

15 January 2019

For the attention of heads of modern foreign languages (MFL)

Dear Head of MFL

GCSE MFL in summer 2019

Ahead of the entry deadline for the summer 2019 exams, I would like to clarify the arrangements for higher tier grading in MFL. Specifically, **the 'safety net' grade 3 allowed for higher tier students will be set at half a grade width, as per our existing rules.**

We know that decisions about tier entry can be difficult to make for some students. As we move toward the summer 2019 entries, I am sure you will have reflected on your approach in 2018. We know that some third-party organisations have recommended higher tier entry for students who are predicted to achieve around grade 4. I would caution you against following that advice, as such students are at risk of missing out on a GCSE. There is a narrow safety net grade 3 for students who just miss a grade 4, but below that they will receive an unclassified result (U). We recommend that students who are predicted to achieve a grade 4 should be entered for foundation tier. Exam boards are also providing additional advice to schools on tier entry, so please do review those communications if you haven't already, and get in touch with your exam board if you need more specific advice.

You may wish to remind students and their parents that certificates for tiered subjects do not indicate which tier the student was entered for and that a 4 achieved through entry for the foundation tier has the same value as a 4 achieved through entry to the higher tier. Tiered exams contain common questions and exam boards use these to align standards between the tiers. As such, it is no easier to get a grade on one tier than the other.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S Collier". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

Sally Collier

Chief Regulator, Ofqual