Moderators' Report/
Principal Moderator Feedback

June 2011

GCSE German (5GN02) Paper 2A

PEARSON

Edexcel is one of the leading examining and awarding bodies in the UK and throughout the world. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers.

Through a network of UK and overseas offices, Edexcel's centres receive the support they need to help them deliver their education and training programmes to learners.

For further information, please call our GCE line on 0844 576 0025, our GCSE team on 0844 576 0027, or visit our website at www.edexcel.com.

If you have any subject specific questions about the content of this Moderators' Report that require the help of a subject specialist, you may find our **Ask The Expert** email service helpful.

Ask The Expert can be accessed online at the following link:
http://www.edexcel.com/Aboutus/contact-us/

Alternatively, you can contact our Languages Advisor directly by sending an email to Alistair Drewery on
LanguagesSubjectAdvisor@EdexcelExperts.co.uk.
You can also telephone 0844 576 0035 to speak to a member of our subject advisor team.

Speaking

General

This was the first major moderation session for the Controlled Assessment in Speaking for those centres following a 2-year GCSE German full course. Moderators listened to some imaginative, creative and genuinely interesting orals and were impressed by the level of performance and achievement of many of the candidates entered. There was a definite sense of a natural conversation with evidence of interaction and spontaneity and the range of vocabulary and grammar used by many candidates was excellent. Teachers are to be congratulated on managing the process so effectively and clearly putting their candidates at ease during the orals.

General

Moderators respectfully request that centres do not send candidate materials in plastic wallets. The best way to submit work is to collate each candidate's materials and then staple together or use a treasury tag.

In short, moderators felt that moderation went most smoothly where centres had

- collated each candidate's mark sheet, CA2 form and task sheet together with a treasury tag/staple/paperclip.

- included a print out of the candidates they were sending in the sample, including the highest and lowest scoring candidates (on task 2A).

- included a signed note about the candidates who had not used the CA2 form.

- included the yellow copy of the OPTEMS if marks had not been entered online.

- included a track list of sampled candidates (giving candidate name and number) complete with task type on the CD or memory stick for the sample candidates.

- completed the mark sheets correctly, using the new mark sheet, with both TE and candidate signatures.

Marking Principles

The following general marking principles are offered as guidance on the application of the mark scheme. They were used by Moderators this summer and show how the mark scheme should be applied to different scenarios that arise during the conduct of the oral.

Tests should last between 4 and 6 minutes.

Tests which are too short: < less than 3'30" - so 3'29 " is too short
- Automatic deduction of 2 marks on the Content and Response grid.
- There is no adjustment applied to either Range or Accuracy.

Test which are too long: > more than 6 minutes
- Once the 6 minutes have passed, stop listening and assessing at the end of the next sentence.

Test which are a monologue and have no interaction
- Candidates cannot score more than 7 marks for Content and Response.
- This does not affect the marks for either Range or Accuracy.

Open interaction tasks only
- If a candidate asks only one question in a task that requires 2 or more – deduct 1 mark from the Content and Response.
- Candidate asks no questions during the task – deduct 2 marks from the Content and Response.

The other two assessment criteria will not be affected. There is an expectation in this task type that the candidate will ask the TE questions since it is a transactional task type. Although interaction is important in all three task types, **there is no requirement for candidates to ask questions in the Presentation and discussion or in the Picture-based discussion task options.**

Marks for content and language are awarded discretely – i.e. if a candidate scores 8-11 for content, there is no imposed ceiling on either of the other assessment boxes for range or accuracy

Presentation and Discussion
- The presentation must last between 1 – 3 mins (max). If the presentation is shorter than 1 min deduct 2 marks for Content and Response.

Tasks

Centres have a choice of 3 tasks:

1. a presentation and discussion
2. a picture-based discussion
3. an open interaction

Each candidate must undertake at least 2 of these 3 task types but only one has to be recorded and submitted, although centres were asked to submit in the moderation sample recordings of the different task types for which they are submitting marks across the whole centre cohort.

