# GCSE Consultations with reference to Modern Languages

# Situation as at 13/07/13

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## References

See the ALL website page for a very useful summary of the National Curriculum Review process to date.

<http://www.all-languages.org.uk/about/all_in_action/active_all_consultations/the_national_curriculum_review_20112014>

This document summarises the current state of play with respect to GCSE languages and gives a personal commentary on the Modern Languages GCSE subject content and assessment objectives. To make it clear, what are formal consultation questions and what are questions which I am posing for consideration in response, I have labelled the latter "HEM Questions" to indicate me (Helen Myers) as the originator.

## Background

### February 2013:

* Secretary of State for Education announces that following evidence gathered through Government's public consultation on reforming KS4 qualifications, GCSEs will be comprehensively **reformed** "so that young people have access to qualifications which match and exceed those of the highest performing jurisdictions"
* He also writes to OFQUAL , the examinations regulator, setting out policy for the reform of GCSEs and asking them to develop **revised regulatory requirements** for the qualifications with regard to that policy.

The DfE has "carried out research, consulted with experts, and drafted subject content and assessment objectives which reflect the high standards expected of 16 year-olds students in high performing jurisdictions around the world"

These drafts are the subject of the DFE consultation, but it is with reference to these drafts that Ofqual have given their response. (So, although only drafts, they are informing Ofqual's response).

###  June 2013

There are currently two consultation documents with respect to GCSE

* The **DfE seeks views on the proposed subject content and assessment** objectives for reformed GCSE qualifications to be introduced for first teaching from September 2015 (i.e those in Year 8 during 2013-14) English language, English Literature, maths biology, chemistry, physics, combined science double award, geography and history) and also draft content framework for Modern languages and ancient languages, which will be introduced for first teaching September 2016 (Y7 in 2013-14).
* **Ofqual is consulting in parallel on the key characteristics of the qualifications** e.g. GCSE assessment arrangements for teaching beginning in Sep 2015 (i.e. not languages). Languages will be consulted on subsequently.

## The Process

### Commentary: What's new?

Previously there was one body responsible for both curriculum and assessment (QCA) This has been disbanded.

A really important process difference this time from previous changes is the very clear and distinct separation between the description of the subject content (DfE) and the way in which it is to be assessed (Ofqual).

While looking at the subject content we need to ask ourselves

 'is it subject content which is being described, or is it an assumption about how it is to be assessed?' e.g. it should not include whether the Target language is to be used or not in assessment.

Everyone needs to be really clear about the fact that since ML is in the second phase the assessment aspect is not being consulted on currently for languages.

This is actually very helpful because it allows us to enter into a constructive dialogue while the thinking is still taking place.

## "Reformed GCSE Subject Content consultation"

This is an over-arching document. Within this is a summary chapter

 - §5 "Subject content and assessment objectives, and standards of achievement"

with a set of questions below for consultation.

There is a specific separate document for Modern Languages, considered in the next section

The over-arching document summarises the main elements of the subject content and assessment objectives (Para 5.8 = MFL) before posing the questions for the consultation at the end of the over-arching document.

5.8 Modern and ancient languages

In modern foreign languages, the subject content will require students to understand and respond to different types of language, both spoken and written, and to communicate and interact effectively, both in speech and writing, across a range of familiar and fresh contexts, appropriate to their age, interests and maturity levels. The assessment objectives for the four skills of listening, reading, speaking and writing will be weighted equally. Ofqual will consult separately on the assessment of the practical skills of speaking and listening at the point at which they prepare the regulatory requirements for that subject. This is not included in Ofqual’s current consultation.

We are consulting on the subject content for modern and ancient languages alongside other subjects, although these GCSEs will not be reformed until 2016. Ofqual will consult in due course on the specific requirements that will govern controlled assessment and tiering in these subjects.

Generic consultation questions

**The generic questions** for each subject area (incl ML) are:

Questions

Do the proposed subject content and assessment objectives cover the appropriate knowledge and understanding for GCSEs in these subjects?

Is the relative weighting of the assessment objectives right?

There are **specific questions** for each of the other subjects, but none for ML.

**The document states the intention regarding progression between stages of study**

The DFE states that the GCSE qualifications should also

provide assurance that 'students have retained and consolidated their understanding of essential subject content covered during earlier key stages.

**The generic questions are:**

Do the proposed subject content and assessment objectives provide assurance that essential knowledge taught at the earlier key stages is built upon and represented adequately?

Will the proposed qualifications secure sound progression for the purposes of further academic and vocational study?

There are no specific questions for ML.

**Equalities**

**The generic question is**

Do any of the proposals have potential to have a disproportionate impact, positive or negative, on specific pupil groups, in particular the 'protected characteristic' groups? (The relevant protected characteristics are disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation); if they have potential for an adverse impact, how can this be reduced?

## "Modern Languages : GCSE subject content and assessment objectives" - June 2013

Do the proposed subject content and assessment objectives cover the appropriate knowledge and understanding for GCSEs in these subjects?

Is the relative weighting of the assessment objectives right?

Here is an analysis and commentary on the proposals, with reference to the current 2008 version [downloadable from <http://www2.ofqual.gov.uk/downloads/category/192-gcse-subject-criteria>] and with other subject responses.

The draft document has 12 headings and subheadings. Reference to knowledge and understanding required for a GCSE in languages is made throughout the document.

The following table attempts to bring these together in a 'checklist' which may assist in being able to compare with other documents, whether former ones in our jurisdiction (e.g. 2008 criteria), or documents in other high performing jurisdictions.

## Contexts and purposes (p.4)

Reference: the current 2008 GCSE Specification:

**See** Points 10-12. I have highlighted the sections which do not appear to be replicated in the 2016 criteria

**Point 10** GCSE specifications in modern foreign languages must require learners to:

• listen and respond to different types of spoken language

• communicate in speech for a variety of purposes

• read and respond to different types of written language

• communicate in writing for a variety of purposes

• use and understand a range of vocabulary and structures

• understand and apply the grammar of the language, as detailed in the specification.

**Point 11**

GCSE specifications in modern foreign languages must set out contexts and purposes

that:

• are of relevance and interest to learners

• correspond to learners’ level of maturity

• reflect, and are appropriate to, the culture of countries and communities where the

language is spoken

• relate, where appropriate, to other areas of the curriculum

**Point 12** For speaking and writing, a specification must allow for centres and/or learners to have some choice of contexts and purposes, including the possibility of proposing a context or

purpose of their own.

***HEM Comment:*** *No defined themes were given centrally in response to Dearing recommendation that people were not motivated by the GCSE topics and the need for flexibility of choice for productive skills (e.g. to allow for CLIL).*

Proposed 2016 GCSE Specification:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Detail given in document** | *HEM Questions* |
| Understand (L&R) and use (S&W) language across a range of contexts | appropriate to age, interests, maturity | *not preparation for later working life?* |
| Use (S&W) languages for a variety of purposes and audiences  | personalacademicemployment | *not social?**not pleasure? (literature, media)* |
| LISTENING:Understand different types of spoken language | public settingssocial settingsauthentic sourcesmedia**Scope section also requires 'authentic material addressing a wide range of relevant contemporary and cultural themes'** | *not personal-related?**not academic-related?**not employment-related?* |
| READING: Understand different types of written language | personalpublicfactualliterary (can include poems, letters, short stories, essays, novels , plays, historical and contemporary sources**Scope section also requires 'authentic material addressing a wide range of relevant contemporary and cultural themes' & 'more abstract material'** | *not social?**not authentic sources?**not media?**not academic-related?**not employment-related?* |
| Contexts organised in broad themes | * Identity, culture, lifestyle, values, beliefs
* Environment local international, global areas of interest
* current and future study and employment
 | *Rationale for these themes?**Any plans to be more specific so that boards can have guidance on level of detail / approx. number of words?**Do authentic literary and media sources need to be in these themes?**Assume no scope for any individual choice now (e.g. to match CLIL practice)* |

**HEM Questions**

* Is there a reason for the variation of settings for different skills?
* Is there a reason for not making specific reference to the target culture when recommending settings, contexts and themes?
* Can CLIL be accommodated in the theme of 'current study'?
* Would it be useful to define generic functions to be covered? (1986 GSE criteria)
* Do media and authentic texts need to be within the broad themes?

See 'Scope of study' for questions relating to emboldened type.

## Scope of study (p.5)

'Scope of study' is a term which has not been used previously in GCSE specifications.

In research terms it means range covered and specific boundaries.

I have made a very detailed comparison of the 2008 and 2016 draft in order to identify similarities and changes with respect to the scope of study. See Appendix: Detailed Analysis - Working Document

In the 2016 draft, for each skill area there is a series of bullet points which very loosely appear to describe a hierarchy of level reached in the skills (more so in listening & reading than speaking & writing). **See tables which follow after the "HEM Comments & Questions" below**

### Level of descriptions

Note that most of the bullet points use descriptions and terminology from what is written in the 'Grade A' boundary grade description in the GCSE 2008 specification'.

