongside other provision. For example, learners working towards the NOCN Qualifications in Progression could undertake the Functional Skills Entry Level 1, 2 or 3 English assessment at any point appropriate for the learner in order to provide evidence of achievement in English skills.

Embedded teaching and learning combines the development of literacy, language and numeracy with vocational, ICT or other skills. Using this approach, learners have the opportunity to achieve a Functional Skills Entry Level 1, 2 or 3 English qualification as well as the vocational/other qualification.

5. How the qualifications will be assessed

The qualifications are awarded to learners who successfully achieve the summative task-based assessment as per the qualification specification, indicated in section 4. Achieving the qualifications.

Assessment

Achievement of the qualifications is through successful completion of three individual component task-based assessments which are:

- externally set by NOCN and may be internally contextualised by the centre;
- internally marked by centre;
- externally verified by NOCN.

NOCN will be required to retain completed assessments for NOCN standardisation and question analysis activity. These will also be subject to national Awarding Bodies' standardisation activities to inform ongoing developing of assessment materials during the pilot.

Assessment Design

Mark schemes specify how the assessments may be contextualised by the centres to meet the needs of their learners without altering the level of the assessment. Tasks, whether NOCN or centre devised, will be replaced annually.

Entry 1

The learner will take part in simple discussions/exchanges about familiar subjects with a person who is familiar to the learner. They will read and understand short simple texts and write short simple sentences.

Learners may use word processing software in the writing assessment, but it is not mandatory. Dictionaries may be used.

The assessments cover the whole of the Entry 1 Functional Skills English criteria and coverage and range statements. They sample from the range of contexts identified for the level. The mark schemes specify the performance evidence that is necessary to achieve the full range of marks. The assessment papers indicate how many marks are available for each task.

No pre-release material is used. Learners must complete the reading assessment in 45 minutes, the writing assessment in one hour and the speaking, listening and communication assessment must be completed within 15 minutes. Learners may have an additional 30 minutes preparation time for the speaking, listening and communication assessments. Learners must be supervised throughout the preparation time.

Speaking, listening and communication and writing assessments are 100% open response tasks. Fixed response questions are used in reading assessments to allow direct assessment of reading skills and to minimise the writing demands of the assessments.

Entry 2

The learner will take part in discussions/exchanges about familiar topics with one or more familiar people in familiar situations. They will read and understand straightforward texts and write short texts showing some awareness of the intended audience.

Learners may use word processing software in the writing assessment, but it is not mandatory. Dictionaries may be used.

The assessments cover the whole of the Entry 2 Functional Skills English criteria and coverage and range statements. They may sample from the range of contexts identified for the level. The mark schemes specify the performance evidence that is necessary to achieve the full range of marks. The assessment papers indicate how many marks are available for each task.

No pre-release material is used. Learners must complete the reading assessment in 45 minutes, the writing assessment in one hour and the speaking, listening and communication assessment must be completed within 15 minutes. Learners may have an additional 30 minutes preparation time, which must be supervised at all times, for the speaking, listening and communication task.

Speaking, listening and communication and writing assessments are 100% open response tasks. Fixed response questions are used in reading assessments to allow direct assessment of reading skills and to minimise the writing demands of the assessments.

Entry 3

The learner will take part in discussions/exchanges about familiar topics with one or more familiar people in familiar situations. They will read and understand straightforward texts and write short texts showing some awareness of the intended audience.

Learners may use word processing software in the Writing assessment, but it is not mandatory. Dictionaries may be used.

The assessments cover the whole of the Entry 3 Functional Skills English criteria and coverage and range statements. They may sample from the range of contexts identified for the level. The mark schemes specify the performance evidence that is necessary to achieve the full range of marks. The assessment papers indicate how many marks are available for each task.

No pre-release material is used. Learners must complete the reading assessment in 45 minutes, the writing assessment in one hour and the speaking, listening and communication assessment must be completed within 15 minutes. Learners may have an additional 30 minutes preparation time, which must be supervised at all times, for the speaking, listening and communication task.

Speaking, listening and communication and writing assessments are 100% open response tasks. A limited number of fixed response questions are used in reading assessments to allow direct assessment of reading skills and to minimise the writing demands of the assessments.

