

# Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback

## Summer 2010

GCE

## GCE French (6FR03) Paper 1

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## Unit 3 (6FR03): Understanding & Spoken Response in French

### Introduction

This is the report on the first session of the new specifications for GCE French Unit 3 (6FR03), introduced in 2008. It will describe the format of the new test and explain the minor changes in emphasis compared to the previous Unit 6444.1, to ensure that centres are aware of the new requirements.

It will also explain the new mark scheme in some detail, as this is where the greatest changes have occurred. A thorough understanding of this scheme is essential if teacher/examiners are to help candidates achieve their potential. The report will analyse and comment upon candidate performance. Where possible, suggestions will be made as to how centres might improve in this area. Teacher/examiner performance will also be examined and advice given on how this, too, may be improved.

### Format of the Test

The test should last between 11 - 13 minutes, from the time the candidate begins to make the opening statement. The candidate's stance about the chosen issue should last no longer than 1 minute. A robust challenge of this position should then be mounted by the teacher/examiner and debate should continue for a further 4 minutes. At the conclusion of this section, the teacher/examiner will signal that the test is now moving to a second phase by making an appropriate remark to that effect. Thereafter, examiner and candidate will discuss a further 2 or 3 issues, in some depth, until the conclusion of the test.

Centres' attention is drawn to Section A, page 6, of the Specifications where the aim of the unit is set out. Candidates are expected to *interact effectively* with the teacher/examiner, *defend* their views and *sustain discussion* as the teacher/examiner moves the conversation away from the chosen issue. Centres are reminded that the test is an examination of the candidate's ability to use language *spontaneously* in largely *unpredictable* circumstances.

### Clarification of terms

It may be helpful to set out what is understood by some of the terms used in the preceding paragraph.

*The Issue.* An issue is a topic that generally has a moral or ethical dimension supporting debate. Examples of good issues would be the following, because they raise moral and ethical questions, are weighty and offer avenues for development later:

Je suis pour la légalisation du cannabis / Je suis contre l'IVG / je suis pour la limitation de l'immigration / je suis contre l'euthanasie / je suis pour le mariage homosexuel / je suis contre l'adoption homosexuelle / je suis contre les cartes d'identité / je suis contre la suppression des symboles religieux / je suis pour la peine de mort / je suis contre les concours de beauté / je suis pour la chirurgie esthétique / je suis pour le vote à 16 ans / je suis contre la prison pour les juvéniles / je suis contre la gratuité des frais universitaires / je suis pour le mariage des prêtres catholiques / je suis contre l'expérimentation animale / je suis pour le "don présumé" des organes /

je suis contre l'énergie nucléaire / je suis pour la recherche sur les cellules souches /  
je suis contre les OGM's / je suis pour la prostitution

Examples of less good are:

je suis contre l'influence des magazines adressés aux jeunes filles / je suis pour internet / je suis pour la taille minimum / je suis contre la laïcité en France / je suis contre les JO à Londres / je suis pour les mesures plus draconiennes pour protéger la planète / je suis pour le génie génétique / je suis contre les éoliennes / je suis pour la voiture électrique

This is because, whilst they are arguable, with ingenuity, they can hardly be described as "issues", often appear poorly thought-out and are not very productive

The following are examples of poor choices:

Les troubles alimentaires ne sont pas causés par les médias / je suis contre le tabac / je suis contre les mannequins trop maigres / je suis contre l'organisation des compétitions de "surf" / je suis contre la pédophilie

This is because they are self-evidently un-arguable

Careful attention should be paid to the choice of issue. It needs to be capable of sustained argument from both sides and should contain the seed of possible further issue for discussion, remembering that the second issue will arise from something touched upon in the initial debate.

For example, a debate on abortion will encompass issues such as women's rights, contraception, sex education, the sanctity of life, which in turn could generate discussion on the role of women in society, the problem of teenage pregnancy, euthanasia, capital punishment etc.

**Effective interaction.** Candidates are deemed to be **interacting effectively** when they **address directly** comments/remarks/questions/prompts made by the examiner. The same is also required of the examiner, incidentally. This type of exchange is called "**spontaneous discourse**" in the mark scheme and it is crucial that centres understand what is meant by this term.

**Discourse** describes the exchange of opinion and information on an issue between two or more people. Put crudely, it means that candidates should answer the question, although clearly in a discussion not every utterance is a question, it could be a comment, a remark, a request. In practical terms, this means that candidates should assume that saying something vaguely related to the topic will be accepted as discourse. They should be trained to listen closely to what the other person says and respond appropriately, engaging fully with what has been said.

