

UMS

Awarding GCSE Modern Foreign Languages

INTRODUCTION

UMS stands for Uniform Mark Scale. The Uniform Mark Scale is used to convert candidates' raw marks into uniform marks. This is done in order to standardise marks from year to year. For example, a candidate who just achieves a grade A will receive the same uniform marks as a candidate achieving that same level the following year, regardless of their raw marks.

GCSE Modern Foreign Languages (French (1226/3226), German (1231), Italian (1237), Spanish (1246), and Urdu (1901)) are awarded using uniform marks. All other GCSE languages are awarded in the standard way.

THE CONVERSION PROCESS

Raw Marks to Grades

Following the marking of scripts, a committee of senior examiners reviews the quality of the work submitted for each individual paper. Using their professional judgement, and statistical and technical evidence, they decide where to set the raw mark grade boundaries for each paper. Table 1 shows possible raw mark paper boundaries for French.

Table 1

Component	Raw Mark ¹	Raw mark boundaries							
		A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1F	50				31	26	21	17	13
1H	50	31	26	20	15	11	9		
2F (A/B)	50				27	22	18	14	10
2H (A/B)	50	40	34	28	23	17	14		
3F	50				32	26	20	15	10
3H	50	36	30	23	17	10	6		
4F	50				28	24	20	16	12
4H	50	38	32	25	19	13	10		
4C	60	51	45	39	33	27	21	15	9

The table shows that the minimum raw mark required to obtain each grade can vary between papers, even when they are marked out of the same total.

¹ Higher tier papers may be shown as having a raw mark range of 0-50 or 100-150, however the maximum number of marks available is 50

Raw Marks to Uniform Marks

The raw mark grade boundaries and all the candidates' raw marks are entered into Edexcel's computer. The computer converts the raw marks into uniform marks.

The maximum uniform marks that can be awarded for the subject is 360; all four skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing) are equally weighted at 25%, 90 uniform marks each. The maximum subject uniform marks that a candidate can achieve will depend on the combination of papers that the candidate takes. The maximum of 360 will only be available to those candidates who take either higher tiered papers in each skill area, or the higher tiered papers in Listening, Speaking and Reading and the coursework option in Writing.

The uniform grade boundaries for each unit are fixed and are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Component	Overall paper and percentage contribution		Maximum UMS	UMS boundary at each grade							
				*A	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1F	01	25%	59				50	40	30	20	10
1H			90	80	70	60	50	40	35		
2F	02	25%	59				50	40	30	20	10
2H			90	80	70	60	50	40	35		
3F	03	25%	59				50	40	30	20	10
3H			90	80	70	60	50	40	35		
4F	04	25%	59				50	40	30	20	10
4H			90	80	70	60	50	40	35		
4C			90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20	10

It is important to note that the scaling is not a single linear scale of maximum raw mark to maximum uniform mark. This is because the intervals between consecutive raw mark grade boundaries are not necessarily constant, however they are fixed for the uniform marks.

In paper 1H for example, all candidates who obtain raw marks of 31 or above receive 80 or more uniform marks, up to a maximum of 90 uniform marks. Those scoring raw marks of 26-30 receive 70-79 uniform marks, raw marks of 20-25, 60-69 uniform marks and so on. Those candidates taking higher tiered papers who are graded below an E (ie a U) will still be awarded uniform marks below the E boundary, meaning that the full range of uniform marks (0-90) can be achieved.

The maximum uniform mark that a foundation paper can be awarded will be 59 (ie the top of the C range; one mark below the B boundary).

The Conversion to Uniform Marks Illustrated

The conversion below uses paper 4C as an example. Table 3 shows the raw marks and the uniform marks. These marks have been taken from Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 3

