Edexcel
Success through qualifications

UMS - Awarding
GCSE Modern Foreign Languages

INTRODUCTION

From Summer 2003, all GCSE Awarding Bodies, in agreement with QCA, have agreed to adopt a new UMS (Uniform Mark Scale) system, which will reward candidates more accurately for their overall performance in GCSE French (1226/3226), German (1231), Italian (1237), Spanish (1246), and Urdu (1901). All other GCSE languages will continue to be awarded in the standard way.

The UMS is used to convert candidates' raw marks into uniform marks. This is done in order to standardise marks from year to year. For example, a candidate who just achieves a grade A will receive the same uniform mark as a candidate achieving that same level the following year, regardless of their raw marks.

THE CONVERSION PROCESS

Raw Marks to Grades

Following the marking of scripts, a committee of senior examiners reviews the quality of the work submitted for each individual paper. Using their professional judgement, they decide where to set the raw mark grade boundaries for each paper. Table 1, as an example, shows a set of possible raw mark paper boundaries for French. The same will apply to all of the MFLs assessed in this way.

Table 1

Component	Max Raw Mark	Min Raw Mark	Raw Mark Boundary							
			*A	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1F	50	0				39	31	24	17	10
1H	150	100	140	134	128	123	118	115		
2F (A/B)	50	0				37	30	23	16	9
2H (A/B)	150	100	144	138	132	126	121	118		
3F	50	0				40	32	25	18	11
3H	150	100	141	135	129	123	117	114		
4F	50	0				36	29	23	17	11
4H	150	100	144	137	130	124	120	118		
4C	60	0	54	47	40	34	27	21	15	9

The table shows that the minimum raw mark required to obtain each grade can vary between papers, even when they are marked out of the same total.

Raw Marks to Uniform Marks

The raw mark grade boundaries and all the candidates' raw marks are entered into Edexcel's computer. The computer converts the candidates' raw marks into uniform marks.

The maximum uniform mark that can be awarded for the subject is 360; all four skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing) are equally weighted at 25%, 90 uniform marks each. The maximum subject uniform mark that a candidate can achieve will depend on the combination of papers that the candidate takes. The maximum of 360 will only be available to those candidates who take either higher tiered papers in each skill area, or the higher tiered papers in Listening, Speaking and Reading and the coursework option in Writing.

Table 2 shows the UMS conversions at each grade for the units given in Table 1.

Table 2

Component	Overall paper and percentage contribution		Maximum Uniform Mark	UMS boundary at each grade							
				*A	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1F	01	25%	59				50	40	30	20	10
1H			90	80	70	60	50	40	30		
2F	02	25%	59				50	40	30	20	10
2H			90	80	70	60	50	40	30		
3F	03	25%	59				50	40	30	20	10
3H			90	80	70	60	50	40	30		
4F	04	25%	59				50	40	30	20	10
4H			90	80	70	60	50	40	30		
4C			90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20	10

It is important to note that the scaling is not a single linear scale of maximum raw mark to maximum uniform mark. This is because the intervals between consecutive raw mark grade boundaries are not necessarily constant. Table 1 shows this. The intervals between the raw mark boundaries may vary but they are fixed for the uniform marks.

In paper 1H for example, all candidates who obtain raw marks of 140 or above receive 80 or more uniform marks, up to a maximum of 90 uniform marks. Those scoring raw marks of 134-139 receive 70-79 uniform marks, raw marks of 128-133, 60-69 uniform marks and so on. Those candidates taking higher tiered papers who are graded below an E (ie a U) will still be awarded uniform marks below the E boundary, meaning that the full range of uniform marks (0-90) can be achieved.

The maximum uniform mark that a foundation paper can be awarded will be 59 (ie the top of the C range; one mark below the B boundary).