**Spontaneity** is perceived as a troublesome notion but it need not be. Clearly, candidates who have been properly prepared for the speaking test will have a store of ideas and phrases they can call upon as required. This is not only perfectly reasonable but also very desirable, it is, after all the only sensible way to prepare for an examination. At a low level, what takes place in the examination room only mimics what goes on in more natural conversation where ready-made utterances are adapted in response to unpredictable, though not completely unexpected, circumstances.

Thus, spontaneity does not equate to novelty. Candidates do not have to produce wholly new utterances in response to unimagined questions. Their spontaneous use of language arises from their manipulation of this stock of language in response to the unpredictable nature of the discussion as it unfolds. This unpredictability arises naturally when the rules of discourse are observed properly. Listening to how the other is interpreting one's remarks forces one to adjust and in so doing requires spontaneous manipulation of language.

The implications of this are now clear. Tests in which neither candidate nor examiner explore the detail of what one or the other has said cannot be accepted as examples of proper discussion and do not qualify as spontaneous discourse. As will be seen when this report comes to discuss the mark scheme, this has serious consequences for the Response mark.

*Sustaining discussion* flows from the proper application of the rules of discourse. If candidate and examiner are engaged in exploring each other's thoughts on a particular issue, then they are conducting a discussion. The longer this discussion goes on the more it is sustained and, as will be seen later, this has advantages for the candidate in two other boxes of the mark grid - Reading and Research and Comprehension and Development.

The temptation for centres to prepare candidates for the test by over-rehearsing the expression of single views on a long list of issues with no enquiry into these views is real and many yield to it. This is not what the specification requires and is not what is rewarded by the mark scheme.

### The Mark Scheme

There has been a fundamental re-working of the mark scheme. The total mark obtainable is now 50.

*Quality of language* now only assesses accurate use of language - and pronunciation and intonation.

*Range of lexis and structure* has been incorporated in Response.

There is no longer a separate mark for the **debate element**. This is taken into account in the new **Reading and Research** box.

*Comprehension*, of both form and content, is now actively rewarded.

**Response**. This box asks the following questions:

- is this spontaneous discourse or rehearsed response - and to what extent?
- is the nature of the discussion basically about ideas - i.e. abstract - as opposed to narrative or descriptive?
- how comfortable with this type of discussion is the candidate?
- what language resources does the candidate display?

If candidates engage reasonably in useful discussion of abstract issues, they will score in the 9 - 12 box. If however, it is clear that the test is not a genuine discussion but merely a sequence of pre-arranged questions and answers, they will not.

**Quality of language**. The central issue here is whether the candidate is communicating without loss of message. If there is no loss of message the candidate will score 4 - unless the incidence of basic error is so intrusive as to be a distraction.

**Reading and Research.** This box assesses the candidate's level of awareness and understanding of both general issues and the chosen issue for debate. Whilst detail is an important element when assessing how well the candidate has prepared for the initial issue, it is clearly unreasonable to expect candidates to produce as much detail when discussing subsequent unpredictable issues. In this case, what is sought is evidence that the candidate has read widely, and in some depth, on issues that an informed young person sitting Advanced levels might be expected to have thought about.

**Comprehension and development.** This box asks the questions:

- can the candidate decipher the sounds of the language correctly?
- can the candidate decode the meaning accurately?
- can the candidate exploit the issue under discussion and develop it independently?

The word "form" is misleading and centres should concentrate on the idea of type or degree of difficulty rather than structure. Questions generally only become complex and challenging by the responses they require.

Q: "Si vous aviez été sélectionné pour participer à un épisode de "l'Isle au Tréor et que vous eûtes à choisir quelqu'un pour vous accompagner dans cette aventure, qui auriez-vous choisi?"

A: Mon meilleur ami."

Candidates can do well in this area. If they display no problems understanding they will obviously be awarded a high mark for that element, which may or may not be maintained depending on how well they are able to develop the discussion, by offering further pathways for investigation.

This overview of the mark scheme has shown that it embodies the features outlined in the discussion of the specifications. It rewards candidates who have something to say of substance about topical issues, can communicate their thoughts spontaneously, under close examination, with no real loss of meaning.

