GENERAL

When will the last exams for the current French/ German/Spanish GCSEs be?
Exam boards will not be offering a resit opportunity for the current GCSE specifications and the last sitting of the current exams will therefore be in summer 2017. This means that all students starting year 9 in September 2015 will take the new specification exams (in summer 2018).

Will AQA be offering a GCSE Short Course in French, German and Spanish for the new specification?
There can be no overlap of assessment between a Full Course and a Short Course, so a Short Course would have to be a separate qualification. As the numbers for Short Courses in French, German and Spanish are currently very small, we will not be offering a Short Course in the new specifications.

We find the grade descriptions in the current GCSE French/German/Spanish specifications really useful for teaching and learning. Will there be grade descriptions in the new GCSE specifications?
Grade descriptors are produced and owned by The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual). They have now published grade descriptors for the new French, German and Spanish specifications. They can be accessed here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/grade-descriptors-for-gcses-graded-9-to-1/grade-descriptors-for-gcses-graded-9-to-1-modern-foreign-languages

Ofqual have explained that the descriptors will be different from 'grade descriptions', which apply to GCSEs graded A* to G. The descriptors aim to help teachers understand the likely level of performance expected at a selection of grades in the new GCSEs. They give an indication of the expected mid-point performance at grades 2, 5 and 8. International performance descriptors have been used to inform the development of these descriptors. However, the content of the descriptors is based on the relevant subject content published by the Department for Education. This can be accessed here: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/gcse-subject-content

The descriptors are not designed to be used for awarding purposes. Statistical predictions will be used to set grade outcomes at whole subject level. This is a development of the awarding process used at present for GCSEs graded A* to G.

For more information on how grade standards will be set for the new GCSEs, please see https://www.gov.uk/government/news/setting-standards-for-new-gcses-in-2017

You are raising the bar and appear to be requiring the content and skills previously delivered at A-level to be taught at GCSE.
When the Secretary of State for Education announced in 2013 a comprehensive reform of GCSEs in general, the DfE stated that ‘We are reforming the content of GCSEs to make them more challenging so pupils are better prepared for further academic or vocational study, or for work’.

The revised Subject Content for Modern Languages which has been published by DfE reflects that intention. We hope that the specs and specimen assessment materials that we have published reassure you that that whilst the demands may have increased, the reformed GCSE will be accessible to the full range of students. The DfE Subject Content is a detailed briefing document which exam boards use to develop a specification. It also includes the prescribed grammar lists for each language and these are the same across all exam boards. To have a look at what is in the DfE Subject Content please see gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/400854/GCSE_modern_foreign_languages_January_2015.pdf.
Prior learning expected (see requirements in the Subject Content) – what happens if students do a language which they haven’t studied at KS2 or KS3 and haven’t therefore acquired all of that prior learning? Is the expectation that any language they study at KS4 will have been studied by them at KS2 and KS3 too? Will they be disadvantaged if not? Senior schools have no control over what was done at KS2.

The learning of a language is cumulative and progressive in content and language. The prior learning requirement, set out in the Subject Content, is meant to indicate that a KS4 qualification will demonstrate progression from KS2/3 in these particular elements. Students may indeed not have studied a particular language at KS2/3 and it is not a requirement of study at KS4 that they must have done so. The content and language that are required at KS4 are set out in the specification. It includes the grammar requirements and the core vocabulary to be studied.

What are the guided learning hours for the new GCSE specifications?
The guided learning hours for the new GCSEs are 120-140 hours.

Will students with special educational needs be eligible for extra time in the exams?
Schools and colleges should continue to apply for access arrangements, in the same way as they do for the current qualifications.

Will there be an appeals process if AQA are marking the Speaking and Writing papers?
Yes, remarks will be available via the normal post results services in every exam series.

What is the position regarding dictionary use?
Students are not allowed to have access to a dictionary when taking any assessment or during any period of formal preparation time prior to such an assessment. This is stipulated in Ofqual’s Subject Level Conditions and Requirements and applies to all exam boards.

Will it be possible for students to achieve Grade 5 if they can use only one tense?
In both Listening and Reading papers, students will be expected to deal with questions which require understanding of more than one time frame. Access to the upper mark bands in both Writing and Speaking will require students to demonstrate an ability to refer to more than one time frame.

How important will translation skills be for the new GCSE? How will the translations be marked?
Translation is a requirement of the new Subject Content and will be assessed in the Reading and Writing tests.

In the Reading test, there will be a translation from the target language into English (a minimum of 35 words at Foundation and 50 words at Higher) and this will account for 10-15% of the overall marks awarded for Reading.

In the Writing test, there will be a translation from English into the target language (a minimum of 35 words at Foundation and 50 words at Higher) and this will account for 20% of the overall marks awarded for Writing. The mark schemes published with the specimen assessment materials demonstrate how the translations will be marked.

Are students able to resit exams in any of the four skills?
Students must take all four exams in the same series, as is the case with the current specifications. This means they would have to resit all four units in the following series.
TIMETABLE

Will the Listening, Reading and Writing papers be conducted in one sitting in the summer exam timetable?
The co-ordination of timetables is carried out by JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications) in conjunction with the exam boards. We would not envisage more than two papers being taken in any one session. Teachers are able to comment on draft timetables in the spring term annually via AQA’s website: aqa.org.uk/exams-administration/dates-and-timetables

Will the Listening and Reading exams be on the same day as currently?
This is yet to be decided (see above).

When will the exact period for conducting the Speaking tests be specified?
The dates will be published for each year’s tests on the exam timetable for that series.

GRADING AND ENTRIES

Will the Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) still be used in the new grading system?
No. In modular specifications students can take the module/unit exams in different exam series. Papers for a particular unit may vary slightly in levels of difficulty. For example, a mark of 45 in summer 2012 may have represented the same level of achievement as a mark of 48 in summer 2013. Uniform marks are used to put the marks from different series on a common scale so that both 45 (from 2012) and 48 (from 2013) have the same value when contributing to an overall grade. The current French, German and Spanish specifications have continued to use uniform marks even though students now have to take them in a linear fashion. Before 2011 most modern foreign languages GCSEs, with the exception of AQA’s modular specification, were linear. However, these specifications also used uniform marks because students could mix tiers. Uniform marks allowed the marks from Foundation Tier and Higher Tier to be put on a common scale.

Most specifications in other subjects were linear and did not use uniform marks. The same will apply to the new French, German and Spanish GCSEs. Students’ overall subject marks, and the overall subject grade boundaries, will be calculated by adding together the relevant component marks, although in some cases those marks may need to be scaled in order to give the components the correct weightings.

For example, suppose that there are two components each weighted at 50%, and suppose component 1 is marked out of 40 and component 2 is marked out of 50. Then, before the component marks are added together, component 1 needs to be multiplied by 5/4, or 1.25, in order to give it the correct weighting of 50%.