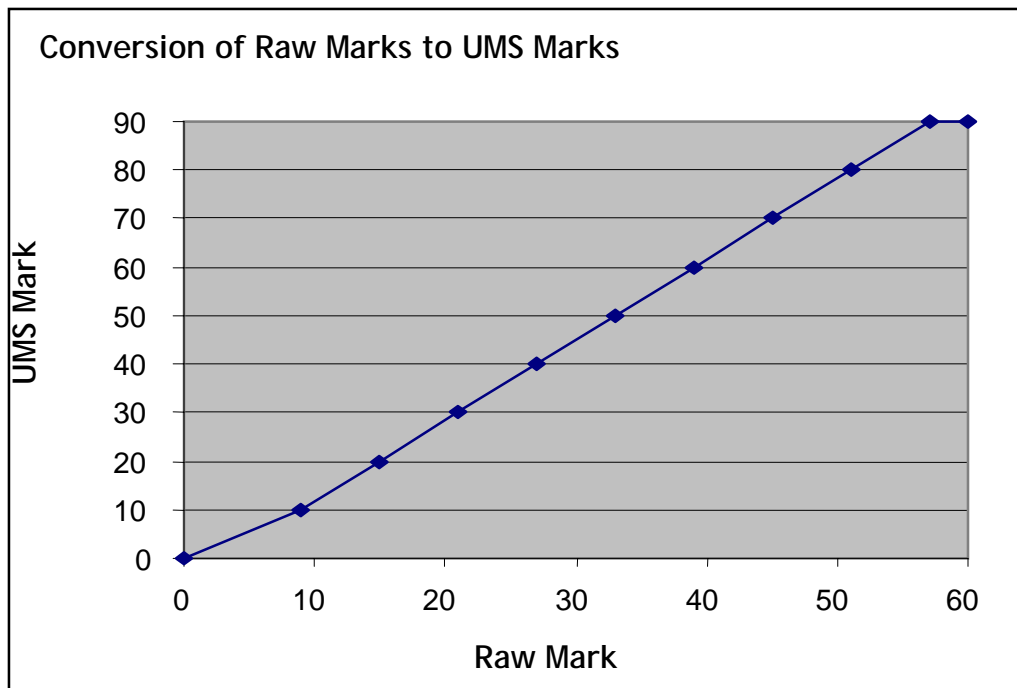
	Boundary at each grade								
	Max	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Raw Mark	60	51	45	39	33	27	21	15	9
UMS Mark	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20	10

Graph 1 shows the pairs of marks plotted with the raw mark on the horizontal axis against the uniform mark on the vertical axis. Straight lines join adjacent points. On higher, and non-tiered papers, the line connecting the points for Grade A* to Grade A, and on foundation papers the line connecting Grade C to Grade D, is extended to give the raw mark at which the maximum uniform mark is reached.

For any raw mark, the uniform mark can be read off the graph. In this example, the maximum uniform mark is awarded for a raw mark below the maximum of 60. In fact, the raw mark is 57 when the maximum uniform mark is reached. All candidates who gain 57 or more raw marks will be awarded a uniform mark of 90.

If extending the line connecting the two grades, A with A* (higher tier and non-tiered) and D with C (foundation tier), results in the maximum raw mark converting to less than the maximum uniform mark then this extension is not used. Instead, a point is plotted of maximum raw mark against maximum uniform mark. A straight line is drawn from Grade A*, and Grade C, for the higher and foundation tiers respectively, to this point. The resulting line is used to read off the uniform marks in this range.

Graph 1



MAKING THE AWARD

Table 4 shows the number of uniform marks required to achieve each subject grade. Like the paper boundaries, these are also fixed. The uniform marks from each component are simply totalled to give a final subject uniform mark.

Table 4

Grade	Uniform Mark Boundaries
Maximum mark	360
A*	320
A	280
B	240
C	200
D	160
E	120
F	80
G	40

Examples

Using the earlier examples of raw grade boundaries, these examples show how candidates' raw marks for each paper convert to their overall qualification grade.

Table 5

Paper	Raw Mark	Uniform Mark
1F	18	23
2F	24	44
3F	44	59
4C	39	60
Total UMS		186

Paper 1F: A raw mark of 18 falls within the F range. The number of uniform marks available in this range is 20-29. 18 raw marks convert to 23 uniform marks.

Paper 2F: A raw mark of 24 falls within the D range. The number of uniform marks available in this range is 40-49. 24 raw marks would convert to 44 uniform marks.

Paper 3F: The maximum uniform mark is achieved at 38 raw marks, therefore with 44 raw marks this candidate would achieve 59 uniform marks.

Paper 4C: A raw mark of 39 falls within the B range. The number of uniform marks available in this range is 60-69. 39 raw marks convert to 60 uniform marks.

Totalling the uniform marks achieved in each paper gives 186 uniform marks. Reading off from Table 4, it can be seen that the candidate will be awarded a Grade D for the subject.

Table 6

Paper	Raw Mark	Uniform Mark
1H	29	75
2F	36	59
3H	21	57
4H	9	32
Total UMS		223

Paper 1H: A raw mark of 29 falls within the A range. The number of uniform marks available in this range is 70-79. 29 raw marks convert to 75 uniform marks.

Paper 2F: The maximum uniform mark is achieved at 32 raw marks, therefore with 36 raw marks this candidate would achieve 59 uniform marks.

Paper 3H: A raw mark of 21 falls within the C range. The number of uniform marks available in this range is 50-59. 21 raw marks convert to 57 uniform marks.

Paper 4H: A raw mark of 9 falls below the lowest available boundary, therefore is in the U range. This converts to 32 uniform marks.

Totalling the uniform marks achieved in each paper gives 223 uniform marks. Reading off from Table 4, it can be seen that the candidate will be awarded a Grade C for the subject.