The Conversion to UMS Marks Illustrated

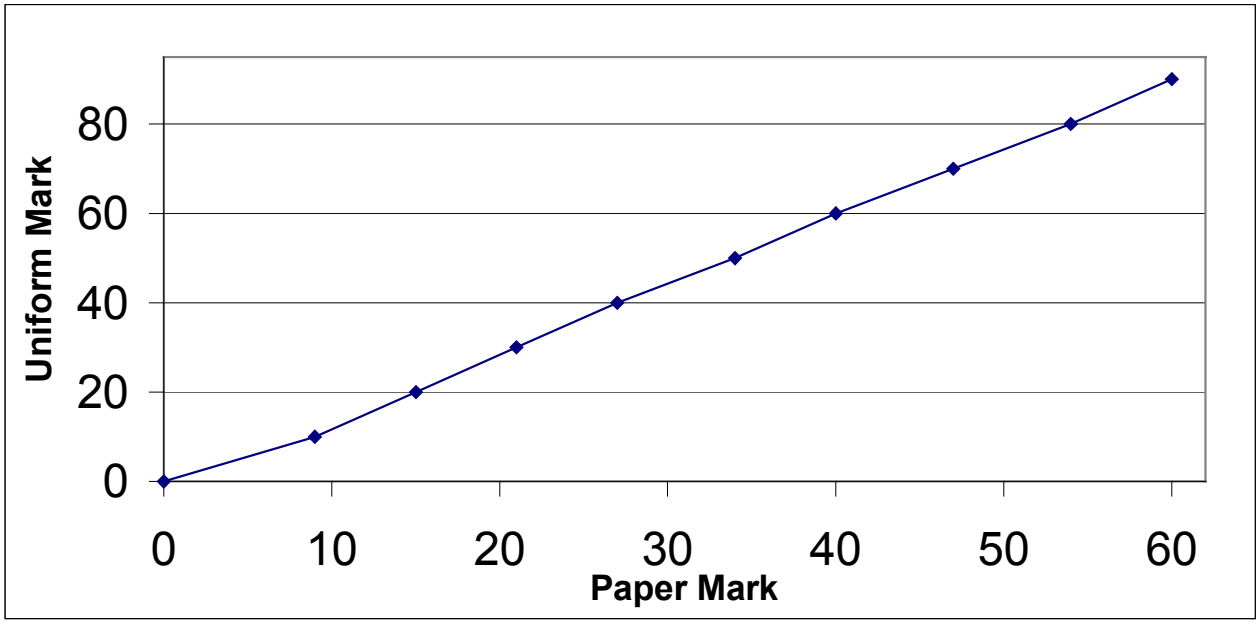
The conversion is described below using paper 4C as an example. Table 3 shows the raw marks and the UMS marks. These marks have been taken from Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 3

	Boundary at each grade								
	Max	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Raw Mark	60	54	47	40	34	27	21	15	9
UMS Mark	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20	10

Graph 1 shows these pairs of marks plotted with the raw mark on the horizontal axis against the uniform mark on the vertical axis. Straight lines join adjacent points.

Graph 1: Conversion to Uniform Marks for Paper 4C



MAKING THE AWARD

Table 4 shows the number of uniform marks required to achieve each subject grade. The uniform marks from each component are simply totalled to give a final subject uniform mark.

Table 4

	Uniform Mark
Maximum mark	360
A*	320
A	280
B	240
C	200
D	160
E	120
F	80
G	40

Examples

The following tables show examples of the possible routes that candidates may take to achieve the GCSE award.

Table 5

Paper	Uniform Mark
1F	52
2F	38
3F	58
4C	63

Totalling the uniform marks achieved in each paper gives 211 uniform marks. Reading off from Table 4, it can be seen that the candidate will be awarded a Grade C for the subject.

Table 6

Paper	Uniform Mark
1F	58
2F	50
3H	67
4H	74

This candidate would score 249 uniform marks, a grade B for the subject.

Table 7

Paper	Uniform Mark
1H	72
2H	84
3H	80
4H	78

This candidate would score 314 uniform marks, a grade A for the subject.