

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2013

GCSE Urdu (5UR04)
Paper 1 Writing in Urdu

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GCSE Urdu

Unit 4 Writing in Urdu

Examiner Report

The students submitted a diverse and exciting range of written tasks which was fascinating as well as pleasant to read. In keeping with the previous years' traditions, both **Travel & Tourism** and **Media & Culture** topics attracted more students. Business, Work and Employment, on the other hand, was attempted by very few students. The marks were awarded for communication and content, knowledge and application of language and accuracy in the target language. On the whole, the work was well-presented and comprehensive showing that many students were duly prepared for their written controlled assessment tasks. Some main issues which were encountered will be highlighted below:

Tasks

It was interesting to see that students who opted for Edexcel set tasks scored the highest marks. It was also noted that instead of situation based tasks recommended by the new specifications, centres that used a topic only approach with a title only and no structured bullet points or stimulus, and submitted narratives on 'my town', 'my school' 'my Pakistan' and 'my favourite personality', that lacked in opinion or justification, these resulted in lower marks. This practice is self penalising as it does not do justice with very able students by not providing them with clear instructions on what to add in their assignments. Of course the centres are free to modify or even create their own tasks, however, it will be beneficial to make the new tasks in line with the already existing tasks. Certain discrepancies while writing new tasks for the students were also noted.

- In some cases, the students were not given clear and sufficient bullet points to develop on their chosen topics. This in turn prevented those students from reaching their full potential and attaining top marks due to marking criteria.
- On the other hand, some centres went to the other extreme and produced stimuli with 7-10 bullet points which is a bit too many. In such cases, the students were unable to demonstrate an ability to expand on their responses well enough to reach a higher grade mark. In a desperate effort to include all the bullet points the responses were dealt with too superficially even by more able students and consequently the work did not go beyond a minimal response. Three to five bullet points are recommended.
- Some students were provided with the tasks that required the answers only in one tense which does not allow the student to show an ability to manipulate language. The specification is very clear on the use of a range of tenses, a wide range of vocabulary and structure alongside some attempt to use ambitious structures using object pronouns, subordinate clauses, negative and superlatives.

Please note that Edexcel provides a new set of tasks every two years and there is an adequately large bank of tasks that already exists. Tasks within a

centre must be refreshed every two years. Of course the centres are free to modify or even produce their own tasks in order to meet the different needs of their students more closely, however, it will be beneficial to make the new tasks in line with the already existing tasks. **Please remember that an inappropriate task stimulus will result in constraining or compromising the performance of the students and must be avoided.**

- Some students from certain centres seemed to be working from themes that were used for coursework. At the same time some centres allowed the students to use same type of tasks for both assignments, e.g. two assignments on two **Famous Personalities** or two assignments on two different **Holidays**. This practice resulted in repetitive phrases in the essays, hence lower grades overall. Centres must ensure that the tasks cover all the Assessment Criteria outlined in the specification.

In some cases the students misinterpreted certain questions and despite being capable of writing excellent essays, could not reach to a higher band mark. In such cases, it was quite transparent that due to certain reasons, the students did not get sufficient coaching during their task setting and preparation period. Edexcel recommends up to 6 hours of preparation time before the formal assessment takes place.

Awarding Marks

The GCSE Urdu Specification is very explicit in stating that Unit 4 is 'a non-tiered unit since the final mark will be determined by the variety, appropriateness and complexity of language used and the length of the submitted tasks'. Hence, the length was also taken into account while awarding marks both for Content and Communication and for Knowledge and Application of Language.

To ensure access to the higher mark bands, students have to use a greater variety of more complex language. The writing tasks must show that the student can spell, punctuate and use grammatical structures that are accurate and appropriate for the purpose. At the top end there were some students who produced excellent pieces with a good analysis using a range of tenses.

Regrettably, very few students did this successfully. Here, two areas were identified where the teachers can put some extra emphasis prior to preparing students for their written assignments.

- Many students appeared to have trouble with gender and agreements.
- A number of students had a poor concept of the post positions and the consequential declension of the nouns, pronouns and adjectives.

Teachers must realise that in order to take students' work to the higher band for marking, there should be some evidence of using:

- Present participles
- Present subjunctive
- Past participles
- Past infinitives
- Variety of tenses
- Subordination
- Past infinitives
- Present participles
- Present subjunctive
- Adverbial phrases
- Conjunctions
- Comparative and superlative adjectives and adverbs

CA4 Form

The CA4 form is not a requirement; it is there to help students during the assessment. The form allows students to write up to 30 words in the target language or in English. It should be used by students as a plan in order to aid them while they work on their writing tasks. However, the students are not allowed to write full sentences on them. It was also noted that some students used the whole form with no word limit and then copied the phrases in their written tasks, this did not do any favour to them.

CM4 Forms

The CM4 is the Student Mark Sheet and centres **must** check that all the relevant parts are duly filled in by the student as well as the teacher. Use of the CA4 form must also be indicated in the 'Y/N' box on this form. Generally, the following concerns were noted with the CM4 forms.

- No candidate number on the form
- Wrong candidate name/number on the form
- No centre name on the form
- Missing student's/teacher's signature
- Missing CM4 form

For administrative purposes, centres should make sure that the below items are attached with each student's work:

- **Two tasks** and **stimuli** along with **two** essays
- CA4 - Student Notes Form (optional)
- CM4 – Student Mark Sheet for Unit 4 (compulsory), with all columns filled in and duly signed by the teacher and the student.

All of the above required forms are available online in the Administrative Support Guide.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

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