Centre Guide to Quality Assurance

Functional Skills English Levels 1 and 2
Speaking, Listening and Communicating

2023-2024

Contents

Using this handbook

This resource is designed to help you with your Functional Skills English Level 1 and 2 Speaking, Listening and Communicating delivery. We advise that all Examinations Officers, Programme Managers, Lead Internal Verifiers, Assessors, and Internal Verifiers in centres offering Functional Skills English at Levels 1 and 2 familiarise themselves with the contents of this handbook.

The focus of this handbook is to help centres effectively set up and understand the requirements to deliver and assess the internal component of Functional Skills English to meet national standards of quality assurance. For all instances referring to a contact in this document, please submit the query to us using the Pearson Support Portal.

Centres must conduct all Functional Skills Level 1 and 2 examinations for Reading and Writing components in line with the information in the Instructions for Conducting Examinations (ICE) document.

Your Examinations Officer should also access the UK Information Manual and the Instructions for Conducting Examinations. These documents are available on our website and contain information about entries and certification.

Team Roles and Responsibilities

Centres are responsible for identifying staff members to hold the roles of Assessor, Internal Verifier and Lead Internal Verifier.

The Quality Nominee

The role of a Quality Nominee is to act as Pearson's single point of contact for all Quality Assurance matters. This is a mandatory role that is required under the Terms and Conditions of being a Pearson Approved Centre for BTEC Vocational, Functional Skills and Work-Based Learning provision.

A key responsibility of the Quality Nominee is to monitor and audit the internal quality assurance processes which are conducted for Speaking, Listening and Communication assessment. This includes:
- ensuring the Lead Internal Verifier has completed the Online Standardisation for Centre Assessors (OSCA) Activity
- ensuring teams meet regularly for ongoing standardisation activity
- auditing internal verification activity
- auditing live assessment recordings and Assessor decisions
- ensuring Standards Verification is conducted in a timely manner.

The Lead Internal Verifier

The Lead Internal Verifier ensures that assessments across the centre consistently meet national standards.

The Lead Internal Verifier is responsible for:
- registration and completion of the OSCA Activity
- ensuring all Assessors and Internal Verifiers complete the OSCA Activity
- supporting the work of Assessors within the centre to monitor and ensure consistency in the interpretation and application of standards
- ensuring all Assessors and Internal Verifiers have access to a copy of assessment requirements as specified in the Assessment Record Sheets
- sampling assessment decisions made by all Assessors across all sites
- maintaining up-to-date records of internal verification and sampling activity and ensuring that these are available for standards verification
- managing the Standards Verification activity.

Online Standardisation for Centre Assessors (OSCA)

It is a requirement that centres identify a Lead Internal Verifier who completes an annual OSCA Activity. This activity is designed to ensure that all centres are standardised to the same level and all Lead Internal Verifiers, Assessors and Internal Verifiers understand how to assess Speaking and Listening and verify assessment decisions applying the national standards.

> If centres are delivering the qualification using a standard academic year model, with learner registrations in September, Lead Internal Verifiers must ensure that this OSCA Activity is completed no later than **31 October 2023**.

For centres who deliver using a 'roll on, roll off' delivery model, the OSCA windows are open between September and August, with the final window open in July. This will ensure that all Lead Internal Verifiers can access the materials at a time that is relevant to the registration of their learners. Once the Lead Internal Verifier has completed the OSCA Activity, the materials and SSV commentary should be used to standardise across the teaching team.

For instructions on registering for and completing standardisation, please see the OSCA step by step guidance and bitesize video.

> Top Tips:
>
> - Lead Internal Verifiers are only able to attempt the OSCA Activity once in a monthly window. This means that if the LIV logs out during the training, then tries to log back in again to complete it, they will be unable to access the materials again until the next monthly window.
>
> - If you have not received a confirmation email, you are not accredited. You must tick the confirmation box at the end of the training in order to receive accreditation.
>
> - The OSCA Activity must be completed for all levels even if you have learners for one level and you must use the current Standardisation materials for each level of FS English.

