

Maths and English Functional Skills Reform Programme Practitioner/Provider questionnaire

About this questionnaire:

This document lists all the questions in the practitioner/provider survey and is intended for reference. Responses may be submitted online via:

www.pyetait.com/fsreform/providersurvey.

Alternatively, if you would prefer to submit a response in a different way, please contact Adrian Smith at Pye Tait Consulting, via: a.smith@pyetait.com.

Introduction:

The purpose of this survey is to collate views from individuals and organisations involved with the delivery of Functional Skills qualifications. This covers their uses and current content, as well as important questions on digital skills and future action, such as those relating to Guided Learning Hours and motivations for learners of Functional Skills.

The research is being conducted on behalf of the Education and Training Foundation, by Pye Tait Consulting in association with the Learning and Work Institute. All information provided to the research company will be treated in strict confidence and in compliance with the Market Research Society (MRS) Code of Conduct.

This survey will be open until Friday 24th June 2016. On completion, feedback will be collated and analysed to identify key themes which will be discussed with the Education and Training Foundation. Further information on what happens next will be detailed on www.pyetait.com/fsreform.

The questionnaire is expected to take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete.

Any enquiries about this survey should be directed to Adrian Smith at Pye Tait Consulting, via a.smith@pyetait.com (telephone 01423 509433).

Any enquiries about the maths and English functional skills reform programme research as a whole should be directed to Imke Djouadj at the Foundation, via imke.djouadj@etfoundation.co.uk (telephone 020 3740 8280).

Part 1: About you

Q1 We would be grateful if you could provide your contact details in case we have any queries or need to contact you directly. (As stated previously, your views will be treated confidentially and reported anonymously by Pye Tait Consulting who work to and abide by the Market Research Society Code of Conduct).

Your organisation name: _____

Your name: _____

Your job title: _____

Your contact email and telephone number in case of queries: _____

Q2 Are you responding (tick one):

- On behalf of the organisation listed above
- Individually (your own views)

Q3 Please indicate the type of organisation where you work (please tick one):

- Academy/school
- Adult and community learning organisation
- Further education college
- Sixth form college
- Higher education institution
- Offender learning organisation
- Private training provider
- Employer/work-based learning
- Independent practitioner
- Other

If Other - please specify:

Q4 The main focus of your role (please tick one):

- Curriculum planning/lead
- Education consultant
- Employer engagement
- ESOL tutor
- Functional Skills teacher/tutor (maths or English)
- Principal or Chief Executive
- SEN or LLDD teacher or tutor
- Subject leader/ Head of Department
- Subject tutor (other than maths or English)
- Teaching assistant
- Training/Education Policy Lead
- Union representative
- Vice Principal or Senior Manager
- Other

If Other - please specify:

Q5 Please tick the region where you primarily work:

- South West
- South East
- London
- Eastern England
- East Midlands
- West Midlands
- Yorkshire & Humberside
- North East
- North West
- UK wide
- England
- Wales
- Scotland

Q6 Regardless of your current job role - have you, personally, taught Functional Skills qualifications? (Please tick one or both, or leave blank if not)

- Maths
- English

Q7 Only applies if question 6 is answered: How many years (approximately) have you taught Functional Skills?

	<i>Less than 1 year</i>	<i>1 to 3 years</i>	<i>4 + years</i>
Maths	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
English	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q8 Only applies if question 6 is answered: What level of Functional Skills have you taught? (Tick all that apply)

	<i>Entry level 1</i>	<i>Entry level 2</i>	<i>Entry level 3</i>	<i>Level 1</i>	<i>Level 2</i>
Maths	<input type="checkbox"/>				
English	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Q9 Would you describe yourself as a specialist in maths (numeracy) or English (literacy) or are you a vocational teacher/tutor? (Please tick one)

- Specialist teacher/tutor in maths/English
- Vocational teacher/tutor

Q10 If you/your organisation operate within a particular sector or context, please tick one option below that is most relevant to your work, otherwise please leave blank:

- Agriculture/Landscape
- Construction
- Digital and creative
- Energy
- Food, hospitality or tourism
- Health and social care
- Information and communication
- Manufacturing
- Professional and business services
- Public administration or defence
- Retail
- Science/Technical
- Transport
- Voluntary
- Mix of the above sectors
- Other

If Other - please specify:

Part 2: Use of Functional Skills qualifications

Q11 To what extent do you agree that each of the following are relevant uses for the Level 1 and Level 2 Functional Skills qualifications?

