

**EXPERT GROUP REPORT  
FOR  
AWARD SEEKING ADMISSION  
TO  
THE UCAS TARIFF**

***OCR ASSET LANGUAGE ADVANCED STAGE  
SPEAKING, LISTENING, READING AND WRITING  
QUALIFICATIONS***

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## THE CONDUCT OF THE COMPARABILITY STUDY

In order to ensure a robust and transparent procedure for allocating UCAS Tariff Points to qualifications seeking admission to the framework, UCAS approached the University of Oxford, Department of Educational Studies for assistance in developing an appropriate methodology.

Acknowledging the problematic nature of comparability studies, and recognising that a mechanical procedure would not work, the Department proposed a procedure based on the premise that such comparisons can only be achieved through the exercise of collaborative judgement by an Expert Group.

Guidelines were drawn up for the composition of the Expert Group, the evidence that would need to be collected and examined and the choice of a benchmark qualification.

Procedures were developed for the conduct of the work of the Expert Group, including detailed sets of questions to be addressed at different stages in the process. Questions appropriate to the awards under consideration are selected and are used to guide, not constrain, the work of the Expert Group.

The judgements made by the Expert Group in this report are presented as suggested allocations of UCAS points which take account of the size and demand of the award seeking admission to the Tariff, and a candidate's level of attainment within that award. The guidelines also provide for an automatic review process to be conducted at a later stage in the light of further evidence. This latter point acknowledges the fact that both benchmark qualifications and those seeking admission to the Tariff may still be relatively new. Consequently, there may only be a relatively small amount of evidence (particularly candidate evidence) available at the time of the work of the Expert Group. There is, therefore, a need to review the decisions of the Group when more evidence becomes available and when HE admissions tutors have gained more experience of using the awards as entry qualifications.

The work of the Expert Group is subject to a quality assurance procedure by an independent auditor from higher education.



## SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There are four separate qualifications within the overall suite of Asset Languages: Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Writing, reported at Grades 10, 11 and 12. The Group was split into two sub-groups: one considering Speaking and Listening, and the other appraising Reading and Writing.

Both sub-groups confirmed the relevance of these qualifications for progression to HE and judged each qualification to reflect roughly a quarter of an A level. Therefore, the total number of Tariff points awarded to all four Asset qualifications could not exceed 120 points as this is the score awarded to the A grade at A level. Therefore, the maximum Tariff values that could be assigned to the Asset Language grade 12 would be 30 points.

The Groups did not wish to distinguish between productive and receptive skills in considering utility for progression to HE. However, it was determined that Speaking incorporated both productive and receptive skills and thus had slightly greater utility. As a result, the experts considered that this qualification warranted a greater number of UCAS points than the others.

During the meeting, the work of the two sub-groups produced slightly different suggestions to the Reading, Writing and Listening qualifications. Subsequent consultation upon the outcomes from the meeting resulted in a rationalisation of scores.

The Expert Group, therefore, recommended the following allocation of UCAS Tariff points:

	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
Speaking	12	20	28
Listening	11	18	25
Reading	11	18	25
Writing	11	18	25

These recommendations were subject to the caveat that judgements made at this stage are necessarily provisional, and should be reviewed as soon as sufficient candidate evidence is available. It is anticipated that UCAS will undertake a review of candidate evidence during 2011.

The recommendations were confirmed as appropriate by both the Tariff Reference and Advisory Groups and endorsed by the UCAS Board in December 2008.



## SECTION 1: THE COMPOSITION OF THE EXPERT GROUPS

The following individuals with expert knowledge and experience of the qualifications under consideration in this study were selected to form the Expert Groups:

### Speaking and Listening

- Olga M. Gómez, Admissions Tutor, Department of European Languages and Cultures, Lancaster University
- Dr Paul Lewis-Smith, Senior Lecturer in Hispanic Studies, Bristol University
- George Mann, Director, Centre for Intercultural Communication (CICC), UWE
- Vivienne May, Asset OCR Integration Manager , OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)
- Tony Woolstone, Chair of Examiners Spanish GCE A level, AQA

### Reading and Writing

- Clelia Boscolo, Language Courses Coordinator, Department of Italian Studies, University of Birmingham
- Christine Peakman, Languages Qualifications Manager, OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)
- Dr Elisabeth Planella, Languages Leader, University of Bolton
- Gareth Roberts, Chief Examiner for AS/A French, WJEC
- Vlad Strukov, Lecturer, University of Leeds

UCAS staff acted as facilitators and secretaries for the meetings, ensuring that the Group worked systematically through the procedures.

The whole process was overseen and quality assured by Dr Geoff Hayward, an independent higher education based consultant.

In addition to the experts mentioned above, Alan Wingfield, Regional Stakeholder Manager (North & Scotland) from OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations) was also in attendance.

CVs of the experts within the group are attached as Appendix 1.



## SECTION 2: OVERVIEW OF THE AWARDS SEEKING ADMISSION TO THE UCAS TARIFF

### 2.1 Aims and purpose of the qualifications

Asset Languages qualifications are provided by OCR as an assessment scheme for the DCSF Languages Ladder within the National Languages Strategy.

A key feature of the scheme is that for each language the separate skills – speaking, listening, reading, and writing - form individual qualifications. This is intended to reflect the uneven skills performance of most language learners and allows a detailed description of the language proficiency of each candidate.

Asset Languages is a voluntary assessment scheme, suitable for all ages and abilities. The scheme is designed as a measure of proficiency and is, therefore, compatible with any programme of study.

It can sit alongside entry level, GCSE or vocationally-related qualifications. By being portable it is intended to support lifelong learning of languages from primary school through secondary to further, higher and adult education. It also recognises that languages are not acquired solely within the context of the mainstream educational system.

Advanced is the fourth of six progressive stages on the Languages Ladder. Asset Languages Advanced Stage qualifications in each of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing have been accredited by QCA for twelve languages at Level 3.

The separate testing of skills means that candidates have the choice of which qualification, in which skill and which stage of proficiency, to present themselves for. Candidates are encouraged to enter when ready and so they may take all four skills but spread their tests over time. There are five assessment windows throughout the year.

Across the four skills, the specifications are designed to give students opportunities to:

- develop an understanding of standard spoken and written forms of their chosen language in a variety of registers and contexts, on a variety of subjects
- develop the ability to communicate effectively on a range of subjects, using increasingly accurate, complex and varied language
- develop positive attitudes towards language learning.





There are four further assessment objectives, each corresponding to the appropriate skill and qualification.

### **Listening**

Understand extended, authentically-based speech extracts spoken at near normal speed in a variety of registers, and follow structured lines of argument relating to concrete and abstract topics.

### **Speaking**

Communicate and respond to spoken language with some fluency and spontaneity, presenting and sustaining a viewpoint in discussion.

### **Reading**

Understand the main ideas and viewpoints of authentically-based texts in a variety of registers on both concrete and abstract topics.

### **Writing**

Write clear, structured texts on a range of subjects, including examining and sustaining different points of view.

## **2.2 History of the qualifications**

The National Languages Strategy was launched by the Government in 2002 with three aims:

- to improve the teaching and learning of languages, including delivering an entitlement to language learning for pupils at Key Stage 2
- to increase the number of people studying languages in further and higher education and in work-based training by stimulating demand for language learning
- to introduce a recognition system to complement existing qualification frameworks and give people credit for their language skills.

The Languages Ladder is a national scale of measurement that the DCSF has developed to support the National Languages Strategy. Asset Languages is the voluntary assessment scheme which Cambridge Assessment has developed on behalf of the DCSF.

The Advanced qualifications are relatively new. French was offered for the first time in November 2006, Spanish and German followed in March 2007. Nine further languages were offered in 2007 - 8 with three more planned for 2008 - 2009.

## **2.3 Entry requirements for the qualifications**



There are no formal entry requirements for the qualifications. In principle the qualifications are available to anyone who is capable of reaching the required standards. In order to allow skills to be separately assessed, the testing vehicle for comprehension in Listening and Reading is English.

## 2.4 Age of candidates

The complementary nature of the scheme means that Asset Languages is intended to attract a very wide range of learners. So far, at Advanced Stage, candidates have tended to be learners at Adult Education Centres or Year 11 students in schools.

## 2.5 Guided Learning Hours (GLH)

QCA recommend a nominal 50 guided learning hours to each Advanced qualification (Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing). This figure assumes a learner will study the language from a Level 2 (Intermediate Stage) base. Where languages present particular issues in script acquisition, additional Guided Learning Hours may be necessary for progress in Reading and Writing.

## 2.6 Content and structure of the qualification

The structural content of tests at Asset Languages Advanced Stage is based on the QCA's GCE AS and A level subject criteria for modern foreign languages. The level of demand in each of the four skills, according to the specification, has also been defined in relation to the performance descriptors of level B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

Each qualification, Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing, is awarded on the basis of a single assessment. All papers are based on the specification content. Language-specific content is published in separate supplements available on the website. Asset Languages is a proficiency qualification, there is no defined syllabus or programme of study on which learners are being tested.

## 2.7 Assessment – procedures, methods and levels

In order to achieve a formal qualification, candidates must be entered for external assessment. External assessment recognises the achievement of the candidate through a grading structure which is based on 'can do' statements. The 'can do' statements form part of the DCSF's National Language Strategy and describes typical behaviour of a candidate at that stage (Table 1).

*Table 1: Asset Languages Advanced Stage 'can do' statements*

Listening 'can do' statements	
Grade 10	I can understand the main points of an authentic spoken passage or conversation involving one or more speakers.
Grade 11	I can understand the main points of authentic spoken passages and conversations in a range of different contexts.



Grade 12	I can identify the majority of points and am able to infer the meaning of a range of authentic passages and conversations spoken at near native speed.
<b>Speaking 'can do' statements</b>	
Grade 10	I can give a presentation on a chosen theme and respond readily to questions.
Grade 11	I can give a presentation on a chosen theme and argue my viewpoints with some degree of success.
Grade 12	I can participate in discussions relating to a variety of situations and topics, taking the initiative where appropriate.
<b>Reading 'can do' statements</b>	
Grade 10	I can understand authentic written texts of moderate length and complexity. I can produce a summary covering the majority of points.
Grade 11	I can understand authentic texts of some degree of complexity and abstraction in a range of different contexts. I can produce a summary covering most essential points.
Grade 12	I can understand and am able to infer the meaning of a range of more complex texts. I can produce a detailed report covering all essential points.
<b>Writing 'can do' statements</b>	
Grade 10	I can structure my writing to produce a coherent text, in an appropriate register, for a specific purpose eg a letter to an employer or an account of a visit.
Grade 11	I can write coherent text, in an appropriate register, for different purposes, including communicating information, ideas and opinions eg a review, an article or a report.
Grade 12	I can write extended text using a wide range of language in a variety of registers covering more specialised contexts eg work-related or in a specialised area of study.

Each external assessment comprises a single short test covering the entire stage. External assessment in Reading, Writing and Listening is work set and marked by OCR. Speaking is assessed through a selection of OCR tasks and a presentation. It is assessed by a teacher and externally moderated.

### Listening and Reading assessment

The external assessment tasks in Listening and Reading are intended to test comprehension. Rubrics and questions are all in English.

Answers are non-verbal and optically marked, so there is no examiner discretion in the mark scheme. Successful candidates are awarded a grade which corresponds to the mark obtained as described in the 'can do' statement. A candidate failing to reach the lower threshold is awarded U.

### Speaking and Writing assessment

Speaking and Writing assessments require the level of achievement to be measured against performance criteria. Each speaking and writing test is in two parts. For each part of these tests, the candidate is awarded two equally weighted marks, one for Language and one for Communication, based on a grid of descriptors provided by OCR. Thus a total of four marks are awarded.

Marks can be awarded in three bands: 1, 2 and 3. Each band is then subdivided into three levels, eg 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3. This shows, within each band, that the level has been minimally achieved (3.1), partially achieved (3.2) or fully achieved (3.3). A candidate failing to reach the lower threshold is awarded U.



Each assessment is offered in five testing series during each academic year, in November, January, March, May and June. Candidates are encouraged to enter when ready to achieve the top grade of the stage.

Dictionaries are not permitted in any assessments, though words may be glossed where appropriate.

### *Listening*

- 40 minutes assessment (including time to transfer answers to answer sheets).
- 25 questions: each worth one mark.
- Task types ordered so that less demanding tasks appear earlier in the paper.
- Texts vary in length, including monologues and short and longer dialogues, such as informal conversations and formal interviews, from a range of adapted authentic sources.
- Candidates hear all spoken materials twice.

### *Speaking*

- 13 minutes assessment.
- Teacher assessed and internally standardised before being returned to OCR for moderation.
- One to one test.
- The teacher follows an interlocutor frame in order to facilitate the marking and external moderation of assessments.
- A range of stimulus materials is provided and the teacher must use the whole range across the cohort of candidates.
- Candidates have no prior knowledge of content and no choice of materials beyond their own selection of a presentation topic which is prepared in advance.

### *Reading*

- Tasks intended to test comprehension.
- Rubrics are all in English and questions in English and/or the target language.
- 50 minutes assessment.
- Variety of different types of text and task – each question worth one mark.
- Task types ordered so that less demanding tasks appear earlier in the paper.
- Candidates are required to read texts of varying length, including messages and short and longer articles from a range of adapted authentic sources.