### Candidate performance

It is pleasing to report that where tests were conducted correctly, candidates displayed a real ability to present and defend an argument and could engage in productive discussion of issues other than their chosen one. However, the outcome for many will reflect the fact that tests were conducted in a manner that did not meet the requirements of the specifications either in respect of spontaneous discourse or demonstrating awareness of an issue through sustained discussion - or both.

### **Response**

Whilst nearly all candidates were able to provide an appropriate initial response to the teacher/examiner's question or comment, this was often the sum total of their grasp of the issue and many were unable to expand upon their opening remarks independently of encouragement from the examiner. For quite a few, even with this encouragement, taking the issue further proved too much. Candidates should be encouraged to structure the contributions they make along the lines of the following example: Declare understanding of the examiner's remark, acknowledge any truth in it, indicate where any perceived weaknesses may lie, state one's own position,

substantiate this with examples or evidence, recognise that one's view may not be shared by all but reaffirm one's belief and raise a hypothetical scenario for the examiner to respond to. For example:

Je comprends votre point de vue et je suis d'accord avec vous quand vous dites que ... mais là où je ne suis pas d'accord c'est quand vous dites que ... car à mon sens ... et à titre d'exemple je vous renverrais au livre de ..... où il dit que ... j'accepte qu'il n'a peut-être pas toutes les réponses mais ... et, d'ailleurs, que se passerait-il si ....?

This is not being suggested as a model for every response, as not all issues or approaches to issues will allow a response of this nature. The point being made is that candidates need to learn to think in terms of two, at least, preferably three phase responses, rather than just the one. In this way they will be seen to be using the language of discussion and debate in a spontaneous, capable and sustained manner and this will be reflected in the marks for both Response and Comprehension.

### Range of lexis and structures

It is generally accepted that language is made up of different parts of speech and that correct usage involves adhering to a set of rules. The extent to which these rules are applied correctly will be dealt with in a later section. This one will deal with the conceptual components of the language. Nearly all candidates understand the notions of:

- nouns needing to be supported by articles etc
- the place of the adjective
- gender and number
- personal pronouns / finite verbs
- word order in statements
- word order relating to questions

Although some do contrive to produce "sentences" containing no verb at all "et c'est pourquoi je contre le clonage" - mercifully rare - and plural nouns are frequently unsupported. In addition, most understand the notions of:

- agreement - article / noun : noun / adjective : personal pronoun / verb
- tense - predominantly the Present and the Conditional - with infrequent excursions into the Perfect, Imperfect and Future as the dictates of the discussion require
- negation
- comparison
- representation through object pronouns when part of the verb group but not when used disjunctively ( i.e. moi etc especially lui and eux)
- ownership through personal adjectives - mon/ton/son etc - but not when used disjunctively ( i.e - le mien etc)
- designation with demonstrative adjectives ce/cette/ces - but not when used pronominally (i.e. celui/celle etc)

When used in simple sentences, **Subordination** is frequently a step too far for many of them. The notion that phrases / clauses have to be linked in French and cannot be merely collocated as in English, is still not fully appreciated by many candidates. Utterances such as: **Je pense il a raison dire cela** are not uncommon. **Qui** and **que** are frequently mixed up, whilst only the best use **ce qui** and **ce que**. Examples of **dont**, **lequel** etc feature only very rarely. In stock opening phrases such as "je pense que ... /

je crois que ... / il faudrait que ... the relative is almost invariably present but when the same phrase appears in the middle of a sentence, it frequently disappears. When it is used, it often creates havoc with the subordinate verb. je pense qu'il est important les parents utiliser la discipline.

**Verbs in subordinate clauses** are frequently in an approximate form, somewhere between the finite and the infinitive.

**Dependent infinitives** are generally acknowledged, although it is often a lottery as to whether a preposition will be used and, in the event, which one.

**Reflexive verbs** are generally only used correctly in stock phrases such as il s'appelle ... or je m'entends bien avec mes parents .... Attempts to use them in the past or with a negative usually flounder.

The **subjunctive** is used frequently but again mostly in stock phrases such as je ne crois pas que ... / il est important que / il faut que and the famous autant que je sache. Most candidates who observe the rule in these circumstances would fail to do so when using "je voudrais que ... / je n'aime pas que .../ il est possible que ...

The **passive voice** is not required in the productive mode, which is perhaps just as well.