Marking Tasks

All assessments are internally assessed using the NOCN assessment mark sheet. All assessments must be conducted by the Functional Skills English tutor and in addition 10% of the speaking, listening and communication must be observed by both the tutor and an internal verifier and a written record of the observation produced by the internal verifier. This observation of the assessment process is to check the validity of the assessment decisions and to ensure that the assessments are being conducted as required by the guidance on the mark schemes. (See Appendix 2 for an exemplar record sheet). See section 4 for further guidance on marking these assessments.

Summative/Externally Set Assessment

All assessments are internally marked using an NOCN mark sheet although the NOCN devised assessment may be contextualised by the centre in line with the guidance on the mark sheet.

Assessment Summary

To achieve one of the qualifications the learner must normally pass the assessment for each of the components at the appropriate level. (However, see section 3 for information for learners with particular requirements).

Certification

At the external verification visit, a Recommendation for the Award of Credit form will be signed by the external verifier to allow certification of the qualification. A formal statement of results indicating the level achieved and components achieved will be issued.

Where no exemption has been granted, learners must pass the assessments of Functional Skills: reading, writing and speaking, listening and communication to be awarded the qualification. Learners achieving a pass in each of the required components will be awarded the qualification at the level of the lowest component achieved.

In exceptional circumstances, NOCN will recognise achievement of any Functional Skills English component issued by another awarding organisation offering the qualifications. Component achievement remains valid for the duration of the qualification accreditation period.

6. Offering the qualification

Recognised Centres

If you are already recognised to offer NOCN qualifications and would like more information contact: business-enquiries@nocn.org.uk.

If you are ready to add the qualification to your curriculum offer, please log in to the NOCN website, under Centres/Processes and Documents, and complete the 'Additional Qualification Approval Request Form,' which can then be returned to business-enquiries@nocn.org.uk for the attention of your Account and Sector Manager.

New Centres

If you are interested in offering NOCN qualifications but not currently working with NOCN, you will need to be recognised as an NOCN approved centre. This process includes:

- Confirmation that your organisation has an adequate infrastructure in place to support the effective delivery of NOCN qualifications
- An agreement signed by the principal authority in the organisation confirming adherence to the specified terms and conditions. This safeguards the quality assurance standards, in relation the delivery and assessment process.

If you would like more information about becoming an NOCN centre and offering this qualification please see 'New centres' under the 'Centres' section on our website www.nocn.org.uk or contact compliance@nocn.org.uk.

Full details of all NOCN requirements are provided in Recognised Centre Handbook on the NOCN website at www.nocn.org.uk. Additional information may be found in the Centre Guidance for Functional Skills document which is available from NOCN.

A dedicated NOCN Functional Skills email address is available for all assessment queries: functionalskills@nocn.org.uk.

7. How are the qualifications quality assured

7.1 General Information

All providers wishing to deliver these qualifications will need to demonstrate the ability to manage and deliver the assessments, including adherence to quality assurance and assessment regulations.

NOCN will provide guidance and give support in enabling you to deliver the qualification.

All assessments are internally assessed,

Direct Claims Status (DCS) and Approved Lead Assessors (ALA)

If a centre already has an approved internal verifier (AIV) for Sector 14, this person will not automatically be able to sign off Recommendation for Award of Credit (RAC) forms for Functional Skills. The centre may still attain Direct Claims Status (DCS) through the process outlined here. The following process replaces the AIVs process on Page 24 of the Centre Handbook. The AIV may become an Approved Lead Assessor (ALA) if they meet the following criteria. The centre should nominate internal verifiers to become ALAs using the form

Entry Level

Centres may have DCS for all Entry Level provision after two clear external verification visits. However, even when DCS has been attained, all assessments must be retained until after the next external verification visit and then sent to NOCN for monitoring and standardisation purposes. External verifiers must see a current curriculum vitae (CV) for all assessors and internal verifiers for the Functional Skills qualifications and will sign them before confirming in their report to the centre that they are satisfied that both the skills and experience on the CV and the assessment and verification of assessments meet the required standard and show good practice. External verifiers will recommend that the centre is approved for DCS for Functional Skills on their second report and will recommend which internal verifiers are now ALAs. ALAs will normally be approved for specific subject areas and levels. These ALAs will be able to sign off specific RACs for Entry Level provision and the RACs for Level 1 and 2 speaking, listening and communication.