How is the new grading structure going to work?
A new system for grading all of the new GCSEs is being introduced by the government. The exams regulator Ofqual has confirmed how grading will work when new GCSEs are awarded for the first time (in English language, English literature and maths in 2017, with GCSE French, German and Spanish and other subjects following in 2018, with the same grading system).

The new GCSEs will be graded 1 to 9, with 9 being the top grade. Ofqual has consulted on proposals for how standards should be set for them, and how the grading scale should work.

• They have confirmed that broadly the same proportion of students will achieve a grade 4 and above as currently achieve a grade C and above.

• Broadly the same proportion of students will achieve a grade 7 and above as currently achieve an A and above.

• For each examination, the top 20 per cent of those who get grade 7 or above will get a grade 9 – the very
highest performers.

- The bottom of grade 1 will be aligned with the bottom of grade G.

- Grade 5 will be positioned in the top third of the marks for a current Grade C and bottom third of the marks for a current Grade B. This will mean it will be of greater demand than the present grade C, and broadly in line with what the best available evidence tells the government is the average PISA performance in countries such as Finland, Canada, the Netherlands and Switzerland.

- For MFL a student who takes Foundation Tier assessments will be awarded a grade from 1 to 5, or be unclassified. A student taking Higher Tier assessments will be awarded a grade within the range of 4 to 9. A student sitting the Higher Tier who just fails to achieve grade 4 will be awarded an allowed grade 3. Students who fail to reach the minimum standard for the allowed grade 3 will be recorded as U (unclassified) and will not receive a qualification certificate.

**GRADING THE NEW GCSES IN 2017 – A VISUAL EXPLANATION**

For more information about the grading of the new GCSEs, please see the earlier response about the new grading system.

**GRADING THE NEW GCSES IN 2017 – KEY POINTS LEAFLET**

**NEW GRADING STRUCTURE**

**Do you know the grade boundaries for the specimen assessment materials yet?**
Grade boundaries are only available once students have taken a live examination. Grade boundaries are never available for untrialled specimen papers as these papers have not actually been taken by students and have not been through the necessary marking and awarding process to decide where the grade boundaries lie. This applies to all subjects and all levels.

We will publish exemplar marked work, with senior examiner commentaries, across the ability range to help teachers understand the requirements of the new exams. Ofqual have confirmed how grading will work when the new GCSEs are awarded for the first time. The approach in that first year will draw heavily on statistical evidence to make sure that there are clear ‘anchor points’ from the old system to the new. This will ensure students are not disadvantaged, or advantaged, because of the introduction of the new qualifications, and will provide some certainty about what to expect at this time of significant change.

**Are we no longer allowed to mix tiers? Is that the same now for all exam boards?**
Students must enter for all four skills at the same tier. When Ofqual consulted on the exact assessment arrangements for languages, whilst they accepted that there are arguments in favour of mixed tiers, its proposal in the consultation was that mixed tiers should be prohibited. This is the same for all exam boards. Because the new GCSEs will be linear, uniform marks will no longer be used in the new specifications. If students were allowed to mix tiers in GCSE MFLs, these subjects would be the only ones still to need to use uniform marks. This anomaly could be confusing for schools and colleges, students and users. Taking all of this into account and the fact that only small numbers of students have mixed tiers in the current and previous specifications (about 10% of the entry) the exam boards agreed with Ofqual’s proposal.
Can we decide on the day of the exams which tier a student should be entered for?
Remember that students must now enter for all four skills at the same tier, so you would have to make the same tier of entry decision for all four skills. Although AQA does allow late change of tier of entry, there is a charge for this and we would recommend that it is in the interests of students for them to know well in advance of the date of the assessments which tier they have been entered for.

Considering that students have to do either Foundation or Higher for all papers, what happens if students don’t get the 4 grade at Higher in one skill? Do they get 0 for that paper?
Grades will not be reported at individual component level; students will be awarded an overall grade based on their performance across all four papers. A student sitting the Higher tier who just fails to achieve grade 4 will be awarded an allowed grade 3. Students who fail to reach the minimum standard for the allowed grade 3 will be recorded as U (unclassified) and will not receive a qualification certificate.

How much overlap is there between the Foundation and the Higher Tiers?
Ofqual requirements state that there must be overlap between the two tiers, in all of the assessments. In the Listening papers, 13 marks are common to both tiers (out of 40 for Foundation and 50 for Higher) and in Reading it is 15 marks (out of 60 for each tier). In Speaking it is 30 marks (out of 60 for each tier) and in Writing it is 16 marks (out of 50 for Foundation and 60 for Higher).

I’ve heard that the current languages GCSEs won’t count towards the Ebacc from 2018. Is that true?
The following is a link to the Department for Education’s (DfE) guide to Progress 8 measures; on page 9 of this document you can find a link to the list of qualifications that count towards the Ebacc.
As soon as a reformed GCSE is introduced in the performance tables, then an early entry to the unreformed GCSE in the same subject will not count in the performance tables. This means that the current (ie unreformed) GCSE French, German and Spanish qualifications will continue to count in the performance tables until the new, reformed GCSEs for these languages are introduced into the performance tables; this will be in 2018. This means that if a student enters in 2017 for one of these current GCSEs and 2017 is the year in which they are in year 11, then this GCSE will count towards the performance tables. However, if they are entered in 2017 for these current GCSEs and are only in year 10, then this GCSE will not count towards the performance tables because in 2018, when they reach year 11, the reformed GCSEs in these languages will have been introduced in the performance tables and these will be the only GCSE qualifications in these languages which can count in 2018.

THEMES

How did you design the content for the new Themes?
We worked with a wide range of practising teachers to pick out the most popular aspects of the current specification if they fitted under these new Themes and at the same time, we brought in some new and more engaging content.

Are the three Themes the only Themes?
The three overarching Themes are prescribed in the new Subject Content. Within each Theme, exam boards decide what topics need to be taught and AQA’s content can be found in our specifications.

Which customs and festivals will be tested?
The vocabulary lists provide you with guidance on the main festivals but there is plenty of scope for teachers to explore any cultural aspects you choose with students.
A lot of the content seems similar to the current AS topics – will the depth of knowledge be different?
We have tried to ensure that we have a balance of topics which are of personal interest to students but at the same time we have included some more challenging topics such as social issues and global issues to broaden the scope of the content. The depth of knowledge required will be appropriate for students studying at this level.

Are there any topics from the current specification that will no longer feature on the new specification?
We have retained some of the content from the current specification because it is popular with students and teachers. For the full breakdown of the three Themes, please refer to the specification document.

How do teachers know the scope of the sub-topics?
Teachers are advised to look at the vocabulary lists in the specification which provide guidance.

Are all three Themes covered in each component/exam?
Yes, each exam will cover all three Themes.

VOCABULARY

Will you provide a list of vocabulary that students need to know for Foundation Tier and Higher Tier assessments and will these apply to all four skills?
Vocabulary lists with English translations are available in the specifications and will apply to all four skills.

