Functional Skills



VQA Functional Skills Qualifications at Entry Level

Quality Assurance and Standardisation Guide

Version 1.1

Contents

Summary of changes.....3

Introduction 4
Reasonable Adjustments, Special Considerations, and Centre Adaptations.....6
Staffing Requirements 7
Internal Quality Assurance and Standardisation Processes..... 13
Assessment Sampling..... 19
External Quality Assurance.....23
Direct Claim Status..... 24

Go to contents Page >

Summary of changes

The following table provides a summary of the changes that have been made to the qualification specification since the publication of the previous version.

Version number	Summary of changes
V1.1	Update to information regarding Staffing Requirements on page 9. Update to information regarding Internal Quality Assurance and Standardisation Processes on page 12 and page 15.

Go to contents Page >

Introduction

The principle objective of TQUK's Functional Skills Qualifications at Entry Level is to provide learners with foundational knowledge and skills essential for progression into employment or further education and to promote the development of skills for use in everyday life.

They provide a structured progression from Entry Level 1 to Entry Level 3 enabling learners to develop and build on their core understanding and skills at each stage.

The focus of the qualifications is the application of English or mathematics in everyday situations to ensure that learners can manage routine tasks involving the application of these skills.

Quality assurance and standardisation form an essential part of Functional Skills Qualifications at Entry Level delivery and ensure that processes and standards are consistent, reliable, fit for purpose, and align with TQUK's expectations and regulatory requirements.

This document refers to:

- **Quality assurance** – the processes that review the quality of teaching and assessment within the centre. These practices ensure that TQUK's Functional Skills Qualifications at Entry Level are delivered fairly, accurately, consistently, and reliably.
- **Standardisation** – the process undertaken by centre staff to ensure consistent, fair, and accurate marking practices across all tutors within the centre. This process ensures that all learners are assessed consistently and fairly against a uniform set of standards.

This guidance document is designed to support centres with the implementation of quality assurance and standardisation processes. It clarifies the roles and responsibilities of centres and their staff in assessing and standardising each of the following assessment components:

- **English**:
  - speaking, listening, and communicating (SLC)
  - reading
  - writing.
- **Mathematics**:
  - calculator and non-calculator sections.

Go to contents Page >

The TQUK Functional Skills Qualifications in English and Mathematics at Entry Level are assessed as outlined in Table 1 overleaf:

Table 1: Functional Skills Qualifications at Entry Level Mandatory Assessment Components

Subject	Number of components	Format
English	3	Reading assessment: • externally set by TQUK and internally marked by the centre tutor. Writing assessment: • externally set by TQUK and internally marked by the centre tutor. Speaking, Listening, and Communicating (SLC) component: • use, adapt or customise exemplar assessment materials provided by TQUK, or centre-devised assessments (CDAs).
Mathematics	1	Externally-set assessment (comprised of two sections: calculator and non-calculator): • externally set by TQUK and internally marked by the centre tutor.

Learners must pass the mandatory assessment components listed in Table 1 to achieve the qualification.

Mark schemes have been produced for each of the externally-set controlled assessments (Reading, Writing, and mathematics). Recognised centres will be able to access and download the mark schemes from the secure area of TQUK's Verve management suite.

All assessment components must be marked by the centre's tutors and internally quality assured within the centre. All assessment decisions made by centres are subject to external quality assurance conducted by TQUK's Quality Team.

It is important to note that the assessment of the Functional Skills Qualifications in English at Entry Level differs from the assessment of the mathematics qualifications due to the inclusion of the **internally-set and controlled** Speaking, Listening, and Communicating (SLC) component.

Reasonable Adjustments, Special Considerations, and Centre Adaptations

Centres should determine whether a learner requires a Reasonable Adjustment and/or Special Consideration to be put in place to ensure they have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their abilities. This aligns with the Equality Act 2010 and ensures recognition of their achievement while maintaining the fairness, validity, and reliability of the assessments. The definitions provided by Ofqual's General Conditions of Recognition should be used as a reference for these terms.

"Reasonable Adjustments are adjustments made to an assessment for a qualification so as to enable a disabled learner to demonstrate his or her knowledge, skills and understanding to the levels of attainment required by the specification for that qualification."

"Special Consideration is consideration to be given to a learner who has temporarily experienced – a) an illness or injury, or b) some other event outside of the learner's control, which has had, or is reasonably likely to have had, a material effect on that learner's ability to take an assessment or demonstrate his or her level of attainment in an assessment."