The Assessor

Assessors will be responsible for:
- managing assessment planning, teaching and skill development, preparation of learners for assessment, marking, and recording assessment decisions
- maintaining accurate and verifiable learner assessment and achievement records.

The Internal Verifier

The Internal Verifier is responsible for reviewing the assessment decisions of the assessor to check for accuracy, fairness, and consistency of applying the correct standards across the programme. Anyone involved in the delivery and assessment of the programme can be an Internal Verifier, but you cannot internally verify your own assessments.

All Assessors and Internal Verifiers must take part in an OSCA activity led by the Lead Internal Verifier and an accurate record of this activity must be kept. This applies to all centres regardless of the number of staff involved with the delivery of the programme. If a centre has multiple sites, Assessors and Internal Verifiers must be standardised across all locations.

Annual Quality Declaration (AQD)

The AQD is our new online form that will need to be completed by centres delivering Pearson Vocational qualifications between 1 Sept - 14 Oct each academic year (different dates for APMR and AMR sections only).

FAQs can be found [here](), and the form can be completed [here]().

Introduction to Functional Skills English Levels 1 and 2

The Functional Skills English qualification consists of three components:
- **Component 1:** Speaking, Listening and Communicating is assessed through internally set tasks which are assessed and marked internally and then verified through an external Standards Verification process
- **Component 2:** Reading is externally assessed via on-demand online Pearson Set Assessments
- **Component 3:** Writing is externally assessed via on-demand online Pearson Set Assessments.

Learners **must complete all units** to gain their Functional Skills English Level 1 and 2 certificate.

Please see the Functional Skills English Specification for details on the structure and content to be delivered for each of the components.

Registrations

Registrations are made using your centre number on Edexcel Online. Please follow these videos for guidance: <u>Individual registrations</u> / <u>Bulk registrations</u>

Registrations are required to be entered on Edexcel Online at the time the learner is enrolled onto the qualification at your centre.

No assessment activity can take place until learners are registered onto the qualification.

Frequently Asked Questions

Are you able to register learners on a framework for apprenticeships rather than doing it separately?
Functional Skills is not part of our bundled frameworks.

If a student is incorrectly registered on Level 1 instead of Level 2, would the centre be charged two registration fees, or can the student be moved over to Level 2?
Pearson does not charge for registration for Levels 1 and 2, so this will not be an issue.

Conducting the Speaking, Listening and Communication Assessment Tasks

Learners must complete both activities to pass the Speaking, Listening & Communicating component. At both Level 1 and Level 2 the assessment can be completed across more than one session. Any learner materials must be collected at the end of each session and stored securely. There is no limit to the number of times a learner can retake their Speaking and Listening assessment.

Level 1 tasks	Level 2 tasks
Talk about a chosen topic (3-4 minutes) and Q&A activity (2 minutes)	Presentation on topic of their choice (4-5 minutes) and Q&A activity (3 minutes)
Group discussion (10 minutes)	Formal discussion (15 minutes)

Please note learners must observe and ask questions in another learner's talk/presentation.

Level 1 and Level 2 learners may be assessed together for the talk and presentation tasks. If centres decide to assess Level 1 and Level 2 learners together for the discussion, then they must ensure that no learners are disadvantaged and that all participants are able to meet the standards. This will be checked as part of a standards verification visit.

How many learners should make up a group?

A maximum of five participants must make up the discussion group, although not all those involved need to be assessed. The minimum number of participants required for the Level 1 and Level 2 discussion activities is **three**.

A maximum of four participants must make up the group for talks (Level 1) and presentations (Level 2), although not all those involved need to be assessed. The minimum number of participants required for the talk/presentation and Q&A is **three**.

Members of teaching or support staff should not be used to make up the discussion group numbers. If there are less than three learners who require assessment, then it is acceptable for a learner or colleague who is not being assessed to take part in the discussion. In exceptional circumstances if you must use a member of staff to make up the numbers, please ensure that they are not involved in the assessment of Speaking, Listening and Communicating.

