



Regulation

# **GCE subject-level conditions and requirements for modern foreign languages**

Updated 6 March 2024

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**Applies to England**

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# Introduction

## About this document

This document is part of a suite of documents which sets out the regulatory requirements for awarding organisations offering reformed A levels and AS qualifications.

We have developed all our requirements for GCE qualifications with the intention that AS and A level qualifications should fulfil the purposes set out below.

### For A levels to:

- define and assess achievement of the knowledge, skills and understanding which will be needed by students planning to progress to undergraduate study at a UK higher education establishment, particularly (although not only) in the same subject area;
- set out a robust and internationally comparable post-16 academic course of study to develop that knowledge, skills and understanding;
- permit UK universities to accurately identify the level of attainment of students;
- provide a basis for school and college accountability measures at age 18; and
- provide a benchmark of academic ability for employers.

### For AS qualifications to:

- provide evidence of students' achievements in a robust and internationally comparable post-16 course of study that is a subset of A level content; and
- enable students to broaden the range of subjects they study.

# Requirements set out in this document

This document sets out the GCE Subject Level Conditions for Modern Foreign Languages. A 'Modern Foreign Language' is defined in Condition GCE(Modern Foreign Languages)6.1.

It also sets out our requirements in relation to:

- assessment objectives – awarding organisations must comply with these requirements under Condition GCE(Modern Foreign Languages)1.2; and
- assessments (including non-examination assessments) – awarding organisations must comply with these requirements under Condition GCE(Modern Foreign Languages)2.3

With respect to all GCE qualifications in Modern Foreign Languages, awarding organisations must also comply with:

- our General Conditions of Recognition, [\[footnote 1\]](#) which apply to all awarding organisations and qualifications;
- our GCE Qualification Level Conditions and Requirements, [\[footnote 2\]](#) and
- all relevant Regulatory Documents. [\[footnote 3\]](#)

## Application of and revisions to this document

The Conditions and requirements in this document were originally published in July 2015. We have subsequently revised those Conditions and requirements (see Appendix 2 for details), most recently in March 2024.

The March 2024 version of this document replaces all previous Conditions and requirements for GCE A levels awarded on or after 1 April 2018, and all standalone GCE AS qualifications awarded on or after 1 April 2017, in the following subjects:

- French;
- German; and
- Spanish.

The Conditions and requirements in this document come into effect at 2:00pm on Tuesday 5 March 2024 for:

- All GCE A levels awarded on or after 1 April 2018, and all standalone GCE AS qualifications awarded on or after 1 April 2017, in the following subjects:
  - French;
  - German; and
  - Spanish.
- all other GCE A level Qualifications in a Modern Foreign Language awarded on or after 1 April 2019; and
- all other standalone GCE AS qualifications in a Modern Foreign Language awarded on or after 1 April 2018.

## Subject Level Conditions

### GCE Subject Level Conditions for Modern Foreign Languages

#### Condition GCE(Modern Foreign Languages)1: Compliance with content requirements

##### GCE(Modern Foreign Languages)1.1

In respect of each GCE Qualification in a Modern Foreign Language which it makes available, or proposes to make available, an awarding organisation must –

- (a) comply with the requirements relating to that qualification set out in the document published by the Secretary of State entitled '[Modern foreign languages GCE AS and A level subject content](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-as-and-a-level-modern-foreign-languages)' (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-as-and-a-level-modern-foreign-languages>), document reference DFE-00694-2014,
- (b) have regard to any recommendations or guidelines relating to that qualification set out in that document, and
- (c) interpret that document in accordance with any requirements, and having regard to any guidance, which may be published by Ofqual and revised from time to time.

### **GCE(Modern Foreign Languages)1.2**

In respect of each GCE Qualification in a Modern Foreign Language which it makes available, or proposes to make available, an awarding organisation must comply with any requirements, and have regard to any guidance, relating to the objectives to be met by any assessment for that qualification which may be published by Ofqual and revised from time to time.

### **Condition GCE(Modern Foreign Languages)2: Assessment**

#### **GCE(Modern Foreign Languages)2.1**

In respect of each GCE Qualification in a Modern Foreign Language which an awarding organisation makes available, or proposes to make available, Condition GCE4.1 does not apply.

