



Assessment Support Pack

Functional Skills: English (level 1)

Component: Speaking, Listening and Communication

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History of changes

Version number	Date	Description	Authorised by
2	October 2012	Significant changes to Appendix 1 and minor text amendments to pages 3, 6, and 7.	Sandy Riddell

Introduction

The Functional Skills Qualification in English comprises three components:

- Reading
- Writing
- Speaking, Listening and Communication

While the Reading and Writing components are assessed through an external exam, the Speaking, Listening and Communication component must be internally assessed and internally verified within the centre. This document provides guidance for centres on the procedures for delivering and resulting the internal assessment of Speaking, Listening and Communication.

The assessment will involve two tasks involving group discussion. Your candidates should be given the opportunity to practise meeting the standards for Speaking, Listening and Communication, through formative assessment tasks and activities, prior to being assessed under controlled conditions. It will be particularly important for your candidates to become accustomed to the importance of listening to others and taking turns to speak before they take part in the formal assessment.

Learners can prepare simple notes to prompt them during the group discussion assessment task. However, these notes must not provide a script for candidates, they should only contain short bullet points or lists.

One of the tasks for this assessment will be an informal discussion and the other task will be a formal discussion.

This Assessment Support Pack can be used in a variety of ways including, for example:

- as exemplification of the standard of performance expected of learners achieving the component, ie as a benchmark
- to help centres develop an appropriate Instrument of Assessment for the component
- to give teachers/lecturers/assessors new ideas
- as a staff development tool

Although this Assessment Support Pack has been verified as containing suitable suggestions for Instruments of Assessment, centres should note that using it does not automatically guarantee successful external verification. It is the centres' responsibility to make sure that all the appropriate internal quality assurance procedures are satisfactorily followed. A valid and effective internal verification system should be in place.

Recommended reading

Before using this Assessment Support Pack centres might find it useful to look at some of our other publications, in particular:

- *Guide to Assessment (June 2008)*
- *Introduction to Assessment Arrangements (November 2008)*

Details of these and other publications are available on SQA's website. Most publications can be downloaded free of charge at: www.sqa.org.uk on the 'Publications, Sales and Downloads' section. If you require a publication to be sent to you, please telephone our Customer Contact Centre on 0845 279 1000 quoting the product code and, where a charge is applicable, have a purchase order number or credit card details available.

Inclusion statements for 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 access and achievement
- enables candidates 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 candidates with speech or hearing impairment.

The needs of individual candidates 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 candidate'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 candidate's normal way of working;
- does not depend solely on the use of written language or require the individual/s with whom the candidate is communicating to be able to read (as these skills are covered by the requirements for reading and writing).

Skills standards

The assessment of Speaking, Listening and Communication must cover the skills standard and all coverage and range statements listed below.

Skills standard	Coverage and Range
Take full part in formal and informal discussions and exchanges that include unfamiliar subjects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

Examples of tasks

There will be two tasks in this assessment. Both tasks will be devised by the centre and one must involve a formal discussion while the other must involve an informal discussion. The order in which the two tasks are done is at the discretion of the centre.

The context for the discussion will be selected by the centre and they must include subjects that are both familiar and unfamiliar to the candidates. The following examples may provide ideas and could be adapted accordingly:

Formal examples

- A discussion about two or three current local or national political issues at least one of which will be unfamiliar to the candidates.
- A discussion about several environmental issues some of which are familiar and some unfamiliar to the candidates.
- A discussion about whether volunteering should be part of the curriculum in schools.

Informal examples

- A discussion about talent shows on television and why some shows are more popular than others.
- A debate about particular celebrity figures and whether they deserve their celebrity status or not.
- A debate about which current bands or musical artists are the best 'live' and studio performers.

In identifying tasks, centres should be careful to select issues and topics that are appropriate for learners at level 1. For example, where a political issue is chosen as a topic, the issue should be one that learners can follow and will involve main points and arguments that provide opportunities for candidate discussion to demonstrate the speaking and listening skills identified in the standards.

The learners in each discussion group should be given details of the discussion theme in advance of the assessment taking place. The learners can prepare bullet points which can be used to prompt them during their discussion, however, they will not be allowed to refer to extended during the assessment. The assessor can prompt learners to start the discussion but must not contribute to the discussion itself.

Size of group discussion and time allowance

The two tasks in this assessment should last a **maximum of 50 minutes** and a **minimum of 25 minutes** across the two tasks. The exact time taken for each task will depend on the number of learners involved in the discussion and every candidate must be given an opportunity to contribute to the discussion and demonstrate the skills required for this component. There should be a maximum of five and a minimum of three learners taking part in each group discussion task. If fewer than

five learners are involved in the discussion then the time limit for the discussion should be adjusted accordingly.

The group discussions can involve learners who are not being assessed for the tasks as long as they are informed of the assessment arrangements and their role in the task before it starts.

Quality Assurance procedures

The Speaking, Listening and Communication component will be internally assessed through controlled assessment within the centre and externally verified by SQA. The tasks set within centres will be monitored by SQA External Verifiers and reviewed annually. New example tasks will be issued as appropriate following the annual review.

Training will be provided for centres on the assessment of the Speaking, Listening and Communication component. This training will be made available through video clips accessed on-line by centre staff.

The assessor must observe each candidate's performance during the task and record their judgement of each candidate's performance against the skills standards. The assessor statement on the candidate's performance must clearly indicate how the candidate has met each of the criteria; that is it should be evaluative. This should also show how the marks were allocated. The recording document included as Appendix 1 to this guide, should be used by the assessor to record each candidate's performance in each task.

