OCR
RECOGNISING ACHIEVEMENT

Functional Skills

English

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

Scheme codes 09495, 09496, 09497

Centre Handbook

Contents

1 Introduction

This Centre Handbook provides information for centre staff involved in the planning, delivery and assessment of the following qualifications which have been accredited onto the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) at Entry level:

OCR Functional Skills qualification in English at Entry 1

OCR Functional Skills qualification in English at Entry 2

OCR Functional Skills qualification in English at Entry 3

Scheme codes:

Entry 1   09495

Entry 2   09496

Entry 3   09497

It is important that centre staff involved in the delivery of the above qualifications understand the requirements laid down in this handbook. Centres should therefore ensure that staff have access to this publication.

Further copies are available to download from our website www.ocr.org.uk.

1.1   The OCR Functional Skills suite of qualifications

Functional Skills are practical skills in English, mathematics and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) that allow individuals to work confidently, effectively and independently in life.

OCR Functional Skills qualifications are offered at Entry level, level 1 and level 2 and meet the Functional Skills criteria approved by Ofqual.

OCR Functional Skills assessments are based primarily on task-based scenarios with a limited duration and must be undertaken under controlled assessment conditions. The assessments use and reinforce skills-based, problem-solving learning techniques. There is more information on assessment in section 3.

OCR Functional Skills qualifications in English, mathematics and Information and Communication Technology are designed to develop and assess Functional Skills as determined by a set of skills standards. The skills standards contained within each qualification provide learners with knowledge, skills and a problem-solving approach that can be used in work, life and further learning.

These qualifications will encourage learners to develop their English, mathematics or ICT skills and transfer skills in ways that are appropriate to their situation.

1.2   Administration arrangements for these qualifications

A separate publication, the OCR *Admin Guide: Functional Skills*, provides details of the administration arrangements for these qualifications. The Admin Guide is issued free on centre approval and is available on our website: www.ocr.org.uk.

1.3   If centre staff have queries

This Centre Handbook and the Admin Guide contain all the information needed to deliver and administer these qualifications. If centre staff have any queries about these qualifications that are not answered in these publications, they should refer to the section Further support and information for details of who to contact. Support is also available on the dedicated OCR Functional Skills pages of the OCR website www.ocr.org.uk/functionalskills.

1.4   Documentation updates

The information provided in this handbook was correct at the time of production. Occasionally OCR may update this information. Please refer to the qualification home pages on our website www.ocr.org.uk for details regarding updates to these qualifications. For your convenience, the latest amended version of this handbook is available to download from the OCR website.

2 General information

2.1 Qualification profile

Title	OCR Functional Skills Qualification in English at Entry level 1
	OCR Functional Skills Qualification in English at Entry level 2
	OCR Functional Skills Qualification in English at Entry level 3
OCR code	09495
	09496
	09497
Level	Entry level
Qualification structure	The OCR Functional Skills qualifications in English at Entry level contain three sub levels: Entry Level 1, Entry Level 2 and Entry Level 3. Each assesses three components – Speaking, listening and communication; Reading; and Writing.
	Assessment material is available for Entry Level 1, Entry Level 2 and Entry Level 3. Learners need to pass one of each of the components to achieve an Entry level qualification. (A qualification will be awarded at the level of the lowest component achieved.)
QAN	Entry 1: 500/9085/9 (Qualification Accreditation Number)
	Entry 2: 500/9086/0 (Qualification Accreditation Number)
	Entry 3: 500/9197/9 (Qualification Accreditation Number)

Age group approved	Pre-16	16-18	18+	19+
	✓	✓	✓	✓

This qualification is suitable for	These qualifications recognise achievement of Functional Skills in English at Entry level. Learners who achieve at Entry Level 1 will have English abilities that range from the most elementary of achievement to beginning to make use of skills, knowledge or understanding that relate to the immediate environment. Learners who achieve at Entry Level 2 will have English skills, knowledge and understanding to carry out simple, familiar tasks with guidance. Learners who achieve at Entry Level 3 will have English skills, knowledge and understanding to carry out structured tasks in familiar contexts, with appropriate guidance where needed. It is also for learners who want to progress to level 1 but currently need greater support to achieve level 1.
Entry requirements	There are no formal entry requirements for these qualifications.
Assessment and grading	These qualifications are internally assessed by the centre staff (eg teachers, tutors, trainers, support workers, carers, assessors) and externally moderated by OCR. Assessments are set by OCR.
	Units will be graded Pass or Fail.
Funding	When seeking public funding, centres will need to provide the Qualification Accreditation Number (QAN) shown above.
	For information on funding for learners aged 14 – 19, please refer to the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) via http://www.dcsf.gov.uk. For

	more information on funding for learners aged 19 and above, please refer to the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) at http://skillsfundingagency.com.
Performance figures	For information on these qualifications' contribution to performance measurement please see the National Database of Accredited Qualifications (NDAQ): http://www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk

2.2   Target market

The OCR Functional Skills qualifications in English at Entry 1, Entry 2, Entry 3 are suitable for both young people and mature learners who wish to be recognised for their achievement of a wide range of practical English skills for use in every day life. These qualifications are also suitable for those preparing to progress to level 1 Functional Skills English qualifications.

2.3   Qualification aims

OCR Functional Skills qualifications in English at Entry level aim to:

- Provide accreditation of achievements of a range of English skills in real-life settings so that learners can use English skills in a functional way throughout life

- Provide a flexible assessment structure that can be adapted to meet the needs of individual learners

- Provide a progression route through to achievement at higher levels.