Where appropriate, centres may apply for Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations for the Functional Skills Qualifications at Entry Level. For further information, please refer to the *TQUK Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy* accessed from our website.

In certain situations, a centre may need to modify the delivery of an assessment for a group of learners to address specific circumstances. For Functional Skills at Entry Level assessments, centres may adapt the context of the assessments; however, any adaptations must be approved by the External Quality Assurer (EQA) before implementation.

Circumstances may include:

- pandemics or health crises
- natural disasters

- technology failures
- staffing shortages
- logistical constraints
- large-scale centre disruptions

Staffing Requirements

Centres are responsible for ensuring that there are appropriate members of staff in place to complete all assessment and internal quality assurance activities. All staff involved in the delivery and assessment of the qualifications must have a clear understanding of the subject content as these form the basis of the assessment approach and all standardisation activities.

For detailed guidance on the recommended qualifications and experience staff should hold, centres must refer to the individual qualification specification for the Functional Skills Qualifications in English and Mathematics at Entry Level.

Centre staff must familiarise themselves with the instructions for the conduct of the Functional Skills at Entry Level assessments provided by TQUK and carry out their designated responsibilities in line with the following TQUK policies and guidance documentation:

- *TQUK Functional Skills Qualifications at Entry Level: Regulations for the Conduct of the Controlled Assessment*
- *Appeals Policy*
- *Complaints Policy*
- *Conflict of Interest Policy*
- *Equality and Diversity Policy*
- *GDPR and Privacy Policy*
- *Malpractice and Maladministration Policy*
- *Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy*
- *TQUK Functional Skills Qualifications in English at Entry Level: SLC Handbook*
- *TQUK Functional Skills Qualifications in English at Entry Level: SLC Remote Delivery Guide.*

TQUK policy documents may be accessed from our website.

TQUK understands that the size of a centre, its staffing levels and learner volumes may vary, however, this should not impact or compromise the internal quality assurance and standardisation expectations defined by TQUK.

Centres should note that TQUK recognises that an individual may be employed in one capacity and have additional designated responsibilities to support the

internal quality assurance processes within the centre. For instance, the Internal Quality Assurer (IQA) might also be required to complete the Lead Internal Quality Assurer activities to maintain quality assurance expectations. Centres must ensure that all staff have a clear understanding of their specific responsibilities and receive training and support to effectively fulfil their roles.

Key responsibilities of the designated staff involved in the administration, marking, and internal quality assurance activities of the Functional Skills Qualifications at Entry Level are outlined below.

The Examinations Officer

The designated Examinations Officer is responsible for the administration of the **Reading and Writing** controlled assessments for **English,** and the **mathematics** controlled assessment activity.

Key responsibilities of the Examinations Officer include:

- downloading the assessments from the secure area of the Verve management suite
- printing the assessments in the appropriate quantity for the learner cohort
- secure storage of all TQUK assessment materials
- ensuring that centre staff involved in assessment activities are aware of the rules and regulations that apply
- coordinating staffing to supervise assessment activities
- the recording, maintenance, and storage of accurate learner records
- following the instructions provided in the *TQUK Functional Skills Qualifications at Entry Level: Regulations for the Conduct of the Controlled Assessment*
- timely learner registration and submission of information to TQUK
- ensuring assessments are arranged in line with TQUK's controlled assessment instructions
- adhering to data protection legislation.

The Invigilator

The invigilator is responsible for ensuring that the externally set, controlled assessments are conducted fairly and in accordance with the *TQUK Functional Skills Qualifications at Entry Level: Regulations for the Conduct of the Controlled Assessment* for:

- English: reading and writing externally set, controlled assessments

- Mathematics: externally-set, controlled assessment (non-calculator and calculator sections).

For the Reading, Writing, and mathematics assessment components the invigilator must **not** be a teacher, tutor, or a senior member of centre staff who teaches the subject being assessed.

The SLC internally-set controlled assessment conducted either remotely or face-to-face does not require an invigilator. The learner's subject tutor will conduct the assessment, however, it is essential that the tutor remains impartial and objective throughout the assessment. To prevent any instance of malpractice, the tutor should carry out the key responsibilities of the invigilator.

Key responsibilities of the invigilator include:

- verifying and confirming the identity of the learners
- collecting and distributing assessment materials as directed by the centre
- communicating controlled assessment rules to the learners by reading out announcements
- verifying whether learners have access to any prohibited items
- monitoring the duration of the assessment and confirming time checks
- monitoring learners throughout the assessment to prevent instances of malpractice
- responding and documenting any issues that may occur during the assessment
- completing a record of attendance, adjustments to the start/finishing time, if applicable, and any concerns raised
- maintaining a quiet and focused environment during the assessment.