How should learners prepare for the assessment?

- Learners may prepare notes (bulleted or numbered points) on the assessment task which can be used during the formal assessment.
- Notes must not include prepared responses to potential questions.
- Notes must be checked by the assessor prior to the activity taking place.
- Group work and individual study can be used to complete preparation.

> There is no set date or assessment window for Speaking, Listening & Communicating. Learners should be assessed when the Assessor believes they are ready and able to attain the criteria of the assessment.

Special educational needs and requirements

Learners with additional requirements in relation to their mode of learning or assessment can have their usual support unless this compromises the outcome of the assessment. Please see our [Access Arrangements](#) webpage for more information.

If you have any specific queries about access requirements, please contact us using the [Pearson Support Portal](#).

Assessment of Speaking, Listening and Communicating

Learners must be provided with a suitably quiet, undisturbed location. The learners can be assessed in their normal environment.

The completion of the assessment must be under controlled conditions. During the assessment, the learner must always be in the direct sight of the Assessor.

Assessment can also be undertaken remotely using a suitable online meeting platform. Remote assessments should be recorded and normal rules on group size and assessment lengths apply. Please see the [Guidance](#) document on the website for more details.

To record the attainment of criteria, Assessors must complete an Assessment Record Sheet for each learner, these can be downloaded from the [Functional Skills Specification website](#). For guidance on completing the Assessment Record Sheets please see the [Assessment Record Sheet guidance document](#).

The completed Assessment Record Sheet for each learner should be retained by the centre at the end of the controlled assessment for Standards Verification purposes and kept securely for **three years** after certification.

Learners must achieve all criteria for each activity at the relevant level to claim achievement.

Advice for recording assessments

Please ensure that learners introduce themselves and remain visible in the recording. It is essential that the assessed formal assessments are 'live' i.e., actual assessments with current registered learners and not 'mock' assessments. A selection of live assessments must be video recorded prior to the Standards Verification visit as evidence. The Standards Verifier will also need to view the Assessment Record Sheets of the learners that were assessed.

Please Note: Audio recordings will not be accepted as appropriate forms of assessment.

> **Top Tip:**
> Please save your video recordings in MP4, AVI or MOV formats to ensure that your Standards Verifier can open the files.

Invigilation

The Assessor may act as the Invigilator; however, they must not perform any other task in the room other than that of Invigilator and the assessor. It is their role to assess the learners and not participate.

We require the Head of Centre to maintain **a record of approved invigilators** who are suitably qualified and experienced to carry out this role. This must include the names and the rationale for their selection. We reserve the right to request this information if required as part of quality assurance measures.

Internal Verification

Please ensure that your centre has a robust internal verification strategy which considers these key areas:

- a schedule of internal verification including when feedback will be provided to Assessors and Lead Internal Verifiers
- in large centres a team of Internal Verifiers may be established to check the validity and consistency of assessment decisions across Assessors and sites
- in small centres, it is acceptable to have only one Internal Verifier who is also registered as the Lead Internal Verifier
- under no circumstance can the role of the Assessor and Internal Verifier be covered by only one person.

> **Top Tips:**
> - the teaching team should meet regularly to ensure standardisation of procedures and application of standards is robust; minutes from these meetings should be kept for the purpose of Standards Verification
>
> - the time required to carry out internal verification is recognised as an important part of quality standards.
>
> - the Centre Quality Nominee should audit standardisation activity throughout the year.

Internal Sampling

Role	Responsibility
Assessors	Assess: • 100% of learner work
Internal Verifiers	Verify: • a selection of learners' work per component and level • all Assessors (this does not need to be 100% of assessment) • all sites • a sample based on risk
Lead Internal Verifier	Verify: • a selection of learners' work per component and level • all Internal Verifiers • all Assessors where risks have been identified • all sites • a sample based on risk

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I assess Level and 2 at the same time?

Yes, you can, but consideration needs to be given to the needs of the Level 2 learners who need the tasks to be longer and more detailed.

Does Pearson provide exemplar Speaking, Listening and Communicating videos?

