



UNITED ARAB EMIRATES  
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Assessment Development Unit

# Skills Check Guidance Document

Academic Year 2019/20

Term 1 (September – November 2019)

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## 1.0 Overview

Skills Checks are an assessment tool designed to monitor the progress of students throughout the academic year. They are effectively mini tests which can be undertaken at junctures deemed most appropriate by the teacher.

By using this assessment tool, progress is measured according to the ability of students to meet the NELCF outcomes of their level. In the first two terms, there is a focus on receptive skills. In the third term, writing skills are also assessed.

In addition to measuring progress, Skills Checks aim to increase familiarity with learning outcomes and to encourage reflection on the part of teachers and students.

In sum, Skills Checks are designed to:

- assist with identifying gaps in attainment
- build familiarity with End of Term summative assessments
- facilitate the provision of outcome-specific feedback to students
- inform teaching practice through a better understanding of learning needs

## 2.0 What is a Skills Check?

Skills Checks are an assessment tool designed to ensure that all stakeholders are aware, throughout each academic term, the extent to which students are progressing towards the NELCF learning outcomes for their level. They are intended as a mechanism through which teachers can support students through specific and timely feedback and by adapting teaching practice to encourage the greatest success for students. Furthermore, Skills Checks aim to better prepare students for their summative assessments by using the same question types as students will see in their End of Term exams.

### 3.0 What will they look like?

Skills Checks take the format of short in-class tests which reflect the longer summative assessments that students will encounter in their End of Term exams. Each receptive Skills Check is made up of only 5 questions. This provides a total of 20 questions per academic term (except for Term 3, which incorporates a Writing Skills Check to support the Writing section of the End of Term 3 exam). Below is the division of Skills Checks that will be made available this academic year:

In Term 1 and 2, four short Skills Checks to test receptive skills:

- Two question papers for listening skills
- Two question papers for reading skills

In Term 3, five short Skills Checks to test receptive and productive (writing) skills:

- Two question papers for listening skills
- Two question papers for reading skills
- One question paper for writing skills

As aforementioned, these can be undertaken at a juncture deemed appropriate by the teacher. See below for further details regarding unit coverage.

It is also worth noting that, on the Skills Checks themselves, the NELCF outcome being tested (i.e. identifying details, identifying main points, identifying attitude) is made explicit. The purpose of this is twofold: Firstly, it aims to increase the students' awareness of what is expected of them. Secondly, it is a means for teachers to obtain clear, useful information regarding specific outcomes in need of additional work.

## 4.0 How often do Skills Checks take place?

Skills Check can be undertaken according to the preference of the teacher and the practicality of running the checks over the course of the terms. The following options demonstrate how flexibility has been built into these assessments. The Skills Checks can be undertaken as follows:

- In Term 1 and 2: over 2 or 4 lesson(s)
- In Term 3: over 2, 4 or 5 lessons

Nonetheless, it should be taken into consideration that the lexical, grammatical and function language covered in the Skills Check is, by necessity, related to the Instructional Planner coverage of that term. See the next section for further details.

## 5.0 What content is covered in the Skills Checks?

Although Skills Checks are outcome-focused, they are based on specific content as dictated by the Instructional Planner. This ensures their usefulness as a progress tool and as summative assessment preparation. It also ensures the accessibility of the Skills Checks as students will be exposed to lexical, grammatical and function language within the specific thematic context of units studied in class. What follows summarises how Skills Checks are mapped against the unit coverage:

Term 1:

- Unit 1: Listening Skills Check 1; Reading Skills Check 1
- Unit 2: Listening Skills Check 2; Reading Skills Check 2

Term 2:

- First unit of Term 2: Listening Skills Check 1; Reading Skills Check 1
- Second unit of Term 2: Listening Skills Check 2; Reading Skills Check 2

Term 3:

- First unit of Term 3: Listening Skills Check 1; Reading Skills Check 1; Writing Skills Check
- Second unit of Term 3: Listening Skills Check 1; Reading Skills Check

## 6.0 When will they take place?

Teachers can decide when to schedule a Skills Check or combination of Skills Checks. Nonetheless, it should be taken into consideration their purpose as a tool for ensuring progress toward outcomes, as a mechanism for providing clear, timely feedback to students and as the foundation for adapting teaching according to need.

Skills Checks must therefore be conducted after the first unit of the coursebook has been completed. This will allow students time to progress towards attaining the skills required for their success in the Skills Checks. It would also be prudent to schedule Skills Checks sufficiently in advance to allow ample time to provide verbal and/or written feedback (See Appendix 2 for Student Feedback Form) and adapt teaching as required.

