

Functional Skills Insight 2: Preparing for Delivery and Assessment

www.edexcel.org.uk/functional-skills

Edexcel is currently putting together advice for centres on how to prepare for the delivery and assessment of functional skills. The website will be updated as more information becomes available.

What is the likely content?

The draft standards are available on the QCA website at www.qca.org.uk. The standards will inform the content of the qualifications that the awarding bodies will develop in each subject and level. The standards are likely to evolve to reflect feedback from both trials and piloting. However the basic premise on which they were written, that learners need to be able to function in literacy, numeracy and ICT in order to be successful in their personal and working lives, will remain at the heart of the standards.

What are the fundamental requirements for learners to be successful in functional skills?

The main requirement driving functional skills development is the need to ensure that learners can 'do the basics'. This is fundamental to the initiative and will continue to drive delivery and assessment. Therefore practice across the curriculum will be an imperative for centre success so that learners are given continual exposure to 'the basics' whenever appropriate.

What models are there for us to consider now?

Key skills

Centres delivering and assessing the key skills in communication, application of number and ICT, will have already considered alternative methods of how to support learners in practising the skill(s) and how to support learners in evidence collection and taking a test. Although we can't be sure that the assessment will include test and portfolio, it is possible that across the subjects and levels both assessment methods will be included. Helpful suggestions for how to embed models of delivery and assessment can be found on our web-site and, in our Skills for Life Centre Support Pack which can be obtained by emailing skillsforlife@edexcel.org.uk

Adult Literacy Adult Numeracy

One of the overriding requirements of the functional skills assessment is the ability for learners to take the assessment when they are ready to achieve (rather like a driving test). So assessment on demand is intended to be a feature of each subject and level. The functional skills requirement will also be a part of the GCSE in maths, English and ICT, which learners will have to achieve to achieve an A*-C grade.

Therefore, centres that are currently offering adult literacy and numeracy qualifications as an integrated part of the GCSE in maths and English are not only offering their learners a worthwhile qualification, they are also supporting their staff in developing the techniques they will need to deliver on demand assessment as part of the GCSE. For further details on the delivery and assessment of the adult literacy and numeracy qualifications, please see the Edexcel website at www.edexcel.org.uk/quals/alan/

How will we cope with on demand assessment?

On-demand assessment is a key feature of both the adult literacy and numeracy qualifications and the key skills tests at Levels 1 and 2 in communication, application of number and ICT. Although it is accepted that there are aspects of the standards that will make e-assessment difficult (speaking and listening is often quoted), it is anticipated that, where possible, e-assessment will take place. Therefore, centres that are already accommodating large numbers of learners requiring on-demand, on-screen assessment are more able to anticipate the issues they might face. For more details on on-screen assessment please visit www.edexcel.org.uk

Is there any training available to help my staff prepare?

Given that centres are at differing stages of development, Edexcel proposes to offer customised training that is tailored to meet the individual requirements of the centre. For more information on Edexcel's bespoke service, please contact us on 0870 240 9800.

Are there any support packages available?

Edexcel is currently working with the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT) on a curriculum framework that links BTEC qualifications with GCSEs in core subjects called Vocational Advantage. The initial fee entitles the centre to training, materials and support that continues throughout the subscription, so that functional skills development can be disseminated as it becomes available. For more information on Vocational Advantage please see the website www.vocational-advantage.org.uk

Is there more?

As more functional skills information becomes available, we will post information on our website. Please register for email alerts by visiting www.edexcel.org.uk/functional-skills