

Report on the Units

June 2006

1926/MS/R/06

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The reports on the Examinations provide information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the syllabus content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

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2361: GCSE GERMAN LISTENING

Administration of the Listening examination:

Many Centres were obliged to amend the Attendance Register at both Foundation and Higher Tiers in order to reflect some candidates' change of entry. Centres carried out this task accurately. However, there are still some Centres, which do not check that each candidate's name appears legibly on the script. It would be advisable to instruct candidates to write their name clearly in block letters, as a fair proportion tend to scribble it. In addition, some candidates fail to write either their centre or their candidate number, while others insert these inaccurately. In cases where the candidate's name is illegible and there is no candidate number or an inaccurate number, this causes problems, when the examiner completes the mark sheet.

General comments

Whereas last year's Foundation Tier Paper was easier than those of previous years, this year's was of more average difficulty. The Higher Tier Paper was more or less equivalent to last year's, although the entry contained some weak candidates who scored unusually low marks. The proportion of candidates taking the Higher Tier Paper was even greater than that of last year which was also an increase.. Perhaps the comment in last year's Report to Centres that "a number of candidates achieved marks well above the Grade C threshold at Foundation Tier" was a contributory factor to this year's large Higher entry. The choice of Tier can be problematic, but Centres should perhaps not be too ambitious for candidates.

Overall, there was evidence of good preparation by teachers. Candidates had much success in answering objective questions based on a visual stimulus. However, it is increasingly obvious each year that problems arise when candidates answer questions in English (Section 2 Exercise 1, Section 3 Exercise 5) or in German (Section 3 Exercise 4) or when they have to detect on the Paper a German synonym of what they have heard on the tape (Section 2 Exercise 4).

Another area for improvement is candidates' handwriting . A number of examiners reported that they had difficulty in deciphering words on some scripts and that they were unable sometimes to award a mark.

On the positive side, very few candidates wrote answers in the wrong language: in German instead of English or vice versa. When the wrong language was used, it was almost always in response to a single question, where perhaps candidates could not translate the word, and not in a whole exercise. Only a handful of very weak candidates failed to tick enough boxes in the objective questions.

Section 1 (Foundation Tier)

General comments

The Paper achieved discrimination in the range of ability of candidates. The weakest were able to achieve some success in Section 1 and the more able showed in the last exercise (Ex. 4) of Section 2 that this was as far as they ought to go.

Exercise 1: Questions 1-5

The majority of candidates scored full marks in this exercise. Wrong answers occurred mostly only in Q.5, where some candidates did not know *klein*.

Aufgabe 2: Fragen 6-10

Most candidates were also completely successful in this exercise.

Aufgabe 3: Fragen 11-15

Weak candidates answered only Q.11 (*Bungalow*) correctly in this exercise, which with Exercise 5 was the most difficult in Section 1. The key word in each of Questions 12, 14 and 15 ended in *-haus* and candidates had problems in identifying the particular type of house for each question.

Q.13: A number of candidates confused *Wohnung* (correct answer G) with *Wohnwagen* (picture F), despite the mention of *Balkon*.

Q.14: The information *es hat keinen Garten* did not help some identify the *Reihenhaus* (correct answer A).

Aufgabe 4: Fragen 16-20

The performance here was better than in Exercise 3. There were two key elements, which reinforced each other in each question in this exercise. Candidates who chose incorrect answers probably did not listen carefully to both elements.

Qs 16 and 17: *im Wald* and *wir gehen wandern* (Q.16) were somehow confused with *Berge* and *Ski fahren* (Q.17).

Q.18: Quite a few did not know *Segeln* (correct answer A). Some of these candidates thought that *See* meant the sea, and so they chose picture D (correct answer for Q.20). Others heard *fahren* and chose the distracter E (cycling).

Qs 19 –20: On the whole, these were well answered, except for those who chose D for Q.18 and wrote A here.

Aufgabe 5: Fragen 21-25

Qs 21-23: Only weaker candidates tended to answer these questions incorrectly.

Q.24: This was the most difficult question in Section 1, as few candidates understood *per Luftpost*.

Q.25: A fair proportion of candidates did not know the meaning of *draußen* and chose answer C instead of the correct answer A.

Aufgabe 6: Fragen 26-30

The only questions that caused problems for some average to good candidates were Questions 27 and 30.

