

Modern Foreign Languages

GCSE, AS and A-level

Summer 2021 exam changes and support

Version 1.0, Created 1 April 2021

Following JCQ's guidance on putting together a range of evidence for your students and deciding grades, here are some things to consider.

Choosing the range of evidence

Here are some ideas for sources that you may choose to build your range of evidence from:

- Mocks – it's likely you'll have evidence from these already.
- Assessment materials (<https://www.aqa.org.uk/2021-exam-changes/about-our-assessment-and-support-materials>) – we've produced groups of questions and mark schemes that you can use with your students including the audio files for listening tasks. There are also past papers and sample assessment materials that we've published over the years.
- Centre-set tasks – tasks that you've set that the whole cohort has completed and you've marked consistently. This could include:
 - homework – even from when you were teaching remotely
 - classroom tests
- Progress records that you've kept for your students over the course of their studies to see their strengths and areas for improvement and development.
- Resources from Teachit Languages <https://www.teachitlanguages.co.uk/>
- Activities from published textbooks.

Collecting the evidence and evaluating its quality

Evidence should be consistent across your cohort as far as possible, to make it easier to assign grades consistently. You should also consider:

- Look for more recent work, as it's likely to be more representative of students' current performance.
- As far as possible, all assessment objectives (AOs) should be covered across as much of the specification as you can. This means for GCSE there should be evidence of Listening, Reading and Writing from all three themes if possible. The evidence for the 9-1 grade

doesn't include speaking as this is being assessed separately via the speaking endorsement.

- For AS/A-level, the evidence should include all four AOs in speaking and in writing where possible. For speaking evidence, all the assessment objectives are assessed in the Discussion of a sub-theme ie AO1, AO2, AO3 and AO4. At A-level, AO2 isn't assessed in Part 2 of the speaking assessment, ie the Presentation and Discussion of the Individual Research Project (IRP).
- For A-level, we recommend taking into account evidence of students' skills in presenting and discussing orally the findings of their research where possible. It's however possible to evidence all the assessment objects through evidence of discussion of a sub-theme; the converse isn't the case ie students cannot evidence all the assessment objectives through the Presentation and discussion of their IRP.
- For AS and A-level written evidence, AO1, AO2 and AO3 are covered by the Listening and Reading tasks and the translations in Paper 1 (and for AS Paper 2) while AO3 and AO4 are covered in the essay(s) in Paper 2.
- For FCSE, there's no need to record any speaking tasks this year. Your evidence must be sufficient to meet the descriptors published in the specification.
- Work that has been produced under supervision and matches closely the assessment requirements of the AQA specifications and mark schemes will provide you with a more confident basis for your holistic judgement.
- As you've got until **18 June** to submit your grades, there's time to use the assessment materials we've produced and other available resources to plug any gaps in your evidence. For example, when schools were closed, you may have found it a challenge to carry out reading or listening activities with your students, so this may be an area where you might need to supplement your evidence.

Tiering considerations for GCSE

In a usual year, after 21 April we charge an amendment fee for changing the tier a student is entered for.

We know this isn't a usual year, though. As the guidance for teachers is to make grading decisions as late as possible this year to enable as much teaching time as possible, we understand that your tiering decisions may need to change later than usual.

In light of this, we're scrapping our fees for late tier changes this summer. We want to support you as much as possible, so we know this is the right thing to do.

This charge is an automated process so, if you make any late tier changes, you'll be charged as usual but receive a refund in the form of a credit note.

The following information may be useful when making your tiering decisions:

- Grades need to be allocated according to the tier of entry. Foundation tier covers grades

1-5 and Higher tier covers grades 3-9 in 2021.

- The 'overlap' questions which appear on both Foundation and Higher tier papers are particularly helpful when making tiering decisions, as these are targeted at students performing at grades 4-5 on both Foundation and Higher tier papers.
- Because of this overlap, you may be able to use evidence from Foundation tier papers to support the grade for a student entered for a Higher tier (and vice versa).
- Given the three grade overlap in the range of grades available through either tier (3, 4, and 5), there should be no need to change the tier of entry for the vast majority of students
- Remember that the tier of entry for the 9-1 grade does not affect the speaking endorsement level in any way, as this is reported separately on students' certificates. Students entered for either tier have access to the full range of levels available for the speaking endorsement (Pass, Merit, Distinction or Not Classified).

Assigning the grade

When assigning a grade, you should make a holistic judgement on the evidence available using the grade descriptors provided. The following points may also be useful:

- Students are likely to show characteristics from different grade descriptors so using the exemplification provided will be helpful when fine-tuning your decisions.
- Questions such as translation tasks and target language response questions/answers (and for AS/A-level also summaries and essays) are particularly helpful in differentiating between students.
- In the Writing tasks at GCSE, consider in particular a student's ability to narrate events, present facts and express ideas and opinions. Also, a student's range of vocabulary, their ability to use more complex linguistic structures and how accurate they are.
- At AS/A-level, key factors to consider would be a student's ability to infer meaning in comprehension tasks and, in the written tasks, their ability to develop and justify ideas. You should also take account of their range of vocabulary and their knowledge of grammar.