The invigilator must ensure that they understand the approach to the controlled assessments for the Functional Skills Qualifications in English and Mathematics at Entry Level and are familiar with the essential equipment required and the prohibited items learners must not access during the assessments. Full details are confirmed in *the TQUK Functional Skills Qualifications at Entry Level: Regulations for the Conduct of the Controlled Assessment.*

The Tutor

The tutor is responsible for marking and making consistent and fair assessment decisions relating to learner achievement in the Functional Skills Qualifications at Entry Level. Tutors must be trained by the centre to ensure a standardised approach to assessment in line with the centre's and TQUK's policies.

Key responsibilities of the tutor include:

- preparing learners for all assessment activities
- familiarising themselves with TQUK's expected standards for the conduct of the controlled assessments
- attending centre standardisation meetings
- seeking advice from the centre's IQA/Lead IQA when unsure of assessment decisions
- providing clear and constructive feedback to learners to include any areas for improvement
- applying TQUK's mark schemes to support reliable and consistent assessment decisions
- maintaining and recording accurate assessment decisions
- liaising with the IQA to ensure consistency in assessment decisions
- maintaining comprehensive records of learner assessments (assessment plans, evidence, documented feedback provided to learners) and updating when required
- where required, contribute to creating the SLC centre-devised assessments
- responding to feedback received from the IQA/Lead IQA and TQUK's EQA activities.

In addition to the above responsibilities, if there is insufficient capacity within the centre to appoint an IQA/Lead IQA, the centre can designate an appropriately qualified tutor to carry out internal quality assurance tasks and undertake the role and responsibilities of an IQA/Lead IQA.

The Internal Quality Assurer (IQA)/Lead Internal Quality Assurer

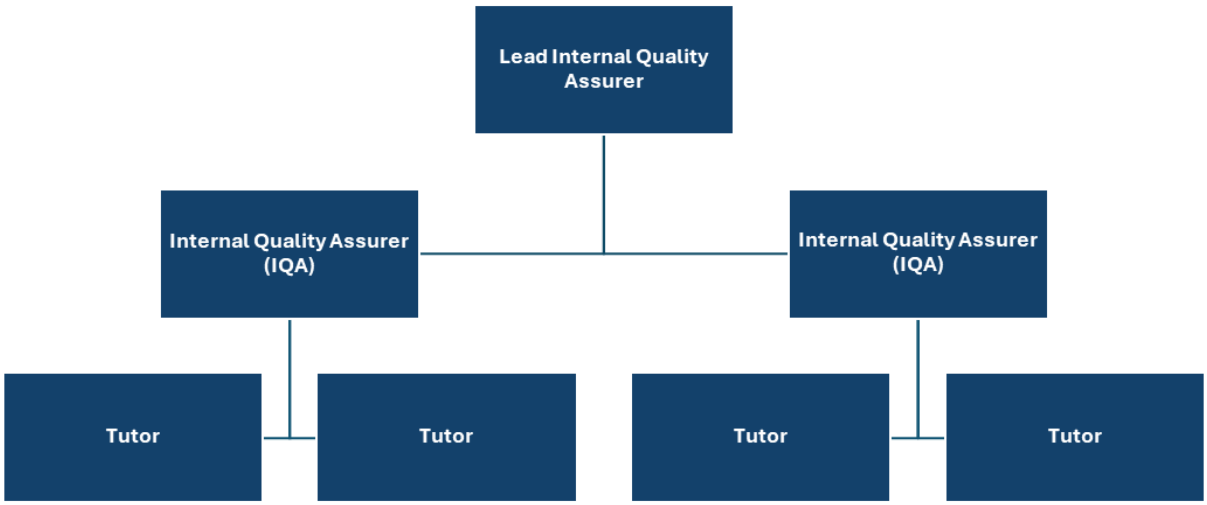
The IQA/designated IQA role is mandatory. The role may be undertaken by a tutor who also teaches the qualification. This individual must possess a strong understanding of the subject content and be fully confident in carrying out the duties of the IQA/Lead IQA role. This ensures that the mark scheme, associated marking criteria, and assessment decisions have been applied fairly across all learners.

