



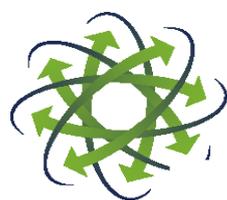
Vtct

Handbook

*Functional Skills English Level
1 & 2*

FSE01

FSE02



Skillsfirst

Qualification Codes

Skillsfirst Qualification code	Qualification Title	Learning Aim Reference
FSE01	Skillsfirst Functional Skills Qualification in English Level 1	501/1497/9
FSE02	Skillsfirst Functional Skills Qualification in English Level 2	501/1498/0

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1.0 Introduction to Functional Skills

1.1 What are Functional Skills?

Functional Skills have been developed as part of a government initiative to improve the levels of literacy, numeracy and ICT in the UK. The qualifications have been designed to assess skills that can be applied to a learner's life, learning and work.

VTCT currently offers Functional Skills at levels 1 and 2, with flexible, onscreen testing opportunities for all subjects, delivered through Skillsfirst Awards.

1.2 Who is this qualification for?

Functional Skills underpin nearly all forms of 14+ learning in England and are intended for a vast range of different settings.

There are specific rules around the achievement of Functional Skills within Apprenticeship frameworks, as well as an expectation that Foundation Learning and other programmes (e.g. GCE/GCSE) should include opportunities to develop and achieve appropriate Functional Skills qualifications.

1.3 What does the English Functional Skill qualification cover?

Competence in Functional Skills English is broadly about being able to:

In speaking, listening and communication:

- take part in discussions and allow for and respond to input from others
- prepare for and contribute with ideas and opinions
- adapt contributions to suit the audience
- present information /ideas clearly using appropriate language

In reading:

- select/read and understand/compare texts

In writing:

- write a range of texts
- present information clearly and in a logical sequence
- use correct grammar
- use correct spelling and punctuation

2.0 Qualification Structures

These qualifications can be achieved by the learner completing the single mandatory unit.

Skillsfirst Functional Skills qualification in English at level 1 – FSE01

Mandatory components: The learner is required to complete one mandatory unit which is made up of the following three components:

Component title	Guided Learning Hours
English Writing Level 1	15
English Reading Level 1	15
Speaking, Listening and Communication Level 1	15

Skillsfirst Functional Skills qualification in English at level 2 – FSE02

Mandatory components: The learner is required to complete one mandatory unit which is made up of the following three components:

Component Title	Guided Learning Hours
English Writing Level 2	15
English Reading Level 2	15
Speaking, Listening and Communication Level 2	15

All three of these assessment components are externally-set. The reading and writing components are also externally marked, whilst the speaking, listening and communication component is internally assessed.

When a registered learner has achieved the speaking, listening and communication component, centres need to claim the result within VTCT's Linx2Online system. Results are subject to external quality assurance (including observation) by Skillsfirst and/or VTCT.

The achievement of each component is reported positively on the qualification certificate.

3.0 Qualification details

3.1 Standards for the English Level 1 components with assessment weightings:

Reading

Skill standard	Coverage and range	Assessment weighting
Read and understand a range of straightforward texts.	Identify the main points and ideas and how they are presented in a variety of texts. Read and understand texts in detail. Utilise information contained in texts. Identify suitable responses to texts.	Equal weighting across all the coverage and range.

Writing

Skill standard	Coverage and range	Assessment weighting
Write a range of texts to communicate information, ideas and opinions, using formats and styles suitable for their purpose and audience.	Write clearly and coherently, including an appropriate level of detail. Present information in a logical sequence. Use language, format and structure suitable for purpose and audience.	55-60%
	Use correct grammar, including correct and consistent use of tense. Ensure written work includes generally accurate punctuation and spelling and that meaning is clear.	40-45%

Speaking, Listening and Communicating

Skill standard	Coverage and range	Assessment weighting
Take part in formal and informal discussions and exchanges that include unfamiliar subjects.	<p>Make relevant and extended contributions to discussions, allowing for and responding to others' input.</p> <p>Prepare for and contribute to the formal discussion of ideas and opinions.</p> <p>Make different kinds of contributions to discussions.</p> <p>Present information / points of view clearly and in appropriate language.</p>	Equal weighting across all the coverage and range.

Important note: centres **must** ensure that all staff involved in the assessment of Speaking, Listening and Communication have seen and be conversant with the content of the VTCT/Skillsfirst SLC DVD training guide before carrying out any assessments.