It therefore appears to describe the upper boundary rather than the lower boundary. This bias is not surprising given the government's published policy objectives in developing the proposals (expectations to match and exceed those in highest performing jurisdictions, more stretching for the most able, taken by the same proportion of students that take GCSE currently). But the lack of guidance for lower levels will be problematic for Ofqual and the Awarding Bodies preparing assessments which still have to cater for the wide range of ability and presumably will have to extrapolate progression towards the goals and define grades for those who do not match the upper boundary descriptions.

***HEM Questions***

The description in 2016 draft appears to describe only the highest boundary. (Strands indicate this). Is it appropriate to broaden the scope of this skill?

(Ofqual is very clear on its remit to reflect the objectives of designing an assessment accessible to all: 'we want to see GCSEs that are accessible to all, using assessments that really test knowledge, understanding and skills that are essential to the subject and are designed so that the results are valid and reliable'.)

### Context

Within the 'scope of study' there are references to some contexts and purposes which are not made explicit in section 5. I have included them in the 'Contexts and purposes' table above. (Listening and reading contexts require understanding of **'authentic material addressing a wide range of relevant contemporary and cultural themes')** However, this could be a description of the broad themes.

***HEM Questions***

* Is there a reason for defining the themes of the authentic materials, or could this be re-worded to 'authentic material addressing the broad themes of the specified context''?
* What is the definition of 'more abstract material'?

### All Skills

1. Reference to 'range of SPECIFIED contexts' [2008: no specified contexts defined in response to Dearing recommendation to allow flexibility and choice of contexts]

***HEM Question:***Is there going to be guidance to boards as to breadth of specified contexts beyond the headings? (Note that other subject areas maths, science, history, geography have extremely detailed specific content regarding contexts for the skills)

1. Explicit reference to recognising three tenses [the 2008 criteria deliberately omitted reference to this in response to evidence that people distorted exam preparation and lessons n order to 'tick the tense box' at the expense of developing other higher level language which would have been more appropriate to the contexts.]

***HEM Question:*** Is there a danger of reverting to the artificial situation where, for example, in order to reach a higher level in the speaking test within a 7-minute speaking test, all three tenses need to be covered?

### Listening and Reading

1. Reference to authentic texts [In the past this has caused problems for Awarding bodies - a constraint on stimuli]. Here there seems to be a practical solution to previous problems by allowing for 'abridged / adapted' texts. This of course means they are no longer 'authentic' but this is a necessary clarification.
2. Nature of response defined, requiring higher processing skills (so not sufficient just to understand the language):

listening: summarise, evaluate (L/BP5)

reading: organise and present relevant details, summarise (R/BP6)

***HEM Question***: Is this going to interfere with assessing pupils' skills in the target language?

1. The descriptors for listening and reading are fairly matched. There are occasional differences.

**QUESTION:** Is there a reason for the slight differences? (e.g. reading = 'high frequency familiar language' (R/BP2); listening = 'familiar language' (L/BP2) + reference to abridged / adapted authentic sources (L/BP5 ad R BP5) /+ final bullet point (L BP5, L BP6)

### Speaking and Writing:

1. Specific requirement to ask and answer questions (S/BP2; W BP2)

***HEM Comment****:* Good idea!

1. Use appropriate style and register formal / informal [This used to be part of former specifications] (S BP8. W BP5)

***HEM Comment****:* Good idea!

1. Specific reference to making creative use of language and using language for 'new purposes' (S/BP3 & W/BP5,) and 'independent ' language (W BP6) [in2008 a discussion about the definition of 'creative language' was lengthy and controversial and the word was deliberately not used]

***HEM Questions***:

* How can 'creative language' be defined? (It is difficult enough to define creative language in your own mother tongue, let alone in a second language.)
* What is the definition of 'new purposes'? [The criteria set out the contexts and purposes …do we deliberately have to make pupils face purposes outside the criteria for which they have not been prepared?]
* What is the definition of 'independent' language?
1. Still the requirement to deal with the 'unexpected' (S/BP4, W [2008: the term 'Unpredictable' used].

***HEM Question***:

How can this be tested to ensure fairness? A student who has come across the 'unexpected' language recently [e.g. the teacher by chance happened to spring the same unexpected scenario on them in a recent lesson] to is going to be at a clear advantage over a student who has not come across it. They may have equal language skills. Perhaps access to the vital key vocabulary to cope with the unexpected situation may help to make it a level playing ground?

### Listening only

There is a goal that candidates can follow and understand 'clear standard speech at normal speed' with respect to familiar contexts over a range of contexts (L/BP2). This statement is worrying. Firstly, even with familiar contexts, it is usually accepted that in a 'real' situation where a non-native speakers is interacting with a native speaker, speakers will be considerate (and sympathetic) enough to slow down or adapt their speech in order to aid understanding. Secondly, it implies that for the other statements, clear standard speech is not required.

***HEM Question***:

To what extent will the selection or production of listening sources be expected to take account of the fact that candidates are not at an advanced stage of language learnign?

### Speaking Only

1. Specific reference to 'interaction' (heading) [Discussed at 2008 review .. acknowledgement that interaction is testing listening skills]

***HEM Question***:

How can interaction be assessed without penalising for quality of listening skills?

### Writing

 ***HEM Questions***:

* Is there a difference between 'a variety of purposes' and 'different purposes'? [I assume 'different' suggests a narrower range?]
* How will 'increasing' accuracy and fluency' be measured? (BP5) (Suggest omit the word 'increasing')
* The function of writing is defined in BP6, requiring higher processing skills (so it is not sufficient just to be able to write the language): summarise information in order to interest, inform or convince. Is this going to interfere with assessing pupils' skills in the target language?
* Translation in to the target language (BP7) requires access to a dictionary in order to be a valid and reliable test of applying grammatical knowledge and structures, rather than a test of memorising an infinite number of words. Not knowing specific words (a lower level skills) could prevent a candidate from demonstrating what they know, understand and can do with respect to manipulation of language (a higher level skill). Can the requirement to be able to use a dictionary and demonstrate language learning skills be included in the scope of study in order to address this need? [This has been included in previous criteria]

**In the tables which follow, I have identified 'strands' which define elements of the skill scovered, and may be useful for comparison with previous criteria**

# Tables summarising "Scope of Study"

**BP = bullet point**

## Listening: understand and respond to spoken language

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Response | Type | Context | Complexity | Grammar |
| BP1 | general and specific understanding | different types of spoken language |  |  |  |
| BP2 | follow and understand | clear standard speech at normal speed | across a range of specified contexts | using familiar language |  |
| BP3 | identify overall message, key points, details and opinions | a variety of short and longer spoken passages |  | involving some more complex language,  | recognising the relationship between past, present and future events |
| BP4 | deduce meaning | a variety of short and longer spoken passages- involving more abstract material including short narratives | **'authentic material addressing a wide range of relevant contemporary and cultural themes'** | involving some complex language, and more abstract material |  |
| BP5 | recognise and respond by being able to answer questions, extract information, summarise, evaluate and draw conclusions | key information, important themes and ideas in more extended spoken text | including authentic sources, adapted and abridged, as appropriate |  |  |

## Speaking

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Type | Purposes & Contexts | Opinions | Complexity | Accuracy Pron & Int | Accuracy grammar | Fluency |
| BP1 | Communicate and interact | a variety of purposes, a range of specified contexts |  |  |  |  |  |
| BP2 | Short conversation, ask and answer questions |  | exchanging opinions |  |  |  |  |
| BP3 | Present info and narrate events | using and adapting language for new purposes |  |  | coherently and confidently |  |  |
| BP4 | speak spontaneously, responding to unexpected questions, points of view or situations |  |  |  |  |  | sustains conversation by using rephrasing or repair strategies |
| BP5 | initiate an d develop conversations and discussion |  |  | producing extended sequences of speech |  |  |  |
| BP6 |  |  |  | including some more complex forms with ref to past present and future events |  | make appropriate and accurate use of a variety of vocabulary and grammatical structures, incl  |  |
| BP7 | Make more creative use of the language |  | to express an d justify own thoughts and opinions | Complex use of the language |  |  |  |
| BP8 |  | Confident use of important social conventions, eg. formal / informal address and register |  |  |  |  |  |
| BP9 |  |  |  |  | use accurate pronunciation and intonation |  |  |

## Reading

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Response | Type | Context | Complexity | Grammar |
| BP1 | understand and respond  | different types of spoken language |  |  |  |
| BP2 | understand general and specific details |  | across a range of specified contexts | using high frequency familiar language |  |
| BP3 | identify overall message, key points, details and opinions | a variety of short and longer spoken passages |  | involving some more complex language,  | recognising the relationship between past, present and future events |
| BP4 | deduce meaning | a variety of short and longer spoken passages- involving more abstract material including short narratives | **'authentic material addressing a wide range of relevant contemporary and cultural themes'** | involving some complex language, and unfamiliar material  |  |
| BP5 | recognise and respond  | key information, important themes and ideas in more extended written text | including authentic sources, abridged or adapted [cf listening added ' as appropriate'] |  |  |
| BP6 | demonstrate understanding by being able to scan for particular information, organise and present relevant details, summarise, draw inferences in context an d recognise implicit meaning  |  |  |  |  |