2.4   Entry requirements

These qualifications are available to anyone who is capable of reaching the required standards. They have been developed free from any barriers that restrict access or progression thereby promoting equal opportunities.

All centre staff involved in the assessment or delivery of these qualifications should understand the requirements of these qualifications and match them to the needs and capabilities of individual learners before entering them as learners for one of these qualifications.

There are no formal requirements for entry to the assessments. Learners will be expected to have the potential to achieve a level of knowledge and skills appropriate for a person working at the level they will be assessed at.

2.5 Unique Learner Number (ULN)

The Unique Learner Number (ULN) is a personal 10-digit number which is essential for learners taking a Diploma programme of study. It is used to link the Diploma component results together for Diploma certification. The ULN must accompany a learner's entry for Functional Skills. Where a ULN is included with an entry, OCR will check the ULN and candidate details with the Learner Registration Service (LRS). Learner details submitted to OCR need to match those held on the LRS exactly. If there are any differences, we will be unable to validate the ULN. This will not prevent entries from being processed, but OCR will not be able to send Diploma component results to the Diploma Aggregation Service until the ULN and candidate details held by OCR match the records held by LRS.

2.6 Entry restrictions

There are no entry restrictions for OCR's Functional Skills qualifications.

2.7 Progression opportunities

OCR Functional Skills qualifications in English at Entry level have been designed to encourage progression through each of the Entry sub-levels. In addition, the Entry level 3 assessment is structured to assist in a learner's progression to level 1 Functional Skills English qualifications. However, it is not assumed that learners will achieve the lower level qualifications before progressing on to the higher level qualifications.

2.8 Supporting learners

Centres should ensure that learners are informed of the title and level of the qualification they have been entered for and that Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR) is the awarding body for their chosen qualification.

Centres should ensure that learners are fully prepared for Functional Skills assessments through appropriate teaching and learning strategies. Centres are encouraged to ensure that learners have the opportunity to practise their skills in real life contexts prior to taking the assessment.

2.9   Wider issues

These qualifications provide potential for centres to develop learners' understanding of spiritual, moral, ethical, social and cultural issues and heighten learners' awareness of environmental issues, health and safety considerations and European developments.

Spiritual, moral, ethical, social and cultural issues

Although there are no specific requirements in relation to spiritual, moral, ethical, social and cultural issues, teachers delivering OCR Functional Skills qualifications have opportunities to address all of these issues through their choice of teaching materials.

The texts used in these qualifications may relate to social and cultural issues and may, therefore, provide and opportunity for teachers to address these issues. For example, the source material used may relate to social and cultural issues and may therefore provide an opportunity for teachers to address these issues, or the impact of television talent contests on culture and society could be explored.

Environmental issues, health and safety considerations and European developments

Teachers may have opportunities to address all of these issues through their choice of teaching materials. The exploration of examples such as the value of recycling could be explored, with the environmental impact of recycling discussed to identify the impact.

2.10   Guided learning hours

The time it will take a learner to complete their qualification will depend on a number of things, for instance, mode of study (ie whether full-time or part-time) and level of knowledge or experience on entry onto the programme of study.

OCR recognises that the needs of learners following courses of study leading to their chosen qualifications are particularly diverse and that this will result in a wide range of approaches to learning. Therefore, OCR provides indicative guided learning hours only.

As the guided learning hours (glh) needed by learners will differ significantly between individual learners, OCR encourages teachers to determine individual needs on a learner by learner basis.

Unit Title	GLH (Indicative)
Functional Skills qualification in English at Entry 1	45
Functional Skills qualification in English at Entry 2	45
Functional Skills qualification in English at Entry 3	45

2.11 Funding

Should you require any more information on funding please contact the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) at www.dcsf.gov.uk, or, for adult learning, the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) at http://skillsfundingagency.com.

2.12 Mode of delivery

OCR does not specify the mode of study or specify a time limit for the achievement of these qualifications other than the expiry dates for entry and certification laid down by the regulatory authorities detailed in the qualification profiles on page six.

Centres are free to deliver these qualifications using any mode of delivery that meets the needs of their learners.

Centres should consider the learners' complete learning experience when designing learning programmes. This is particularly important in relation to learners studying part time alongside real work commitments where learners may bring with them a wealth of experience that should be utilised to maximum effect by teachers and assessors.

2.13 Resources

OCR strongly advises that teaching and development of subject content and associated skills be referenced to real life situations, to ensure that learners are operating functionally within different contexts. The practical skills prescribed in the Functional Skills criteria should form the basis of the individualised learner programme.

A number of bodies have been tasked with producing support for Functional Skills. It is recommended that centres attend relevant training events and visit support sites to help with the delivery of these qualifications. A list of appropriate support websites is available on the OCR website www.ocr.org.uk/functionalskills.

Centres will need to provide appropriate assessment facilities for learners in line with the requirements and guidance laid down by OCR (the OCR *Admin Guide: Functional Skills*) and the *JCQ Instructions for Conducting Coursework*. (JCQ publications are available to download from www.jcq.org.uk.)

2.14 Wales and Northern Ireland

These qualifications have only been approved by OfQual for delivery in England.

Centres in Wales or Northern Ireland should contact the regulators for Wales (DCELLS) or Northern Ireland (CCEA) for requirements in relation to the delivery of Functional Skills qualifications.