The key responsibilities of the designated IQA include:

- familiarising themselves with the qualification and, where provided, the mark schemes

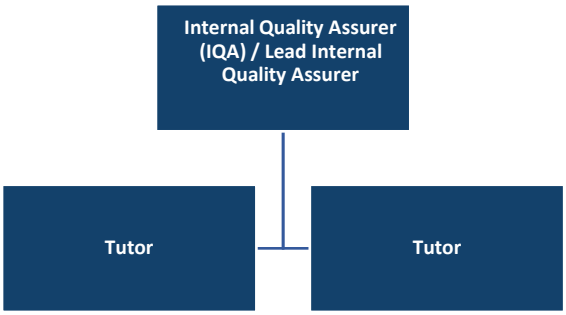
- sampling learner responses and the feedback provided to the learner by the tutor across all levels of achievement to ensure reliable and consistent decision-making
- lead standardisation activities
- risk rating tutors in line with the centre's policy
- following and updating the assessment sampling plan
- discussing any discrepancies between own and the tutor's marks
- maintaining accurate records of internal quality assurance activities and outcomes, for example, completing the relevant IQA section of the *Learner Assessment Record (LAR)* when a learner's work is sampled.

Where centres have more than one IQA and/or deliver Functional Skills Qualifications at Entry Level over more than one site, they should appoint a Lead IQA and consider the appointment of additional IQAs.



Where the role of a Lead IQA has not been designated, their responsibilities may be allocated to the designated IQA.

Go to contents Page >



When a tutor delivering an assessment component is also the designated IQA, they cannot verify their own assessment decisions. The centre must establish a process to ensure that the tutor/IQA's approach meets the required standards and that their assessment decisions are verified. This process should be reviewed in consultation with TQUK's Quality Team to confirm that effective IQA measures are in place.

The Lead Internal Quality Assurer

Centres should appoint a designated member of staff to undertake the role of the Lead IQA, or alternatively, allocate these responsibilities to the designated IQA.

The key responsibilities of the designated Lead IQA include:

- leading the centre's internal quality assurance processes
- coordinating all standardisation activities
- leading the standardisation activities to ensure validity and consistency in assessment decisions
- monitoring IQAs' and tutors' performance and providing training and guidance when needed
- ensuring compliance with TQUK requirements
- maintaining accurate records
- providing constructive feedback to the tutor/IQA to support and encourage continuous improvement
- providing the tutor/IQA with guidance on how they should adjust their marks to ensure a consistent approach where they do not align with the TQUK mark scheme
- regularly reviewing whether suggested actions have been completed
- liaising with the TQUK EQA during their reviews and responding/implementing feedback when appropriate

- undertaking internal quality assurance activities (such as, sampling plans, records of standardisation meetings, minutes, action plans, and providing feedback to tutors)
- liaising with TQUK
- maintaining records of staff training.

Internal Quality Assurance and Standardisation Processes

Internal quality assurance and standardisation processes must commence in advance and at regular intervals and include all staff members involved in the delivery of the Functional Skills at Entry Level assessments. Centre quality assurance and standardisation processes must include:

- submission of SLC centre-devised assessments to TQUK for approval, where applicable
- designation of a member of staff as the Internal Quality Assurer (IQA)
- designation of a Lead IQA where there is more than one IQA and/or they deliver Functional Skills Qualifications at Entry Level over more than one site
- documented standardisation meetings for each assessment component and level
- application of TQUK mark schemes for the externally-set controlled assessment components
- creating and implementing sampling plans in line with the requirements outlined in Table 2 for each component and level
- observation of the tutors teaching a group and providing feedback to the tutors to discuss their performance and areas for improvement
- maintaining contact and responding to feedback and requests from TQUK.

Internal Quality Assurance

Centres should have quality assurance policies and procedures in place to ensure the quality of teaching, learning, and assessment. Examples of the internal quality assurance procedures TQUK recommends for inclusion in the centre's quality assurance policies are:

- risk rating of tutors
- gaining learner feedback
- provision of peer tutor review
- quality checks on lesson content and documentation
- curriculum audits

- tracking learner progress
- reviewing teaching materials
- opportunities for continuous professional development
- reviewing records and documentation
- developing action plans to support continuous improvement.

Centres must ensure that all quality assurance processes, such as meetings, are minuted and that tracking documents are completed. This will provide a formal record of all discussions, decision-making, and any actions agreed. The minutes act as a reference to confirm the centre's approach to assessment decisions and should be made available to all staff, including the EQA.