#### **GCE(Modern Foreign Languages)2.2**

In respect of the total marks available for a GCE Qualification in a Modern Foreign Language which it makes available, an awarding organisation must ensure that –

- (a) 70% of those marks are made available through Assessments by Examination, and
- (b) 30% of those marks are made available through assessments that are not Assessments by Examination.

#### **GCE(Modern Foreign Languages)2.3**

An awarding organisation must ensure that in respect of each assessment for a GCE Qualification in a Modern Foreign Language which it makes available it complies with any requirements, and has regard to any guidance, which may be published by Ofqual and revised from time to time.

### **Condition GCE(Modern Foreign Languages)3: Non-examination assessment**

#### **GCE(Modern Foreign Languages)3.1**

In respect of each assessment for a GCE Qualification in a Modern Foreign Language that it makes available which is not an Assessment by Examination an awarding organisation must –

- (a) ensure that each Learner completes any such assessment within a period of up to 5 weeks in the months of April and May in any single year, and
- (b) take all reasonable steps to minimise the predictability of each such assessment.

#### **GCE(Modern Foreign Languages)3.2**

In respect of each assessment for a GCE Qualification in a Modern Foreign Language that it makes available which is not an Assessment by Examination an awarding organisation must ensure that –

- (a) the evidence generated by each Learner in the assessment is marked by the awarding organisation and/or a person connected to it, and
- (b) the awarding organisation is provided with a complete and unedited recording of the evidence generated by a Learner in the assessment by the Centre which delivered the assessment.

### **Condition GCE(Modern Foreign Languages)4: Access to dictionaries**

#### **GCE(Modern Foreign Languages)4.1**

An awarding organisation must take reasonable steps to ensure that no Learner has access to a dictionary –



- (a) when taking any assessment for a GCE Qualification in a Modern Foreign Language which it makes available, or
- (b) during any period of formal preparation time prior to such an assessment.

### **GCE(Modern Foreign Languages)4.2**

For the purposes of this Condition, ‘formal preparation time’ is a period of time immediately prior to the assessment, or a task within an assessment, during which the Learner is provided with previously unseen information relating to the assessment or task and is allowed to prepare for the assessment or task under conditions (including conditions as to supervision) which have been specified by the awarding organisation.

### **Condition GCE(Modern Foreign Languages)5: Titling**

#### **GCE(Modern Foreign Languages)5.1**

An awarding organisation must ensure that, for the purposes of compliance with Condition E2.1(d), the title on the Register of each GCE Qualification in Chinese which it makes available indicates the content of that qualification in the following manner, as appropriate –

- (a) Chinese (spoken Mandarin), or
- (b) Chinese (spoken Cantonese).

### **Condition GCE(Modern Foreign Languages)6: Interpretation and definitions**

#### **GCE(Modern Foreign Languages)6.1**

In these Conditions the following words shall have the meaning given to them below (and cognate expressions should be construed accordingly) –

#### **Modern Foreign Language**

A language, apart from English –

- (a) which is in everyday spoken use, and
- (b) with respect to which an awarding organisation is not required to comply with –
  - (i) the GCE Subject Level Conditions and Requirements for Ancient Languages (Classical Greek, Latin), or
  - (ii) the GCE Subject Level Conditions and Requirements for Modern Foreign Languages (listening, reading, writing).

## Assessment objectives – GCE Qualifications in Modern Foreign Languages

Condition GCE(Modern Foreign Languages)1.2 allows us to specify requirements relating to the objectives to be met by any assessment for GCE Qualifications in Modern Foreign Languages.

The assessment objectives set out below constitute requirements for the purposes of Condition GCE(Modern Foreign Languages)1.2. Awarding organisations must comply with the requirements, as relevant, in relation to each GCE AS and A level qualification in a Modern Foreign Language they make available.