2.15 Access to Entry level Functional Skills

Arrangements for learners with special requirements for Entry level specifications are based on the principle that the centre is best able to assess the needs of the learner and the appropriateness of the arrangement required. Arrangements for learners with special needs should neither advantage nor disadvantage a particular learner, nor should they reduce the reliability and validity of the assessment.

The arrangements available at Entry level are more flexible than those at Functional Skills level 1 and level 2. As such it should not be assumed that any arrangements made at Entry level will automatically be available at levels 1 and 2. Please also be aware that at Entry level centres do not need to apply to OCR for Access Arrangements; however, at level 1 and level 2 this is not the case. Please consult the *Entry level* chapter in the JCQ booklet *Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration* for further guidance. Forms are available on the JCQ website (Forms 11-13) http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams_office/access_arrangements/.

Learners who are unable to access part of the assessment, even after exploring all possibilities through reasonable adjustments, may be eligible for an exemption and an award based on the parts of the assessment they have taken. The centre will need to apply to OCR Special Requirements Team in writing for such an arrangement and the JCQ form *Application for an Exemption* must be completed.

Speaking, listening and communication

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 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 (eg 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).

Reading

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 standards through use of screen reader software.

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

Writing

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 Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 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 standards through use of a computer and appropriate software.

A human scribe cannot be used to demonstrate the requirements of the standards 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.

The table below summarises arrangements to which learners can have access in meeting the requirements of Functional Skills English Entry level qualifications:

Access arrangements	Yes/No	Type of assessment
Reader	Yes	For speaking, listening and Communication (SLC) in instructions only. For Reading, no human reader is allowed although assistive reader technology can be used. For Writing, a human reader can read the assessment instructions only.
Scribe	Yes	For Speaking, Listening and Communication, for recording outcomes of discussions and presentations only. For recording learner responses to Reading tasks only. Not for Writing, although learners can use assistive technology as their normal way of producing written texts can meet the requirements of the assessment through use of a computer and appropriate software.
Large Print	Yes	
PC	Yes	For SLC, can include access to augmentative speech equipment and such software as constitutes the learner's normal way of working. For Reading, learners who can use assistive technology as their normal way of reading, can use screen reader software. Learners who use assistive technology as their normal way of producing written texts can meet the requirements of the assessment through the use of a computer and appropriate software.
Transcripts		Not for Reading and Writing
Communicator/signer	Yes	For SLC, can include use of sign language (eg British Sign Language, sign-supported English) provided this is made accessible to all participants in the discussion, 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. However, augmentative speech equipment and such software as constitutes the learner's normal way of working can be also used. Not for Reading and Writing.
Supervised rest period	Yes	
Modified question papers (including Braille)	Yes	For speaking, listening and Communication (SLC), in instructions only. Okay for Reading. Okay for Writing instructions only.
Extra time	Yes	

2.16 Centre malpractice guidance

It is the responsibility of the Head of Centre[*] to report (in writing) all cases of suspected malpractice involving centre staff or learners, to the OCR Standards division.

When asked to do so by OCR, Heads of Centres are required to investigate instances of malpractice promptly, and report the outcomes to the OCR Standards division.

Further information is contained in the publication *JCQ publication: Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessment* which is available from the JCQ website www.jcq.org.uk.

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[*] The Head of Centre is defined as the most senior officer in the organisation, directly responsible for the delivery of OCR qualifications, eg the Principal of a College, the Head Teacher of a school, the Managing Director of a Private Training Provider or the Group Training Manager of a major company.

3   Qualification structure

3.1   Qualification structure

Wherever possible, teachers should tailor learning programmes to meet individual learner needs. It is recommended that centres should adopt a holistic approach to the delivery of these qualifications and identify opportunities to link Functional Skills English to other areas of the curriculum. At Entry level, there are three sub levels:

OCR Functional Skills Qualification in English Entry 1

(Qualification Accreditation Number 500/9085/9)

OCR Functional Skills Qualification in English Entry 2

(Qualification Accreditation Number 500/9086/0)

OCR Functional Skills Qualification in English Entry 3

(Qualification Accreditation Number 500/9197/9)

Each qualification contains one mandatory unit. These are listed below:

Unit 1 = Entry level 1 (QCDA Unit Number F/601/2226)

Unit 2 = Entry level 2 (QCDA Unit Number D/601/2332)

Unit 3 = Entry level 3 (QCDA Unit NumberJ/601/2339)

Each Unit, or sub –level, contains three components (Speaking, Listening & Communication; Reading; Writing). Centres can choose to submit components from the three different sub-levels when claiming a learner achievement, as long as there is summative evidence for each component (Speaking, Listening & Communication; Reading; Writing). The qualification achieved is awarded at the level of the lowest component achieved.

The English standards are essentially concerned with developing and recognising the ability of learners to apply and transfer skills in ways that are appropriate to their situation. For English to be useful, learners must have the skills and confidence to apply, combine and adapt their English knowledge to new situations in their life and work. The capacity to identify and understand the role that English plays in the world is crucial in enabling learners to function as effective citizens.

At **Entry level** 'real life' contexts can appear complex. This should be approached by identifying familiar aspects. Entry level learners need to be able to;

- apply their basic knowledge and understanding to produce an appropriate solution to a complex problem

- apply their understanding within a routine and familiar context

- apply a limited range of techniques to simple activities

- solve problems that are essentially instructor/teacher lead.

3.2   Unit format

Skills standards

The skills standards describe the criteria against which learners will be assessed. At each level, the skills standards subsume the previous level's skills standards and coverage and range, supporting a progression-based suite of qualifications.

