

Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2013

Functional Skills Mathematics
Level 1 (FSM01)

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General comments

The majority of candidates were able to access all of the contexts on this paper. 'The Diving Holiday' proved the least familiar but most of the candidates did attempt all of the questions.

Within all Functional Skills Mathematics Papers there is a need to ensure that the candidate reads and understands the requirements of each question. It seems that the importance of this is sometimes overlooked and causes the candidate to lose marks. Many marks within this paper are lost due to not re-reading the question and finalising the answer with a simple 'Yes' or 'No' or similar. Teachers should ensure that checking the question on completion becomes second nature in order that candidates show they can answer the question completely.

It is evident that many candidates were disadvantaged by not having access to a calculator.

SECTION A:

Question 1a – This question was worth two marks and most candidates achieved both marks by providing an appropriate answer and the correct supporting statement.

The marks were awarded if the candidate had taken both constraints into account. No marks were available for the month without explanation. Candidates must realise that the words “show why you think this” mean that an explanation of how they arrived at their decision is required.

Question 1b – Most candidates were able to access this question and did well. Candidates should be reminded that they must provide a decision with their answer. A small number of candidates lost marks by not saying “yes” he can go on the holiday.

The requirement to “Show how you have checked your answer” is often embedded in the demand for a question. When this occurs there is always a mark for the check. Most candidates did not perform a check for question 1b. Candidates should be given practice in checking by using a reverse calculation, rounded figures, or as in this case it would have been acceptable to check their answer against the £800 budget. Some candidates successfully did this by showing within their answer that he had an amount left from the £800.

Centres should remind candidates that they should provide answers with the correct money notation. Incorrect notation was not penalised in this question, though, we always test money notation somewhere on a paper, so it is best always to write money correctly.

It was evident that some candidates did not have a calculator and may have lost some accuracy marks for this question.

Question 2 – Many candidates do not know $1\text{kg} = 1000\text{g}$; many candidates changed 760g to 7.60kg or just added 760 giving a result they should have realised was far too heavy. More practical work would provide a better understanding of the units involved.

Most candidates were able to add the decimal numbers; they should be reminded about providing a decision, such as “yes” he can take all of his luggage. Some candidates omitted their decision and lost valuable marks.

Question 3a – Centres should provide candidates with real life examples of using timetables so that a variety of real life situations are embedded into learning programmes. A small number of candidates thought that the second line of figures were arrival times at the airport instead of understanding that these were further, later bus times for departure.

Some candidates dealt with the time aspect well but then made the incorrect decision. A common mistake was to subtract correctly from 13:50 to 9:20 but then choose the 9:25 bus.

Question 3b – More practice is needed in working with percentages. The correct answer to the calculation “2.2” was often not converted correctly into monetary notation losing a mark.

SECTION B:

Question 4a – The biggest problem demonstrated within this question is that of understanding the context of the question. The word 'almost' is in the information and needs to be considered when answering the question. Although most candidates gained full marks for the correct process, they often gave an incorrect decision –many stating 'Kara was incorrect because 58 is not 60'. Making a sensible decision is key to functionality.

Question 4b – Most candidates were successful at this question. This question was answered well and the majority of candidates gained full marks, a small minority calculated for 6 hours instead of 5 and a very small minority appeared not to read the question and just added all the numbers.

Question 5a – Most candidates achieved at least one mark for this question. Division was used well. A small number forgot to round up and either truncated or gave a decimal answer. Most realised rounding up was necessary.

Question 5b – This question demonstrates the need to understand data collection in context. Many candidates failed to think about the requirements of the table and follow the information given for the question. Many candidates created a 'tally' chart which was not suitable for this question as it did not identify the menu choice for each individual.

Too many candidates created a data collection sheet for the 14 tables, which was not asked for. Candidates must read questions carefully and should be provided with opportunities to access this style of open question regularly to create an efficient answer. They should realise that it is not efficient to write out dishes or names and that these should be in the row and column headings.

Teachers could use the multitude of Data Collection questions available in past Functional Skills papers.

Question 6 – This question caused some minor problems. Time plans should include times; however, some candidates ordered the information without calculating start and finish times for each event. The ordering of the information tended to be adequate.

A number of candidates did not deal with the drinks constraint correctly, with many putting the welcoming drinks starting at 7pm instead of 7.30 pm.

SECTION C:

Question 7 – Many candidates completed the majority of this question adequately and demonstrated a good understanding of a complicated comparison question. Candidates without a calculator found this question challenging and evidence of repeated addition to avoid multiplication was common often leading to a loss of accuracy marks. Some got extremely large unrealistic answers, without thinking whether they were sensible.

Most gained the first two marks for dealing with the bulk bags with only a few misinterpreting the question by multiplying 3 by 265.

The smaller packs caused more problems with many not realising that 40 packs were needed and to therefore pay for 30, but instead using a count up method of 3 + 1 free. Many candidates gained partial marks by working out the cost of 40 bags at 11.75 but failing to deduct the 10 bags or finding 200kg i.e. 3×11.75 , and failing to scale up to the required amount.

Question 8a – Most candidates accessed these marks. Some made errors by not checking that they had met all of the constraints; however there were examples of checking taking place where candidates have later changed their answer. Centres should ensure that candidates check their answers; this is particularly good practice.

Question 8b – Candidates completed this question adequately throughout. The simple formula needed correct comprehension of the information provided. Most candidates accessed and answered this question correctly.

Question 9 – Most candidates gained some marks on this question although there was evidence of candidates not reading the information given in the question.

More practice is required by candidates in the practical use of ratio. Where candidates broke this question down in to more manageable bite size pieces, they did eventually achieve a correct answer.

Most candidates managed to find the ratio and place information accordingly for a single 3:1 ratio. However, many candidates failed to continue their processing to include all of the information.

Pass mark for FSM01

Maximum mark	48
Pass mark	30
UMS	6

Note: Grade boundaries vary from year to year and from subject to subject, depending on the demands of the questions.

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