



Overview of Functional Skills process changes

As there are changes to various processes in line with the government's reform for Functional Skills, we've created an overview of the changes to some of our processes below in order to help get you started with the updated qualifications.

Qualification approval

Do I need to apply for approval for the new qualifications?

Centres that are currently approved for NCFE Functional Skills qualifications will automatically be given approval for the reformed Functional Skills, and checks around their processes for retrieval, storage and delivery of external assessments will follow the standard External Quality Assurer and Audit Visit Officer Processes.

Assessment information

When can my learners complete the assessment?

Our online assessments are available on-demand.. Centres will be able to book and complete assessments through our online assessment platform at a date and time of their choosing. Our paper based assessments will be completed during published assessment windows, available 6 times per year.

When are the first assessment dates?

Online assessments will be available on-demand from October 2019. First assessments can be booked from 30 September 2019 and first sittings from 07 October 2019. The first paper based assessment window is 14 – 18 October 2019, with centres able to select a suitable date and time within the published assessment window. Confirmation of all subsequent paper based assessment windows and results release dates are detailed in our external assessment timetable. This is available within the 'Delivery and Learner Support' section of [QualHub](#).

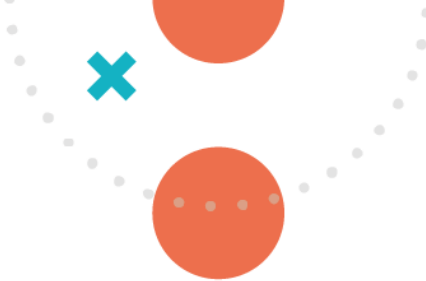
What are the new invigilation requirements?

All Functional Skills external assessments, whether online or paper based, must be completed under invigilated conditions, in accordance with the NCFE Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment.

From July 2019, following an Ofqual review, all Awarding Organisations have adopted the rule that no tutor of a Functional Skills qualification can be involved in the administration of the assessment materials for level 1 and 2 exams in that subject, regardless of the level they teach (administration includes initial receipt, secure storage, movement, or preparation of confidential material for external assessments before, during, or after an external assessment).

In addition, a Functional Skills subject tutor must not be involved in the invigilation of that subject, even if they have not taught those learners. For example, a Functional Skills English tutor must not invigilate any Functional Skills English exam and a Functional Skills maths tutor must not invigilate any Functional Skills maths exam, regardless of the level they teach.





Ofqual published an [update](#) to the invigilation restrictions and exemptions in September 2019 detailing additional circumstances that are allowable on advance approval from the Awarding Organisation. These changes are reflected in the updated Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment, from 30 September 2019, these can be found on [QualHub](#). The blue text within the documentation highlights changes to the way Functional Skills qualifications must be administered. Please note these changes apply to both legacy and reformed Functional Skills qualifications.

How long are the assessments and do they have different requirements?

The assessment times vary for different levels and subjects along with the requirements for them, to help you understand the specific requirements we have published the Qualification Specific Instructions for Delivery (QSID) which can be found on [QualHub](#). This documents contains all the specific instructions for controlled and external assessments.

How will I access the controlled assessments for the new qualifications?

The controlled assessments are on-demand and will be made available electronically on our website. There are no assessment windows for these controlled assessments as they are externally set by NCFE and internally marked by centres.

You will be able to view the topics available and can book learners on to the assessment via the portal which will provide you with a password to access the materials, the learner will then have 2 weeks to sit the allocated assessment. All assessments must be tracked and NCFE have provided an Assessment Tracking document for completion. Our Guidance for Accessing Controlled Assessments and separate Guidance for Booking Controlled Assessments will support you. There are also mandatory Assessor Instructions that detail how to deliver the assessments. Documentation can be found on the qualification pages on QualHub.

All controlled assessments must adhere to the Regulations for the Conduct of Controlled Assessment which can be accessed on [QualHub](#).

What new features will be available on the new online assessment system?

