

CONDITIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

# DRAFT GCSE Subject-Level Conditions and Requirements for French, German and Spanish

Draft conditions and requirements for consultation  
– not in force

**ofqual**

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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 GCSE qualifications (graded from 9 to 1).

We have developed these requirements with the intention that GCSE qualifications (graded from 9 to 1) should fulfil the following purposes, to provide:

- evidence of students' achievements against demanding and fulfilling content;
- a strong foundation for further academic and vocational study and for employment; and
- (if required) a basis for schools and colleges to be held accountable for the performance of all of their students.

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## Requirements set out in this document

This document sets out the GCSE Subject Level Conditions for French, German and Spanish.

It also sets out our requirements in relation to:

- assessment objectives – awarding organisations must comply with these requirements under Condition GCSE(French, German and Spanish)1.2;
- tiering of assessments – awarding organisations must comply with these requirements under Condition GCSE(French, German and Spanish)2.1; and
- assessments (including the speaking assessment) – awarding organisations must comply with these requirements under Condition GCSE(French, German and Spanish)3.1

The conditions and requirements set out in this document apply to all GCSE qualifications in French, German and Spanish awarded after 1 June 2026, except where a Learner is retaking a GCSE qualification in the relevant language and the assessments for the Learner's previous attempt at the qualification took place before 30 June 2025.

With respect to all GCSE qualifications (graded from 9 to 1), awarding organisations must also comply with:

- our [General Conditions of Recognition](#), which apply to all awarding organisations and qualifications
- our [GCSE Qualification Level Conditions](#)
- all relevant Regulatory Documents

# **GCSE Subject Level Conditions for French, German and Spanish**

Condition GCSE(French, German and Spanish)1:  
Compliance with content requirements

## **GCSE(French, German and Spanish)1.1**

**1.1** In respect of each GCSE Qualification in French, German or Spanish 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 '[GCSE French, German and Spanish subject content](#)',
- 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.

## Condition GCSE(French, German and Spanish)2: Assessing the full range of abilities

### GCSE(French, German and Spanish)2.1

**2.1** In respect of each GCSE Qualification in French, German or Spanish that an awarding organisation makes available, or proposes to make available –

- (a) Condition GCSE1.1 does not apply, and
- (b) the awarding organisation must ensure that the qualification, and each assessment for it, complies with any requirements which may be published by Ofqual and revised from time to time.

## Condition GCSE(French, German and Spanish)3: Assessment

### GCSE(French, German and Spanish)3.1

**3.1** An awarding organisation must ensure that in respect of each assessment for a GCSE Qualification in French, German or Spanish 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 GCSE(French, German and Spanish)4: Assessment of spoken language

### GCSE(French, German and Spanish)4.1

**4.1** In respect of each GCSE Qualification in French, German or Spanish which an awarding organisation makes available, or proposes to make available, Condition GCSE4.1 does not apply to any assessment of a Learner's ability to speak that language effectively.

### GCSE(French, German and Spanish)4.2

**4.2** In respect of each assessment for a GCSE Qualification in French, German or Spanish that it makes available and which is not an Assessment by Examination an awarding organisation must ensure that –

- (a) the awarding organisation sets the assessment,
- (b) the evidence generated by a Learner in the assessment is marked by the awarding organisation and/or a person connected to it, and
- (c) the awarding organisation is provided with a recording of the evidence generated by a Learner in the assessment.

### GCSE(French, German and Spanish)4.3

**4.3** In respect of each GCSE Qualification in French, German or Spanish that an awarding organisation makes available, or proposes to make available –

- (a) Condition GCSE6.1 does not apply to any assessment of a Learner's ability to speak that language effectively,
- (b) the awarding organisation must ensure that each Learner completes any such assessment within a period of up to five weeks in the months of April and May in any single year, and
- (c) the awarding organisation must take all reasonable steps to minimise the predictability of each such assessment.



## GCSE(French, German and Spanish)4.4

**4.4** An awarding organisation must ensure that the five week period referred to in Condition GCSE(French, German and Spanish)4.3(b) is not required to (but may) –

- (a) be continuous, or
- (b) take place on the same dates each year.

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## Condition GCSE(French, German and Spanish)5: Access to dictionaries

### GCSE(French, German and Spanish)5.1

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

- (a) when taking any assessment for a GCSE Qualification in French, German or Spanish which it makes available, or
- (b) during any period of formal preparation time prior to such an assessment.

