

# **GCE Subject Level Guidance for Modern Foreign Languages**

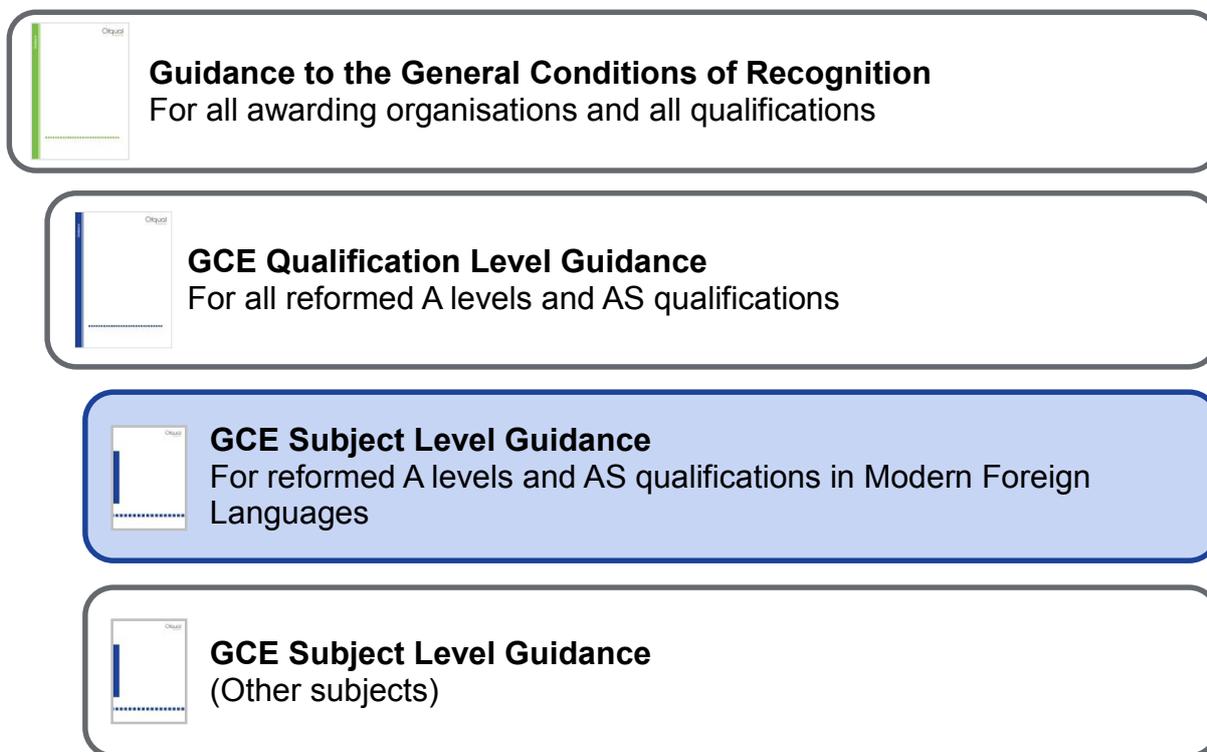
April 2016

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## Introduction

This document (highlighted in the figure below) is part of a suite of documents which outlines our guidance for awarding organisations offering GCE Qualifications.



This document sets out guidance which applies to:

- GCE A levels awarded on or after 1 April 2018, and standalone GCE AS qualifications awarded on or after 1 April 2017, in the following subjects:
  - French;
  - German; and
  - Spanish.
- GCE A levels awarded on or after 1 April 2019, and standalone GCE AS qualifications awarded on or after 1 April 2018, in all other Modern Foreign Languages.

It supports the GCE Subject Level Conditions and Requirements for Modern Foreign Languages.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-subject-level-conditions-and-requirements-for-mfl](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-subject-level-conditions-and-requirements-for-mfl)

This document constitutes guidance for the purposes of section 153 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 (the '2009 Act'), Condition GCE(Modern Foreign Languages)1.2 and Condition GCE(Modern Foreign Languages)2.3.

An awarding organisation has a legal obligation under the 2009 Act to have regard to this guidance in relation to each GCE Qualification in a Modern Foreign Language that it makes available or proposes to make available. Conditions GCE(Modern Foreign Languages)1.2 and GCE(Modern Foreign Languages)2.3 impose the same obligation in respect of the guidance below which is issued under those Conditions.

An awarding organisation should use the guidance to help it understand how to comply with the *GCE Subject Level Conditions and Requirements for Modern Foreign Languages*.

## **Revisions to this document**

The guidance in this document was originally published in July 2015. This document replaces the guidance. (see Appendix 1 for details).

This document replaces all previous guidance for GCE A levels awarded on or after 1 April 2018, and all standalone GCE AS qualifications awarded on or after 1 April 2017, in the following subjects:

- French;
- German; and
- Spanish.

