

Functional English SAS Guide

This SAS guide relates to courses developed from the study area specification *Functional English* (2006).

Study Area Specification

Functional English

Approaches

Approach B: Vocational Learning (VL) Strand

Focus of Study Area Specification

Effective communication is integral to our society. New technologies, the influences of globalisation and the restructured workplace require students to be able to interpret, construct and make judgments about meanings in texts, in preparation for lifelong learning.

Students undertaking the study area specification *Functional English* will have particular language needs. This course is designed to support those students in further development of their basic literacy skills. These skills are required to participate confidently and constructively in interactions with others, and to use language clearly and effectively to achieve purposes and convey meanings.

Therefore programs developed from this study area specification should foster success for students by further developing and reinforcing their functional language skills to help them critically evaluate the world around them. Students should access a significant level of support, and emphasis is on practical real-life learning experiences, where students use language to think, interpret and communicate effectively. Learning experiences will reflect a range of individual and community contexts and purposes in which language is used.

The study area specification *Functional English* is designed to reflect the National Reporting System (NRS) indicators of competence at level one and two in reading, writing and oral communication.*

Overview of approaches

The study area specification *Functional English* (2006) has been developed for students in Years 11 and 12 who have particular language needs. It is appropriate that students undertaking the course have access to learning support. It enables one approach only:

* *National Reporting System (NRS)* Australian Government
Department of Education, Science and Training



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Approach B: Vocational learning (VL) strand

- Schools may devise a course of study over four semesters, based on units designed to promote vocational education as well as general knowledge and skills. Units are designed within contexts of work, community and leisure. This approach does not provide any vocational units of competency.

Nature of assessment

An exit level of achievement will be awarded at the end of the program of study for *Functional English*. The criteria on which students will be judged are based on the general objectives of the course, *Knowledge of Contextual Factors*, *Knowledge of Textual Features* and *Knowledge and Understanding of Texts*.

For students to demonstrate their knowledge and control of the three criteria, within the contexts of work, community and leisure, tasks will provide opportunities for students to use their knowledge of:

- Meanings in texts in familiar and predictable contexts
- Selecting and using textual features to produce their own texts
- How texts make meaning in contexts.

Students will complete a variety of written and spoken/signed tasks in real-life contexts for particular purposes and audiences. Assessment will be conducted in both individual and group situations.

The three assessment criteria are integrally related, and will be applied holistically to the work completed by the student in order to determine the exit level of achievement.

Opportunities for students

Functional English can establish a basis for students' further learning as well as developing essential communication skills to enhance employment opportunities.

This study area specification offers students opportunities, within the contexts of work, community and leisure, to use language to perform tasks, use technology, express identity, and interact in groups, organisations and the community. Students will have opportunities for negotiated learning and assessment, individual goal setting, and developing confidence and self-concept.

Students will be involved in learning experiences that allow them to develop their interpersonal skills, and to acquire knowledge and skills related to future life and further training and employment. Learning experiences are activity-based and life-related as much as possible. Students are supported to learn from and about spoken, written and visual text.

It may be beneficial for students who are successful in their studies of Functional English, and have completed at least one full semester of the subject, to undertake the English Communication Study Area Specification. The school should make such decisions, taking into account school resources, student achievements and needs.

How parents can help

Parents and guardians can help students by:

- Reading the study area specification *Functional English (2006)*, on which schools base their programs of study
- Reading the school program of study and discussing this with the teacher
- Showing an interest in the area being studied by discussing the activities and relevant issues with the student
- Discussing the student's progress with the student and with relevant school personnel.