

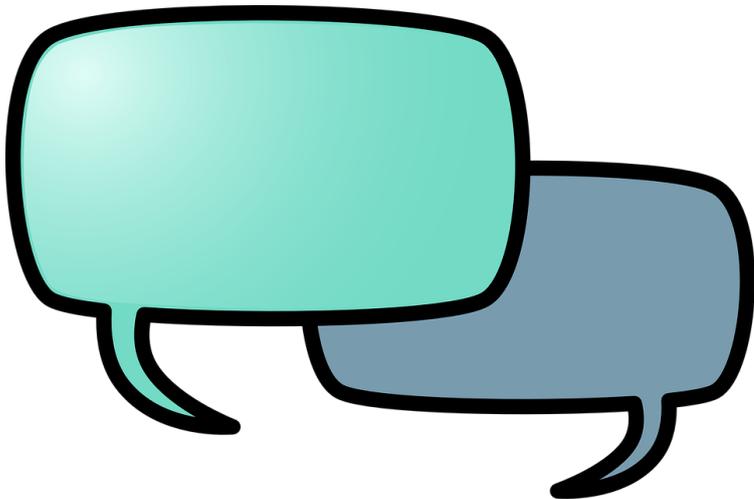


openawards

Functional Skills Specification

Speaking, Listening and
Communicating

Level 1



SPECIFICATION

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Speaking, Listening and Communication Assessment (Level 1)

This specification outlines the Speaking, Listening and Communication assessment tasks for Open Awards Functional Skills English at Level 1.

The tasks outline the activities which can be carried out to meet the Speaking, Listening and Communication standards, and coverage and range statements. Centres are able to pick topics and contextualise these activities in order to meet the interests and/or needs of their students. Suggestions for possible topics are given with each task.

This document should be read in conjunction with the [Level 1 Functional Skills English Qualification guide](#).

Scheduling Assessments and Entering Results Using XAMS

All Speaking, Listening and Communication assessments must be scheduled a minimum of 48 hours before the planned date of assessment using our XAMS system. Assessment results must be entered into the system within four weeks of the date of assessment. See our [XAMS User Guidance](#) for further information.

Awarding Consortium

PARTNERS IN YOUR SUCCESS

This Functional Skills qualification is offered through a partnership called The Awarding Consortium which is comprised of five awarding organisations and the designers of our XAMS® platform.

Through working together we have been able to invest in our systems and assessment papers to deliver a market leading product that is:

- competitively priced
- certificated efficiently
- simple to administer through approval and registration
- securely delivered through our online assessment system XAMS®
- supported by a network of External Verifiers experienced in Functional Skills delivery and a dedicated team of account managers
- complemented by a growing range of teaching and learning materials including free online practice assessments

You can find out more about the Awarding Consortium at: www.awardingconsortium.co.uk

Guidance on Setting and Delivering Internal Assessment Tasks

- **Task-setting**

All centres must have a consistent process for setting tasks that are contextualised to be relevant, meaningful and appropriate to the level of the learners, which allow for adequate coverage of the set topic, and which provide sufficient opportunity to demonstrate proficiency at the level against all of the criteria, in a manner which is fair and consistent for all learners.

- **Task-taking**

All centres must have a clearly defined procedure for the delivery of the assessment activity which meets the needs of the learners, which allows for adequate coverage of the set topic, and which provides sufficient opportunity to demonstrate proficiency at the level against all of the criteria, in a manner which is fair and consistent for all learners.

The tasks themselves will vary depending on the nature of the topics set, and the context or circumstances in which they are assessed, however, the assessment requirements and level of demand must be consistent for all learners and must comply with the Functional Skills regulatory criteria.

The tasks can be taken at any point deemed appropriate during the Functional Skills Qualification programme but this should be based upon an informed judgement that the learner is operating at the level to be assessed.

The assessment task must follow the guidance contained in the Speaking, Listening and Communication (SLC) assessment template.

- **Task-marking and internal verification**

All centres must have a consistent approach to marking the assessment activity and for ensuring that standards applied in marking are consistent for all of their learners. Following the completion of the assessments an internal verification panel must convene in which the assessors and the Internal Verifier discuss outcomes and ensure the Functional Skills standard and mark schemes have been applied consistently across all learners. Borderline pass/fail learners' results may be adjusted at this time. The meeting must be recorded using the [Assessment Internal Verification Panel Form](#).