**Hypothetical Language** - using "si" - nearly always produces error and correct usage is found in the performances of only the best candidates. This may appear a bleak assessment of candidates' extent of knowledge of the language. No criticism of centres or their candidates is intended. And it should not be forgotten that there are a great many candidates who are capable of demonstrating knowledge and mastery of the notions set out above and more besides. The synopsis of structures known and used, however imperfectly, emerges from analysis of what appears in the performances and is included to show centres where failings occur so that they may better organise their teaching. The fact that the Present and Conditional tenses are the most commonly used should come as no surprise since they allow candidates to say what they think, how they see things around them and what they think should happen in order to bring about any necessary change or improvement. This is, after all, what the examination requires them to do - talk about things that are problematic and need solutions. If they show little knowledge of other tenses, it may not be that they do not know them but rather that it is the examining technique that is at fault, in that opportunities to use these tenses were not offered to them. Nevertheless, it is disappointing to see that such a key feature of French as subordination is not done well, in the main.

### **Quality of Language**

Most candidates score 4/5, with many treading a very fine line between 3/4 as a result of the sheer weight of error. Many also achieve 6 and some 7. Because an oral language examination is partially, at least, a test of performance, candidates will always make mistakes but that does not mean they all make all of them all of the time. The following list of errors reflects areas of the language that cause problems and are included as examples of what is frequently encountered by markers:

- **incorrect gender /agreement** - tous les communautés ... le peine de mort ... le taille zero ... le mère ... la paire ... je pense que les femmes, ils n'ont pas l'égalité ... une bébé ... tous les personnes ... un société ...



- **incorrect placement of adjectives / adverbs** - le seulement problème ... la financière crise ... un change très grande ... nous rarement mangeons en famille ... nous toujours avons des cartes d'identité ... ces télévision cameras ...
- **contraction of articles** - de le gouvernement etc ... aux les femmes etc
- **Main clause verb not conjugated** - les hommes sentir que ... si les femmes rester à la maison les homes continuer à travailler - beaucoup de jeunes rester à la maison ...
- **Subordinate verb not conjugated** - les gens voient les immigrés qui venir dans leur pays - les jeunes qui commettre ces crimes - il faut que le gouvernement améliorer - tout le monde qui vivre ... les idées qui conflit ...
- **Subject / verb agreement** - les femmes a besoin ... les patients veut rester dans sa maison ... le gouvernement devrions faire quelque chose ... ils fait ce qu'ils veut ... les musulimes qui a fait les attentats pour montre notre société ... il est vrai que les états qui maintenu la peine de mort l'a aboli ... les gens doit ...
- **Wrong choice of tense** - de nos jours l'euthanasie a été un sujet de contraverse ... dans le passé les parents est plus strictes ... il y a 6 mois je cherche ... l'autre jour je parle à un ami qui me dit que ... si le gouvernement fait cela les terroristes viennent plus dans notre pays ...
- **Incorrect use of dependent infinitives** c'est difficile d'accepte ... le gouvernement ne doit pas les permit ... on doit considère que ... on doit règle ... les medias presser les jeunes paraît très beaux ... quand je vois des gens fumant ... après avoir être ... ils sont très efficaces de notre (sic) protéger ... doivent être punir ... je voudrais plus sure ...
- **Confusion over il y a or il est (avoir / être)**- je pense qu'il n'est pas assez de jeunes ... je pense que vous ne devez pas avoir le droite de vote quand vous êtes 16 ans ... il ne sera pas un parti avec la majorité ... il n'a jamais été des preuves ... je pense qu'ils sont très peur ... ils ont (sont) destabilise(s) il a des gens comme moi ... i l est des lois qui ...
- **Confusion over Connaître and Savoir**
- **Misuse of negative** - je d'accord pas avec vous ... je ne suis d'accord ... n'ont aucun d'argent ... n'aucune personne n'a pensé que ... les immigrés ne veulent travailler ... il ne pas vrai ... ils ne jamais pas disent ... personne n'a pas dit que ... ce n'est juste pas ... les enfants pas pensent que ... ni personne doivent aller en prison ... il n'y a pas des raisons ...

