Reformed Functional Skills Qualifications (4748)
Frequently Asked Questions
Version 1.0 August 2019
General questions

Why have Functional Skills been reformed?
Functional Skills are an important qualification taken by many learners studying in educational settings and workplaces throughout England. The government wants to make sure Functional Skills qualifications are relevant and rigorous and that those who achieve them have the skills and knowledge employers are looking for.

Are all three Functional Skills changing?
No. The changes only apply to Functional Skills Mathematics and English, but at all five levels.
We expect the existing Functional Skills ICT (3748-03) qualifications to continue until at least 2021.

What are the main things that are changing?
There is new subject content for both mathematics and English. This is what needs to be taught and what the new qualifications will assess.
There are new Ofqual Conditions and Requirements for each subject. These are the rules used to regulate the qualifications.

If they still have the same name, will they still have the same purpose or is what they set out to do different?
Yes. While there are a lot of similarities, the reformed qualifications do have a more explicit focus on demonstrating underpinning skills and knowledge as well as using these to solve problems.
The subject content documents provide clear purpose statements for each Functional Skill, along with a useful summary of the expected learning aims and outcomes for each skill and level.

Will the GLH be the same?
No, Guided Learning Hours (GLH) for the reformed qualifications have been increased from 45 to 55 hours.

Does City & Guilds have Ofqual approval for all levels of the new Functional Skills?
Yes. Like all Functional Skills awarding organisations, City & Guilds has had to go through a formal process of applying to offer the reformed qualifications. That process has involved submitting both our proposed specifications/assessments and operational processes for a detailed technical evaluation.
Are new learning aim numbers available?
Yes. The ESFA Learning Aim Reference numbers for reformed Functional Skills are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Aim Reference Number</th>
<th>Qualification Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>603/4913/X</td>
<td>City &amp; Guilds Functional Skills Qualification in English at Entry Level 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>603/4914/1</td>
<td>City &amp; Guilds Functional Skills Qualification in English at Entry Level 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>603/4915/3</td>
<td>City &amp; Guilds Functional Skills Qualification in English at Entry Level 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>603/4646/2</td>
<td>City &amp; Guilds Functional Skills Qualification in English at Level 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>603/4647/4</td>
<td>City &amp; Guilds Functional Skills Qualification in English at Level 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>603/4918/9</td>
<td>City &amp; Guilds Functional Skills Qualification in Mathematics at Entry Level 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>603/4916/5</td>
<td>City &amp; Guilds Functional Skills Qualification in Mathematics at Entry Level 2</td>
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<td>603/4917/7</td>
<td>City &amp; Guilds Functional Skills Qualification in Mathematics at Entry Level 3</td>
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<td>603/4648/6</td>
<td>City &amp; Guilds Functional Skills Qualification in Mathematics at Level 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>603/4649/8</td>
<td>City &amp; Guilds Functional Skills Qualification in Mathematics at Level 2</td>
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These can also be found within the qualification handbooks, on the information tab on our qualification web page and on the Walled Garden.

Will there be differences between the Awarding Organisations’ reformed Functional Skills offers?
DfE and Ofqual have set some high-level design requirements for the reformed Functional Skills qualifications and assessments. Within these there is some flexibility and choice for an individual Awarding Organisation to design assessments to meet the needs of its learners and customers. City & Guilds and other Awarding Organisations will work jointly to secure greater comparability and shared understanding of the standard required to pass the Functional Skills assessments for each subject and level.

Where can I find all the information about City & Guilds’ reformed Functional Skills offer?
All the new information can be found on our Functional Skills updates page. You will find recorded webinars and useful documents to help you prepare for the introduction of reformed Functional Skills in September 2019 as well as a link to our new qualification web page.

What is the new qualification number?
4748 is the new City & Guilds qualification number for the reformed Functional Skills in English and Mathematics. Functional Skills ICT is not changing, so will continue to be available under the legacy 3748-03 qualification number.

Where can I find information about the new qualifications and how to administer them?
New guidance, handbooks, sample assessments and mark schemes can be found on the reformed Functional Skills (4748) qualification web page.

What is happening to the legacy Functional Skills qualifications?
Last registrations for legacy Functional Skills English and Mathematics (3748-01 and 3748-02) must be made by 31 August 2019. Last certification will be 31 August 2020.

What is the last date a learner registered on legacy Functional Skills (3748) can take a level 1 or 2 test?
No further tests will be available after 31 May 2020. If learners have not achieved by this date, they will need to re-register for the reformed Functional Skills qualifications. Further information on last booking dates will follow.