### *Writing*

60 minute assessment in two parts:

- Part one



- Transfer of meaning into a letter or email.
  - Candidates given a short stimulus text in the target language, with notes in English.
  - Text and notes indicate the context and the essential content of the stimulus, and five points to be communicated.
  - Candidates respond to five key points in form of email or short letter (100–120 words) in the target language.
- Part two
    - One task selected from a choice of three. Tasks may include an article, letter (formal or informal), review, short story or online diary.
    - Text drawn from a range of types and contexts.
    - Instructions given in English and in the target language at a level of complexity below Advanced Stage.
    - 180–200 words in the target language.

## 2.8 Grading

Separate approaches to grading are taken for the Reading and Listening papers, which have multiple-choice items, and the Speaking and Writing papers, which are examiner marked.

For the receptive skills (listening and reading), an item-banking approach is taken, with item difficulties determined using the Rasch model and calibrated to a common scale using teacher estimates of the candidates' levels. Cut-off ability levels for each Asset grade are defined to reflect a larger observable rate of progression at lower levels, flattening off at the higher end of achievement. Grade thresholds for each paper are determined using these cut-offs.

For Speaking and Writing, marking criteria are used by the examiners to grade candidates within one of 3 bands for each grade. Separate parts of the assessments are then weighted to give an overall grade for the paper.

## 2.9 Quality assurance processes for Asset Languages

Quality assurance of Asset Languages qualifications is ensured through a system of procedures and processes as defined by OCR.

Support for teachers who conduct and mark Speaking tests is provided in the form of a DVD of candidate performances with commentaries.

For Speaking and Writing, moderators and examiners attend standardisation meetings to ensure the standard of marking and moderating is uniform across



marking teams. Cross-language standardisation meetings are also held to ensure standards are equivalent across different languages and skills.

For the receptive skills the quality assurance process is embedded in the setting of items and papers, and in the threshold setting process. Once candidate scores for Reading and Listening have been obtained, papers are graded and results scrutinised by a statistical screening process.



## SECTION 3: OVERVIEW OF THE BENCHMARK AWARD

### 3A WJEC GCE FRENCH A LEVEL

#### 3A.1 Aims and purpose of the qualification

The specification for AS and A level French is designed to encourage students to:

- develop an interest in, and enthusiasm for, language learning
- develop understanding of the language in a variety of contexts and genres
- communicate confidently, clearly and effectively in the language for a range of purposes
- develop awareness and understanding of the contemporary society, cultural background and heritage of countries or communities where the language is spoken
- consider their study of the language in a broader context.

The specification is designed to encourage students to:

- derive enjoyment and benefit from language learning
- acquire knowledge, skills and understanding for practical use, further study and/or employment
- communicate with speakers of the language
- take their place in a multilingual global society.

The specification is also designed to provide a coherent, satisfying and worthwhile course of study for students who do not progress to further study in the subject and to provide a sufficient basis for the further study of languages at degree level or equivalent.

#### 3A.2 History of the qualification

The WJEC AS and A2 Modern Foreign Languages specification has been modified and updated for delivery from September 2008. The first AS awards will be made in summer 2009 and the first A level awards in summer 2010. The new specification has been designed in direct response to regulatory changes.

#### 3A.3 Entry requirements for the qualification

There is no specific requirement for prior learning, although many candidates would have already gained a knowledge and understanding and have developed a range of language skills, through their study of French at GCSE. The specification may be followed by all candidates, irrespective of their gender or ethnic, religious or cultural background.



### **3A.4 Age of candidates**

This specification is not age specific and can be followed by candidates of any age.

### **3A.5 Guided Learning Hours (GLH)**

As with all subjects and all A level specifications, QCA guidance states that AS GCE Modern Foreign Languages A level requires 180 Guided Learning Hours in total. Advanced GCE Modern Foreign Languages A level requires 360 Guided Learning Hours in total.

### **3A.6 Content and structure of the qualification**

AS candidates will be required to:

- listen and respond to a variety of spoken sources, including authentic sources
- read and respond to a variety of written texts, including authentic sources, covering different contexts, registers, styles and genres
- adapt their spoken and written language appropriately for different situations and purposes
- use the language accurately to express facts and ideas, and to present explanations, opinions and information in both speech and writing
- understand and apply the grammatical system and a range of structures as detailed in the AS specification
- transfer meaning from foreign language into English/Welsh.

In addition, A level candidates will be required to:

- use the language to present viewpoints, develop arguments, analyse and evaluate, in speech and writing
- understand and apply the grammatical system and a range of structures as detailed in the A level specification
- study aspects of the contemporary society, cultural background and heritage of one or more of the countries or communities whose language is being studied
- transfer meaning from English/Welsh into the foreign language.

Language topics covered in the specification are staged over two years. Language teaching and learning is embedded in the cultural heritage and current lifestyle of the country in which it is spoken. Topics provide a general framework for teaching the language – they are studied with reference to target language countries as well as in a wider, global context as appropriate.

Two groups of topics are specified for the AS and a further two (including the AS topics) are specified for the A2.





Table 2: WJEC Modern Foreign Languages A level topics

Advanced Subsidiary		Advanced	
Leisure and lifestyles	including travel and tourism, sport, hobbies, entertainment, customs, traditions, healthy living – health and nutrition, diet and exercise; unhealthy living - drugs, aids, smoking, alcohol, etc.	Environmental issues	including technology, pollution, global warming, transport, energy, nuclear energy, renewable energies, conservation, recycling, sustainability.
The individual and society	including relationships and responsibilities, gender issues, youth culture (values, peer groups, fashions and trends etc.), education, vocational training and future careers.	Social and political issues	including the role of the media, racism, immigration, social exclusion and integration, terrorism, world of work (employment, commerce, globalisation etc.).

### 3A.7 Assessment – procedures, methods and levels

#### Assessment objectives

Candidates must meet the following assessment objectives in the context of the content detailed in Section 3A.6.

- AO1 Understand and respond, in speech and writing, to spoken language.
- AO2 Understand and respond, in speech and writing, to written language.
- AO3 Show knowledge of and apply accurately the grammar and syntax prescribed.

#### Assessment methods

Table 3: WJEC Modern Foreign Languages A level assessment methods

	Weighting	Duration	Total marks	Marks per AO		
				AO1	AO2	AO3
<b>FN1</b> Oral	20%	15 mins	60	50	0	10
<b>FN2</b> Listening, Reading and Writing	30%	3 hrs	98	8	60	30
<b>FN3</b> Oral	20%	15-20 mins	60	30	20	10
<b>FN4</b> Listening, Reading and Writing	30%	3 hrs	100	16	52	30

- There will be two sittings a year (January and May) for AS, paper FN2 only.
- There will only be one annual sitting (June) for A2 and for the FN1 oral test.

#### Synoptic assessment

Synoptic assessment, testing candidates' understanding of the connections between the different elements of the subject and their holistic understanding of the subject, is a requirement of all A level specifications.

Knowledge, understanding and skills in MFL are closely linked. Synoptic assessment covers both knowledge of the language and skills in using it that have been developed in different parts of the A level course. Candidates will demonstrate understanding and the ability to use advanced level language skills in one or more tasks. Synoptic assessment in MFL will draw on all A level assessment objectives.



### 3A.8 Grading

The overall grades for the GCE AS qualification are graded A to E, whilst the overall grades for the GCE A level qualification are recorded on a grade scale from A\* to E. Results not attaining the minimum standard for the award of a grade will be reported as U (Unclassified). At A level, grade A\* will be awarded to candidates who have achieved a grade A in the overall A level qualification and an A\* on the aggregate of their A2 units.

Performance descriptions illustrate expectations at the A/B and E/U boundaries of the AS and A2 as a whole; they have not been written at unit level. Grade A/B and E/U boundaries should be set using professional judgement. The judgement should reflect the quality of candidates' work, informed by the available technical and statistical evidence. Performance descriptions are designed to assist examiners in exercising their professional judgement. They should be interpreted and applied in the context of individual specifications and their associated units. However, performance descriptions are not designed to define the content of specifications and units.

The requirement for all AS and A level specifications to assess candidates' quality of written communication will be met through one or more of the assessment objectives. The performance descriptions have been produced by the regulatory authorities in collaboration with the awarding bodies.

*Table 4: Modern Foreign Languages A level AS grade descriptions*

	<b>Assessment Objective 1</b>	<b>Assessment Objective 2</b>	<b>Assessment Objective 3</b>
<b>Assessment objectives</b>	Understand and respond, in speech and writing, to spoken language.	Understand and respond, in speech and writing to written language.	Show knowledge of and apply accurately the grammar and syntax prescribed in the specification.
<b>A/B boundary performance descriptions</b>	In the context of materials appropriate to the AS specification, candidates characteristically: a) show a clear understanding of spoken language b) understand the main points and details, including points of view c) are able to infer meaning with only a few omissions d) are able to develop their ideas, and express points of view, with some appropriate justification e) respond readily and fluently and take the	In the context of materials appropriate to the AS specification, candidates characteristically: a) show a clear understanding of a range of written texts b) understand the main points and details, including points of view c) are able to infer meaning with only a few omissions d) are able to develop their ideas, and express points of view, with some appropriate justification e) respond readily and fluently and take the	In the context of grammar and syntax listed in the AS specification, candidates characteristically: a) make effective use of a range of vocabulary and structures appropriate to the task b) The deployment of grammar, syntax and morphology is generally accurate c) are able to manipulate language appropriately when required.



	<p>initiative (speaking)</p> <p>f) have generally accurate pronunciation and intonation (speaking)</p> <p>g) are able to deal with unpredictable elements (speaking)</p> <p>h) show the ability to organise and structure their response coherently (writing)</p> <p>i) offer relevant information which addresses the requirements of the task (writing).</p>	<p>initiative (speaking)</p> <p>f) have generally accurate pronunciation and intonation (speaking)</p> <p>g) show the ability to organise and structure their response coherently (writing)</p> <p>h) offer relevant information which addresses the requirements of the task (writing).</p>	
<b>E/U boundary performance descriptions</b>	<p>In the context of materials appropriate to the AS specification, candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a) show some understanding of basic, often concrete, spoken language, while experiencing difficulties with more complex and abstract language</p> <p>b) understand some of the main points and details, including basic points of view</p> <p>c) have a limited ability to infer meaning where appropriate to the task</p> <p>d) are able to convey some basic information when transferring meaning</p> <p>e) may be hesitant in their response and their fluency is mostly confined to pre-learned material. Their target language performance may be influenced by their first language (speaking)</p> <p>f) may have some difficulty communicating factual information, narrating events and expressing basic points of view in response to the task set, and do not always address the requirements of the task (writing)</p> <p>g) show some ability to structure and organise their response where appropriate.</p>	<p>In the context of materials appropriate to the AS specification, candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a) show some understanding of straightforward written texts, but experience difficulties with more complex and abstract language</p> <p>b) understand some of the main points and details, including limited points of view</p> <p>c) have a limited ability to infer meaning where appropriate to the task</p> <p>d) are able to convey some basic information when transferring meaning</p> <p>e) may be hesitant in their response and their fluency is mostly confined to pre-learned material. Their target language performance may be influenced by their first language (speaking)</p> <p>f) may have some difficulty communicating factual information, narrating events and expressing basic points of view in response to the task set, and do not always address the requirements of the task (writing)</p> <p>g) show some ability to structure and organise their response where appropriate.</p>	<p>In the context of grammar and syntax listed in the AS specification, candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a) use a restricted range of vocabulary and structures</p> <p>b) have language characterised by frequent errors in grammar, syntax and morphology</p> <p>c) may be influenced by the first language</p> <p>d) demonstrate a very limited ability to manipulate language where required.</p>



Table 5: Modern Foreign Languages A2 grade descriptions

	Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2	Assessment Objective 3
<b>Assessment objectives</b>	Understand and respond, in speech and writing, to spoken language.	Understand and respond, in speech and writing to written language	Show knowledge of and apply accurately the grammar and syntax prescribed in the specification.
<b>A/B boundary performance descriptions</b>	In the context of materials appropriate to the A level specification, candidates characteristically: a) show a clear understanding of spoken language b) understand the main points and details, including points of view c) demonstrate an ability to infer meaning d) are able to transfer meaning with only minor omissions e) are able to develop their ideas, and express and justify points of view effectively f) respond readily and fluently and take the initiative ( <i>speaking</i> ) g) have generally accurate pronunciation and intonation ( <i>speaking</i> ) h) are able to deal appropriately with unpredictable elements ( <i>speaking</i> ) i) show the ability to organise and structure their response coherently ( <i>writing</i> ) j) offer relevant information which addresses the requirements of the task ( <i>writing</i> ).	In the context of materials appropriate to the A level specification, candidates characteristically: a) show a clear understanding of a range of written texts b) understand the main points and details, including points of view, and are able to infer meaning c) demonstrate an ability to infer meaning d) are able to transfer meaning with only minor omissions e) are able to develop their ideas, and express and justify points of view effectively f) respond readily and fluently and take the initiative ( <i>speaking</i> ) g) have generally accurate pronunciation and intonation ( <i>speaking</i> ) h) are able to deal appropriately with unpredictable elements ( <i>speaking</i> ) i) show the ability to organise and structure their response coherently ( <i>writing</i> ).	In the context of materials appropriate to the A level specification candidates characteristically: a) make effective use of a wide range of vocabulary and a variety of complex structures as appropriate b) predominantly use grammar, syntax and morphology in an accurate way c) are able to manipulate language accurately and appropriately where required.
<b>E/U boundary performance descriptions</b>	In the context of materials appropriate to the A level specification, candidates characteristically: a) show some understanding of spoken usually concrete language, but may experience difficulty with more complex and abstract language b) understand some of the main points and details, including basic points of view c) demonstrate a limited ability to infer meaning, where appropriate, to the	In the context of materials appropriate to the A level specification, candidates characteristically: a) show some understanding of a range of written texts, usually straightforward, but may experience difficulty with more complex and abstract language b) understand some of the main points and details, including basic points of view c) demonstrate a limited ability to infer meaning, where appropriate, to the	In the context of grammar and syntax listed in the A level specification, candidates characteristically: a) use a restricted range of vocabulary and structures. The deployment of grammar, syntax and morphology contains frequent error and may be influenced by their first language. b) demonstrate a very limited ability to manipulate language correctly when required.