The SLC assessment component for the Functional Skills Qualifications in English at Entry Level requires the centre to internally set the SLC assessment. Centres may opt to use, adapt or customise the *exemplar assessment materials (1-4)* that TQUK has created to support the completion of the SLC component or they may devise their own.

If a centre chooses to use the *TQUK exemplar assessment materials (1-4)* for the SLC assessment tasks, centres do not need to submit them to TQUK for approval as these have already been approved by TQUK.

Where centres opt to adapt or customise or create their own, they must submit them to TQUK for quality assurance at least four weeks before any assessment takes place.

Once the CDAs have been approved by the TQUK Quality Team, centres are free to use them over the lifetime of the qualification, providing the:

- scope of study remains the same
- materials continue to be fit for purpose and meet learner and delivery needs.

It is the centre's responsibility to stay updated with any changes to Functional Skills and review their assessment materials accordingly.

TQUK will ensure that centres are informed of any updates to qualification content or changes to the assessment or administration of the Functional Skills at Entry Level qualifications. It is the centre's responsibility to review and act upon these communications to ensure that all aspects of delivery, particularly relating to the SLC components, remain valid and consistent with qualification requirements.
Centres must establish a formal review as part of their IQA procedures to ensure any centre-devised assessment aligns with the Scope of Study and assessment expectations. Centres may need to make adjustments to their assessment materials based on EQA feedback and are responsible for

documenting any changes made and ensuring that amended centre-devised assessments are submitted to TQUK for approval prior to use. This process will be monitored as part of their EQA review and failure to remain up to date with qualification changes may impact a centre's approved status.

For the Functional Skills Qualifications in English at Entry Level, learners must complete **both** approved tasks to pass the SLC component.

Standardisation

Standardisation should take place for **each** component and level to ensure that learner work is marked fairly and consistently to the same standard by all staff involved in the delivery and assessment of Functional Skills Qualifications at Entry Level. All assessment papers and SLC assessment materials used by the centre for its learners must be standardised.

Once an assessment component is complete and before tutor marking commences, centres must ensure that standardisation takes place and includes an opportunity for:

- reviewing the interpretation of assessment criteria
- examining assessment decisions made during the pre-meeting standardisation activity to verify accuracy
- sharing ideas and feedback
- discussing and addressing recurring challenges
- reviewing learner performance to identify areas of inconsistency
- engaging in marking exercises to align decision-making.

English (Reading and Writing) and Mathematics Controlled Assessments

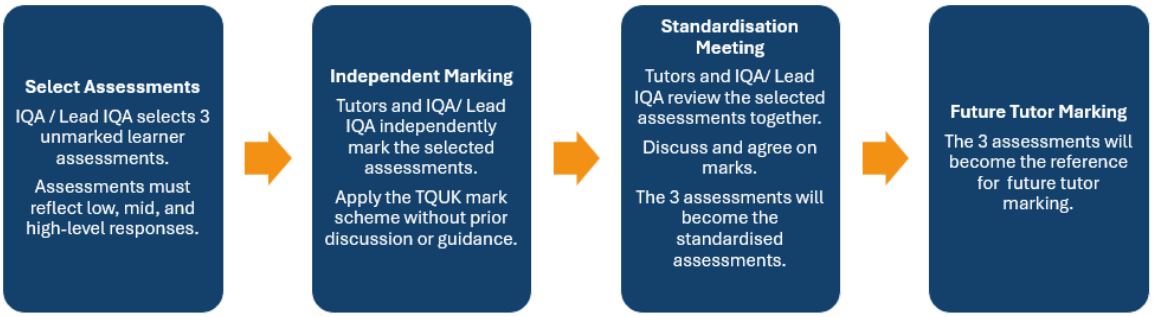
To standardise the externally-set controlled assessments, the IQA/Lead IQA must select three unmarked assessments completed by learners at their centre which have not been marked and reflect low, mid, and high-level responses. When selecting low, mid, and high-level responses, IQAs should use their professional judgement, guided by the assessment criteria and review all available learner work to understand the range of responses. The IQAs should make informal, holistic judgements based on the clarity of response, completeness, accuracy, and how well the learner has answered the questions. This will support the selection of one low-level response (limited or incomplete), one mid-level (a response that meets basic expectations), and one high-level (detailed, accurate, and well-structured response). The IQA will

provide a brief rationale for each choice, making it clear that their selection is provisional and based on observed quality, not allocated marks.

This approach supports early standardisation, encourages consistent tutor understanding, and can be revisited after marking to confirm alignment and inform further training if needed.