What sort of words will you be testing which aren’t in the vocabulary lists in the specifications?
At Foundation Tier, we will be testing words which are common or familiar. These could be words which students know from their prior study or words which are cognates, near cognates or which can be accessed through the communication strategies in the specifications. At Higher Tier, we will be testing words which are less common or familiar than those tested at Foundation Tier. Again, students will be expected to use the knowledge from their prior study and communication strategies in the specification to access these words.

Will vocabulary lists be available in Excel, making their input into vocabulary builders easier?
Our new specifications are available in digital form. Vocabulary lists are provided as part of the digital specifications meaning that teachers can copy and paste the content into other systems.

LISTENING

Will the target language questions in the Listening exams also be applicable for Foundation students?
Yes, there will be questions in the target language at both tiers as required by the Subject Content prescribed by the Department for Education.

Will questions and answers in the target language be multiple choice or will they require full sentence answers?
Questions in the target language may require a range of responses including selecting letters and numbers, and writing words, phrases and short sentences.

Will the rubrics for questions and answers in the target language be in English or in the target language?
The requirement of the Subject Content is that the rubrics for questions in the target language must be written in the target language.
Will spelling mistakes be penalised in Listening?
Responses in the Listening exams will be assessed only for their understanding of the spoken language. They will not be assessed for quality of language, but purely for comprehension. This applies to answers both in English and in the target language.

If we are testing Listening, why are some of the answers in the target language? Isn’t that testing Writing at the same time?
It is a requirement of the Subject Content that there are questions and answers in the target language in the Listening and Reading exams. As mentioned previously, in the Listening test, responses will be assessed only for their understanding of the spoken language.

When responding in the target language, can students write what they have heard on the transcript or do they need to paraphrase?
Students will not be required to paraphrase text they have heard. As long as their answer communicates the information required by the question, credit will be given.

Why are there fewer questions testing single lexical items than there were in the first draft of the specimen papers?
One of the areas of feedback from Ofqual on the first draft of the specimen papers was around not testing single lexical items as it was felt that this did not demonstrate sufficient progression from Key Stage 3. The question papers have, therefore, been reviewed to address this feedback.

Will students still be able to write notes during the 5 minutes’ reading time before the Listening test starts?
Yes. Students will find it particularly useful for the questions in the target language (Section B) where they may need to use the communication strategies to help them understand any unfamiliar language.

Are there sound files to accompany the GCSE specimen listening tests?
Yes, these can be found at aqa.org.uk/subjects/languages/gcse/language(XXXX)/Assessment resources for our first set of specimen papers; the additional set of specimen papers, including the sound files for the listening tests, can be found on Secure Key Materials area of e-AQA/GCSE/Languages/Language/Additional Specimen Assessment materials.

Will there be video recordings in the Listening tests?
No, the recording for the Listening test will be in audio format, as it is currently.

Why is the total number of marks different at Foundation and Higher? And why are they different from those for Reading?
The weighting for both papers is the same. Any difference in the total marks will be scaled up to maintain the equal weighting for each paper. In Listening, there is a specified time limit for the length of the recording from Ofqual which means that we have to consider very carefully the requirements of the tasks and also how many marks are targeted in the time allowed. For example, if we had set the Foundation Listening out of 60 marks to match the Reading paper, this could impact on our ability to set an appropriate number of questions within the time available and could lead to poor assessment design by trying to get too many marks out of particular listening items. This is something we considered very carefully during the development of the specification and our decision was to have mark totals of 40 and 50 for Listening to reflect the time allowed for these tests and also to ensure that the tasks were manageable for the students.
SPEAKING

GENERAL

What do you mean by non-exam assessment?
Ofqual refers to any assessment which is not an examination taken on the same day, at the same
time, by all students as 'non-exam assessment' (NEA).

Therefore the GCSE Speaking tests are classed as NEA as there is a prescribed window of up to
five weeks in which to conduct the tests. We will be providing lots of support and guidance on
the conduct of the Speaking test in the Preparing to Teach meetings, and in subsequent years,
via free online training materials.

How can there be a Speaking ‘paper’?
For Speaking, the term ‘question paper’ refers to the confidential assessment materials provided by AQA
to schools and colleges in advance of the testing period.

For Speaking are we having Foundation and Higher papers?
Yes. Question papers will be available for both Foundation and Higher tiers.

Who chooses the types of stimulus used in the GCSE Speaking test?
Each exam board will specify the exact format of its Speaking tests. This is illustrated in the
specifications and specimen materials.

Will there be just one Speaking test for each student?
Yes, students will take one Speaking test.

Are the Speaking tests to be conducted by teachers or external examiners? Can we request
a visiting speaking examiner?
The Speaking test is conducted and recorded by the teacher. It is marked by AQA. It is not possible to request a
visiting examiner for GCSE Speaking tests.

Are all Speaking recordings sent off to AQA – not just a sample?
Recordings of Speaking tests for all students are submitted to AQA for marking as the new specification is
100% external assessment.

What are the supervision arrangements for the Speaking tests?
Students preparing for their Speaking test must be supervised by an invigilator in a specified area to avoid
any contact with unauthorised material or contact with other students. They must also not be in a position
to hear the student being tested. There is no restriction on contact between students who have already
taken their test within the test period and those students yet to complete it.

Does being able to open the confidential materials ‘three working days prior to the
Speaking exam’ mean three working days before the start of the five week test period or
three working days before teachers are actually conducting the tests in their
school/college?
Teachers can open the confidential materials up to three working days before the start of the five week
test period if they so wish.

Do teachers choose the length of preparation time?
No, this must be the same for all students, ie 12 minutes. Ofqual’s Subject Level Conditions and
Requirements state that the preparation time must be between 10 and 12 minutes; so, in order to ensure a
level playing field for all students and to help you with the logistics of administering Higher tests which may
last for 12 minutes, we have stated that the length of the preparation period for all students must be 12 minutes.

**Will students be allowed to use a sheet with prompts as they currently can with controlled assessment?**

Students can use the preparation time to write notes for both the role-play and the photo card and these notes can then be used by the student during these tasks. Teachers will then collect the notes from the student before starting the General Conversation. Notes should be retained by schools/colleges until results day, after which they should be disposed of.

**What range of time frames do students have to refer to during the Speaking test?**

In the Foundation test, the role-plays are designed so that students only have to refer to the present (though if they respond to a task referring to another time frame, and that response is appropriate, then that is fine); in the photo card, one of the five questions will require the student to refer to a time frame other than the present and in the General Conversation, students aiming for the highest marks should make reference to past, present and future events.

In the Higher test, there will be at least one task in the role-play which gives the student an opportunity to refer to an event which is either in the past or the future; in the photo card, two of the five questions will require the student to refer to a time frame other than the present and in the General Conversation, students aiming for the highest marks should make reference to past, present and future events.

**Why are students required to ask a question in the role-play and then another one in the General Conversation?**

It is a requirement of the Subject Content that students ask more than one question during the Speaking test. We know that formulating questions is a challenging task for students, so we did not want to make it a requirement for them to ask two questions in the role-play. We have, therefore, introduced a requirement for students to ask a question at some point during the General Conversation. This requirement is brought to the attention of students in the instructions on their stimulus cards and we also remind teachers in the Teacher’s Booklet to prompt a question if one has not been asked.

