Uniform mark (UMS) guidance: an example GCSE Chinese

What are uniform marks and why do we use them?
Grade boundaries are set using raw marks. For each unit, raw marks are mapped to uniform marks. A GCSE qualification grade is determined from the unit uniform mark scores.

Uniform marks are used to ensure that the standard required to gain a particular unit score is the same from exam series to exam series.

Below we have exemplified what the use of uniform marks mean in GCSE Chinese.

> Sumita & Kwasi are both re-taking GCSE Chinese Unit 1 in this exam series. Sumita is re-taking the Higher tier. Kwasi is re-taking the Foundation tier.
>
> Unit 1 (5CN01/1H) is out of 40 raw marks and has a total 60 UMS.
>
> After they have sat the examination and their papers have been marked, Edexcel senior examiners recommend the **raw mark** grade boundaries as follows:

Unit 1 Higher Tier	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Raw Mark boundary **this** exam series	40	36	32	28	24	20	(18)	-	-	0
Raw mark boundary **last** exam series	40	34	30	26	22	18	(16)	-	-	0
Uniform Mark boundary	60	54	48	42	36	30	(24)	-	-	0

IMPORTANT NOTE:
*The raw boundary marks listed above are for illustration only to show how raw marks map to uniform marks in this subject area and should not be taken as the actual grade boundaries for the unit.

Why are the raw marks boundaries different in this series compared to the last series?
You'll notice, for example, that at C on the Higher tier, the raw boundary mark was 22 last series; this series it is 24. However, you will also notice that C will always have a uniform mark of 36.

Why do raw mark boundaries change?
Raw mark boundaries change from series to series since examination papers can vary in difficulty. Even though the raw mark boundaries have changed, the uniform mark for each grade boundary remains the same for all series. In this example, the reason for the different raw mark boundaries is that, in the last series, the paper was more demanding.

> In the last examination series when Sumita & Kwasi took the exam for the first time the raw mark boundaries were lower. Sumita scored 30/40 and Kwasi scored 29/40 in raw marks.
>
> This series, Sumita scores a raw mark of 28/40 and Kwasi scores 26/40.

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Calculating Results – GCSE Chinese Cash in code: 2CN01

Sumita achieved 42 uniform marks in her original unit 1 resit. She has also taken units 2, 3 & 4 in this series. Originally she gained 48 uniform marks; a higher score. Since units 2, 3 & 4 have been sat in this series, the better result can count, as it is not needed to satisfy the 40% terminal requirement.

Sumita achieved:

Unit	Uniform Mark	
	This series	Last series
1	42 (resit)	48
2	54	
3	42	
4	62	

Sumita's total score is 48 + 54 + 42 + 62 = 206 uniform marks. With reference to the table below, she will achieve a grade C.

Qualification Grade	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Uniform mark grade threshold	270	240	210	180	150	120	90	60

For the Foundation tier, as with the Higher tier, the uniform marks are fixed but the raw mark boundaries are set in each examination series. Where there is no tiering (e.g. Units 2 and 4) the same principles apply, but the available grade range is from A*-G.

Unit 1 Foundation Tier	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Raw Mark boundary **this** exam series	40	-	-	(33)	30	26	22	18	14	0
Raw mark boundary **last** exam series	40	-	-	(32)	29	25	21	17	13	0
Uniform Mark boundary	60	-	-	(41)	36	30	24	18	12	0

Kwasi has 47 uniform marks from his original unit 1 result. For his resit he gained 39 uniform marks; a lower score. Since he has also taken units 2, 3 & 4 in this series, his better result can count as it is not needed to satisfy the 40% terminal requirement.

Anthony achieved:

Unit	Uniform Mark	
	This series	Last series
1	39 (Resit)	47
2	42	
3	35	
4	43	

Kwasi's total score is 47 + 42 + 35 + 43 = 167 uniform marks. With reference to the table below, he will achieve a grade D.

Qualification Grade	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Uniform mark grade threshold	270	240	210	180	150	120	90	60

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