

Functional Skills

English

Entry Level – **09495, 09496, 09497 (Unit 1, 2 and 3)**

OCR Report to Centres August 2015

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This report on the examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the examination.

OCR will not enter into any discussion or correspondence in connection with this report.

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Overview

The Functional Skills in English qualifications are excellent at providing individualised outcomes for Entry Level learners and are beneficial in that they allow for spikey profiles. The qualifications are suitable for many learner types, such as: learners in schools/colleges, ESOL learners, learners moving towards employment, learners taking traineeships, learners in secure establishments and learners with special educational needs etc.

Centre assessors are becoming increasingly good at submitting assessments that demonstrate that their learners have met the Assessment Criteria (AC).

Best practice has included the submission of:

- Speaking, Listening and Communication (SLC) assessor observation records that are detailed and contain very individualised comments, which provide examples of what was said or carried out by each learner to demonstrate exactly how the AC was met. Many assessors also submit supporting evidence, such as spider diagrams developed during discussions. Whilst supporting evidence is not a requirement it does serve to fully demonstrate the learners' abilities.
- Accurately marked reading assessments.
- Correctly marked writing assessments, which fully meet all of the overarching AC as well as the pass mark.

General Comments

Entry Level 1 – 3

It is clear that some excellent teaching and learning is taking place prior to the learners undertaking the assessments, as the learners perform very well in all three units at these levels. In the main, centre assessors provide good SLC assessment evidence and they are highly competent in the marking of the reading assessments. The marking of the writing assessments is good, however centre assessors are advised to ensure that all submitted work for this unit meets the overarching AC as well as the pass mark.

Comments on Individual Units

Unit 1 – Speaking, listening and communication

The topics for discussions, exchanges and presentations have been interesting and clearly motivating for the learners. The learners are being encouraged to discuss some very relevant issues, such as 'Should drugs be legalised?' and 'What makes a person successful in their career?' This is excellent practice.

Most assessors are skilful in writing comments that show how each learner has met the AC rather than writing general comments.

Advice for less experienced assessors: Comments should provide examples of what was said or carried out by the learner to demonstrate how they have met the AC. The examples should link to each AC.

Unit 2 – Reading

The reading assessments have been developed to give the assessors a variety of options to choose from so that they can select the most suitable topics for their learners. This works well as the vast majority of learners achieve well in this unit. The mark scheme is uncomplicated and therefore assessors accurately mark the assessments.

Unit 2 – Writing

The most experienced assessors have a good understanding of what is required by the learners to achieve this unit. However, there are a small number of cases where assessors do not take into account the overarching assessment criteria when marking the assessments for this unit. To achieve the writing unit learners must achieve the following:

Entry 1 (09495) –

- Write at least two simple sentences in BOTH Task A and Task B.
- Achieve a positive mark for each evidence statement in BOTH Task A and Task B.
- Achieve the pass mark, which is 8/16.

Entry 2 (09496) –

- Write at least three sentences and use at least two conjunctions in BOTH Task A and Task B.
- Achieve a positive mark for each evidence statement in BOTH Task A and Task B.
- Achieve the pass mark, which is 11/22.

Entry 3 (09497) –

- Write at least four sentences and use at least two conjunctions in BOTH Task A and Task B.
- Achieve a positive mark for each evidence statement in BOTH Task A and Task B.
- Achieve the pass mark, which is 18/36.

Sector Update

Funding:

The Skills Funding Agency announced in July 2015 that they are continuing to fund the OCR Functional Skills in English qualifications.

Resources and support:

Please note that additional resources have been added to the Functional Skills webpage. These include the documents: 'Hints and Tips No 1 – Speaking and Listening Units' and 'Moving towards retirement – A project approach'. The webpage also provides lesson elements that link to the Cambridge Progression in English qualification.

OCR has also provided a free support video on how to observe and record speaking and listening assessments. This can be found at www.cpdhub.ocr.org.uk (reference BVFSAD).

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