

FAQs 1: All qualifications

What recording devices should we use for the recording of oral examinations and assessments?

It is expected that you will use digital recording devices and submit these in MP3, WAV or WMA format on a memory stick or CD. If you have used a different digital format to the above (e.g. .m4a), you will need to convert the recordings to one of the accepted formats. It is no longer acceptable to produce recordings on cassette.

What are the labelling requirements for digital oral recordings?

Recordings need to be clearly labelled so that the centre and candidates can be easily identified. You will also need to provide the track listings in Word or Excel as below:

Unit: eg 5FR02

Centre number: eg 99999

Exam series June 2016

Track listing	CA task/ Stimulus	Candidate	Candidate number
eg 1	eg Open interaction (tourist office)	eg Joe Bloggs	eg 0000

You should also keep a 'back up' copy of all submitted recordings. If a moderator requests a replacement, you will be required to send a further copy of the relevant assessment.

Where can we find the oral forms for GCE, GCSE International GCSE and Edexcel Certificates?

The oral forms appear in the Appendices sections of the following documents:

- 2016 GCSE Administrative support guide (Chinese, French, German, Italian, Spanish and Urdu)
- 2016 GCSE Administrative support guide (Arabic, Greek, Japanese and Russian)
- 2016 AS Chinese Administrative support guide
- 2016 GCE AS & A2 French, German, Spanish, Italian, Russian and Urdu administrative support guide

You'll also find oral forms for our Edexcel Certificates and International GCSEs in **Chinese, French, German and Spanish** qualifications in our 2011 specifications (Appendices section).

Similarly, forms for the International GCSE in English (Second Language) optional oral unit also appear in the 'Appendices' section of the specification.

Where can I find the 2016 oral windows for languages?

Please see our 2016 oral dates document for these qualifications. This information also appears in the 'Key Dates' section of our 2015-2016 Information Manual. The oral windows dates are the same for UK and international centres.

What type of Arabic is acceptable for Edexcel GCSE, International GCSE and GCE?

Our qualifications require knowledge and understanding of Modern Standard Arabic. Candidates will need to be able to read and write Modern Standard Arabic at the appropriate level. There are no dialects in reading and writing units. If candidates write or use colloquial words in their oral work (GCSE), they will lose marks in language quality, but may attain some marks for communication.

Is the use of South American Spanish acceptable in Edexcel GCSE, International GCSE and GCE assessments?

It is acknowledged that there are some differences of vocabulary and accent, according to the country of origin of individual native speaker students. While for Listening and Reading examinations the language of the texts or stimuli is Castilian (in line with the specification), examiners are aware of and consider other Hispanic alternatives where they are given in response to questions. **Candidates are not penalised in oral and writing exams for the use of South American Spanish rather than Castilian, as long as the language is used appropriately and contributes to a correct response to the question.**

There is considerable expertise and knowledge of both types of Spanish among our examination teams. In addition, markers are always required to check with their senior team leaders if they have any queries regarding language variations offered by candidates. In preparing for assessment, teachers and candidates should always be familiar with the grammatical or vocabulary lists set out in the relevant specification and ensure full coverage of those lists.

For GCSE controlled assessment, if you are aware that a student has submitted work using a South American alternative, and if have concerns that the outcome may be compromised as a result, you should add a note for Edexcel about the country of origin of the Spanish used when submitting the work.

Are Edexcel's GCSE, International GCSE, Edexcel Certificate and GCE qualifications in Chinese for Cantonese or Mandarin learners?

Our GCSE, International GCSE, Edexcel Certificate and GCE qualifications in Chinese all accommodate learners of Cantonese or Mandarin. Where listening is tested, recordings are provided in Cantonese as well as Mandarin to cater for different learner needs. Similarly, any related speaking assessments are suitable for both Cantonese and Mandarin learners. In terms of writing, candidates should use Modern Standard Chinese and can produce either simplified or traditional characters. All Edexcel-provided reading material will be in simplified and traditional text. The use of some pinyin is tolerated in the GCSE and International GCSE qualifications.

However, please note that, in terms of endorsed publisher resources, these have only been produced for learners of Mandarin

Can a parent or other relative conduct an oral in a language that is not offered at our school?

Given the current format and demands of the oral units is **not appropriate for a parent or other relative to conduct an oral in a language** that is not offered at your centre.

You should consider:

- advising your students to enter as external candidates at another centre
- finding a 'host centre' willing to conduct the oral with your students
- locating a teacher of the language to conduct the orals (some teachers in community language schools are familiar with the qualification demands and have undertaken appropriate training).

Please see our [Find a centre link](#) which may help with this. We are unable to provide further information about other centres.

It is essential that the external person brought in to conduct the oral is fully conversant with the specification, assessment and administrative requirements and that the oral is conducted in the presence of an invigilator from the centre.

Can you provide or recommend someone to conduct the oral exam in a language that we do not offer at our school?

