



Pearson

Pearson Consultation response

Ofqual consultation

GCSE, AS and A level modern foreign languages conditions and guidance

21 March 2016

Questions

Question 1: To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should adopt the same approach to the assessment of GCSEs, AS and A levels in modern foreign languages, as we did for GCSEs, AS and A levels in French, German and Spanish?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

We agree with the proposal to adopt the same approach for most of the assessment requirements for GCSE, AS and A level.

However we would appreciate clarification that the requirement for GCSE, stated in the DfE Modern Languages: GCSE Subject Content on page 7, beneath the section, 'Use of the assessed language in questions and rubrics,' still stands, i.e. 'Languages using logographic systems such as Mandarin Chinese and Japanese must set all questions and task instructions in English, as the sole use of hanzi or kanji is deemed too challenging for this level.' In the consultation document, this requirement has only been included in the, 'Interpretations and definitions,' section of the Technical Interpretation document for AO4 (writing paper) on page 36 of the consultation document. This makes it unclear as to whether the statement in the DfE subject content does indeed apply to all four Assessment objectives or only to AO4.

For the sake of clarity, we recommend that this statement is either included in the, 'Interpretations and definitions,' sections for all of the Assessment Objectives or that it is included as a general condition beneath the Assessment Objective grid in the same way that it appears in the DfE Modern Languages: GCSE Subject Content.

If Pearson is correct in thinking that the condition does indeed relate to all of the four Assessment Objectives, we would recommend that it is made clear in the conditions and guidance document that prompts for role plays and picture cards can be set in English for the speaking assessment for Chinese and Japanese.



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Pearson would also like to recommend that given the complexity of the Chinese language, the same rule given for AO4 writing for GCSE on page 36 in relation to languages using a logographic system should apply to AS and A level Chinese.

We therefore recommend that as in current qualifications for Chinese, awarding organisations are permitted to set all questions in English and that therefore the condition for AS and A Level that across AO1 and AO2 on page 43 that no more than 10% of the total marks for the qualification may be used for responses in English, including translation into English should not apply to Chinese AS or A level. If this rule is not added then AS and A level Chinese will not be of comparable demand to other languages.

We welcome the exceptions outlined within the consultation document relating to, i) different requirements in GCSE for the expected length of an extended written text in Chinese, Japanese and Russian, ii) different requirements for the number of words in the translations for Chinese, Japanese and Russian in AS and A level.

Question 2: To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should expand the existing GCSE and GCE Modern Foreign Languages (French, German, Spanish) Conditions and Guidance documents so that they apply to other modern foreign languages?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

We strongly agree with this proposal as it will give equal status to these languages.

Question 3: To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should introduce a Condition on interpretation and definition which sets out what is meant by the term 'Modern Foreign Language'?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

We strongly agree with this proposal as it gives a firm definition to the term, 'Modern Foreign Language,' which has not been previously existed. This will add clarity to teachers and give all assessed languages equal status. We also agree with the definition.



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Question 4: To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposed introduction of grammar requirements into the assessment requirements for GCSE, AS and A levels in Modern Foreign Languages?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

We strongly agree with this proposal as it will ensure comparability across languages and will give vital guidance for teachers.

Question 5: To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal to move the guidance on the length of translation exercises in the AS and A level Guidance document from the section on guidance on assessment to the section on guidance on subject content?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

We strongly agree with this approach as this will bring consistency with the GCSE document.

Question 6: To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposed approach to setting additional guidance relating to the length of translation exercises at GCSE, AS and A level?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

We agree with the proposal as translation is one of the most demanding skills and we welcome the proposed lengths for translation in Chinese, Japanese and Russian. However we would also welcome guidance on the length of translation for all languages being offered at GCSE and AS and A level to ensure comparability of demand across languages. Pearson would be particularly interested in guidance on suitable translation lengths for all languages that do not have a Roman script such as Urdu, Greek and Arabic.



