

# Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback

## Summer 2010

GCE

### GCE Urdu (6UR01)

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## Introduction

This is the second series in which candidates have been examined for this unit based upon the new GCE A/S level (8UR01) syllabus. There were approximately 1035 entries.

## The Format.

There were two stimuli for each of the four Topic Areas: "Lifestyle, Health & Fitness", "The World Around Us", "Youth Culture & Concerns" and "Education & Employment." The candidates will have previously chosen one of these general topic areas earlier in their course and should therefore have had the opportunity to study it in some depth.

Each candidate is given one of two written stimuli based on their chosen topic area. They are given 15 minutes to consider an and make notes before their test commences.

### *Section A (four set questions)*

Candidates must respond to four questions set by Edexcel on the stimulus relating to their chosen topic area. These questions should NOT be rephrased.

Most of the candidates can score 4 marks. The candidates are expected to respond, in depth where appropriate, basing their answers mainly on the stimulus text, although expanded responses will score well under the Response heading on the mark grid. This section should not take more than a minute or two.

### *Section B (discussion)*

The teacher-examiner should spend between six to eight minutes engaging the candidate in a discussion that relates to the chosen topic area but moves away from focus of the stimulus. There are two key points:

- the teacher-examiner must have prepared a range of questions on that topic area
- candidates must be given the opportunity to respond at length and to the point to the teacher-examiner's questions on their chosen topic.

The teacher-examiner will normally have spent time with their candidates discussing and working on their chosen Topic Areas. They should be aware of what the candidates are interested in and are able to talk about, and also know their level of linguistic competence.

It was pleasing to note that the majority of teacher-examiners carried out this discussion appropriately, and, in some cases, very skillfully. However, there were some instances where teacher-examiners had not prepared adequately, which are outlined below.

## Problems

### *Section A*

Problems arose in section A for some candidates because a few teacher-examiners did not ask the set questions at all or, in some cases, only posed these questions in the middle of the test. There was an issue with one teacher-examiner who read the correct stimulus out to the candidate and then asked the four set questions, but then same with another stimulus from a different topic area.

### *Section B*

Unfortunately, a small number of centres sent in recordings that consisted of candidates answering only the four set questions on the stimulus but nothing else. The teacher-

examiners had failed to engage candidates in any discussion. As a result, the maximum mark that the candidate could achieve would be 20 out of 50.

Other problems arose in section B where teacher-examiners had not prepared appropriately-challenging questions for their candidates in order to allow them to demonstrate both their understanding of the topic area and their linguistic ability. Simplistic questions do not elicit extensive responses or require great understanding of the topic; neither do ones that do not broaden out the scope of the discussion.

Teacher-examiners must ensure that they fully understand their responsibilities and are appropriately prepared. Where tests are not properly conducted the potential for each candidate is compromised. By considering the specification, using support materials available through the Edexcel website, and preparing suitable questions for their candidates, they will be better able to conduct a successful speaking test.

One of the key components of the speaking test is a discussion. It is not a monologue or a speech and should not be prepared or delivered as such. Candidates who did so were not able to score highly in the response grid on the assessment criteria.

It must be noted that the problems mentioned above affected only a small number of centres, the overwhelming majority of the tests were very well conducted by well prepared Teacher Examiners with well prepared students. It was very pleasing to record another successful session of this new exam.

#### **Organisation of Material in Centres: general advice and guidance**

- **Topic:** Candidates should choose a General Topic Area which interests them. Further guidance can be found on the Edexcel website. Candidates need to have the opportunity to think in depth about the topic area chosen, and the many related sub-topics. Success comes from good preparation, detailed knowledge and the ability to express and justify opinions.
- **Conduct:** Examiners should pay careful attention to the guidelines as given in the Specification, especially for the random sequence of stimulus cards, and for overall timing. The Unit 1 exam lasts 8-10 minutes. Short tests cannot access the highest marks, and long tests are not listened to after 10 minutes. Any pre-learned material must be interrupted.
- **Oral Form:** Please note that there is a form to be filled in for each candidate, and should be submitted with the recording. Centres are advised to take note of any comments made on the Oral Form, as in many cases, this is the only feedback.
- **Recording:** Good sound quality is essential. If using cassettes, please use new cassettes. It is also important to have the right balance between the candidates' and examiners' voices. Free-standing microphones should be angled towards the candidate, whose voice is normally quieter than the examiner's. Recordings must never be paused or stopped, except in an emergency, which must be fully explained in writing to Edexcel. All mobile phones must be switched off (not just on silent, as there is otherwise electronic interference) and there should be no background noise. Centres should check that every candidate has actually been recorded, that it is audible and at the correct speed. Teacher-examiners are requested to please check the length of the cassette, whether it is C60 or C90 so

that the tape does not run out in the middle of the test. Cassettes/CDs should be clearly labeled as well as the box/cover and teacher-examiners must ensure that the cassettes are rewound to the beginning before posting them off. The increasing use of CDs to record material is to be encouraged.

- **Handbook of Instructions to Centres:** Teacher examiners should be thoroughly acquainted with this publication, as observing correct procedures is vital. It is recommended that teacher-examiners attend training sessions provided by Edexcel if at all possible. An Oral Training Guide is also available from Edexcel to help teachers to prepare for this examination. It is unfortunate that candidates are sometimes deprived of marks because the test has been incorrectly conducted. Teacher examiners have the responsibility to prepare adequately, in order to bring out the best from their candidates. All information relating to the oral tests is available on the Edexcel website ([www.edexcel.com](http://www.edexcel.com))
- **Administration:** Centres should take care to enclose the correct paperwork with the recordings: i.e. the oral forms, the attendance register and a note of any unusual circumstances e.g. fire alarm, candidate illness. Care should be taken with packaging: unfortunately, quite a few cassettes arrive in a damaged state.

## Grade Boundaries

Raw Mark boundaries

Max Mark	A	B	C	D	E
50	40	35	30	25	21

Uniform Mark Scale boundaries

Max Mark	A	B	C	D	E
60	48	42	36	30	24

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

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