GCSE subject criteria for modern foreign languages

December 2007

QCA/07/3468

Contents

Introduction

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. They provide the framework within which an awarding body creates the detail of the specification.

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).

3. Subject criteria are intended to:

- help ensure consistent and comparable standards in the same subject across the awarding bodies

- ensure that the rigour of GCSE is maintained

- 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

- help higher education institutions, employers and other stakeholders such as learners and parents/guardians know what has been studied and assessed.

4. Any GCSE specification that contains significant elements of modern foreign languages must be consistent with the relevant parts of these subject criteria.

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)

Aims and learning outcomes

6. GCSE specifications in modern foreign languages should encourage learners to derive enjoyment and benefit from language learning, and be inspired, moved and changed by following a broad, coherent, satisfying and worthwhile course of study. Learners should

recognise that their linguistic knowledge, understanding and skills help them to take their place in a multilingual global society and also 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.

7. GCSE specifications in modern foreign languages must enable learners to:

- develop understanding of the language in a variety of contexts

- develop knowledge of the language and language learning skills

- develop the ability to communicate effectively in the language

- develop awareness and understanding of countries and communities where the language is spoken.

Subject content

8. The content of GCSE specifications in modern foreign languages must reflect the learning outcomes.

9. GCSE specifications in modern foreign languages must allow learners to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding specified below, as appropriate to the specification title.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Assessment objectives

14. All specifications in modern foreign languages must require candidates to demonstrate their ability to:

Assessment objectives		% weighting
AO1	Understand spoken language	20–30
AO2	Communicate in speech	20–30
AO3	Understand written language	20–30
AO4	Communicate in writing	20–30

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.

Scheme of assessment

16. GCSE specifications in modern foreign languages must require candidates to express themselves in the specified language when speaking and writing.

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.

18. Question papers in modern foreign languages must be targeted at either Foundation or Higher tier.

19. The use of dictionaries will not be permitted in any external assessment.

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.

21. Assessment of AO2 and AO4 must be by controlled assessment consistent with the guidance developed by the regulators.

Grade descriptions

To be added later

Appendix: grammar requirements

French

GCSE candidates will be expected to have acquired knowledge and understanding of French grammar during their course. In the examination they will be required to apply their knowledge and understanding, drawing from the following lists. *The examples in brackets are indicative, not exclusive.* For structures marked (R), only receptive knowledge is required.

French (Foundation tier)

Nouns:

gender

singular and plural forms

Articles: definite, indefinite and partitive, including use of *de* after negatives

Adjectives:

agreement

position

comparative and superlative: regular and *meilleur*

demonstrative (*ce, cet, cette, ces*)

indefinite (*chaque, quelque*)

possessive

interrogative (*quel, quelle*)

Adverbs:

comparative and superlative:

regular

interrogative (*comment, quand*)

adverbs of time and place (*aujourd'hui, demain, ici, là-bas*)

common adverbial phrases

Quantifiers/Intensifiers: (*très, assez, beaucoup, peu, trop*)

Pronouns:

personal: all subjects, including *on*

reflexive

relative: *qui*

relative: *que* (R)

object: direct (R) and indirect (R)

position and order of object pronouns (R)

disjunctive/emphatic

demonstrative (*ça, cela*)

indefinite (*quelqu'un*)

interrogative (*qui, que*)

use of *y, en* (R)

Verbs:

regular and irregular verbs, including reflexive verbs

all persons of the verb, singular and plural

negative forms

interrogative forms

modes of address: *tu, vous*

impersonal verbs (*il faut*)

verbs followed by an infinitive, with or without a preposition

tenses:

present

perfect

imperfect: *avoir, être* and *faire*

other common verbs in the imperfect tense (R)

immediate future

future (R)

conditional: *vouloir* and *aimer*

pluperfect (R)

passive voice: present tense (R)

imperative

present participle (R)

Prepositions

Conjunctions

Number, quantity, dates and time including use of *depuis* with present tense

French (Higher tier)

All grammar and structures listed for foundation tier, plus:

Adjectives: comparative and superlative, including *meilleur, pire*

Adverbs: comparative and superlative, including *mieux, le mieux*

Pronouns:

use of *y, en*

relative: *que*

relative: *dont* (R)

object: direct and indirect

position and order of object pronouns

demonstrative (*celui*) (R)

possessive (*le mien*) (R)

Verbs: tenses:

future

imperfect

conditional

pluperfect

passive voice: future, imperfect and perfect tenses (R)

perfect infinitive

present participle, including use after *en*

subjunctive mood: present, in commonly used expressions (R)

Time: including use of *depuis* with imperfect tense

German

GCSE candidates will be expected to have acquired knowledge and understanding of German grammar during their course. In the examination they will be required to apply their knowledge and understanding, drawing from the following lists. *The examples in brackets are indicative, not exclusive.* For structures marked (R), only receptive knowledge is required.