In this session, the majority of centres opted for the presentation and discussion and picture-based discussion, but there was a pleasing number of centres who undertook the open interaction.

Centres create their own task sheets for the P&D & the PBD – there are no Edexcel set tasks for these 2 options. Many centres did not give their candidates a task sheet as such. Candidates had just a title e.g. *My holiday last year*. Centres should be aware that all tasks have to be refreshed every 2 years, in accordance with all other Awarding Bodies. The best tasks will therefore be a title with 5 or so bullet points to guide and support candidates: the task can then be refreshed at the end of 2 years by changing at least one of these bullet points. If the task is 'just' a title, this title may not be used after 2 years.

Where a candidate engages in a picture-based discussion, centres should note that the specification states on p16 that the picture is intended to be used as a 'prompt to discussion'. The ensuing discussion should therefore start from the candidate's picture. The spirit of this task type is that candidates will bring in their own picture, rather than all being given the same one.

Most centres undertaking the open interaction created their own stimuli and tasks, generally 'customising' ones from the Edexcel bank in order to develop tasks that suited the interests of their own candidates, thus allowing them to perform well. Teachers are reminded, however, that the stimulus in the open interaction task should not exceed 70 words.

Relatively few centres differentiated their tasks to cater for the different levels of candidates – most centres gave all candidates the same task which differentiated by outcome. Centres are reminded that candidates do not all have to do the same task and that controlled assessments allow candidates access to tasks which are tailored to their ability level.

Themes

Centres and candidates are free to choose their own themes for the orals: 4 popular themes have been identified by Edexcel (as listed on p9 of the Specification) but these are not prescriptive. Candidates may undertake both tasks on the same theme if they wish although there should be no direct overlap of content. Popular themes included holidays, work experience, school, family, media, lifestyle, leisure, my town, Olympic Games and Christmas. Plenty of candidates used the opportunity provided by the new specification to talk about things which were of genuine interest to them e.g. favourite actors, singers or sports stars and it was evident that they had carried out lots of independent research.

Conduct

In general, the orals were well conducted and allowed candidates to achieve their best. Skilful and appropriate questioning from the Teacher-Examiner afforded candidates the opportunities to fulfil their potential in line with the criteria.

Presentation and Discussion

In the presentation and discussion task type candidates must give a presentation which should last between **1 minute minimum** and **3 minutes maximum**. Unfortunately some Teacher-Examiners did not allow their candidates to speak for at least one minute before interrupting them to ask a question - even where the candidate clearly had more to say – consequently these presentations were too short. For information on how to assess presentations which fall short of the one minute minimum time allocation please refer to the *Marking Principles* at the beginning of this document. The other 2 task type options might be more appropriate for students who are unable to give a presentation lasting a minimum of 1 minute. Centres should be reassured that 1 minute really is long enough for the presentation part of the task - long presentations could mean less time for the more interactive, spontaneous part of the task.

Many candidates performed well here and were a pleasure to listen to. Other candidates had prepared their presentation thoroughly and were able to perform well only then to have little left for the all-important interaction. The presentation section undoubtedly allows candidates to fulfil certain assessment criteria but the discussion allows them to fulfil others. It is therefore very important to ensure that both sections are well represented and accomplished. Sometimes the follow up questions covered exactly the same ground as that in the presentation, which led to candidates using the same language and repeating information already given rather than taking the conversation forward, expanding on detail and opinion or taking the conversation in a new direction. In fact, when the Teacher-Examiner asked a question about something the candidate had already stated in the presentation, this frequently caused hesitation and confusion.

It is not in the spirit of the examination for all candidates to learn the same presentation off by heart. Nor should a presentation be followed by the same sequence of questions which in turn lead into shorter 'mini-presentations' – within the constraints of an assessment, we are looking for spontaneity, interaction and an ability to deal with unpredictable questions. Asking all candidates the same questions will not provide enough challenge for more able candidates. There was evidence that the questions had been well rehearsed in some centres. Whilst this drilling may have allowed weaker students to access their potential grade, the lack of spontaneity and unpredictability limited the marks of the more able students.