### GCSE(French, German and Spanish)5.2

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

# Assessment objectives – GCSE

## Qualifications in French, German and Spanish

Condition GCSE(French, German and Spanish)1.2 allows us to specify requirements relating to the objectives to be met by any assessment for all GCSE Qualifications in French, German or Spanish.

The assessment objectives set out below constitute requirements for the purposes of Condition GCSE(French, German and Spanish)1.2. Awarding organisations must comply with these requirements in relation to each GCSE Qualification in French, German and Spanish they make available or propose to make available.

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Weighting</b>
<b>AO1</b>	Understand and respond to spoken language in speaking and in writing	35 %
<b>AO2</b>	Understand and respond to written language in speaking and in writing	45 %
<b>AO3</b>	Demonstrate knowledge and accurate application of the grammar and vocabulary prescribed in the specification	20 %

# **Tiering requirements – GCSE Qualifications in French, German and Spanish**

Condition GCSE(French, German and Spanish)2.1(b) allows us to specify requirements relating to assessing the full range of abilities for GCSE Qualifications (graded 9 to 1) in French, German and Spanish.

In accordance with Condition GCSE(French, German and Spanish)2.1(b) an awarding organisation must design, deliver and award each GCSE Qualification in French, German or Spanish that it makes available, or proposes to make available, in accordance with the requirements set out below.

## Use of the overlapping tiers model

Each GCSE Qualification in French, German or Spanish must be tiered. An awarding organisation must design and set the assessments for each GCSE Qualification in French, German or Spanish which it makes available, or proposes to make available, using an overlapping tiers model.

Such a model must use two tiers – a foundation tier and a higher tier – and each assessment must be designed and set in such a way as to fall within one of those two tiers only.

## Preclusion of mixed tier entry

An awarding organisation must ensure that each Learner is permitted to take assessments in either the foundation tier or the higher tier only.

## Grades available at each tier

The questions or tasks in foundation tier assessments must be targeted at the Level of Demand required for the award of grades 1 to 5. A Learner who takes foundation tier assessments must be awarded a grade within the range of 1 to 5, or be unclassified.

The questions or tasks in higher tier assessments must be targeted at the Level of Demand required for the award of grades 4 to 9. A Learner who takes higher tier assessments must be awarded a grade within the range of 4 to 9, or be unclassified. However, if the mark achieved by such a Learner is a small number of marks below the 4/3 grade boundary, that Learner may be awarded a grade 3.

## Assessing the full range of abilities

An awarding organisation must ensure that the assessments within each tier allow each specified level of attainment available for that tier to be reached by a Learner who has attained the required level of knowledge, skills and understanding.

An awarding organisation must ensure that the assessments both within each tier, and taken together across both tiers –

- (a) ensure consistent and sufficient differentiation<sup>1</sup> between Learners; and
- (b) ensure consistent and sufficient discrimination<sup>2</sup> between Learners; and
- (c) ensure the accurate and consistent setting of grades across the full range of attainments demonstrated by Learners.

In designing assessments, an awarding organisation must take all reasonable steps to ensure, at each tier, that Learners achieving the lowest targeted grade have demonstrated attainment with regard to a sufficient range of the subject requirements, in terms of the areas of content, content domains and the assessment objectives. Equally, an awarding organisation must take all reasonable steps to ensure, at each tier, that Learners achieving the higher targeted grades must have demonstrated attainment with regard to suitably stretching and challenging requirements, in terms of the areas of content, content domains and the assessment objectives.

## The overlap at grades 4 and 5

An awarding organisation must take all reasonable steps in the design and delivery of the assessments and awarding processes to secure that the level of attainment indicated by grades 4 and 5 is comparable regardless of the tier for which a Learner is entered. Each awarding organisation must demonstrate in its assessment strategy the steps it has taken to secure such comparability between tiers, including on an

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of these requirements, 'differentiation' means the provision of opportunities in an assessment for Learners to generate evidence demonstrating different levels of attainment according to their knowledge, skills and understanding.

<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of these requirements, 'discrimination' means the rank ordering of Learners on the basis of the different levels of attainment they have demonstrated in an assessment or set of assessments.

ongoing basis. Such steps may include, but are not restricted to, the use of common questions or tasks between tiers.

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# Assessment Requirements – GCSE Qualifications in French, German and Spanish

Condition GCSE(French, German and Spanish)3.1 allows us to specify requirements and guidance in relation to assessments for GCSE Qualifications in French, German and Spanish.

We set out our requirements for the purposes of Condition GCSE(French, German and Spanish)3.1 below.