Completed assessment recording documents must be retained in the centre until after each candidate has been certificated. In addition, centres must retain records of candidate assessments for three years and these records must include:

- a list of candidates registered with SQA for each qualification offered
- details of candidate assessment, including the name of the assessor, location, date and outcomes
- internal verification activity
- certificates claimed

Centres must have an appropriate system of internal verification in place to oversee the development of the assessment instruments used and to ensure consistency of assessment decisions. Centres should refer to the document *Internal Verification: A Guide for Centres Offering Ofqual Regulated Qualifications* (Publication code: FA5437 – April 2010) for further information.

Appendix 1

Functional Skills English (level 1) Speaking, Listening and Communication

Instructions to candidate

Candidate name _____

Candidate number _____

You are going to take part in a **formal/informal*** discussion on _____ (date).
(* delete as applicable)

You will be assessed on how you meet the following criteria:

Skills standard	Coverage and Range
Take full part in formal and informal discussions and exchanges that include unfamiliar subjects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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

The subject of your discussion is _____

You need to research this subject to prepare for taking full part in the discussion. You can research on the Internet, in newspapers and books for instance. You should make notes which you can bring with you to the discussion.

Note: You will not be allowed to read passages from your notes – they are only to prompt you.

You will hand your notes in following the discussion. Please make sure your name is on them.

Assessment Mark Sheet

Complete the table below for the **formal discussion** task.

The learner:	Performance levels	Marks	Marks Awarded
made relevant and extended contributions to the discussion, allowing for and responding to others' input	Learner made limited contributions to the discussion.	1	
	Learner made some contributions to the discussion, a few of which were in response to contributions from others.	2	
	Learner made several extended contributions to the discussion, including responses to contributions from others.	3	
prepared for and contributed to the formal discussion of ideas and opinions	Learner lacked adequate preparation and made limited contributions to the discussion.	1	
	Learner prepared for and contributed to the discussion appropriately.	2	
	Learner was well prepared and made a significant contribution of opinions and ideas to the discussion.	3	
made different kinds of contributions to the formal discussion	Learner made one kind of contribution to the discussion.	1	
	Learner made more than one kind of contribution to the discussion.	2	
	Learner made several different kinds of contribution to the discussion	3	
presented information/points of view clearly and in appropriate language	Learner made limited contributions, some of which lacked clarity and were expressed in language that was at times inappropriate for the given audience.	1	
	Learner made some contributions, most of which were clearly expressed in language that was appropriate for the given audience.	2	
	Learner made several contributions, all of which were clearly expressed in language that was appropriate for the given audience.	3	
discussed subjects that were familiar and unfamiliar	Learner made limited contributions to the discussion on familiar and unfamiliar topics.	1	
	Learner made some contributions to the discussion on topics which were familiar but fewer on topics that were less familiar.	2	
	Learner made several contributions to the discussion on topics that were familiar and unfamiliar.	3	
Total Marks =			

(To achieve a pass in this task, the learner must achieve a score of at least 9 marks out of a possible 15)

Assessment Mark Sheet

Complete the table below for the **informal discussion** task.

The learner:	Performance levels	Marks	Marks Awarded
made relevant and extended contributions to the discussion, allowing for and responding to others' input	Learner made limited contributions to discussion.	1	
	Learner made some contributions to discussion, a few of which were in response to contributions from others.	2	
	Learner made several extended contributions to discussion, including responses to contributions from others.	3	
prepared for and contributed to the informal discussion of ideas and opinions	Learner lacked adequate preparation and made limited contributions to the discussion.	1	
	Learner prepared for and contributed to the discussion appropriately.	2	
	Learner was well prepared and made a significant contribution of opinions and ideas to the discussion.	3	
made different kinds of contributions to the informal discussion	Learner made one kind of contribution to the discussion.	1	
	Learner made more than one kind of contribution to the discussion.	2	
	Learner made several different kinds of contribution to the discussion	3	
presented information/points of view clearly and in appropriate language	Learner made limited contributions, some of which lacked clarity and were expressed in language that was at times inappropriate for the given audience.	1	
	Learner made some contributions, most of which were clearly expressed in language that was appropriate for the given audience.	2	
	Learner made several contributions, all of which were clearly expressed in language that was appropriate for the given audience.	3	
discussed subjects that were familiar and unfamiliar	Learner made limited contributions to the discussion on familiar and unfamiliar topics.	1	
	Learner made some contributions to the discussion on topics which were familiar but fewer on topics that were less familiar.	2	
	Learner made several contributions to the discussion on topics that were familiar and unfamiliar.	3	
Total Marks =			

(To achieve a pass in this task, the learner must achieve a score of at least 9 marks out of a possible 15)

Assessor Statement

Complete the table below for **each** discussion task.

Candidate name	
Candidate number	
Discussion subject	
	formal <input type="checkbox"/> informal <input type="checkbox"/> (tick applicable box)
Names of candidates in group	
Candidate performance. How did the candidate meet the criteria?	
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	

Name of assessor _____

Date of assessment _____

Checklist

This checklist should be enclosed with the appropriate materials, to enable the SQA External Verifier to verify the quality and consistency of assessment judgments against national standards for the Speaking, Listening and Communication component of Functional Skills English.

For each candidate:

- Completed instructions to candidate
- Completed Assessment Mark Sheets
- Completed Assessor Statements
- Candidate evidence, including preparation notes, plans

For each batch:

- Verification Sample Form
- Verification Report Forms

Names and signatures of assessors

Names and signatures of internal verifiers

Centre name _____

Date(s) of assessment _____