

# GCSE Languages (Speaking): Guidance in the application of the common assessment criteria for the 2021 series

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## Information for delegates

Please note that all information on assessments was correct at the time of delivery. Schools and colleges will be notified of any changes. For the latest information on your subject, please visit [aqa.org.uk](https://www.aqa.org.uk)

## Session overview

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- Arrangements for Speaking endorsement in 2021
- Submission of levels and Centre Declaration Forms (CDF)
- Common assessment criteria
- Theme coverage and activities
- Additional guidance on range of language
- Applying the criteria in practice
- AQA checklist
- Resources
- Q&A

## Arrangements for Speaking endorsement in 2021

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## Arrangements for Speaking assessment in 2021

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- These arrangements are for summer 2021 only.
- In 2021, Speaking does not contribute to the 9–1 grade – a student's grade will instead be based on teacher assessments for Listening, Reading and Writing.
- Students are awarded a speaking endorsement level, which will be one of the following: Pass, Merit, Distinction or Not Classified.
- The endorsement level for Speaking will appear on the student's GCSE certificate alongside the 9–1 grade based on the other three skills.
- There is no requirement for centres to record performances of speaking work or retain evidence to support the level awarded, as there is no moderation or verification of speaking levels by exam boards.

## Arrangements for Speaking assessment in 2021

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- Teachers decide the Speaking level based on work in class, using common assessment criteria.
- Speaking skills can be assessed remotely via online technology if required.
- As speaking skills are assessed through classroom activities rather than a formal exam, the use of notes, cue cards, dictionaries, resources etc and any preparation time is entirely at the discretion of the teacher. The focus is on providing students with opportunities to demonstrate the aspects of the criteria at the different levels.
- Exam materials from a previous series – eg photo card, role-play etc – can be used, or teachers can design their own tasks.
- If preferred, a single assessment may be conducted, but this is more likely to be the case for private candidates or for students taking a language which is not taught within the school. Any single assessment must meet all of the requirements of the assessment criteria.

## Submission of levels and Centre Declaration Forms (CDF)

## Submission of levels

- Endorsement levels for all students must be submitted to AQA by **7 May 2021**. Your Exams Officer will manage this task.
- Pass, Merit, Distinction or Not Classified (NC) must be submitted for every student entered for GCSE MFL assessments in the summer 2021 series.
- If an endorsement level of any kind (even NC) is missing for an individual student, this will be followed up by AQA.
- The endorsement level submitted for each student will be the final level which appears on their certificates – no adjustments by exam boards.
- Students must be informed of their Speaking level before submission to AQA in case they want to use the NEA appeals process. Please see the link to JCQ's Notice to Centres on page 17 of the *Resources booklet*.

## Centre Declaration Forms (CDF)

- The 2021 CDF can be found on the Exams Admin page of the AQA website. The link to this can be found on page 17 of the *Resources booklet*.
- The Declaration states that 'every reasonable step has been taken to ensure that there has been an opportunity for an assessment of spoken language for every learner'. It is a decision for each centre as to how they wish to manage the process to ensure that students have had the opportunity for speaking skills to be assessed.
- One CDF is required for each centre with entries. The CDF should be sent to **NEAdeclaration@aqa.org.uk**
- The final date for submission of the CDF is **15 May 2021**.
- Failure to provide a CDF will be considered malpractice and will be followed up by AQA.

## 2021 series: Speaking endorsement for private candidates

- Private candidates and students learning a language which is not taught at a school/college can access speaking endorsements in 2021.
- Schools/colleges entering private candidates and/or their own students in a language for which they have no teacher must inform AQA in advance by emailing **mfl@aqa.org.uk**
- The endorsement level can be provided by a supplementary school or community school, by a private tutor or by a speaker of the language who is not a relative or friend of the student who will act as 'Assessor'.
- The school/college must obtain from the Assessor a completed Assessor Declaration Form (available from **mfl@aqa.org.uk**) which confirms that the student has been assessed against the common criteria.
- A CDF is required.

