

FCSE

**FRENCH, GERMAN, SPANISH,
CHINESE (MANDARIN)**

8958/ 8968/ 8998/ 8973: Portfolio
Report on the Examination

8958/ 8968/ 8998/ 8973
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General Comments Relating to All Languages

2018 was the first award of the revised specification so the moderation process took account of centres who submitted students' work under the legacy specifications, under the new specifications or those in transition, as the award can be gained over a number of years. Moderators, as in past years, always try to give credit for what students have produced and will note any amendments to be made in subsequent years in centre feedback. Centres should always take note of this advice which is intended to enable them to gain the best possible results for students entered the following year. In 2019, moderators expected all work to be completed from the new specifications and made fewer allowances where this is not the case. The vast majority of centres adhered to the requirements of the new specification and chose the full course or appropriate short course version appropriate for their students.

Administration

Nearly all centres submitted work from the new specifications and rigorously followed the guidance given both online and from coursework advisers. A minority of centres incorrectly entered specification codes, some giving the short course code instead of the full course code or vice versa. Centres are strongly advised to check the entry code carefully. Most centres submitted work well in advance of the deadline of 15th May, for which moderators were grateful. Most included all the required paperwork, including a Centre Declaration Sheet for each centre and signed Candidate Record Forms for each student's portfolio. Centres are reminded that Ofqual guidance does not allow an award to be granted for student portfolios without a signed Candidate Record Form. Some centres still complete written work on papers without identifiable student name, number or unit number/ title; this can cause unnecessary delays for moderators. Nearly all centres now annotate written work clearly to show how teachers have arrived at the marks given; where work is unmarked, it will be returned to centres for teacher annotation. Most centres send data sticks for speaking tasks; this is preferable to CDs which can be damaged more easily in transit. Centres are reminded to include a tracking list and to announce student details clearly at the start of each recording. This year, to comply with new GDPR rulings, centres were advised to encrypt media. The majority did this, although there were some issues faced by moderators where the guidance was not followed. Inaccurate transfer of marks or incorrect addition were evidenced less frequently but centres are reminded to check and re-check these before submission. Portfolios were generally well presented and the information on the back of the Candidate Record Form was accurate. A small but significant number of centres did not give the collation and organisation of portfolios due attention which resulted in missing work, missing pages and incorrect addition or mark transfer. A few centres did not provide work divided into individual portfolios. Portfolios should be organised into units and the work attached by a treasury tag.

Typical administration issues included:

- No centre declaration sheet included with the sample.
- Set A/ B tasks used, these belong to the previous specification and must no longer be used.
- Portfolios containing work from more than 3 units.
- Arithmetical errors, either through errors in addition, multiplication or totals incorrectly transferred to the Candidate Record Form
- No candidate record forms.
- No recording supplied when required.
- Students entered for full course instead of a short course, or the other way around.
- Work not divided into individual portfolios, one for each student.

- Some tasks not annotated.
- Assessment Criteria for marking not used. (Refer to the specification.)
- Centre using their own reading and listening tasks.
- Late submission of marks/ sending sample.

Listening and Reading

The new specification's listening and reading tasks should be taken from sets C and D. Most centres performed well in the listening assignments which remain essentially unchanged in format. The vast majority of centres showed that students knew what was expected of these assignments and performed well in the traditional style questions. The format of the reading assignments remains very similar but includes a different type of question, based on translation, as task one. This was the second year of the new format, which provides greater consistency with the AQA GCSE suite of qualifications, but translation proved challenging for students in the majority of cases. Some did not attempt these questions at all. Centres are advised to practise these types of question in order to prepare students more readily for the revised approach; exemplars and guidance are available on the AQA website.

Speaking and Writing

The new specification requires one of the writing tasks to be from set D and one of the speaking tasks to be a role-play taken from set E with the remainder coming from set C. The compulsory tasks must not be altered and should be marked as dictated by the mark scheme. Most centres did not include a role-play speaking task as the recorded speaking submission but most students seemed well prepared for these when they were included. Where centre marking was generous in speaking tasks, it was often due to crediting items of information where the pronunciation prevented communication. Where centre marking was severe, it penalised minor errors, such as gender or adjectival agreement, which did not impede comprehension. The best speaking tasks are usually conducted by the teacher. Students left to make their own recording generally performed less well. Centres must ensure that recordings are made where there is no background noise.

