Digital Functional Skills Qualifications (DFSQs)

Frequently Asked Questions

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1. Standards

1.1. Is the content of Digital Functional Skills qualifications (DFSQs) similar to the Essential Digital Skills Qualifications?

Both EDSQs and DFSQs are based on the same national standards, and cover the same five skills areas of

1) Using Devices & Handling Information

2) Creating & Editing

3) Communicating

4) Transacting and

5) Being safe and responsible online.

However, DFSQ has specific content statements which is what the teaching and assessment will cover.

1.2. Why is there no replacement for Entry 1 and 2 Functional Skills ICT qualifications?

The new national standards for essential digital skills have been set against levels in line with the national qualification framework levels. The skills set out in the standards were identified as starting at Entry Level 3 although it is recognised that some learners may not be ready to access this level and may need additional support to be ready at this level.

1.3. Will there be a Level 2 Digital Functional Skills qualification eventually?

During the consultations and development of the national digital standards, the generic digital skills identified were felt to be at Level 1. It was felt that more specific digital skills or knowledge that might be at a higher level, would be recognised by specialist qualifications in different sectors such as media or accounting.

1.4. What will happen with apprentices that have to have L2 Functional Skills ICT as part of their overall qualification?

While Functional Skills ICT formed part of many apprenticeship frameworks, these have now come to an end and have been replaced by apprenticeship standards which do not have digital skills as a mandated qualification. IfATE have said that developing the relevant digital skills for each apprenticeship standard is important, but they do not require this to be evidenced with a qualification.

2. Administration

2.1. When will the qualification approval process open?

We have completed the Ofqual technical evaluation process and have recieved permission to open our qualifications for registration, we anticipate opening the approval process for these qualifications from 1 September 2023.

2.2. If we are already approved for Functional Skills Maths and English, will we get automatic approval for this?

The approval process for Digital Functional Skills is being finalised, but at this stage, there will be no automatic approval for DFSQ. Centres who are approved for 3748-03 (FS ICT), 4249 (Start IT) and 7574 (ITQs for IT Users) may apply for fast track approval.

2.3. Will DFSQs be available to deliver for the academic year 23/24?

We hope to be in a position to open for registrations from 1 September 2023, subject to a successful outcome of the Ofqual technical evaluation.

2.4. Will exams be available on demand?

Yes, DFSQ assessments will be available to book when your learners are ready.

2.5. Will tutors be able to invigilate exams?

The invigilation requirements for DFSQs will be the same as those of Functional Skills English and Maths. This means to mitigate against the risk that teachers may, inadvertently

teach 'to the test', anyone who teaches DFSQs will not be allowed to invigilate these assessments.

The full guidance about delivering Functional Skills assessments can be found in the Functional Skills Instructions for Conducting Exams guidance document which can be found on the 4748 Qualification page under Centre Documents.

2.6. Will there be a cost for registration or just for the online test?

As DSFQ will form part of the current Functional Skills (4748) suite of qualifications, we will use the same model. There will be no registration fee, and a fee will be charged at the point the exam is booked on Walled Garden.

3. Assessments

3.1. Will an assessment by wholly marked by City and Guilds or will it just be the Knowledge Questions?

The whole assessment, which is delivered through our e-assessment platform e-volve, will be marked by the City & Guilds' examiners.

3.2. Will there be a pass for each section or a total mark?

There is an overall pass mark for the assessment. Although the assessment is broken into three sections, to allow the tasks to be set in a context that is authentic, while having a separate for the knowledge test, all the marks will be added to make a cumulative score which will determine whether the candidate has passed or not. This is a requirement set out in the technical specifications for the assessments which set out for awarding organisations how the assessments must be built.

3.3. Will sample tests be available when the qualification launches?

When we launch, we will have one sample per level, but a further three samples per level will be added to create a bank which will be refreshed over time.

As the assessment for DFSQs will be delivered onscreen through our e-volve e-assessment platform, sample assessments will be available on Open Assess

3.4. How many retakes will be allowed?

As for Functional Skills Maths and English, candidates are only permitted to see each question paper once. This means that if a candidate is unsuccessful, they will only be able to retake if there is an unseen paper for them to sit.

3.5. For learners who are registered when DFSQs are launched, how long would they have to wait to know if they had passed or not?

When a new qualification is launched with brand new assessments these have to undergo an awarding process. This means that we need to ensure a sufficient number of candidate responses per paper before the awarding can take place. For this reason, when we launch new assessments the agreed turnaround time for results release is 32 working days, this is the same as when we release new versions of Maths and English Functional Skills assessments.

3.6. What are the pass marks for the Entry Level 3 and Level 1 exam?

Setting the pass marks will form part of the awarding process and after this takes place we will be in a position to release indicative pass marks.

4. Support resources

4.1. Will there be a cost for the initial and diagnostic assessments?

The initial and diagnostic assessment that we are offering for our Digital Functional Skills qualifications will be available from our e-Functional Skills platform, which has been developed in collaboration with Hodder, the Educational Publishers. This will be on a price per license basis at a cost of £1 per license for the DFSQ initial and diagnostic assessment. This is the same model we use for the English and Maths initial assessment in e-Functional Skills.

4.2. Will there be any books or workbooks?

We are not planning to develop workbooks for these qualifications at this time.

5. Funding

5.1. Where will I find information about funding for DFSQs?

We are currently waiting for Ofqual to allocated the Qualification Number for our Entry 3 and Level 1 DFSQs. Once this is available, you will be able to find the information, including the funding rates on the Government's Find a learning aim website: Find a learning aim (submit-learner-data.service.gov.uk)

All individuals aged 19 and over whose digital skills are assessed at Level 1 or below are entitled to be fully funded for Essential Digital Skills or Digital Functional Skills qualifications up to Level 1. More information can be found on the AEB Funding pages here: Adult education budget: funding and performance management rules 2023 to 2024 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

5.2. Will there be list of qualifications that will exempt students from DSFQs?

Provided that a learner is initially assessed with digital skills at Level 1 or below, they will still be funded for Digital Functional Skills qualifications up to and including Level 1.

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