

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

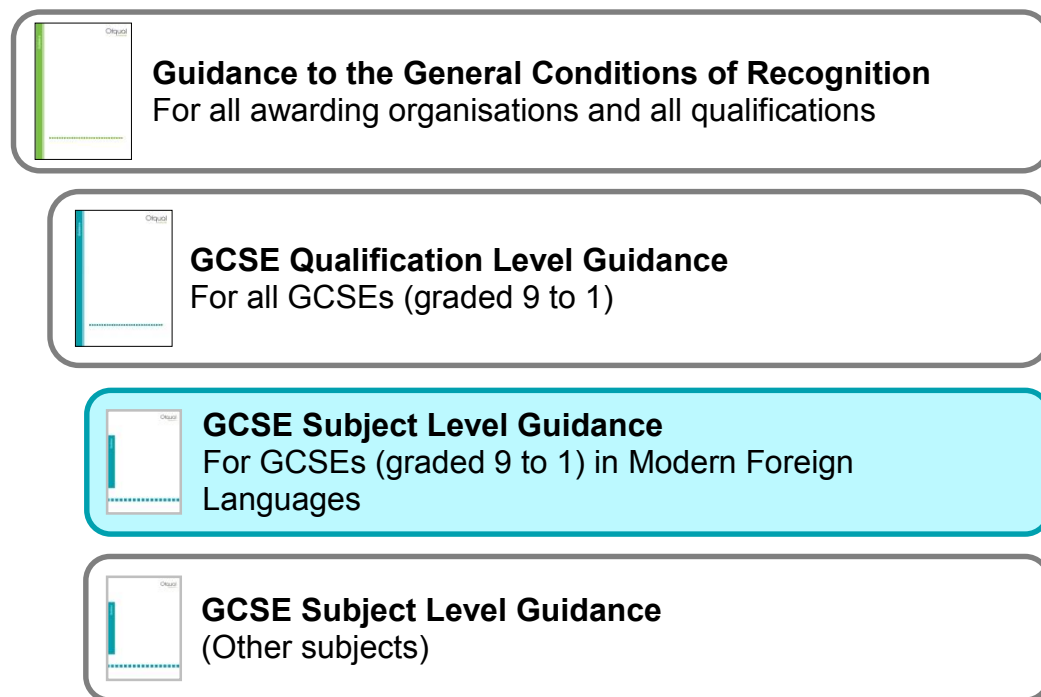
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## Introduction

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



This document sets out guidance which applies to all GCSE Qualifications (graded from 9 to 1) in Modern Foreign Languages. It supports the *GCSE Subject Level Conditions and Requirements for Modern Foreign Languages*.<sup>1</sup>

This document constitutes guidance for the purposes of section 153 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 (the '2009 Act'), Condition GCSE (Modern Foreign Languages) 1 and Condition GCSE (Modern Foreign Languages) 3.

An awarding organisation has a legal obligation under the 2009 Act to have regard to this guidance, where relevant, in relation to each GCSE Qualification in a Modern Foreign Language that it makes available or proposes to make available. Condition GCSE (Modern Foreign Languages) 1 and Condition GCSE (Modern Foreign Languages) 3 impose the same obligation in respect of the guidance below which is issued under those Conditions.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-9-to-1-subject-level-conditions-and-requirements-for-modern-foreign-languages](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-9-to-1-subject-level-conditions-and-requirements-for-modern-foreign-languages)

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

## **Application of and revisions to this document**

This document replaces the original guidance that was published in February 2015 (see Appendix 1 for details).

This document replaces all previous guidance for GCSE qualifications (graded from 9 to 1) in French, German and Spanish, and comes into effect at 5.01pm on Monday 18 April 2016 for all GCSE qualifications (graded from 9 to 1) in Modern Foreign Languages.

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

This document provides guidance in relation to subject content, and on assessment objectives, for GCSE Qualifications (graded 9 to 1) in Modern Foreign Languages
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# Guidance in relation to subject content for GCSE Qualifications in Modern Foreign Languages

The subject content for GCSE Qualifications (graded 9 to 1) in Modern Foreign Languages is set out in the Department for Education's *Modern foreign languages: GCSE Subject Content*, document reference DFE-00348-2014 (the 'Content Document')<sup>2</sup>.

Condition GCSE(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 GCSE(Modern Foreign Languages)1.1(c) below.

## Length of translation exercises

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

'translate a short passage from the assessed language into English' as part of the assessment of their ability to understand and respond to written language,

and

'translate sentences and short texts from English into the assessed language' as part of the assessment of their ability to communicate in writing.

