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## ***Guidance on setting centre devised SLC assessment tasks***

*V3 – August 2016*



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## *Guidance on setting SLC assessments tasks*

### **Introduction**

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 [here](#).

All learners should undertake one of the two set assessment tasks in order to achieve this component part of the Functional Skills English.

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 within this document.

Amended and / or new tasks, along with a completed setting matrix, should be sent to Skillsfirst for review at least six weeks before assessment is due to take place. Only if 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 Skillsfirst approved tasks. This also applies if the centre wishes to adapt any of the set assessment tasks.



## Assessment of this qualification

The assessment for this qualification is externally set/guided and internally marked by the centre. Skillsfirst will provide externally set tasks along with guidance to centres on ways in which these may be adapted and also guidance for centres which may wish to develop their own tasks. Any amendment of set tasks or production of alternative tasks by centres must be in line with the setting specifications within this document and sent to Skillsfirst at least eight weeks before assessment is due to take place for approval by the Functional Skills senior examiner.

## Purpose of assessment

To ensure that learners who achieve a pass mark have the minimum level of process skills represented in the skill standard for this subject and level and the related coverage and range.

<b>Level 1 skill standard</b>			
Take full part in formal and information discussions and exchanges that include unfamiliar subjects			
Make relevant and extended contributions to discussions, allowing for and responding to others' input	Prepare for and contribute to the formal discussion of ideas and opinions	Make different kinds of contributions to discussions	Present information / points of view clearly and in appropriate language

At Level 1 the standards to be demonstrated subsume the previous levels' skill standards and the indicative coverage and range, supporting a progression-based suite of skills qualifications. The coverage and range statements in the setting specification below provide the range of opportunities that must be given to all learners to apply in functional contexts that are based on purposeful and real-life scenarios.

<b>Level 2 skill standard</b>			
Make a range of contributions to discussions in a range of contexts, including those that are unfamiliar and make effective presentations			
Consider complex information and give a relevant, cogent response in appropriate language.	Present information and ideas clearly and persuasively to others.	Adapt contributions and ideas clearly and persuasively to others.	Make significant contributions to discussions taking a range of roles and helping to move discussion forward.

At Level 2 the standards to be demonstrated subsume the previous levels' skill standards and the indicative coverage and range, supporting a progression-based suite of skills qualifications. The coverage and range statements in the setting specification below provide the range of opportunities that must be given to all learners to apply in functional contexts that are based on purposeful and real-life scenarios.

## Description of externally set/guided and internally marked assessment task

Each assessment task must

- provide realistic contexts and scenarios
- specify sub-tasks that are relevant to the context and meaningful
- require application of knowledge, skills and understanding for a purpose
- assess process skills and the outcome of their application in different contexts

Every assessment task must be designed to assess a single level, i.e. Level 1. The assessment must provide a reliable measure of proficiency at this level by providing significant evidence of success against the requirements for the standard, coverage and range specified in the setting specification (see Table 1) and shown in the setting matrix (see Table 2).

Every assessment task must enable 100% open response from learners.

Open response assessment is defined as task-based assessment based on real-life contexts that require learners to apply their skills, knowledge and understanding in order to produce effective outcome/s. Open response assessment presents purposeful tasks and problems embedded in realistic scenarios but does not prescribe the content of the learners' response. The process skills applied to contextualised tasks to achieve successful results and/or effective outcomes are a key focus of this type of assessment.

- Every assessment task must focus on functionality and the effective application of process skills in purposeful contexts and scenarios that reflect real-life situations.
- Every assessment task must provide opportunities to demonstrate the skill standard and each activity in the coverage and range.
- Each assessment task consists of related sub-tasks with guidance on the preparation required, instructions to the centre assessor on how to manage the sub-task and a set of ideas to help maintain discussion.
- Learners complete the assessment task and any related sub-tasks under controlled conditions in groups of not less than three and not more than five.
- Learners are permitted to use aids but care must be taken to ensure that the use of any aid does not detract from the need to demonstrate the skill standard through the coverage and range.

## **Mark scheme**

Centres are not required to produce mark schemes. There is a standard mark scheme for the English Speaking Listening and Communication Level 1 and Level 2 assessment components which has been produced by Skillsfirst and should always be used. This clearly states how marks are allocated to the different levels of performance that learners will demonstrate. The mark scheme does not prescribe the content of learners' responses and can therefore easily be applied to the Skillsfirst set assessment tasks and to any centre devised tasks.

Each assessment task and its sub-tasks must clearly enable performance against all of the coverage and range in the skills standard.

## **Pass mark**

The pass mark is set at approximately 75% of available marks as this best describes minimum competence. This will be regularly monitored and reviewed as part of Skillsfirst's awarding processes. The 75% of available marks may be achieved over the coverage and range as a whole, subject to a minimum mark being obtained for each task and each component. There is no requirement to achieve 75% of available marks within each component of the coverage and range in order to achieve a pass overall.

## **Level of language**

Instructions that are given to the learner that are not part of the assessment task and its sub-tasks must be accessible to learners operating at the standard represented by Level 1 and no higher.