The OCR Functional Skills qualification in English at Entry level assesses all of the skills standards and the coverage and range.

Coverage and range

The coverage and range provides the knowledge and techniques that learners would be expected to apply at each level. These sections are not intended as exhaustive lists to which learners should be confined but are intended as a guide to the minimum type of content that learners will need to demonstrate and apply to meet the requirements of the skills standards.

Assessment weightings

The assessment weightings indicate the percentage of the overall assessment that must be covered in relation to the individual skills standards. All assessments reflect the assessment weightings as outlined in the skills standards.

3.3   Units

The OCR Functional Skills qualifications in English at Entry level contain three sub levels: Entry Level 1, Entry Level 2 and Entry Level 3. Each assesses three components – Speaking, listening and communication; Reading; and Writing.

Assessment material is available for Entry Level 1, Entry Level 2 and Entry Level 3. Learners need to pass one of each of the components to achieve an Entry level qualification. (A qualification will be awarded at the level of the lowest component achieved.)

Entry 1 (Unit 1)

Skill standards	Coverage and range
Speaking, listening and communication • (E1S) Participate in and understand the main points of simple discussions/exchanges about familiar topics with another person in a familiar situation	• (E1S1) Understand the main points of short explanations • (E1S2) Understand and follow instructions • (E1S3) Respond appropriately to comments and requests • (E1S4) Make contributions to be understood • (E1S5) Ask simple questions to obtain specific information.
Reading • (E1R) Read and understand short, simple texts that explain or recount information	• (E1R1) Read and understand simple regular words and sentences • (E1R2) Understand short texts on familiar topics and experiences
Writing • (E1W) Write short, simple sentences	• (E1W1) Use written words and phrases to present information • (E1W2) Construct simple sentences using full stops • (E1W3) Spell correctly some personal or very familiar words

Entry 2 (Unit 2)

Skill standards	Coverage and range
Speaking, listening and communication • (E2S) Participate in discussions/exchanges about familiar topics, making active contributions, with one or more people in familiar situations	• (E2S1) Identify the main points of short explanations and instructions • (E2S2) Make appropriate contributions that are clearly understood • (E2S3) Express simply feelings or opinions and understand those expressed by others • (E2S4) Communicate information so that the meaning is clear • (E2S5) Ask and respond to straightforward questions • (E2S6) Follow the gist of discussions
Reading • (E2R) Read and understand straightforward texts that explain, inform or recount information	• (E2R1) Understand the main events in chronological texts • (E2R2) Read and understand simple instructions and directions • (E2R3) Read and understand high frequency words and words with common spelling patterns • (E2R4) Use knowledge of alphabetical order to locate information
Writing • (E2W) Write short texts with some awareness of the intended audience	• (E2W1) Use written words and phrases to record and present information • (E2W2) Construct compound sentences using common conjunctions • (E2W3) Punctuate correctly, using upper and lower case, full stops and question marks • (E2W4) Spell correctly all high frequency words and words with common spelling patterns

Entry 3 (Unit 3)

Skill standards	Coverage and range
Speaking, listening and communication • (E3S) Respond appropriately to others and make some extended contributions in familiar formal and informal discussions and exchanges	• (E3S1) Follow the main points of discussions • (E3S2) Use techniques to clarify and confirm understanding • (E3S3) Give own point of view and respond appropriately to others' point of view • (E3S4) Use appropriate language in formal discussions/exchanges • (E3S5) Make relevant contributions, allowing for and responding to others' input
Reading • (E3R) Read and understand the purpose and content of straightforward texts that explain, inform and recount information	• (E3R1) Understand the main points of texts • (E3R2) Obtain specific information through detailed reading • (E3R3) Use organisational features to locate information • (E3R4) Read and understand texts in different formats using strategies/techniques appropriate to the task
Writing • (E3W) Write texts with some adaptation to the intended audience	• (E3W1) Plan, draft and organise writing • (E3W2) Sequence writing logically and clearly • (E3W3) Use basic grammar including appropriate verb-tense and subject-verb agreement • (E3W4) Check work for accuracy, including spelling

4 Assessment and moderation

4.1 Internal assessment

These qualifications are designed around the principle that learners will build evidence towards the achievement of a level within a prescribed period of time under Controlled Assessment conditions. Once all skills standards have been met, for the level, the evidence is then submitted to OCR for external moderation.

In order for learners to be able to effectively progress towards meeting the requirements of each skill standard, teachers must make sure that the coverage and range requirements for each standard are fully addressed. The identified coverage and range are not exhaustive and may be expanded upon or tailored to particular contexts to which the qualification is being taught and the skills standards applied.

We recommend that teaching and development of subject content and associated skills be referenced to real-life situations, through the utilisation, for example, of appropriate work-based contact and vocationally-experienced delivery personnel.

Assessment of these qualifications will be conducted in accordance with the controlled assessment regulations for Functional Skills (see section 4.2).

Entry Level 1

Component	Assessment availability	Assessment details	Duration
Speaking, Listening and Communication	Available throughout the year.	Set by OCR. Centre assessed. Externally moderated by OCR 1 simple one-to-one discussion about familiar topics conducted under controlled assessment conditions 1 simple group discussion/exchange about familiar topics conducted under controlled assessment conditions	20 minutes
Reading	Available throughout the year.	Set by OCR. Centre assessed. Externally moderated by OCR. The assessment is a combination of open and closed response questions, set in a generic and realistic context. There are two tasks to complete for this component. The relevant coverage and range is fully covered in this component. A spell/grammar check facility or dictionary is allowed in the reading component. Learners may word process their answers.	50 minutes

Writing	Available throughout the year.	Set by OCR. Centre assessed. Externally moderated by OCR.	50 minutes
		The assessment is a combination of open and closed response questions, set in a generic and realistic context. There are two tasks to complete for this component.	
		The relevant coverage and range is fully covered in this component.	
		A spell/grammar check facility or dictionary is allowed in the writing component. Learners may word process their answers. A dictionary is allowed.	