## Writing

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Type | Purposes & Contexts | Opinions | Complexity | Accuracy grammar |
| BP1 | Communicate and interact | a variety of purposes, a range of specified contexts |  |  |  |
| BP2 | Write short texts Short conversation, ask and answer questions and exchange information |  |  | using simple sentences and familiar language | accurately |
| BP3 | Produce text of extended length to present facts | for different purposes and different settings | and express ideas and opinions |  | Clear and coherent |
| BP4 | Describe and narrate events | using and adapting language for new purposes |  | a variety of vocabulary and grammatical structures, including some more complex forms - with reference to past, present and future events | Make accurate use |
| BP5 |  | Manipulate language for new purposes including using appropriate style and register for informal and formal use |  | using and adapting a variety of structures and vocabulary | with increasing accuracy and fluency |
| BP6 | Make more independent, creative use of the language to note down key pints, summarise information. | in order to interest, inform or convince | to express an d justify individual thoughts and opinions | complex |  |
| BP7 | Translate sentences and short texts from English into the assessed language to convey key messages accurately |  |  |  | to apply grammatical knowledge of language and structures in context |

## Grids comparing the 2008 and draft 2016 criteria and highlighting differences and similarities.

*Cross reference with 2016 to highlight changes / additions etc*

yellow (grey) = hierarchy within each row; **emboldened = same or very nearly the same language;** Arial black = new (2016)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| LISTENING | **A** | **C** | **F** |
| Type | Candidates show understanding of **different types of spoken language** (16) clear standard speech at normal speed(16) shorter and longer spoken passages(16) more abstract material incl short narratives and authentic material(16) extended spoken text incl authentic sources, adapted and abridged as appropriate | Candidates show understanding of a variety of spoken language |  |
| Complexity | that contain a variety of structures | **that contains some complex language** | Candidates show some understanding of simple language spoken clearly  |
| Context | The spoken material relates to **a range of**(16) specified **contexts,** including some that may be unfamiliar,(16) addressing a wide range of relevant contemporary and cultural themes | and relates to a range of contexts. | **that relates to familiar contexts.** |
| Grammar | may relate to past and future events.**16:** recognising the relationship between past, present and future |  |  |
| Response | They can identify overall message main points, details and opinions.(16)demonstrate general and specific understandingfollow and understandrecognise and respond to.. | They can identify main points, details and points of view **and draw simple conclusions.** (16)deduce meaningbeing able to answer questions, extract information, summarise, evaluate | They can identify main points and extract some details. |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| SPEAKING | **A** | **C** | **F** |
| Type | They **initiate and develop conversations** [(16) asking and answering questions] **and discussions**, **present information and narrate events.** | They take part in conversations and simple discussions and present information. **They show an ability to deal with some unpredictable elements.** (16) 'unexpected questions, points of view or situations' | They take part in simple conversations, present simple information  |
| Opinions | They express and explain ideas and (16) exchange **points of view**  | They express points of view  | and can express their opinion. |
| Complexity | , and **produce extended sequences of speech using a variety of vocabulary**, **structures** including some complex forms **and verb tenses.** (16) specific: with reference to past, present and future events(16) making more creative and complex use of the language | Their spoken language contains a variety of structures and may relate to past and future events. | They use a limited range of language. |
| Accuracy: Pron & Intonation | They speak **confidently**, with reasonably **accurate pronunciation and intonation**  | Their pronunciation and intonation are more accurate than inaccurate. | Their pronunciation is understandable. (16) by a native speaker |
| Accuracy: Grammar | The message is **clear** but there may be some errors, especially when they use more complex structures. | They convey a clear message but there may be some errors. | There are grammatical inaccuracies but the main points are usually conveyed. |
| Purposes | [2008: covered in another section - not related to the specific skills]variety of purposesrange of specified contextsusing and adapting language for new purposes to convey meaningMake confident use of important social conventions such as formal address and register |  |  |
| Fluency | sustaining communication by using rephrasing or repair strategies as appropriate |  |  |
| **READING** | **A** | **C** | **F** |
| Type | They show understanding of a **variety of written texts** (16) short and longer passages | **They show understanding of different types of written texts**  | They **show some understanding of short, simple written texts**  |
| Contexts | relating to a **range of** (16) specified c**ontexts.** **(16)** including short narratives and authentic sources including extracts from relevant abridged or adapted literary texts (16) addressing a wide range of relevant contemporary and cultural themes **They understand some unfamiliar language** | **The written material relates to a range of contexts, including some that may be unfamiliar** | **that relate to familiar contexts**. (16) using high frequency familiar language across a range of contexts. They show limited understanding of unfamiliar language. |
| Complexity | and extract meaning from **more complex language** and **extended texts.** | that contain a variety of structures. |  |
| Grammar | (16) recognising the relationship between past, present and future events | and may relate to past and future events. |  |
| Response | **They can identify main points, extract details, recognise points of view,** attitudes and emotions **and draw simple conclusions.** (16) deduce meaningdemonstrate understanding by being able to scan for particular info, organise and present relevant details, summarise, draw inferences in context and recognise implicit meaning | They can identify **main points, extract details** and **recognise opinions.** | **They can identify main points and some details.** |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| WRITING | **A** | **C** | **F** |
| Context /Purpose | They write for different purposes and contexts about real or imaginary subjects.(16) Produce clear and coherent text of extended length to present facts variety of purposesrange of specified contextsask and answer questionsexchange informationusing and adapting a variety of structures and vocabulary language for new purposes to convey meaningUsing appropriate style and register for formal and informal usemake more independent creative and complex use of the language as appropriate to note down key points, summarise information.. in order to interest, inform or convinceTranslate sentences and short texts form Englsh into the assessed language to convey key messages accurately and to apply grammatical knowledge of language and structures in context | They write for different contexts that may be real or imaginary.  | **They write short texts that relate to familiar contexts.**  |
| Opinions | **They express and explain ideas and points of view** (16) appropriately for different purposes and in different settings | They communicate information and express points of view. | They can express simple opinions. |
| Complexity | They use a variety of vocabulary, structures and verb tenses. (16) Including some more complex forms to describe and narrate with reference to past, present and future events | They use a variety of structures and may include different tenses or time frames. The style is basic. | They use simple sentences. |
| Accuracy | **Their spelling and grammar are** generally **accurate. The message is clear** but there may be some errors, especially when they write more complex sentences. increasing accuracy and fluency | They convey a clear message but there may be some errors. | The main points are usually conveyed but there are mistakes in spelling and grammar. |

## Assessment objectives (p.8)

Description of assessment objectives all imply mixed skills testing: 'and respond to, interact'.

Comment: This is Ofquals' remit. If this stands, it will seriously constrain the means, validity and reliability of the assessment.

***HEM Question***:

 'and respond to' / 'and interact effectively' - does this dictate the nature of the assessment? (Comment: beware that this lead to double penalty if for example a question is not understood and they cannot demonstrate what they can say)

***HEM Question***:

How can Ofqual ensure that assessments are fit for purpose and fairly test the targeted skill effectively without penalising if the task set involves another skill?

Description of assessment objectives specifies the level reached in the skills 'understand an respond to **different types** of language / communicate and interact **effectively**

***HEM Question***:

Is there a reason for including reference to the quality of the skill in the assessment objective? Is there a reason why it cannot simply be stated as an objective to assess the skills of listening / speaking / reading / writing?

The skills are equally weighted.

*Note that 2008 had a constraint of 25/60 rule for practical skills + Dearing recommendation about S & W led to requirement that writing and speaking should be tested under controlled assessment conditions. There was an expectation that boards might take advantage of flexibility to introduce 'mixed skill' testing (e.g. speaking test where 20% - speaking, 10% - listening) however this did not occur.*

In AO2 and AO4 at least 10% of the marks available must be allocated to knowledge and

accurate application of the grammar and structures of the language prescribed in the

specification.

***HEM Comment:*** (No change from 2008

Assessment objectives will be fully assessed through **external assessment:** awarding

organisations can require teachers to conduct the oral exams, and then send recordings

to the awarding organisations for marking. They are internally conducted, but not

internally assessed.

***HEM Question***:

Is this not the remit of Ofqual to decide the best means of assessing?

### Use of the assessed language in questions and rubrics (p.8)

It is the expectation that questions and rubrics for the majority of modern languages will

be set in the assessed language, except where tasks focus on assessing the candidate’s

understanding of the use of the language (grammatical and lexical knowledge) or in tasks where the candidate is translating from the assessed language into English or from

English into the assessed language. It is more appropriate that the instructions for these

tasks should be set in English.

***HEM Comment:***  It is the job of the regulator with the boards to determine what is the best way of assessing in the most valid and reliable way. Is this not the remit of Ofqual to decide the best means of assessing?