3.2 Standards for the English Level 2 Components with assessment weightings:

Reading

Skill standard	Coverage and range	Assessment weighting
Select, read, understand and compare texts and use them to gather information, ideas, arguments and opinions	<p>Select and use different types of texts to obtain and utilise relevant information.</p> <p>Read and summarise, succinctly, information / ideas from different sources</p> <p>Identify the purposes of texts and comment on how meaning is conveyed.</p> <p>Detect point of view, implicit meaning and / or bias.</p> <p>Analyse texts in relation to audience needs and consider suitable responses.</p>	Equal weighting across all the coverage and range.

Writing

Skill standard	Coverage and range	Assessment weighting
Write a range of texts, including extended written documents, communicating information, ideas and opinions effectively and persuasively	<p>Present information / ideas concisely, logically and persuasively.</p> <p>Present information on complex subjects clearly and concisely.</p> <p>Use a range of writing styles for different purposes.</p> <p>Use a range of sentence structures, including complex sentences, and paragraphs to organise written communication effectively.</p>	55-60%
	<p>Punctuate written text using commas, apostrophes and inverted commas accurately.</p> <p>Ensure written work is fit for purpose and audience, with accurate spelling and grammar that support clear meaning in a range of text types.</p>	40-45%

Speaking, Listening and Communicating

Skill standard	Coverage and range	Assessment weighting
Make a range of contributions to discussions in a range of contexts, including those that are unfamiliar and make effective presentations.	<p>Consider complex information and give a relevant, cogent response in appropriate language</p> <p>Present information and ideas clearly and persuasively to others.</p> <p>Adapt contributions and ideas clearly and persuasively to others.</p> <p>Make significant contributions to discussions taking a range of roles and helping to move discussion forward.</p>	Equal weighting across all the coverage and range.

Important note: centres **must** ensure that all staff involved in the assessment of Speaking, Listening and Communication have seen and be conversant with the content of the VTCT/Skillsfirst SLC DVD training guide before carrying out any assessments.

4.0 Delivering Functional Skills

The time taken to complete the Functional Skills qualifications will vary significantly between learners – dependent upon their previous experience, interests and their exposure to work related activities. Programmes of learning should take factors such as this into account.

During the delivery, it is important to maximise the association with real life situations as the assessments will be based on real life scenarios.

To effectively delivery Functional Skills, centres must ensure that the appropriate teaching, administrative and physical resources are in place.

4.1 Teaching Staff

Teaching staff must have one of the following:

- 2 years experience in teaching/training

Or

- Hold or be working towards an appropriate teaching/training qualification (Cert Ed or Learning & Development trainer units)

Plus

- Knowledge and experience in the subject being taught to be able to judge the learner's performance against the Functional Skills Standards and to be able to justify their teaching practices
- As a minimum hold the same level of the qualification being taught – but preferably hold a higher level.

4.2 Learners

There are no formal entry requirements for this qualification. However, centres will need to make an initial assessment of each learner prior to the start of their programme to ensure they are working towards relevant Functional Skills qualifications at the appropriate level.

4.3 Registering learners

In order to enter learners for any of the Functional Skills examinations, centre staff should first register learners with VTCT through our secure online portal **Linx2Online**.

If you don't have a username and password for this portal, please contact VTCT on 02380 684500 or email linx2help@vtct.org.uk.

4.4 Entering learners for the Speaking, Listening and Communication component

As long as the learner is registered for the English qualification, they can sit the SLC assessment when they are ready. This component is internally assessed using VTCT/Skillsfirst approved tasks or centre-produced tasks that has been approved by VTCT/Skillsfirst.

VTCT/Skillsfirst Awards have designed Functional Skills English Level 1 and 2 Speaking, Listening and Communication assessment tasks to meet the requirements of the Functional Skills English Skills standard. These assessment tasks are available from the Functional Skills area of the VTCT website.

Centres who do not wish to use these assessment tasks, or who wish to tailor tasks for specific industries or client groups, may produce their own. However, centre devised tasks **must** be approved by the Skillsfirst senior examiner before use and should meet the setting specification which can be found on the Functional Skills area of the VTCT website.

Amended and/or new tasks, along with a completed setting matrix, should be sent to VTCT for review at least six weeks before the assessment is due to take place. Only when your amendments/new tasks meet the requirements will approval be given. If approval is not received by the time the assessment takes place, centres should use one of the VTCT/Skillsfirst approved tasks. This also applies if the centre wishes to adapt any of the set assessment tasks.

When a registered learner has achieved this component, centres need to submit the result within VTCT's Linx2Online system. Results are subject to external quality assurance (including observation) by Skillsfirst and/or VTCT.

Centres **must** ensure that all staff involved in the assessment of the Speaking, Listening and Communication have viewed the VTCT/Skillsfirst SLC DVD training guide before carrying out any assessments.