	<p>task</p> <p>d) are able to convey the basic information when transferring meaning</p> <p>e) may be hesitant in their response and their fluency is mostly confined to prelearnt material. Their target language performance may be influenced by their first language (speaking)</p> <p>f) may have some difficulty communicating factual information, narrative events and expressing basic points of view in response to the task set, and do not always address the requirements of the task appropriately (writing)</p> <p>g) show some ability of structure and organise their response, where appropriate.</p>	<p>task</p> <p>d) are able to convey the basic information when transferring meaning</p> <p>e) may be hesitant in their response and their fluency is mostly confined to prelearnt material. Their target language performance may be influenced by their first language (speaking)</p> <p>f) may have some difficulty communicating factual information, narrative events and expressing basic points of view in response to the task set and do not always address the requirements of the task appropriately</p> <p>g) show some ability of structure and organise their response, where appropriate.</p>	
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### 3A.9 QA systems and code of practice

The quality assurance procedures are those specified in the relevant, latest edition of the regulatory authorities' code of practice. These procedures relate to the setting, marking, awarding and appeal procedures.



## **3B AQA GCE SPANISH A LEVEL**

### **3B.1 Aims and purpose of the qualification**

Courses leading to this qualification should encourage students to:

- develop an interest in, and enthusiasm for, language learning
- develop understanding of the language in a variety of contexts and genres
- communicate confidently, clearly and effectively in the language for a variety of purposes
- develop awareness and understanding of the contemporary society, cultural background and heritage of countries and communities where Spanish is spoken
- consider their study of the language in a broader context.

The specification should enable students to:

- derive enjoyment and benefit from language learning
- acquire knowledge, skills and understanding for practical use, further study and/or employment
- communicate with speakers of the language
- take their place in a multilingual global society
- have a coherent, satisfying and worthwhile course of study (AS students)
- study Spanish further at degree level or equivalent (A level students).

### **3B.2 History of the qualification**

This is a new specification for first teaching from September 2008, replacing the specification established by Curriculum 2000. It consists of either a one year stand alone AS course or a two-year full A level consisting of the AS and A2 courses. First examination for AS level will be in 2009, whilst first examination for A2 will be in 2010.

### **3B.3 Entry requirements for the qualification**

There are no prior learning requirements although it is recommended that students have already gained a knowledge and understanding and have developed a range of language skills, through their study of Spanish at GCSE or equivalent. However, any entry requirements are at the discretion of individual learning institutions.

### **3B.4 Age of candidates**

There are no age limits or restrictions; however exams will be set with content appropriate for notional 17 year olds (AS) and 18 year olds (A2).

### **3B.5 Guided Learning Hours (GLH)**

There are no recommended GLH for the qualification, although the majority of students will follow 1 year full-time academic courses.



### 3B.6 Content and structure of the qualification

Two groups of topics are specified for the AS and a further two (including the AS topics) are specified for the A2.

Table 6: AQA GCE Spanish A level topics

AS topics		A2 topics	
Media	Including TV, advertising and communication technology	Environment	Including pollution, energy and protecting the planet
Popular culture	Including cinema, music and fashion/ trends	The multi-cultural society	Including immigration, integration and racism
Healthy living/ lifestyle	Including exercise, health and well-being and holidays	Contemporary social issues	Including wealth and poverty, law and order and the impact of scientific and technological progress
Family/ relationships	Including relationships within the family, friendships and marriage/partnerships.	Cultural topic	the study of a target language speaking region/ community or the study of a period of 20th century history from a target language-speaking country/community or the study of a novelist/ dramatist/ poet from a target language-speaking country/community or the study of a director/ architect/ musician/ painter from a target language-speaking country/ community.

As knowledge of society is not a discrete assessment objective in the subject criteria for Modern Foreign Languages, there is no requirement to study the topics in the context of the target language-speaking country/community. However, assessment material will include authentic sources.

### 3B.7 Assessment – procedures, methods and levels

Assessment models for each unit are outlined in Table 7:

Table 7: AQA GCE Spanish A level assessment model

AS units	A2 units
<b>Unit 1: Listening, Reading and Writing paper</b>	<b>Unit 3: Listening, Reading and Writing paper</b>
Candidates answer a range of questions based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>approximately 5 minutes of heard material (35 marks)</li> <li>a range of written stimulus texts (30 marks)</li> <li>grammar exercises (10 marks)</li> <li>Candidates will also respond in writing to one question from a choice of three based on the AS topics (200 words minimum) (35 marks).</li> </ul> 2 hours 35% of total A level marks	Candidates will answer a range of questions based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>approximately 6 minutes of heard material (25 marks).</li> <li>a selection of written texts (25 marks).</li> <li>translation from and into Spanish (20 marks).</li> <li>Candidates will also respond in writing to <u>one</u> question based on one of the five A2 cultural topic areas (250 words minimum) (40 marks).</li> </ul> 2 hours 35% of total A level marks
<b>Unit 2: Speaking test</b>	<b>Unit 4: Speaking test</b>
Part 1 - Discussion of stimulus card	Part 1 Discussion of a stimulus card



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Candidates choose one of two stimulus cards based on the four AS topics, each dealing with a specific sub-topic.</li> <li>• 5 printed questions on card which candidate must answer.</li> <li>• Progression to a wider discussion through questions 4 and 5.</li> <li>• Supplementary questions generated by candidate's response.</li> </ul> <p>(5 minutes - 10 marks)</p> <p>Part 2 - Conversation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conversation will cover the 3 remaining AS topics not covered by card.</li> <li>• First discussion area nominated by the candidate from the AS topic list.</li> <li>• Candidates must develop ideas and show spontaneity to access highest marks for Interaction.</li> </ul> <p>(10 minutes – 25 marks)</p> <p>(+ 15 marks for grammar over Parts 1 &amp; 2)</p> <p>35 minutes (including 20 mins prep time) 15% of total A level marks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Candidates choose one of two cards based on the three <u>non-cultural</u> A2 topics. Each card puts both sides of an argument</li> <li>• Candidates choose one of the two points of view, present this, (maximum 1 minute), and then defend and justify it</li> <li>• Examiners oppose the candidate's viewpoint and counter the arguments</li> </ul> <p>(5 minutes – 15 marks)</p> <p>Part 2 - Conversation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Candidates are questioned on the two cultural topics studied (5 minutes approximately for each).</li> <li>• No notes or visual material allowed.</li> <li>• Intervene to avoid 'prepared speech' mode.</li> <li>• Challenge 'pre-programmed' responses.</li> </ul> <p>(10 minutes - 20 marks)</p> <p>(+ 15 marks for grammar over Parts 1 &amp; 2)</p> <p>35 minutes (including 20 mins prep time) 15% of total A level marks</p>
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- All four units are assessed externally.
- Units 2 and 4 (Speaking tests) may be conducted by teachers or external examiners.
- There will be two sittings a year (January and May) for AS.
- There will only be one annual sitting (June) for A2.

### 3B.8 Grading

The AS qualification is graded on a five-point scale: A, B, C, D and E. The full A level qualification is graded on a six-point scale: A\*, A, B, C, D and E. To be awarded an A\*, candidates need to achieve a grade A on the full A level qualification and an A\* on the aggregate of the A2 units. For AS and A level, candidates who fail to reach the minimum standard for grade E will be recorded as U (unclassified) and will not receive a qualification certificate. Individual assessment unit results will be certificated.

The grade awarded will depend in practice upon the extent to which the candidate has met the assessment objectives overall. Shortcomings in some aspects of the examination may be balanced by better performances in others.

The performance descriptions outlined in Table 8 and 9 show the level of attainment characteristic of the grade boundaries at A level. They give a general indication of the required learning outcomes at the A/B and E/U boundaries at AS and A2. The descriptions should be interpreted in relation to the content outlined in the specification; they are not designed to define that content.





Table 8: AS performance descriptors

	Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2	Assessment Objective 3
<b>Assessment objectives</b>	Understand and respond, in speech and writing, to spoken language.	Understand and respond, in speech and writing to written language.	Show knowledge of and apply accurately the grammar and syntax prescribed in the specification.
<b>A/B boundary performance descriptions</b>	In the context of materials appropriate to the AS specification, candidates characteristically: a) show a clear understanding of spoken language b) understand the main points and details, including points of view c) are able to infer meaning with only a few omissions d) are able to develop their ideas, and express points of view, with some appropriate justification e) respond readily and fluently and take the initiative ( <i>Speaking</i> ) f) have generally accurate pronunciation and intonation ( <i>Speaking</i> ) g) are able to deal with unpredictable elements ( <i>Speaking</i> ) h) show the ability to organise and structure their response coherently ( <i>writing</i> ) i) offer relevant information which addresses the requirements of the task ( <i>Writing</i> ).	In the context of materials appropriate to the AS specification, candidates characteristically: a) show a clear understanding of a range of written texts b) understand the main points and details, including points of view c) are able to infer meaning with only a few omissions d) are able to develop their ideas, and express points of view, with some appropriate justification e) respond readily and fluently and take the initiative ( <i>Speaking</i> ) f) have generally accurate pronunciation and intonation ( <i>Speaking</i> ) g) show the ability to organise and structure their response coherently ( <i>Writing</i> ) h) offer relevant information which addresses the requirements of the task ( <i>Writing</i> ).	In the context of grammar and syntax listed in the AS specification, candidates characteristically: a) make effective use of a range of vocabulary and structures appropriate to the task b) The deployment of grammar, syntax and morphology is generally accurate c) are able to manipulate language appropriately when required.
<b>E/U boundary performance descriptions</b>	In the context of materials appropriate to the AS specification, candidates characteristically: a) show some understanding of basic, often concrete, spoken language, while experiencing difficulties with more complex and abstract language b) understand some of the main points and details, including basic points of view c) have a limited ability to infer meaning where appropriate to the task d) are able to convey some basic information when transferring meaning e) may be hesitant in their	In the context of materials appropriate to the AS specification, candidates characteristically: a) show some understanding of straightforward written texts, but experience difficulties with more complex and abstract language b) understand some of the main points and details, including limited points of view c) have a limited ability to infer meaning where appropriate to the task d) are able to convey some basic information when transferring meaning e) may be hesitant in their response, and their fluency	In the context of grammar and syntax listed in the AS specification, candidates characteristically: a) use a restricted range of vocabulary and structures b) have language characterised by frequent errors in grammar, syntax and morphology c) may be influenced by the first language d) demonstrate a very limited ability to manipulate language where required.



	<p>response, and their fluency is mostly confined to pre-learned material. Their target language performance may be influenced by their first language (<i>Speaking</i>)</p> <p>f) may have some difficulty communicating factual information, narrating events and expressing basic points of view in response to the task set, and do not always address the requirements of the task (<i>Writing</i>)</p> <p>g) show some ability to structure and organise their response where appropriate.</p>	<p>is mostly confined to pre-learned material. Their target language performance may be influenced by their first language (<i>Speaking</i>)</p> <p>f) may have some difficulty communicating factual information, narrating events and expressing basic points of view in response to the task set, and do not always address the requirements of the task (<i>Writing</i>)</p> <p>g) show some ability to structure and organise their response where appropriate.</p>	
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Table 9: A2 performance descriptors

	Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2	Assessment Objective 3
<b>Assessment objectives</b>	Understand and respond, in speech and writing, to spoken language.	Understand and respond, in speech and writing to written language.	Show knowledge of and apply accurately the grammar and syntax prescribed in the specification.
<b>A/B boundary performance descriptions</b>	<p>In the context of materials appropriate to the A level specification, candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a) show a clear understanding of spoken language</p> <p>b) understand the main points and details, including points of view</p> <p>c) demonstrate an ability to infer meaning</p> <p>d) are able to transfer meaning with only minor omissions</p> <p>e) are able to develop their ideas, and express and justify points of view effectively</p> <p>f) respond readily and fluently and take the initiative (<i>Speaking</i>)</p> <p>g) have generally accurate pronunciation and intonation (<i>Speaking</i>)</p> <p>h) are able to deal appropriately with unpredictable elements (<i>Speaking</i>)</p> <p>i) show the ability to organise and structure their response coherently</p>	<p>In the context of materials appropriate to the A level specification, candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a) show a clear understanding of a range of written texts</p> <p>b) understand the main points and details, including points of view, and are able to infer meaning</p> <p>c) demonstrate an ability to infer meaning</p> <p>d) are able to transfer meaning with only minor omissions</p> <p>e) are able to develop their ideas, and express and justify points of view effectively</p> <p>f) respond readily and fluently and take the initiative (<i>Speaking</i>)</p> <p>g) have generally accurate pronunciation and intonation (<i>Speaking</i>)</p> <p>h) are able to deal appropriately with unpredictable elements (<i>Speaking</i>)</p> <p>i) show the ability to</p>	<p>In the context of materials appropriate to the A level specification, candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a) make effective use of a wide range of vocabulary and a variety of complex structures as appropriate</p> <p>b) predominantly use grammar, syntax and morphology in an accurate way</p> <p>c) are able to manipulate language accurately and appropriately where required.</p>