Assessment objective	Objective	Weighting (A level)	Weighting (AS)
<b>AO1</b>	Understand and respond: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• in speech to spoken language including face-to-face interaction;</li> <li>• in writing to spoken language drawn from a variety of sources.</li> </ul>	20%	20%
<b>AO2</b>	Understand and respond: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• in speech to written language drawn from a variety of</li> </ul>	30%	30%

Assessment objective	Objective	Weighting (A level)	Weighting (AS)
	sources; • in writing to written language drawn from a variety of sources.		
<b>AO3</b>	Manipulate the language accurately, in spoken and written forms, using a range of lexis and structure.	30%	30%
<b>AO4 (AS)</b>	Show knowledge and understanding of, and respond critically to, different aspects of the culture and society of countries or communities where the language is spoken.	n/a	20%
<b>AO4 (A level)</b>	Show knowledge and understanding of, and respond critically and analytically to, different aspects of the culture and society of countries or communities where the language is spoken.	20%	n/a

For AS qualifications in Chinese awarded from summer 2025 and for A level qualifications in Chinese awarded from summer 2026, across assessment objectives AO1 and AO2, no more than 40% of the total marks for the qualification may be used for responses in English, including translation into English.

For any other qualifications to which these conditions and requirements apply, across assessment objectives AO1 and AO2, no more than 10% of the total marks for the qualification may be used for responses in English, including translation into English<sup>[footnote 4](#)</sup>.

## Assessment requirements

## Assessment requirements – GCE Qualifications in Modern Foreign Languages

Condition GCE(Modern Foreign Languages)2.3 allows us to specify requirements and guidance in relation to assessments for GCE Qualifications in Modern Foreign Languages.

Condition GCE(Modern Foreign Languages)2.2(b) further states that an awarding organisation must ensure that of the total marks available for a GCE Qualification in a Modern Foreign Language, 30% of those marks shall be made available through assessments which are not Assessments by Examination.

We set out our requirements for the purposes of Condition GCE(Modern Foreign Languages)2.3 below.

Unless otherwise specified, all of the requirements below apply to both A level and AS qualifications in a Modern Foreign Language which an awarding organisation makes available or proposes to make available.

### Grammatical content

The subject content for GCE Qualifications in Modern Foreign Languages is set out in the document published by the Secretary of State entitled '[Modern foreign languages GCE AS and A level subject content](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-as-and-a-level-modern-foreign-languages)' (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-as-and-a-level-modern-foreign-languages>), document reference DFE-00694-2014 (the 'Content Document').

The Annex to the Content Document sets out grammatical content for GCE Qualifications in French, German or Spanish. The Content Document goes on to state that lists of grammatical content for other languages:

must be developed by awarding organisations and included as appendices to relevant specifications, to represent a level of challenge and breadth that is comparable to the requirements for French, German and Spanish

In respect of each GCE Qualification in a Modern Foreign Language (other than French, German or Spanish) which it makes available, or proposes to make available, an awarding organisation must –

- set out in the specification for the qualification the knowledge and understanding of grammar that will be expected of Learners (the ‘Grammar Requirements’), and
- demonstrate to Ofqual’s satisfaction in its assessment strategy that it has taken all reasonable steps to ensure that, as far as possible, the Level of Demand of the Grammar Requirements is comparable to that of the grammar requirements specified in the Content Document for GCE Qualifications in French, German and Spanish.

## Vocabulary lists

Where an awarding organisation publishes any information about the words and/or forms of words which Learners will be expected to use and understand (a ‘vocabulary list’) for a GCE Qualification in a Modern Foreign Language which it makes available, or proposes to make available, it must ensure that:

- any assessment for that qualification is not restricted to use of words and/or forms of words on the vocabulary list in such a way as to render the assessment predictable, and
- the vocabulary list is set out in the specification for the qualification.

## Access to texts

An awarding organisation must take all reasonable steps to ensure that no Learner has access to any text, or any part of a text, which is listed for study in the specification when taking any assessment for a GCE Qualification in a Modern Foreign Language, except where that text or part of a text has been provided as Stimulus Materials in respect of that assessment by the awarding organisation.

## Non-Examination Assessment (A level)

The requirements in this section apply to each GCE A level qualification in a Modern Foreign Language which an awarding organisation makes available, or proposes to make available.