Entry Level 2

Component	Assessment availability	Assessment details	Duration
Speaking, Listening and Communication	Available throughout the year.	Set by OCR. Centre assessed. Externally moderated by OCR 1 one-to-one discussion about familiar topics with active contribution conducted under controlled assessment conditions 1 group discussion/exchange about familiar topics with active contribution conducted under controlled assessment conditions	20 minutes
Reading	Available throughout the year.	Set by OCR. Centre assessed. Externally moderated by OCR. The assessment is a combination of open and closed response questions, set in a generic and realistic context. There are two tasks to complete for this component. The relevant coverage and range is fully covered in this component. A spell/grammar check facility or dictionary is allowed in the reading component. Learners may word process their answers.	50 minutes
Writing	Available throughout the year.	Set by OCR. Centre assessed. Externally moderated by OCR. The assessment is a combination of open and closed response questions, set in a generic and realistic context. There are two tasks to complete for this component. The relevant coverage and range is fully covered in this component. A spell/grammar check facility or dictionary is allowed in the writing component. Learners may word process their answers. A dictionary is allowed.	50 minutes

Entry Level 3

Component	Assessment availability	Assessment details	Duration
Speaking, Listening and Communication	Available throughout the year.	Set by OCR. Centre assessed. Externally moderated by OCR 1 informal discussion about familiar topics with extended contribution conducted under controlled assessment conditions 1 formal discussion/exchange about familiar topics with extended contribution conducted under controlled assessment conditions	20 minutes
Reading	Available throughout the year.	Set by OCR. Centre assessed. Externally moderated by OCR. The assessment is a combination of open and closed response questions, set in a generic and realistic context. There are two tasks to complete for this component. The relevant coverage and range is fully covered in this component. A spell/grammar check facility or dictionary is allowed in the reading component. Learners may word process their answers.	50 minutes
Writing	Available throughout the year.	Set by OCR. Centre assessed. Externally moderated by OCR. The assessment is a combination of open and closed response questions, set in a generic and realistic context. There are two tasks to complete for this component. The relevant coverage and range is fully covered in this component. A spell/grammar check facility or dictionary is allowed in the writing component. Learners may word process their answers. A dictionary is allowed.	50 minutes

Centre-assessed unit

The OCR Functional Skills qualifications in English at Entry level are assessed in the centre and are then externally moderated by OCR.

When learners complete an assessment, the centre assessor (usually the teacher) assesses their work. Centres will need to identify staff who will act as assessors. Centres must ensure that its assessors have the appropriate expertise and are adequately informed and supported to fulfil their responsibilities including providing suitable training.

Assessors must:

- ensure that summative assessment complies with the controlled assessment conditions specified by OCR for the qualification

- judge learner work against the standard identified in the Functional Skills standards

- identify valid and sufficient evidence

- identify gaps in evidence

- give feedback to learners and ensure it is in line with requirements for controlled assessment

- liaise with other assessors in the centre to ensure assessment decisions are standardised

- verify learner achievement by completing and signing OCR documentation (ie Witness Statement forms, Assessment Record Forms)

- maintain records of learners' achievements.

4.2   Controlled assessment

Controlled assessment is a new form of internal assessment. Controls are set for each of the three stages in the assessment process: task setting, task taking and task marking. Controls are set within assessments so that validity and reliability are ensured and that assessors can confidently authenticate learners' work. Controls will also make assessments more manageable for teachers and learners. Within each of the stages the level of control will vary. Unlike GCSEs and Principal Learning, where controlled assessment also applies, the level of controls are not described as limited, medium or high but are defined by what this means in terms of practical application within the assessment.

This section sets out the overall OCR approach for the OCR Functional Skills qualifications in English at Entry level.

Centre staff involved in the assessment of Functional Skills controlled assessments should also familiarise themselves with the JCQ document *Instructions for conducting coursework*. This document is reviewed annually and republished each September and can be downloaded from www.jcq.org.uk.

4.3   Task setting

The OCR approach

For these qualifications OCR will set the assessment tasks. Assessment materials will be issued on a bi-annual basis for use within the 12 months following the issue date.

For Entry level Functional Skills in English the assessment has to cover the three components of reading; writing; and speaking, listening and communication and each component is presented as a separate set of tasks to ensure coverage of the skills standards.

The OCR assessments have been designed to meet the full assessment requirements of the unit. Learners will need to take part in a planned learning programme that covers the underpinning knowledge and skills of the unit in preparation for completing the designated assessment tasks.

Using the assessment material

Only the Speaking, Listening and Communication assessment task can be altered in terms of the context to ensure that the learner is not disadvantaged, and to ensure that the tasks can be delivered using the centre resources available. However, the context must still meet the prescribed skills standards, be set within a real life context and must have a clear purpose that their learners will find meaningful, relevant and engaging. Alterations to the context for the Reading and Writing component are not allowed.