This guidance comes into effect at 5.01pm on Monday 18 April 2016 for:

- GCE A levels awarded on or after 1 April 2018, and standalone GCE AS qualifications awarded on or after 1 April 2017, in the following subjects:
  - French;
  - German; and
  - Spanish.
- GCE A levels awarded on or after 1 April 2019, and standalone GCE AS qualifications awarded on or after 1 April 2018, in all other Modern Foreign Languages.

## **Guidance set out in this document**

This document provides guidance in relation to subject content, on assessment, and on assessment objectives, for GCE Qualifications in Modern Foreign Languages.

## Guidance in relation to subject content for GCE Qualifications in Modern Foreign Languages

The subject content for GCE Qualifications in Modern Foreign Languages is set out in the Department for Education's '*Modern foreign languages GCE AS and A level subject content*',<sup>2</sup> document reference DFE-00694-2014 (the 'Content Document').

Condition GCE(Modern Foreign Languages)1.1(c) requires awarding organisations to interpret the Content Document in line with any requirements, and having regard to any guidance, published by Ofqual.

We set out our guidance for the purposes of Condition GCE(Modern Foreign Languages)1.1(c) below.

### Length of translation exercises

The Content Document states that each GCE Qualification in a Modern Foreign Language must require Learners to –

[translate] an unseen passage or passages from the language of study into English at AS and A level,  
and

[translate] unseen sentences or short texts at AS, and an unseen passage or passages at A level, from English into the language of study.

We expect the length of any 'unseen passage or passages' or 'unseen sentences or short texts' used in a translation task in an assessment to be –

- for GCE Qualifications in Chinese or Japanese:
  - in respect of A level qualifications, a minimum of 80 characters for translation from Chinese or Japanese into English, and a minimum of 70 words for translation from English into Chinese or Japanese, and
  - in respect of AS qualifications, a minimum of 60 characters for translation from Chinese or Japanese into English, and a minimum of 45 words for translation from English into Chinese or Japanese
- for GCE Qualifications in Russian:

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<sup>2</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-as-and-a-level-modern-foreign-languages](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-as-and-a-level-modern-foreign-languages)

- in respect of A level qualifications, a minimum of 70 words for translation from Russian into English, and a minimum of 100 words for translation from English into Russian, and
- in respect of AS qualifications, a minimum of 50 words for translation from Russian into English, and a minimum of 70 words for translation from English into Russian.
- for GCE Qualifications in French, German or Spanish:
  - in respect of A level qualifications, a minimum of 100 words, and
  - in respect of AS qualifications, a minimum of 70 words.

In respect of each GCE Qualification in any other Modern Foreign Language we expect an awarding organisation to explain in its assessment strategy –

- its approach to the length of any ‘unseen passage or passages’ or ‘unseen sentences or short texts’ used in translation tasks, and
- how that approach will achieve a Level of Demand for translation tasks consistent with that of the GCE Qualifications in Modern Foreign Languages in relation to which we have provided specific guidance above.

## Guidance in relation to assessments for GCE Qualifications in Modern Foreign Languages

Condition GCE(Modern Foreign Languages)2.3 allows us to specify requirements and guidance in relation to assessments for GCE Qualifications in Modern Foreign Languages.

We set out our guidance for the purposes of Condition GCE(Modern Foreign Languages)2.3 below.

### Vocabulary lists

Provided that the requirements set out in the *GCE Subject Level Conditions and Requirements for Modern Foreign Languages* are met, awarding organisations are not precluded from publishing vocabulary lists to act as guides for Teachers of GCE Qualifications in Modern Foreign Languages which they make available or propose to make available. Neither are awarding organisations required to publish vocabulary lists.

### Assessment period for non-examination assessment

Condition GCE(Modern Foreign Languages)3.1(b) requires an awarding organisation to ensure each Learner completes any assessment which is not an Assessment by Examination within a period of up to five weeks in the months of April and May in any single year.

This assessment period is not required to be continuous or the same every year. It may, for example, allow for a break to accommodate Easter in any given year.

## Guidance on assessment objectives for GCE Qualifications in Modern Foreign Languages

Condition GCE(Modern Foreign Languages)1.2 allows us to specify requirements and guidance relating to assessment objectives for GCE Qualifications in Modern Foreign Languages.