**Are retakes of GCSE Speaking tests permitted?**

Students may attempt the Speaking test only once in each series. Students who wish to resit the Speaking test must resit all four units in the following series.

**What if recordings fail due to technical issues?**

In the event of a technical malfunction, the student concerned should be re-tested within the allocated period. Full Instructions for the Conduct of the Tests will be published and training will be made available to teachers to conduct the tests.

**What training will be available to teachers to conduct the Speaking tests?**

A summary of how to conduct the Speaking tests will be available at the Preparing to Teach meetings. From spring 2017, detailed training on how to conduct the Speaking tests will be available online and free of charge.

**In the mark scheme for Speaking, do the levels equate to the new GCSE grades 1-9?**

No, the levels in the mark scheme do not equate to the GCSE numerical grades. This level of response mark scheme uses numbers to differentiate between levels of performance and to demonstrate progression.

**How can we make accurate grade predictions if we are not marking the Speaking test?**

Schools/colleges will no longer be required to submit estimated grades for each student (see: aqa.org.uk/exams-administration/exams-guidance/estimated-grades.)
In the current specifications in French and Spanish the near future is credited as a present tense, rather than as an ‘other’ or future tense. Will this be the case in the new specifications too?

In the current specification, both the immediate future and future are classed as two different tenses. However, in the new specification we are dealing in time frames, so the present tense can be used to make a reference to the future eg in Spanish este viernes voy al cine would be a correct reference to a future event and in French, a sentence such as le week-end prochain, je vais au cinéma avec mes amis totally satisfies the criteria for a future time frame/reference.

In the current specification, the use of the future tense and the conditional tense counts as two tenses; what is the ruling for the new specification?

In the new specification, the requirement is for the student to refer to several time frames, rather than tenses, so in this example such usage would be a reference to one time frame only – ie the future. The use of different tenses does, however, contribute towards the Range and accuracy of language marks.

My students speak with an accent which is not Castilian and use some words which are not Castilian, because I have taught them and I am from South America. Will they be penalised for this?

No, there is no change from our current Spanish specifications where both are accepted.

We’re not clear what you mean when you refer to ‘repair strategies’ in the assessment criteria Notes for marking the Speaking tests.

‘Repair strategies’ are mentioned in the DfE’s Modern Languages Subject Content (‘Students are expected to speak … sustaining communication by using … repair strategies’) and they refer to the ways in which students resolve communication breakdowns in speaking. Types of repair strategies include asking questions for clarification, repeating, requests for repetition, requests for definition or explanation, self-correction, etc.

ROLE-PLAY/PHOTO CARD

Is the teacher allowed to rephrase the questions or adapt the script in the role-play and photo card?

In the role-play, teachers may change the target language phrases only if the student’s previous response makes them inappropriate. However, if key vocabulary is supplied, students cannot be rewarded for it.

In the photo card task, teachers can paraphrase the questions provided the same meaning is maintained. It is also acceptable to repeat or paraphrase a question that the student does not understand.

In the role-play, if the task given to the student specifies, for example, ‘two details’, but the student only gives one detail, can the teacher ask for another detail?

In such role-plays, the teacher’s script states ‘Elicit two details.’ So, if the student only gives one detail, the teacher is permitted to elicit the second detail by asking, for example, ‘And …?’ or ‘Anything else?’, etc – in the target language.

In the photo card, if the teacher realises that the student has not developed enough answers to gain access to the higher mark bands in the assessment criteria, can he/she ask supplementary questions to those in the Teacher’s Notes?

No. Whilst the teacher can repeat a ‘Why’ question which is already on the Teacher’s Notes, if the student does not answer it, it is not permissible for the teacher to ask supplementary questions which are not printed in the Teacher’s Notes. Good practice when preparing students for this task is to encourage them to write notes in their preparation time which allow them to develop as much as possible the three questions which are printed on their card, whilst ensuring that they don’t run out of time when they need to answer the remaining two (unseen) questions.
How many role-play and photo cards will each student discuss?
Each student will complete one role-play and one photo card.

Do students have a choice of role-play and photo card?
No, AQA specifies the sequence of role-plays and photo cards and each student will be offered one card only for the role-play and for the photo card. The sequencing table can be found in the Teacher’s Booklet (which is part of the Speaking specimen materials).

From the sequencing table it looks as though first we do the role-play, then the student’s chosen Theme for the General Conversation, then the photo card and then the second Conversation Theme. Is that correct?
No. The order of the test is: role-play, photo card and finally General Conversation. The purpose of the sequencing table is to illustrate which stimulus cards you give to each student. You do not have to test students in candidate order number and the table refers to the sequence in which students are tested by each teacher, not for the school/college as a whole. If you have a break in testing, eg lunch or overnight, the sequence should be restarted at the next number in column 1, so if you stopped after candidate 2 for a break, you would start again at candidate 3. If there are more candidates than the table allows for, you should start again at number 1.

Are the questions on the role-play and photo card in the target language?
For the role-play, the instructions to the student are in English; the tasks are in the target language. The three questions on the student’s copy of the photo card are in the target language.

Will certain Themes/topics be specified for the role-plays and photo cards?
No, tasks will cover all three Themes in the specification.

In the role-plays, where the question from the teacher consists of two parts, should I ask these separately or at the same time?
Good practice would be to ask them separately so as not to overburden the students’ memory. In the final specimen materials we have put three dots in between the individual questions to make it clear that teachers should ask the questions one at a time. This will be covered in more detail in the Preparing to Teaching meetings, which start in spring 2016, alongside more detailed guidance on conducting the Speaking tests as a whole.

How many elements will the teacher ask for in the unpredictable task?
At Foundation the teacher will only ask for one reason, detail, opinion, etc. At Higher this will vary, depending on the task. Please see the specimen materials for more details.

Why is there a mix of formal and informal role-plays?
It is a requirement of the Subject Content that students be exposed to appropriate social conventions, including informal and formal address and register.

What will the penalty be if a student uses the wrong form of address?
Role-plays are marked for Communication and for Knowledge and use of language. A wrong form of address would be highly unlikely to affect the mark for Communication and would not necessarily incur a penalty for Knowledge and use of language; it will depend on the quality of the rest of the language used by the student in the role-play overall.

With the student’s question task in the role-play, how much leeway is there? Are you expecting that just one particular question will be asked, or can it be any question that is relevant?
Any question which is appropriate will score the mark. Some role-plays are designed so that a particular question is expected, but the student has individual choice over the language he/she uses to ask that question. In other role-plays the student has more choice over the question he/she asks.
Do the positions of the unpredictable task and the question task vary from role-play to role-play?
Yes, this will vary depending on the individual role-play and where they fall naturally. The unpredictable task will never be the first task because we feel this would be too challenging; the question task however could be the first task if that fits with the scenario of the role-play.