The assessment tasks form a coherent whole addressing all the skills standards. **No changes to the skills standards are permitted.**

OCR has ensured that, in the language used and tasks provided, we have avoided discrimination, bias and stereotyping and support equality and diversity. In the development of qualifications and assessments we use the guidance given in the Ofqual publication *Fair access by design,* notably this includes:

- using language and layout in assessment materials that does not present barriers to learners
- using stimulus and source materials in assessment materials (where appropriate) that do not present barriers to learners

If centres wish to adapt the Speaking, Listening and Communication assessment tasks, we strongly advise that staff responsible for modifying and quality assuring the assessment refer to the publication *Fair access by design*.

Any assessment material that is used by learners as practice materials must not be given to them again for use as live assessment material.

An Assessment Record Form is provided as part the assessment handbook and will also be available to download from the OCR website. The record is designed to be used as a summative record of a learner's assessment, and identifies the criteria the learner needs to achieve in order to pass the Entry level 1 assessment. The Assessment Record Form must be submitted to OCR as evidence of achievement for the learner, together with supporting evidence.

4.4   Task taking

The OCR approach

Under the process of task taking, levels of control are set for the unit under the key aspects of authenticity, feedback, time, resource and collaboration.

Definitions of the controls

(a) **Authenticity control:** Assessors/teachers must be confident that the work they mark is the learner's own. Within Functional Skills English OCR expects assessors to supervise and guide learners who are undertaking work for internal assessment.

Learners must complete all work for assessment under formal supervision, that is, in direct sight of the teacher/supervisor at all times. It is acceptable for any preparatory work for assessment to be

under limited supervision. For example, learners may wish to research a topic prior to discussing this as a group.

With all internally assessed work, the teacher must be satisfied that the work submitted for assessment is the learner's own work and be able to authenticate it – they can insist on acknowledgement and referencing of any sources used. The centre must ensure for all learners who participate in the assessment that plagiarism does not take place; sources used by learners are clearly recorded and each learner's preparation for the final production of work is the learner's own. Plagiarism is the submission of another's work as one's own and/or failure to acknowledge the source correctly. Plagiarism is considered to be malpractice and could lead to learners being disqualified. Plagiarism sometimes occurs innocently when learners are unaware of the need to reference or acknowledge their sources. It is therefore important that centres ensure that learners understand that the work they submit must be their own and that they understand the meaning of plagiarism and what penalties may be applied. Learners may refer to quotations or evidence, but they must list their sources. The rewards from acknowledging sources, and the credit they will gain from doing so, should be emphasised to learners as well as the potential risks of failing to acknowledge such material. Learners may be asked to sign a declaration to confirm that the work they submit is their own. Centres should reinforce this message to ensure learners understand what is expected of them.

When supervising tasks, assessors are expected to:

- Offer learners advice about how best to approach such tasks

- Exercise continuing supervision of work in order to monitor progress and to prevent plagiarism

- Exercise continuing supervision of practical work to ensure essential compliance with Health and Safety requirements

- Ensure that the work is completed in accordance with the qualification requirements and can be assessed in accordance with the specified marking criteria and procedures.

Please note: Centres must confirm to OCR that the evidence produced by learners is authentic. The Centre Authentication Form which can be downloaded from our website (www.ocr.org.uk) includes a declaration for assessors to sign. It is a requirement of the Ofqual Common Criteria for all Qualifications that proof of authentication is received.

(b) **Feedback control:** The degree of assessor guidance in learners' work will vary according to the kinds of work being undertaken. It should be remembered, however, that learners are required to reach their own judgements and outcomes. Whilst feedback that remains at the general level may be provided to learners, centres **must** ensure that the work submitted for final assessment is the learner's own work. It is not acceptable for assessors to provide model answers or to work through answers in detail. For more information and advice on giving feedback to learners on the work they have produced for assessment, centres should refer to JCQ document *Instructions for conducting coursework.*

Any advice to individual learners over and above that given to the class as a whole and that is not of a general nature should be recorded on the OCR Assessment Record Form and a Centre Authentication Form must be signed.

(c) **Time control:** The time available to learners to complete the assessment task varies according the level of the assessment and guidance on how the time should be spent between the tasks is

given in the OCR assessment materials. There is no requirement to complete the whole assessment in one sitting. Guidance within the OCR assessment materials indicates suitable ways in which to split the tasks, however, any attempt by the learner at a task that is used for summative assessment must be completed under controlled assessment conditions.

There is no time limit for any preparatory work so this will be over and above the guided learning hours designated for the assessment.

(d) **Resource control:** Access to resources will be limited to those appropriate to the learning and assessment and as required by the unit. Learners will need to be provided with the most appropriate materials and equipment to allow them full access to the assessment. For the unit basic workplace equipment will be adequate.

(e) **Collaboration control:** Learners must provide evidence of their own individual work. The work of individual learners can be informed by working with others **during preparatory work** for formal discussion, for example, but all learners must be assessed on their own performance.

General guidance on completing the tasks

Centres are free to deliver assessment tasks in any order appropriate to the learner, as long as the clear purpose is still maintained.

Learners should be allowed sufficient time to complete all of the tasks. It is suggested that evidence is produced in several sessions, each focussing on a specific task within the overall task or scenario. These may be interspersed with opportunities to gain knowledge and develop appropriate practical skills.

Each learner must produce individual and authentic evidence for each of the tasks. Centre staff may give support and guidance to learners. This support and guidance should focus on checking that learners understand what is expected of them. It is not acceptable for assessors to provide model answers or to work through answers in detail.

Learners may use information from any relevant source to help them with producing evidence for the tasks unless there are any restrictions on any evidence or resources to be used, if this is the case it will be clearly identified within the unit.