A minimum of 10% of assessments should be observed by an internal verifier to ensure they are being conducted in accordance with the Awarding Consortium requirements. These observations should be completed using the [Observation of Internal Assessment Form](#). When more than one assessor carries out the assessments the observations should be spread proportionately.

The assessment process will be subject to external quality assurance by Open Awards. All assessment records must be retained by the Centre for at least 3 years from the end of the year to which they relate.

Equality, Access and Inclusion

Functional Skills Qualifications have been designed to be inclusive and enabling skills qualifications for the full range of learners. It is important that all centres understand the expectations for Speaking, Listening and Communication in this context.

This section outlines these requirements, based upon the Functional Skills regulatory criteria.

Speaking, Listening and Communication (SLC) 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 by these standards, 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 regulatory 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 “usual 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).

The Skill Standard: Level 1

Take full part in formal and informal 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

To present reasonable opportunities for learners to demonstrate their proficiency and to provide sufficient evidence of this standard at Level 1, the assessment comprises two assessment tasks. This ensures that learners have reasonable opportunities to demonstrate, for example, "relevant and extended contributions to discussions", demonstrating "different kinds of contributions to discussions", engagement with both familiar and unfamiliar subject matter, and contributions to both formal and informal discussions and exchanges, some of which are prepared for, while others entirely spontaneous, all of which must be in accordance with the assessment criteria.

To be deemed proficient at the level, learners must be able to consistently demonstrate the full range of Speaking, Listening and Communication standards defined at the level.

At Level 1, the learner is expected to demonstrate this performance evidence in two separate assessment activities: an informal discussion, where learners demonstrate the relevant criteria without preparation or pre-determined format or structure, and a more formal discussion of ideas and opinions, which has been prepared for in advance.

• **Assessment Overview at Level 1**

Assessors must use the relevant assessment template (and follow its level specific instructions about activities, conditions and durations, for example), choose appropriate topics for the level, and assess directly against the level criteria presented on these templates, the general guidance provided above for Level 2 should apply in terms of administering the assessments.

In order to provide appropriate opportunities to demonstrate these skills at the level, there are two separate assessment activities:

- **a formal discussion which learners have had the opportunity to prepare for;**
- **an informal, more impromptu discussion.**

There is no requirement for a presentation at Level 1.

Assessment Instructions

Assessors must assess individual performance (albeit in a group context and in relation to the input, contributions and behaviour of others) against the full set of criteria to determine whether they are proficient at the level. The assessor's judgements must then be recorded in the online XAMS system.

The assessment templates provided in this document reflect the information that must be provided. These forms are optional to support centres in recording judgements prior to internal verification and entering results into XAMS. Alternatively centres may use their own paperwork or enter the information directly into the system (providing it has been internally verified). See our [XAMS User Guidance](#) for information about how to schedule Speaking, Listening and Communication assessments and enter in results and assessment information.

Making and recording assessment judgements

- Assessors provide group-based discussion details (Assessment Template Part A) for each cohort/group for each activity on XAMS. There are two fields to complete:
 - assessors should use the first field to provide clear details about the structure, composition and topic for the discussion
 - the second field should include a commentary of the performance within the discussion, as well as a summary of referring the performance of each learner, including several specific examples of performance in relation to the level criteria to allow for valid and reliable judgements about whether or not learners have presented sufficient evidence to be considered a secure pass
- Assessors must also complete individual performance, criterion-based judgements (Assessment Template Part B) for each learner in both activities.
- Assessors evaluating an individual must judge whether learner consistently meets the performance threshold defined in the right-hand column (i.e. Achieved Level 1) or whether performance generally aligns with the left-hand column (i.e. Below Level 1) for the stated skill, while allowing for the variability and unpredictability inherent in group discussions.