Yes, we do. Level 1 and 2 videos are part of the OSCA process. You will need an Edexcel Online account to access these resources.

Does Pearson provide exemplar Speaking, Listening and Communicating paperwork?

Yes, we do. The Level 1 and 2 paperwork is available on our Course Materials page.

Where can I find Word versions of the Speaking, Listening and Communicating paperwork?

The Word versions of the Speaking, Listening and Communicating paperwork are available on our Course Materials page, within Forms and Administration.

Can I use Teams or other onscreen video communication tools?

Yes, you can. Please ensure that these calls are recorded.

Do I have to video every learner?
No. For Levels 1 and 2, we need to see evidence of each task at each level, which can be in the form of a video.

What is the procedure if a learner does not want to be videoed?
It depends. For face-to-face assessments, only a sample have to be videoed so it would be possible not to video the activity (provided that it wasn't the only assessment). However, we require all remote assessments to be videoed so in this case the centre would have to apply for an exemption. You can find the link to the exemption form [here](#). This **must** be requested **before** the assessment takes place, every academic year.

Can my learner use sign language?
If it is their usual way of working, yes they can.

The Standards Verification Process

As part of the quality assurance process, all centres will be required to undergo external verification of their internal assessment decisions. For the 2023/24 academic year, most Standards Verification activity will be completed remotely. Centres may be eligible for a face-to-face visit if they fulfil any of the exception criteria.

In order to complete the process, your Standards Verifier (SV) will review a sample of learner work and supporting quality assurance documentation. To prepare for your SV visit, please see the centre visit checklist (Appendix B). A Standards Verifier will be allocated to your centre between November and January. **The deadline for sampling is 30 June 2024.**

> **Please note** if there are extenuating circumstances which lead a centre to defer the SV activity, this can only be done ONCE. Further requests to defer, or failing to organise the Standards Verification activity when requested, will result in a block from certification.

Your Standards Verifier

Your allocated Standards Verifier will contact your centre Quality Nominee via email to introduce themselves. This communication should be forwarded to the Lead Internal Verifier who will then work with the Standards Verifier to plan for sampling to take place.

The Standards Verifier will:
- agree a schedule with your centre for the activity
- identify the learners and levels to be verified
- request necessary materials such as live assessment recordings, evidence of OSCA accreditation, and Assessment Record Sheets
- validate the work of the of Assessor against national standards by sampling assessment and internal verification decisions
- check quality assurance procedures and OSCA records
- communicate any areas of improvement points and agree an action plan
- review your centre's processes for meeting the conditions in the Instructions for Conducting Examination (ICE) document.

During the process, your Standards Verifier will provide advice and guidance and a standards verification report will be completed at the conclusion of the activity.

Documentation Required for Sampling

Your centre must provide copies of:

- confirmation of Lead Internal Verifier OSCA accreditation
- date/s of internal standardisation, names of Assessors who attended including records of any discussion points or clarifications required
- assessment and internal verification plans
- internal verification records for all learners in the sample, including feedback to Assessors
- video recordings of assessments and the relevant learners' Assessment Record Sheets.

The Standards Verifier will want to be assured that all Internal Verifiers and Assessors understand centre systems and procedures.

> **Top Tip:** The Assessment Record Sheets (ARS) of all the assessed learners in the video recorded assessments must be sent to the Standards Verifier. Your Standards Verifier will ask to see an additional sample of Assessment Record Sheets, so these must be available.

Sampling

If the number of learner registrations and entries is below the number required to conduct the group activities, then this must be declared to the Standards Verifier so they can advise you of the sampling size requirements accordingly.

Your sample <u>must</u> include the following video recorded evidence:

Level 1	3 Talks and Q&A activities (min 3 learners, max 4 learners)
	1 Formal Discussion (min 3 learners, max 5 learners)
Level 2	3 Presentations and Q&A activities (min 3 learners, max 4 learners)
	1 Group Discussion (min 3 learners, max 5 learners)

Note: For centres with a large number of learners (100+), the Standards Verifier may ask to see a larger sample range. More recordings may be requested so it is advisable to video more than the requirement.