The tutors and IQA/Lead IQA independently mark the three assessments selected and apply the TQUK mark scheme without prior discussion with other tutors or guidance from the IQA/ Lead IQA. This ensures an objective evaluation of learner responses before any collective review.

Tutors and the IQA/Lead Internal Quality Assurer must then attend a standardisation meeting to discuss and agree on the allocation of marks by reviewing together the three selected assessments before marking the full cohort. Reaching a consensus is particularly important when determining the number of marks to award where a learner has provided a partially correct response to a question. Where marks differ between the tutor and IQA/Lead IQA, the IQA's/Lead IQA's decision is upheld. The three selected assessment papers will then become the standardised assessments and help inform future marking.



Mark Allocation

When marking the reading and writing externally-set, controlled assessment components for the English qualifications and the externally-set, controlled assessment activity for mathematics, centres will be provided with a TQUK mark scheme. The mark scheme provided must be applied to the assessments marked during standardisation and throughout the assessment cycle.

Centres should be aware that assessment questions may have varying mark requirements depending on the complexity of the question and the skills being assessed. For example, mark schemes may allow for partially correct answers when they are awarding marks. Other questions may involve multiple steps. Marks may be awarded for correctly completed steps even if the final answer

is incorrect. Learners who demonstrate the use of an appropriate method but fail to provide a correct answer may be awarded partial marks. Therefore, mark schemes must be fully discussed and understood during the standardisation process. For specific guidance on individual mark scheme requirements, centres should contact TQUK's Quality Team.

English (Speaking, Listening, and Communicating (SLC)

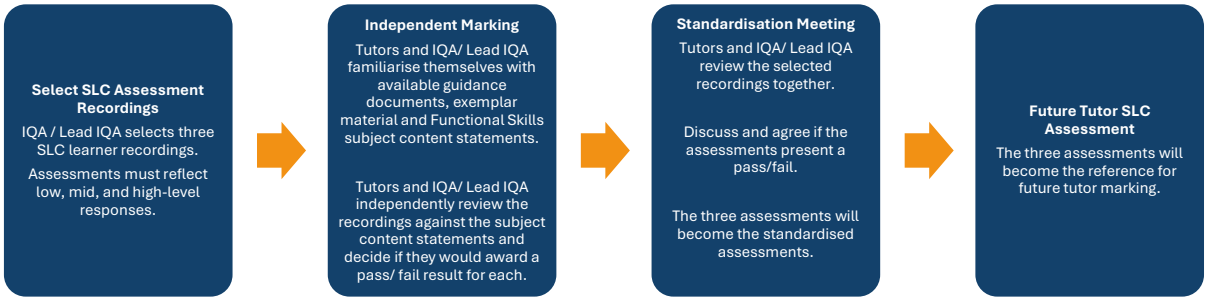
The process of standardising the internally-set controlled SLC assessment differs from the externally-set controlled assessments because the assessment follows a pass/fail result no-mark approach based on tutor observation and judgement. Although there is no mark scheme for this component, tutors must standardise their interpretation and professional judgement to ensure consistent application across the SLC assessment.

If using the TQUK exemplar assessment materials for live SLC assessments, and where centres devise their own SLC assessments the following materials can be used as a reference guide to help illustrate expectations of Entry Level Functional Skills. If further clarification is required centres are responsible for contacting their EQA who will provide additional support and training to help them understand the application of the SLC SoS in their CDAs:

- exemplar learner responses
- a completed example of a TQUK Standardisation Meeting Agenda Template.

If a centre chooses to create CDAs for the SLC, the Internal Quality Assurer (IQA) should facilitate standardisation sessions using previously recorded assessments and referring to TQUK's exemplar learner responses. The exemplar learner responses should be reviewed and discussed along with the Functional Skills Qualifications at Entry Level subject content statements and any potential challenges that might impact assessment decisions. This process will provide a benchmark in helping tutors align the requirements and expected standards necessary to reach a consensus on what constitutes a pass mark.

Go to contents Page >



Standardisation Meetings

Standardisation meetings are essential and provide an opportunity to discuss assessment decisions, mark allocation, and set standards. These meetings should ensure that all tutors are familiar with and are trained to accurately apply TQUK mark schemes and understand the Functional Skills Qualifications at Entry Level subject content.

When there is only one tutor involved in the delivery of a component, the IQA must ensure the tutor's approach meets the required standards and that assessment decisions are applied appropriately. Standardisation meetings should still be arranged but will be limited to the tutor and IQA.

