

Functional Skills

Maths

Level 1 Maths - **09865**

OCR Report to Centres 2014-2015

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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.

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CONTENTS

Functional Skills

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OCR REPORT TO CENTRES

Content	Page
Functional Skills Maths Level 1 - 09865	4

Functional Skills Maths Level 1 - 09865

1 Report on the overall work of candidates both Paper Based (PBT) and Computer Based (CBT)

Throughout the year most candidates appeared to have prepared well for the assessments and the vast majority completed all three tasks on a paper. Only very few candidates demonstrated such poor numeracy skills that they not make a reasonable attempt at answering the paper.

Many candidates made good use of a calculator, although some simply recorded results obtained. Sometimes these could be wildly inaccurate. This appeared to result from either a misunderstanding of the order of operations or lack of consideration of the order of the required result. Those without a calculator often failed to demonstrate problem-solving skills through having poor Numeracy skills. For these candidates, correct answers were difficult to obtain.

Some candidates provided small headings and organised calculations well. They supported answers with clear working and they showed how decisions had been reached. These candidates often gained full marks on question parts.

CBT candidates sometimes did not include calculations in a response. Many typed an account of their work, such as, "I multiplied by and then added... to get" This seems an inefficient way to record working. Only a few candidates could use the facilities of the platform such as superscript, bold, underline... to present their work well. Some even type, "23 pounds" rather than "£23". Some candidates still miss parts of questions at the bottom of a screen, despite the advice to scroll to the bottom of each screen. Some candidates wrote responses such as "Garcia is right" in response to a four mark question without presenting any evidence. Even if judgements are correct they score no marks without supporting evidence.

Very few candidates checked their work. Most gained one mark in a task by showing three complete and correct calculations within that task. Some used a reverse calculation, an estimate or reworked a calculation from the task in the space beside the final checking mark. Any of these methods scored two marks. Some candidates wrote a calculation with 'check' beside the final checking mark. If this had **not** been previously seen, then it did not count as a check. Others wrote "check" or "Used my calculator" beside an answer. Such comments do not gain a checking mark and are without value.

Candidates generally struggled with any task involving spatial awareness with area appearing to be a closed book to many. This seems to be the weakest area of understanding. Conversion between units was sometimes done using incorrect factors.

Tasks that involved money were probably the best answered. However, some common but incorrect forms such as £12.40p and bad form such as £1.7 were penalised once in a task.

Candidates were usually secure with simple statistics although they sometimes confused mean (average) and range. Some found it difficult to interpret these measures, although many correct interpretations were given.

The standard of work from candidates appears to be improving. A significant number of very strong performances, with marks above 50, were seen. The number of candidates scoring below 10 has also markedly reduced.

2 Overall guidance for centres

- (a) Candidates have up to two marks available **in each task for checking** their work. These marks may be earned for employing any checking procedure at an appropriate point in the task. Candidates should practise using checking procedures. Only clear checks are rewarded. When a check is used, it is helpful to identify this for the examiner.
- (b) Candidates should practise annotating and ordering solutions.
- (c) Candidates need to be secure with all common units and suitable relationships between them.
- (d) Candidates should practise responding to questions that require them to make and explain decisions. They should support decisions with evidence. Where a significant number of marks are available, calculations and data should be used to support reasoning. Questions that include statements such as “support your answer with evidence” should not be answered, “Yes” or “No”.
- (e) Candidates should practise reading and interpreting questions and selecting necessary information from sources such as tables.
- (f) Resource Documents should **not be returned** inside scripts. **No essential working** should be shown on Resource Documents.
- (g) Where more than a few scripts are returned, these should not be posted in paper envelopes unless securely bound.
- (h) Candidates’ scripts should be packaged and sent to the examiner either
 - in the order that their names appear on Interchange or
 - for small centres, in alphabetical order.
- (i) Please ensure that
 - each script shows the candidate’s name and details, including Centre number, on the front page
 - scripts are **not** sent in individual plastic envelopes
 - scripts are in **alphabetical order**.

The package of scripts should contain an accurate **attendance register**. (Centres should ensure that their **attendance register is completed** as quickly as possible on Interchange so that examiners can submit their marks.) Packages should be despatched **by the last day of the examination window**.

Additional guidance for CBT candidates

- (a) Candidates should practise using headings and small notes when ordering work. They should be familiar with the functionality of the platform. Setting out calculations with each step on a new line is helpful when following reasoning.
- (b) Candidates scroll down the screen so as not to miss parts of questions.
- (c) Candidates should include calculations with their work. A typed account of work is inefficient.

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