# Reforming functional skills qualifications in English and maths

## How to respond to this consultation

The closing date for responses is **22 November 2017 at 5pm.**

You can answer as many of the consultation questions as you like. You do not have to answer all of the questions, unless you wish to do so.

Please respond to this consultation in one of three ways:

* complete the online response (click ‘Respond online’ on the [consultation homepage](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reforming-functional-skills-qualifications-in-english-and-maths)).
* complete this response form and email your response to [consultations@ofqual.gov.uk](mailto:consultations@ofqual.gov.uk). Please include the consultation title (Reforming functional skills qualifications in English and maths) in the subject line of the email and make clear who you are and in what capacity you are responding.
* Post your response to: Reforming functional skills consultation, Ofqual, Spring Place, Herald Avenue, Coventry, CV5 6UB, making clear who you are and in what capacity you are responding.
* **We can only consider your response if you fill in the ‘About you’ section at the end of the document.**

## How we will use your response

* Your response will be used to help us shape our policies and regulatory activity.
* After the consultation ends, we will publish a summary of responses received.
* We will not include your personal details in any published list of respondents, although we may quote from your response anonymously.

## Sharing your response

We may share your anonymised response with the Department for Education if it relates to the subject content for reformed functional skills qualifications.

If you are happy for Ofqual to attribute your response to you, in the responses shared with the Department for Education, please confirm this below:

**[ ] When sharing responses with the Department for Education, I am happy for Ofqual to attribute my response to me.**

If you respond on behalf of an organisation, we will list your organisation’s name and may publish your response in full unless you tell us not to. If you want any part of your response to stay confidential, you should explain why you believe the information you have given is confidential. If you check the box below, we will not include your details in any list of people or organisations that responded to the consultation.

**[ ] I want part of my organisation’s response to remain confidential.**

Please explain which sections of your response you want kept confidential, and why:

Members of the public are entitled to ask for information we hold under information access law (such as the Freedom of Information Act 2000). We may have to disclose information covered by these laws. On these rare occasions, we will usually anonymise responses, or ask for consent from those who have responded, but we cannot guarantee confidentiality.

## Contacting you

Ofqual may sometimes follow-up responses received. If you are happy to be contacted about your response, please complete your details below.

**Telephone number:**

**Email:**

# Consultation questions

**Question 1:** To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should introduce requirements setting minimum, but no maximum overall assessment times for reformed functional skills qualifications?

[ ] Strongly agree  
[ ] Agree  
[ ] Neither agree nor disagree  
[ ] Disagree  
[ ] Strongly disagree

Please explain your reasons

**Question 2:** To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should **not** set requirements around the number of assessments within individual functional skills qualifications?

[ ] Strongly agree  
[ ] Agree  
[ ] Neither agree nor disagree  
[ ] Disagree  
[ ] Strongly disagree

Please explain your reasons

**Question 3:** To what extent do you agree or disagree that at the Entry levels we should allow, but not require, centres to set and mark the assessments?

[ ] Strongly agree  
[ ] Agree  
[ ] Neither agree nor disagree  
[ ] Disagree  
[ ] Strongly disagree

Please explain your reasons

**Question 4:** To what extent do you agree or disagree that at Levels 1 and 2 we should require all mathematics assessments, and the reading and writing assessments in English, to be set and marked by the awarding organisation?

[ ] Strongly agree  
[ ] Agree  
[ ] Neither agree nor disagree  
[ ] Disagree  
[ ] Strongly disagree

Please explain your reasons

**Question 5:** To what extent do you agree or disagree that at levels 1 and 2 for the speaking, listening and communicating assessments in English we should allow, but not require, centres to set and mark the assessments?

[ ] Strongly agree  
[ ] Agree  
[ ] Neither agree nor disagree  
[ ] Disagree  
[ ] Strongly disagree

Please explain your reasons

**Question 6:** To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should **not** place any restrictions around availability of assessments in reformed functional skills qualifications?

[ ] Strongly agree  
[ ] Agree  
[ ] Neither agree nor disagree  
[ ] Disagree  
[ ] Strongly disagree

Please explain your reasons

**Question 7:** To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should continue to have a pass/fail grading model for reformed functional skills qualifications?