We expect the length of any such 'short passage' or 'short text' in an assessment to be –

- for GCSE Qualifications in Chinese or Japanese:
  - for the foundation tier, a minimum of 35 characters for translation from Chinese or Japanese into English, and a minimum of 20 words for translation from English into Chinese or Japanese, and

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<sup>2</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-modern-foreign-languages](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-modern-foreign-languages)

- for the higher tier, a minimum of 50 characters for translation from Chinese or Japanese into English, and a minimum of 35 words for translation from English into Chinese or Japanese.
- for GCSE Qualifications in Russian:
  - for the foundation tier, a minimum of 25 words for translation from Russian in English, and a minimum of 35 words for translation from English into Russian, and
  - for the higher tier, a minimum of 35 words for translation from Russian in to English, and a minimum of 50 words for translation from English into Russian.
- for GCSE Qualifications in French, German or Spanish:
  - for the foundation tier, a minimum of 35 words, and
  - for the higher tier, a minimum of 50 words.

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

- its approach to the length of 'short passages' and 'short texts' at each of the foundation and higher tiers, and
- how that approach will achieve a Level of Demand for translation tasks consistent with that of the GCSE Qualifications in Modern Foreign Languages in relation to which we have provided specific guidance above.

## **Length of extended written text in reading assessment**

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

'recognise and respond to key information, important themes and ideas in more extended written text and authentic sources, including some extracts from relevant abridged or adapted literary texts'.

We expect an awarding organisation to interpret the reference to an 'extended written text' as being to a text which is –

- for GCSE Qualifications in Chinese or Japanese:

- for the foundation tier, a minimum of 80 characters in length, and
- for the higher tier, a minimum of 130 characters in length.
- for GCSE Qualifications in Russian:
  - for the foundation tier, a minimum of 65 words in length, and
  - for the higher tier, a minimum of 105 words in length.
- for GCSE Qualifications in French, German or Spanish:
  - for the foundation tier, a minimum of 90 words in length, and
  - for the higher tier, a minimum of 150 words in length.

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

- its approach to the length of 'extended written texts' at each of the foundation and higher tiers and
- how that approach will achieve a Level of Demand for reading tasks consistent with that of the GCSE Qualifications in Modern Foreign Languages in relation to which we have provided specific guidance above.

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

Condition GCSE(Modern Foreign Languages)3.1 allows us to specify requirements and guidance in relation to assessments for GCSE Qualifications in Modern Foreign Languages.

We set out our guidance for the purposes of Condition GCSE(Modern Foreign Languages)3.1 below.

### Vocabulary lists

Provided that the requirements set out in the *GCSE 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 GCSE 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

Condition GCSE(Modern Foreign Languages)4.3(b) states that an awarding organisation must ensure that each Learner completes the assessment of his or her ability to speak a Modern Foreign Language effectively within an assessment period of up to five weeks in 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 GCSE Qualifications in Modern Foreign Languages

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

We published our requirements in relation to assessment objectives in *GCSE Subject Level Conditions and Requirements for Modern Foreign Languages*, and reproduce assessment objectives AO1 to AO4 and their respective weightings in the table below.

	Objective	Weighting
<b>AO1</b>	Listening – understand and respond to different types of spoken language.	25%
<b>AO2</b>	Speaking – communicate and interact effectively in speech.	25%
<b>AO3</b>	Reading – understand and respond to different types of written language.	25%
<b>AO4</b>	Writing – communicate in writing.	25%

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

- the discrete ‘elements’ within each assessment objective 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 GCSE(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: Listening – understand and respond to different types of spoken language			25%
Strands	Elements	Coverage	Interpretations and definitions
n/a	This AO is a single element.	Full coverage in each set of assessments <sup>3</sup> (but not in every assessment).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The <b>different types of spoken language</b> are aspects of subject content. Awarding organisations should explain their approach to targeting them in their assessment strategies.</li> <li>■ It is not possible to assess Learners' ability to 'understand' and 'respond to' spoken language separately. Rather, Learners should demonstrate their understanding through their responses.</li> <li>■ Responses should be written, either in the assessed language or in English.</li> <li>■ Responses to questions in the assessed language may include (but are not limited to): single letters, numbers and/or percentages in figures, names, single words and/or phrases in the assessed language.</li> <li>■ Responses should only assess the skill of understanding spoken language. Responses in the assessed language should not be assessed for quality of language, but purely for comprehension.</li> <li>■ Where questions and/or rubrics are set in the assessed language, the reading requirements in those questions and/or rubrics should not be beyond the level of the language in the listening material, in terms of both complexity and length.</li> </ul>

<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 GCSE Qualification in a Modern Foreign Language. For clarity, the assessments taken by Learners may vary, depending on any possible routes through the qualification.