We published our requirements in relation to assessment objectives in *GCE Subject Level Conditions and Requirements for Modern Foreign Languages*, and reproduce them in the table below.

|   | Objective   | Weighting (A level) | Weighting (AS) |
|---|---|---------------------|----------------|
| <b>AO1</b>  | Understand and respond: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ in speech to spoken language including face-to-face interaction;</li> <li>■ in writing to spoken language drawn from a variety of sources</li> </ul> | 20%                 | 20%            |
| <b>AO2</b>  | Understand and respond: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ in speech to written language drawn from a variety of sources;</li> <li>■ in writing to written language drawn from a variety of sources</li> </ul>  | 30%                 | 30%            |
| <b>AO3</b>  | Manipulate the language accurately, in spoken and written forms, using a range of lexis and structure   | 30%                 | 30%            |
| <b>AO4 (AS)</b>   | Show knowledge and understanding of, and respond critically to, different aspects of the culture and society of countries/communities where the language is spoken  | n/a                 | 20%            |
| <b>AO4 (A level)</b>  | Show knowledge and understanding of, and respond critically and analytically to, different aspects of the culture and society of countries/communities where the language is spoken                                   | 20%                 | n/a            |
| Across assessment objectives AO1 and AO2, no more than 10% of the total marks for the qualification may be used for responses in English, including translation into English. |   |                     |                |

We set out below our guidance for the purposes of Condition GCE(Modern Foreign Languages)1.2. This guidance explains how we expect awarding organisations to interpret these assessment objectives in terms of:

- the different ‘strands’ within each of the assessment objectives;
- the discrete ‘elements’ within each assessment objective and its strands that questions and tasks could target and/or seek to credit – our expectation is that each and every question/task should target or seek to credit at least one of these elements, and may target or seek to credit multiple elements across one or more assessment objectives;
- the coverage expectations, such as in relation to the different elements within each assessment objective and how those elements should be sampled over time; and
- the key areas of emphasis in each assessment objective and the particular meaning for the subject of any key terms and phrases used; defined terms are shown in bold text, followed by their definitions.

In line with the obligations set out in Condition GCE(Modern Foreign Languages)1.2, we expect awarding organisations to be able to demonstrate how they have had regard to this guidance. For example, an awarding organisation could map how it has regard to the guidance as it:

- develops its sample assessment materials;
- delivers the qualification;
- develops and applies its approach to sampling the elements into which the assessment objectives are divided; and
- monitors the qualification to make sure it addresses all elements appropriately.

| AO1: Understand and respond:  |                                  |   | 20% (A level)<br>20% (AS)  |
|---|----------------------------------|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ in speech to spoken language including face-to-face interaction;</li> <li>■ in writing to spoken language drawn from a variety of sources</li> </ul> |                                  |   |  |
| Strands   | Elements                         | Coverage  | Interpretation and definitions   |
| <b>1 – Understand and respond in speech to spoken language including face-to-face interaction.</b>  | This strand is a single element. | Full coverage in each set of assessments <sup>3</sup> (but not every assessment). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Face-to-face interaction</b> includes direct interaction in person, but could also be facilitated or simulated using technology.</li> <li>■ <b>Sources</b> of spoken language are aspects of subject content. Awarding organisations should explain their approach to targeting them in their assessment strategy.</li> <li>■ Learners will demonstrate their understanding through their response, so understanding and response should normally be assessed together.</li> <li>■ This assessment objective does not include assessment of how accurately the Learner manipulates the language – this should be credited under AO3.</li> <li>■ In the context of this assessment objective: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Responses in speech should always be in the target language, and should be assessed for the quality of what is communicated – including how well the Learner interacts with the person delivering the assessment.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| <b>2 – Understand and respond in writing to spoken language drawn from a variety of sources.</b>  | This strand is a single element. |   |  |

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<sup>3</sup> For the purposes of this guidance, a ‘set of assessments’ means the assessments to be taken by a particular Learner for a GCE Qualification in a Modern Foreign Language. For clarity, the assessments taken by Learners may vary, depending on any possible routes through the qualification.

| <b>AO1: Understand and respond:</b>   |          |          | <i>20% (A level)</i>   |
|---|----------|----------|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ in speech to spoken language including face-to-face interaction;</li> <li>■ in writing to spoken language drawn from a variety of sources</li> </ul> |          |          | <i>20% (AS)</i>  |
| Strands   | Elements | Coverage | Interpretation and definitions   |
|   |          |          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Responses in writing can be in either the target language or English, and may include (but are not limited to) single letters, numbers and/or percentages in figures, names, single words and/or phrases. They may be assessed for the quality of what is communicated, but only where the response is in the target language and of sufficient length to allow meaningful assessment.</li> </ul> |