The Picture Based discussion

This proved a popular choice with centres and candidates bringing their own photo or picture added a sparkle to the conversation - they clearly enjoyed talking about their pictures. Candidates may give a presentation (maximum of one minute) but they do not have to. Practice varied. Some students clearly find giving a presentation boosts their confidence for the rest of the oral, others feel more comfortable going straight into the discussion. Either approach is acceptable. A short presentation or brief discussion on the photo or picture led on to wider conversation which was interesting to listen to. Personal pictures of their home, a holiday or a celebrity were frequently used and things that had clearly captured candidates' imagination gave rise to opportunities to express opinions and speak with enthusiasm. Feelings and humour were evident and this greatly enhanced the spoken communication.

Open Interaction

Whilst many teachers have realised the full potential of this task, this was the lesser-chosen task option. Performance tended to fall into two polarised categories.

Where the task was exploited correctly, candidates of **all** levels were able to engage in a genuinely spontaneous role-play type dialogue. There were some fascinating performances e.g. candidates playing the role of famous stars being interviewed on chat show, job interviews, in a tourist office with a tourist asking for information on the area, a conversation between two airline passengers who had just met in the departure lounge whilst waiting for a flight and role plays in the cinema (customer + employee). Well-structured Open Interaction tasks really encouraged high scores in the Content and Response category due to the level of genuine interaction e.g. a poster advertising a leisure centre and another advertising a new shopping centre gave candidates lots of scope to give their own spontaneous answers to questions asked of them and to ask the required questions. The nature of this task gives a real flavour of how language is used in a way that is personal and unique to each individual candidate. Moderators felt that the Open Interaction task often enabled weaker candidates to achieve better marks, as it was more structured and even the

sort of "unpredictable questions" which might be asked were easier to predict.

Unfortunately, many teachers conducted this task as a question and answer session – so more of a general conversation than an unscripted role-play scenario in response to a stimulus (which candidates will have prepared under supervision ahead of the test). Some tasks set did not easily give rise to an unscripted role-play - situations such as *You meet a friend and talk about your holiday* did not work well as there was no obvious role to play and many Teacher-Examiners forgot the scenario. Centres are advised that there is no 'general conversation' task type in this new specification.

There is an expectation in the Open Interaction that candidates will ask the Teacher-Examiner questions and the vast majority of tasks reminded candidates of the need to do so. All the more pity therefore that some candidates forgot to ask questions and were not prompted by the Teacher-Examiner to do so – it is perfectly acceptable for teachers to prompt candidates in this respect e.g. *hast du/Haben Sie Fragen für mich*? Centres should refer to the Marking principles for details on how to apply the marking criteria in such instances.

Timings

Each oral task should last between 4 and 6 minutes - this range affords flexibility to suit different candidates. Moderators were pleased that in this session the majority of orals conformed to the timings requirements. Centres should be aware that moderators stop moderating after 6 minutes to ensure an even playing field for all candidates. In any case, prolonging the oral rarely, if ever, brings any advantage to the candidate – often the reverse is true. At the other end of the time scale, we have recognised that 4 minutes may represent too long a time for weaker candidates and we are willing to accept orals which last 3 minutes 30 seconds – so some considerable leeway. However, anything less than this will be considered short and centres should refer to the *Marking principles* for details on how to apply the assessment criteria in this case. However, centres should note that in order to access the full mark range, the oral must last between 4 and 6 minutes. An oral which lasts only 3'30" will not be able to access the full mark range.