The assessment must produce a pass or fail outcome. Assessors must therefore make careful judgements about whether the learner's performance generally accords with the right-hand column or the left-hand column for each of the criteria. Only learners who have had a tick against all of the "Achieved Level 1" statements in both of the discussions (Activity 1: Formal discussion and Activity 2: Informal discussion) will be awarded a Pass

Assessment Activities

One formal and one informal discussion	Guidance for Assessors
<p>10 - 15 minutes duration for each activity</p>	<p>The duration of the two discussions may vary slightly but should be as far as possible consistent for learners being assessed at the same level.</p>
<p>Conditions</p>	<p>At least one of the discussions should be a minimum of 15 minutes in duration, and both of them must allow adequate time for the topic to be covered and the assessment criteria to be demonstrated.</p> <p>The discussions and exchanges must allow for the consistent assessment of the skills defined in the regulatory criteria, irrespective of when the assessment takes place.</p> <p>The nature of discussions means that unpredictable elements may be present but it is important that centres ensure that the assessment tasks and conditions provide fair and equivalent opportunities for all learners to demonstrate their level of proficiency against the skill standards.</p> <p>The formal discussion will be based upon an agreed topic which learners should have prepared for, while the informal discussion should be based upon a topic for which learners have not been able to prepare, although it may be relevant to the programme or context.</p> <p>While the duration of discussions may vary slightly, it is important that this type of variation is limited and doesn't present different opportunities to demonstrate the standard across assessments.</p>
<p>Topics</p>	<p>Centres can agree suitable topics for the discussions but they must provide appropriate opportunities for learners to demonstrate each of the skills at the level. One of the topics must be agreed in advance to allow for preparation while the other must be introduced at the time of the assessment to allow for an informal discussion topic that has not been prepared for or rehearsed in any way.</p> <p>The topics should ideally be related to the learning programme and present opportunities for applying the skills in purposeful and 'real-life' contexts, being based upon a vocationally relevant subject or issue, for example.</p> <p>Agreed topics should be straightforward but substantive and engaging. They must provide opportunities for learners to make relevant and extended contributions to discussions, to make different kinds of contributions, and to present information/points of view clearly and in appropriate language.</p> <p>One of the discussions must introduce unfamiliar subject matter to the learner, providing a context in which the learner must demonstrate the relevant skills in order to engage effectively with novel and unfamiliar</p>

Assessment Template Activity One - Formal Discussion

Part A: Group-based Discussion Details

This template is optional, but reflects the mandatory information you will be required to enter on XAMS.

Cohort: _____

<p>Enter relevant details, including the topic, number and full names of participants, how the discussion is organised, the duration and any learner support provided.</p>	
<p>Provide a brief commentary on the assessment activity in this field, with supporting evidence and specific examples of performance for each learner from the discussion, to support the individual criterion judgements taken for each learner using the individual assessment marketing sheet.</p>	

Assessor name _____ Centre name _____

Signature _____ Date _____

IV/Observer name (if observed) _____

IV/Observer signature _____ Date _____

A word version of this document is available [here](#).

Assessment Template Activity One - Formal Discussion

Part B: Individual Assessment Marking Sheet

This template is optional, but reflects the mandatory information you will be required to enter on XAMS.

Learner name: _____

Learner number: _____

Below Level 1		Achieved Level 1	
Preparation is not always evident or sufficient. Contributes to the discussion of ideas and opinions, but contributions are not consistently effective, clear, or in appropriate registers for formal discussion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prepares for and contributes effectively to the formal discussion of ideas and opinions.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Makes contributions to discussions, but may be infrequent and hesitant, not necessarily relevant, and not extended or sufficiently detailed or sustained. Contributions often do not recognise the contributions of other participants, or allow for and respond to others' input.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Makes relevant and extended contributions to formal discussions, allowing for and responding to others' input.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrates only a limited ability to adapt or vary contributions to discussions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Makes different kinds of contributions to formal discussions.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information presented is often not clear or delivered in appropriate language.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Presents information clearly and in appropriate language.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Points of view are often not clearly expressed or delivered in appropriate language.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Presents points of view clearly and in appropriate language.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Assessor name _____ Centre name _____

Signature _____ Date _____

IV/Observer name (if observed) _____

IV/Observer signature _____ Date _____

A word version of this document is available [here](#).

Guidance on Activity One

Example topic:

“Voting is a democratic right in the United Kingdom. It is very important that everyone exercises this right to vote”.

“By voting, we demonstrate our willingness to be active, positive citizens, and ensure that our views are represented in government.”

Discuss

This topic is potentially quite challenging at the level but engages reasonably familiar content and therefore will be appropriate for a formal discussion, which requires preparation, and will ensure that learners are able to demonstrate the full range of skills.