Q.27: Christiane Klein's date of birth *am ersten März 1980* was misunderstood.

Q.30: The telephone number *31-50-47* was misheard.

Section 2 (Foundation and HigherTiers)

Candidates encountered most difficulty in Exercise 1 and in *Aufgabe 4*.

Exercise 1: Questions 1-4

Good Higher Tier candidates usually gained at least four of the five marks available. However, as in previous years, other candidates experienced difficulty in formulating correct answers in English, often answering Question 1 (worth 2 marks) and Question 4 incorrectly, as below:

Q.1: Common ailments are not as well known as would be expected. Knowledge of two of the following three was required here: *Halsschmerzen*, *Ohrenschmerzen* and *Husten*. Of these, the least well known was *Ohrenschmerzen*.

Q.2: Most candidates answered this correctly.

Q.3: Many had success here, but some failed to answer the set question, writing merely "No", instead of "No medication etc."

Q.4: Quite a number of candidates did not recognise *Apotheke*. Among those who did, some thought that Herr Wiemer was going to take his sick wife to the chemist's, although he said: *Ich gehe zur Apotheke*.

Aufgabe 2: Fragen 5-9

Candidates who listened carefully answered well in this exercise. However, in Qs 6 and 9 some candidates were unable to listen long enough for the correct answer to appear.

Q.6: Although the waiter offered *Aufschnitt* (picture A) and *Suppe* (picture B), the customer ordered *keine Vorspeise* (correct answer C).

Q.7: This was the most difficult question in this exercise, as a fair number of candidates did not understand *Schnitzel*.

Q.9: The waiter suggested *einen Eisbecher* (picture A) or *ein Stück Torte* (picture B), but the customer chose *Obst*. If candidates did not know the meaning of *Obst*, they could have worked it out by a process of elimination, as the other words should have been well known.

Aufgabe 3: Fragen 10-14

The only questions in this exercise, which caused a little difficulty, were Questions 11 and 14.

Q.11: A surprising number of candidates did not recognise the time *um halb acht*.

Q.14: Candidates seemed to have heard the question: *Und verkaufen Sie auch Zeitungen oder Zahnpasta?* However, they did not appreciate the meaning of *nur* in the reply *nur Lebensmittel*. They ticked either box A (where the picture included toothpaste) or box B (where the picture included a newspaper) instead of the correct answer C (where only food was illustrated).

Aufgabe 4: Fragen 15-19

Candidates had difficulty in finding the correct synonym for the German that they had heard. Appropriately, as they were the final questions, Questions 18 and 19 proved to be the most difficult in the whole of Section 2. Question 15 was also frequently answered incorrectly.

Q.15: If candidates understood Anna's statement *Ich weiß nicht, was ich machen will*, quite a few were unable to match it with the correct answer C: *Anna hat keine Pläne*.

Q.18: Many candidates could not equate Dieter's statement *Dann werde ich reich sein* with the correct answer C: *Dieter will viel Geld verdienen*.

Q.19: The majority of candidates thought that *eine Lehrstelle* was a post as a teacher (*Lehrer* - incorrect answer B) rather than as an apprentice (*Lehrling* - correct answer C).

Section 3 (HigherTier)

General comments

Good candidates encountered most difficulty in *Aufgabe 4* and in Exercise 5, which provided, as intended, good discrimination for the highest Grades, A and A*.

Aufgabe 1: Fragen 1-6

Most candidates were able to score at least five out of six marks and even weaker candidates usually gained four marks. The most common error was to use the distracter E as an answer, often for Q.6, probably because the town was described as *schön* and picture E looked attractive. Sometimes the answers to Q.2 and Q.6 were reversed (correct 2F, 6C; incorrect 2C, 6F), because candidates confused *Turm* (Q.2) with *Hochhäuser* (Q.6).

Aufgabe 2: Fragen 7-12

Once more, most candidates were able to score at least five out of six marks and even weaker candidates usually gained four marks. The most common error was to tick the box for Marco in

the wrong questions, Marco being a correct choice only for the last question (Q.12), as he refuses the other gardening chores on offer.

Aufgabe 3: Fragen 13-18

Marks tended to range from three to six on this exercise.

Qs 13-15: These were usually answered correctly. Only weak candidates experienced any difficulty here.