I know that the role-play is supposed to take about two minutes, at both Foundation and Higher, but what happens if it takes longer (or is shorter)?
Two minutes should be long enough for most students, but, because of the nature of the task, this is a suggestion only and the role-play does not have to be timed - it takes as long (or as little) as each student needs and there is no cut-off point as far as marking is concerned. The photo card task and the General Conversation are timed (maximum 2 minutes at Foundation and 3 minutes at Higher for the photo card and 3–5 minutes at Foundation and 5–7 minutes at Higher for the General Conversation), so we would recommend that you have a stopwatch in the exam to time the photo card and to start it again for the General Conversation.

Can students use their imagination in answering the first question on the photo card, or must everything said be verifiable from looking at the photo?
Responses must be rooted in the content of the photo. However, for this task, for marks in the highest bands, examiners are looking for development and for the giving and explaining of opinions. For this reason, more able students should be encouraged to complement factual description with opinions about the people and activity depicted in the photo; this could also encompass conjecture, eg ‘I think the weather is hot because the people are wearing t-shirts’.

GENERAL CONVERSATION

Is the nominated conversation topic chosen by us or AQA? How long in advance will we know the nominated topic? Will the nominated topic be known to the student before the exam?
The Speaking test as a whole covers aspects of all three Themes listed in the specification. One of the Themes for the conversation is chosen by the student in advance (though the student must not know what questions will be asked on that Theme). We have provided teachers with guidance regarding how to ensure that the remaining two Themes are covered (see the sequence table in the Teacher’s Booklet).

Do students nominate their chosen conversation Theme before the exam starts? If so, when and how does that affect the choice of photo card?
Students will be required to notify their teacher of their nominated Theme in advance of the test. This will then allow the teacher to use a pre-determined sequence provided by AQA to allocate the photo card which will be from a different Theme. Students can nominate their chosen Theme any time in advance of the test. We would not suggest doing it on the day of the exam, because the teacher will want to prepare beforehand.

Can every student in the class choose the same Theme as his/her nominated Theme?
This is permissible, but each student must be tested according to his/her ability, so we would not expect that each student would be asked the same questions (see also response below).

Can teachers look at the students’ preparation for their chosen conversation Theme and devise questions on that Theme in advance?
Students will be able to practise a range of questions for each of the Themes. However, a student must not know which questions will be asked during the test itself.

Can teachers choose which sub-topics to ask questions on in each of the two Themes?
Yes. However, a student must not know which questions will be asked during the test itself, although,
clearly, a range of questions will have been covered as part of teaching and learning time. Teachers should also facilitate a genuine conversation by following up on a student’s answers.

**Will AQA prescribe questions for the General Conversation or will there be scope for flexibility?**
Suggested questions covering the full ability range are provided for each Theme in the Teacher’s Booklet as a guideline but these questions are not compulsory and teachers are free to use their own questions if they wish.

**With regard to the requirement for students to ask a question during the General Conversation, does this need to contain a verb, or would ‘And you?’ count as a question?**
The purpose of the question that the student asks in the General Conversation is to elicit information; it is not essential to include a verb, if information can be elicited in another way. The example, therefore, of the student asking ‘And you?’ would be perfectly acceptable provided that it made sense in, and was appropriate to, the context of what else had just been said by the teacher-examiner or student.

**With regard to the requirement for students to ask a question during the General Conversation, could the student ask, at the start of the General Conversation ‘How are you?’**
Yes.

**With regard to the requirement for students to ask a question during the General Conversation, would asking ‘Could you repeat that?’ in the target language meet that requirement?**
No. The Speaking test mark scheme refers to the fact that students ‘may show repair strategies in seeking clarification’ and asking the teacher to repeat something, or asking them if they would slow down, etc is a repair strategy so that the student can understand what the teacher is saying. A question must elicit information, rather than repetition/clarification of something the teacher has said.

**With regard to the requirement for students to ask a question during the General Conversation, does the teacher have to answer it?**
The teacher should answer the question, but as briefly as possible.

**For the General Conversation section of the speaking exam, if a student goes under or over the allocated time, are they penalised?**
The General Conversation should last for 3–5 minutes at Foundation and 5–7 minutes at Higher. We recommend that teachers conducting the tests use a stopwatch at the start of this section of the test to ensure that you adhere to these timings. If you are still asking a question, or if the candidate is still answering a question, when the maximum time allowed has been reached, the candidate is allowed to give his/her full response even if this takes him/her beyond the maximum time and all of the work produced up to that point will be marked. No additional questions can be asked after that, and if they are, the candidate’s output from that point on will not be assessed. If a student is slightly under the allocated time, there is no automatic penalty; however, if they are considerably under the recommended timings they are highly unlikely to have access to the higher mark bands in the assessment criteria because they will not have produced enough language to demonstrate the evidence needed to meet the requirements of these mark bands.

The same principles will be applied to the Photo card section of the test (maximum 2 minutes at Foundation and 3 at Higher).
READING

Will the target language questions in the Reading exams also be applicable for Foundation students?
Yes, there will be questions in the target language at both tiers as required by the Subject Content prescribed by the Department for Education.

Will the rubrics for questions and answers in the target language be in English or in the target language?
The requirement of the Subject Content is that the rubrics for questions in the target language must be written in the target language.

When answering questions in the target language, are students required to manipulate the language into their own words?
The marks for the target language answers are for communication only and not for the quality of the student’s language. Where it is appropriate to do so, students will be able to lift their answer from the stimulus text.

If we are testing Reading, why are some of the answers in the target language? Isn’t that testing Writing at the same time?
It is a requirement of the Subject Content that there are questions and answers in the target language in the Listening and Reading exams. As mentioned previously, in the Reading test, responses will be assessed only for their understanding of the written language.

Why are there fewer questions testing single lexical items than there were in the earlier draft of the first set of specimen papers?
One of the areas of feedback from Ofqual on an earlier draft of the first set of specimen papers was around not testing single lexical items as it was felt that this did not demonstrate sufficient progression from Key Stage 3. The question papers have, therefore, been reviewed to address this feedback.

What type of literary texts will be set? Will they be in the English or target language sections?
The Subject Content states that literary texts can include ‘extracts and excerpts, adapted and abridged as appropriate, from poems, letters, short stories, essays, novels or plays from contemporary and historical sources, subject to copyright’. They will appear in either the English or target language sections or both.

Will there be a list of the featured literary texts available?
The literary text should be treated in the same way as any other stimulus for a reading comprehension. There is no requirement for students to study specific literary texts, nor will there be a list of suggested literary texts or authors. There is no requirement to study any specific tenses for the literary texts; only those tenses listed in the specification will be tested.

In the specimen papers, all the literary texts are taken from historical sources. Will this always be the case?
No, the Subject Content states that literary texts must be taken from contemporary and historical sources, so you will see both over the lifetime of the specification. The reason why the specimen paper literary texts are entirely historical is due to the difficulties of getting copyright permission for authors who have not been dead for 70 years. It is crucial to us to obtain copyright permissions from foreign publishers for electronic publication, so that we are able to publish full question papers on our website.