Relevant resources

The following resources can be used both to plug gaps in your evidence and also to support consistent marking and grading.

- JCQ guidance on how to come to judgements about grades
<https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Summer-2021-JCQ-Guidance-WorkedExamples.pdf>
- 2021 assessment materials – including grade descriptors, grading exemplification, mark schemes and marking guidance examples
<https://www.aqa.org.uk/2021-exam-changes/about-our-assessment-and-support-materials>

GCSE

Optional assessment materials

Grouped by theme for Listening, Reading and Writing plus a resource of exam translations, all at both Foundation and Higher tier. These materials are based on past questions and will also include a proportion of questions that haven't previously been publicly released, such as those set for June 2019 or Autumn 2020.

This means that the questions are only available to centres as secure key materials via e-AQA (Centre Services), and will be publicly available on our website mid-April. Our optional assessment materials are available to teachers from the end of March via e-AQA (Centre services) and on the public area of our website in mid-April but the mark schemes and exemplars and all other materials will be kept securely on eAQA/Centre Services.

Assessment resources

The Assess tab on each GCSE MFL landing page <http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/languages> includes a wide range of resources to help you, as follows:

- **GCSE French, German and Spanish progress tests:** our 10-item vocabulary tests and grammar cloze tests have been created by experienced languages teachers to support your GCSE students whether they're learning remotely or in class. They can help facilitate end-of-topic reviews, and the outcomes can be used as a diagnostic tool to re-visit vocabulary and specific grammar points. These tests can help assess your students' progress as well as identify areas that need extra time or attention. The resources for GCSE French, German and Spanish can be found under the Teach tab on our website
- **Past papers:** the 2018 assessment materials are available now on the public website via Assessment resources tab. The 2019 and 2020 exam materials are available via e-AQA/Centre Services only until summer 2021 so that these can be used for assessments (either using selected questions or in full) before they are released on the public website.
- **Sample assessment materials** with mark schemes and audio files. A second set of sample papers for French, German and Spanish (only) for use in mock exams is available via e-AQA/Centre services, so that students cannot access them before you want them to.
- **Translation practice:** practicing teachers have written these additional translations to support teachers and students with work on exam-style translation. There are two additional translations per tier.
- **Additional translation practice** into English
- **Additional Reading paper practice** based on literary text extracts
- **Exampro languages** <https://www.exampro.co.uk/languages/> Hundreds of searchable questions, mark schemes and examiner comments for French, German and Spanish. Create shareable documents for all types of formative assessments including class activities, homework tasks and topic tests. Interactive marked and annotated student responses to GCSE Writing questions.

MERiT is **free** to schools and colleges offering AQA GCSEs Languages and helps you to respond effectively to learning gaps by identifying your students' strengths and weaknesses, targeting class, group and individual interventions effectively and comparing your students' mock exam performance with the population for benchmarking.

- **GCSE 2021 Speaking endorsement training** and supporting resources: This free on-demand webinar will help you to understand the implications of the speaking endorsement for 2021, understand how your students' performance is assessed, look in detail at the application of the common assessment criteria. We've created a zip of the resources used in the webinar, Notes and guidance: application of the common assessment criteria for 2021, which includes an AQA optional checklist for speaking levels, presentation slides, a resource booklet and the Speaking endorsement criteria table. Detailed questions and answers from the sessions are also available.
<https://www.aqa.org.uk/resources/languages/gcse/assess/speaking-endorsement-2021>
- **GCSE Paper 4 (Writing) mark scheme guidance and application** This free AQA on-demand course provides expert instruction from a senior AQA examiner in how to apply mark schemes to Paper 4: Writing for French, German and Spanish as well as providing the opportunity to take part in marking activities. The course will help you to improve your confidence in awarding marks accurately, gain a better understanding of mark scheme application, identify typical features and characteristics of responses, practise and receive feedback on student response examples, and gain access to tools and resources to achieve consistent marking across your cohort. It's suitable for all teachers who need additional guidance in marking GCSE Languages Paper 4: Writing and for Heads of Department who wish to internally moderate their team's mock marking.
https://www.aqa.org.uk/professional-development/course-details?meta_E=MFLGOE1x

AS and A-level

Available on Centre Services (or e-AQA if you're not yet registered for Centre Services)

- 2021 assessment materials grouped by theme and set works
- Past papers - from 2019 and 2020
- Sample assessment materials - second set for French, German and Spanish

AQA website

- Past papers from 2018
- Sample assessment materials (in the Assess tab for each language)
- AS practice translations (Assess tab for each language)
- Exampro <https://www.exampro.co.uk/languages/>
- A-level mark scheme guidance and application covering summary, translation and essays for French, German and Spanish
<https://www.aqa.org.uk/professional-development/search?f.Subjects%7CD=Languages>