	(Writing) j) offer relevant information which addresses the requirements of the task (Writing).	organise and structure their response coherently (Writing).	
<b>E/U boundary performance descriptions</b>	In the context of materials appropriate to the A level specification, candidates characteristically: a) show some understanding of spoken, usually concrete, language, but may experience difficulty with more complex and abstract language b) understand some of the main points and details, including basic points of view c) demonstrate a limited ability to infer meaning, where appropriate, to the task d) are able to convey the basic information when transferring meaning e) may be hesitant in their response, and their fluency is mostly confined to pre-learned material. Their target language performance may be influenced by their first language (Speaking) f) may have some difficulty communicating factual information, narrative events and expressing basic points of view in response to the task set, and do not always address the requirements of the task appropriately (Writing) g) show some ability to structure and organise their response, where appropriate.	In the context of materials appropriate to the A level specification, candidates characteristically: a) show some understanding of a range of written texts, usually straightforward, but may experience difficulty with more complex and abstract language b) understand some of the main points and details, including basic points of view c) demonstrate a limited ability to infer meaning, where appropriate, to the task d) are able to convey the basic information when transferring meaning e) may be hesitant in their response, and their fluency is mostly confined to pre-learned material. Their target language performance may be influenced by their first language (Speaking) f) may have some difficulty communicating factual information, narrative events and expressing basic points of view in response to the task set, and do not always address the requirements of the task appropriately g) show some ability to structure and organise their response, where appropriate.	In the context of grammar and syntax listed in the A level specification, candidates characteristically: a) use a restricted range of vocabulary and structures. The deployment of grammar, syntax and morphology contains frequent error and may be influenced by their first language. b) demonstrate a very limited ability to manipulate language correctly when required.

### 3A.9 QA systems and code of practice

The quality assurance procedures are those specified in the relevant, latest edition of the regulatory authorities' code of practice. These procedures relate to the setting, marking, awarding and appeal procedures.



## SECTION 4: THE WORK OF THE EXPERT GROUPS

### 4A ASSET LANGUAGE ADVANCED SPEAKING AND LISTENING

#### 4A.1 Prior to the meeting

Prior to this meeting some preliminary work was carried out. Pre-meeting papers were distributed, requiring members of the Group to compare aims, content, study hours, relative size and assessment models of the Asset Language Advanced Stage Spanish Speaking and Listening qualifications and in comparison with the AQA GCE A level Spanish, and aligning the grading systems. In addition, group members were asked to undertake a preliminary scoring of the qualifications against the UCAS Tariff domains.

#### 4A.2 The Expert Group meeting

The Expert Group met on one occasion on 25 July 2008 to examine and discuss the evidence listed in Appendix 2 and the preparatory work completed by group members. This section contains an account of the deliberations of this meeting.

The meeting opened with a presentation from the Asset OCR Integration Manager and examiners from AQA and WJEC representing GCE A level Spanish and French language qualifications respectively. These presentations provided an opportunity for the Chief Examiners to present their qualifications and for Expert Group members to seek clarification about general issues in relation to the awards. The Expert Group then subdivided into two groups one to consider Asset Language Advanced Stage Reading and Writing qualifications and the other to consider Asset Language Advanced Stage Speaking and Listening qualifications.

#### *Qualification design*

The Speaking and Listening Expert Group reviewed the key points made about the structure and design of Asset Language Advanced Stage qualifications and GCE A level language programmes, as found in Table 10.



Table 10: Qualification design

Asset Language Advanced Stage	GCE A level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asset Language programmes have been developing since 2005, with the first advanced stage programme offered in 2007.</li> <li>• Single language skill qualifications (Speaking, Reading, Listening and Writing)</li> <li>• Part of a language ladder</li> <li>• Allows for the recognition of language skill proficiency</li> <li>• Graded on numerical scale 10,11,12</li> <li>• Bank of test material</li> <li>• Testing available five times a year; November, January, March, May, June</li> <li>• No specific topics or content</li> <li>• Test when ready</li> <li>• Recommended 50 GLH for each of the four separate qualifications</li> <li>• Rubrics/questions in English. Tests assess specific skill</li> <li>• Reference to cultural context</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A level programmes have been available since the 1950s, with a significant reform in 2000. The structure has recently been amended and will be available for first teaching from September 2008.</li> <li>• Accredited as a single qualification (multi skill)</li> <li>• Available at two levels - AS and A level</li> <li>• Single grade to cover all skills, cannot identify individual skill proficiency</li> <li>• Graded on alphabetical scale A*, A, B, C, D, E</li> <li>• No bank of test material</li> <li>• Assessment available twice a year; January and June.</li> <li>• Many topics and specific content</li> <li>• Two year programme (A level)</li> <li>• 360 GLH</li> <li>• Rubrics/questions are in MFL. Examinations assess all skills</li> <li>• Specific teaching of cultural topics</li> </ul>

In the opinion of the Group the major difference between the qualifications, as highlighted by the presentations, rested with the separation of skills. Within the Asset Language qualifications the skills, that is to say speaking, listening, reading and writing, are assessed separately. This separation offered candidates increased flexibility. The Asset Language qualifications also offer more frequent assessment opportunities than the GCE. Asset Language candidates are tested once they are considered ready and this is determined by self-assessment against the 'can do' statements found in the DCSF Language Ladder framework.

By contrast, the GCE A level qualification assessed all skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing) following the completion of a unit or the course. The defined content and specific cultural topics within the A level mean that candidates would achieve very different outcomes in terms of vocabulary and grammar.

The Group quickly agreed that linguistically the qualifications are broadly comparable. It was, however, evident that the skills developed within the A levels are embedded within grammatical structures.

The skills within the Asset Language qualifications are linked to language purposes and functions in line with the "can do" statements of the DCSF Languages Ladder. The language functions to be covered are more thorough and often incorporate some of the grammar included in the A level aims. Thus Asset Languages' approach to language learning creates a programme of work around functions, which emphasises the purpose of a piece of language.



### 4A.3 Comparison of aims

The Group considered the aims and purposes of the Asset Language Advanced Stage Speaking and Listening qualifications with the GCE A level Spanish, a summary of which can be found in Table 11.

*Table 11: Aims, strengths, weakness and utility for progression*

	<b>Asset Language Advanced Stage</b>	<b>GCE A level</b>
Aims	<p>Three aims across the four skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an understanding of standard spoken and written forms of their chosen language in a variety of registers and contexts, on a variety of subjects.</li> <li>• Develop the ability to communicate effectively on a range of subjects, using increasingly accurate, complex and varied language.</li> <li>• Develop positive attitudes towards language.</li> </ul>	<p>Six overall aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an interest in, and enthusiasm for, language learning.</li> <li>• Develop an understanding of the language in a variety of context and genres.</li> <li>• Communicate confidently, clearly and effectively in the language for a variety of purposes.</li> <li>• Develop awareness and understanding of the contemporary society, cultural background and heritage of countries and communities where Spanish is spoken.</li> <li>• Consider their study of language in a broader context.</li> <li>• Provide a sufficient basis for the further study of languages at degree level or equivalent .</li> </ul>
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Can do’ competence based qualifications.</li> <li>• Recognise lifelong learning.</li> <li>• Assesses language skills and proficiency not necessarily learned within the context of the mainstream education system.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear aims.</li> <li>• Identification of key topics.</li> <li>• Consideration of ‘culture’.</li> </ul>
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills considered in isolation; candidates would be advised to take all four skills qualifications to be considered appropriately qualified for Language Degree programmes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not provide individual skill information within grading structure.</li> </ul>
Utility for Progression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details the level obtained for each individual skill.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HE representatives stated that the understanding of the cultural aspect of the language studied was important for entry onto a language degree programme.</li> <li>• Progression to HE is an explicit aim.</li> </ul>

The Group felt that the cultural reference within the A level, although not assessed, was very important when considering whether the qualification demonstrated utility for progression. It was argued that while a study of culture was not present in the Asset Language Advanced Stage aims, it was an integral part of the qualification. This was evidenced in the DCSF Language Ladder statement for Listening:



#### Advanced Grades 10-12 Listening

'You should now be comfortable understanding a range of tenses and a variety of registers. On completing this stage, you should be able to understand the majority of what you hear in the target language, including references to the culture and society of countries/communities where the language is spoken.'

The Group agreed that the A level aims are more detailed although there was concern that the qualification itself was nebulous because the single grade masks the learners' competence in the individual language skills.

The HE members agreed that the Asset Language qualifications would be a useful measure of competence for individuals who had gaps in their formal education and would also evidence the skills of those who had travelled extensively prior to making a university application. The qualification could significantly help the HE selection process by reducing the administrative burden imposed by the assessment of language competence via interview.

The Group agreed that the aims of the Asset Language Speaking and Listening and A level are very similar in terms of developing positive attitudes towards language and providing a basis for further study. However, when expanding upon this point to provide evidence of the utility for progression within the qualifications it was confirmed that the A level specification stated progression to HE as an explicit aim. The group felt that Asset Language candidates would need to take all four Asset qualifications (Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening) in order to be considered appropriately qualified for progression onto a language degree programme.

The Group concluded that, following the consideration of aims, the qualifications were broadly comparable and demonstrated utility for progression to HE.

#### **4A.4 Determining size – comparison of Guided Learning Hours**

The Group accepted the QCA guidelines that stated the individual Asset Language qualifications require a nominal 50 Guided Learning Hours (GLH). The regulator, QCA, has designated all GCE A level qualifications as 360 GLH.

The Group did not feel it was helpful to draw comparison based on GLH nor did they agree that they could use GLH as a proxy measure for size. Discussions on size were parked at this stage.



#### 4A.5 Estimating relative demand - comparing assessment models

The task of comparing the assessment models required the group to look at each qualification in depth. It was agreed to compare the Asset Language Speaking qualification to the A level Spanish oral component, and then consider the Asset Language Listening qualification to ensure each qualification was given appropriate attention.

Discussion by the group of assessment models produced the summary in Table 12.

*Table 12: Assessment models*

Award	Unit	Content	Mode	Duration and Length	Comment	Weighting
Asset Language Advanced Stage: Speaking	Single unit award	Speaking Skill	Internal	13 Minutes	Two part test 1. Response to stimulus cards (40%) 2. Candidate prepared presentation followed by examiner and candidate dialogue (60%)	Must pass
Asset Language Advanced Stage: Listening	Single unit award	Listening Skill	External	40 Minutes	Candidates may only listen to the tape twice. Examination paper consists of a multiple choice paper written in English. Responses are non-verbal.	Must pass
GCE A level Spanish	1	Listening, Reading and Writing	External	2 hours (max of 30 minutes advised to be spent on listening)	5 minutes of text. Tape can be controlled by the learner.	35% (22% of AS)
	3	Listening, Reading and Writing	External	2.5 hours (max of 30 minutes advised to be spent on listening)	6 minutes of text. Tape can be controlled by the learner.	35% (16% of A2 and 19% of overall A level)
	2 and 4	Speaking	External	15 minutes plus 20 preparation time	Stimulus text on prescribed topics. Candidate chooses one topic from two	15% each

#### *Speaking*

The first part of the Asset Language speaking assessment is a five minute interactive task using photographs as stimuli. The candidates are given 15 seconds to familiarise themselves with the photographs and then 1 minute to provide an uninterrupted commentary. The photographs are then used as a prompt to initiate a 4 minute discussion. In the discussion candidates are asked to express and justify an opinion. The questions asked are predetermined and graded to allow for answers which provide factual information through to an expression of opinions or ideas.





The second part of the assessment is a two to two and a half minute presentation on a topic of the candidate's choice, centred around a question or title. The presentation can be delivered in PowerPoint, and can include up to four illustrations or prompt materials. The presentation is followed by a five-minute discussion where the candidate is provided with the opportunity to expand upon points made within the presentation.

The Group discussed the merits of the presentation element. Some members found this style of assessment very effective. One HE colleague liked the idea of presenting a point of view in a relatively short time frame. Other Expert Group members were concerned that the candidate could prepare and practise the presentation and give prior consideration to the questions that could be posed by the examiner.

The Asset Language representative confirmed that the imposed limit on 'prompt material' meant examiners could easily identify candidates delivering the presentation 'parrot' fashion. Additionally, the discussion tested the candidate's ability to respond spontaneously and the Group agreed that it separated those candidates who had the ability to converse fluently from those who had prepared stock answers.

The A level units 2 and 4 are specifically focused upon speaking and both units have similar assessment criteria. The examinations each contribute 15% to the overall A level. Therefore, 30% of the total A level grade comes from speaking assessments. The structure of the assessments for these two units is very similar. Both are divided into two parts with a total assessment duration of 15 minutes. Candidates are given an additional 20 minutes preparation time.

The first part of the A level test is a five-minute discussion using a stimulus card. Candidates can choose from one of two stimulus cards, based upon the four AS topics (media, popular culture, healthy living/lifestyle or family/relationships). Each card contains 5 printed questions which the candidate must answer. The examiner can ask supplementary questions generated by the candidate's response.