Surely translation is a Writing skill? Why is it being tested in the Reading paper?
In the Reading paper, students will be translating from the target language into English, therefore it is comprehension that is being assessed.
Is it true the translations are from Molière, for example?
No. Literary texts (adapted and abridged as appropriate) are included as part of the range of stimulus materials in the Reading test, but the translations will not be based on any of the literary materials.

Why is the translation in the Reading paper a passage at Foundation Tier? In Writing, it is sentences at Foundation Tier.
The Subject Content requires the translations in the Reading paper to be short passages. Sentences are permitted by the Subject Content in Writing.

How will the translation in Reading be marked?
The sentences will be split into sections of text and 1 mark is awarded separately for each part (no half marks are awarded). We decided not to go for an impression type mark scheme for this task because of concerns about issues of consistency and interpretation which could lead to quality of marking issues. The mark scheme gives examples of alternative answers and of text which is not essential.

In the translation into English, will the quality of the student’s written English be taken into account?
There is no assessment of students’ written English. As long as the meaning is clear, credit will be given.

Will students still get the marks in the translation even if they make slight spelling mistakes?
A slight spelling mistake is unlikely to prevent the mark being scored unless a word in the target language is created, eg marriage / mariage in French.

Do the three sections in the paper all cover different topic areas?
Each section will cover a range of topic areas and the paper as a whole will cover all three Themes.

Will stimulus texts be typed or handwritten like they were some years ago?
All stimulus texts will be typed.

WRITING

GENERAL

Who marks the Writing paper?
All four papers are externally assessed so this means that AQA examiners will set and mark all of the assessments including Writing.

For Writing are we having Foundation and Higher papers?
Yes. Question papers will be available for both Foundation and Higher tiers.

Will the Writing task be an exam or controlled assessment?
There is no controlled assessment in the new GCSE specification. The Writing task will be an AQA set exam which accounts for 25% of the total GCSE marks.

Will the questions be set in target language or English?
All tasks, except for the translations, are set in the target language. This is a requirement of the Subject Content and applies to all exam boards.

Will students be able to take in some words to help with them in the Writing exam, for example transferrable vocabulary?
No, students cannot have any access to any resources during the exam itself. They are required to respond in the examination to the unseen questions on the question paper.
Why is there a difference in the total number of marks at Foundation tier and Higher tier? This is because the tasks are different. In terms of the overall weighting, the papers at both tiers are worth 25% of the overall GCSE, so the number of raw marks doesn't affect this weighting. At Higher tier, the grade range to be covered is from 4-9, so there are 6 grades spanning this paper. The greater number of marks at Higher tier facilitates discrimination between the grades.

In the mark scheme for Writing, do the levels equate to the new GCSE grades 1-9? No, the levels in the mark scheme do not equate to the GCSE numerical grades. This level of response mark scheme uses numbers to differentiate between levels of performance and to demonstrate progression.

What happens if students write less than the recommended number of words for a question? To access the highest marks, students need to accomplish all the tasks and develop them as well as show a variety of vocabulary and structures. If they write considerably fewer than the recommended number of words, they are unlikely to meet these requirements. They will still gain credit for what they produce.

What happens if students write more than the recommended number of words for a question? Everything a student writes will be marked and credited. We do not want students to be wasting time counting words. It is the quality of the work which is important. Examples of indicative content are available in the published specimen mark schemes.

Do there need to be clear paragraphs between answers to the bullet points or should the response be written as a piece of continuous text? Students can produce their piece as they wish. There is no requirement for a particular layout.

In the current specifications in French and Spanish the near future is credited as a present tense, rather than as an ‘other’ or future tense. Will this be the case in the new specifications too? In the current specification, both the immediate future and future are classed as two different tenses. However, in the new specification we are dealing in time frames, so the present tense can be used to make a reference to the future eg in Spanish *este viernes voy al cine* would be a correct reference to a future event and in French, a sentence such as *le week-end prochain, je vais au cinéma avec mes amis* totally satisfies the criteria for a future time frame/reference.

In the current specification, the use of the future tense and the conditional tense counts as two tenses; what is the ruling for the new specification? In the new specification the requirement is for the student to refer to several time frames, rather than tenses, so in this example such usage would be a reference to one time frame only – ie the future. The use of different tenses does, however, contribute towards the Quality of language and Range of language marks.

My students write non-Castilian Spanish because I have taught them and I am from South America. Will they be penalised for this? No, there is no change from our current Spanish specifications where both are accepted.

In your German exemplar materials some students have used the imperfect rather than the perfect tense to convey past events. Is this acceptable? Yes, the imperfect tense can be used in Writing instead of the perfect to convey past events and meets the requirement for reference to a past time frame. Both are acceptable.
TRANSLATIONS

Will the translation exercise just be in the present tense at Foundation Tier?

It will be mainly in the present tense at Foundation Tier.

Will the Writing translations be marked in the same way as the Reading translations?

No, in Writing the translations are marked against two sets of criteria: conveying key messages and application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures. Please see the full mark scheme.

How accurate do the translations have to be in order to achieve full marks?

The criteria for assessment for the top band at Foundation tier and the top band at Higher tier do not require perfection in terms of application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures. Therefore, occasional missing accents and the occasional minor spelling error are unlikely to preclude a top band mark. However, if, over the piece as a whole, there are numerous minor errors/missing accents, then this is likely to impact on the mark awarded.

If a student translates some of the sentences/passage into the target language and there are virtually no errors in it, but misses out altogether some of the sentences/passage, can they have access to the highest marks for Application of grammatical knowledge and structures?

No. The assessment criteria refer to ‘knowledge of vocabulary and structures’. Omissions from the students in their translations indicate a lack of such knowledge and would preclude access to the higher bands. The more that has been omitted then the lower the maximum mark will be; this principle is exemplified in the marked exemplar work available in the published mark scheme for each language on AQA’s website.

FOUNDATION QUESTION 1

If a student wrote ‘Il y a ma copine’ and then also ‘Il y a mon prof’, repeating the same structure, would both sentences receive credit?

Yes, each sentence is judged on its merits. For the award of two marks, the relevant message must be clearly communicated. The two examples quoted do communicate information clearly and would therefore be awarded 2 marks each.

What constitutes a ‘sentence’ for this question? It seems much harder than the previous vocabulary listing question that was in the first specimen question paper at Foundation Tier.

The question in the first set of specimen papers was a task where students had to write a list of single vocabulary items for 6 marks. One of the areas of feedback from Ofqual on the first submission was around not testing single lexical items as it was felt that this did not demonstrate sufficient progression from Key Stage 3. The Subject Content document also refers as a minimum to the requirement for students to ‘write short texts, using simple sentences’, so a list-type question was not appropriate. This question is aimed at the lowest grades and as long as the sentence communicates a message clearly, it will receive credit. Normally it will include a verb (as the omission of a verb will usually delay communication) but a construction such as ‘Voici ma copine’ does communicate the message clearly and would therefore get 2 marks. There are examples of other possible answers in the published mark scheme for each language.