4.5 Scheduling Functional Skills Reading and Writing exams

When taken onscreen, Functional Skills Reading and Writing exams can be taken at any time (on-demand). For details on how to schedule and manage onscreen exams please refer to the *SecureAssess/Secure Client Key and Functional Skills User Guide* on the VTCT website.

Marking of papers takes place in frequent windows. For information on marking windows and result release dates refer to the *Functional Skills Exam Delivery Calendar*, available on the VTCT website.

4.6 Preparing learners for the Functional Skills Reading and Writing exam

An onscreen practice test is available to centres through the VTCT website, which can be used by staff and learners to familiarise themselves with the onscreen system functionality.

4.7 Conduct of Functional Skills exams

Functional Skills examinations must be taken under supervised conditions, that is:

- Learners must be continually supervised by a reliable person
- All necessary facilities must be available to learners
- Any time restrictions must be complied with
- Learners work must be independent and unaided

The document *Instructions for conducting Functional Skills examinations* includes further information relating to:

- Invigilation
- Test Environment
- Guidance on conducting onscreen exams
- Safe custody of exam papers
- Dealing with malpractice and emergencies

4.8 Learner certification process

Functional Skills are 'pass' or 'fail' qualifications, they are not graded. They are also free standing qualifications so each subject will be certificated separately. Certificates are titled by skill and level achieved.

In the case of Functional Skills English, VTCT/Skillsfirst will automatically dispatch learners' certificates once centres have met VTCT/Skillsfirst quality assurance requirements and learners have achieved the required pass mark in their exams, together with the claim for the speaking, listening and communication component.

4.9 Re-sits

There are no limits on the number of times a learner may re-sit a Functional Skills exam, however a learner must wait at least 30 days from the date of the last exam (or the date uploaded for onscreen exams).

VTCT strongly recommends that a learner receives proper tuition and preparation before any re-sit.

Please note that there is a charge for each examination re-sit.

4.10 Access arrangements

In line with the guidance provided by the Ofqual, learners can have access to all forms of equipment, software and assistance that constitute their normal way of working. However, these **must not** affect the reliability or validity of assessment outcomes or give the learner

an advantage over other learners undertaking the same or similar assessments.

The Functional Skills qualifications criteria require awarding organisations to develop assessment/exam materials that anticipate the needs of learners with disabilities and which minimise, as far as possible, the need to make reasonable adjustments or exemptions whilst still assessing the skills standards.

Learners may be permitted access to any of the following when undertaking Functional Skills English exams/assessments:

- Dictionary (non-electronic)
- Readers (for writing and SLC only)
- Scribes (for reading and SLC only)
- Practical Assistants
- Transcripts
- BSL Interpreters
- Oral language modifiers
- Modified question papers (including Braille)
- Extra time
- Models, visual/tactile aids, speaking scales

Exemptions – please note

Disability Discrimination legislation (now incorporated into the Equality Act 2010) permits the granting of exemptions for specific assessment components within qualifications in certain circumstances.

Functional Skills qualifications and assessments have been designed to be inclusive and to minimise any later need to make reasonable adjustments or exemptions.

For full details see the *VTCT Reasonable Adjustment and Special Consideration policy* available on the VTCT website.

4.11 Centre Malpractice & Maladministration guidance

Malpractice and maladministration is outlined in the *VTCT Malpractice & Maladministration policy* available on the VTCT website.

4.12 Appeals Procedure

The Appeals procedure is outlined in the *VTCT Enquiries and Appeals Policy* available on the VTCT website.

5.0 Further Support

For further support, please contact the VTCT customer support team on 02380 684500 or customersupport@vtct.org.uk.

7.0 Summary of the English Functional Skill qualifications

Subject	Level	Total number of tasks	Total length of papers	Type of paper	Open/Closed Mix	Total number of marks	Comments
English							
SLC*	1	3	3 x 10 mins	Externally set – internally marked	100% open	60	SLC* is 3 x 10 mins sessions within a one hour period with a minimum of 3 and maximum of 5 learners
Reading	1	3 Reading texts	45 mins	Externally set and marked	>50% open	30	
Writing	1	2	45 mins	Externally set and marked	100% open	60	40/45% marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar
English							
SLC*	2	3	3 x 10 mins	Externally set – internally marked	100% open	60	SLC* is 3 x 10 mins sessions within a one hour period with a minimum of 3 and maximum of 5 learners
Reading	2	3 reading texts	1 hour	Externally set and marked	>50% open	30	
Writing	2	3	1 hour	Externally set and marked	100% open	60	40/45% marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar

*SLC = Speaking, listening and communication