Please rate from 1 'not relevant at all' to 10 'highly relevant':

Alternative qualification to ESOL qualifications _____

An alternative to GCSE for vocational/adult learners _____

Applying maths and/or English knowledge and skills to life _____

Applying maths and/or English knowledge and skills to work _____

As a component part of an Apprenticeship/Study programme _____

As a standalone qualification _____

Improve a learner's maths and/or English knowledge _____

Improve a learner's maths and/or English skills _____

Stepping-stone qualification to GCSE _____

Supplementary qualification to be taken after GCSE _____

To help with a learner's employability _____

Q12 Are there any other uses of Level 1 and Level 2 Functional Skills qualifications not included in the above list? If so please state them here:

Q13 To what extent do you agree that each of the following are relevant uses for Entry level Functional Skills qualifications?

Please rate from 1 'not relevant at all' to 10 'highly relevant':

Alternative qualification to ESOL qualifications _____

Applying maths and/or English knowledge and skills to life _____

Applying maths and/or English knowledge and skills to work _____

As a standalone qualification _____

Improving a learner's maths and/or English knowledge _____

Improving a learner's maths and/or English skills _____

To help with a learner's employability _____

Q14 Are there any other uses of Entry level Functional Skills qualifications not included in the above list? If so please state them here:

Part 3: Qualification size and levels

Size: Currently Functional Skills qualifications are set at 45 guided learning hours (GLH) as this was intended to reflect the application of literacy and numeracy skills (not their acquisition). It is recognised that 'GLH' is notional and centres often use more than the current 45 allocated for each level (being a variable factor contingent on learner type and individual needs). Whilst GLH is not necessarily a metric that employers recognise, and GCSE – a different qualification altogether - is much higher at 120 GLH, does 45 GLH continue to be sufficient?

Q15 Which of the following statements do you agree with regarding the GLH for Functional Skills qualifications? (Please tick one)

- All five qualifications should increase
- All five qualifications should stay the same
- Levels 1 and 2 only should increase (entry levels stay the same)
- Entry levels only should increase (levels 1 and 2 should stay the same)

Q16 Please explain your choice and indicate, where relevant, by how much you would increase GLH and at what level?

Level: The use of the word “level” in two different ways (Entry Level 2, Level 2, etc.) is often confusing. Calling the Entry level qualifications “Levels” invites confusion with Level 1 and 2 and can make Entry Level 3 sound like a higher qualification, with consequences for those less familiar with national qualifications’ frameworks. A potential solution would be to re-name the “levels” within the Entry qualifications to reduce this potential confusion and mitigate any de-valuing that it may prompt.

Q17 To what extent do you agree there is scope for renaming the Entry levels?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

The current suite of qualifications from Entry Levels 1 to 3, through to Levels 1 and 2, covers a wide range of skill levels and, arguably, different levels have different uses. Entry levels are often an aid to learners wishing to progress their learning of fundamental maths and English skills, whereas levels 1 and 2 emphasise the application of such skills.

This Reform may be an opportunity to focus on those different uses more explicitly within the content and teaching/delivery. The five qualifications would all remain regulated qualifications.

Q18 To what extent do you agree with such an action?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

**Q19 What would you say are the POSITIVE implications of these two suggestions?
(If none, please leave blank).**

Renaming of the Entry levels:

Reflecting the different uses of the qualification in content:

Q20 What would you say are the **NEGATIVE** implications of these two suggestions? (If none, please leave blank).

Renaming of the Entry levels:

Reflecting the different uses of the qualification in content:

Digital Skills: Feedback from employers diverged on the need for and treatment of digital skills within the content of the reformed qualifications. Putting aside the use of digital technology for assessment purposes to what extent do you agree with the statement below with regard to the standards and content?

Q21 "The digital application of maths and English should be regarded simply as different ways in which fundamental maths and English skills can be applied. Without a sound knowledge and skill-base for maths and English, the effective use of digital technology is impossible. Digital skills, per se, should NOT therefore be included in Functional Maths and Functional English."

To what extent do you agree with this statement?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Q22 Please explain your choice of answer:

Q23 Which is your specific area of expertise/interest?

Please tick one or both. The questions you should answer next depend on the answer(s) you provide here.

- Maths
- English

Part 4a: Maths

This section should be completed if your answer is 'maths' to question 23. Otherwise, please go to part 4b.