Will the pictures be in colour on the actual live exam?

No, the pictures will be in black and white in the question papers.

What do you mean by ‘delay in communication’ in the assessment criteria?

The criteria for one mark refer to ‘the message is relevant but has some ambiguity and causes a delay in communication’. There are some examples of answers which meet these criteria in the mark scheme. A
delay in communication is where some information is communicated but it is not immediately clear, for example a verb may be missing.

Should students use their imagination when responding to this question and include their opinions about what might be happening on the photo?
No, this question (aimed at the lowest grades) is marked only for clear, relevant communication – examiners are not looking for opinions or developments. Students should be encouraged, therefore, to write four simple (so that lack of clarity is not an issue) sentences about what is on the photo (so that lack of relevance is not an issue).

FOUNDATION QUESTION 4/ HIGHER QUESTION 1

Will the optional questions in Question 4 Foundation Tier/Question 1 Higher Tier cover different topics?
Yes, each option will cover a different topic area to allow the student to choose the topic they feel most confident with. This will also be the case in Higher Question 2.

Do students need to cover all of the bullet points for the writing questions?
Yes, the bullet points are compulsory, but students can write more on some than others. See the indicative content in the mark scheme for further guidance. If a bullet point is not covered at all, this will have an impact on the Content mark (see additional notes on the application of the assessment criteria for further guidance).

HIGHER QUESTION 2

In the criteria for Higher Writing Question 2, no reference is made to a requirement for different tenses for Range of Language. Why not?
The overlap question (ie Question 4 at Foundation/Question 1 at Higher) is aimed at grades 4 and 5; this is the question where we ensure that students are given every opportunity to demonstrate references to three time frames, by embedding them in the bullet point tasks which are set for each of the questions and by making specific reference to them in the Quality of language assessment criteria. This ensures that students at the top of Foundation/bottom of Higher are given opportunities to meet the requirements of the Department for Education Modern foreign languages Subject Content to refer to past, present and future events. Higher Question 2 is a more open-ended question, with only two bullet points set, which really allows the higher ability students to make more independent, creative and complex use of the language and demonstrate the performance required for the higher grades. They may well refer to several time frames in such responses (and the two bullet points will ensure that at least two are elicited), which will add to their range of language, but the specific requirement to refer to three time frames is addressed by the overlap question.

SUPPORT AND RESOURCES

Once Ofqual have approved them, will you send printed copies of the specifications and specimen assessment materials (SAMs) to schools and colleges?
Most schools and colleges have told us that you don’t want to be overwhelmed by hard copies of specifications and specimen materials from all of the exam boards, particularly for languages that you don’t teach. Our new accredited specifications are digital, so they will be most useful to you as electronic versions. You can access these now on our website. You can of course download and print them out too.

We have looked on your website at the SAMs that you have sent to Ofqual. Will there be an additional set available?
Yes, an additional complete set of SAMs (for each of French, German and Spanish) are available to
schools and colleges on Secure Key Materials area of e-AQA/GCSE/Languages/Language/Additional Specimen Assessment materials

**For three-year KS4, will there be mock papers and mark schemes available from September 2015?**

One complete set of SAMs for each language is available now on our website and these can be used as mock papers. An additional complete set of SAMs for each language is now available on the Secure Key Materials area of e-AQA, so only teachers will have access to them.

**When and where will schemes of work be available?**

On our website you will find schemes of work with suggested approaches for teaching the new specifications. In response to your feedback, we have produced schemes of work for 2-year and 3-year courses. These are available now on the ‘Teach’ page for each language. The schemes of work are in Word format so you can tailor these according to the needs of your students. There are also links within the schemes of work to free-of-charge resources based on topics and key linguistic points. More resources will continue to be available over the coming months.

**We teach the GCSE over three years – can we still do this?**

Yes, the overlap in topics and grammar requirements between the current and new specifications means that this will not be an issue for teaching over three years. The accredited specifications and sample assessment materials are on our website now to help teachers understand the requirements of the new specifications. We have also produced 3-year schemes of work which you will find on the ‘Teach’ page for each language.

**Our students do their KS4 in Year 9. We need resources in place to support the new specifications early enough so that we can continue to teach GCSE languages in this way.**

Resources already available on our website include two sets of specimen papers for each language, 2-year and 3-year schemes of work, and free-of-charge grammar resources linked to topics and key linguistic points. More resources will continue to be made available over the coming months.

**My school is going to be doing the new specification over 1 year. What are your thoughts on this and will there be a scheme of work provided (as I’ve heard there is for 2-year and 3-year courses)?**

This is a decision for individual schools and colleges. We have no plans to produce a 1-year scheme of work but teachers can adapt the schemes of work that we have produced for 2-year and 3-year courses to deliver the course over a shorter period of time, if they so wish.

**We currently do our GCSE in one year in Year 9 and we are trying to persuade our SLT (Senior Leadership Team) to give us more time; is there anything you can recommend we do/say?**

The new GCSEs, whilst accessible to students of all abilities, are designed to be more challenging in line with the new Subject Content from the Department for Education. How best to deliver the new specifications is of course a decision for individual schools and colleges, but the move to linear examinations in all four skills requires a different approach to teaching, including more opportunities for revisiting key linguistic points throughout the course.

**Will you provide some marked student work so that we can see how the senior examiners will assess the new assessments?**

The mark schemes for Listening and Reading are straightforward and objective – if you look at the mark schemes for the accredited SAMs you will see how marks will be awarded for the questions in English and in the target language. The mark schemes for the translations and for Writing and Speaking are more complex. Please see the published mark schemes for exemplification. We will also be making additional marked student work for the Reading translations and for the Speaking and Writing tests available on our website in autumn 2016.
Is there a need to buy new resources for the GCSE?
The new specifications contain elements that were not previously assessed, such as translation, some questions and answers in the target language and literary texts as stimulus material in the Reading tests. There are also some new topics. We will be providing a range of resources, many of which will be free-of-charge, to give teachers the tools that they need to teach our new specifications successfully. It is not necessary to buy any approved resources to be able to teach our specifications.

Will the online resources include e-books? Will the online resources take on the same format as the ones on Kerboodle at the moment?
The new text book are available in digital form, via Kerboodle, as well as hard copy. There are new Kerboodle courses for the new specifications and teachers will also still have access to the Kerboodle courses for the legacy specifications until 2018.

When will the new AQA-approved text books be available? Will they be aimed at just Key Stage 4, or Key Stage 3 as well?
Oxford University Press (OUP) are the only publishers which entered the AQA approval process for GCSE. They have published Foundation Tier and Higher Tier Student Books, Teacher books and an updated version of their digital platform, Kerboodle. We have only approved the print and digital versions of the student books though. Information on these resources is available now on the ‘Teach’ page for each language on our website and finalised resources are now available from OUP.