An awarding organisation must ensure that each assessment which is not an Assessment by Examination is designed and set –

(a) to comprise the following tasks –

(i) a presentation in the target language, with a duration of no more than 2 minutes, by each Learner on an independent research project which has been selected by the Learner and which meets the requirements in paragraph 14 of the Content Document,

(ii) the provision of oral responses in the target language by each Learner to questions regarding the Learner's independent research project which are set and asked by the person delivering the assessment, and

(iii) a discussion in the target language concerning one theme set by the awarding organisation in line with the requirements in paragraph 7 of the Content Document, and

(b) on the basis that the total period of time spent by each Learner in taking that assessment shall be between 21 and 23 minutes, which must include a single period of 5 minutes formal preparation time (as defined in Condition GCE(Modern Foreign Languages)4.2) for the Learner to prepare for the discussion outlined at (iii) above.

An awarding organisation must ensure that no more than 20% of the total marks available in respect of an assessment which is not an Assessment by Examination is made available in respect of the presentation outlined at (i) above.

## Non-Examination Assessment (AS)

The requirements in this section apply to each GCE AS qualification in a Modern Foreign Language which an awarding organisation makes available, or proposes to make available.

An awarding organisation must ensure that each assessment which is not an Assessment by Examination is designed and set –

- (a) to comprise 2 discussions in the target language on 2 different themes from the areas of interest specified in paragraph 7 of the Content Document,
- (b) on the basis that the total period of time spent by each Learner in taking that assessment shall be between 12 and 15 minutes, and
- (c) such that all tasks are set by the awarding organisation.

An awarding organisation must take all reasonable steps to ensure that each Learner shall have 15 minutes formal preparation time (as defined in Condition GCE(Modern Foreign Languages)4.2).

## **Delivery of Non-Examination Assessments**

Any assessment for a GCE Qualification in a Modern Foreign Language which is not an Assessment by Examination may be delivered –

- (a) by the awarding organisation or a person connected to the awarding organisation,
- (b) by a Centre, or
- (c) through a combination of (a) and (b).

In its assessment strategy the awarding organisation must demonstrate that –

- (a) it has taken all reasonable steps to identify the risk of any Adverse Effect which may result from the way the assessment is delivered, and

(b) where such a risk is identified, it has taken all reasonable steps to prevent that Adverse Effect or, where it cannot be prevented, to mitigate that Adverse Effect.

In respect of each GCE Qualification in a Modern Foreign Language, an awarding organisation must take all reasonable steps to ensure that each Learner takes the assessments which are not Assessments by Examination only once prior to being issued with a result for that qualification.

## Appendix 1: Not in use

## Appendix 2: Revisions to this document

The table below sets out when the GCE Subject Level Conditions and Requirements for Modern Foreign Languages initially came into force and when they were subsequently revised.

Revisions	Date in force
Assessment Objectives requirements amended to increase the permitted proportion of marks to be used for responses in English for AS and A level qualifications in Chinese.	6 March 2024
Amended Condition GCE(Modern Foreign Languages)6.1 to update definition of Modern Foreign Language.	21 April 2017
Republished as 'GCE Subject Level Conditions and Requirements for Modern Foreign Languages' Extended applicability to all modern foreign language subjects GCE(Modern Foreign Languages)5 – Titling (new)	18 April 2016



## Revisions

## Date in force

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GCE(Modern Foreign Languages)6 – Interpretation and definitions (new)  
Assessment requirements (amendment)

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First edition (published as ‘GCE Subject Level Conditions and Requirements for Modern Foreign Languages (French, German, Spanish)’)

7 July 2015

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1. [www.gov.uk/government/publications/general-conditions-of-recognition](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/general-conditions-of-recognition)  
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/general-conditions-of-recognition>)
2. [www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-qualification-level-conditions-for-pre-reform-qualifications](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-qualification-level-conditions-for-pre-reform-qualifications)  
(<http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-qualification-level-conditions-for-pre-reform-qualifications>) and  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-qualification-level-conditions-and-requirements](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-qualification-level-conditions-and-requirements)  
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-qualification-level-conditions-and-requirements>)
3. [www.gov.uk/government/publications/regulatory-documents-list](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/regulatory-documents-list)  
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/regulatory-documents-list>)
4. These requirements take effect under both Condition GCE (Modern Foreign Languages)1.1(c) and Condition GCE (Modern Foreign Languages)1.2.