The second part of the examination is a ten-minute conversation covering the remaining three topics not addressed via the stimulus card. The candidate nominates the first discussion area, while the remaining two topics are selected by the examiner.

The assessment for unit 4 differs slightly because the topics studied (environment, multicultural society, contemporary social issues) differ, and also because the first part of the assessment requires the candidate to put forward a point of view. The stimulus cards illustrate an argument and the candidate must select a point of view



which the examiner will oppose. The conversation element covers the cultural topics studied by the candidate. No notes or visual material are allowed.

The Group liked the fact that the presentation within the A level assessment could not be prepared and practised to the same extent as the Asset Language presentation, although they also acknowledged that the assessment structure meant that the assessment would be focused on one of the four topics studied. However, the Group felt the structured questions, as found on the cards, provided less opportunity for the candidate to respond with spontaneity and demonstrate their full range of speaking skills.

When comparing the assessment demand of the speaking tests, the Group agreed that the same skill was assessed, and that both tests were equally challenging but with differences in style. The duration of the tests and the assessment methods were also similar.

### *Listening*

The Asset Language Listening assessment is a 40-minute test consisting of 25 questions and uses a mixture of 'extract' and 'task'. The extracts can be monologues, conversations and/or formal interviews adapted from a range of 'authentic' material. The Asset Language candidates may only hear the text twice. The tasks within the assessment are predominantly multiple choice or matching tasks. All questions are written in English – the answers are non-verbal. It was reiterated that assessment had been designed purely to assess the candidate's ability to understand the spoken word.

The HE representatives felt that restricting the number of times candidates could listen to the material made this assessment demanding. The Group questioned whether the assessment actually assessed a candidate's ability to demonstrate recall rather than understanding. It was noted that this demand was counteracted by the simplicity of the requirement to confirm understanding by answering multiple choice questions. The HE representatives regarded multiple choice tests as easier and that they would deliver higher success rates. The Asset Language representative stated that consideration had been given to the assumed success rate associated with multiple choice style tests and that this was reflected in the marking schemes.

The A level, by comparison, assesses a candidate's listening skill alongside their reading and writing skills. A level units 1 and 3 make up 35% of the overall A level grade. The examination assesses the candidates' skills of reading, writing and listening interchangeably. It was stated by the A level examiner that 19% of the overall A level grade came from marks awarded to the listening element of the



examination even though the candidates were not exclusively tested on listening skills.

The A level assessment paper for unit 1 is two hours in total. For the listening component of the examination, candidates are required to answer 35 questions based upon five minutes of heard material. Candidates can listen to the tape as many times as they wish though they are advised to spend only 30 minutes completing this section. The assessment for unit 3 is two and half hours in total and for the listening component candidates are required to answer 25 questions based on six minutes of heard material.

The Group found it difficult to split the pure listening components from the reading and writing assessments. One member stated that this style of assessment effectively 'lumped together' language and grammar skills. This meant it was not possible to distinguish a candidate's level of fluency in one skill compared to the other, hence the assessment was more difficult for the candidate.

The difference in the length of assessment between the Asset Language Listening and A level Spanish Listening, Reading and Writing was also significant due to the multi-skills testing of the A level.

*Use of assessment objectives*

The Group noted that Asset Language assessment objectives are specific to each skill while the A level objectives cross all four of the units and thus all four language skills. This issue was explored in greater detail when the Group compared the examination papers and mark scheme.

All of the A level assessment objectives are weighted and assessed differently across the units. AO2 has a greater percentage allocated to the Speaking assessment while AO1 is specifically assessed within the Listening components of the Reading, Writing and Listening assessment. Table 13 illustrates the individual assessment objectives and details the specific weighting given for the overall A level.

*Table 13: Comparison of assessment objectives*

	<b>Listening</b>	<b>Weight</b>	<b>Speaking</b>	<b>Weight</b>	<b>A level</b>	<b>Weight</b>
AO1	Understand extended, authentically-based speech extracts spoken at near normal speed in a variety of registers, and follow structured lines of argument relating to concrete and	100%	Communicate and respond to spoken language with some fluency and spontaneity, presenting and sustaining a viewpoint in discussion.	100%	Understand and respond, in speech and writing, to spoken language	33%



	abstract topics.					
AO2					Understand and respond, in speech and in writing, to written language	42%
AO3					Show knowledge of and apply accurately the grammar and syntax prescribed in the specification	25%

### *Grade descriptors*

There are no formal grade descriptors for Asset Languages. However, there are DSCF Language Ladder statements. The different grades within Asset languages utilise ‘can do’ statements to describe the typical ability of the learner.

### *Speaking*

DSCF Advanced Language Ladder statement:

“You should now be comfortable using a range of tenses and a variety of registers. On completing this stage, you should be able to communicate confidently and maintain a conversation using a wide ranging vocabulary. Your pronunciation and intonation will be generally accurate. You should be able to make references to the culture and society of countries/communities where the language is spoken.”

The ‘can do’ statements per grade are as follows:

- Grade 10 I can give a presentation on a chosen theme and respond readily to questions.
- Grade 11 I can give a presentation on a chosen theme and argue my viewpoints with some degree of success.
- Grade 12 I can participate in discussions relating to a variety of situations and topics, taking the initiative where appropriate.

By contrast the A level specification provided detailed performance descriptors for each of the assessment objectives at both the A/B and E/U boundaries. The Group explored the language used within the descriptors to assess whether they were comparable to the Asset Language information.

The A2 A/B boundary for assessment objective 2 stated:

In the context of materials appropriate to the A level specification, candidates characteristically;

- are able to transfer meaning with only minor omissions
- are able to develop their ideas, and express and justify points of view effectively
- respond readily and fluently and take the initiative



- have generally accurate pronunciation and intonation
- are able to deal with unpredictable elements.

The Group agreed that the grade descriptors at the A/B boundary used similar language to the grade 12 'can do' statements for the Asset Language Speaking qualification. They also found similar terminology being used at the A level E/U boundary and the grade 10 descriptors.

### *Listening*

The Group conducted the same analysis for the Listening components but noted that it was a more difficult exercise because A level candidates must demonstrate their understanding of Spanish text, by responding in written Spanish. Hence, the grade descriptors are not specific to the listening skill.

The A2 A/B assessment objective 1 states:

In the context of materials appropriate to the A level specification, candidates characteristically;

- show a clear understanding of spoken language
- understand the main points and details, including points of view
- demonstrate an ability to infer meaning
- are able to transfer meaning with only minor omissions.

It was agreed that, while this was broadly equivalent to the terminology used within the Asset Language descriptor, the A level A/B boundary was slightly above the standard of the grade 12 'can do' statement (see below).

The 'can do' statements per grade are as follows:

- Grade 10 I can understand the main points of an authentic spoken passage/conversation involving one or more speakers.
- Grade 11 I can understand the main points of authentic spoken passages and conversations in a range of different contexts.
- Grade 12 I can identify the majority of points and am able to infer the meaning of a range of authentic passages/conversations spoken at near native speed.

It was acknowledged that the Listening Language Ladder statement made a useful reference to culture and 'registers' although it was felt that the information contained within the statement was very basic.

### *DSCF Language Ladder statement*



You should now be comfortable understanding a range of tenses and a variety of registers. On completing this stage, you should be able to understand the majority of what you hear in the target language, including references to the culture and society of the country/communities where the language is spoken.

Following extensive discussions on the complexity of construction the Group agreed that the terminology used within the grading descriptors was comparable. It was also agreed that the terminology used within the grading descriptors implied that the assessment demand matched that of a full A level.

#### **4A.6 Estimating relative demand – comparing examination requirements: structure, question papers, mark schemes**

In comparing the marking schemes, the Group noted that the marking criteria for the Asset Language Speaking assessment is divided into two equally weighted parts: 'Language and 'Communication'. As the assessment itself is divided into two parts, candidates achieve a total of four marks; one mark for part one Language, one mark for part one Communication, one mark for part two Language and one mark for part two Communication. Examiners record their marks for both part one and two on a mark sheet.

The marking criteria for Speaking assessment focuses on Language and Communication and for each element there are descriptor grids which illustrate a banded mark scheme. Marks are awarded in three bands: 1, 2 and 3. These bands are then subdivided into three levels. The levels correlate to the standard of achievement:

- 3.1 minimally achieved (grammatical accuracy generally consistent and speech almost always fluent).
- 3.2 partially achieved (considerable use of the language of ideas, opinions and discussions and pronunciation is almost always appropriate to convey meaning).
- 3.3 fully achieved (appropriate use of a wide range of structures and main points of information and opinions are clearly communicated).

The Group made a preliminary attempt to align the bands 1, 2, 3 to the overall grades. Therefore band 3 related to grade 12, band 2 to grade 11 and band 1 to grade 10. This allowed them to develop a deeper understanding of the candidates' ability which was felt to be of importance in the absence of assessment material.

Upon consideration of the A level marking criteria, it was noted that both Speaking unit assessments are marked out of 50. For part one, up to 5 marks are allocated in response to the stimulus material, and up to 10 marks are allocated based upon



responses to questions posed by the examiner. Part two allocates up to 5 marks for fluency, up to 10 marks for interaction and 5 marks for pronunciation and intonation. Assessment objective 3, 'Knowledge of Grammar' attracts up to 15 marks and these are allocated on the basis of the candidate's overall performance in both parts of the test.

The Group discussed the importance of the section in the marking criteria titled 'Interaction'. The Group felt that this was a very important assessment criterion with the top marks allocated on the basis of the candidate's ability to conduct a 'meaningful exchange' with the examiner. It also mentioned that candidates achieving the top mark could react spontaneously and could develop ideas and opinions. The Group had previously highlighted this as being a benefit within the Asset Language assessment. Upon detailed exploration it was noted that the marks allocated to Interaction attributed only 6% of the overall A level grade illustrating that the skill of interaction was a larger within the Asset Speaking qualification.

The Group considered the relative demand of the examination material for the listening qualifications and at the same time considered the assessment models, assessment objectives and grade descriptors. They felt that the demands of the listening assessment were comparable though they used different approaches. It was felt that a comparison could be made across the A level and Asset Language qualifications although without listening to the recorded examination material there was less evidence at this stage on which to base this judgement.

#### **4A.7 Estimating relative demand - comparison of candidate work**

As there was no candidate evidence for the GCE A level and Asset Language Listening qualifications, it was deemed inappropriate to consider the audio material available for the Asset Language Speaking qualification.

Due to the lack of candidate evidence it was made clear that the Tariff values allocated to the Asset Language qualifications would be provisional and subject to a review.

#### **4A.8 Aligning the grades**

Using the information as found in the 'can do' statements and the Groups informed judgement based upon the assessment demand they agreed that the Asset Language Speaking qualification was equivalent to the A/B A level boundary. It was similarly agreed that grade 10 should align with the E/U boundary. Although the A level specification did not provide information about the B/C/D boundaries it was felt that the grade 11 candidate would sit in the middle of the descriptors provided. The agreed alignment can be found in Table 14:



Table 14: Proposed grade alignment - Speaking

Asset Language Advanced Stage Spanish Speaking	Spanish A level
Grade 12	A
Grade 11	C
Grade 10	E

When comparing the grades of the listening qualification the group did not agree that a grade 12 candidate aligned with the A/B boundary because of the additional skills against which A level candidates are being assessed. The Group felt that, based upon the evidence provided and the multiple choice nature of the listening test, candidates performing at this level would be aligned to the B grade at A level and grade 10 would align with the E/U boundary as displayed in Table 15.

Table 15: Proposed grade alignment - Listening

Asset Language Advanced Stage Spanish Listening	Spanish A level
Grade 12	B
Grade 11	D
Grade 10	E/U

#### 4A.9 Domain scoring

Due to time constraints the Group considered the mean scores as collated from the returned preparatory work. It was confirmed that the domain scores were used to illustrate how different qualifications provide the opportunities for a candidate to evidence knowledge, skills, attitudes and dispositions deemed important by HE. It was felt that the information displayed an appropriate visual representation of the skills as found within the qualifications.

Table 16: Domain scoring summary

Domain element	Mean Score		
	Asset Listening	Asset Speaking	A level
Use and apply	3.1	4.4	4.9
Application and analysis of ideas, knowledge and theory	1.2	1.9	2.2
Synthesis and evaluation	2.3	3.1	3.5
Logical and critical thinking	0.4	1.6	2.0
Literacy and language skills	0.4	0.7	1.4
Numeracy skills	0.0	0.0	0.0
Personal and social skills	0.4	0.8	0.9
Learning skills	1.7	2.0	2.2
Vocational and practical skills	0.5	0.6	0.6





#### **4A.10 Recommended allocation of UCAS Tariff points**

The final process was to allocate the Tariff points. The Group summarised the work undertaken previously in the day and confirmed that they felt the Speaking and Listening qualifications had comparable aims to the GCE A level. The assessments were, in the broadest sense, similar but with the major difference surrounding the assessment of the listening skill. The depth of study was different because the Asset Language qualifications do not have prescribed content.

The Asset Listening test is less versatile as the answers are all in English and the only testing method is multiple choice. The Asset Language Listening test does not, therefore, assess an equal range of skills. All other things being equal (eg speed and quality of the spoken language), it is less demanding and does not merit an equivalent Tariff score. However, based upon assessment criteria and demand, as defined within the marking schemes and examination papers, the qualifications were considered to assess the same skills at the same standards.