Q.16: Sabine made a telephone call to Björn's room (depicted in picture A) and discovered that her boyfriend had not had breakfast (this meal being shown in picture B) before going to the beach (correct answer C). A fair number of candidates did not listen carefully to the whole of this part of the story before deciding on Björn's whereabouts.

Q.17: Some candidates did not understand *mit einem schönen Mädchen, das ich nicht kannte* (correct answer B – *ein anderes Mädchen*).

Q.18: This was the most difficult question in the exercise. Many candidates did not know the verb *weinen*.

Aufgabe 4: Fragen 19-25

The weakest candidates either failed to gain a mark at all in this exercise or managed to answer only Q.24 (*Fenster*) correctly. Good candidates gave correct answers to at least Qs 20, 21 and 22 as well. Frequently, a correct answer was used in reply to the wrong question throughout this exercise, which showed that candidates answered with words that they had heard in the recording without reading the questions carefully first.

Q.19: The only word required was *heute*, but it was a common error to omit it. Some added (*heute*) *vormittag*, which was an acceptable, if unnecessary, addition.

Q.20: Acceptable answers were *Schmuck* or *Ketten / Goldketten / Juwelen* (plural). The singular *Kette* or *Juwel* was not allowed, as there was a clear plural marker: *sie sind sehr wertvoll*. Unfortunately, a number of candidates heard only *Gold*, or they believed that they had heard *Geld*.

Q.21: Candidates could write either *Haus* or *Haustür* here, the article being ignored. Although one might think that *Tür* should be a well-known word at this level, many could not render it; on some scripts the answer was *Haustier*. A few candidates misheard *vor* and spoilt their answer by adding the preposition *für* before *Haus* or *Haustür*. This made the answer meaningless.

Q.22: Although good candidates heard and wrote *Bank(en)* – either singular or plural was acceptable – weaker candidates gave answers that were appropriate for other questions, for example *Haus* or *Inspektor*.

Q.23: Some knew what the correct answer should be but wrote in English "Inspector". Only an answer in German – *Inspektor* – is permitted in this exercise.

Q.24: On the whole, this was answered correctly.

Q.25: Only the very best candidates could find the correct response: *weggelaufen* or *weggegangen*.

Exercise 5: Questions 26-29

The weakest candidates either failed to score a mark at all in this exercise or managed to answer only Q.28b ("activities") correctly. Good candidates gained at least three or four marks, experiencing most difficulty in one part of Q 28 and in Q.29.

Q.26: A surprising number of candidates did not recognise the perfect tense of the verb *verstehen*: *Ich habe nie was verstanden*. This was sometimes even translated as "He couldn't stand them."

Q.27: Although most candidates understood that the answer had something to do with English, a number of them could not convey the idea of improvement, of getting better at English. Clearly, *verbessern* is not that well known.

Q.28: The mark scheme allowed candidates to reverse their answers to Q.28a and Q.28b and examiners read both parts of the answer together as a continuous answer where this was in the candidate's favour. The single word "activities" was all that was needed to gain one mark. Although the plural "activities" was required and the singular penalised, the singular was accepted as a consequential error if used later in answer to Q.29. Only the best candidates were able to express the idea of not having to go home at the end of school or after lessons for the second mark in Q.28.

Q.29: Again, only the most able candidates appreciated that Frau Feil would not want to stay at school for one more hour with Erich or with her pupils or that she would not want to provide extra-curricular activities (by inference). Some missed out the important words "with Erich" or "with her pupils"; others misunderstood *Stunde* as a lesson in this context and wrote that Frau Feil could not bear the idea of giving Erich extra lessons.

One had some sympathy, but no reward, for the very weak candidate who wrote in answer to the last question (What would Frau Feil not want to do?): "This Paper".

Principal Examiner's Report / Principal Moderator's Report 2362 & 2365 (01 & 02) Speaking Tests

Introduction

The 2006 tests were the fourth of the new specification 1926 and it is pleasing to note that most teachers continue to prepare themselves and their candidates well for the Speaking Tests and are totally familiar with the scheme of assessment, particularly if they are entering their candidates for 2365, Internal Assessment, although comparatively few centres avail themselves of this option now.