I am aware that this is a controversial area, but I am extremely concerned about the prospect of a return to target language testing. In my view, target language testing leads to convoluted, artificial test types which confuse the candidatesin high pressure test situations, and do not allow them to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do with respect to the assessment objectives. Valid reliable forms of testing leading to fair judgements of candidates' skills are vital for this high-stakes examination. An examination should not be used to promote a pedagogical ideal. I know that this view is shared by significant people working for awarding bodies who have had the task of setting exam questions and who in the past had to spend inordinate amounts of time and effort finding pictures to represent lexical items clearly in order to avoid the use of English.

Languages using logographic systems or characters such as Mandarin Chinese and

Japanese may set all questions and task instructions in English, as the sole use of hanzi or kanji is deemed too challenging for this level.

***HEM Question***:

Given the acknowledgment of relative difficulty in these languages, should not other aspects of the criteria be similarly adapted? (Allowance made for this in 2008)

### Grammatical expectations for French, German and Spanish (p.8)

Lists of grammar requirements will be drawn from the existing lists produced in the

Ofqual GCSE Subject Criteria. There will be some relevant categorisation according to

core and more complex language use. There will also be an indication of structures that

students will be expected to recognise only and not produce independently.

***HEM Comment***:

 The 2008 specfication grammar list categorises and distinguishes core / more complex grammar, though requirement to do so not specified in its criteria. Good idea to include as a requirement.

### Elements which appear in 2008 criteria but not here, are those relating to the assessment regulations. The numbers refer to the points in the 2008 criteria.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 18. Question papers in modern foreign languages must be targeted at either Foundation or Higher tier. | Ofqual to make decision. Their current leaning = overlapping tiersMy preference = core + extension |
| 19 The use of dictionaries will not be permitted in any external assessment. | Ofqual decisionMy preference = allow use (allows for fair testing of manipulation / application ) Essential if translation is to be included as a skill. |
| 20. GCSE specifications in modern foreign languages must allocate a weighting of 40% to external assessment and a weighting of 60% to controlled assessment in the overall scheme of assessment. | Ofqual decision. Already very encouraging that they recognise it is not appropriate to have 'fixed' requirements on all subject areas- that percentages need to be calculated on a subject-by-subject need basis. |
| 22. Grade descriptions are provided to give a general indication of the standards of achievement likely to have been shown by candidates awarded particular grades. The descriptions must be interpreted in relation to the content in the specification; they are not designed to define that content. | Current thinking is to have 'comparable outcomes' rather than criteria-driven grades. It will be interesting to see how these are calculated.Ofqual decision. Current leaning is to Grades expressed as number 1-8 where 8 is high. |
| 23. The grade awarded will depend in practice upon the extent to which the candidate has met the assessment objectives overall. Shortcomings in some aspects of candidates’ performance in the assessment may be balanced by better performances in others. | Ofqual decision.  |