The new online assessment platform offers an improved learner interface, as assessments now fill the full length of the screen. New item types will be available within the new level 1 and 2 Functional Skills maths online assessments and a demonstration test will be available within the online platform and on QualHub for learners to familiarise themselves with the functionality. Sample assessments are available for Level 1 and 2 Maths and bookable in the online platform from 30 September. Level 1 and 2 English will follow soon.





Direct Claim Status (DCS)

Will my organisation keep Direct Claim Status (DCS) for the new qualifications?

We need to ensure the quality of the delivery of the new qualifications in line with Ofqual requirements, therefore DCS won't be transferred for the reformed qualifications. It will be possible to award DCS for the Functional Skills suite of qualifications in the future, based on quality criteria that are measure and reported on through the external quality assurance visits carried out by the External Quality Assurer.

DCS transfer from another Awarding Organisation

DCS can normally be transferred from another Awarding Organisation (AO), however this will not be permitted within the first month of the reformed Functional Skills going live. Given the required GLH and assessment requirements, it's highly unlikely that a centre will be able to provide sufficient assurances on their delivery model to award DCS. Following this, DCS transfer requests will be on a case by case basis. Centres will be expected to provide evidence from the other AO that clearly shows that they have been awarded DCS (or the AO's equivalent) for that qualification through external quality assurance activity. Qualifications must be like for like for DCS to be transferred.

Results

When will my learners receive their results?

All results will be issued on the advertised results release date, these dates can be located in the External Assessment Timetable. Centres will be able access their results through the NCFE secure administration portal and results will be available at a learner or batch level.

Feedback

What feedback will I receive for my learner's assessments?

As with our current Functional Skills qualifications, we'll offer several feedback options for learners as part of the Functional Skills reform.

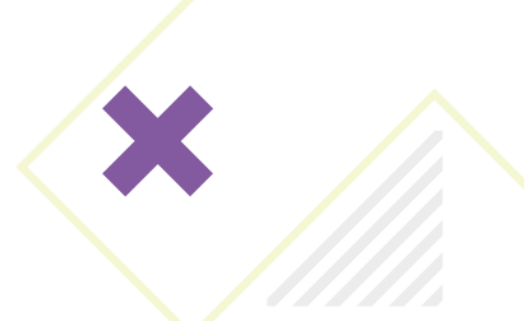
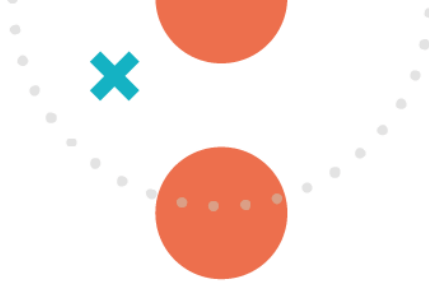
Automated feedback will be available free of charge for all online assessments through our online assessment platform. Centres can also request compact and rich feedback, compiled by a subject specialist following a review of your learner's assessment.

Resits

Are learners still eligible for a free resit?

All learners are eligible for a free resit if they do not pass their first attempt. This applies per assessment for all external assessments. There are no resit charges for controlled assessments.





Are there any changes with processes for resits?

There are no changes to the process however we do recommend that should a learner fail their assessment that a sufficient amount of time is spent delivering to the learner on the areas they struggled in before resitting the assessment. We would recommend at least 14 days between receiving the result and resitting the assessment.

Contextualisation of Controlled Assessments

Can I choose to contextualise the Assessment Activities?

Centres may contextualise (amend/change) scenarios in order to make the assessment context more relevant and engaging for their learners. These changes need to be approved in advance by NCFE. For full information on how to do this please refer to “*Functional Skills Writing Guide – Adapting NCFE Devised Internal Assessment Activities*” which is available on [QualHub](#).

Standardisation Webinars

Our controlled assessments have on-demand standardisation webinars available to support you in English reading, writing and maths. Speaking, Listening and Communicating standardisation webinars will also be available very soon. Please check the qualification pages on QualHub for updates.