Is there going to be any change to who can deliver the reformed Functional Skills qualifications?
There will be no change to the requirements for teachers delivering Functional Skills and there are no specific qualifications required. Qualification handbooks provide more detail on our expectations.
City & Guilds offers a range of CPD opportunities together with subject specialist qualifications for teachers covering literacy and numeracy.

Will there be parity of status between legacy and reformed Functional Skills?
Yes, one is simply a replacement for the other (in the same way that a legacy GCSE achieved before 2016 hasn’t ceased to be valid/recognised). So a level 2 pass in Functional Skills (3748) will be equivalent to a level 2 pass in Functional Skills (4748).
Reformed qualifications

Conducting assessments

How do centres offering the legacy Functional Skills (3748) qualifications gain approval to offer reformed Functional Skills (4748) qualifications?
Centres currently approved to deliver our legacy Maths and English Functional Skills (3748) qualifications will need to apply for Fast track approval if they intend to deliver the reformed maths and English Functional Skills (4748) qualifications.
Guidance to support the process and the documents needed to complete the process can be found in the centre documents section of our Functional Skills (4748) qualification web page.

Centres that do not have approval for City & Guilds’ legacy maths and English Functional Skills (3748) qualifications should apply for the reformed maths and English Functional Skills (4748) qualifications via a Qualification Approval Application (QAP). This must be submitted via the Walled Garden Quality Portal.
You can find out more about this process by reading our User Guide.

Are there any new rules surrounding the administration and invigilation of reformed Functional Skills? Where can I find out more?
As with all other live assessments, Functional Skills qualification assessment material is confidential. All centres need to ensure they can maintain the security and confidentiality of the qualification assessment content at all times. For the externally set and marked assessments at level 1 and level 2, this means nobody sees the content of live assessments apart from the candidate taking the examination.

City & Guilds has developed a new document - Instructions for Conducting Examinations – specifically for level 1 and level 2 Functional Skills examinations taken on paper or on screen.

New Assessor Instructions documents provide guidance for Entry level assessments.
These documents outline our expectations of centres and centre staff. Understanding and accepting these expectations and conditions is central to our qualification approval process and your ongoing centre approval.

Will reformed Functional Skills still be available flexibly and on demand?
Yes. We will still be offering reformed Functional Skills English and Mathematics exams on demand - on paper for both skills at all levels, and on screen through our e-volve platform for both skills at levels 1 and 2. Level 1 and level 2 exams should be taken on the date booked. Read our Instructions for Conducting Examinations for more information on scheduling and arrangements for changing booked exam dates.
Can assessments still be taken at multiple sites?  
Yes. All assessment sites need to be identified to City & Guilds as part of the approval process. Assessment should always take place in a suitable location. See our Instructions for Conducting Examinations document for more guidance on assessment locations.

Will results still be returned to us within 20 working days (from receipt/upload)?  
Under usual circumstances results are processed and issued within 20 working days after the completed work has been received by City & Guilds.

Please be aware that all new exam versions will be subject to an awarding process before results can be issued. This involves analysing a range of candidates’ completed scripts to ensure they are being marked consistently and the pass mark has been positioned correctly.

In some cases this might require results to take slightly longer than the standard 20 working days, potentially up to 32 working days.

Where can I find information on access and inclusion arrangements?  
Both the Instructions for Conducting Exams and the qualification handbooks which support Entry level and Level 1 and 2 reformed Functional Skills contain detail on access and inclusion arrangements. They can be found on our qualification web page.

It is important to note some key changes.  
Dictionaries/spell checkers are now not allowed for English Writing at any level. Mathematics assessments at all levels contain a section where calculators are not permitted.

What qualification support materials will be available to help with preparation?  
All materials will be made available on the 4748 qualification page.

- Qualification handbooks containing specifications, resource requirements, access and inclusion.
- Sample assessments and mark schemes
- Instructions for Conducting Examinations (Levels 1 and 2)
- Assessor Instructions (Entry Level)
- Worked examples (from late autumn)
- Delivery guides (from September)

Initial and diagnostic assessment

Will the tools that we use for initial and diagnostic assessment need to change?  
The reformed Functional Skills qualifications contain some subject content that was not assessed directly within the legacy qualifications. In addition, some skills may have moved from one level to another, so it might be necessary to review your current arrangements for initial and diagnostic assessment.

We have reviewed our e-Functional Skills tool and realigned the initial and diagnostic tests and learning content to the new subject content.
Registration

Will there still be 2 points of registration for Functional Skills Mathematics and English?
No. There will now be 4 points of registration. This will improve the planning of quality assurance activities. There will continue to be no fee for registration.