Note that, in Term 1 and 3, Skills Checks must be undertaken prior to the final End of Term exams and closure of Al Manhal for Continuous Assessment marks.

## 7.0 How will the students be assessed?

The foundation for the Skills Checks as an assessment tool has its basis in level-specific outcomes. This means that, in Term 1 and 2, the Skills Checks are written according to the NELCF receptive skills outcomes for that level. Moreover, the question types mirror the End of Term summative assessments that students will take.

In Term 3, additional productive skills outcomes for writing are assessed in addition to the two receptive skills. This will be undertaken via one Skills Check which also aligns with the End of Term writing assessment format.

As aforementioned, the specific outcomes are stated on the Skills Check question paper above each section. The purpose of this is to increase transparency and raise student and teacher awareness.

## 8.0 How long are the Skills Checks?

Each receptive Skills Check is a 'self-contained' mini test made up of only 5 questions. In Term 1 and 2, each set of 4 Skills Checks will therefore total 20 marks. In Term 3, in addition to the 20 possible marks for the receptive skills, the Writing Skills Check will be marked out of 21 marks.

A Skills Check can be conducted at the beginning of a class, if desired. However, if preferred, by combining tests, a longer assessment may also be created.

For example, whilst taking into consideration their alignment with the Instructional Planners, the following permutations are possible in one class in Term 1 and 2:

- Listening Skills Check 1 + Reading Skills Check 1
- Listening Skills Check 1 + Listening Skills Check 2
- Listening Skills Check 2 + Reading Skills Check 2
- Reading Skills Checks 1 + Reading Skills Checks 2

## 9.0 What percentage of CA are Skills Checks?

The Skills Checks carry different weightings over the three terms. As the terms progress, the Skills Checks carry greater weight. The following explains the percentage weighting of each Skills Check.

In Term 1, Skills Checks will form 10% of the CA mark. The breakdown is as follows:

Listening One = 2.5%

Reading One = 2.5%

Listening Two = 2.5%

Reading Two = 2.5%

Two Listening Skills Check = 5%

Two Reading Skills Checks = 5%

Total: 10% of CA Mark for Term 1

In Term 2, Skills Checks will form 20% of the CA mark. The breakdown is as follows:

Listening One = 5%	Reading One = 5%
Listening Two = 5%	Reading Two = 5%
Two Listening Skills Check = 10%	Two Reading Skills Checks = 10%

Total: 20% of CA Mark for Term 2

In Term 3, Skills Checks will form 100% of the CA mark. The breakdown is as follows:

Listening One = 20%	Reading One = 20%
Listening Two = 20%	Reading Two = 20%
Two Listening Skills Check = 40%	Two Reading Skills Checks = 40%

One Writing Skills Check = 20%

Total: 100% of CA Mark for Term 3

## 10.0 Where can I find the materials?

Skills Check will be distributed centrally from the Assessment Department each term.

The following material is be provided by the ADU via SharePoint:

- this Teachers' Guide
- Class Scoresheet
- Student Feedback Form
- Skills Checks for each level
- Answer Key for Skills Checks
- Item Mapping for each Skills Check

Should you have any problems with these materials, please contact [Amelia.Ray@moe.gov.ae](mailto:Amelia.Ray@moe.gov.ae).



## Appendix 1A: Class Scoresheet, Term 1

<b>Class Scoresheet Skills Checks Term 1 (2019-2020)</b>					
Student Name:	Listening 1 (5 marks)	Reading 1 (5 marks)	Listening 2 (5 marks)	Reading 2 (5 marks)	Total (20 marks)
e.g: Ali Saif Saad	4	4	3	5	16
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
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11.					
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## Appendix 1B: Class Scoresheet, Term 2

<b>Class Scoresheet Skills Checks Term 2 (2019-2020)</b>					
Student Name:	Listening 1 (5 marks)	Reading 1 (5 marks)	Listening 2 (5 marks)	Reading 2 (5 marks)	Total (20 marks)
e.g: Ali Saif Saad	3	4	4	5	16
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					
8.					
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## Appendix 1C: Class Scoresheet, Term 3

<b>Class Scoresheet</b> <b>Skills Checks Term 3 (2019-2020)</b>						
Student Name:	Listening 1 (5 marks)	Reading 1 (5 marks)	Writing (21 marks)	Listening 2 (5 marks)	Reading 2 (5 marks)	Total (41 marks)
e.g: Ali Saif Saad	4	3	16	5	4	32
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## Appendix 2: Class Scoresheet, Term 3

<b>Skills Check Feedback Form (2019-2020)</b>		
Student Name:	Class:	Date:
Teachers comments:		Students comments:
Signed: _____		Signed: _____