| AO2: Understand and respond:   |                                  |  | 30% (A level)<br>30% (AS)  |
|--|----------------------------------|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ in speech to written language drawn from a variety of sources;</li> <li>■ in writing to written language drawn from a variety of sources</li> </ul> |                                  |  |  |
| Strands  | Elements                         | Coverage   | Interpretation and definitions   |
| <b>1 – Understand and respond in speech to written language drawn from a variety of sources.</b>   | This strand is a single element. | Full coverage in each set of assessments (but not every assessment). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Sources</b> of written language are aspects of subject content – and may include texts read prior to the assessment, or provided as Stimulus Materials. Awarding organisations should explain their approach to targeting them in their assessment strategy.</li> <li>■ Learners will demonstrate their understanding through their response, so understanding and response should normally be assessed together.</li> <li>■ This assessment objective does not include assessment of how accurately the Learner manipulates the language – this should be credited under AO3.</li> <li>■ In the context of this assessment objective:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Responses in speech should always be in the target language, and should be assessed for the quality of what is communicated – including how well the Learner interacts with the person delivering the assessment.</li> <li>□ Responses in writing can be in either the target language or English, and may include (but are not limited to) single letters, numbers and/or percentages in figures, names, single words and/or phrases. They may be assessed for the quality of what is communicated, but only where the response is in the target language and of sufficient length to allow meaningful assessment.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| <b>2 – Understand and respond in writing to written language drawn from a variety of sources.</b>  | This strand is a single element. |  |  |

| AO3: Manipulate the language accurately, in spoken and written forms, using a range of lexis and structure |   |  | 30% (A level)<br>30% (AS)  |
|--|---|--|--|
| Strands  | Elements  | Coverage   | Interpretation and definitions   |
| n/a  | 1a – Manipulate the language accurately in spoken forms, using a range of lexis and structure.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Full coverage in each set of assessments (but not every assessment).</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Manipulate</b> means selecting and using language in a range of forms, contexts and tasks.</li> <li><b>Accurately</b> refers to the correct application of the grammar and syntax of the language and, when speaking, to the quality of the pronunciation and intonation.</li> </ul> |
|  | 1b – Manipulate the language accurately in written forms, using a range of lexis and structure. |  |  |

| AO4 (AS): Show knowledge and understanding of, and respond critically to, different aspects of the culture and society of countries/communities where the language is spoken |  |  | n/a (A level)<br>20% (AS)   |
|--|--|--|---|
| Strands  | Elements   | Coverage   | Interpretation and definitions  |
| n/a  | 1a – Show knowledge and understanding of different aspects of the culture and society of countries/communities where the language is spoken. | Full coverage in each set of assessments (but not every assessment). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Respond critically</b> may include, but is not limited to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ presenting and justifying points of view;</li> <li>□ developing arguments; and</li> <li>□ drawing conclusions based on understanding.</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ <b>Countries/communities</b> means at least one country or community. However, specifications should include reference to a range of countries and communities where the language is spoken.</li> <li>■ In the context of this assessment objective, knowledge and understanding will be demonstrated through the Learners' ability to communicate information about, and to demonstrate their appreciation of, different aspects of culture and society.</li> </ul> |
|  | 1b – Respond critically to different aspects of the culture and society of countries/communities where the language is spoken.               |  |   |

| AO4 (A level): Show knowledge and understanding of, and respond critically and analytically to, different aspects of the culture and society of countries/communities where the language is spoken |  |  | n/a (AS)<br>20% (A level)  |
|--|--|--|--|
| Strands  | Elements   | Coverage   | Interpretation and definitions   |
| n/a  | 1a – Show knowledge and understanding of different aspects of the culture and society of countries/communities where the language is spoken. | Full coverage in each set of assessments (but not every assessment). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Respond critically and analytically</b> may include, but is not limited to:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ selecting relevant material;</li> <li>□ presenting and justifying points of view;</li> <li>□ developing arguments;</li> <li>□ drawing conclusions based on understanding; and</li> <li>□ evaluating issues, themes, and cultural and social contexts.</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ <b>Countries/communities</b> means at least one country or community. However, specifications should include reference to a range of countries and communities where the language is spoken.</li> <li>■ In the context of this assessment objective, knowledge and understanding will be demonstrated through the Learners' ability to communicate information about, and to demonstrate their appreciation of, different aspects of culture and society.</li> </ul> |
|  | 1b – Respond critically to different aspects of the culture and society of countries/communities where the language is spoken.               |  |  |
|  | 1c – Respond analytically to different aspects of the culture and society of countries/communities where the language is spoken.             |  |  |

# Appendix 1: Revisions to this document

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The table below sets out when the *GCE Subject Level Guidance for Modern Foreign Languages* initially came into force and when they were subsequently revised.

| Revisions   | Date in force |
|---|---------------|
| Republished as GCE Subject Level Guidance for Modern Foreign Languages <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Extended applicability to all other modern foreign language subjects.</li><li>■ Guidance in relation to subject content (amendment, previously published as guidance on assessments)</li><li>■ Guidance in relation to assessments (amendment, now published as guidance on subject content)</li></ul> | 18 April 2016 |
| First edition (published as <i>GCE Subject Level Conditions and Requirement for Modern Foreign Languages (French, German, Spanish)</i> )  | 7th July 2015 |

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