Considering the task of aligning grades and size based upon the GLH the Group acknowledged that a grade 12 in Asset Language Speaking would be 14% of an A at Level and would, therefore, attract 17 UCAS Tariff Points. It was recognised, however, that the group had previously agreed that GLH was a crude tool for determining size and did not reflect the candidate's ability as demonstrated by the assessment demand for the skill in question. They therefore agreed that a value of 17 was too low.

It was then agreed that each Asset Language qualification reflected a quarter of the A level programme. This meant that the total number of Tariff points awarded to all four Asset qualifications could not exceed 120 points as this is the score awarded to the A grade at A level. Therefore, the maximum Tariff values that could be assigned to the Asset Language grade 12 would be 30 points. The Group felt that, because the analysis conducted on both speaking tests indicated that they were very similar, 28 UCAS Tariff points would be an appropriate allocation to the Asset Language Advanced Stage Speaking grade 12.

Because the utility for progression within the Listening qualification was not considered to be as high as for the A level, the Group settled upon a Tariff score of 23 to be allocated to the grade 12. In both cases these represented the best judgement that the Group felt it could reach on the basis of the available evidence.

Based on the relative scores for grade 12, the Group agreed a relationship between the Speaking and Listening qualifications, with a multiplier of 0.82. Grades 10 and 11 were calculated accordingly.



Table 17: Proposed allocation of Tariff points:

Grade	UCAS Tariff Points
<b>Speaking</b>	
12	28
11	20
10	12
<b>Listening</b>	
12	23
11	16
10	10

## 4B ASSET LANGUAGES ADVANCED READING AND WRITING

### 4B.1 Prior to the meeting

Prior to this meeting some preliminary work was carried out. This included a detailed mapping of the OCR Asset Languages Advanced Stage French (Reading and Writing) against the WJEC GCE French A level, reports from three HE representatives highlighting similarities and differences between the two qualifications, and comparative studies from a representative from each awarding body. Pre-meeting papers were distributed, requiring members of the Group to compare aims, content, study hours, relative size and assessment models of the Asset Languages Advanced Stage French (Reading and Writing) and that of the WJEC GCE French A level.

### 4B.2 The Expert Group meeting

The Expert Group then met on one occasion on 25 July to examine and discuss the evidence listed in Appendix 2 and the preparatory work completed by group members. This section contains an account of the deliberations of this meeting.

The opening plenary session provided an opportunity for the Asset OCR Integration Manager and the Chief Examiner WJEC A level French to present their qualifications and for Expert Group members to seek clarification about general issues in relation to the awards. The Expert Group then sub-divided into two groups, for Reading and Writing, and Speaking and Listening.

#### *Qualification Design*

The Reading and Writing Group reviewed the key points in the presentation by the WJEC Chief Examiner and charted the differences in qualification design as in Table 18. This table summarises the information on the qualifications in section 2 above, where more detailed explanation can be found.



Table 18: Qualification design

Asset Languages Advanced Stage French	WJEC GCE A level French
Proficiency framework	Two-year taught qualification.
Single language skill accreditation - Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening – all separate qualifications of equal weight.	Multi-skill with single overall accreditation. AS/A2 modular structure – AS accredited in its own right. A2 not accredited as a qualification in its own right – A level assessment based on AS +A2 – 50% each.
The structural content of tests based on the QCA's GCE AS and A level subject criteria for Modern Foreign Languages.	Based on QCA's GCE AS and A level subject criteria for Modern Foreign Languages.
Part of a continuous Languages Ladder.	Standalone qualification with no specific connection with GCSE.
Voluntary assessment scheme not associated with a programme of study.	Typically delivered as two-year full-time programme of study in schools and colleges.
Three levels – 10, 11 and 12.	Graded A-E for AS, A*-E for A level.
Internal teacher assessment – as preparation for external assessment.	All external assessment.
External tests Reading – 50 minutes Writing – 60 minutes.	Oral tests (AS +A2) + 5.5 hours of examinations.
Testing on demand.	Fixed examination sessions – June and January But only FN2(AS) available in January. Modules may be sat more than once. Best mark accredited.
Rubrics/questions can be in English.	Rubric/questions/answers in French.
One assessment objective per skill.	Three assessment objectives covering both active and receptive skills + further objective concerning grammar/accuracy (QCA requirement of testing grammar discretely).
No specified topics.	Many topics and subtopics.
Solely language-based.	Language-based with topics to help with core vocabulary. Includes contemporary society and cultural background.

It was the Group's initial view that there was linguistic comparability between the qualifications although there were significant differences in their design. Asset Languages are discrete qualifications providing a measure of proficiency in specific language skills. This concept provides a high degree of flexibility and enables learners to present themselves for testing in different skills at different levels at different times when they are ready, and has potential applications for learners of many kinds and ages. The GCE A level in French is a broader and larger qualification forming part of the suite of mainstream 16-19 general qualifications typically taken in a school or college setting. The challenge for the Group was to benchmark standalone language skills tests against an A level. It was agreed that the approach should be to compare Asset Languages with the relevant language skills within A level, and the common use by both types of qualifications of the QCA AS and A level subject criteria facilitated this approach.

### 4B.3 Comparison of aims

The Group then proceeded to compare the aims and purposes of the two types of qualifications as charted in Table 2 below. As a multi-purpose measure of proficiency in language skills, Asset Languages does not specifically mention progression to HE



as an aim, and the individual qualifications would not in their own right provide progression to HE, although members felt that all four skills in combination might well do so. HE members expressed interest in the qualifications and envisaged their possible use for progression to HE in a variety of contexts. Asset Languages might play a role in progression to non-language degree courses where the possession of language skills might be a useful adjunct to the degree course. By contrast progression to HE language degrees is an explicitly stated aim of GCE A level.

The Group went on to consider the relative strengths of the two types of qualifications, building on the preparatory work undertaken by the HE members. In some cases the same feature was regarded as both a strength and a weakness. For example, the separating out of individual language skills creates great flexibility for the learner, but could also be regarded as an artificial separation. Overall, it was more a matter of different types of qualifications for different purposes rather than one being better than the other. A major difference was the use of a defined syllabus and content in the A level compared with the skills-based approach of Asset Languages, and there were both strengths and weaknesses in both those approaches.

The final part of Table 19 relates to support for progression to HE. The Asset Language skills provide specific and reliable evidence of proficiency in individual skills, whereas a particular grade in French A level gives no clear indication of the candidate's proficiency in specific language skills, although it is specifically designed for progression to language degree courses in HE.

*Table 19: Aims, strengths and weaknesses and support for progression to HE*

	<b>Asset Languages Advanced Stage French</b>	<b>WJEC GCE A level French</b>
Aims	Give students opportunities to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop an understanding of standard spoken and written forms of chosen language in a variety of registers and contexts, on a variety of subjects</li> <li>• develop the ability to communicate effectively on a range of subjects, using increasingly accurate, complex and varied language</li> <li>• develop positive attitudes towards language learning.</li> </ul>	Encourage students to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop an interest in, and enthusiasm for, language learning</li> <li>• develop understanding of the language in a variety of contexts and genres</li> <li>• communicate confidently, clearly and effectively in the language for a range of purposes</li> <li>• develop awareness and understanding of the contemporary society, cultural background and heritage of countries or communities where the language is spoken</li> <li>• consider their study of the language in a broader context</li> <li>• derive enjoyment and benefit from language learning</li> <li>• acquire knowledge, skills and understanding for practical use, further study and/or employment</li> <li>• communicate with speakers of the</li> </ul>



		<p>language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>take their place in a multilingual global society.</li> </ul> <p>Also designed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a coherent, satisfying and worthwhile course of study for students who do not progress to further study in the subject</li> <li>provide a sufficient basis for the further study of languages at degree level.</li> </ul>
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>skills based</li> <li>separate language skills qualifications giving flexibility to gain accreditation of individual skills when ready in an individual skill</li> <li>testing on demand</li> <li>suits needs of a wide variety of learners</li> <li>testing potentially demanding as less easy to prepare – criticality</li> <li>testing in English – but debate as to whether it is easier or harder</li> <li>assessment tasks designed to test comprehension exclusively – could be either a strength or a weakness</li> <li>part of a continuous ladder – encourages progression</li> <li>can support entry to a broad range of HE courses</li> <li>could play useful role in Diploma ASL.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>skills acquired and applied in a specific context</li> <li>integrated approach to language skills</li> <li>broader eg includes contemporary society etc.</li> <li>use of topics and sub-topics – writing on a book or film – this allows for the development of critical skills</li> <li>all external assessment</li> <li>rubrics, questions and answers in French</li> <li>greater length of tests and examinations</li> <li>ability to re-sit units – a strength from student’s point of view</li> <li>can provide entry to honours degree courses in HE.</li> </ul>
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>not based on content</li> <li>not based on formal programme of study</li> <li>critical skills not assessed</li> <li>treats skills in isolation – artificial separation?</li> <li>sum total of four skills does not have the breadth of a level</li> <li>testing in English – but also see strengths</li> <li>little relevance to socio-cultural context - topics mainly designed only to test linguistic ability</li> <li>writing tasks mostly descriptive and not demanding in terms of analytical skills and reflection</li> <li>potentially insufficient Guided Learning Hours (50).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>potentially possible for students to prepare answers based on content without good linguistic ability</li> <li>overall grade does not provide indication of level of proficiency in individual language skills</li> <li>only two assessment opportunities per year</li> <li>ability to re-sit units</li> <li>doubts about the extent to which questions in French actually test comprehension.</li> </ul>
Support for HE progression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>not aimed to support progression to HE languages degrees – although might in practice do so</li> <li>might usefully support progression to non-language degrees</li> <li>gives HE a detailed description and profile of proficiency.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>specifically aimed to support progression to language degree courses in HE.</li> <li>could be used for progression to many non-language degree courses.</li> <li>does not provide HE with evidence of level of proficiency in individual language skills.</li> </ul>



## **4B.4 Determining size**

### **4B.4.1 Comparison of Guided Learning Hours**

The Asset Languages specification gives a figure of 50 notional Guided Learning Hours (GLH) for each language skill – a total of 200 GLH for all four skills at Advanced level, representing a notional allowance for class contact time. This figure is to be regarded as highly notional and does not reflect any particular programme of study or mode of delivery. Some members felt that this might not be sufficient for the active skills ie Writing and Speaking.

The GCE A level specification does not give GLH as such, but the Group was informed that QCA has designated all GCE A levels as 360 GLH. On the basis of GLH, the Group calculated that all four Asset Language skills represented five ninths (55.5%) of GCE A level in size. The remaining four ninths (44.5%) consisted of the topic-based elements of GCE A level.

This gave an initial weighting between the qualifications which might inform the recommendation on UCAS Tariff points, although the Group was clear that only limited reliance could be placed on notional GLH, and that it was difficult to compare a skills-based proficiency test in individual language skills with a taught general qualification in terms of size.

### **4B.4.2 Breadth and depth of content coverage**

On the basis of detailed perusal of the specifications, the Group was satisfied that the language skills for Asset Languages are directly comparable to the equivalent in A2 of GCE A level and can be regarded as of the same size. It was remarked that the content-free Asset Language assessment has an element of criticality, which potentially provides a higher level of demand by comparison with the context-based assessment in A level.

There is clearly more breadth in A level than in Asset Languages, as reflected in the comparison of aims above. In addition to a core of language skills common to both qualifications, A level also includes:

- topics/subtopics - literature/film/region
- critical thinking
- evaluation – compare/contrast/discuss
- transfer of meaning (including translation)
- a general moral agenda
- cultural knowledge – taught but not assessed.

It was suggested that this probably represents the 44.5% additional 'content' in the A level referred to above, but it was difficult to quantify and to determine the balance



between the common core of language skills and the additionality of the content-based A level.

#### 4B.5 Estimating relative demand - comparing assessment models

The Group reviewed the assessment models for the two types of qualification as summarised in Table 20 below, limiting the information about Asset Languages to Reading and Writing while acknowledging the parallel existence of Speaking and Listening being considered by the other group:

*Table 20: Assessment models*

Award	Unit	Content	Mode	Duration	Weighting
Asset Languages Advanced Stage French Reading	Single	Reading	External test	50 Minutes	Must pass
Asset Languages Advanced Stage French Writing	Single	Writing	External test in two parts Part 1 – compulsory task Part 2 – one task chosen from three	60 minutes	Must pass
WJEC GCE A level French	AS Unit FN1	Oral	External	12-15 minutes	20%
	AS Unit FN2	Listening, Reading and Writing	External	150 minutes	30%
	A2 Unit FN3	Oral	External	15-20 minutes	20%
	A2 Unit FN4	Listening, Reading and Writing	External	180 minutes	30%

The Asset Languages at Advanced Stage also use internal (teacher) assessment to enable a centre to issue a grade award direct to its students. This is intended to be motivational and to prepare for external assessment. However, the grade award cannot be regarded as a formal qualification within the NQF and is not eligible for UCAS Tariff points.

The Group noted a substantial difference in the duration of assessment – 110 minutes in total for Asset Reading and Writing, compared with 330 minutes for Listening, Reading and Writing in A level. A simple calculation would suggest that Reading and Writing might account for 220 minutes in A level, twice the figure for Asset Languages. However, this was easily accounted for by the Expert Group as being attributable to the topic-based approach and it was their judgement that length of examination did not necessarily reflect any greater challenge in assessment of linguistic skills.