SharePoint

We encourage centres to use SharePoint to share documents for sampling as part of the Quality Assurance process. The aim of the SharePoint portal is to make the sharing of work between centres and SVs as easy and streamlined as possible. By using the SharePoint Portal, we also ensure the security and data privacy of any candidates work that is shared. As a centre you will have a folder created for you. Each centre only has access to their own folder and cannot see any other centres folders. When centres are ready for external verification, centres can upload documents to their folder, which the SV will then be able to view and/or download. A folder will be shared with you which will generate an email that will be sent to you.

In order to further enhance our privacy and security, you will be required to setup Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) in order to access this platform. This means that when we share a folder with you, you will be prompted to set up Multi-Factor Authentication. There is a guide here on how to do this. You will be asked to download an app, or alternatively you can set up a different method. Please speak to your Standards Verifier regarding this if you wish to share work this way.

If you experience any issues with this, please contact our Customer Services team here.

Please note: if you have not received a SharePoint folder, contact your SV. Assessment materials **must not** be emailed.

After your SV verification

The outcome of the sampling will be discussed with the Lead Internal Verifier at the end of the process. Actions for improvement will be identified by your Standards Verifier. It is important that any actions and target dates agreed are clear, realistic and understood by the Lead Internal Verifier who should ask for clarification where needed. If the visit reveals serious inaccuracies in assessment standards, the Lead Internal Verifier accreditation will be suspended. This means that marks submitted for learners will not be accepted and certificates will be withheld. The Standards Verifier will advise on appropriate actions and the timescale in which the agreed actions are to be taken to resolve this suspension.

Standards Verification Outcomes

- **Approved** - no further action is required, the centre will be released for certification – future annual monitoring will usually be remote, unless we have concerns about quality assurance standards.

- **Approved with improvement points** - minor follow up action required, the centre will be released for certification – future annual monitoring will usually be remote; a visit may take place approximately every three years (or sooner if we have concerns about quality assurance standards).

- **Not approved – actions to complete** - immediate action required and centre certification will be blocked – once improvements have been implemented the centre will be released, however, a face-to-face visit will take place next year.

You will receive your Standards Verification Report via email within 10 working days of the conclusion of the sampling activity.

If there are no significant issues identified during the Standards Verification activity, the Lead Internal Verifier will retain their accredited status for the remainder of the academic year (i.e. until 31 August 2024).

> **Please note** a sampling outcome resulting in a decision to block the centre will apply to both Level 1 and Level 2 cohorts.

Frequently Asked Questions

If we have one student taking an assessment, does the Standards Verifier process still apply?

Yes it does.

When will my Standards Verifier be assigned to my centre?

A Standards Verifier will usually be allocated to your centre before Christmas. They will usually contact you in the new year to arrange a remote verification. If you haven't heard from an SV, please get in touch with us via the [Pearson Support Portal](#).

How often will I receive a visit for Level 1 and 2 Speaking, Listening and Communicating?

Due to changes in the Ofqual requirements, each centre will now be moderated each year. This will either be through a face-to-face visit or a remote verification. Your Standards Verifier will inform you.

When will the verification activity happen?

The Standards Verification Activity will usually take place between February and June, depending on the availability of live assessment material. If you need verification before this, then you may request this by contacting the assessment team. The Standards Verification Activity must be completed by the end of June.

Claiming certificates

Centres with an accredited Lead Internal Verifier

Centres with an accredited Lead Internal Verifier can submit marks for Functional Skills English Speaking, Listening & Communicating on Edexcel Online after completion of the Standards Verification process. Certificates will be automatically generated once all units are present on a learner's record.

Centres without an accredited Lead Internal Verifier

If the Lead Internal Verifier does not complete OSCA, centre marks for learners will still be accepted by us. However, learners will not receive certificates until OSCA has been successfully completed.

For information on how to submit marks on Edexcel Online, please refer to this [guidance page](#).

