

The following questions and answers are to help explain the developments around Functional Skills, bust any myths or misunderstandings and set out the position in 2010/11. If you have any further questions please [email the basic skills team](#).

QUESTION	ANSWER
What's the brief history of Functional Skills?	The Skills White paper, March 2005, announced the development of Functional Skills (FS). This followed much feedback from employers and the sector that young people were still leaving school without gaining the English and Maths skills required to function in work and society, and that the curriculum offer to learners of all ages for literacy and numeracy is confusing.
What are Functional Skills?	Functional Skills are those core elements of English, maths and ICT that provide an individual with the essential knowledge, skills and understanding that will enable them to operate confidently, effectively and independently in life and at work. To address these skills needs, new Functional Skills qualifications have been developed in English, Mathematics and ICT at Entry Level (E1 to E3), Level 1, Level 2.
When will Functional Skills be introduced?	They were rolled out nationally from September 2010.
Which qualifications will Functional Skills in Mathematics, English and ICT replace?	<p>Functional Skills in Mathematics, English and ICT will replace the Key Skills in Communication, Application of Number and ICT from 1 September 2010. Except in Apprenticeship frameworks where Key Skills can be delivered alongside Functional Skills up to April 2011 (for all age learners). Continuing learners who enrolled before 1 September 2010 can complete their Key Skill qualification and certification up to August 2012.</p> <p>Ministers will make a decision in autumn 2010 as to whether Functional Skills in English and mathematics will also replace the Skills for Life Certificates in Adult Literacy and Certificate in Adult Numeracy. If they do decide to replace them this will not be until 2012 at the earliest.</p>
Will Functional Skills in English replace the Certificate in ESOL Skills for Life?	It has been decided that Functional Skills in English will not replace the Certificate in ESOL Skills for Life in 2010. However, further work is required to determine what developments would be needed for Functional Skills in English to be a suitable replacement. Until this work has been commissioned and completed the Certificate in ESOL Skills for Life will continue to be eligible for funding.

<p>Will Functional Skills in English and Mathematics replace GCSE's in English and Maths?</p>	<p>No, they will not replace GCSE's. But the new GCSE's in English, mathematics and ICT from 2010 will assess significant amounts of the Functional Skills in the respective subjects.</p> <p>The original intention was that all school pupils would take the Functional Skills in English and maths assessment and that a pupil couldn't gain an A*-C grade unless they also passed the Functional Skills at level 2. However, Ministers have now agreed not to introduce this requirement, schools will still be encouraged to offer their learners the Functional Skills in English and Maths assessment but there will be no requirement for them to pass them in order to gain the higher GCSE grades.</p>
<p>Are Functional Skills for a particular age group?</p>	<p>Functional Skills are intended to be used for learners aged 14 upwards. They will be delivered in schools as part of GCSE English and Maths. They form part of the 14-19 specialised diplomas, they are the literacy and numeracy element of all Apprenticeships frameworks. They can be taken in FE colleges by 16-18 year old learners and can also be taken as stand-alone qualifications for adult learners (post 19) funded through Adult Learner Responsive model.</p>
<p>Do Functional Skills fit into the Qualifications and Curriculum Framework (QCF) and the Foundation Learning Curriculum (FLC)?</p>	<p>Functional Skills in English, mathematics and ICT do not fit into QCF. The new qualifications that have been accredited for use from 1 September 2010 will be accredited onto the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). Further development work is required before the qualifications can be accredited under the QCF criteria and they are unlikely to be on QCF until some time after 2012. The Skills Funding Agency and Young Peoples Learning Agency (YPLA) will still fund them as priority literacy and numeracy qualifications, and as such form part of the Foundation Learning Curriculum.</p>
<p>How will Functional Skills in 2010/11 be funded?</p>	<p>Functional Skills in English, mathematics and ICT will be funded at an unlisted rate and this applies to all age groups (16-18 and 19+), except where they are delivered as part of an Apprenticeship framework where they will continue to be set a listed rate (based on 0.08 SLN)</p> <p>All Functional Skills in English and Mathematics funded by the YPLA through the 16-18 learner model will be funded at a 1.4 programme weighting. Functional Skills in ICT will continue to be funded at 1.12.</p> <p>Only Entry Level Functional Skills in Mathematics awards funded by the Skills Funding Agency through the Adult Learner Responsive (ALR) model will attract a 1.4 programme weighting.</p> <p>All other Functional Skills in English and Mathematics funded through the Skills Funding Agency (ALR model)</p>