Where a dataset or case material is provided it is acknowledged that learners in their responses will refer to situations in the assessment material but as this is fictitious this does not break any rules of confidentiality or copyright. However, in general, learners must be guided on the use of information from other sources to ensure that confidentiality and intellectual property rights are maintained at all times. It is essential that any material directly used from a source is appropriately and rigorously referenced.

Presentation of work

Centres should discourage learners from excessive use of plastic wallets for presentation of their evidence as this may hinder the assessment process. Instead centres may wish to encourage learners to present their work so that it is easily accessible, eg spiral bound, stapled booklet, treasury tag.

Additional Guidance for Speaking, Listening and Communication

Centres may select the topic of discussion at Entry level if appropriate to the learner.

This can either be based on the topics of the Reading and Writing assessments OR a different topic selected by the centre. However, centres are reminded that topics selected must meet the requirements of the level.

Recording and Assessing: Centres are reminded that assessment must be individual to each learner, even where more than one learner is being assessed on their contributions to the same group discussion.

OCR recording documentation /assessor observation forms are intended to be used for both formative and summative assessment i.e. these sheets can be used for feeding back strengths and weaknesses to learners who have not met the skills standards, as well as for recording the final assessment of those learners who have, according to the centre assessor, met the requirements of the coverage and range of the skills standards. These are available within the Entry level assessment materials.

Only assessor observation sheets (and supporting evidence) for learners who have met the required standards, should be presented to the External Moderator.

When completing the assessor observation sheets, centres should ensure that they do not merely repeat the requirements of the standards but clearly say how the learner has met them, or what the learner has done to convince the assessor that they are competent. For example, the comment, '......took a range of roles in the discussion' is unhelpful and merely repeats words from the standards. However, the comment, '.... asked questions, clarified comments and at times led the discussion', exemplifies what they did to meet the standards.

Any supporting evidence (for example, from the discussion, notes of any preparation) should be kept for a minimum of two years and should also be presented to the External Moderator. This helps to confirm the centre's decision but does not replace the need for the assessor to complete the observation record forms.

Centres are reminded that there is no requirement for video or audio recordings of any speaking, listening and communication evidence.

Group size and composition: It is recommended that in a group discussion the number of participants is between three and five. It is also recommended that the assessor is not part of the group / discussion. These recommendations are not intended to add hurdles but to ensure that assessors can fully concentrate their efforts on observing learners and assessing whether they are meeting the requirements of the standards. With more learners in a group, each will have less opportunity to contribute and the task of assessing more than this number at any one time becomes increasingly difficult, as it does if someone is trying to both assess and contribute to a discussion.

The decision of whether someone is familiar or unfamiliar is left to the discretion of the centre but in broad terms someone who works or studies with the learner on a daily basis would be seen as familiar. Someone who has no regular contact with the learner but who may work for the same organisation, study at the same place or live in the same town would be seen as unfamiliar.

The length of time for a discussion is dictated by the Assessment Materials and should take place under Controlled Assessment conditions. The discussion must be sufficiently long for the learners to show they are competent across the skills standard and all aspects of the coverage and range. It is therefore acceptable if the discussion takes longer than indicated, as long as it is no more than double the prescribed time.

4.5   Task marking

The OCR approach

All internally assessed units will be marked by the centre assessor(s) using OCR marking schemes or guidance and the Assessment Record Form and moderated by the OCR external moderator. External moderation will take the form of postal moderation.

Applying the skills standards

The starting point for marking the tasks is the marking scheme within each assessment. Where provided (the reading and writing components), centres should use the marking scheme.

Use of 'best fit' approach to mark scheme

A marking scheme is provided in the OCR assessment materials for reading and writing and the assessment task(s) should be marked by the assessor according to the given mark scheme. Where it is possible to choose from a range of marks assessors must award marks using a 'best fit' approach, choosing the descriptor that most closely describes the work being marked.

Marking should be positive, rewarding achievement rather than penalising failure or omissions. The award of marks **must be** directly related to the mark scheme.

4.6   Quality assuring the controls

It is the responsibility of the Head of Centre to ensure that the controls set out in this section of this centre handbook are imposed. OCR will quality assure this through a system of centre inspection which will include assuring the centre processes and observing some local assessment on a sampling basis. For this reason, centres may be asked to notify OCR of dates and times when learners are undertaking the tasks which comprise the assessment of the locally assessed units.

4.7   Quality assuring assessment

Each centre is required to provide evidence of its quality assurance process that ensures its assessment decisions are accurate and consistent across all assessors.

Centres must identify an individual who is accountable to OCR for the centre's assessment decisions. This individual will be responsible for:

- maintaining a list of current assessors

- ensuring that the assessment decisions of all current assessors are accurate

- maintaining records of the outcome of standardisation

- regularly sampling the assessment decisions of all assessors and recording the outcome

- recording advice and actions given to advising assessors in relation to any discrepancies in assessment

Centres are required to keep evidence of moderation and records of any decisions/issues for a minimum of one year.

External moderation

External moderation ensures centres' assessment decisions are accurate and meet the national requirements of this qualification.

OCR Moderators are appointed by OCR to quality assure centres' assessment decisions.

OCR requires centres to submit only the appropriate documentation for external moderation. OCR anticipates that centres will wish to create programmes of learning for learners towards the completion of this qualification that will generate additional items of evidence. However, OCR does not require centres to submit for moderation additional evidence produced by the learner in the course of an activity.