- **Hypothetical statements** - largely restricted to use of "si" clauses. Sometimes the verb in the "si" clause is wrongly chosen - si les femmes pourraient but generally it is the second verb that is wrong... si les problèmes a une incidence les jeunes suivraient ... si le gouvernement fait cela les gens dire que ... à l'avenir si le gens recycleront, la planète est sauve
- **Modals (renderings of Should/could would/ought etc)** - many candidates feel that "devoir" contains the verb "être" and so do not use it, as in il devrait une loi or they use confuse the conditional of "être" with "pouvoir" as in il serait être une loi
- **Quantity** - there are frequent examples of - beaucoup des gens, plusieurs de personnes, milliers étudiants, plus et plus personnes,
- **Anglicised syntax** - largely restricted to phrases of two types as illustrated - c'est important pour les parents prohiber leurs enfants regardant les films violents ... les professeurs doivent enseigner les étudiants quoi est nécessaire ...
- **Passive voice** - this is only meant to be recognised at A2 level which is just as well since very few candidates are able to get it right - des mesures devraient introduire/ introduit is about as close as they can get
- **Pronunciation and Intonation** - most candidates have a tolerably good accent but loss of message still occurs as a result of poor pronunciation. All the features highlighted in previous reports are present in this year's cohort:
  - o **final consonants** - ilz, lez, nouz, danz le casse où, passer le tempes, disposer de son corpse, il est treize petite, bioucoupe etc
  - o **nasal vowels** - innetéresstant, symepathétique, mennesonge, il est mort de femme(!), la faim est l'égal de l'homme le pain de mort (seems harsh on the baker!)
  - o **semi-vowels** - les gense qui résident dans cet paille
  - o **poor middle vowels** - often one is never clear whether one is hearing about the young, the people or the Chinese - les jeunes , les gens et les jaunes
  - o **opposition [y] / [u]** -

It is hoped that this list of deficiencies will serve to show centres where candidates lose marks. It is not the intention of this report to paint an inaccurate picture of the control shown by candidates over the grammar of French. It has already been stated

that the great majority of them scored between 4 and 6. This means that whilst mistakes of the kind listed above are common, they are generally not present in quantities such that they become intrusive and detract from the message.

The language of very many candidates is characterised by adequate and appropriate lexis, simple sentence construction and effective, if occasionally limited, presentation of ideas, allowing them to conduct interesting and worthwhile discussions when offered the opportunity. Quite a large number are impressively fluent and confident enough to attempt, and succeed at, more complex forms of language. Some are amazingly good.

### **Reading and Research**

This is a new feature and replaces the Justification and Debate section of the previous mark scheme. Colleagues report that, in the great majority of cases, candidates were well prepared for the initial debate and that there was ample evidence of serious research having been done. Good to very good marks were recorded often for this aspect of the grid. Assessment of wider reading was not so positive. The feeling is that this is probably more to do with the style of examining adopted by some centres than a real weakness in candidates themselves.

### **Comprehension and Development**

Another new feature. The oral test is now used to assess candidates understanding of the spoken language. If they show that they can make sense of the sounds they are hearing by responding in a way that demonstrates understanding of meaning, they will score highly. If, in so doing, they can promote further discussion of the issue by offering avenues for development, they will reinforce their Comprehension mark. Very few candidates had difficulty understanding what was being said to them. However, for some reason, lack of ability, lack of knowledge, lack of confidence or poor examining technique, many failed to sustain discussion. This is an area that centres should address.

### **Teacher Examiner Performance**

At several points in this report, reference has been made to the role played by teacher/examiners in the conduct of this test and the effect this can have on candidates' achievement in terms of performance and, correspondingly, marks. Centres are reminded of the description of the unit to be found in Section A of the Specifications, on page 6. "Students first outline their chosen issue for about **one** minute, adopting a definite stance towards the issue. They should then defend and justify their opinions for up to **four** minutes. The teacher/examiner will then initiate a spontaneous discussion in which a minimum of two further unpredictable areas will be covered." There are several important implications for examiners here.

*Timing.* Candidates should not be allowed to go beyond 1 minute when presenting their stance. To do so would take time from the ensuing debate and limit candidates' ability to demonstrate depth of research and ability to marshal arguments. This will inevitably be reflected in the Reading and Research mark. Nor should they be allowed to extend the initial issue beyond 5 minutes. The more time spent on a familiar well-rehearsed topic, the less remains for candidates to demonstrate their ability to deal satisfactorily with unpredictable issues. Again this will be reflected in the Reading and Research mark but also in the Response mark. Candidates who are allowed to discuss their chosen issue for the whole test, as occurs in some centres, will not be demonstrating wide reading nor can they be considered to be reacting to unpredictable situations. In such cases, candidates' marks for Response will be restricted to the 5-8 box and will not rise above 3/4 for Reading and Research. Adhering to the full span of time allotted to the exam is also very important as short tests mean that candidates' marks for Response and Comprehension and Development will be moved down to the box below the one they would have been put in if the exam had been of the right length.