The subject content for GCSE Qualifications in French, German and Spanish is set out in the document published by the Secretary of State entitled '[GCSE French, German and Spanish subject content](#)' (the 'Content Document').

## Grammar and sound-symbol correspondence requirements

An awarding organisation must ensure that the specification for a GCSE Qualification in French, German or Spanish which it makes available sets out the grammar requirements that may be assessed for the qualification. Such requirements must include the sound-symbol correspondences specified in the Content Document, together with examples drawn from the vocabulary list for the qualification.

In its assessment strategy, an awarding organisation must set out its approach to covering the grammar requirements in the assessments for the qualification, including the sound symbol correspondences specified in the Content Document.

## Vocabulary requirements

An awarding organisation must ensure that the specification for a GCSE Qualification in French, German or Spanish which it makes available sets out the vocabulary list for the qualification.

In its assessment strategy, an awarding organisation must set out its approach to compiling the vocabulary list, including an overview of the parts of speech distribution. An awarding organisation must also demonstrate its approach to covering the vocabulary requirements in the assessments.

## Speaking assessment

An awarding organisation must design and set each assessment of a Learner's ability to speak French, German and Spanish effectively on the basis that –

- each Learner shall have the same amount of formal preparation time (as defined in Condition GCSE(French, German and Spanish)5.2 in relation to the assessment and that period of time must be between 10 and 12 minutes;
- the total period of time spent by each Learner in taking such assessments shall be –
  - for foundation tier assessments, between seven and nine minutes, and
  - for higher tier assessments, between 10 and 12 minutes.

Within such an assessment, in relation to each task requiring a Learner to read aloud a short written text, an awarding organisation must ensure that the length of that text is –

- for foundation tier assessments, a minimum of 35 words, and
- for higher tier assessments, a minimum of 50 words.

## Understanding spoken extracts

An awarding organisation must design and set each assessment of a Learner's ability to understand spoken French, German or Spanish effectively (which does not also assess the Learner's ability to speak the language effectively) on the basis that the total number words across all spoken extracts in such an assessment is –

- for foundation tier assessments, between 450 and 500 words, and
- for higher tier assessments, between 700 and 850 words.

In its assessment strategy, an awarding organisation must demonstrate to Ofqual's satisfaction its approach to assessing understanding of spoken extracts in relation to –

- the number of extracts used,
- the number of words in each extract,
- the number of marks available in relation to the number of words in each extract, and
- the approach to allowing a Learner sufficient opportunities to read the tasks before hearing the extracts.



In its assessment strategy, an awarding organisation must set out its approach to meeting the requirements of paragraphs 10 and 11 of the Content Document in relating to complexity of language and question types in the assessment of understanding spoken extracts.

## Dictation

An awarding organisation must design and set each assessment of a Learner's ability to take dictation of spoken French, German or Spanish effectively on the basis that each short spoken extract for dictation shall be –

- for foundation tier assessments, a minimum of 20 words, and
- for higher tier assessments, a minimum of 30 words.

In its assessment strategy, an awarding organisation must set out its approach to dictation assessments, including reference to the sound-symbol correspondence list in the Subject Content, its approach to different languages and the level of accuracy required

## Understanding written language

An awarding organisation must design and set each assessment of a Learner's ability to understand written French, German or Spanish effectively on the basis that (excluding the translation tasks) the number of words across all texts in such assessments shall be –

- for foundation tier assessments, between 600 and 650 words, and
- for higher tier assessments, between 850 and 900 words.

Within the above total word limits, an awarding organisation must ensure that in each assessment of a Learner's ability to understand written French, German or Spanish effectively there shall be –

- for foundation tier assessments, a maximum of 7 texts (excluding the translation tasks), with a maximum number of words in any single text of 100 words, and
- for higher tier assessments, a maximum of 8 texts (excluding the translation tasks), with a maximum number of words in any single text of 160 words.

In its assessment strategy, an awarding organisation must set out its approach to meeting the requirements of paragraphs 10 and 11 of the Content Document, in relation to complexity of language and question types in the assessment of understanding written extracts.

## Translation

An awarding organisation must design and set each assessment of a Learner's ability to translate short sentences or texts in French, German or Spanish to English, and vice versa, on the basis that such sentences or texts shall be –

- for foundation tier assessments, a minimum of 35 words, and
- for higher tier assessments, a minimum of 50 words.

In its assessment strategy, an awarding organisation must set out its approach to meeting the requirements of paragraph 9e of the Content Document, in relation to 'a range of the vocabulary and grammar specified for each tier' and to 'an appropriate and sufficient rendering of the meaning of the original language'.



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