In addition to the findings from the 'Making Maths and English work for all' review last year which suggested that the Functional Skills qualifications need to be more robust, a recent employer consultation indicated that new recruits and junior staff need better basic skills in maths for life and work. Examples of commonly mentioned maths skills that could be better developed are:

- Percentages, fractions and ratios;
- Arithmetical calculations (e.g. working out VAT);
- Mental arithmetic (estimation, conversion, space, weight);
- Time (coordination, dates, journeys, deliveries, estimation); and
- Metric systems (full understanding and conversions).

Such skills were largely included within the detailed National Standards for Adult Numeracy, which underpin the Functional Skills qualifications. However, employers suggest these skills listed above do not appear to be well developed in new recruits and junior staff. The reform of Functional Skills qualifications presents an opportunity to improve on this situation.

Q24 What do you think could be done? Please rate the following potential actions, from 1 'not useful at all' to 10 'highly useful':

Increase guided learning hours (GLH) to allow more time for teaching of Functional Skills maths ____

Amend the current subject content to ensure inclusion of all of these maths skills within the Functional Skills maths qualifications ____

Ensure greater emphasis is made, through assessment, of these specific skills within the Functional Skills maths qualifications ____

CPD support to help boost teachers' confidence in the delivery/teaching of Functional Skills Maths ____

Ensure users of the qualifications (including employers, teachers and learners) are clear on the content and purpose of the Functional Skills maths qualification ____

A greater focus on work-related assessment scenarios ____

Help for teachers/tutors to embed functional maths skills in the wider curriculum ____

Q25 Please provide further detail in support of your choices of priority for action:

The 'coverage and range' - in the current Subject Criteria for Maths (at level 2) covers:

- use of numbers
- calculations
- ratio, proportions, scale
- equivalences between fractions, decimals and percentages
- simple formulae and equations involving one or two step operations
- recognise and use 2D representations of 3D objects
- find area, perimeter and volume of common shapes
- use, convert and calculate using metric, and where appropriate, imperial measures
- collect and represent discrete and continuous data, using ICT where appropriate
- use and interpret statistical measures, tables and diagrams for discrete and continuous data, using ICT where appropriate
- use statistical methods to investigate situations
- use probability to assess the likelihood of an outcome

Q26 To what extent do you believe the coverage and range of the subject criteria/content of Functional Skills level 2 maths could be improved?

Q27 Do you have any further comment on how you think the CONTENT of Functional Skills in maths could be improved at any level? Please provide as much detail as possible including level/ content/rationale, as appropriate.

Part 4b: English

This section should be completed if your answer is 'English' to Question 23. Otherwise, please go to part 5.

In addition to the findings from the 'Making Maths and English work for all' review last year which suggested that the Functional Skills qualifications need to be more robust, the recent employer consultation indicated that new recruits and junior staff need better basic skills in English for life and work. Examples of commonly mentioned English skills that could be better developed, are:

- communicating confidently and clearly (written and oral);
- grammar;
- writing;
- spelling;
- punctuation;
- summarising ;
- business vocabulary;
- hand-writing skills;
- telephone skills.

Such skills were largely included within the detailed National Standards for Adult Literacy, which underpin the Functional Skills qualifications. However these skills listed above do not appear to be as well developed as expected in new recruits and junior staff. The reform of Functional Skills qualifications presents an opportunity to improve on this situation.

Q28 What do you think could be done? Please rate the following potential actions, from 1 'not at all useful' to 10 'highly useful':

Increase guided learning hours (GLH) to allow more time ___
for teaching of Functional Skills English

Amend the current subject content to ensure inclusion of ___
all of these English skills within the Functional Skills
English qualifications

Ensure greater emphasis is made, through assessment, ___
of these specific skills within the Functional Skills English
qualifications

CPD support to help boost teachers' confidence in the ___
delivery/teaching of Functional Skills English

Ensure users of the qualifications (including employers, ___
teachers and learners) are clear on the content and
purpose of the Functional Skills English qualification

A greater focus on work-related assessment scenarios ___

Help for teachers/tutors to embed functional English ___
skills in the wider curriculum

Q29 Please provide further detail in support of your choices of priority for action?

The 'coverage and range' for English (at level 2) includes the following:

Speaking and Listening:

- Consider complex information and give a relevant, cogent response in appropriate language;
- Present information and ideas clearly and persuasively to others;
- Adapt contributions to suit audience, purpose and situation;
- Make significant contributions to discussions, taking a range of roles and helping to move discussion forward.

Reading:

- Select and use different types of texts to obtain and utilise relevant information;
- Read and summarise, succinctly, information/ideas from different sources;
- Identify the purpose of text and comment on how meaning is conveyed;
- Detect point of view, implicit meaning and/or bias;
- Analyse texts in relation to audience needs and consider suitable responses
In three or more texts.