It should be observed that the test is timed from the moment candidates begin their presentation and not from when they are greeted and announced on the tape/CD track. Colleagues report that too many centres do not pay enough attention to these three points.

*Debate/Discussion.* This has partially been dealt with elsewhere in this report but would bear further explanation.

The first section of the test is designed to assess whether candidates are able to marshal their thoughts under a sustained attack on their positions from the examiner. Therefore, tests that fail to do this and require only that candidates explain, clarify and exemplify their positions will not score well in this section.

The second section of the test is designed to assess candidates' ability to discuss a further two or three issues that they may have covered in class or private study. The emphasis here is on discussion. Discussion is an exploration of another's views on a subject with a view to understanding why they hold them, as opposed to debate which is a way of destroying argument and is not appropriate for the second section of the test.

Colleagues report that this section is not well done by centres. Too many teacher/examiners do not discuss issues with candidates. They ask for opinions but do not seek to delve into the reasons for these opinions being held, moving quickly on to the next issue where the same procedure is observed. The result is a selection of superficial "question and answer" exchanges with no exploration of candidates' knowledge and understanding. Concerns have been expressed by colleagues that many tests resemble "good GCSE" exams in which identical topics are addressed - i.e. manger sain / garder la forme / la pratique d'un sport / les loisirs etc. This is not an appropriate level for this examination. The effects of such an approach will be seen in lower marks for Reading and Research and Comprehension and Development as

candidates will not have been afforded an opportunity to display detail on the one hand nor the ability to expand the issue under discussion on the other.

*Spontaneity / Unpredictability.* These points have been touched upon already, at several points in this report. The two things go together. When an examiner conducts a test correctly, issues are treated unpredictably. This does not mean that candidates will be expected to talk about things they have never heard of. Candidates should be told that they will be expected to discuss any of the issues they have worked on in class or at home. Which ones arise and how they are treated constitutes the unpredictable nature of the test and thereby ensures that candidates' responses are spontaneous. Centres that use the same issues for each candidate and the same set of questions - as happens not infrequently - should take note of this. Such an approach will adversely affect their candidates' marks.

Correct examining first proposes an issue and invites a reaction from the candidate. Thereafter, having listened carefully to the candidate's response for points of further discussion, the teacher/examiner's role is to probe for better understanding of how the candidate arrived at this position by, for instance, raising further questions/queries/requests for information or pointing to possible weaknesses in their position, or stating widely held counter-arguments in response to the candidate's answer. Candidates will naturally respond by drawing on their knowledge base and their linguistic resources and may frequently produce well-remembered phrases - but this still counts as spontaneous use of language since it has had to be created in response to an unexpected remark on the teacher/examiner's part.

### Centre performance

Colleagues asked me to draw centres' attention to the following:

#### **Recording**

- noisy equipment / machine hum / clunky microphones
- one or more of the participants "faint" - generally the candidate
- outside noise
- colleagues intruding on the test - in person or via electronic means
- recording at the wrong speed
- failure to record candidates
- failure to announce candidates
- candidate order not specified on CDs
- CDs not formatted for play on multiple players

#### **Administration**

- Poor/no labelling of cassette or CD
- oral forms not filled in correctly by students
- oral forms not included
- out-of-date oral forms used
- issues expressed in English
- registers not submitted

poor packaging - resulting in broken cassettes

### Conclusion

There can be some satisfaction over the outcome of the first session of this new unit. There are areas that require attention, specifically the deterioration in control of language when candidates attempt complex sentences and the tendency for too many teacher/examiners to treat the test as a "question and answer" exercise rather than the spontaneous discussion it is meant to be.

That aside, the majority of centres are to be congratulated for producing candidates who, in the main, acquit themselves well of a very difficult task, namely to present and defend ideas on a variety of unpredictable issues in a foreign language, something that many of their contemporaries would be hard-pressed to do in their own.

## Grade Boundaries

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E	N	U
Raw mark boundary	50	37	33	29	25	21	17	0
Uniform mark scale boundary	70	56	49	42	35	28	21	0

Please note that although the modern foreign languages specifications share a common design, the assessments in different languages are not identical. Grade boundaries at unit level reflect these differences in assessments, ensuring that candidate outcomes across MFL specifications are comparable at specification level.

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