	<p>will be funded at 1.2. Functional Skills in ICT will continue to be funded at 1.12.</p> <p>Functional Skills will not be eligible for funding through Train to Gain in 2010/11</p>
Where can I find more information on the funding of Functional Skills?	Funding information is set out above and a funding table on the Skills Funding Agency website .
Are Colleges, providers and employers able to access any support to enable their staff to deliver the new Functional Skills qualifications?	<p>A dedicated website for the Functional Skills Support Programme (FSSP) is available, providing a first point of contact for all functional skills support.</p> <p>The FSSP is designed to prepare practitioners, leaders and managers to introduce functional skills in their centre, from developing applied learning to adopting a whole-organisational approach to functional skills implementation.</p>
Will the Functional Skills in ICT become part of the national Skills for Life strategy and receive the same level of funding?	There are no plans for the Functional Skills in ICT to be included in the Skills for Life strategy or be funded at the same rates.
How will the Functional Skills qualifications be assessed?	The assessment approaches will differ slightly by awarding organisation and this detail will be in the specifications, syllabi and support materials that they produce. You can see the specifications they produce on their individual websites. The QCDA website has a list of functional skills awarding organisations. However, the Functional Skills will be assessed in accordance with the regulatory criteria which are available on the Ofqual website at: Functional Skills criteria . The important things to remember are that they take a problem solving approach to assessment, assessing with the application of skills in real life environments and while the assessments themselves are generic, the teaching and learning programmes may be contextualized for individual sectors or situations to make them relevant to learners.
Will the Functional Skills qualifications all be externally marked?	Functional Skills qualifications are externally assessed at Levels 1 and 2, but internally assessed at the Entry Levels (E1, E2 & E3)
Will Functional Skills be available on-line and on-demand?	Online assessments are being developed by some awarding organisations, but this is not likely to be wide spread practice in 2010. Awarding organisations are working on ways of including computer mediated assessments for some elements of the assessments, but elements such as speaking and listening are unlikely

	to be available electronically. For further information please contact the appropriate awarding organisations.
Will the functional skills be graded or assessed as pass/fail?	The qualification will be graded as pass or fail. However, learners will be able to request their results in Functional Skills English by each of its three component skills (Reading, Writing and Speaking & Listening)
Will functional skills be separately certificated?	Yes, they will and learners will also be certificated for each of the entry sub levels (E1, E2 and E3).
When will awarding organisation specifications and assessment criteria be published?	Awarding organisations have been submitting to Ofqual, for accreditation, their new Functional Skills qualifications for delivery from September 2010. The specifications and assessment criteria for these Functional Skills qualifications are available on each of the awarding organisation websites.
Key skills: A learner already has the key skills qualifications. Will they need to do them again to complete their Apprenticeship framework?	<p>Key Skills in Communication, Application of Number and ICT (together with their acknowledged proxy qualifications) achieved at the equivalent level required by the framework, within the previous five years and before September 2012, will satisfy the requirement for Functional Skills until 2016.</p> <p>However, to promote progression where a learner has already achieved a level 1 Key Skills required to start a level 2 Apprenticeship but may not have a level 2, then the employer may allow the individual to study for a level 2 Functional Skills qualification as part of the level 2 Apprenticeship framework and the Skills Funding Agency will fund this.</p> <p>For further details on Functional Skills in Apprenticeships, please refer to the Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for England (SASE).</p>
Are functional skills included on the qualification success rate or minimum levels of success?	All Functional Skills qualifications will be included in the Qualification Success Rate and Minimum Levels of Performance calculations from 2010/11 when Functional Skills are rolled out nationally.
Where can I find out more information?	Further information can be found on Awarding Organisation websites.