There is no coursework assessment for either qualification.



At this stage the Group considered the possibility of looking at the weightings in Foreign Modern Language A levels from awarding bodies other than WJEC. While it was acknowledged that there were slight variations, it was noted that all such qualifications operate under QCA regulations to an agreed common specification. It was, therefore, concluded that it was acceptable to limit the comparison to the WJEC French GCE A level in this case.

### *Assessment objectives*

The Group reviewed the assessment objectives of Asset Languages and A level as set out in Table 21 below. It noted that there are four assessment objectives for Asset Languages Advanced Stage, one for each language skill, each being tested separately and forming the basis of separate qualifications. The Group only considered the assessment objectives for Reading and Writing.

*Table 21: Assessment objectives*

	<b>Asset Languages Advanced Stage French</b>	<b>Weight</b>	<b>WJEC GCE A level French</b>	<b>Weight</b>
AO1	Writing – Write clear, structured texts on a range of subjects, including examining and sustaining different points of view.	100%	Understand and respond, in speech and writing, to spoken language.	34%
AO2	Reading – Understand the main ideas and viewpoints of authentically-based texts in a variety of registers on both concrete and abstract topics.	100%	Understand and respond, in speech and writing, to written language.	41%
AO3			Show knowledge of and apply accurately the grammar and syntax prescribed in this specification.	25%

The Asset Languages assessment objectives are specific to each discrete qualification, whereas the A level assessment objectives AO1 and AO2 are multi-skill and interwoven across the language skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Active and passive or receptive skills are linked together, while they are separated out in Asset Languages. (It was noted that an HE member expressed dissent over the concept of “active” and “passive” to describe language – the terms “productive” and “receptive” were preferred). This is a reflection of the different philosophies of the two types of qualifications. The A level AO3 concerning grammar and syntax is additional and has no formal parallel in Asset Languages, although the requirements for grammar are in practice similar in both qualifications. It was noted that the former A level objective concerning knowledge of society has been removed from the new specification although it is taught.

While the assessment objectives for Asset Languages Writing and Reading are shown as 100%, this relates to the individual qualification. If considering the full





Advanced Stage achievement of four language skills, then each assessment objective is 25% of the total, all being equally weighted. In A level the understanding of and response to written language has a greater weighting than spoken language.

#### *Grade descriptors*

The Group considered the grade descriptors for Asset Languages and GCE A level. For Asset Advanced Stage Reading, there is the following statement covering grades 10-12:

*“You should now be comfortable using a range of tenses and a variety of registers. On completing this stage, you should be able to understand the majority of what you read in the target language, including references to the culture and society of countries/communities where the language is spoken.”*

The equivalent statement for Advanced Stage Writing is as follows:

*“You should now be comfortable using a range of tenses and a variety of registers. On completing this stage, you should be able to write confidently using a wide ranging vocabulary and more complex structures. Your spelling will be generally accurate. You should be able to make references to the culture and society of countries/communities where the language is spoken.”*

In each case there are brief “can do” statements establishing the increasing level of linguistic skills from grade 10 to grade 12.

GCE A level has detailed performance descriptions for AS and A2 under each of the assessment objectives for the A/B and E/U boundaries. There are no descriptions for intermediate grades and the boundaries are set mathematically at equidistant intervals between A/B and E/U.

For Asset Writing there are marking criteria which enabled the Group to compare the requirements for grade 12 (as detailed for band 3) with the A/B boundary for the linguistic elements of A level as described in the performance descriptions for A2. The outcomes of this exercise are described in section 4.8 below.

#### **4B.6 Estimating relative demand – comparing examination requirements: structure, question papers, mark schemes**

The Group considered the structure, length and amount of candidate support in the examination papers, and marking schemes, as detailed in Table 22 below:



Table 22: Examination arrangements

Asset Languages Advanced Stage French – Reading and Writing	WJEC GCE A level French
External	
Single assessment for each skill	Unitised – 4 units (2 AS, 2 A2)
Reading	AS FN1 Oral
50 minutes	15 minutes 60 marks
Rubrics in English, questions in English or target language	AS FN1 Listening, Reading, Writing
Variety of types of test and task – 1 mark per task	150 minutes 98 marks
Writing	Individual cassettes/CDs provided
60 minutes	Writing – one essay from choice of 4 topic areas – 200-250 words in French
Part 1 – transfer of meaning into letter/email format 40%	A2 FN3 Oral
100-120 words in target language	20 minutes 60 marks
Part 2 – 1 task selected from 3 – text from a range of types and contexts – 60% - content not assessed	A2 FN4 Listening, Reading, Writing
For each part equally weighted marks for Language and Communication using three bands	180 minutes 98 marks
Instructions in English and in target language	Individual cassettes/CDs provided
180-200 words in target language	Writing – translation exercise - 100 words from English/Welsh to French
No dictionaries allowed	Essay 400 words on one Guided Studies option: A World of Cinema B World of Literature C Regions of France Marks for content and organisation
Maximum total words - 320	Maximum total words – 750 including translation

The Group noted that the word count for writing in Asset Languages is 320 compared with 750 in GCE A level. However, the latter figure includes 100 words for translation. It was agreed that translation should be excluded from the comparison, and that this formed part of the 44.5% of the A level additional to the four main linguistic skills. Deducting 100 words for translation, this still showed the word count for Asset Writing to be less than 50% of that for A level.

The Group considered that this reflects the different approaches of the two types of qualifications. While the tasks are very different, the skills tested are the same. The Group was clear that the linguistic skills are comparable between the two qualifications. The differences in word count were not thought to be particularly relevant, and were explained by the greater level of complexity of the essay-based approach in A level. The latter is a broader qualification incorporating a Guided Studies topic.

There was discussion about the relative demand of the qualifications. Some members felt that there could be a higher level of demand for Asset Languages Writing because of the criticality of the assessment – candidates would not necessarily be dealing with familiar topics. Because the Asset tests are not connected to a programme of study and would be taken by a wide variety of learners in a wide variety of contexts, there would be a much more uneven playing field than



for the taught A level course. It was thought that the topic-based approach to A level provides scaffolding from the learning topic – this could be seen as offering advantages for candidates. There were differing views as to the extent to which familiarity or the lack of it should be regarded as significant.

The Group considered the task in part 2 of Asset Writing. This includes a variety of registers, but only one can be chosen. However, it gives the opportunity for use of complex structure and vocabulary, and could be equivalent to the essay requirement in A level. It is impossible to verify this until candidate evidence is available, but in the meantime the Group was minded to give the benefit of the doubt and regard the demand of Asset Writing as comparable to that element of A level.

The Group's judgement was that Reading was comparable between the qualifications, although there was less information available on which to base this judgement and it was based purely on the comparison of Asset and A level reading materials provided as sample tests.

#### **4B.7 Estimating relative demand - comparison of candidate work**

There was no candidate evidence available for the Group for either Asset Languages Advanced Stage French or WJEC GCE A level French as both are new qualifications. The Group was clear that, in these circumstances, its recommendations could only be provisional, and must be subject to review as soon as sufficient candidate evidence becomes available.

#### **4B.8 Aligning the grades**

Following on from Section 4B.5 above, the Group considered the mapping of grade descriptors and marking criteria for Asset Advanced Stage Writing against the linguistic elements of performance descriptors for AS and A2. There was a clear equivalence between Asset Writing and the A/B boundary for A2, and the statements mapped consistently across both qualifications. The Group then proceeded to map grade 10 against the E/U for A level and once again found a match, but concluded that grade 10 was higher than grade E at A level on the basis that there are more negative descriptors for grade E and therefore mapped against grade D at A level.

Equivalent information was not available for Reading and therefore the Group had to rely on the “can do” statements which appeared to suggest a similar equivalence to that between Writing and A level. Comparison of reading materials suggested comparability between Asset Reading grade 12 and A2, although grade 10 might be a little below AS. Asset Reading tests comprehension whereas in A level, because of the nature of some questions in the target language, and because writing skills are also being tested, an A level candidate could be awarded points for other linguistic factors besides simple comprehension, eg, well-written, correct, original answer etc.



Overall, the equivalence between Reading grade 12 and A level grade A was felt to be justified as a provisional judgement pending further evidence.

It was noted that the grading of Asset Languages is carried out on a statistical basis which is worked out retrospectively and that the statistical evidence is improving over time. The Group considered that this did not affect the ability to compare the top and bottom of the grading scale against the A level A/B and E/U boundaries, and concluded that Asset grade 12 is equivalent to grade A at A level and Asset grade 10 to grade D at A level as shown in Table 23 below.

*Table 23: Grade alignment*

Asset Languages Advanced Stage French – Reading and Writing	WJEC GCE A level French
Grade 12	A
Grade 11	C
Grade 10	D

#### **4B.9 Domain scoring**

Group members had undertaken the detailed exercise of scoring Asset Languages Advanced Stage French Reading and Writing and WJEC GCE A level French against the standard set of domains currently used by all Tariff Expert Groups. These scores are summarised in Table 24

*Table 24: Domain scores*

Domain element	Mean score		
	Asset Reading	Asset Writing	A level
Use and apply	2.9	3.0	3.5
Application and analysis of ideas, knowledge and theory	1.3	1.7	2.4
Synthesis and evaluation	2.2	2.4	3.5
Logical and critical thinking	1.9	1.8	2.6
Literacy and language skills	0.8	2.9	3.9
Numeracy skills	0.0	0.0	0.0
Personal and social skills	1.1	1.2	1.4
Learning skills	1.7	1.7	2.0
Vocational and practical skills	0.6	0.6	0.6

It was noted that the overall mean scores for the qualifications were as follows:

Asset Languages Advanced Stage Reading	1.4
Asset Languages Advanced Stage Writing	1.7
WJEC GCE A level French	2.2

The Group was satisfied that the relationship between Asset Writing and A level was appropriate, reflecting the greater breadth and wider aims of the A level. The Group was less confident about its scoring of Asset Reading, which was based on less information and members considered that in retrospect they would be minded to



increase their scores for Asset Reading. As there was insufficient time to re-work the domain scores, the Group was content to agree to a proposal that the scoring should be raised to the same as Writing, subject to later verification when more information including candidate evidence is available.

On the basis of domain scoring the Group considered that Asset Reading and Writing each represented 77% of the A level score ie the relationship between 1.7 and 2.2 expressed as a percentage.

#### **4B.10 Recommended allocation of UCAS Tariff points**

The Group noted that the recommendations for UCAS Tariff points for Reading and Writing are independent of each other and could be different if appropriate. However, the Group felt throughout that there was linguistic comparability between Asset Reading and the Reading element of GCE A level at A2, and accepted the principle of all Asset Language skills being treated as equal. It did not wish to distinguish in terms of utility for progression to HE, and therefore UCAS Tariff points, between productive and receptive skills.

The Group reviewed the relationship of Asset Languages to the A level in the light of the recommended alignment of Asset Languages grade 12 to grade A at A level, the latter bearing 120 UCAS Tariff points. The Group recognised that the sum total of all four Asset Language skills could not exceed the score for A level and therefore the maximum points per Asset Language skill is 30. However, it was clear from Guided Learning Hours, the review of the size of the qualifications and domain scoring that the sum total of the four Asset skills is less than A level. The issue was one of determining the proportionate reduction of the points score to reflect this differential.

The Group was not convinced that the relationship suggested by notional Guided Learning Hours (four Asset Language skills as 55% of A level) was meaningful and that the percentage did justice to the relative weight of Asset Languages and their utility for progression to HE. The points score per Asset Language skill should therefore be in excess of 17, the figure derived by multiplying 120 points for grade A at A level by 55.5% and dividing by four for a single skill.

The Group felt that the relationship between the qualifications suggested by the domain scoring (Asset Reading and Writing each representing 77% of the A level score) would form a fair basis for the allocation of UCAS Tariff points. The Group calculated 77% of 120 points for grade A at A level = 92. This was then divided by four to give a Tariff score of 23 for grade 12 in each language skill.

The Group was content that this was a fair representation of the linguistic demand of Asset Languages at grade 12. It had earlier determined that grade 10 is above A



level grade E standard and is equivalent to grade D which carries 60 UCAS Tariff points. Applying the 77% differential gives 46 points for grade 10 which must be divided by four for each Asset Language skill giving 12 per skill. However, the Group felt that, on the basis of comparison of descriptors, grade 10 should be slightly up the grade D scale rather than at the bottom. It therefore agreed to recommend 13 points per skill for Asset Languages Advanced Stage Reading and Writing at grade 10.

The recommended points for grade 11 were allocated on a mathematical basis at 18 points per language skill.

The Group, therefore, recommended the following allocation of UCAS Tariff points for Asset Languages Advanced Stage French Reading and Writing

Grade 12	23
Grade 11	18
Grade 10	13

This recommendation was subject to the caveat that judgements made at this stage are necessarily provisional, and should be reviewed as soon as sufficient candidate evidence is available for both Asset Languages Advanced Stage French and the WJEC GCE A level in French.

The Group also noted that the Asset Languages ladder went higher than Advanced and considered that some applicants to HE might offer Proficiency Stage qualifications for entry to HE. Under current policies these would not be eligible to be included within the UCAS Tariff, and this would seem potentially unfair to applicants. It was recommended that UCAS should review its policy of limiting qualifications in the Tariff to Level 3 or its equivalent.

#### Overall assessment

On the basis of the work of the Expert Groups we have differing suggestions for the allocation of UCAS Tariff Points to the Asset Language qualifications, as shown in Table 25.