Apart from our London orals service for GCE oral units in **Russian, Italian, German, Spanish and Urdu** (Please see the [2016 GCE AS & A2 French, German, Spanish, Italian, Russian and Urdu administrative support guide](#) for further details), we do not offer provide examiners to conduct oral assessments and exams.

You should consider:

- advising your students to enter as private candidates at another centre
- finding a 'host centre' willing to conduct the oral with your students
- locating a teacher of the language to conduct the orals at your school (Some teachers in community language schools are familiar with the qualification demands and have undertaken appropriate training).

Please see our [Centres for private candidates link](#) which may help with this. We are unable to provide further information about other centres. It is essential that the person conducting the oral is fully conversant with the specification, assessment and administrative requirements and that the orals are fully invigilated in the centre.

Orals submission deadline: Does the 15 May deadline refer to the date of despatch or receipt date?

Please make arrangements for your submissions to *reach* our examiners and/or moderators by 15 May 2016.

Is other support available to help with the orals (other than the administrative support guide?)

The following support material and guidance may be of interest.

The [2016 GCSE Administrative support guide \(Chinese, French, German, Italian, Spanish and Urdu\)](#) , [2016 GCSE Administrative support guide \(Arabic, Greek, Japanese and Russian\)](#) , [2016 AS Chinese Administrative support guide](#) and the [2016 GCE AS & A2 French, German, Spanish, Italian, Russian and Urdu administrative support guide](#) provide **essential reading** and must be consulted well in advance of the oral. Instructions for the conduct of the examination (ICE) for the speaking unit are produced as appendices in the 2011 International GCSE and 2011 Edexcel Certificate specifications for Chinese, French, German and Spanish.

The **examiner reports** for the oral units also provide useful feedback on previous oral assessments and examinations. They refer to examples of good practice and may help you with your preparations for the speaking unit. These can be accessed from the language and qualification-specific homepages.

Examples of student work and linked examiner commentaries have been produced and appear on **GCSE Chinese, French, German, Spanish, Italian and Urdu** qualification pages and can be accessed via the 'Controlled assessments' tab. These should help to inform teacher-marking decisions. In terms of support for the speaking unit for GCSEs in lesser-taught languages, please refer to our [Preparing for the oral units – GCSE Arabic, Greek, Japanese, and Russian presentation](#).

Similarly for **Edexcel Certificates and International GCSEs in Chinese, French, German and Spanish**, examples of student work and examiner commentaries have also been produced and are located on the language-specific qualification pages. You may also wish to consult the 'Training students for the speaking test' section of the Edexcel Certificate and International GCSE teachers guides (These appear under the 'Tutor support materials' tab on the qualification homepage.)

GCE language teachers should find **Oral training guides for GCE Chinese, GCE French, GCE German, GCE Spanish, GCE Italian**, GCE Russian and **GCE Urdu** useful as these also feature student recordings (accessed via clicking on the loudspeaker icon) and linked commentaries. Other samples of student recordings and linked commentaries can be found in the exam materials sections of the GCE French, German and Spanish qualification pages.

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However, please note that endorsed published resources have been written specifically for learners of Mandarin.

We do not issue separate GCSE or GCE certificates for Cantonese or Mandarin and the Chinese GCSE and GCE certificates do not indicate if the candidates are learners of Cantonese or Mandarin.

What should I do if the oral has not been recorded correctly?

Please refer to the following guidance:

Before recording:

It is your responsibility to ensure that suitable, good quality recording equipment is used and that this is checked in advance of the orals. Prior to recording your candidates, you should make (and play back) a brief test recording. You must adjust all controls to the appropriate levels for clear recording of the teacher-examiner and candidate with minimum background noise.

During the orals:

You must check that all candidates have been recorded. It is advisable to re-run the closing moments of each recording before each candidate leaves the room in order to verify the recording. **Any candidates who have not been recorded properly must re-sit the examination immediately.** If candidates cannot be heard, no marks can be awarded. If this occurs in GCE AS Unit 1, the candidate must resit the test using a different stimulus card. Controlled assessment tasks cannot be re-sat. A new task would need to be undertaken. The recording should, on no account, be paused or stopped during a test. If an emergency makes this unavoidable, a report should be written immediately. The report must explain the circumstances and any subsequent action taken. A copy of the report must be included with the oral tests sent to the examiner or moderator.

After the oral:

You should keep a copy of all recordings.

Please refer to the relevant administrative support guides below (or the Unit 3 Instructions for the Conduct of the Exam (ICE) for the Edexcel Certificates and International GCSEs in Chinese, French, German, Spanish or for the International GCSE in English as a Second Language) for further information about the conduct of the oral examinations or assessments:

- [2016 GCSE Administrative support guide \(Chinese, French, German, Italian, Spanish and Urdu\)](#)
- [2016 GCSE Administrative support guide \(Arabic, Greek, Japanese and Russian\)](#)
- [2016 AS Chinese Administrative support guide](#)
- [2016 GCE AS & A2 French, German, Spanish, Italian, Russian and Urdu administrative support guide](#)