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Mathematics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Entry levels</td>
<td>4748-01</td>
<td>4748-03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 1 &amp; Level 2</td>
<td>4748-02</td>
<td>4748-04</td>
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Can learners registered for the legacy Functional Skills (3748) opt to take the reformed Functional Skills (4748) qualifications?
Yes. They would need to be re-registered for 4748, but there's no cost involved in doing so.

Assessment grading and feedback

Will reformed Functional Skills be graded?
Candidates taking reformed Functional Skills assessments at all levels will be graded either pass or fail.
Sample assessments will contain an indicative pass mark to help identify readiness for assessment.

What feedback will be available for candidates who have taken level 1 and 2 exams?
At entry level, feedback will be provided to the learner by the Assessor. Assessment outcomes will always be subject to internal and external quality assurance.
For levels 1 and 2 taken on screen, detailed score reports are available through our e-volve system together with a provisional result. Following the marking quality assurance process, confirmation of the candidates’ result will be made available on Walled Garden.

For levels 1 and 2 tests taken on paper, improved performance codes will be available on notification of candidate results slips. These will now be linked to the subject content statements and clearly identify performance above or below 50% in specific skill areas. Further improvements will be introduced to performance feedback during 2020-2021.
Will English be available in the same way as it currently is?
Largely, yes. English will still comprise 3 separate components – Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening & Communicating (no longer Communication).
Each component can be taken separately, on demand.
Reading and Writing at levels 1 and 2 can be taken either on screen or on paper, or a combination of both.
For English, the new regulatory conditions for Functional Skills English stipulate that all three components must be achieved at the same level. A spiky profile is no longer possible.
If a learner attempts and achieves components at higher levels, they will be recorded on the Walled Garden, but not identified on a certificate. They can be used in a future claim.

Will it be possible to carry forward individual components of the legacy Functional Skills English qualifications into the reformed qualifications?
No. Any learners working towards the legacy Functional Skills qualifications will need to complete all three components of that qualification in order to gain certification.
Do bear in mind that it will not be possible to sit City & Guilds legacy Functional Skills (3748) assessments at levels 1 and 2 after 31 May 2020.

Where can I find the requirements for Reading, Writing and Speaking, Listening and Communicating at each level for the reformed Functional Skills English qualifications?
There are two qualification handbooks for English – one covering all Entry levels and another for Levels 1 and 2. These contain the detailed specifications for the assessments at each level and explain our approach to the assessments.
They are available on the reformed Functional Skills (4748) qualification page.
The mark schemes also provide useful information to support marking.
Delivery Guides will be available from September – these will also provide further detail on expectations at each level and how marks are applied.

What are the rules around dictionaries for Functional Skills?
Reading:
Dictionaries will be permitted for use during Reading exams, this includes bilingual dictionaries. At Entry Level, candidates will need to use a dictionary as part of the assessment.

Writing:
Dictionaries or spell/grammar checkers of any kind must not be used during the Writing exam. This is the case for all learners including anyone entitled to access arrangements.

How are spelling, punctuation and grammar being tested?
Spelling, punctuation and grammar appear in the subject content for English at all levels.
At Entry levels, spelling is assessed discretely through a spelling test and also through a writing task.
At levels 1 and 2, there is no discrete spelling test. The assessment of spelling, punctuation and grammar will be integral to the two writing tasks.

**How will the spelling tests at Entry level work?**
The subject content for English provides tables of common words for each level. Learners are expected to know how to spell these words. Our spelling lists have been drawn from these tables. Candidates will need to complete a discrete spelling test as part of their Writing assessment at each Entry level. This spelling test forms part of the overall assessment and spelling is also tested as an integral part of the writing task. An overall mark for the assessment is given which includes a mark for the spelling test and the writing task, so there is no ‘pass or fail’ attached to the discrete spelling test.

**Do we have to use phonics to teach spelling?**
Using phonics to support the development of reading and spelling has been part of the adult literacy core curriculum since it was published nearly 20 years ago. The reformed Functional Skills English subject content has some additional focus on reading and spelling strategies, although the use of phonics will not form part of the assessment. It is likely that a range of spelling strategies will be selected which best suit the needs of the learners.

**Will candidates still be able to type/word process their Writing responses?**
Yes. However, any spell check facility or tool must be disabled and they must not have access to the internet.

**Why is there still so much emphasis on Speaking, Listening and Communicating compared with GCSE?**
This is one of the key differentiators between Functional Skills and GCSE - and was one of its real strengths of Functional Skills identified in the ‘Making Maths and English Work for All’ report that preceded these reforms - eg employers especially value effective verbal communication skills.
Mathematics

Will Mathematics be available in the same way as it currently is?
Largely, yes. Mathematics will still be available as one integrated assessment.
It can be taken as a single assessment, on demand.
At levels 1 and 2 it can be taken either on screen or on paper.
However, the design of City & Guilds reformed Functional Skills Mathematics papers
is significantly different from the legacy qualifications.
The assessments comprise 2 sections – one where a calculator is permitted, another
where a calculator isn’t permitted. The two sections do not have separate pass
marks, but form one single test with an overall pass mark.