All standardisation meetings must be documented using the *TQUK's Standardisation Meeting Agenda Template* or a similar centre-devised document to provide a formal record of all discussions, decision-making, and any actions agreed. This document should be a reference point and be made available to all tutors, the IQA/Lead Internal Quality Assurer, and EQA.

At the end of the standardisation meeting, tutors must be confident in making marking decisions.

Following the initial standardisation activity, and in conjunction with sampling and verification activities, TQUK recommends that centres carry out ongoing standardisation to ensure the agreed standard is maintained.

These activities may include:

- an IQA observing a new tutor conducting SLC assessments
- inexperienced tutors observing experienced tutors conducting SLC assessments to gain confidence in delivering and applying agreed standards

- informal opportunities to discuss assessment decisions and reasons for awarding pass/fail result
- informal opportunities to double-mark learner assessments.

It is essential to retain all standardisation documentation as evidence for external quality assurance purposes.

Assessment Sampling

An internal quality assurance sampling plan is an essential part of the quality assurance process and is a structured approach used to monitor and verify assessment decisions to ensure consistency across all tutors at a centre. To support centres, TQUK has developed a sampling plan template that may be used to support recording and tracking sampling activities.

The sampling plan must identify the names of the learners whose assessments are to be sampled allowing assessment decisions to be verified and reviewed. This will ensure that all tutors' assessment decisions are verified over the duration of the assessment cycle.

The sampling plan must be based on risk and created in advance by the IQA/Lead IQA to confirm the sampling required for all Functional Skills Qualifications at Entry Level. The sampling plan must confirm the sampling to be completed by the IQA **and** Lead Internal Quality Assurer.

The scope of the sampling plan must include:

- all tutors at the centre
- all components of the qualification
- a range of learners across levels of ability
- a range of different externally-set assessments
- a range of different internally-set assessments (English SLC only)
- appropriate sample quantity (refer to Table 2)
- all sites where the qualification is delivered
- sampling to be completed over the duration of the assessment cycle.

The IQA/Lead IQA must ensure that the sampling plan is implemented.

When a component has been marked, the IQA must review the first five marked assessments completed by each tutor for each level. There may be occasions where centres have fewer than five learners who have completed assessment for the component. In this situation the IQA must review all available

assessments. Once additional assessments are received, IQA activity will resume until the total of five assessments have been verified by the IAQ for each tutor and level. The same process applies to the SLC assessment; however the IQA will be conducted through direct observation or by reviewing recorded assessments.

Centres are required to implement a policy for risk rating each tutor. A risk rating helps reduce assessment errors by identifying tutors who are at a higher risk of inaccuracy. The rating indicates whether the likelihood of errors is low, medium, or high, enabling the IQA to adjust sampling levels based on the level of risk. For further information on implementing risk ratings, please contact TQUK's Quality Team.

The risk rating should be based on several factors, which centres must consider when determining whether a tutor meets the required standard for sampling as outlined in Table 2 or requires additional verification and sampling of assessment decisions.

This risk rating will guide the number of assessments to be verified for each tutor. However, if inconsistencies increase during the sampling activity, centres should adjust the number of samples to be verified accordingly. If a discrepancy occurs between a tutor and IQA when sampling, TQUK recommends that the IQA provides additional support to the tutor.

Once the IQA has decided the risk rating for each tutor, it is their responsibility to decide if a higher percentage of sampling is required. As a guide, TQUK recommends a minimum of 50% of all assessments per medium-risk tutor per component and 100% of all assessments per high-risk tutor per component.



Go to contents Page >

All sampling following the initial standardisation activity should be completed immediately after the learners have taken their assessments and before any results are confirmed.

The table below outlines the standard sample quantity of learner assessments to be verified for:

- English - Speaking, Listening, and Communicating (SLC), Reading and Writing
- Mathematics

Table 2: Functional Skills Qualifications at Entry Level Standard Sample Quantity

Staff Role	Standard Sample Quantity
Designated Internal Quality Assurer (IQA)	Verify: • first five assessments completed by each tutor for each level and component. If fewer than five learners have completed the assessment, all available assessments should be verified before tutors continue marking, thereafter: ○ a minimum of 25% of all assessments per tutor per level and component. Where marks differ between the tutor and IQA, the IQA's decision is upheld, and additional sampling and support should be provided by the Lead/Internal Quality Assurer.
Lead Internal Quality Assurer (Only required where centres have more than one IQA and/or deliver Functional Skills Qualifications at Entry Level over more than one site)	Verify: • one of the first five assessments which has been sampled by an IQA. This will ensure that the IQA is confident in the required standard and a standardised approach taken. Outcome discussed and feedback provided and recorded by Lead IQA. • a minimum of 10% of the sampled assessments across each component and the levels of achievement. Where marks differ between the IQA and Lead IQA, the Lead IQA's decision is upheld, and additional sampling and support should be provided to the IQA by the Lead IQA.