Learners will be familiar with the general concept of voting, and the statement provides additional elements which will stimulate deeper thinking about the topic and provide ideas to consider further in appropriately supported, preparation time, such as what is meant by democratic rights, or how does (or indeed does not) voting ensure that one's views are represented in government.

The topic has various dimensions but remains sufficiently straightforward at Level 1 to present an appropriate opportunity to demonstrate proficiency at the level. It is not too difficult or complex to consider in advance, without having to engage in time-consuming research, in order to be able to express ideas, thoughts and opinions (and possibly some relevant information and facts), and importantly, to be able to allow for, consider, and respond effectively to the ideas, views and opinions of others participating in the discussion.

It is, however, sufficiently substantive to allow learners to make relevant, extended contributions, to engage effectively in the discussion of ideas and opinions, to make different kinds of contributions to discussions, and to present information and points of view clearly and in appropriate language.

Assessment Template Activity Two - Informal Discussion

Part A: Group-based discussion details

This template is optional, but reflects the mandatory information you will be required to enter on XAMS.

Cohort: _____

<p>Enter relevant details, including the topic, number and full names of participants, how the discussion is organised, the duration and any learner support provided.</p>	
<p>Provide a brief commentary on the assessment activity in this field, with supporting evidence and specific examples of performance for each learner from the discussion, to support the individual criterion judgements taken for each learner using the individual assessment marking sheet.</p>	

Assessor name _____ Centre name _____

Signature _____ Date _____

IV/Observer name (if observed) _____

IV/Observer signature _____ Date _____

A word version of this document is available [here](#).

Assessment Template Activity Two - Informal Discussion

Part B: Individual Assessment Marking Sheet

This template is optional, but reflects the mandatory information you will be required to enter on XAMS.

Learner name: _____

Learner number: _____

Below Level 1		Achieved Level 1	
Contributes to the discussion of ideas and opinions, but contributions are not consistently effective, clear, or in appropriate register for discussion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Contributes effectively to the informal discussion of ideas and opinions.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Makes contributions to discussions, but may be infrequent and hesitant, not necessarily relevant, and not extended or sufficiently detailed or sustained. Contributions often do not recognise the contributions of other participants, or allow for and respond to others' input.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Makes relevant and extended contributions to informal discussions, allowing for and responding to others' input.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrates only a limited ability to adapt or vary contributions to discussions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Makes different kinds of contributions to informal discussions.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information presented is often not clear or delivered in appropriate language.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Presents information clearly and in appropriate language.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Points of view are often not clearly expressed or delivered in appropriate language.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Presents points of view clearly and in appropriate language.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Assessor name _____ Centre name _____

Signature _____ Date _____

IV/Observer name (if observed) _____

IV/Observer signature _____ Date _____

A word version of this document is available [here](#).

Guidance for Activity Two

The informal example topic: A more flexible, open-ended topic might be based on the concept of Leadership. It could be introduced in a way that is relevant to the learners' employment, or educational programme, or might be related to a topical event. Alternatively, it could be presented as a statement that expresses a point of view which is likely to stimulate a lively, informal discussion without preparation.

For example: Consider the following quote about leadership and discuss its merits.

"Strong leadership is vital in business today.

It requires nerves of steel and a thick skin to be an effective leader, so that you can overcome resistance from those around you, outsmart enemies and critics, and ensure that you do not have your vision undermined either by the objections of your opponents or the inevitable disagreements that arise in any group situation."

While preparation is not required, if you were to introduce a more detailed statement such as the one outlined above, it would be appropriate to spend a few minutes prior to the start of the informal discussion ensuring that everyone involved has fully understood the topic and is ready to discuss it in more detail.

Another example of an appropriate Level 1 Speaking, Listening and Communication topic could relate to the emergence of internet-based shopping and its implications.

Example topic:

"Is internet shopping good for everyone?

What are the advantages and/or disadvantages of our shopping increasingly being done without having to leave the home or workplace?

Discuss"

This topic will be reasonably familiar and straightforward for learners operating at this level and learners are likely to have clear views about its effects and value.

While this type of topic may be used for the more informal discussion, and not require formal preparation, it might be helpful for learners to be given a moment at the outset to consider the topic prior to commencing the assessment. This type of topic has considerable potential for exploration within an active conversation and the discussion format and range of views aired, provide opportunities for learners to consider, reflect upon, and develop their ideas and opinions as part of the assessed activity.