OCR requires that all Assessment Record Forms submitted in support of achievement are signed by the teacher and learner prior to submission for external moderation.

Teachers must check that each aspect of the criteria has been successfully met by the learner before work is signed and submitted for external moderation.

Centres must send learners' work and assessment records to the OCR external moderator.

External moderation of a centre's assessment decisions is achieved through systematic sampling. The assessment decisions of each assessor submitting work will be sampled. The outcomes of external moderation will apply to all work submitted in each batch for moderation. No substitution of learners' work will be allowed unless prior agreement of the OCR external moderator has been obtained.

The moderator will complete a Centre Feedback Report Form for the batch. If the centre assessment is inaccurate, the centre will be notified of the necessary amendments to the learners' achievements, and certification will reflect these amendments.

Moderators are not empowered to enter into direct contact with centres. In no circumstances must centres attempt to contact their moderator in any way other than through posting learner work to the address provided to them by OCR. Any queries concerning the units or assessment must be directed to OCR, Coventry (see section 7).

Re-sits

There are no limits on the number of times a learner may re-sit individual assessment components, but centres must ensure that learners undertake a different assessment on each occasion.

5 Certification

At Entry level, there are three sub levels. Each sub level is a single unit qualification. Learners who achieve a pass for the unit will be awarded the certificate, giving the full qualification title at the appropriate sub level, and the title of the components achieved:

OCR Functional Skills qualification in English at Entry 1

OCR Functional Skills qualification in English at Entry 2

OCR Functional Skills qualification in English at Entry 3

The statement of results will report the result (pass or fail), the level at which the qualification has been awarded and the level at which the assessment components have been achieved (where the learner is not exempt).

5.1 Claiming certificates

Certificates will be issued for successful learners. In order to ensure that these are automatically issued centres must ensure that the OCR learner number is **always** used where a learner has already achieved one or more units. See the *OCR Admin Guide: Functional Skills* for full details.

5.2 Replacement certificates

Centre should formally make the request in writing on centre-headed paper. If the request is made within six months of the issue date, replacements will be provided free of charge. A fee is charged for replacement certificates more than six months after the date of issue. Please see the OCR Fees List for details of these fees. Letters should be sent to the Archives team in Coventry (see section 7 for address).

6　Administration arrangements

OCR will confirm its process for approving centres, registering learners and claiming certificates in due course.

7   Further Support and Information

7.1   General enquiries

You can visit OCR's website at www.ocr.org.uk for further information on OCR qualifications.

For general enquiries relating to any of OCR's vocational qualifications, please contact the OCR Customer Contact Centre on:

Telephone: 024 76 851509
Fax: 024 76 851633
Email: vocational.qualifications@ocr.org.uk

7.2   Claim forms and claim enquiries

All claim forms should be returned to:

Operations
OCR
Progress House
Westwood Way
Coventry
CV4 8JQ

If you have any queries about entries, please contact Operations Customer Support on 024 76 470033.

7.3   Enquiries about results

Please refer to the *OCR Admin Guide: Functional Skills*.

Forms and current fees can be obtained from:

Results Enquiries
OCR, Progress House
Westwood Way
Coventry CV4 8JQ

Telephone 024 76 470033

7.4 Customer feedback

We welcome feedback from customers on all aspects of our provision. Comments relating to this documentation should be sent to:

The OCR Qualification Manager
Functional Skills English
Qualifications Division
OCR
Coventry Office
Westwood Way
Coventry
CV4 8JQ

7.5 OCR Training Events

Information on OCR's training events for centres can be found on the OCR website by going to www.ocr.org.uk, or by contacting:

OCR Training
Customer Support Division
Progress House
Westwood Way
Coventry CV4 8JQ

Telephone: 02476 496 398
Fax: 02476 496 399
Email: training@ocr.org.uk

7.6 OCR Publications

The OCR Publications Service offers support to OCR customers, centres, parents and learners. It offers a wide range of up-to-date materials for sale which relate to our key qualifications. These materials include centre handbooks, past papers, mark schemes and a range of support materials.

The OCR Publications Catalogue holds the full list of materials currently available to order. To obtain a copy of this and to order publications, please go to http://publications.ocr.org.uk or call our dedicated order line on 0870 770 6622.

Orders can also be emailed to publications@ocr.org.uk or posted to the address on the order form printed in the OCR Publications Catalogue.

OCR Support Materials prepare extra resources to help you deliver our qualifications. These support materials can be ordered from OCR Publications and more information about the materials can be obtained from support.materials@ocr.org.uk

7.7   Publications (related to this qualification)

OCR publications:

- *OCR Admin Guide: Functional Skills*

JCQ publications, available from www.jcq.org.uk:

- *Instructions for conducting coursework*

- *Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration*

- *Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessment*

7.8   OCR sample assessment material

OCR assessment material is available for all Entry levels. Centres must use these assessments for the summative assessment of learners

OCR assessment material is available to download from our website www.ocr.org.uk.

Assessment materials

The OCR assessment materials for the OCR Functional Skills qualifications in English at Entry level include learner resource sheets, guidance and assessments for each Entry sub-level and assessment records. Assessment materials are issued on an annual basis for use within the 12 months following the issue date.

Centres must adhere to the guidance given in the assessment materials handbook.

Assessment Record Forms

Assessment Record Forms allow centres and learners to track achievement of each part of the Entry level assessment. The Assessment Record Forms are available within the assessment and are available to download as Word documents from the OCR website www.ocr.org.uk.