AO1: Listening – understand and respond to different types of spoken language			25%
Strands	Elements	Coverage	Interpretations and definitions
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It should be noted that the Department for Education’s <i>Modern Languages: GCSE Subject Content</i> states that all questions and task instructions in assessments for qualifications in languages using logographic systems – such as Mandarin Chinese and Japanese – must be set in English, as the sole use of hanzi or kanji is deemed too challenging at GCSE.</li> </ul>

AO2: Speaking – communicate and interact effectively in speech			25%
Strands	Elements	Coverage	Interpretations and definitions
n/a	1a – Communicate in speech.	Full coverage in each set of assessments (but not in every assessment).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Communicate</b> means conveying information, which includes but is not limited to: presentation, speech and monologue.</li> <li>■ <b>Interact</b> includes but is not limited to: conversation, discussion, answering and asking questions, and exchanging opinions.</li> <li>■ Communicate and interact should generally be assessed together.</li> <li>■ Some tasks may assess communication only. However, there should be follow-up interaction for example questions and discussion.</li> <li>■ The emphasis here should be on Learners' fluency in their use of spoken language, rather than on accuracy. Learners attempting more complex language and/or demonstrating increased spontaneity should not be penalised if the language is less accurate.</li> <li>■ It should be noted that the Department for Education's <i>Modern Languages: GCSE Subject Content</i> states that all questions and task instructions in assessments for qualifications in languages using logographic systems – such as Mandarin Chinese and Japanese – must be set in English, as the sole use of hanzi or kanji is deemed too challenging at GCSE.</li> </ul>
	1b – Interact in speech.		

AO3: Reading – understand and respond to different types of written language			25%
Strands	Elements	Coverage	Interpretations and definitions
n/a	This AO is a single element.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Full coverage in each set of assessments (but not in every assessment).</li> <li>■ 10% to 15% of marks for AO3 for questions/tasks requiring translation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The <b>different types of written language</b> are aspects of subject content. Awarding organisations should explain their approach to targeting them in their assessment strategies.</li> <li>■ It is not possible to assess Learners' ability to 'understand' and 'respond to' written language separately. Rather, Learners should demonstrate their understanding through their responses.</li> <li>■ Responses should be written, either in the assessed language or in English.</li> <li>■ Responses to questions in the assessed language may include (but are not limited to): single letters, numbers and/or percentages in figures, names, single words and/or phrases in the assessed language.</li> <li>■ Responses should only assess the skill of understanding written language. Responses in the assessed language should not be assessed for quality of language, but purely for comprehension.</li> <li>■ Where questions and/or rubrics are set in the assessed language, the reading requirements in those questions and/or rubrics should not be beyond the level of the language in the reading material and/or texts, in terms of both complexity and length.</li> <li>■ It should be noted that the Department for Education's <i>Modern Languages: GCSE Subject Content</i> states that all questions and task instructions in assessments for qualifications in languages using logographic systems – such as Mandarin Chinese and Japanese – must be set in English, as the sole use of hanzi or kanji is deemed too challenging at GCSE.</li> </ul>

AO4: Writing – communicate in writing.			25%
Strands	Elements	Coverage	Interpretations and definitions
n/a	This AO is a single element.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Full coverage in each set of assessments (but not in every assessment).</li> <li>■ 20% of marks for AO4 for questions/tasks requiring translation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Communicate</b> means conveying information in writing.</li> <li>■ Awarding organisations should explain in their assessment strategies how they will assess Learners’ ability to communicate in writing “for a variety of purposes across a range of specified contexts” (as required by the Content Document).</li> <li>■ It should be noted that the Department for Education’s <i>Modern Languages: GCSE Subject Content</i> states that all questions and task instructions in assessments for qualifications in languages using logographic systems – such as Mandarin Chinese and Japanese – must be set in English, as the sole use of hanzi or kanji is deemed too challenging at GCSE.</li> </ul>

# Appendix 1: Revisions to this document

The table below sets out when the GCSE Subject Level Guidance for Modern Foreign Languages initially came into force and when it was subsequently revised.

Revisions	Date in force
Republished as <i>GCSE Subject Guidance for Modern Foreign Languages</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Extended applicability to all GCSEs (graded 9 to 1) in modern foreign language subjects</li><li>■ Guidance in relation to subject content (amendment)</li><li>■ Guidance in relation to assessment objectives (amendment)</li></ul>	18 April 2016
First edition (published as <i>GCSE Subject Level Guidance for Modern Foreign Languages (French, German, Spanish)</i> )	6th February 2015



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