Where can I find the requirements for Mathematics at each level for the
reformed Functional Skills English qualifications?
There are two qualification handbooks for Mathematics – one covering all Entry
levels and another for Levels 1 and 2. These contain the detailed specifications for
the assessments at each level and explain our approach to the assessments.
They are available on the reformed Functional Skills (4748) qualification page.
The mark schemes also provide useful information to support marking.
Delivery Guides will be available from September – these will also provide further
detail on expectations at each level and how marks are applied.

How will the calculator/non-calculator requirements be managed?
Entry Level:
There are two sections to the Entry Level assessment. These can be done in different
sessions, and in either order. There is a single pass mark for the assessment as a
whole.

Levels 1 and 2:
The exam will consist of one paper with two sections: the non-calculator section will
need to be completed first, followed by the calculator section.
Each section has a fixed time. The overall time allowance for the exam is 1 hour 45
minutes. For exams taken on paper, candidates must not have access to a calculator
until they have handed in the non-calculator section. Candidates taking the exam on
screen must use the inbuilt calculator.
Detailed guidance on conducting these exams can be found in the Instructions for
Conducting Examinations document on the qualification page.

What sort of calculator will candidates need?
While City & Guilds does not stipulate the type of calculator that candidates can use,
pre-programmable calculators or devices with Internet access are not permitted.

Onscreen exams:
The onscreen platform incorporates a calculator that is available to candidates during the calculator section of the paper. Candidates will not be permitted to use their own calculator for the on screen exam.

Paper delivered exams:
Scientific calculators are permitted, however a basic or simple function calculator will suffice for this exam.

Teaching and learning resources

What teaching and learning resources will be available to support us?
Aside from the materials available on the qualification web page to support assessment delivery and preparation, we have additional resources available through our SmartScreen platform to support teaching and learning.

Our existing Functional Skills and maths and English e-toolkit SmartScreen resources have been reviewed and refreshed and will be available as a single maths and English offer. This will support the delivery of all our maths and English qualifications, including the reformed Functional Skills.

SmartScreen users will have access to a wealth of engaging maths and English resources in a range of different formats including:

- developing skills activities for English – suitable for topic led approaches
- 150 maths and English videos
- interactive e-learning
- worksheets
- classroom games and activities
- exam preparation videos
- videos to support speaking and listening preparation.

For Functional Skills, each skill and level will have a resource guide which will be led by the new Functional Skills subject content.

From initial and diagnostic assessments, teachers/tutors will be able to identify the subject content statements learners need to focus on and use the resource guides to help build schemes of work and session plans by selecting the best resources to use and learning how to make best use of them.

Resources will support all staff delivering reformed Functional Skills who need to gain a deeper understanding of the subject content, whatever their levels of confidence or experience.
What about initial assessment and digital learning tools?
Our e-Functional Skills solution is being updated to reflect the changes to the subject content and the design of our reformed Functional Skills assessments.

Our e-Functional Skills solution takes learners through initial and diagnostic testing, automatically creating a learning plan to address areas for development. Learning plan targets are linked to resources, which can also be supplemented by a centre’s own material, and ‘test your knowledge’ sections check learning throughout the journey. Progress is tracked and reports are easily accessible to tutors, making monitoring straightforward.

Initial and diagnostic assessments will continue to be integrated into e-Functional Skills, but initial assessments will also be available separately as a stand-alone tests.
Useful links

4748 Qualification web page
Qualification handbooks
Sample assessments and mark schemes
Approval documentation including Instructions for Conducting Examinations (new guidance)

Functional Skills updates
Regular updates
Subject content mapping guides
Recorded webinars and slides
Event information

Key terms:

SmartScreen – SmartScreen is City & Guilds’ tutor and learner support website. It supports learners, tutors and assessors by providing specific support materials for City & Guilds’ qualifications

Walled Garden - Walled Garden is a free online administration service. It has been especially developed to enable City & Guilds’ approved centres to carry out a range of day-to-day functions quickly and efficiently via the internet

e-volve – e-volve is City & Guilds’ e-assessment platform which helps learners and apprentices to sit on-screen tests and exams securely.

Open Assess – OpenAssess is our new tool to help learners prepare for on-screen Functional Skills exams taken on e-volve.
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