

Pearson response to the Ofqual Consultation

GCSE Reform: Regulations for Modern Foreign Languages

January 2015

Pearson information

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Would you like us to treat your response as confidential? If you answer Yes we will not include your details in any list of people or organisations that responded to the consultation.

No

Are the views expressed in response to this consultation your personal views or an official response from the organisation you represent?

Official response, awarding organisation

Nation

England

How did you find out about this consultation?

From our website

May we contact you for more information?

Yes

Consultation questions

Question 1

Do you have any comments on the draft Conditions on subject content for new GCSEs in French, German and Spanish?

Yes No

If yes, please provide them here:

Question 2

Do you have any comments on the draft Guidance on subject content for new GCSEs in French, German and Spanish?

Yes No

If yes, please provide them here:

Pearson is in agreement with the guidance points 1.1 to 1.7. We do have further points regarding the guidance on page 8 of the document. Please find our comments below:

Translation

From Target Language to English

Pearson agrees that this task type should be in the reading paper and that a short passage of 50 words is suitable for the higher paper. For the Foundation paper however, in the statutory guidance document put forward by each Awarding Organisation in July 2014, it was suggested to have separate sentences linked by a common theme rather than a passage. This is still the Pearson preference as it allows greater flexibility to target sentences to a range of abilities.

Reading passage length in extended text

Pearson believes the minimum word count is low especially for the Higher tier. We would suggest increasing the higher minimum word count to 180 words in order to get the sense of the text.

Rubrics and instructions (pages 20-23)

We would prefer the wording agreed during the original technical interpretation in September 2014 (see below) to be included in the tables on pages 20-23 as they made it very clear the difference between rubrics, instructions and stimuli and which language should be used for each one:

AO1 & AO3: To avoid confusion for learners, questions that are to be set in the assessed language should also have rubrics and instructions in the assessed language.

AO2 & AO4: Contexts, instructions and rubrics will be in English. Any stimulus material will be in the assessed language.

Question 3

Do you have any comments on the draft tiering Conditions or requirements for new GCSEs in French, German and Spanish?

Yes () No

If yes, please provide them here:

Tiering requirements

With reference to the condition 2 and 2.1 Pearson is in agreement with the suggestions.

With regard to the detail of these conditions please find Pearson comments as follows:

Overlapping tier model

1. We agree that all assessments should be tiered and that an overlapping model be used.
2. We agree that each assessment must be designed and set in such a way as to fall within one of those two tiers only.

Preclusion of mixed tier entry

Our stakeholder research shows that teachers are generally in favour of mixed tier entry; it is felt that as languages are a mixture of skills, learners often perform differently in each one. Currently however, only 10% of learners take mixed tiers. We think this would increase once speaking and writing become terminal exams, given the more challenging nature of these productive skills. Allowing learners to choose the tier most appropriate for them in each skill might prevent aspirations being capped and allow learners to achieve the result that reflects their real ability. This latter point may have a positive impact on take-up of languages. However, we also recognise that mixed tier entry can also have adverse impacts on student achievement as students may be persuaded to enter for lower tiers on components assumed to be of greater difficulty such as speaking.

Question 4

Do you have any comments on the draft Conditions or requirements on assessment for new GCSEs in French, German and Spanish?

() Yes No

If yes, please provide them here:

Question 5

Do you have any comments on the draft Guidance on assessment for new GCSEs in French, German and Spanish?

() Yes (X) No

If yes, please provide them here:

Question 6

Do you have any comments on the draft Conditions on speaking assessments for new GCSEs in French, German and Spanish?

() Yes (X) No

If yes, please provide them here:

Question 7

Do you have any comments on the draft Conditions on access to bi-lingual dictionaries for new GCSEs in French, German and Spanish?

() Yes (X) No

If yes, please provide them here:

Question 8

Do you have any comments on the draft Guidance on assessment objectives for new GCSEs in French, German and Spanish?

() Yes (X) No

If yes, please provide them here:

Question 9

We have not identified any ways in which the proposed requirements for reformed GCSEs in French, German and Spanish would impact (positively or negatively) on persons who share a protected characteristic. Are there any potential impacts we have not identified? If so, what are they?

() Yes (X) No

If yes, please provide them here:

Question 10

Are there any additional steps we could take to mitigate any negative impact resulting from these proposals on persons who share a protected characteristic? If so, please comment on the additional steps we could take to mitigate negative impacts.

Yes No

If yes, please provide them here:

Question 11

Have you any other comments on the impacts of the proposals on persons who share a protected characteristic?

Yes No

If yes, please provide them here:

General questions

We want to write clearly, directly and put the reader first. Overall, do you think we have got this right in this consultation?

Yes

Do you have any special requirements to enable you to read our consultations? (For example screen reader, large text, and so on)

No

Which of the following document formats would you prefer to use when reading our consultations? (Select all that apply)

A standard PDF

How many of our consultations have you read in the last 12 months?

More than 5