*Table 25: Proposed UCAS Tariff scores*

	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
Speaking	12	20	28
Listening	10	18	23
Reading	13	18	23
Writing	13	18	23



The difference in the allocation of UCAS tariff points between Speaking and Listening is a reflection of the judgement made by the Expert Group of the higher utility of the former for supporting progression into HE. Consequently we should preserve this differential. However, the differences at the other Grade levels produce a very complex pattern that is difficult to justify. So some rationalisation is suggested. Given that we are only dealing with one or two UCAS tariff points the following recommendation (Table 26) is made.

	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
Speaking	12	20	28
Listening	11	18	25
Reading	11	18	25
Writing	11	18	25



## UCAS COMPARABILITY STUDY

### Outline Biography of Expert Group Member

Name: **Clelia Boscolo**

Current Position: Language Instructor

Organisation: University of Birmingham - Department of Italian Studies

Qualifications: BA Hons (Modern Languages)

#### **Brief Biography**

Since July 1992, she has been full time language instructor and language courses coordinator for the Department of Italian Studies, University of Birmingham. Prior to her appointment she has taught Italian language at numerous education institutions including

Birmingham Conservatoire and King Edward's School, Birmingham.

Clelia has over twenty years experience as a language teacher, consultant, translator, proof-reader, reviewer and interpreter and has taught Italian to management teams at a range of commercial organisations and worked as a language consultant with the BBC.

She has extensive examining experience from GCSE through A level to Post Graduate Certificates having worked for Edexcel, OCEAC and NEAB and as a setter, marker and moderator of Italian examinations for Foreign Office embassy and Home Office personnel.

Her research interests include Language teaching methodology, translation studies, linguistic interference between Italian and English, e-learning and modern Italian society. She has written numerous publications covering Italian grammar, speaking and listening Italian and the use of technology to enhance the student experience in language learning.

She is a member of CILT Less Widely Used Less Taught Languages Special Interest Group and is involved in the Flags (Foreign Languages Awareness Group for Schools) project.





# UCAS COMPARABILITY STUDY

## Outline Biography of Expert Group Member

Name: **Olga Gomez**

Current Position: Teaching Fellow in Spanish (Admissions Tutor for Department of European Languages and Cultures, Spanish Sectional Leader and Language Coordinator)

Organisation: Lancaster University

Qualifications: BA (Hons) European Studies and Modern Languages(French and Spanish), 1<sup>st</sup> Class, Bath University (1989)

### **Brief Biography**

I have worked as a Teaching Fellow in Spanish at Lancaster University since September 2000.

I teach and coordinate courses in Spanish language at all degree levels, as well as being responsible for the Year Abroad.

My significant responsibilities here have been:

2001-2007 Departmental Language Teaching Committee Chair- responsible for the (successful) standardisation and monitoring of all language delivery across the four languages (French, German, Italian, Spanish) taught in our department

2007- Spanish Section Leader.

2007 -Departmental Admissions Tutor

1998-2000 Lecturer in French and Spanish, Edge Hill University

I taught French language and culture at degree level, and Spanish at beginners and intermediate level on modular scheme.

Significant responsibility: French section leader

1991- 1998

Lecturer in European Thought and Culture, Bath Spa University

During this time published research on European/French Intellectual History

# UCAS COMPARABILITY STUDY

## Outline Biography of Expert Group Member

Name: **Paul Lewis-Smith**

Current Position: Senior Lecturer in Hispanic Studies

Organisation: School of Modern Languages, University of Bristol

Qualifications: M.A. (Cantab.), Ph.D. (Cantab.)

### **Brief Biography**

Paul Lewis-Smith holds a first-class honours degree in Modern and Medieval Languages, French and Spanish, from the University of Cambridge (1970) and a doctorate in Spanish literature from the same University. He is a Senior Lecturer in Hispanic Studies in the School of Modern Languages, University of Bristol and is the Senior Admissions Tutor for Hispanic, Portuguese and Latin American Studies. His previous appointments include lectureships in Spanish in the University of London (1975-78) and University of Surrey (1978-88) and the chief examinership for Advanced Level Spanish for the Oxford and Cambridge Schools Examination Board (1984-95). He is the General Editor of Spanish Texts, published by Bristol Classical Press/Duckworth.

# UCAS COMPARABILITY STUDY

## Outline Biography of Expert Group Member

Name: **S George Mann**

Current Position: Director, Centre for Intercultural Communication

Organisation: University of the West of England, Bristol

Qualifications: MA, BA, DipED. DipComm, Dip TEFLA, Fellow HEA

### Brief Biography

Currently, Director, Centre for Intercultural Communication (CICC), and Senior Lecturer in Faculty of Humanities, Languages and Social Sciences. Previously Head of School of English as a Foreign Language and Linguistics, Faculty of Languages and European Studies, University of the West of England, Bristol.

Senior Chief Examiner, University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, IGCSE, English as a Second Language (1986 - 1996)  
Oral Examiner, PET, FCE, CAE, CPE (1986-1997)  
Chairman of Examiners, University of London School Examinations Board, Graded Tests in English, (1990-1995)  
External Examiner, University of Wales, Aberystwyth (1999 - 2003)  
External Examiner, Nottingham Trent University (2001 - 2005)  
Post-graduate dissertation supervisor and external assignment marker, distance MA in TEFL/TESL, University of Birmingham (2001 - present)  
External marker/Associate Tutor, University of Leicester, MA in Applied Linguistics and TESOL by distance (2002 - present)  
Moderator for Trinity College, London (2003 - present)  
External Examiner, University of Gloucestershire (2004 – 2007)  
External Examiner, University of Abertay, Dundee (2007 – present)  
External Examiner, University of Exeter (2007 – present)  
External Examiner Oxford Brookes University, MA in TESOL (2007 – present)  
Thesis supervisor with Bristol University's MA TESOL

Research Interests include task-based language learning, international course design, communicative language teaching and test design.

# UCAS COMPARABILITY STUDY

## Outline Biography of Expert Group Member

Name: **Vivienne May**

Current Position: Asset OCR Integration Manager

Organisation: OCR

Qualifications: B Sc hons in Modern Languages 2.i (French and Spanish with Italian), University of Salford,  
PGCE University of Bristol,  
M Sc in School and College Management, Brunel University

### **Brief Biography**

I currently lead the Asset Languages qualification team in OCR, having joined Asset Languages in 2004. In this role I am responsible for managing the development of separate-skill assessment materials in 25 languages and six stages. Previously, I taught French and Spanish for more than twenty years in five different schools including seven years in a specialist Language College. During my career I taught students to Advanced Level and beyond and, as Head of Modern Languages in two schools, was responsible for selecting and teaching Advanced Level examination syllabuses from a range of different boards.

# UCAS COMPARABILITY STUDY

## Outline Biography of Expert Group Member

Name: **Christine Peakman**

Current Position: Qualifications Group Manager  
Organisation: OCR: Languages and Literature Qualifications Team – Cambridge Assessment

Qualifications: BSc (Joint Hons) French and Italian with Portuguese, University of Salford.  
PGCE – Manchester University  
MBA (Education) – Nottingham University  
MA (Cantab) – Cambridge University

### **Brief Biography**

Currently senior manager in OCR with responsibility for all OCR GCSE, GCE, AEA and Entry Level qualifications in Modern Foreign Languages, English and Classics.

Previously -18 years as teacher and Head of Department (MFL) teaching to GCSE and GCE in French, Italian and German.

# UCAS COMPARABILITY STUDY

## Outline Biography of Expert Group Member

Name: **Dr Elisabeth Planella**

Current Position: Senior Lecturer  
Organisation: University of Bolton

Qualifications: Licence-ès-Lettres (Université Aix-Marseille, France) PGCE  
11-18 (University of Manchester), PhD in Applied Linguistics  
(University of Salford).

### **Brief Biography**

#### Employment

1988-1989 Salford College: part-time lecturer in French and European Studies.  
1988 -1989 Bolton Institute of Higher Education: part-time lecturer in French and Spanish on undergraduate programmes  
1990 – 2005 Full-time lecturer in French and Spanish at Bolton Institute of Higher Education. Programme leader for undergraduate French, German and Spanish programmes. Programme leader for the Certificate of Higher Education in European Business Programme leader for the English Foundation Programme (Academic English for International students)  
2005 – to date University of Bolton: Full-time senior lecturer in French and Spanish.

#### Academic responsibilities:

Teaching French (all levels) and Spanish (up to intermediate level), Programme leader for: Language degrees, Programme Leader for Languages university –wide provision, Programme Leader for English Foundation Programme and English language support for International students, Member of various departmental and University committees

Research interests include second-language acquisition and language teaching methodology

#### Additional professional experience

Examiner (French) for the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI)  
HEFCE Specialist subject assessor (1995)  
External Examiner (Languages–French) at Sheffield Hallam University (current)  
Secretary of Standing Conference of Heads of Modern Languages (SCHLM)  
ILTHE member  
European Research in Second-Language Acquisition (EUROSLA )

# UCAS COMPARABILITY STUDY

## Outline Biography of Expert Group Member

Name: **Gareth Wyn Roberts**

Current Position: Chief Examiner WJEC A level French

Organisation: WJEC and own company Eduphile Ltd

Qualifications: M.A. Cantab and Wales, Dip.Ed

### **Brief Biography**

'retired' from LEA work in January 2006; now an independent educational consultant-specialising in school improvement

since 2006 A level Chief examiner for WJEC French,  
2000-2005 Principal Examiner A level French  
1988-1999 Joint Chief examiner WJEC, GCSE French  
1994- January 2006, Modern Languages Adviser for Gwynedd ,then CYNNAL,  
serving N.W. Wales including manager of technology and sixth form centre 1998-2006  
1990-1994 TVEI coordinator for two consortia in NW Wales- open and distance learning,curricular development, vocational and European projects. ICT since 1993 Registered Inspector for Secondary sector (1993) and Primary Sector (1995) in Wales, by end of this term will have led 80 inspections (47 secondary), mostly in Welsh medium sector.  
1989- advisory teacher for MFL with Gwynedd LEA  
1970- Dec 1988 in schools; Head of MFL ( French and German) from 1972-1988, Senior teacher for five years and Deputy Head for one year.

## **UCAS COMPARABILITY STUDY**

### **Outline Biography of Expert Group Member**

Name: **Vlad Strukov**

Current Position: Lecturer

Organisation: Department of Russian, University of Leeds

Qualifications: Ph.D.

#### **Brief Biography**

Before taking up his position in Leeds, Vlad Strukov was based in London where he worked in the School of Slavonic and Eastern European Studies (SSEES), University College London. Before coming to the UK, he worked as Assistant Professor at the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures at the University of Pittsburgh (USA), and prior to that as Deputy Head and Lecturer at the Department of Modern Languages and Cultures at the University of Voronezh (Russia).

His professional training was in the area of linguistics, translation and inter cultural communication. His doctorate thesis (1998) was on the politics and aesthetics of postmodernist literature.

He has taught all aspects of Russian at all levels, including intensive courses as part of University of Pittsburgh Summer Language Institute. His main responsibilities at the University of Leeds are teaching, examining and administration at BA, MA and PhD levels; admissions; coordinating the Russian programmes including (curriculum development, course assessment, etc.).

Since 2006 he has been involved in creating Russian language examination portfolio for ASSET, Cambridge, including writing scripts, editing, recording, etc.

At Leeds his interest is in the application of new media to the study of foreign languages and cultures.



# UCAS COMPARABILITY STUDY

## Outline Biography of Expert Group Member

Name: **Tony Woolstone**

Current Position: Chair of Examiners GCE Spanish

Organisation: AQA

Qualifications: LL.B BA DipLang

### **Brief Biography**

Secondary Languages Teacher Maintained & Independent Schools 1971 - 2008  
Deputy Headmaster 1976-2007  
Foundation Registrar 1995-2008  
Chair O & C Spanish 1994 - 1996  
Chair AEB Spanish 1995-2000  
Chair AQA Spanish 2000 - present  
ISI School Inspector 1995 - present  
Independent languages consultant and trainer 1993 - present  
Co-author of four books on language classroom methodology  
Research group member for development of new GCE specifications - 1998-2000,  
2006-2008

## **APPENDIX 2 THE EVIDENCE CONSIDERED**

### **Asset Languages Advanced Speaking and Listening Group**

- OCR Asset Languages Specification
- OCR Asset Languages Specification Content – Spanish Advanced
- OCR Asset Languages Assessment Materials – Spanish Speaking/ Spanish Listening
- OCR Asset Languages Assessment Criteria - Speaking Tests
- OCR Asset Languages Instructions for Moderators – Speaking Tests
  
- AQA GCE A level Spanish Specification
- AQA GCE A level Spanish Specimen Question Papers and Mark Schemes
- AQA GCE A level Spanish Exemplar Work Units

### **Asset Languages Advanced Reading and Writing Group**

- OCR Asset Languages Specification
- OCR Asset Languages Specification Content – French Advanced
- OCR Asset Languages Assessment Materials – French Reading/ French Writing
- OCR Asset Languages Assessment Criteria - Writing Tests
- OCR Asset Languages Instructions for Examiners – Writing Tests
  
- WJEC GCE A level French Specification
- WJEC GCE A level French Specimen Question Papers and Mark Schemes
- WJEC GCE A level Modern Foreign Languages Teachers' Guide