

Modern Languages

OCR Advanced Subsidiary GCE French H075 Unit F701

OCR Advanced Subsidiary GCE German H076 Unit F711

OCR Advanced Subsidiary GCE Spanish H077 Unit F721

Instructions for Internally Conducted Oral Examinations

Please read these instructions carefully

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1. DATES OF EXAMINATIONS

It is essential that all teacher-conducted orals are held during the official examining period:

- 1 December - 10 January for the January series
- 15 March - 15 May for the June series.

It is desirable, in the interests of confidentiality, that the examinations be conducted over as short a period as possible.

2. MATERIAL FOR THE EXAMINATION

With these instructions centres should receive

- supplies* of the Candidate's Sheet for the Role Play
- a booklet* containing both the candidate's and the teacher's materials for the Role Play
- Working Marksheets ("F701 FRENCH", "F711 GERMAN", "F721 SPANISH", as appropriate)
- labels for the despatch of material to the OCR Examiner
- envelopes
- reply-paid labels

* **These items must be stored securely until needed, and must not be opened until a maximum of three working days before the examination.**

Leaflets containing notes for candidates on the oral examination together with supplies of the oral topic form are despatched to centres in November/February.

3. ACCOMMODATION AND EQUIPMENT

3.1 Quiet conditions

These are essential. The examination room should be free from traffic noise and other disturbance from outside the building (e.g. lawn-mowers). It should not be close to corridors used by large numbers of students between lessons, but if movement within the building is unavoidable, steps should be taken to keep that noise to a minimum. Notices must be displayed to prevent interruptions from people entering the room unaware that an examination is in progress.

3.2 The examination room

The candidate and the teacher should be seated opposite each other across a table. The teacher needs ample table space to arrange his/her documents, but the candidate should be close enough for a rapport to be established and for papers to be passed across the table without difficulty. **No other persons may be present in the examination room without the express permission of OCR.**

3.3 Separate preparation room

This is essential. It should be near the examination room, and must not be part of a corridor. Other students should not have access to the area. The room should be equipped with a table where the candidate can prepare the Role Play Task.

3.4 Invigilation

Though not essential, it is highly desirable to have an invigilator present while candidates are preparing. If this is not possible, then all the usual examination conditions must be met.

3.5 Dictionary

No access to dictionaries is permitted during the preparation time or during the examination.

3.6 Recording

It is a requirement of the examination that all oral tests are recorded. Centres are responsible for providing equipment of as high a standard as possible for this purpose. If at all possible, an external microphone should be used rather than

one that is in-built, and it should be placed on a soft surface between teacher and candidate. Normally it will be necessary to place the microphone nearer to the candidate than to the teacher. Before the start of the examinations the teacher must make sure that the recording level is satisfactory for both candidates and teacher.

4. PREPARING THE CANDIDATES

It is in everyone's interests that candidates are as relaxed and confident as is possible in the circumstances. A number of points should be mentioned here:

4.1 Information sheet for candidates

We have prepared a sheet Cand/Info/F701/F711/F721, which centres may copy and distribute to their candidates in advance of the examination.

4.2 Oral Topic Form

Centres should have received sufficient forms to distribute one to each candidate for each language. Candidates should use the form to write **in the foreign language** the title of their topic and a list of up to 5 areas within it, which they would like to discuss with the teacher. The top copy is handed to the teacher either at the start of the examination or at the start of the topic discussion. The bottom copy may be retained and used by the candidate during the test.

4.3 Supporting material

Candidates may, if they wish, bring with them into the examination their own notes during the discussion (**but must not be allowed to read out prepared sections**); such notes must be limited to one side of A4 paper.

5. TIMING

5.1 The examination normally lasts for 15 minutes, and must be followed by a few minutes' break for the teacher. Candidates should be timetabled to arrive at the preparation room at intervals of 20 minutes. In the interests of both teacher and candidates, not more than 12 candidates should be timetabled on any one day. At the beginning of the day and after breaks the timetable should allow for the first candidate to prepare the role play.

6. CONDUCT OF THE EXAMINATION

6.1 Preparation of the Role Play Task

The teacher should select the Role Play Task to be used according to the Randomisation Sheet provided and hand it to the candidate before beginning the previous candidate's examination. The candidate will prepare the task in a separate room set aside for this purpose. A number of different tasks are provided for each language. It is recognised that candidates may wish to annotate the stimulus material; for this reason enough sheets are supplied for all candidates. **For security reasons, teachers must ensure that the Candidate's Sheet is handed back at the end of the Role Play exercise.**

6.2 Recording the examination

Each CD will record approximately 700 minutes of sound in MP3 format or 30 candidates. The exact capacity depends on the number and length of each recording.

Most of the cassettes supplied by OCR are 45 minutes per side, some are 30. One 45-minute tape should therefore be sufficient for 4 orals, 2 on each side.