Recordings

Just one recorded exemplar per candidate for moderation should be sent to moderators. This session centres submitted their recordings on cassettes, CDs and USB sticks (with orals recorded as both mp3 files and music/audio files). Whilst we will continue to accept cassettes for the next few sessions, it is undoubtedly the case that orals recorded digitally and saved as mp3 files greatly facilitate for centres the selection process for the moderation sample. The quality and clarity of the recording are also better in comparison with cassettes. Moderators would respectfully request that centres check their recordings before sending off the samples: there were some compatibility issues and some very poor quality recordings which were almost inaudible. Whilst it is not necessary to conduct the controlled assessments one-on-one in a dedicated room, there is a need for minimal background noise. Moderators commented that many candidates recorded in a classroom situation were very difficult to hear due to high levels of background noise.

Centres are kindly requested to label cassettes, CDs or USBs carefully – centre number, candidate name and number, language and series details should be clearly given. It would help moderators tremendously if the task type were indicated next to the candidate's name. It also avoids confusion if these details are announced clearly at the start of each oral – Teacher-Examiners at some centres started the oral without identifying the candidate which made it very difficult for the moderator to know which candidate they were listening to.

All recordings will be returned to Centres.

Marking

The vast majority of Teacher- Examiners showed a good understanding of the assessment criteria and were able to differentiate performances among their candidates. Unfortunately, there were centres whose marks were out of tolerance and needed adjustment.

Content and response:

These centres tended to overvalue their candidates' performance here. It should be remembered that the assessment criteria are applied globally on a best-fit basis and that the ability to interact well with the teacher and respond spontaneously to unpredictable questions is necessary to attain marks in the higher mark bands. Pre-learnt mini-monologues or 'conversations' which consist of a question and answer session (typically, one question followed by a one sentence answer) but a lack interaction or the ability to expand or take the initiative cannot be rewarded with top marks. On the other hand, the weakest candidates were often under-marked in this section. Candidates who had been able to give a mix of short

sentence answers or phrases and maintain the conversation for 4 minutes were still put in the 1-3 band.

Accuracy and Range of Language:

Marks here are largely dependent on the amount of German conveyed by the candidate and it is unusual for a candidate who scores in the lower mark bands for Content and response to score highly in these grids since there is not the breadth of language required. Tenses other than the present must be used in order to have the opportunity to access the 5 mark band for Range of Language. However, the demonstration of a good grasp of the tenses alone does not mean candidates should automatically score a mark of 5 – they do need to demonstrate wide range of structures and vocabulary. It is important when awarding the mark for Accuracy to note that the mere lack of error does not mean the candidate will score highly. The candidate must attempt to use more complex structures to reach 5 and there must be generally good pronunciation and intonation.

Administration

Many centres completed the administration admirably. Others had omitted to include vital documents but responded quickly to moderators' requests for material.

Centres are advised to refer to the *Administrative support guide (Instructions for the Conduct of the Examination and Controlled Assessments)* available on the web site: *http://www.edexcel.com/migrationdocuments/GCSE%20New%20GCSE/ICE -GCSE-tiered-2011.pdf* for each examination session as this details exactly which materials should be sent to the moderator.

Centres should not send more than the one oral per candidate to which they wish moderators to listen i.e. only those recordings which are to be moderated. The candidates required for moderation are identified with an asterisk by Edexcel, but Centres should ensure that they send their **highest** performing and their **lowest** performing candidates on the 2A task (i.e. task for moderation) in addition to the requested sample.

Moderators will moderate the 2A task only. They do not moderate the 2B task. Consequently, centres should not send to moderators any paperwork relating to the 2B task.

Missing orals

Some centres emailed through to their moderators mp3 files for outstanding candidates e.g. highest and lowest scoring. Whilst email is a very expedient process, centres are reminded that the Code of Practice dictates that examinations, including controlled assessments, must be kept confidential until the closing date for enquiries about results.