Assessors should have, or be working towards teaching qualifications and should have evidence of relevant Continuous Professional Development in Functional Skills. When LLUK has issued guidance on the qualifications a Functional Skills assessor should hold, NOCN will apply this criteria to the approval process. CVs for new assessors will be checked at the next external verification visit.

To become an ALA for Functional Skills, an internal verifier has to provide the external verifier with a current CV showing a minimum of two years' experience in Skills for Life or Key Skills or Functional Skills delivery and assessment plus a relevant teaching qualification. It is also desirable that the ALA has experience of internal verification in Skills for Life, Functional Skills or Key Skills qualifications. In addition the ALA must evidence recent Continuous Professional Development in Functional Skills. When LLUK has issued guidance on

qualifications required to deliver and assess Functional Skills, this will become an additional requirement.

The ALA **will not** be required to complete the NOCN Approved Internal Verifier (AIV) training.

The centre must send at least one ALA to NOCN Functional Skills training on a yearly basis which should then be cascaded in the centre. The training will be available at a number of venues throughout the country.

The role of the ALA

The ALA will conduct observations of the assessment process for speaking, listening and communication and complete a written record of their findings. The ALA will moderate a 10-25% sample of assessed work and completed mark schemes. They will lead standardisation across the assessors to ensure that the mark schemes are being applied consistently. They will be able to sign off the RAC once DCS has been approved.

Withdrawal of Direct Claims Status (DCS) and Approved Assessment Verifiers (ALA)

Where there is evidence that the required standards have not been met, NOCN may decide to withdraw DCS and/or the approved status of an individual ALA.

7.2 Standardisation

Standardisation is a process that promotes consistency in the understanding and application of standards, as it:

- establishes statements on the standard of evidence required to meet the assessment criteria for the units in NOCN qualifications
- makes recommendations on assessment practice
- produces advice and guidance for the assessment of units
- identifies good practice in assessment.

It is a requirement of the Centre Recognition Process that each Centre offering the units from the qualification must contribute assessment materials and learners' evidence for NOCN standardisation if requested.

NOCN will notify Centres of the required sample for standardisation purposes. Assessment materials, learners' evidence and tutor feedback will be collected by External Verifiers on behalf of NOCN.

Outcomes from standardisation will be available to Centres through NOCN.

APPENDIX 1

FUNCTIONAL SKILLS CRITERIA: ENGLISH

ENTRY LEVEL 1 ENGLISH CRITERIA

Functional Skills Performance	Functional Skills Coverage and Range
<p><u>Speaking, listening and communication</u></p> <p>Participate in and understand the main points of simple discussions/exchanges about familiar topics with another person in a familiar situation.</p>	<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.
<p><u>Reading</u></p> <p>Read and understand short, simple texts that explain or recount information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read and understand simple regular words and sentences. • Understand short texts on familiar topics and experiences.
<p><u>Writing</u></p> <p>Write short, simple sentences.</p>	<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.

ENTRY LEVEL 2 ENGLISH CRITERIA

Functional Skills Performance	Functional Skills Coverage and Range
<p><u>Speaking, listening and communication</u></p> <p>Participate in discussions/exchanges about familiar topics, making active contributions with one or more people in familiar situations.</p>	<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.
<p><u>Reading</u></p> <p>Read and understand straightforward texts that explain, inform or recount information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the main events of chronological texts. • Read and understand simple instructions and directions. • Read and understand high frequency words and words with common spelling patterns. • Use knowledge of alphabetical order to locate information.
<p><u>Writing</u></p> <p>Write short texts with some awareness of the intended audience.</p>	<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.