A learner may, for example, start only by considering their personal experience and the benefits to themselves, however, they should be ready to exchange ideas and to respond effectively to a range of views, engaging with the topic and their peers in a way that allows them to consider its effects - whether positive or negative - on different types of people and on society more broadly. An active discussion about the topic should allow them to think beyond their personal perspective and experience, and to consider whether it might have broader implications for contemporary life, whether this be, for example, for the future of our high streets, for shopkeepers, for employment,

for community life, for cities and how they are designed and constructed, for social interaction, and for helping the less able, the elderly, or those in remote areas etc.

While the topic has rich potential, at Level 1 learners can engage with the topic in a straightforward and familiar manner, talking to one another about current, or potential, benefits and disadvantages, and how they apply to different people and in different circumstances. This approach will still afford good, level-appropriate opportunities to demonstrate the full range of skills specified for assessment.

- **Appropriate Level**

As the Speaking, Listening and Communication (SLC) assessment is output-based, usually being either a formal or informal discussion based upon a set topic, it is possible to present certain topics at either Level 1 or Level 2, so long as they provide learners with reasonable opportunities to demonstrate the respective skills at each level.

At Level 1, the topic should be relatively straightforward while at Level 2 it is important that it is complex. However, the topic may be able to be introduced in a straightforward manner at Level 1 and support the more complex discussion of information, ideas and opinions at Level 2.

The following topic, included at Level 2, is a good example of one which could be used at Level 1, as learners can engage effectively with the topic in a reasonably straightforward manner, and can consider those aspects of social media with which they are familiar.

Example topic:

"Social media use at work (or insert the relevant education-based context) is a big problem. We have decided to restrict access to all social media on work-based computers and to ban its use on personal devices in the workplace.

We are also considering the development of clear guidelines about their use, as an alternative, which we would introduce on a trial basis from next month"

While it is important that any topics chosen are suitable to the level, it is also essential to use the templates provided for the relevant level, to ensure that the assessment activities are appropriate and are administered consistently, and to ensure that the assessment activities and performance evidence are directly measured against the level specific criteria.

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 and ICT. 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 1 and 2 Functional Skills English Reading
- Entry 1 Functional Skills ICT and 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.

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 2, the form should be sent to Open Awards with completed assessment performance sheets.

A word version of this document is available [here](#).

Name of Centre		
Functional Skill	<input type="checkbox"/> ICT <input type="checkbox"/> English Speaking, Listening and Communication	<input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics <input type="checkbox"/> Reading
Functional Skill Level	<input type="checkbox"/> Entry Level 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Entry Level 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Entry Level 3
Date(s) of assessment		
Name of Tutor/Assessor		
Name of Observer		
Learners observed	Name	ULN
Were assessments conducted in accordance with the Open Awards Functional Skills guidance?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <i>(If 'No', please detail recommendations to address in the Action Plan section below)</i>	
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)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <i>(If 'No', please detail recommendations to address in the Action Plan section below)</i>	
Action Plan		
Have you attached a list of all learners (at the same level) in this assessment cohort? (This can be a copy of the LRF, class list, RAC)		
Observer's signature and date	Signature	Date
Tutor/Assessor's signature and date	Signature	Date

Functional Skills Speaking, Listening and Communication Assessment Internal Verification Panel Form

Date of Meeting: _____

Location of the meeting: _____

Cohorts covered by the panel:

No	Agenda	Notes	Actions
1.	Present: <i>(As a minimum all assessors and Internal Verifier)</i>		
2.	Apologies:		
3.	Matters arising from previous panel: <i>(where applicable)</i>		
4.	Review and confirmation of results: <i>The panel should consider:</i> a) <i>Have the assessment templates and standards been consistently applied?</i>		

	<p>b) Results in comparison to predicted learner performance</p> <p>c) Observation reports</p> <p>d) Application of standard in comparison with previous cohorts (where applicable)</p> <p>Decisions must be made in accordance with the Speaking, Listening and Communication Assessment specification.</p>		
5.	Any other business:		

Present (add addition rows if required)

Name	Signature	Date
(Internal Verifier)		

A word version of this document is available [here](#).