German (foundation tier)

The case system

Nouns:

gender

singular and plural forms, including genitive singular and dative plural

weak nouns: nominative and accusative singular (*Herr, Junge, Mensch, Name*) (R)

adjectives used as nouns (*ein Deutscher*)

Articles:

definite and indefinite

kein

Adjectives:

adjectival endings: predicative and attributive usage, singular and plural, used after

   definite and indefinite articles, demonstrative and possessive adjectives

adjectival endings after *etwas, nichts, viel, wenig, alles* (R)

comparative and superlative, including common irregular forms (*besser, höher, näher*)

demonstrative (*dieser, jeder*)

possessive

interrogative (*welcher*)

Adverbs:

comparative and superlative, including common irregular forms (*besser, lieber, mehr*)

interrogative (*wann, warum, wo, wie, wie viel*)

adverbs of time and place (*manchmal, oft, hier, dort*)

common adverbial phrases (*ab und zu, dann und wann, letzte Woche, nächstes Wochenende, so bald wie möglich*)

Quantifiers/Intensifiers (*sehr, zu, viel, ganz, ziemlich, ein wenig, ein bisschen*)

Pronouns:

personal, including *man*

reflexive: accusative

reflexive: dative (R)

relative: nominative

relative: other cases (R) and use of *was* (R)

indefinite: *jemand, niemand*

interrogative: *wer, was, was für*

interrogative: *wen, wem* (R)

Verbs:

regular and irregular verbs

reflexive

modes of address: *du, Sie*

mode of address: *ihr* (R)

impersonal (most common only, eg *es gibt, es geht, es tut weh*)

separable/inseparable

modal: present and imperfect tenses, imperfect subjunctive of *mögen*

infinitive constructions (*um … zu …*; verbs with *zu …*) (R)

negative forms

interrogative forms

tenses: present

perfect: excluding modals

imperfect/simple past: *haben, sein* and modals

imperfect/simple past: other common verbs (R)

future

pluperfect (R)

imperative forms

Prepositions:

fixed case and dual case with accusative and/or dative

with genitive (R)

Clause structures:

main clause word order

subordinate clauses, including relative clauses

Conjunctions:

coordinating (most common, eg *aber, oder, und*)

subordinating (most common, eg *als, obwohl, weil, wenn*)

Number, quantity, dates and time including use of *seit* with present tense

German (Higher tier)

All grammar and structures listed for Foundation tier, plus:

Nouns: weak nouns

Adjectives: adjectival endings after *etwas, nichts, viel, wenig, alles*

Pronouns:

reflexive: dative

relative: all cases, and use of *was*

interrogative: *wen, wem*

Verbs:

mode of address: *ihr*

impersonal

infinitive constructions (*ohne … zu …*; *um ... zu ...*; verbs with *zu …*, eg *beginnen, hoffen,*

   versuchen)

modal: imperfect subjunctive of *können, sollen*

tenses: imperfect/simple past of common verbs

future

conditional: *würde* with infinitive

pluperfect

imperfect subjunctive in conditional clauses: *haben* and *sein*

Prepositions: with genitive (most common, eg *außerhalb, statt, trotz, während, wegen*)

Conjunctions: coordinating and subordinating

Time: use of *seit* with imperfect tense

Spanish

GCSE candidates will be expected to have acquired knowledge and understanding of Spanish grammar during their course. In the examination they will be required to apply their knowledge and understanding, drawing from the following lists. *The examples in brackets are indicative, not exclusive.* For structures marked (R), only receptive knowledge is required.

Spanish (Foundation tier)

Nouns:

gender

singular and plural forms

Articles:

definite and indefinite

lo plus adjective (R)

Adjectives:

agreement

position

comparative and superlative: regular and *mayor, menor, mejor, peor*

demonstrative (*este, ese, aquel*)

indefinite (*cada, otro, todo, mismo, alguno*)

possessive, short form (*mi*)

possessive, long form (*mío*) (R)

interrogative (*cuánto, qué*)

Adverbs:

formation

comparative and superlative: regular

interrogative (*cómo, cuándo, dónde*)

adverbs of time and place (*aquí, allí, ahora, ya*)

common adverbial phrases

Quantifiers/Intensifiers (*muy, bastante, demasiado, poco, mucho*)

Pronouns:

subject

object (R)

position and order of object pronouns (R)

reflexive

relative: *que,*

relative: *quien, lo que* (R)

disjunctive (*conmigo, para mí*)

demonstrative (*éste, ése, aquél, esto, eso, aquello*)

indefinite (*algo, alguien*)

interrogative (*cuál, qué, quién*)

Verbs:

regular and irregular verbs, including reflexive verbs

all persons of the verb, singular and plural

modes of address: *tú* and *usted*

radical-changing verbs

negative forms

interrogative forms

reflexive constructions (*se puede, se necesita, se habla*)

uses of *ser* and *estar*

tenses:

present indicative

present continuous

preterite

imperfect: in weather expressions with *estar, hacer*

imperfect (R)

immediate future

future (R)

perfect: most common verbs only

conditional: *gustar* only in set phrases

pluperfect (R)

gerund (R)

imperative: common forms including negative

subjunctive, present: (R) in certain exclamatory phrases (*¡Viva! ¡Dígame!*)

subjunctive, imperfect: *quisiera*

impersonal verbs: most common only

Prepositions:

common, including personal *a*

por and *para*

Conjunctions: common, including *y, pero, o, porque, como, cuando*

Number, quantity, dates

Time: use of *desde hace* with present tense (R)

Spanish (Higher tier)

All grammar and structures listed for Foundation tier, plus:

Articles: *lo* plus adjective

Adjectives:

comparative and superlative

possessive, short and long forms (*mi, mío*)

relative (*cuyo*)

Adverbs: comparative and superlative

Pronouns:

object

position and order of object pronouns

relative: all other uses including *quien, lo que, el que, cual*

possessive (*el mío, la mía*)

Verbs: tenses:

future

imperfect

imperfect continuous

perfect

pluperfect

conditional

passive voice (R)

gerund

present subjunctive: imperative, affirmation and negation, future after conjunctions of time

   (*cuando*), after verbs of wishing, command, request, emotion, to express purpose (*para que*)

imperfect subjunctive (R)

Time:

use of *desde hace* with present tense

use of *desde hace* with imperfect tense (R)