

Functional Skills



Functional Skills

‘Fundamental, applied skills in English, mathematics and ICT that allow individuals to operate confidently, effectively and independently in life, learning and work’

Functional skills are widely recognised as essential skills that provide a platform to further achievement.



The Standards

What are the functional skills standards?

- The essential skills and knowledge that comprise functional skills are outlined in the FS standards.
- The standards were developed by QCA, together with a wide range of partners, to define and differentiate the knowledge and skills required by learners at each level.
- The standards form the foundation of the functional skills qualifications and their assessments.
- Have been developed from entry – level 2.



The Standards cont'd

The updated version of the Functional Skills standards are now available to download from the QCA website:

<http://www.qca.org.uk/functionalskills>

Hard copies can be ordered from the QCA order line on 08700 60 60 15 by quoting QCA/073472.



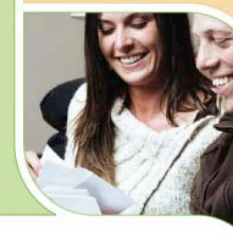
Development timeline

- Standards were finalised for pilot use: Aug 2007.
- Pilot qualifications commenced: Sept 2007.
- Functional English, Mathematics and ICT qualifications available: Sept 2010.
- Revised GCSE English, Mathematics and ICT containing FS Standards: Sept 2010.
- Key Skills qualifications expected to be available at least until Sept 2010.
- Adult Skills for Life qualifications are under review.
- Continued support for wider key skills.



The pilot phase

- Pilot phase began on 3 September 2007.
- 12 awarding bodies are engaged in piloting activity across all types of centres, including schools, FE colleges, the justice system and the workplace.
- 1,000 centres are taking part in year 1 of the pilot.
- Over 2,000 centres are expected to take part in the pilot in year 2.
- It is expected that more adult and apprenticeship cohorts will join the year 2 pilot.



Pilot arrangements

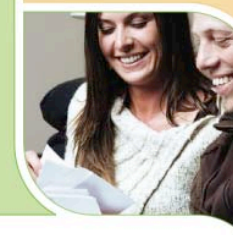
12 Awarding Bodies are developing assessments:

AQA	NCFE
ASDAN	NOCN
City and Guilds	OCNW
EAL	OCR
Edexcel	VTCT
EDI	WJEC

ABs are delivering a range of assessment approaches in accordance with the FS standards and based on a common set of assessment principles

Functional skills interdependencies

- Diploma
- GCSE
- Key skills
- SFL
- Apprenticeships.



FS assessment

Functional skills assessments:

- are designed to measure the purposeful application of skills within a real life scenario
- are task-based, or task and test-based
- are externally set but may provide for internally contextualised task-based assessments
- are subject to rigorous quality assurance arrangements.
- are competence-based qualifications that are awarded on a pass / fail basis
- focus on purposeful, task-based assessment that reflects regular, 'real-life' activities

Skills for Life qualifications

- Functional Skills piloting and evaluation will consider their appropriateness as replacement qualifications for the SFL qualifications
- The year 2 pilot is expected to include a significant number of adult cohorts in a range of learning environments.

CPD

The Quality Improvement Agency (QIA) and the National Strategies (Secondary) lead the work to design and deliver workforce development and training support for the functional skills pilot qualifications.

QIA manages the design, development and publication of support materials and NS manage the training and network programme. QIA has contracted the Learning and Skills Network (LSN) to deliver its lead strands.

Training for pilot centres for year 2 of the pilot will commence in June 2008.



Further information

QCA website has support materials and guidance

<http://www.qca.org.uk/functionalskills>