Candidate mark sheets

Centres are reminded that the Code of Practice requires that assessment evidence provided by candidates has been authenticated. The *Candidate mark sheet* has a double function: it is clearly the form on which the tasks and centre awarded marks are recorded, but it is also the authenticity form and **must** be signed by both candidate and teacher. Unfortunately, lots of forms were not signed either by the candidate or the teacher and consequently signatures had to be requested. The Candidate mark sheet replaces the old *Authenticity record sheet* and is available as an appendix on the Admin guide referred to above.

CA2 forms

The CA2 form is the pro forma on which candidates may write up to 30 words of notes and make 5 small drawings. They may take this form into the oral with them so it is one of the controls. Moderators must see this form to check exactly what support candidates had whilst taking their oral. Some centres did not include the CA2 forms nor did they include any statement to the effect that their candidates had not used them. If candidates decide they do not wish to use this form, this is fine but moderators must receive a statement to this effect – this could be a blank CA2 form.

Those candidates who used a CA2 form, did not always use it to their best advantage, especially weaker candidates. Complex vocabulary items were often recorded by such candidates, but it was apparent that they did not know how to pronounce them, and consequently communication was impaired. A list of 30 discrete lexical items may not represent the most helpful use of this form and centres should spend some time discussing with their candidates how the allowed 30 words can best support them as they undertake the speaking tasks.

Task sheets

It is very difficult for moderators to moderate a candidate's performance if they do not have access to the task used in the assessment. Centres are reminded that a copy of each task used in the moderation sample must be sent to the moderator – even if the task was just a title.

Task sheets should not contain additional vocabulary such as *useful fillers*. Candidates are allowed up to 30 words of notes (on the CA2 form) and any words in addition to the 30 permitted words infringe the controls. The task sheet should be just that, a task sheet with no reminders to use a range of tense, express opinions etc. Such reminders should be achieved via the bullet points e.g. mention an activity you did last week (to encourage past tense), say why this was enjoyable (to encourage opinion and reason) etc.

Support

Centres are reminded that the GCSE 09 German web page http://www.edexcel.com/quals/gcse/gcse09/mfl/german/Pages/default.aspx offers a wealth of support to teachers on the CA in speaking and teachers should check for any updates on a regular basis: it is possible to sign up for email alerts (see bottom of web page for details).

The *Controlled Assessment Teacher Support Book – speaking* is an invaluable resource with many FAQs http://www.edexcel.com/migrationdocuments/CPS/GCSE%20from%202009/GCSE%20MFL%20Controlled%20Assessment%20Teacher%20Support%20Book%20%20-%20Speaking.pdf as is the *Supplementary Frequently Asked Questions – GCSE Controlled Assessments (Speaking and Writing)* http://www.edexcel.com/migrationdocuments/GCSE%20New%20GCSE/FAQs-Supplement.pdf

The *Controlled Assessment Exemplar Materials* include exemplar orals, tasks and moderator commentaries.

For those wanting a brief overview, there is a Podcast (http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/podcast-mfl.aspx) and you can ask and answer queries and exchange ideas via the MFL Online community (http://community.edexcel.com/forums/22.aspx).

Any teacher with a specific query about any aspect of the CA process should send an email to one of the Senior Examiners for German at *Ask the Expert* gcsegerman@edexcelexperts.co.uk. A reply will be received within 48 hours (often sooner). Alternatively, teachers may like to send their query to LanguagesSubjectAdvisor@edexcelexperts.co.uk

In addition to the GCSE German page, there is a generic languages web page and it is possible to subscribe to regular newsletters with updates and advice via this web page: http://www.edexcel.com/Subjects/Languages/Pages/Default.aspx

Finally, Edexcel offers a programme of trainings events – both face-to- face and online. Please refer to: http://www.edexcel.com/resources/training/Pages/default.aspx

Grade Boundaries

The modern foreign languages specifications share a common design, but the assessments in different languages are not identical. Grade boundaries at unit level reflect these differences in assessments, ensuring that candidate outcomes across these specifications are comparable at specification level.

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link: http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx

Ofqual
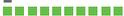
Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Rewarding Learning