Writing:

- Present information/ideas concisely, logically and persuasively;
- Present information on complex subjects clearly and concisely;
- Use a range of writing styles for different purposes;
- Use a range of sentence structures, including complex sentences, and paragraphs to organise written communication effectively;
- Punctuate written text using commas, apostrophes and inverted commas accurately;
- Ensure written work is fit for purpose and audience, with accurate spelling and grammar that support clear meaning in a range of text types.

Q30 Do you have further comment on how you think the coverage and range in the current subject criteria for Functional Skills in English could be improved? Please provide as much detail as possible including level/content/rationale, as appropriate.

Q31 Employers say effective oral communication skills is a top priority. How and in which way do you think these skills are best assessed within the Functional Skills English qualification? Please tick one only:

- As an integral part of the assessment for all levels
- As an integral part of the assessment for some of the five levels
- As an optional unit that is tested separately
- None of the above
- Other

Q32 Thanks. You selected 'as an integral part of the assessment for some of the five levels'.

Please can you indicate for which levels?

Q33 Do you have any further comment on how you think the CONTENT of Functional Skills in English could be improved at any level?

Part 5: Learner motivations

Q34 In your experience, which of the following are main motivations for learners undertaking Functional Skills qualifications in maths/English? (Tick all that apply).

- Requirement as part of an Apprenticeship, Study programme, or other education programme
- Requirement as part of the Condition of Funding (supporting progression towards GCSE A* - C)
- To gain a qualification to enhance employment opportunities
- To gain a level 2 in maths and English to qualify for higher level study, including level 3 Apprenticeships, Access to Higher Education or A levels
- Functional Skills are a natural progression from previous learning/experience
- Has completed ESOL qualifications and wishes to progress to further learning
- Is an ESOL learner and has been advised to complete Functional Skills instead of ESOL qualifications
- Other

If Other - please specify:

Q35 What would you say are the main benefits to learners of obtaining Functional Skills qualifications in maths/English? (Tick all that apply).

- Better understanding of the subjects(s)
- Development of maths skills
- Development of English skills
- Improved confidence for life and work
- Improved CV
- Progression to higher level learning
- Other

If Other - please specify:

Q41 Maths - Level 2

Subject knowledge _____

Understanding how to apply the (current) Functional Skills Criteria alongside subject knowledge _____

Contextualising Functional Skills to vocational learning, life or the workplace _____

Only complete questions 42 to 44 if your answer is 'English' to question 23. Otherwise, please go to question 45.

ENGLISH For the levels and subjects you teach, and using a scale from 1 'not at all competent' to 10 'very competent', how would you rate your own competence in (or that of the teachers for whom you are responsible) delivering Functional Skills English?

Q42 English - Entry Levels 1 to 3

Subject knowledge _____

Understanding how to apply the (current) Functional Skills Criteria alongside subject knowledge? _____

Contextualising Functional Skills to vocational learning, life or the workplace? _____

Q43 English - Level 1

Subject knowledge _____

Understanding how to apply the (current) Functional Skills Criteria alongside subject knowledge _____

Contextualising Functional Skills to vocational learning, life or the workplace _____

Q44 English - Level 2

Subject knowledge _____

Understanding how to apply the (current) Functional Skills Criteria alongside subject knowledge _____

Contextualising Functional Skills to vocational learning, life or the workplace _____

Q45 In what ways, if any, do you think teacher confidence could be improved in delivering Functional Skills in maths/English?

Part 7: Final questions

Q46 Do you have any final comments about Functional Skills qualifications (on any of the topics covered in the questions above or something else)?

As stated previously, your views will be treated confidentially and reported anonymously by Pye Tait Consulting who work to and abide by the Market Research Society Code of Conduct.

Q47 Would you be happy for us to share your name and organisation details with the Education and Training Foundation so they know you have participated? If so, these details may be included in a published list of consultation participants. (Please tick one)

- Yes – name and organisation
- Yes – organisation only
- No

Q48 Would you be willing to be contacted to see if you are able to take part in a short follow-up interview about this subject so we can explore some of your views in a little more detail?

- Yes
- No

Q49 **If your answer is 'yes' to question 48:** Thank you. If you haven't already done so in response to question 1, please provide us with the following:

Your organisation name: _____
Your name: _____
Your job title: _____
Your contact email and telephone number in case of queries: _____

Thank you very much for your time and interest.