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Pass boundaries for external assessments: Functional Skills Entry Level 3, Level 1 and Level 2

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NCFE wishes to provide as much support and information as possible to our centres when delivering our qualifications. We recognise that tutors and assessors value an understanding on how our pass marks are set, and what range the boundaries cover for our live external assessments for Digital Functional Skills Qualifications (DFSQs) at Entry Level 3 and Level 1, and Functional Skills maths and English at Level 1 and Level 2.

We are happy to publish the below information that reflects how our pass marks are set, and what those boundaries are. Please note that as these refer to live assessments, these boundaries may change over time and be updated; you should always refer to this page for the latest information.

Pass marks for Functional Skills external assessments are set in an awarding meeting, in which a combination of statistical analysis and professional judgement is used to determine the minimum required standard to achieve a pass in the assessment.

While different versions of the same assessment are designed to be of the same level of difficulty, variations in content can lead to the minimum required standard being represented by different marks across versions.

The range of pass marks across the live versions of each assessment are shown in the tables below, expressed as a percentage of the maximum mark available.

The awarding meeting takes place following an initial period, lasting approximately 1 month, during which results are embargoed until sufficient evidence is available to allow a pass mark to be reliably set.

After a pass mark has been set, results release turnaround for that paper will then be issued from 6 working days – a market-leading turnaround time. This applies for both our paper-based and online assessments.

External assessment pass boundaries*

Functional Skills English Reading		
Level	Total marks	Pass mark percentage
Level 1	30	57%
Level 2	30	50 to 57%
Functional Skills English Writing		
Level	Total marks	Pass mark percentage
Level 1	40	58%
Level 2	44	59%
Functional Skills Maths		
Level	Total marks	Pass mark percentage
Level 1	60	58% to 63%
Level 2	60	58% to 60%

Digital Functional Skills		
Level	Total marks	Pass mark percentage
Entry Level 3	40	68%
Level 1	50	62% to 64%

(*Information correct at time of publication – August 2024)