[ ] Strongly agree  
[ ] Agree  
[ ] Neither agree nor disagree  
[ ] Disagree  
[ ] Strongly disagree

Please explain your reasons

**Question 8:** To what extent do you agree or disagree that, at Levels 1 and 2, awarding decisions made **before** assessments have been taken by all learners involved must either:

* use pre-set pass marks based on rigorous pre-testing of the assessments
* in setting pass marks, draw on evidence from the actual performance of a sufficiently representative sample of the anticipated cohort

[ ] Strongly agree  
[ ] Agree  
[ ] Neither agree nor disagree  
[ ] Disagree  
[ ] Strongly disagree

Please explain your reasons

**Question 9:** To what extent do you agree or disagree that, at Levels 1 and 2, for awarding decisions made **after** assessments have been taken by all learners involved, we should restrict the number of awarding sessions an awarding organisation can hold to no more than four each year?

[ ] Strongly agree  
[ ] Agree  
[ ] Neither agree nor disagree  
[ ] Disagree  
[ ] Strongly disagree

Please explain your reasons

**Question 10:** To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should regulate differently for the first year of awards for reformed functional skills qualifications to ensure initial standards are set appropriately?

[ ] Strongly agree  
[ ] Agree  
[ ] Neither agree nor disagree  
[ ] Disagree  
[ ] Strongly disagree

Please explain your reasons

**Question 11:** To what extent do you agree or disagree that, for Levels 1 and 2, we should require an enhanced level of scrutiny of qualification outcomes post-awarding?

[ ] Strongly agree  
[ ] Agree  
[ ] Neither agree nor disagree  
[ ] Disagree  
[ ] Strongly disagree

Please explain your reasons

**Question 12:** To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should set a process for reviewing qualification outcomes for the Entry levels, and for speaking, listening and communicating at Levels 1 and 2, that

* has the same purpose to that proposed for levels 1 and 2
* is tailored to the fact that these assessments are likely to be set and marked by the centre

[ ] Strongly agree  
[ ] Agree  
[ ] Neither agree nor disagree  
[ ] Disagree  
[ ] Strongly disagree

Please explain your reasons

**Question 13:** To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should set requirements and/or guidance around awarding organisations’ centre–monitoring procedures in relation to functional skills qualifications?

[ ] Strongly agree  
[ ] Agree  
[ ] Neither agree nor disagree  
[ ] Disagree  
[ ] Strongly disagree

Please explain your reasons

**Question 14:** To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should set requirements on awarding organisations to produce guidance for centres on the conduct and assessment of speaking, listening and communicating?

[ ] Strongly agree  
[ ] Agree  
[ ] Neither agree nor disagree  
[ ] Disagree  
[ ] Strongly disagree

Please explain your reasons

**Question 15:** To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should set a requirement for awarding organisations to produce a document covering their approach to assessing reformed functional skills qualifications?

[ ] Strongly agree  
[ ] Agree  
[ ] Neither agree nor disagree  
[ ] Disagree  
[ ] Strongly disagree

Please explain your reasons

**Question 16:** To what extent do you agree or disagree that once reformed functional skills qualifications are available, we should require awarding organisations to make current functional skills qualifications available for a minimum of 9 months, and a maximum of 12 months which would include all resits?

[ ] Strongly agree  
[ ] Agree  
[ ] Neither agree nor disagree  
[ ] Disagree  
[ ] Strongly disagree

Please explain your reasons

**Question 17:** To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should assign weighting ranges to the content areas for reformed functional skills qualifications in mathematics?

[ ] Strongly agree  
[ ] Agree  
[ ] Neither agree nor disagree  
[ ] Disagree  
[ ] Strongly disagree

Please explain your reasons

**Question 18:** To what extent do you agree or disagree that any weighting ranges set for content areas should differ between the levels in reformed functional skills qualifications in mathematics?

[ ] Strongly agree  
[ ] Agree  
[ ] Neither agree nor disagree  
[ ] Disagree  
[ ] Strongly disagree

Please explain your reasons

**Question 19:** To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should set weightings for calculator-based and non-calculator-based assessment within reformed functional skills qualifications in mathematics?

[ ] Strongly agree  
[ ] Agree  
[ ] Neither agree nor disagree  
[ ] Disagree  
[ ] Strongly disagree

Please explain your reasons

**Question 20:** To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should set weightings for the assessment of underpinning skills, underpinning skills in an applied context and problem solving in an applied context in reformed functional skills qualifications in mathematics?

[ ] Strongly agree  
[ ] Agree  
[ ] Neither agree nor disagree  
[ ] Disagree  
[ ] Strongly disagree

Please explain your reasons

**Question 21:** To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should set greater emphasis on the assessment of underpinning skills in an applied context and problem solving in an applied context than on underpinning skills in reformed functional skills qualifications in mathematics?

[ ] Strongly agree  
[ ] Agree  
[ ] Neither agree nor disagree  
[ ] Disagree  
[ ] Strongly disagree

Please explain your reasons

**Question 22:** To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should set a requirement that learners must pass each of the three content areas (reading, writing, and speaking, listening and communicating) in order to achieve an overall pass in functional skills qualifications in English?