The translation writing tasks from set D were less well completed as most students did not include all elements of the required sentence or question which was required for credit of that sentence. This task was usually the written task with the lowest mark. As students become more accustomed to the skills required in translation, it is hoped that this differential will disappear. It is recommended that translation is something which centres work on, especially if these students are going on to GCSE later.

The Criteria for Assessing Speaking and Writing must be used when assessing those tasks. The regular occurrence of marks which do not exist in the criteria suggests that some centres are not doing this. One successful use of a time frame is sufficient. The time frame and subject of the verb must be unambiguous. Teachers should give credit where the use of a present tense verb plus a time frame indicates the future tense; examples will differ across languages. There does have to be at least one opinion before full marks can be awarded. Centres are reminded that, to credit an item of information it must also be relevant to the unit so, for example, the student's name cannot be credited in each unit submitted. A successful tactic employed by some centres, and very much to be encouraged, was to have students writing more than one example of a time frame or opinion, so that if one attempt failed, they had the opportunity of another attempt later.

The assessment of some speaking and writing tasks revealed that some centres were not very clear about the criteria and not clear how to mark. Centres are asked to consult the specification carefully when planning. This ensures that they are meeting the requirements. If a new teacher is delivering FCSE or the teacher changes during the year, centres are urged to ensure that they are fully briefed about the requirements. They are strongly reminded to refer to the booklet entitled 'FCSE – a practical guide for teachers'. The FCSE NEA adviser is also available throughout the school year. Centres can get help with speaking and writing tasks as well as with assessment and administration issues.

Additional comments relating specifically to Chinese:

Speaking and Writing (students' performance)

In Speaking and Writing tasks, as in the previous years, it was very pleasing to see the majority of students demonstrated the successful use of a wider variety of vocabulary, verbs, including the coverbal structures 在, 和, 跟, 坐, opinion phrases 觉得, 喜欢/不喜欢, modal verbs 打算, 想/要, 会 (particularly to indicate future events), and adjectival stative verbs; aspect markers of 了 (to indicate completed action), 过 (to indicate past experience); conjunctions eg 因为.....所以.....; 可是/但是; 如果; time expressions such as 常常, 天天, 每天, 昨天, 去年, 以前, 上个周末, 下个星期, 将来, 以后 to produce different time frames, were also very well used. Constructions such as 要.....了, 是.....的,的时候, measure words eg 个, 口, 杯, 条, 只 etc. were very well expressed, some work obviously demonstrated the strong potential for reaching GCSE levels.

Compulsory Role Play and the Writing Translation tasks: the teachers should note that in the new specification, one compulsory, externally set Role Play, and one Translation task are required, and the tasks are provided by AQA, each unit covering each of the three levels. The task is prescriptive and must not be changed which means that the exact questions should be asked in Role Play, for example the compulsory Role Play Unit 1, Q7 'What did you do at home last weekend?' In Chinese it should be '上个周末你在家做了什么?' However, in most cases, the teacher asked '上个周末你和你的家人一起做了什么?' Please do not change the question, and make sure of the Chinese translation for that English meaning. Fortunately some students gave correct answer in responding to the question as on the task sheet, '上周末我在家读书.' In the case of one Translation task Unit 6, which is prescriptive and must not be changed the student wrote '我常常去饭店' for 'We often go to restaurant '我们常常去饭店' which cannot be credited, because the meaning of the subject has been changed. Please note, the components of a Chinese character should not be separated or hyphenated, as can be done with individual words in European languages eg 物→牛-勿. If the squared paper is used, ensure that a character is written within the framework of a square. The structure of Chinese characters, e.g. the left – right components of a character should not be written in two separate boxes on the Chinese character writing sheet, eg 馆 and 好 become

个	官	女	子
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The teacher should remember to tell the students that unlike English, the components of a character should not be separated to move to the next line, e.g. the right component went to next line, so 饭 became 饣 - and 反, 明 became 日 - 月 and 欢 became 又 - 欠. Please note that Modal verbs such as 想, 会, 打算, 计划, 希望 or 要 + verb, etc. can indicate the future, so should

accepted for future time frame. Aspectual particles can also be accepted for actions with different time references, e.g. verb + 过 or 了 can indicate past experience.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.