## APPENDIX 1: Detailed Analysis

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Proposed | 2008 | Commentary |
|  |  |  |
| IntroductionGCSE subject criteria set out the knowledge, understanding, skills and assessment objectives common to all GCSE specifications in a given subject.  | IntroductionPoint 1: GCSE subject criteria set out the knowledge, understanding, skills and assessment objectives common to all GCSE specifications in modern foreign languages except where, in particular languages, the regulators indicate otherwise.  | 2008: no prescription about topics (Dearing recommendation from teacher survey)2013: does not make allowance for different demands of different languages e.g. Chinese script |
| Not mentioned | 2. Specifications must also meet the regulators’ general requirements, including the common and GCSE criteria as defined in The statutory regulation of external qualifications (QCA/04/1293). | are there any general criteria? |
| They provide the framework within which awarding organisations create the detail of their specifications, so ensuring progression from key stage 3 national curriculum requirements and the possibilities for progression to A level. | 3. Subject criteria are intended to:• ensure that specifications build on the knowledge, understanding and skills established by the national curricula for England, Northern Ireland and Wales, and facilitate progression to further study of modern foreign languages  |  |
| not mentioned | • help higher education institutions, employers and other stakeholders such as learners and parents/guardians know what has been studied and assessed. |  |
| not mentioned | • help ensure consistent and comparable standards in the same subject across the awarding bodies •ensure that the rigour of GCSE is maintained  |  |
| not mentioned | 4. Any GCSE specification that contains significant elements of modern foreign languages must be consistent with the relevant parts of these subject criteria.  |  |
| not mentioned | 5. Specifications may be offered under the following titles and must include the name of the language concerned: • GCSE in [language] • GCSE in [language]; spoken language (short course) • GCSE in [language]; written language (short course)  | To be decided by OfqualShort courses no longer to be seen as half of a full course, but as a course in their own right. |
| **Section 2 Subject aims and learning outcomes [not listed as heading in contents of document]****General intro [aims] then 7 bullet points [learning outcomes]** | **Aims and learning outcomes****Points 6 [aims]****Point 7 (4 bullet points) [learning outcomes]** |  |
| Through studying a GCSE in a modern language, students should | GCSE specifications in modern foreign languages should encourage learners to | Prefer 2008: better to word in terms of the requirement on the specification rather than the candidate and more realistic 'encourage learners to' rather than 'should' |
| develop their ability and desire to communicate confidently and coherently with native speakers in speech and writing.  |  | 2013 'develop' - not a description of an aim/outcome, but a process2 skills mentioned - why not L&R? |
| The study of a modern language at GCSE should also broaden students’ horizons and encourage them to step beyond familiar cultural boundaries  | Point 6 Learners should recognise that their linguistic knowledge, understanding and skills help them to take their place in a multilingual global society |  |
| and develop new ways of seeing the world. | Point 6 be inspired, moved and changed by following a broad, coherent, satisfying and worthwhile course of study.  | 2013: develop |
| practical use not mentioned | Point 6 and also provide them with a suitable basis for further study and practical use of the language. |  |
| not mentioned | derive enjoyment and benefit from language learning, | ML used to be the only one that mentioned 'enjoyment'! |
| **GCSE specifications in a modern language should enable students to:** | **Point 7 GCSE specifications in modern foreign languages must enable learners to:** | **removal of the word 'foreign'** |
| BP1 . develop their ability to communicate coherently with native speakers in speech and writing, conveying what they want to say with increasing accuracy | Point 7 BP3develop the ability to communicate effectively in the language | coherently / effectively?is there a need for the word 'increasing?' |
| BP2 express and develop thoughts and ideas spontaneously and fluently | Point 23: grade descriptor for A, speaking and writingS: …. They express and explain ideas and points of view, …They speak confidently… W: … They express and explain ideas and points of view. | this defines the higher levels in S and Wspontaneously not used (advisedly so - how to define? - better to use the words familiar / unfamiliar predictable / unpredictable) |
| BP3 deepen their knowledge about how language works and enrich their vocabulary  | Point 7 BP2 develop knowledge of the language and language learning skills | 2013: omits language learning skills |
|  |  |  |
| in order for them to increase their independent use and understanding of extended language in a wide range of contexts  | Point 23: grade descriptor for A, S:They initiate and develop conversations and discussions,R: They show understanding of a variety of written texts relating to a range of contexts. They understand some unfamiliar language and extract meaning from more complex language and extended texts. | definition of 'independent use' .. initiate / unfamiliar may be more descriptive / measurable |
| BP4 acquire new knowledge, skills and ways of thinking through their ability to understand and respond | Point 7 BP1 develop understanding of the language in a variety of contexts |  |
| to a rich range of authentic spoken and written material, including literary texts | Point 23: grade descriptor for A, listening and reading: understanding of a variety of spoken language that contains some complex language and relates to a range of contexts. | specific reference to 'authentic' and 'literary' (not excluded from 2008)2013: no reference to complexity |
| BP5 develop awareness and understanding of the culture and identity of the countries and communities where the language is spoken | Point 7 BP4 develop awareness and understanding of countries and communities where the language is spoken.Point 11 BP3 contexts and purposes that reflect, and are appropriate to, the culture of countries and communities where the language is spoken |  |
|  |  |  |
| BP6 make appropriate links to other areas of the curriculum to enable bilingual and deeper learning, where the language may become a medium for constructing and applying knowledge | Point 11 BP4 contexts and purposes …relate, where appropriate, to other areas of the curriculum. | More appropriate to express in terms of contexts than pupil behaviour? 'may become' … methodology rather than assessable outcome |
| BP7 develop language learning skills to prepare them for further language study and use in school, higher education or employment. | Point 7 BP2 develop knowledge of the language and language learning skillsPoint 6 Learners should recognise that their linguistic knowledge, understanding and skills …. provide them with a suitable basis for further study and practical use of the language. GCSE specifications in modern foreign languages should prepare learners to make informed decisions about further learning opportunities and career choices. | 2013: Suggest put reference aim of progression into 'aims' paragraph (as 2013) |
| not mentioned | Point 6 GCSE specifications in modern foreign languages should encourage learners to derive enjoyment and benefit from language learning, and be inspired, | Suggest add 2008 aim to 2013 aim |
| **Subject content** | **Subject content** |  |
| This content sets out the full range of content for GCSE specifications in modern languages. Awarding organisations may, however, use any flexibility to increase depth, breadth or context within the specified topics or to consolidate teaching of the subject content. The content of the GCSE specifications in modern languages must fully reflect the aims and learning outcomes. | Point 8 The content of GCSE specifications in modern foreign languages must reflect the learning outcomes. | 2008: cannot do full range of content as required to allow for flexibility 2013: does it set out full range of content? All skills, all contexts, all themes, all grammar? No defined content / vocabulary lists /core vocabulary |
| **Prior learning**GCSE specifications will be cumulative and progressive in content and language. They will take account of the matters, skills and processes specified in the national curriculum programmes of study for key stages 2 and 3. They will also build on the foundation of core grammar and vocabulary outlined in the programmes of study for key stages 2 and 3, increasing the level of linguistic and cognitive demand. | Point 3 BP3 ensure that specifications build on the knowledge, understanding and skills established by the national curricula for England, Northern Ireland and Wales, and facilitate progression to further study of modern foreign languages | Specifications state what is tested .. not how it is accumulated / how progress is made / how it is increasingNo ref to Ireland and Wales |
| **Contexts and purposes** | **Aims and learning outcomes** |  |
| Bullet 1: GCSE specifications will require students to understand and use language across a range of **contexts,** appropriate to their age, interests and maturity levels | **Point 11** BP2 . GCSE specifications in modern foreign languages must set out contexts and purposes that:  are of relevance and interest to learners • correspond to learners’ level of maturity • reflect, and are appropriate to, the culture of countries and communities where the language is spoken • relate, where appropriate, to other areas of the curriculum | 2008: defines 'understand and use language' at this point - Point 10. Seems logical. 2013 has not yet succinctly defined the language skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar and knowledge about languagebefore this point /.. seems more logical to  |
| BP2 students will be expected to use language for a variety of **purposes** and with a variety of different audiences, including for personal, academic and employment-related use  | Point 10 GCSE specifications in modern foreign languages must require learners to: • listen and respond to different types of spoken language • communicate in speech for a variety of purposes • read and respond to different types of written language • communicate in writing for a variety of purposes • use and understand a range of vocabulary and structures • understand and apply the grammar of the language, as detailed in the specification. | 2013: specific examples of purposes 'including … |
| BP3 students will be expected to understand different types of spoken language, including recorded input from one or more speakers in public and social settings and recorded material from authentic sources and the media, appropriate to this level | Point 10 BP1 listen and respond to different types of spoken language and Point 23 Listening A grade description: a variety of spoken language that contains some complex language and relates to a range of contexts. | Listening2013: specific about settings, authentic, media; no comment about complexity |
| BP4 students will be expected to understand different types of written language, including relevant personal communication, public information, factual and literary texts, appropriate to this level | Point 10 BP3 read and respond to different types of written language Point 23 A grade description :understanding of a variety of written texts relating to a range of contexts. | specific about nature of texts |
| BP5 language contexts will be organised in a specified number of broad themes, addressing relevant matters relating to: . identity and culture, lifestyle, values and beliefs . environment, local, international and global areas of interest . current and future study and employment | Point 1111. GCSE specifications in modern foreign languages must set out contexts and purposes that: • are of relevance and interest to learners • correspond to learners’ level of maturity • reflect, and are appropriate to, the culture of countries and communities where the language is spoken • relate, where appropriate, to other areas of the curriculum. | specifies themes(Dearing report of teachers' desire to ensure contexts reflected learner interest)In reality, boards did maintain 'trad' themes e.g. PSL, LC, WW, WoW2013:  |
| no flexibility | Point 12 For speaking and writing, a specification must allow for centres and/or learners to have some choice of contexts and purposes, including the possibility of proposing a context or purpose of their own.  |  |
| BP6 literary texts can include poems, letters, short stories, extracts and excerpts from abridged and adapted essays, novels or plays from contemporary and historical sources | Nature of texts not defined  | Defines literary textsNote: does not make reference to culture or cross curricular |
| BP7 the content, contexts and purposes of a GCSE specification in a modern language will provide an appropriate foundation for A level study and a suitable preparation for higher education or employment. | Point 3 BP3 ensure that specifications build on the knowledge, understanding and skills established by the national curricula for England, Northern Ireland and Wales, and facilitate progression to further study of modern foreign languages | 2013: Would be better placed by prior learning and in the 'aims' section? |
| Not mentioned | Point 11 BP1 GCSE specifications in modern foreign languages must set out contexts and purposes that: are of relevance and interest to learners  |  |
| Not mentioned | Point 11 BP3 contexts and purposes that: reflect, and are appropriate to, the culture of countries and communities where the language is spoken |  |
| Not mentioned | Point 12 For speaking and writing, a specification must allow for centres and/or learners to have some choice of contexts and purposes, including the possibility of proposing a context or purpose of their own. | Requirement from Dearing. This was the fundamental reason for the format of CAS and CAW. |
| **Scope of Study** | **Subject content Point 10 + Grade descritpions** |  |
| **Listening** | Point 10 BP1, listen and respond to different types of spoken language exemplified in point 23 grade descriptions, first paragraph of each grade |  |
|  | A Candidates show understanding of a variety of spoken language that contains some complex language and relates to a range of contexts. They can identify main points, details and points of view and draw simple conclusions. |  |
|  | C: Candidates show understanding of different types of spoken language that contain a variety of structures. The spoken material relates to a range of contexts, including some that may be unfamiliar, and may relate to past and future events. They can identify main points, details and opinions. |  |
|  | F :Candidates show some understanding of simple language spoken clearly that relates to familiar contexts. They can identify main points and extract some details. |  |
| **BP1**  |  |  |
| demonstrate general understanding | L Grade F | understanding |
| and specific understanding | L Grade C | understanding |
| of different types of spoken language different types of spoken language | L Grade C | range |
| **BP2:** |  |  |
| follow and understand |  | understanding |
| clear standard speech | not mentioned | register |
| at normal speed | not mentioned | context (authentic?) |
| familiar language | L Grade F description | familiarity |
| across a range of contexts | L Grade A description | range |
| **BP3:** |  |  |
| Identify overall message | L Grade F | understanding |
| identify key points | L Grade F | understanding |
| identify details | L Grade C | understanding |
| identify opinions | L Grade C | understanding |
| a variety of short and longer passages | L grade C but no mention of length for L (extended for R) | range'long' passages could test memory rather than listening skill |
| involving some more complex language | L Grade A | complexity |
| recognising the relationship between past, present and future events | Grammar requirements Foundation | complexityNB Was deliberately omitted in 2008 to avoid obsessive focus on tense manipulation for every task |
| deduce meaning | L Grade A draw conclusions | understanding |
| from a variety of short and longer texts | see above | range 2013: use of passages / texts / narratives significant? |
| involving some complex language | L grade A | complexity |
| and more abstract material | concrete / abstract not defined | range2013: what does abstract mean here? |
| including short narratives |  | range [length - see above]2013: what does narratives mean here? is it implying a literary story telling? |
| and authentic material |  | range [authentic not used .. recognition that this puts unrealisitic constraint on exam boards . hence the 2013 'abridged or amended' concession elsewhere?] |
| addressing a wide range of relevant contemporary and cultural themes | Point 11 reflect, and are appropriate to, the culture of countries and communities where the language is spoken | range2013: No mention of the TL culture |
| recognise and respond  |  | understandingOverall; need to define the skills rather than use what appear to be synonyms e.g. skim / gist / detail / and relate to hierarchical content (usually defined by familiarity + complexity) |
| key information | L Grade F | understanding |
| important themes and ideas in more extended spoken text | see above re: length | understandingwhy spoken text mentioned here? (narrative / passages / text) |
| incl authentic sources, adapted and abridged as appropriate | not mentioned | rangenote: so not really authentic? this is critical to define or will constrain exam boards |
| by being able to answer questions | understand | obvious? Seems to be defining the nature of the response, rather than the fact of understanding |
| extract information | understand | understanding |
| summarise | understand | understanding - seems to focus on task required - nature of response |
| evaluate |  | understanding - seems to focus on task required |
| and draw conclusions | L Grade A | infer - used to be seen as a 'higher level' skill (reading between the lines) |
| **Speaking: communicate and interact in speech** | Point 10 BP2, communicate in speech for a variety of purposes exemplified in point 23 grade descriptions, second paragraph of each grade |  |
| BP1: | A They initiate and develop conversations and discussions, present information and narrate events. They express and explain ideas and points of view, and produce extended sequences of speech using a variety of vocabulary, structures and verb tenses. They speak confidently, with reasonably accurate pronunciation and intonation. The message is clear but there may be some errors, especially when they use more complex structures. |  |