Onscreen model and Paper Based On-Demand (PBOD)

There are no deadlines for submitting marks for the Functional Skills English Onscreen and PBOD model. For the Speaking, Listening & Communicating units, marks are to be submitted once Standards Verification is complete and the centre is released for certification.

Communicating with us

Pearson communicates with centres by newsletter, telephone and email. To make sure we reach you, please ensure that you maintain accurate contact details on Edexcel Online.

You can submit any queries to us using the [Pearson Support Portal](). By using the Support Portal, you can get in touch with Functional Skills Assessment directly. We aim to respond to you within 5 working days.

Pearson Functional Skills homepage
Located at: [https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-functional-skills.html]()

Our website pages are regularly updated with all the most current information and documents.

Edexcel Online
[Edexcel Online]() is an invaluable service for administrators, providing support from approval through to registration and entry, reporting of achievement, and results and post-results services.

It also includes access to services for teaching staff, including OSCA, online booking for training events and Pearson publications ordering. In addition, your Edexcel Online username and password will give you access to ResultsPlus.

Customer Services
We pledge to provide excellent service in all your dealings with us. Each centre will have a dedicated Accounts Specialist that will be their first point of contact for administration matters relating to learner registrations, exam entries, claiming certification.

Curriculum Development Managers

Curriculum Development Managers are an important part of our Pearson UK FE and Schools teams. They provide a range of professional advisory support across all Pearson qualifications.

A key responsibility of Curriculum Development Managers is to build relationships with schools, colleges, and Local Authorities to raise achievement and promote our drive for excellence in education. Work Based Learning centres are supported by their Account Manager.

If you would like your Curriculum Development Manager or Account Manager to contact you, please get in touch with our Customer Services team and they will be able to guide you through this.

Functional Skills Assessment Team

Our Functional Skills Assessment team is responsible for the production of papers, the assessment of externally assessed units and the administration of internally assessed units and can be contacted via
http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/contact-us.html

Vocational Quality Assurance Managers

Your Vocational Quality Assurance Managers (VQAM) are available to support your Quality Nominee and their internal vocational team/s with Quality Assurance processes to ensure compliance with National Standards.

The VQAMs develop a wide range of resources to support your understanding of the quality assurance requirements for delivering and assessing Functional Skills English; you can find our support on The Home of Quality Assurance pages of the Pearson website. We can be contacted via Live Chat on that webpage or via the Pearson Support Portal.

If you have a question, please contact
FS Assessment or your **Vocational Quality Assurance Manager** via
The Pearson Contact Portal.

In addition, you will find further information on our
Quality Assurance webpages.

Appendix

Standards Verification Checklist

Actions to complete prior to a remote sample taking place	Completed (please ✓)
OSCA Training completed and accreditation email received by Lead IV	
2023-24 standardisation of assessment team completed	

Items to send to Standards Verifier prior to a remote sample	Sent (please ✓)
Initial Contact Form (ICF) (This must be sent within 5 days of being received)	

Items to send to Standards Verifier as part of a remote sample	Sent (please ✓)
Centre remote sample form	
Level 1: 3 video recordings of Talks/Q&A activities **(min 3 learners, max 4 learners)**	
Level 1: 1 video recording of a formal discussion **(min 3 learners, max 5 learners)**	
Level 2: 3 video recordings of Presentations/Q&A activities **(min 3 learners, max 4 learners)**	
Level 2: 1 video recording of a group discussion **(min 3 learners, max 5 learners)**	
The assessment record sheets for each learner participating in the above activities (all learners should be clearly identifiable in the recordings)	
Evidence of verification feedback on some of the assessments at each level	
An additional sample of ARS sheets for other 2023/24 learners (at least 10 per level if available)	
Internal verification and standardisation policy	
Evidence of internal standardisation of assessors, e.g. meeting minutes or agenda	

All boxes must be ticked prior to a remote sample being sent to your standards verifier (SV).

Please also tick here to SV that you are [ ] confirm that you have notified your sending the sample.

Form completed by (Print name and role)	
Date Completed	