

Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2010

GCE

GCE Urdu (6UR03)

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Unit 3: Understanding and Spoken Expression in Urdu

This is the first time that this unit has been available for assessment, as part of the new GCE Urdu (9UR01) specification.

The assessment criteria of this unit are similar to the unit 6824, paper 1 on the legacy specification. The key difference to the assessment criteria is the introduction of categories on ‘Reading and research’ and ‘Comprehension and development’. The timing requirements have also changed. Tests which are shorter than 10 minutes 30 seconds will be penalised, dropping down one mark band in ‘Response’ and ‘Comprehension and development’.

During the assessment, candidates must outline and defend their opinion on their initial issue, then discuss two further unpredictable areas initiated by the teacher.

The majority of candidates performed well in this test, following the requirements properly. Some candidates lost marks, not for any lack of linguistic ability but for the unsatisfactory fulfilment of assessment requirements by the centre. Centres are advised to follow instructions precisely.

Timing related penalties for short pieces were rare; however there instances where conversations were too long. Centres are advised to remind candidates that any recording past 13 minutes is not counted.

The performance of candidates in this assessment is heavily dependent on the proficiency of the teacher-examiner. There were some examples of candidates who would have scored much higher had the teacher-examiner adhered closely to their instructions. It was pleasing to see that most of the international centres closely followed instructions with their candidates performing well.

Advice and Guidance

- **Issue:** candidates must choose a genuinely controversial issue, and argue consistently for or against it. The teacher-examiner should propose the opposing view.
- **Timing:** the presentation in which candidates outline their chosen issue may take the maximum time of one minute. Anything longer should be interrupted. Overall, the candidate’s presentation (including their justification of their opinions) should last 5 minutes in total. If it is longer, this erodes the time available for the unpredictable areas, now taking 6-8 minutes, for a total time of 11-13 minutes.
- **Conduct:** some teacher-examiners conducted the test as if it were identical to the legacy unit 6824/01. Centres must refer to the specification to check on how it is different. In particular, they must look closely at the mark grid to see what is being assessed, as this has implications for the conduct, not least on the style of questioning. This can no longer be minimal, otherwise there is no evidence of the candidate’s comprehension abilities. Teacher-examiners may like to consider preparing a hierarchy of questions, ranging from the very simple, to the more challenging. A range of questions is essential.

- **Oral chosen issue form:** this should be filled in correctly, in Urdu, with the stance clearly stated. This is particularly important for candidates with a visiting examiner. These forms and the recordings are returned to centres. If there are any comments on the forms, centres should take note.
- **Recording:** Good sound quality is essential. The microphone generally should be nearer to the candidate than the examiner. All mobile phones must be switched off (not just on silent, as there is otherwise electronic interference) and there should be no background noise or interruptions. AS (unit 1) and A2 (unit 3) oral tests must be recorded on separate cassettes. Please check that the tape is long enough: one candidate on each side of a C60, two on a C90. Please also check that every candidate has been recorded, that it is audible and at the correct speed. It is helpful to label the cassette as well as the box. Please ensure that every cassette is rewound to the beginning before posting them off.

CD recordings are increasingly common: please ensure that they can be read on any machine and are not merely computer-compatible. With a large number of candidates, centres may find that a memory stick is the best option. This is returned to the centre in the same way that cassettes and CDs are returned.

Further information: all information about the specification, mark schemes and training courses is available on the Edexcel website: www.edexcel.com.

Grade Boundaries

Raw Mark boundaries

Max Mark	A	B	C	D	E
50	42	36	31	26	21

Uniform Mark Scale boundaries

Max Mark	A	B	C	D	E
70	56	49	42	35	28

Please note that although the modern foreign languages (MFL) 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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