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Question 7: Do you have any comments on the guidance that we are proposing in relation to the length of translation exercises?

Yes No

Question 8: To what extent do you agree or disagree with our approach to setting additional guidance relating to the length of an extended written text in the reading assessment at GCSE?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Setting guidance on the length of extended written text for Chinese, Japanese and Russian is useful in ensuring comparability of demand across languages. We are in agreement with the number of words set. Pearson would also welcome similar advice on lengths of extended written text for other languages with a non-Roman script such as Greek, Urdu and Arabic.

Question 9: Do you have any comments on the guidance that we are proposing in relation to the length of an extended written text in the reading assessment?

Yes No

Question 10: To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should introduce a Condition on the titling of GCSE, AS and A level Chinese qualifications?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

We agree with introducing this condition but the wording as suggested in the consultation document may be confusing. Instead of using the wording 'Chinese (spoken Mandarin)' or 'Chinese (spoken Cantonese)', we suggest using the wording 'Chinese (Mandarin)' and 'Chinese (Cantonese)', i.e. removing the word, 'spoken,' so that it is clear that this condition relates to the listening paper as well as to the speaking paper.

Question 11: Are there any additional rules or guidance that we should introduce in relation to modern foreign languages?

Yes No



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Question 12: Do you have any comments on our proposed amendments or additions to the Conditions and requirements for GCSE, AS or A level modern foreign languages?

(X) Yes () No

As stated in our response to question 1, we would appreciate clarification that the requirement for GCSE, stated in the DfE Modern Languages: GCSE Subject Content on page 7, beneath the section, 'Use of the assessed language in questions and rubrics,' still stands and applies to all four Assessment Objectives, i.e. 'Languages using logographic systems such as Mandarin Chinese and Japanese must set all questions and task instructions in English, as the sole use of hanzi or kanji is deemed too challenging for this level.' We also recommend that if the requirement does apply to all four Assessment Objectives that it is made clear in the conditions and guidance document that prompts for role plays and picture cards can be set in English for the speaking assessment for Chinese and Japanese.

Also as stated in our response to question 1, Pearson would like to recommend that given the complexity of the Chinese language, the same rule given in relation to languages using a logographic system for GCSE on page 7 of the DfE Modern Languages: GCSE Subject Content, should apply to AS and A level Chinese.

Question 13: Do you have any comments on our proposed amendments or additions to the guidance for GCSE, AS or A level modern foreign languages?

(X) Yes () No

As stated in our response to question 1, we would appreciate clarification that the requirement for GCSE, stated in the DfE Modern Languages: GCSE Subject Content on page 7, beneath the section, 'Use of the assessed language in questions and rubrics,' still stands and applies to all four Assessment Objectives, i.e. 'Languages using logographic systems such as Mandarin Chinese and Japanese must set all questions and task instructions in English, as the sole use of hanzi or kanji is deemed too challenging for this level.' We also recommend that if the requirement does apply to all four Assessment Objectives that it is made clear in the conditions and guidance document that prompts for role plays and picture cards can be set in English for the speaking assessment for Chinese and Japanese.

Also as stated in our response to question 1, Pearson would like to recommend that given the complexity of the Chinese language, the same rule given in relation to languages using a logographic system for GCSE on page 7 of the DfE Modern Languages: GCSE Subject Content, should apply to AS and A level Chinese.



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Question 14: We have not identified any ways in which the proposals for GCSE, AS and A level modern foreign languages would impact (positively or negatively) on persons who share a protected characteristic.¹ Are there any potential impacts we have not identified?

Yes No

Question 15: Are there any additional steps we could take to mitigate any negative impact resulting from these proposals on persons who share a protected characteristic?

Yes No

Question 16: Do you have any other comments on the impacts of the proposals on students who share a protected characteristic?

Yes No

¹ 'Protected characteristic' is defined in the Equality Act 2010. Here, it means disability, racial group, age, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, sex, sexual orientation and gender reassignment.