

# Circular S/IF/82/22

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**To:** The Principals of Post-primary Schools and Directors of Further and Higher Education

**For circulation to:** Heads of Departments and Teachers: GCSE Mathematics and GCSE English Language

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## The Assessment of Functional Mathematics and Functional English

The assessment of Functional Mathematics and Functional English was incorporated into the revised GCSE Mathematics and GCSE English Language specifications which were made available for first teaching in 2017.

Initial outcomes from the assessment of functionality were due to be shared with candidates following first award of both GCSE Mathematics and GCSE English Language in Summer 2019, but this was placed on hold because of the challenges presented by conflicting awarding methodologies.

Instead CCEA committed to carrying out further investigative work in Summer 2020 and 2021 on the best means of delivering on the assessment of functionality. However, with the cancellation of public examinations in 2020 and 2021, and with the assessment arrangements in place in Summer 2022, this work was further delayed.

During this period the Department of Education also released the report *A Fair Start – Expert Panel on Educational Underachievement in Northern Ireland (2021)*. This highlights a number of key actions for CCEA including an action to “look afresh at the assessment of skills and knowledge in English, maths and ICT in a way which supports subsequent progression.” Alongside this, the Department of Education and the Department of the Economy published *Developing a more Strategic Approach to 14-19 Education and Training: A Framework to 14-19 Education and Training Provision*. This too, references improving standards in literacy and numeracy.

Because of the unavoidable delays in carrying out investigative work on the best approach to implementing the assessment arrangements associated with functionality and bearing in mind the focus on the actions set out in *A Fair Start* and the 14-19 Framework, the assessment of Functional Mathematics and Functional English remains on hold pending further review. The findings from initial investigative work into the assessment of functionality will of course feed into this review.

The GCSE Mathematics and GCSE English Language specifications and assessment materials will be updated to reflect this position.

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