|  | B: They take part in conversations and simple discussions and present information. They express points of view and show an ability to deal with some unpredictable elements. Their spoken language contains a variety of structures and may relate to past and future events. Their pronunciation and intonation are more accurate than inaccurate. They convey a clear message but there may be some errors. |  |
|  | F: They take part in simple conversations, present simple information and can express their opinion. They use a limited range of language. Their pronunciation is understandable. There are grammatical inaccuracies but the main points are usually conveyed. |  |
| BP1: communicate and interact effectively in speech for a variety of purposes across a range of specified contexts | Point 10 BP2 communicate in speech for a variety of purposes | communicateinteract |
| BP2: take part in a short conversation, asking and answering questions,  | S Grade A They initiate and develop conversations and discussions,  |  |
| and exchanging opinions | S Grade A: They express and explain ideas and points of view, | 2013 exchange requires dialogue |
| BP3: present information and narrate events  | S Grade A present information and narrate events. |  |
| coherently and confidently, | S Grade A They speak confidently, with reasonably accurate pronunciation and intonation. The message is clear but there may be some errors, especially when they use more complex structures. | 2008 does not describe native speaker level |
| using and adapting language for new purposes to convey meaning | S Grade B: They express points of view and show an ability to deal with some unpredictable elements. | 2013 'new purposes' - how can this be defined - new to whom? How can you create a purpose which is new to half a million candidates? (probably means unpredictable, spontaneous situations) |
| BP4: speak spontaneously,  | S Grade A They initiate and develop conversations |  |
| responding to unexpected questions, points of view or situations,  | S Grade B …..show an ability to deal with some unpredictable elements. | dependent on listening skills |
| sustaining communication by using rephrasing or repair strategies, as appropriate | not mentioned | used to be reference to 'hesitation' in criteria 1986 |
| BP5: initiate and develop conversations and discussion, producing extended sequences of speech | S Grade A They initiate and develop conversations and produce extended sequences of speech |  |
| BP6: make appropriate and accurate use of a variety of vocabulary and grammatical structures, including some more complex forms, with reference to past, present and future events | S Grade A using a variety of vocabulary, structures and verb tenses. The message is clear but there may be some errors, especially when they use more complex structures. | 2008: realistic description for non-native speakerdeliberately not focussing on tenses as the main example of complexity |
| BP7: make more creative and complex use of the language, as appropriate, to express and justify their own thoughts and points of view | S Grade A They express and explain ideas and points of view, and produce extended sequences of speech using a variety of vocabulary, structures and verb tenses. | 2008: complexity not used as a word. Implicit in higher level of grammar list indicates what expected at higher level |
| BP8: make confident use of important social conventions, such as formal and informal address and register | not mentioned | 2013: Useful addition |
| BP9: use accurate pronunciation and intonation so as to be understood by a native speaker. | They speak confidently, with reasonably accurate pronunciation and intonation. The message is clear but there may be some errors, especially when they use more complex structures. | 2008: more realistic description and usefully relates standard to complexity (need to encourage 'risk' - if standard is perfection, pupils will 'play safe'… fundamental principle of reform is to encourage them to go further …) |
| **READING**Reading: understand and respond to written language | Point 10 BP3, read and respond to different types of written language exemplified in point 23 grade descriptions, third paragraph of each grade |  |
|  | A: They show understanding of a variety of written texts relating to a range of contexts. They understand some unfamiliar language and extract meaning from more complex language and extended texts. They can identify main points, extract details, recognise points of view, attitudes and emotions and draw simple conclusions. |  |
|  | C: They show understanding of different types of written texts that contain a variety of structures. The written material relates to a range of contexts, including some that may be unfamiliar and may relate to past and future events. They can identify main points, extract details and recognise opinions. |  |
|  | F: They show some understanding of short, simple written texts that relate to familiar contexts. They show limited understanding of unfamiliar language. They can identify main points and some details. |  |
| BP1: understand and respond to different types of written language | R Grade A: They show understanding of a variety of written texts relating to a range of contexts. |  |
| BP2 understand general and specific details  | R Grade C: They can identify main points, extract details and recognise opinions. |  |
| within texts using high frequency familiar language  | R Grade F: They show some understanding of short, simple written texts that relate to familiar contexts. |  |
| across a range of contexts | R Grade C: The written material relates to a range of contexts, |  |
| BP3: identify the overall message, key points, details and opinions  | R Grade C: They can identify main points, extract details and recognise opinions. | see listening comment |
| in a variety of short and longer written passages, | R Grade A: They show understanding of a variety of written texts relating to a range of contexts. | 2013: short and longer?passages / texts |
| involving some more complex language, recognising the relationship between past, present and future events | R Grade A: They.. extract meaning from more complex language and extended texts. | 2013 explicit about tenses (deliberate omission 2008) |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| BP4 deduce meaning  | R Grade A: They can …..draw simple conclusions. |  |
| from a variety of short and longer written texts | R Grade A: They show understanding of a variety of written texts | 2013 texts / passages interchangeable? |
| from a range of specified contexts, including authentic sources | R Grade A: relating to a range of contexts. | 2013: 'specified' - reference to themes.2008: deliberate omission .. teachers unhappy with contexts - idea that boards would provide choice (Dearing recommendation)2013: including authentic (note - not abridged or amended as necessary here?) |
| involving some complex language  | R Grade A: They.. extract meaning from more complex language |  |
| and unfamiliar material | R Garde A: They understand some unfamiliar language |  |
| as well as short narratives and authentic material | R Grade A: They show understanding of a variety of written texts | 2008 does not specify purpose of texts .. uses texts throughout |
| addressing a wide range of relevant contemporary and cultural themes | Point 11 reflect, and are appropriate to, the culture of countries and communities where the language is spoken |  |
| BP5: recognise and respond to key information, important themes and ideas in more extended written text and authentic sources, including extracts from relevant abridged or adapted literary texts | R Grade A: They.. extract meaning from more complex language and extended texts. | 2013: specific about authentic and literary texts (yet abridged / adapted) |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| BP6: demonstrate understanding by being able to scan for particular information, organise and present relevant details, summarise, draw inferences in context and recognise implicit meaning. | R Grade A: They can identify main points, extract details, recognise points of view, attitudes and emotions and draw simple conclusions. | 2013 specific about the nature of the skills needed to identify / extract / recognise / draw conclusions … i.e. scan2013 defines how the understanding will be shown: organise and present details, summarise (assessment issue) - this may indicate an overlap of skill / may restrict |
| **WRITING** |  |  |
| Writing: communicate and interact through the written word | Point 10 BP4 communicate in writing for a variety of purposesexemplified in point 23 grade descriptions, fourth paragraph of each grade |  |
|  | Grade A: They write for different purposes and contexts about real or imaginary subjects. They express and explain ideas and points of view. They use a variety of vocabulary, structures and verb tenses. Their spelling and grammar are generally accurate. The message is clear but there may be some errors, especially when they write more complex sentences. |  |
|  | Grade C: They write for different contexts that may be real or imaginary. They communicate information and express points of view. They use a variety of structures and may include different tenses or time frames. The style is basic. They convey a clear message but there may be some errors. |  |
|  | Grade F: They write short texts that relate to familiar contexts. They can express simple opinions. They use simple sentences. The main points are usually conveyed but there are mistakes in spelling and grammar. |  |
| BP1: communicate and interact effectively in writing for a variety of purposes across a range of specified contexts | They write for different purposes and contexts about real or imaginary subjects.  |  |
| BP2: write short texts, using simple sentences and familiar language accurately to convey meaning, ask and answer questions and exchange information | Grade F: They write short texts that relate to familiar contexts. They can express simple opinions. They use simple sentences. | 2013: specifies 'ask and answer questions' - useful addition |
| produce clear and coherent text of extended length  | Grade A: The message is clear but there may be some errors, especially when they write more complex sentences. | 2008: length not defined for Grade C and A |
| to present facts and express ideas and opinions | Grade A: They express and explain ideas and points of view. |  |
| appropriately for different purposes and in different settings | Grade A: They write for different purposes and contexts about real or imaginary subjects. |  |
| make accurate use of a variety of vocabulary and grammatical structures, including some more complex forms, to describe and narrate with reference to past, present and future events | Grade A: They use a variety of vocabulary, structures and verb tenses. Their spelling and grammar are generally accurate. The message is clear but there may be some errors, especially when they write more complex sentences | 2008: specific reference to tenses omitted to prevent unnatural emphasis on tenses as an example of complexity |
| manipulate the language, using and adapting a variety of structures and vocabulary |  | 2013: manipulate / using and adapting? Implication for assessment method e.g. if given language models they can then demonstrate their knowledge through manipulating /adapting it to suit a new purpose? (would be a good idea - a fair way of testing application) |
|  |  |  |
| with increasing accuracy and fluency | W Grade c: They convey a clear message but there may be some errors.W Grade A: The message is clear but there may be some errors, especially when they write more complex sentences | increasing???.. implicit hierarchy…. |
| for new purposes, |  | 2013 'new purposes' - how can this be defined - new to whom? How can you create a purpose which is new to half a million candidates? (probably means unpredictable, spontaneous situations) |
| including using appropriate style and register for formal and informal use |  | 2013: useful addition |
| BP6: make more independent, creative and complex use of the language, as appropriate,  |  | 2013 'more'? More than what?2013: how to define independent / creative? |
| to note down key points, summarise information, express and justify individual thoughts and points of view, | W Grade A: They express and explain ideas and points of view. | 2013 .. this looks as though it may be there to allow for 'response' to reading or listening … mixed skill testing .. beware! Penalised if source text not understood, and will not be able to demonstrate writing skill |
| in order to interest, inform or convince |  | 2013: defines functions of written language (as in spec 1996) |
| BP7: translate sentences and short texts from English into the assessed language to convey key messages accurately and to apply grammatical knowledge of language and structures in context. | No definition of task required to test subject content and skills | New requirement - defines means of testingNote: without dictionary, this will also be testing lexical knowledge (not just grammar and structures) |
| **Assessment objectives**  | **Assessment objectives % weighting** |  |
| AO1 Listening: understand and respond to different types of spoken language Weighting 25% AO2 Speaking: communicate and interact effectively in speech Weighting 25% AO3 Reading: understand and respond to different types of written language Weighting 25% AO4 Writing: communicate and interact effectively in writing | Point 14 Assessment objectives AO1 Understand spoken language % weighting 20–30 AO2 Communicate in speech % weighting 20–30 AO3 Understand written language % weighting 20–30 AO4 Communicate in writing % weighting 20–30 | 2008: constraint of 25/60 rule + Dearing recommendation about S & WExpectation that boards would take advantage of flexibility to introduce 'mixed skill' testing (e.g. speaking test where 20% - speaking, 10% - listening)'and respond to' / 'and interact effectively' - does this dictate the nature of the assessment? beware that this may be double penalty if not understood and expected to respond in target languageDescription carries 'level' of language required 'different types / effectively' |
| In AO2 and AO4 at least 10% of the marks available must be allocated to knowledge and accurate application of the grammar and structures of the language prescribed in the specification. | Point 17 For both AO2 and AO4, at least 10% of the total marks for the subject must be allocated to knowledge and accurate application of the grammar and structures of the language prescribed in the specification. | no change |
| Assessment objectives will be fully assessed through external assessment: awarding organisations can require teachers to conduct the oral exams, and then send recordings to the awarding organisations for marking. They are internally conducted, but not internally assessed. | Assessment of AO2 and AO4 must be by controlled assessment consistent with the guidance developed by the regulators. | Ofqual responsible for this aspect. It is the job of the regulator with the boards to determine what is the best way of assessing in the most valid and reliable way2013: 'can require teachers' .. so does this mean they may not? |
| Use of the assessed language in questions and rubrics It is the expectation that questions and rubrics for the majority of modern languages will be set in the assessed language, except where tasks focus on assessing the candidate’s understanding of the use of the language (grammatical and lexical knowledge) or in tasks where the candidate is translating from the assessed language into English or from English into the assessed language. It is more appropriate that the instructions for these tasks should be set in English. | GCSE specifications in modern foreign languages must require candidates to express themselves in the specified language when speaking and writing. | Ofqual responsible for this aspect. It is the job of the regulator with the boards to determine what is the best way of assessing in the most valid and reliable way2013: 'expectation' for form of testing given. this can only be relevant if added to subject content: 'understand the language used to ask questions in exams' |
| Languages using logographic systems or characters such as Mandarin Chinese and Japanese may set all questions and task instructions in English, as the sole use of hanzi or kanji is deemed too challenging for this level. |  | 2013: 'expectation' for form of testing given. this can only be relevant if added to subject content: 'understand the language used to ask questions in exams' |
|  |  |  |
| **Grammatical expectations for French, German and Spanish** Lists of grammar requirements will be drawn from the existing lists produced in the Ofqual GCSE Subject Criteria. There will be some relevant categorisation according to core and more complex language use. There will also be an indication of structures that students will be expected to recognise only and not produce independently. | Point 13 GCSE specifications in modern foreign languages must specify grammar and linguistic structures (see the Appendix for French, German and Spanish) and a minimum core vocabulary, consistent with any additional guidance agreed between the regulators and awarding bodies. In addition, key words and phrases used in rubrics in the language must be listed, where applicable. | 2008: List categorises ad distinguishes Receptive language, though requirement to do so not specified here |
| not mentioned (short course subject to review - will not be simply 'half' of a full course, so current situation cannot remain | Point 15 GCSE short course specifications must require candidates to demonstrate their ability in relation to only two of the assessment objectives, either AO1 and AO2, or AO3 and AO4. | 2008: a ridiculous situation! |
| ELEMENTS IN 2008 AND NOT IN 20134 |  |  |
|  | 18. Question papers in modern foreign languages must be targeted at either Foundation or Higher tier. | Ofqual decision. Their current leaning = overlapping tiersMy preference = core + extension |
|  | 19 The use of dictionaries will not be permitted in any external assessment. | Ofqual decisionMy preference = allow use (allows for fair testing of manipulation / application ) |
|  | 20. GCSE specifications in modern foreign languages must allocate a weighting of 40% to external assessment and a weighting of 60% to controlled assessment in the overall scheme of assessment. | Ofqual decision. |
|  | 22. Grade descriptions are provided to give a general indication of the standards of achievement likely to have been shown by candidates awarded particular grades. The descriptions must be interpreted in relation to the content in the specification; they are not designed to define that content. | Ofqual decsion. Current leaning is to Grades expressed as number 1-8 where 8 is high. |
|  | 23. The grade awarded will depend in practice upon the extent to which the candidate has met the assessment objectives overall. hortcomings in some aspects of candidates’ performance in the assessment may be balanced by better performances in others. | Ofqual |