Go to contents Page >

External Quality Assurance

External quality assurance activities are carried out by TQUK's Quality Team to ensure that centres are fully compliant with the assessment and verification requirements for the conduct of the Functional Skills Qualifications at Entry Level.

The EQA assigned to the centre will liaise with centre staff to confirm the date and time of their review and identify the learners they wish to sample.

During centre reviews, the EQA will check and monitor that tutors and IQAs are following TQUK's quality standards and are fully compliant with TQUK policies and procedures.

The EQA will work with the centres to ensure that a clear, structured sampling plan is in place, it covers all tutors, IQAs, and a representative sample of learners that have been verified across all qualifications and levels of achievement. The EQA will also ensure that the sampling plan is adjusted in response to any identified risk, learner achievement, and previous EQA visits.

The TQUK's Quality Team will conduct a comparative analysis of assessment activities and IQA decisions across centres delivering Functional Skills Qualifications at Entry Level to identify any patterns or inconsistencies. This may be followed by the implementation of any corrective action to improve consistency and quality where required.

TQUK encourages sharing best practice to promote continuous improvement and compliance with quality standards.

To support centres with the documentation that will be reviewed, EQAs may request access to the following:

- live assessment papers
- recordings of assessment activities
- tutor reports
- assessment record sheets
- observation reports
- IQA reports
- dates of standardisation meetings
- minutes of standardisation meetings
- written confirmation of decisions agreed at standardisation
- feedback provided to tutors
- details of the controlled assessments to include date, time, and learner details
- details of the invigilator and their reports

- a record of the learners who took the assessment
- details of any issues that arose during the assessment activity
- completed sampling reports.

All external quality assurance activity must be completed by 31 July each year.

Once all external quality assurance activities have taken place, the EQA will compile a centre report and liaise with the centre to discuss their findings and confirm whether any follow-up activity is required to address any concerns or areas for improvement identified.

Direct Claim Status

Direct Claim Status (DCS) is awarded according to level for the Functional Skills Qualifications at Entry Level in line with *TQUK's External Quality Assurance Strategy*. Centres will be awarded DCS when the EQA confirms that 15 consecutive assessments have been marked consistently, accurately, and in line with the required standards.

When a centre wishes to achieve DCS across multiple qualification levels, the centre must submit marked assessments for each level and component. For example, for Entry Level 1 English, the centre must submit the following marked assessments:

- Entry Level 1 Reading – 15 marked assessments including five verified by the centre's IQA /Lead IQA
- Entry Level 1 Writing – 15 marked assessments including five verified by the centre's IQA /Lead IQA
- Entry Level 1 SLC– 15 recordings with completed LARs including five verified by the centre's IQA/Lead IQA.

If the evidence submitted for Direct Claims Status (DCS) exceeds the permitted 10% tolerance for acceptable errors in the marking of the reading, writing and mathematics assessments, the EQA will provide feedback to help improve marking accuracy. Following this feedback, and with the EQA's agreement, a further 10 assessments can be submitted to the EQA for review.

For the SLC assessment, there is no allowed tolerance due to the nature of the assessment. Following any inaccuracies within the 15 assessments, the EQA will provide feedback to help improve assessment accuracy. Following this feedback, and with the EQA's agreement, a further 10 assessments can be submitted to the EQA for review.

Thereafter, for all components, if the centre is still unable to mark within the required tolerance, for the 10 additional assessments, support and monitoring will be provided by the EQA and no further evidence submitted for DCS until the EQA agrees.

Once DCS is awarded, centres will be monitored through TQUK's Continued Recognition Activities (CRAs) to ensure ongoing compliance with TQUK's assessment standards. The Continued Recognition Activity will be carried out by an appointed EQA. During this activity, the centre will be asked to share their policies and procedures in relation to their delivery, assessment and IQA processes to ensure they are working in line with TQUK requirements and can effectively deliver the Functional Skills Qualifications at Entry Level.

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Company number 07827508.
Registered address: Crossgate House, Cross Street, Sale, England, M33 7FT.