If for any reason the test fails to record, it must be re-recorded as soon as possible with a different role play. Details of such instances must be sent to the OCR Examiner and also to OCR.

At the beginning of each cassette or CD, the teacher must record an introduction giving the following information:

- Cassette/CD number
- Centre number
- AS level oral examinations in (language)
- Date
- Teacher (e.g. Mrs. J Smith)

Before the test begins, the teacher must announce the candidate's number and name, **and leave the tape/CD running for the duration of the examination.**

After the last recording on side A of each tape the teacher should announce "No more recordings on this side. Recording continues on side B."

After the last candidate on each tape/CD, the teacher must announce 'end of tape/CD no....' and after the last candidate on the last tape/CD 'end of examination'.

Cassettes

The tape must be wound on to the end before turning over or starting a new tape. As each cassette is used, the labels supplied must be completed with the name of teacher, centre number, candidate numbers, and unit number. The labels must then be inserted in the cassette box, with the thin strip between the 2 lines showing along the spine.

CDs

- Record the candidates in the order of the attendance register.
- If that is not possible, complete the CD sleeve with candidate details in recording order.
- Each recording should indicate candidate number and name.
- Each recorded **file** on the CD must be clearly named using the following convention:
Centre number-candidate number-unit number-component number.
- Each CD should be labelled with the centre number and unit number.
- To label CDs use CD friendly marker pens. The use of biro, for example, may make the contents of the CD unreadable.
- Centres should complete each CD sleeve.

For more technical information go to the OCR website and the document

Digital Audio Technology: Guidance to Centres and Assessment Personnel

6.3 Striking a balance

Teachers have to choose between two potentially extreme positions. On the one hand, they wish to present themselves as approachable human beings and to conduct the oral in a friendly, relaxed, and flexible way. On the other hand, they know that they have the responsibility of administering an agreed standard test which will have national validity and comparability; and that the candidates themselves will expect them to treat the occasion with the thoroughness and seriousness it deserves. It is difficult for OCR to prescribe the exact balance between these extremes. Teachers are clearly at an advantage here, in that, unlike Visiting Examiners, they are known to the candidates. It should therefore be easier for them to be thorough, careful and fair, without being intimidating or distant.

6.4 Conversational style

In conversation with candidates, a warm and friendly manner will encourage good responses, overcoming some of the nervousness felt by many. A brusque or officious manner may frighten or alienate candidates.

6.5 Eye contact

It is also important to maintain reasonable eye contact with the candidate; body language, often unnoticed in everyday life, plays an important role in the artificial situation of the oral test. There can be little that is more off-putting for the candidate than trying to talk to the top of the teacher's head.

6.6 Question style

Another temptation is for teachers to prompt too much and to end up by doing all the talking themselves. It is sometimes difficult to strike the right balance between listening and trying to 'bring the candidate out', especially with candidates who may have little to say. A little help at a critical moment - by supplying a word the candidate is searching for; by reformulating the candidate's own phrase in a more constructive way; or simply by giving approval and encouragement - can bring candidates out of their shell. However, the teacher should strive to establish a genuine conversation, with the candidate playing as large a part as possible.

6.7 Dealing with errors on the part of the candidate

It is very easy to demotivate candidates by correcting errors, or by expressing consternation or disapproval – so do not do this during the test.

7. COMPONENTS OF THE EXAMINATION

7.1 Format of the examination

The examination consists of 2 sections, which must be conducted in the following order:

(i) Section A: Role Play (30 marks): 5 to 6 minutes

followed by

(ii) Section B: Topic discussion (30 marks): 9 to 10 minutes

The oral test lasts for 15 minutes, and represents 30% of the total marks for the AS examination. Centres are asked to timetable candidates every 20 minutes so as to allow the teacher a short break between candidates.

7.2 Role Play

7.2.1 The teacher must set the scene for the Role Play, using the form of words given on the Examiner's Sheet. The Examiner's Sheet contains instructions and suggestions for the conduct of the Role Play. The Task should be started as indicated, but the development which takes place will depend on the line taken by the candidate.

7.2.2 The teacher's introduction invites the candidate to ask his/her questions at the beginning, but if the candidate does not ask the questions when expected, the teacher must be careful not to supply inadvertently the information the candidate should be trying to find out - the candidate may intend to ask the questions in later discussion. If the candidate completely fails to give the required information this will clearly be reflected in the mark for Response to Examiner.

7.2.3 The task need not follow the order of the candidate's sheet, but the teacher must ensure that the candidate is given every opportunity to complete the task fully. The points printed in bold must be raised with all candidates; these relate directly to the prompts on the candidate's sheet. **In particular, candidates must be encouraged to exploit the English stimulus material fully, and should be prompted if they fail to do this.** Teachers should note that this is not a formal summary exercise, and should interject frequently with questions to ask for clarification or more detail.