2008 GCSE subject criteria for modern foreign languages - ORIGINAL FROM HEM!

# Grade descriptors

Grade descriptions are provided to give a general indication of the standards of achievement likely to have been shown by candidates awarded particular grades. The descriptions must be interpreted in relation to the content specified by the specification; they are not designed to define that content. The grade awarded will depend in practice upon the extent to which the candidate has met the assessment objectives overall. Shortcomings in some aspects of candidates’ performance in the assessment may be balanced by better performances in others.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| LISTENING | **A** | **C** | **F** |
| Type | Candidates show understanding of different types of spoken language that contain. and | Candidates show understanding of a variety of spoken language |  |
| Complexity | a variety of structures | that contains some complex language | Candidates show some understanding of simple language spoken clearly  |
| Context | The spoken material relates to a range of contexts, including some that may be unfamiliar, | and relates to a range of contexts. | that relates to familiar contexts. |
| Grammar | may relate to past and future events. |  |  |
| Response | They can identify main points, details and opinions. | They can identify main points, details and points of view and draw simple conclusions. (seems more demanding than A) | They can identify main points and extract some details. |
| SPEAKING | **A** | **C** | **F** |
| Type | They initiate and develop conversations and discussions, present information and narrate events. | They take part in conversations and simple discussions and present information. | They take part in simple conversations, present simple information  |
| Opinions | They express and explain ideas and points of view | They express points of view and show an ability to deal with some unpredictable elements. | and can express their opinion. |
| Complexity | , and produce extended sequences of speech using a variety of vocabulary, structures and verb tenses. | Their spoken language contains a variety of structures and may relate to past and future events. | They use a limited range of language. |
| Accuracy: Pron & Intonation | They speak confidently, with reasonably accurate pronunciation and intonation. | Their pronunciation and intonation are more accurate than inaccurate. | Their pronunciation is understandable. |
| Accuracy: Grammar | The message is clear but there may be some errors, especially when they use more complex structures. | They convey a clear message but there may be some errors. | There are grammatical inaccuracies but the main points are usually conveyed. |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **READING** | **A** | **C** | **F** |
| Type | They show understanding of a variety of written texts  | They show understanding of different types of written texts  | They show some understanding of short, simple written texts  |
| Contexts | relating to a range of contexts. They understand some unfamiliar language | The written material relates to a range of contexts, including some that may be unfamiliar | that relate to familiar contexts. They show limited understanding of unfamiliar language. |
| Complexity | and extract meaning from more complex language and extended texts. | that contain a variety of structures. |  |
| Grammar |  | and may relate to past and future events. |  |
| Response | They can identify main points, extract details, recognise points of view, attitudes and emotions and draw simple conclusions. | They can identify main points, extract details and recognise opinions. | They can identify main points and some details. |
| WRITING | **A** | **C** | **F** |
| Context | They write for different purposes and contexts about real or imaginary subjects. | They write for different contexts that may be real or imaginary.  | They write short texts that relate to familiar contexts.  |
| Opinions | They express and explain ideas and points of view. | They communicate information and express points of view. | They can express simple opinions. |
| Complexity | They use a variety of vocabulary, structures and verb tenses. | They use a variety of structures and may include different tenses or time frames. The style is basic. | They use simple sentences. |
| Accuracy | Their spelling and grammar are generally accurate. The message is clear but there may be some errors, especially when they write more complex sentences. | They convey a clear message but there may be some errors. | The main points are usually conveyed but there are mistakes in spelling and grammar. |