Setters (whether setting the assessment tasks for Skillsfirst or from centres amending these tasks or devising their own) should also take care to ensure that use of English in any instructions to learners takes into account the fact that not all learners will have English as their first language.

All setters (again both those setting the Skillsfirst tasks and those from centres) are also responsible for ensuring that the content and instructions for the assessment task and its sub-tasks do not provide unnecessary obstacles to learners, for example, by demanding skills and knowledge outside those actually being assessed.

## **Inclusion**

The assessment task and its related sub-tasks must support inclusion.

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

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

- does not create barriers to achievement and success
- enables learners to demonstrate achievement against the full range of standards using the full range of permitted strategies, and
- meets the security requirements specified in criterion 58f of "The statutory regulation of external qualifications" (QCA/04/1293).

The term 'speaking, listening and communication' as used in the standard for this Level 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 (e.g. British Sign Language, sign-supported English) provided this is made accessible to all participants in the discussion. (It is recognised that BSL is a language in its own right and not a form of English. BSL is, however, permitted as an alternative to English for the assessment of speaking, listening and communication where BSL is the learner's normal way of communicating in the contexts described by the standards). No other languages are permitted as alternatives to English;
- can include access to augmentative speech equipment and such software as constitutes the 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).

### **Equality issues**

Skillsfirst is responsible for ensuring that, where controlled assessment is used, centre comply with the '*Functional Skills qualification criteria*' (Ofqual/09/4558) and the relevant skills criteria in relation to equality, access and inclusion.

Additionally, Skillsfirst must ensure that qualifications are non-discriminatory on the grounds of disability, gender, race, age, sexual orientation and religion / belief. Inclusion documents detail the full range of strategies that learners are permitted to use to meet the requirements of the assessment and are available through Skillsfirst as well as Ofqual and QCDA.

Centres must ensure when amending or developing tasks for SLC no unnecessary barriers are placed in the way of learner achievement.

## The setting specification and setting matrix

The setting specification (see Table 1) and accompanying setting matrix (see Table 2) are provided to ensure that each assessment task for speaking, listening and communication and its three related sub-tasks assesses completely the skills standard and the full coverage and range. It ensures that all learners will receive a comparable assessment task in terms of level of coverage and demand. The setting matrix is used to confirm that coverage and range are sampled in every assessment task across the related sub-tasks.

Column 1 shows skill standard to be assessed. Every question paper must cover all these skills standards to the level stated.

Column 2 states the coverage and range for each question paper which is used to assess the three skills standards.

Column 3 shows the sub-task or sub-tasks that enable the coverage and range to be demonstrated. This is used to ensure the coverage of all skills over time.

Column 4 states the weighting (range of available marks as a percentage) of which must be allocated to each component of the coverage and range

*Table 1*

**Functional Skills English – Speaking, Listening and Communication**

Level 1 – Setting specification

<b>Skill standard</b>	<b>Coverage and range</b>	<b>Assessment weighting</b>
Take full 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.

**Functional Skills English – Speaking, Listening and Communication**

Level 2 – Setting specification

<b>Skill standard</b>	<b>Coverage and range</b>	<b>Assessment weighting</b>
Make a range of contributions to discussions in a range of contexts, including those that are unfamiliar and make effective presentation.	<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.

Table 2

**Functional Skills English – Speaking, Listening and Communication**

Level 1 – Setting matrix pro-forma

Skill standard	Coverage and range	Sub-tasks	Assessment weighting
<p>Take full part in formal and informal discussions and exchanges that include unfamiliar subjects.</p>	<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>		<p>Equal weighting across all the coverage and range.</p>

## Functional Skills English – Speaking, Listening and Communication

### Level 2 – Setting matrix pro-forma

Skill standard	Coverage and	Sub-tasks	Assessment
<p>Make a range of contributions to discussions in a range of contexts, including those that are unfamiliar and make effective presentation.</p>	<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>		<p>Equal weighting across all the coverage and range.</p>

*Table 3*

**Functional Skills English – Speaking, Listening and Communication**

Exemplar Level 1 – Setting matrix pro-forma

Skill standard	Coverage and range	Sub-tasks	Assessment weighting
<p>Take full part in formal and informal discussions and exchanges that include unfamiliar subjects.</p>	<p>Make relevant and extended contributions to discussions, allowing for and responding to others' input.</p>	<p><i>Sub-task 1</i> <i>Sub-task 2</i> <i>Sub-task 3</i></p>	<p>Equal weighting across all the coverage and range.</p>
	<p>Prepare for and contribute to the formal discussion of ideas and opinions.</p>	<p><i>Sub-task 2</i> <i>Sub-task 3</i></p>	
	<p>Make different kinds of contributions to discussions.</p>	<p><i>Sub-task 1</i> <i>Sub-task 2</i> <i>Sub-task 3</i></p>	
	<p>Present information / points of view clearly and in appropriate language.</p>	<p><i>Sub-task 1</i> <i>Sub-task 2</i> <i>Sub-task 3</i></p>	