ENTRY LEVEL 3 ENGLISH CRITERIA

Functional Skills Performance	Functional Skills Coverage and Range
<p><u>Speaking, listening and communication</u></p> <p>Respond appropriately to others and make some extended contributions in familiar formal and informal discussions/exchanges.</p>	<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 others' point of view. • Use appropriate language in formal discussions/exchanges. • Make relevant contributions, allowing for and responding to others' input.
<p><u>Reading</u></p> <p>Read and understand the purpose and content of straightforward texts that explain, inform and recount information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the main points of texts. • Obtain specific information through detailed reading. • Use organisational features to locate information. • Read and understand texts in different formats using strategies/techniques appropriate to the task.
<p><u>Writing</u></p> <p>Write texts with some adaptation to the intended audience.</p>	<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.

APPENDIX 2

OBSERVATION OF INTERNAL ASSESSMENT RECORD SHEET

NOCN Functional Skills

Report on Observation of Internal Assessment

Instructions for Centres

Centres must ensure that an appropriate second tutor/assessor carries out formal observation, including a written report of performance for a minimum of 10% of the cohort for specific components of Functional Skills English and specific levels of Functional Skills mathematics. This is to ensure that the assessments, which require very limited learner recording of responses, are being conducted appropriately.

These are:

- Functional Skills English speaking, listening and communication at **all** levels
- Entry Level 1 Functional Skills mathematics.

A minimum 10% of the cohort must be observed proportionately across the relevant levels for **each** of these components/qualifications.

When more than one tutor conducts the assessments, the observation of assessments should be spread proportionately across all tutors.

Although there is no requirement to make an audio/visual recording of the assessment, this may be done to further strengthen the quality assurance process.

A separate copy of this Report on Observation of Internal Assessment should be completed by the observer for each tutor carrying out assessment

At Entry Level the form should be retained and made available for the external verification visit

At Level 1 and Level 2, the form should be retained and made available for the external verification visit.

NOCN Functional Skills

Report on Observation of Internal Assessment

Name of Centre	
Regional NOCN	
Functional Skill	
Functional Skill Level	
Date(s) of assessment	
Name of Tutor/Assessor	
Name of Observer	
Learners observed (names and ULNs)	
Were assessments conducted in accordance with the NOCN Functional Skills guidance?	
Do you agree with the assessor's decisions? Give details of any adjustments applied to the assessor's assessment of the performance of the learners as an outcome of this observation process (with reference to specific learners)	
Other comments or feedback to assessor	
Have you attached a list of all learners (at the same level) in this assessment cohort? (This can be a copy of the CLRF, class list or RAC.)	
Observer's signature and date	
Tutor/Assessor's signature and date	

NOCN Functional Skills qualification in English at Entry 1
NOCN Functional Skills qualification in English at Entry 2
NOCN Functional Skills qualification in English at Entry 3



APPENDIX 3

NOMINATION FORM FOR APPROVED LEAD ASSESSOR ROLE

Nomination Form

Approved Lead Assessor

1 CENTRE DETAILS

Centre name:	<input type="text"/>	NOCN Centre no:	<input type="text"/>
Quality Assurance Contact	<input type="text"/>		

2 PERSONAL DETAILS

Full Name	<input type="text"/>		
Telephone	<input type="text"/>	Email	<input type="text"/>
Role at Centre	<input type="text"/>		

3 PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE

Please provide details of all Functional Skills, Basic/ Key Skills experience you have and any Internal / External Verification or Moderation experience you have attained.

4 QUALIFICATIONS

Please provide details of any teaching qualifications you hold, i.e. PGCE, Cert Ed, DTLLS including dates achieved. Also include details of CPD training attended and any specialist Skills for Life qualifications.

5 CONFIRMATION AND SIGNATURE

I hereby declare that the information given in this application is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Applicant	<input type="text"/>	Quality Assurance Contact	<input type="text"/>
Dated	<input type="text"/>	Dated	<input type="text"/>

NOCN office use only

Route Agreed:	<input type="text"/>		
NOCN External Verifier:	<input type="text"/>	Date:	<input type="text"/>

NOCN Functional Skills Qualification in English at Entry Level (Entry 1) (Entry 2) and (Entry 3)



Operational Start Date: 01/09/2010
Review End Date: 31/08/2016

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