Cross reference with 2013 to highlight changes / additions etc

**emboldened = same or very nearly the same language**

Arial black = new

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| LISTENING | **A** | **C** | **F** |
| Type | Candidates show understanding of **different types of spoken language** (13) clear standard speech at normal speed(13) shorter and longer spoken passages(13) more abstract material incl short narratives and authentic material(13) extended spoken text incl authentic sources, adapted and abridged as appropriate | Candidates show understanding of a variety of spoken language |  |
| Complexity | that contain a variety of structures | **that contains some complex language** | Candidates show some understanding of simple language spoken clearly  |
| Context | The spoken material relates to **a range of**(13) specified **contexts,** including some that may be unfamiliar,(13) addressing a wide range of relevant contemporary and cultural themes | and relates to a range of contexts. | **that relates to familiar contexts.** |
| Grammar | may relate to past and future events.**13:** recognising the relationship between past, present and future |  |  |
| Response | They can identify overall message main points, details and opinions.(13)demonstrate general and specific understandingfollow and understandrecognise and respond to.. | They can identify main points, details and points of view **and draw simple conclusions.** (13)deduce meaningbeing able to answer questions, extract information, summarise, evaluate | They can identify main points and extract some details. |
| SPEAKING | **A** | **C** | **F** |
| Type | They **initiate and develop conversations** [(13) asking and answering questions] **and discussions**, **present information and narrate events.** | They take part in conversations and simple discussions and present information. **They show an ability to deal with some unpredictable elements.** (13) 'unexpected questions, points of view or situations' | They take part in simple conversations, present simple information  |
| Opinions | They express and explain ideas and (13) exchange **points of view**  | They express points of view  | and can express their opinion. |
| Complexity | , and **produce extended sequences of speech using a variety of vocabulary**, **structures** including some complex forms **and verb tenses.** (13) specific: with reference to past, present and future events(13) making more creative and complex use of the language | Their spoken language contains a variety of structures and may relate to past and future events. | They use a limited range of language. |
| Accuracy: Pron & Intonation | They speak **confidently**, with reasonably **accurate pronunciation and intonation**  | Their pronunciation and intonation are more accurate than inaccurate. | Their pronunciation is understandable. (13) by a native speaker |
| Accuracy: Grammar | The message is **clear** but there may be some errors, especially when they use more complex structures. | They convey a clear message but there may be some errors. | There are grammatical inaccuracies but the main points are usually conveyed. |
| Purposes | [2008: covered in another section - not related to the specific skills]variety of purposesrange of specified contextsusing and adapting language for new purposes to convey meaningMake confident use of important social conventions such as formal address and register |  |  |
| Fluency | sustaining communication by using rephrasing or repair strategies as appropriate |  |  |
| **READING** | **A** | **C** | **F** |
| Type | They show understanding of a **variety of written texts** (13) short and longer passages | **They show understanding of different types of written texts**  | They **show some understanding of short, simple written texts**  |
| Contexts | relating to a **range of** (13) specified c**ontexts.** **(13)** including short narratives and authentic sources including extracts from relevant abridged or adapted literary texts (13) addressing a wide range of relevant contemporary and cultural themes **They understand some unfamiliar language** | **The written material relates to a range of contexts, including some that may be unfamiliar** | **that relate to familiar contexts**. (13) using high frequency familiar language across a range of contexts. They show limited understanding of unfamiliar language. |
| Complexity | and extract meaning from **more complex language** and **extended texts.** | that contain a variety of structures. |  |
| Grammar | (13) recognising the relationship between past, present and future events | and may relate to past and future events. |  |
| Response | **They can identify main points, extract details, recognise points of view,** attitudes and emotions **and draw simple conclusions.** (13) deduce meaningdemonstrate understanding by being able to scan for particular info, organise and present relevant details, summarise, draw inferences in context and recognise implicit meaning | They can identify **main points, extract details** and **recognise opinions.** | **They can identify main points and some details.** |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| WRITING | **A** | **C** | **F** |
| Context /Purpose | They write for different purposes and contexts about real or imaginary subjects.(13) Produce clear and coherent text of extended length to present facts variety of purposesrange of specified contextsask and answer questionsexchange informationusing and adapting a variety of structures and vocabulary language for new purposes to convey meaningUsing appropriate style and register for formal and informal usemake more independent creative and complex use of the language as appropriate to note down key points, summarise information.. in order to interest, inform or convinceTranslate sentences and short texts form Englsh into the assessed language to convey key messages accurately and to apply grammatical knowledge of language and structures in context | They write for different contexts that may be real or imaginary.  | **They write short texts that relate to familiar contexts.**  |
| Opinions | **They express and explain ideas and points of view** (13) appropriately for different purposes and in different settings | They communicate information and express points of view. | They can express simple opinions. |
| Complexity | They use a variety of vocabulary, structures and verb tenses. (13) Including some more complex forms to describe and narrate with reference to past, present and future events | They use a variety of structures and may include different tenses or time frames. The style is basic. | They use simple sentences. |
| Accuracy | **Their spelling and grammar are** generally **accurate. The message is clear** but there may be some errors, especially when they write more complex sentences. increasing accuracy and fluency | They convey a clear message but there may be some errors. | The main points are usually conveyed but there are mistakes in spelling and grammar. |

## APPENDIX 2 Ofqual Consultation

In summary, Ofqual is addressing these 6 issues:

1. Modularity - decision already taken that assessment will all be at the end of the course
2. Reliability of non-exam assessment (Currently favour approach of ensuring used only if absolutely necessary, be manageable, appropriate weighting, [so no longer contrained by the 25%/60% rule], not distorted by external pressure. En;gish solution = separate certificate, not part ogf grade)
3. Addressing criticism of predictable / formulaic exams
4. Assessing the benefits / drawbacks of tiering [models of differentiation: overlapping tiers / core plus extension / non overlapping (or adjacent) tiers. Ofqual currently favour overlapping tiers.
5. Consider alternative ways of reporting results (Currently favour grading on a 1-8 scale aiming to get more even distribution)
6. Addressing issue of grade comparability between subject (research findings that grades are not comparable )

Design principles proposed for reformed GCSEs:

**7 Subject-specific features of the reformed GCSEs**

We have set out in the earlier sections of this consultation the design principles we propose should apply to the reformed GCSEs, namely:

the qualifications will take about the same time to study as current GCSEs

the qualifications will only be tiered if:

manageable assessments cannot be designed that would both allow students at the lower end of the ability range to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding in the subject, *and* that would stretch the most able students, and

content that would be exclusive to the higher tier can be identified

the qualifications will be linear and will include synoptic assessments

assessment will be by way of exams, set and marked by the exam boards, where exams can validly assess the intended outcomes

where assessment arrangements other than exams are used, the balance of assessment types will reflect the learning outcomes for the specific subject

where a subject is assessed only by exam, the total examination time will be a minimum of 3.5 hours

assessments will be taken in the summer only – with the exception of re-sits in English language and mathematics

students’ achievements will be reported using grades 8−1 or U

short courses of the qualifications could be made available but must not drive the design of the full qualification.

We have reviewed controlled assessment used in current GCSEs, focusing on the subjects in the first phase of reform, and we have published our findings separately.[[1]](#footnote-1) As part of that review, and drawing on the findings from across the full range of subjects, we propose that in future the decisions about whether or not to include non-exam assessment in a qualification should be based on a set of principles, as follows:

non-exam assessment should be used when it is the only valid way to assess essential elements of the subject;

non-exam assessment must strike a balance between valid assessment of essential knowledge and skills, sound assessment practice and manageability;

any non-exam assessment arrangements should be designed to fit the requirements of the particular subject including the relative weighting of written exams and other components assigned to it; and

non-exam assessment should be designed so that the qualification is not easily distorted by external pressures from the wider system.

We have used these principles to guide the proposals on whether the reformed GCSEs in each subject should include non-exam assessment alongside written exams.

The table below gives an overview of the proposals.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Subject | Tiered | Written exams | Non-exam assessment | Minimum exam time | Assessment of S, P & G[[2]](#footnote-2) |
| English language | no | yes | reported separately | 3.5 hours | yes (20%) |
| English literature | no | yes | no | 3.5 hours | yes (5%) |
| Mathematics | yes | yes | no | 3.5 hours | no |
| Biology, chemistry, physics | yes | yes(90%) | yes(10%) | 3 hours | no |

1. Ofqual (2013) *Review of Controlled Assessment in GCSEs*. See [www.ofqual.gov.uk/files/2013-06-11-review-of-controlled-assessment-in-GCSEs.pdf](http://www.ofqual.gov.uk/files/2013-06-11-review-of-controlled-assessment-in-GCSEs.pdf) (accessed 11th June 2013) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Assessment of spelling, punctuation and grammar [↑](#footnote-ref-2)