7.3 Topic Discussion

7.3.1 **This part of the examination must last for 9 to 10 minutes** and must follow on without a break from Section A, the Role Play.

7.3.2 The oral topic form, listing the main aspects of the topic which the candidate wishes to discuss, serves a dual purpose: it acts as a prompt to the candidate and it provides a framework for the teacher giving a series of 'pegs' on which to hang questions. The teacher must be guided largely by this, but this does not mean that questions on other aspects should not be asked. The headings should normally be tackled in the order listed on the form. **Before introducing areas of his/her own, however, the teacher must ensure that all the headings listed on the form have been fully covered.** In the last two minutes of the discussion teachers should ask candidates if there is anything else they would

like to say about their topic; this avoids any possible frustration on the part of candidates who have not had a chance to discuss an issue in which they are particularly interested.

- 7.3.3** It must be stressed that teachers are not expected to be experts on any or all of the topics which may be offered by candidates. Even if he/she is very familiar with the subject matter or book which is being discussed, the teacher should at all times adopt the position of the intelligent layperson, and ask a series of general, open-ended questions, designed to allow candidates to talk freely about the aspects of the topic which have particularly interested or engaged them during their course of study. Whilst candidates must of course be given the chance to show what they know and can do, they must not be allowed to give a series of highly prepared mini-presentations.

Many teachers will be fully conversant with the topics to be discussed by candidates. The danger here lies (consciously or unconsciously) in expecting the candidates to produce in the examination a known body of knowledge and in limiting the questioning style to triggers which will elicit this knowledge. Teachers have a particular responsibility in this respect to ensure that they do not pitch all their questions at a level which they know candidates are able easily to handle, but must seek to approach the topic from an unexpected angle, and to include questions which stretch and provoke thought in the candidates, allowing them access to the higher range Assessment Criteria particularly Grid E: Fluency, spontaneity and responsiveness.

- 7.3.4** Some candidates may choose to talk about a literary text they have studied but this must be linked to one of the AS topic areas or sub-topics.

- 7.3.5** The topic discussion is intended to be a conversation. Although the candidate must lead to some extent, this part of the examination should not be allowed to develop into a monologue on the candidate's part - frequent questions should be asked. The precise balance between candidate and teacher is obviously at the discretion of the teacher, and will probably vary from candidate to candidate.

- 7.3.6** Teachers should not expect candidates to speak in the form of complete sentences, as this would be unrealistic in natural conversation, but of course candidates whose conversation consists largely of monosyllabic or disjointed replies cannot get much credit for such a performance. A great measure of responsibility rests here with the teacher, who should design the questions and guide the conversation in such a way that the candidate is obliged to be articulate and encouraged to express his/her ideas in extended form, using, for example, a variety of verb forms and tenses. The conversational nature of the exercise should at all times be borne in mind. Candidates will in many cases have prepared their topic thoroughly, and may attempt to give a series of 'mini-presentations.' Whilst they must of course be given the chance to show what they know and can do, they must not be allowed to reel off set pieces unchallenged by questions which make them think 'on their feet' and provide access to the higher level Assessment Criteria.

- 7.3.7** Candidates may bring into the examination notes to support the discussion of the topic (such notes must be limited to one side of A4 paper or a maximum of 3 postcards). Candidates may refer to this material during the discussion, but must not be allowed to read out sections (apart from e.g. statistics, quotations). If they attempt to do this, the teacher should interject with questions. Teachers should bear in mind that the aim of the examination is to test candidates' speaking ability; candidates should not be encouraged to spend too much time displaying visual and written material.

- 7.3.8** Occasionally, the topic discussion may dry up completely. In such cases, the teacher must ask if the candidate wishes to say anything else about the topic; if not, recourse may be made to general conversation to fill up the remaining time. General conversation cannot of course be assessed for content. Candidates may perform better on the language element than when speaking about their topics.

8. AFTER THE EXAMINATION

- 8.1** **Completing the mark sheet:** Centres are supplied with individual candidate mark sheets. Please ensure that centre and candidate numbers are given on each form.
- 8.2** **Assessment:** Examiners will be appointed by OCR. Centres must send **all** recordings to the OCR Examiner/OCR Repository.
- 8.1.1** Centres will be notified of details for the submission of recordings to OCR towards the end of the oral examining period.
- 8.1.2** All Tapes/CDs, Working Marksheets and copies of the oral topic form must be submitted to OCR. For submission by post, labels will be supplied for this purpose. Tapes/CDs must be carefully packed. All material must be sent to arrive no later than 10 January for the January series and no later than 15 May for the June series.

9. SECURITY

At all times during the examination, the tapes/CDs, confidential material and marksheets must be kept under conditions of security exactly the same as those for examination materials before a written examination.

The Role Play Tasks must be treated as confidential until the conclusion of the examination series.