## Common assessment criteria

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## Common assessment criteria

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- The criteria do not relate to specific tasks, but are designed to be used across a range of contexts, purposes and teaching situations to judge each student's speaking level during work completed in class.
- There are four aspects:
  - communication and interaction
  - range of language
  - accuracy
  - pronunciation and intonation.
- The criteria are not intended to be a mark scheme, but have been devised to provide an overall description of a student's performance covering different aspects at a particular level by the end of the course.

## Common assessment criteria

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- Each aspect has between two and five bullet-pointed criteria.
- In order to reach a level (Pass, Merit, Distinction) in an aspect, **all** of the bullet-pointed criteria within that aspect must be achieved.
- Communication and interaction is mandatory at the level to be awarded.
- **Two** of the other three aspects must be met in full for that level to be awarded.
- **One** aspect may be one level below.

## Theme coverage and activities

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## Theme coverage

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- The themes are those in the specification:
  - identity and culture
  - local, national, international and global areas of interest
  - current and future study and employment.
- Each theme is divided into topics and, in some cases, sub-topics.
- Each student has to cover at least **one topic or sub-topic** in **two different themes**. For example, one activity on mobile technology (Theme 1) and a different activity on travel and tourism (Theme 2).

## Activities

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- Activities may include: conversations, presentations, role plays, descriptions, narrations and photo-based activities (these are neither prescriptive nor exhaustive).
- Students can demonstrate their speaking skills in relation to different purposes in a whole class context, working in pairs and groups or in a one-to-one interaction with the teacher.
- The minimum number of activities to achieve a level is **two**, on different themes. For example, a presentation given to the whole class on one theme and a role-play on a different theme, or alternatively, a photo-based activity on one theme and a conversation on a different theme.
- For all three levels, students must have the opportunity to ask at least **two** questions to meet this requirement, so tasks chosen must facilitate this.



## Additional guidance on range of language

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## Additional guidance on range of language

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- Each language has its own *Additional guidance on range of language*.
- This guidance can be found on the 'Assess' tab on the AQA website (*Notes and guidance: Additional speaking guidance for range of language*).
- This guidance should be used alongside the common assessment criteria.
- The guidance gives examples of the kind of language that a student might produce at each of the three levels.
- These examples should **not** be seen as a checklist, but rather as being indicative of the kind of language students at different levels may produce to meet the requirements of the criteria.

## Determining levels for students

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- Individual students are assessed according to work done in class over the course or a single assessment if necessary eg private candidates, students learning a language outside of school.
- Teachers can share the common assessment criteria with students and also share a student's 'working at level' if they wish, to enable them to discuss, monitor and assess their own progress and to identify strengths and areas for improvement.
- A foreign language assistant or another member of staff can play a part in the assessment of students' speaking skills and decision-making on levels to be awarded, at the Head of Centre's discretion.
- A checklist is a useful way of recording an individual student's achievements and progress (see our version of a checklist on page 6 of the *Resources booklet*). The use of a checklist is optional.

## AQA checklist

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## Examples of the award of a level

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- Let's take a look at Student 1 on page 7 of the *Resources booklet*.
- This student has fulfilled all but one of the criteria needed for the award of Pass in the Communication and interaction aspect.
- However, for the award of any level, all of the criteria for Communication and interaction must be met at that level.
- This student has been unable to ask questions, or may only have been able to ask one question (at least two are needed for this part of the criteria to be accomplished).
- This means that the student cannot be awarded a Pass level for Communication and interaction.

## Examples of the award of a level

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Please see Student 2 on page 8 of the *Resources booklet*.

Which level do you think this student should be awarded?

## Examples of the award of a level

Please see Student 3 on page 9 of the *Resources booklet*.

Which level do you think this student should be awarded?

## GCSE languages: Insights that inform our assessment design

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## Any questions?



## Get in touch

Our friendly team will be happy to support you between 8am and 4pm, Monday to Friday.

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[aqa.org.uk](http://aqa.org.uk)



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Thank you

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