[ ] Strongly agree  
[ ] Agree  
[ ] Neither agree nor disagree  
[ ] Disagree  
[ ] Strongly disagree

Please explain your reasons

**Question 23:** To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should set a weighting for spelling, punctuation and grammar that will apply to the writing assessments for functional skills qualifications in English?

[ ] Strongly agree  
[ ] Agree  
[ ] Neither agree nor disagree  
[ ] Disagree  
[ ] Strongly disagree

Please explain your reasons

**Question 24:** To what extent do you agree or disagree that for those sections of online writing assessments where spelling, punctuation and grammar will be assessed for functional skills qualifications in English, we should set a requirement that disallows spelling, punctuation and grammar checks?

[ ] Strongly agree  
[ ] Agree  
[ ] Neither agree nor disagree  
[ ] Disagree  
[ ] Strongly disagree

Please explain your reasons

**Question 25:** Do you think that we should set a mark-based or a level-based approach to the assessment of Speaking, listening and communicating for functional skills qualifications in English? Please give reasons for your answer.

[ ] Mark-based approach  
[ ] Level-based approach

Please explain your reasons

**Question 26:** To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should set mandatory common assessment criteria for speaking, listening and communicating at each level for functional skills qualifications in English?

[ ] Strongly agree  
[ ] Agree  
[ ] Neither agree nor disagree  
[ ] Disagree  
[ ] Strongly disagree

Please explain your reasons

**Question 27:** To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should set rules around the assessment of reading and spelling of words contained in the appendix of the subject content?

[ ] Strongly agree  
[ ] Agree  
[ ] Neither agree nor disagree  
[ ] Disagree  
[ ] Strongly disagree

Please explain your reasons

**Question 28:** We have set out the ways in which our proposals could impact (positively or negatively) on learners who share a protected characteristic.[[1]](#footnote-1) Are there any potential impacts that we have not identified?

[ ] Yes  
[ ] No

Please provide details:

**Question 29:** Are there any additional steps we could take to mitigate any negative impact, resulting from our proposals, on learners who share a protected characteristic?

**Question 30:** Do you have any other comments on the impacts of our proposals on learners who share a protected characteristic?

**Question 31:** Are there any regulatory impacts that we have not identified arising from our proposals?

**Question 32:** Are there any additional steps we could take to minimise the regulatory impact of our proposals?

**Question 33:** Are there any costs or benefits associated with our proposals which we have not identified?

**Question 34:** Is there any additional information we should consider when evaluating the costs and benefits of our proposals?

# About you

To evaluate responses properly, we need to know in what capacity you are responding to the consultation. We will only consider your response if you complete the following section. Questions marked with a **\*** are required.

**Name \*:**

**Organisation (if applicable):**

**Position (if applicable):**

**Is this a personal response or an official response on behalf of your organisation? \***

[ ] Personal response (please answer the question ‘If you ticked ‘Personal response’’)

[ ] Official response (please answer the question ‘If you ticked ‘Official response’’)

**If you ticked ‘Personal response’, which of the following are you? \***

[ ] Student

[ ] Parent or carer

[ ] Teacher (but responding in a personal capacity)

[ ] Other, including general public (please state below)

**If you ticked ‘Official response’, which of the following are you? \***

[ ] Awarding organisation

[ ] Local authority

[ ] School or college (please answer the question ‘School or college type‘ below)

[ ] Academy chain

[ ] Private training provider

[ ] University or other higher education institution

[ ] Employer

[ ] Other representative or interest group (please answer the question ‘Type of representative group or interest group’below)

**School or college type**

[ ] Comprehensive or non-selective academy

[ ] State selective or selective academy

[ ] Independent

[ ] Special school

[ ] Further education college

[ ] Sixth form college

[ ] Other (please state below)

**Type of representative group or interest group**

[ ] Group of awarding organisations

[ ] Union

[ ] Employer or business representative group

[ ] Subject association or learned society

[ ] Equality organisation or group

[ ] School, college or teacher representative group

[ ] Other (please state below)

**Nation\***

[ ] England

[ ] Wales

[ ] Northern Ireland

[ ] Scotland

[ ] Other EU country: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

[ ] Non-EU country: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**How did you find out about this consultation?**

[ ] Ofqual’s newsletter

[ ] Ofqual’s social media channels

[ ] Other social media channels

[ ] Ofqual’s website

[ ] Internet search

[ ] Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. The term ‘protected characteristics’ is defined in the Equality Act 2010. Here, it means sex, disability, racial group, age, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation and gender reassignment. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)