The text books contain some Key Stage 3 revision material and OUP also has a wide range of new Key Stage 3 resources for the 2014 Curriculum which will help to prepare students for the new GCSE specifications.

Will the text books produced by publishers reflect the format, level and variety of the new exams?
We have approved the student textbooks published by Oxford University Press for our new GCSE French, German and Spanish specifications. Other publishers will make courses available to accompany the new specifications, though these will not be approved by AQA. The AQA-approved resources provide students with the skills and knowledge they need to develop fluency and independence in the language and approach the new assessments.

Will the text books produced by publishers for the current GCSEs no longer be of use?
Whenever the content and demands of a specification change, inevitably text books produced for a previous specification will no longer be a perfect match for the new specification. There will, however, be many elements of the existing text books which will support the new specification.

Will there be free online progress tests and other resources or will they require a subscription? Will these be available through AQA?
Online progress tests will be available through Exampro and will be chargeable. Other resources, such as additional SAMs, marked exemplar student work and schemes of work, are free-of-charge. We have also developed a Teacher Assessment Tracker which is free-of-charge to schools and college who sign up to teach our new specifications.

Will Exampro be updated to reflect the content of the new exams and when will this be available?
Exampro has been updated to meet the requirements of the new specifications – please see [http://www.exampro.co.uk/sec/languages.asp](http://www.exampro.co.uk/sec/languages.asp) for more information.

What is the difference between the types of questions used in the Exampro On-screen Assessments and those in the Question Bank?
Exampro On-Screen Assessments, covering Listening, Reading, Grammar and Vocabulary, use automatically marked items and generate reports which enable the teacher to monitor students/classes easily. The examination covers a wider range of items than those used in the On-Screen Assessments, so
the Exampro Question Bank contains all types of questions used in the specimen papers including translation from and into the target language, and questions and answers in the target language.

I’d love to write resources for the new specifications and share them with other teachers; how do I go about doing this?
Our colleagues at Teachit would be really pleased to hear from you. Please visit the Teachit website and complete the online form to register your interest in writing resources.

In the old specifications the exam papers contained some questions and answers in the target language. It would be very helpful to have access to the Listening and Reading papers for additional practice.
There are past papers with questions in the target language on e-AQA, our secure extranet (GCSE> Languages > Language (new specification) > Teacher Support Materials > Examples). Teachers are reminded that these papers are from legacy specifications, so they won’t be an exact match with the structure and content of the new GCSE specifications.

Are there any support materials for the Speaking photo card task in addition to the specimen assessment papers?
There are exemplar tasks and guidance on the ‘Teaching and learning resources’ pages for our IGCSE qualifications as the photo card task is also a feature of the IGCSE Speaking test. Teachers are reminded that the IGCSE tasks and materials are not the same as those in the new GCSE specifications, but they will offer some support. More exemplar marked work for the photo card tasks from the new specifications will be added to the website in autumn 2016.

Are there any more role-plays for the Speaking tests?
There are past papers with role-plays on e-AQA, our secure extranet (GCSE> Languages > Language (new specification) > Teacher Support Materials > Examples). Teachers are reminded that these papers are from legacy specifications, so they won’t be an exact match with the structure and content of the new GCSE specifications.

Will the materials from the Preparing to teach meetings be available online?
There materials are available on e-AQA/SKM/GCSE/Languages, then either French (new specification) or German (new specification) or Spanish (new specification), then Teacher Support Materials, then PTT Spring 2016.

Is there a quick guide to the resources you are offering?
Yes, please use the following link to view a webinar recently produced by Neil Hardy, our Resources Co-ordinator, which takes you through the resources we currently offer and those we are planning to offer: http://www.aqa.org.uk/resources/languages/gcse/plan/webinars-session-4

OTHER QUALIFICATIONS/ LANGUAGES

Will FCSE be updated to reflect the new changes for GCSE? If so, when will this happen?
FCSE will remain unchanged until summer 2017. We are in the process of redeveloping FCSE Chinese, French, German and Spanish for first teaching in September 2017. The new FCSE specification will no longer include Italian. There will only be minimal changes to the specification but we will be assessing elementary translation in addition to current skills, to reflect the requirements of the new GCSE. The current FCSE topics already broadly map to the new GCSE.

What is the situation for small entry languages GCSEs?
AQA currently offers GCSEs in Bengali, Panjabi, Modern Hebrew, Polish, Italian, Urdu and Mandarin Chinese. We are developing new GCSE qualifications in these languages for first teaching in September 2017, first exam in June 2019, subject to Ofqual’s approval. These languages will be developed in line
with the same subject content as French, German and Spanish. We submitted our proposed specification
and assessment materials to Ofqual in July 2016 and will receive feedback in November. The draft
specifications and specimen materials can be found on the language specific pages on our website.

Will there be resources for these languages?
We will be producing some resources, including schemes of work, to support these subjects. There will be
only an AQA-approved text book for Chinese (Mandarin).

I’ve heard that the current languages GCSEs won’t count towards the Ebacc from 2018. Is that true?
The following is a link to the Department for Education’s (DfE) guide to Progress 8 measures; on page 9
of this document you can find a link to the list of qualifications that count towards the Ebacc.
school-performance-measure-January-2016.pdf

As soon as a reformed GCSE is introduced in the performance tables, then an early entry to the
unreformed GCSE in the same subject will not count in the performance tables. This means that the
current (ie unreformed) GCSE Bengali, Italian, Mandarin Chinese, Modern Hebrew, Panjabi, Polish and
Urdu qualifications will continue to count in the performance tables until the new, reformed GCSEs for
these languages are introduced into the performance tables; this is planned, at the moment, to be in
2019. This means that if a student enters in 2018 for one of these unreformed GCSEs and 2018 is the
year in which they are in year 11, then this GCSE will count towards the performance tables. However, if
they are entered in 2018 for these unreformed GCSEs and are only in year 10, then this GCSE will not
count towards the performance tables because in 2019, when they reach year 11, the reformed GCSEs in
these languages will have been introduced in the performance tables and these will be the only GCSE
qualifications in these languages which can count in 2019.

Is there a webinar about the new AS and A-level specifications now that they are
accredited?
Yes, this can be found on our website: aqa.org.uk/subjects/Languages/AS and A-level/language/Planning
resources/Getting started: webinars.

Our accredited specifications and specimen assessment materials in GCSE French, German
and Spanish are available to download on our website: aqa.org.uk/ subjects/languages/gcse

To help you prepare to teach the new specifications, we’d like to invite you to one of our free
Preparing to Teach event meetings.

Book your place now: aqa.org.uk/GCSEFrenchPTT
aqag.org.uk/GCSEGermanPTT aqa.org.uk/GCSESpanishPTT

Contact us
We’re here to support you throughout the exam changes and beyond.
• Visit aqa.org.uk/languagesupdates
• Email mfl@aqa.org.uk
• Call 01423 534381