

3748-114 and 3748-314

**Functional Skills English Level 2
Writing**

Chief Examiner's report – May 2016

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City & Guilds

1 Giltspur Street

London EC1A 9DD

www.cityandguilds.com

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1 Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide centres with feedback on the performance of candidates for 3748-114 and 3748-314 Functional Skills English Writing Level 2.

The Chief Examiner's Report has been reintroduced as a result of feedback from centres, to give them guidance in preparing candidates for examination.

2 Overall Performance

This report covers the period from February 2016 to May 2016. However, centres are strongly urged to review the previous Chief Examiner's report, dated January 2016, as the comments and advice still apply.

In general, candidates seem to engage well with the topics presented. Most candidates appear to have sufficient time to complete the two tasks, although it is apparent that some weaker candidates find the time constraints tight.

As a result of the review of Functional Skills undertaken by Ofqual, the pass marks for writing have risen slightly, meaning there is now more emphasis on the need for accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Areas of good performance

Formatting documents and structuring responses are generally well addressed by successful candidates. Similarly, successful candidates seem to have few problems in engaging with the topics and determining what relevant details need to be covered in their responses.

Successful candidates are also strong in at least one or more of spelling, punctuation or grammar. Weak performance across all three means candidates are unlikely to accumulate sufficient marks to pass the exam.

Areas for development

1. Centres are strongly urged to read the previous Chief Examiner's report, dated January 2016, as the advice and guidance from that report is still applicable.
2. For weaker candidates, spelling, punctuation, grammar and language tend to be the areas where a significant number of marks are dropped. Proof-reading of responses is always advisable and centres are reminded that candidates should have access to dictionaries.
3. Irrespective of the type of document candidates are asked to write, punctuation is required. Some candidates seem to be under the impression that punctuation is optional in emails, especially when using the first person personal pronoun.
4. Grammar errors are frequent for some weaker candidates whose writing styles are similar to informal speech. Candidates should be made aware that all documents they are asked to write are formal, and should, therefore, be grammatically correct.
5. Candidates should aim to write between 250 and 300 words per response. Responses that contain fewer than 180 words are penalised across all categories.

3 Recommendations/Advice for centres

1. Review previous Chief Examiner's report, dated January 2016.
2. Candidates should be entered only after a significant period of learning has taken place. Making use of the sample assessments and the worked examples available on the City & Guilds website is important, and allows centres to be able to judge a candidate's exam preparation.
3. Level 2 papers no longer contain bullet pointed lists of detail to expand upon. Instead, the detail required is contained in the scenario or the source documents that need to be read for each question. Candidates should read these carefully to determine what should be covered.
4. Candidates should be fully conversant with the formatting and structural requirements of letters, emails, speeches, articles and reports. Centres should review the Functional Skills English Guidance for Centres document, available on the City & Guilds website, as this provides invaluable guidance on the requirements and also contains useful sample teaching activities.
5. Candidates who handwrite their responses should be reminded of the importance of the correct formation of individual letters so text is as legible as possible and that they are unequivocally upper or lower case, as determined by what is being written. Although legibility per se is not marked, illegibility can affect marks awarded across several categories. To this end, centres should ensure that candidates are entered for the platform which will maximise their chances of success.
6. Encourage candidates to proofread their work.

4 Additional Information

Centres that enter candidates for the paper-based version of the exam should be aware that candidates can word process their responses and can may make use of the inherent spelling and grammar checking facilities.

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London
EC1A 9DD
www.cityandguilds.com

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