It does seem apparent that the entry for German is improving: there are certainly fewer weak Foundation Tier candidates and more good to very good ones. Most candidates were entered appropriately for either Foundation or Higher Tier, although there still remain candidates whose Foundation Tier performance suggests that they might score well at Higher Tier, as their General Conversation ability is relatively good, and yet others, entered at Higher Tier, whose Role Play 3 performance is very poor who might have benefited from a Foundation Tier entry instead.

The administration and recordings of most tests were generally carried out satisfactorily. As in previous years however there still remain some quite poor recordings, which makes the examiner's task extremely difficult. Some tests remain over-extended, particularly in the Discussion and General Conversation sections: weaker candidates do not profit from a lengthy test which consists of questions totally beyond their capabilities; in fact they usually only demonstrate their lack of knowledge. Many otherwise appropriately entered Foundation Tier candidates still remain unable to communicate successfully in tenses other than the present and they may well be more successful if the more complex questions requiring past and future time references were not put to them. It remains however a QCA requirement that candidates aiming for a Grade C are able to 'undertake transactions and develop conversations which include past, present and future events.'

There is a feeling that many teachers and candidates are playing safe: offering little spontaneity and no great range of vocabulary and structure. Some go against the spirit of the specification, with the same Presentation topic being offered by most (or all) candidates in the centre (e.g. *Ferien / Freizeit / Schule / Berufspraktikum*) and with the Discussion and General Conversation containing well-rehearsed question and answer – quite often in the same order for all candidates! The provision of banks of questions containing ideas for topic-based conversations (listed on pp30-34 of the two *Teacher/Examiner's Booklets*) was intended as suggestions of areas that might be explored in the course of a natural conversation between teacher/examiner and candidate. They were useful in the course of this year's examination in some centres and it is hoped that they will continue to be so in future years; many other centres however did **not** demand the more rigorous type of response from their better Higher Tier candidates, which was rather disappointing, as it tended to limit the marks scored. The mark scheme does reward candidates whose conversations show elements of spontaneity and initiative, and who respond at length to the examiner's questions; these candidates are best served by the more 'open' questions offered in the booklet.

Section 1 Role play [Foundation Tier only]

Five different role play situations were set for this section of the test testing tasks listed in Appendix A of the Approved Specifications for Modern Languages. The tasks were cued in English. Given that there are no dictionaries, candidates were again offered the opportunity to select for themselves the item of vocabulary appropriate to the task where possible, although suggestions were provided. In general the elements of the various tasks were expected to be readily accessible to the vast majority of Foundation Tier candidates.

It is still very disappointing that everyday expressions such as "I'd like [something]", "that's all" and particularly "how much does it cost?" are frequently not well expressed; these are standard

fare and should surely be known by all candidates. Careless pronunciation continues to be a feature at this Section 1 level, with a mangled English version often used (eg *Supermarkt* [sic] or *Chocolad* [sic]); *Euro* is rarely given its correct German pronunciation! Some simple items of vocabulary are not known at this level (e.g. ice-cream, apple, book) although candidates are offering mangled versions of these items themselves. Asking simple questions remains a problem for many candidates, with the usual confusion of *wo?* and *wer?* *wenn?* and *wann?*

Teacher/examiners may query a candidate's utterance (without penalty to the candidate); many however do not do so, accepting what is first said, thereby not allowing the candidate the possibility of rescuing an initially ambiguous or non-communicative message so as to gain the two marks allowed for each set task. The change in the mark scheme to allow for one mark out of two per task continues to be welcomed, as it does allow candidates to receive credit for mangled expressions of German, where previously no marks might have been received. In general however, the majority of Foundation Tier candidates were able to perform well on this section.

Card 1/6: *Wir sprechen zusammen*

Most candidates found little difficulty in attempting this section, but poor pronunciation was a feature (*Supermarkt* / *Geschafft* / *Caff* / *Pefund* / *Uro* [sic]).

Card 2/7: *Wir sind in der Eisdiele*

Most candidates were successful in the requirements of this role play, but as stated previously there are many poor efforts for "I'd like..". "Chocolate" was the favourite variety requested (often poorly pronounced) and this may have been a reflection that candidates did not know the other suggested flavours (strawberry or lemon)! Many candidates confused 50 and 15 (euros) - but were not always queried on their response!

Card 3/10: *Wir sind am Marktplatz*

The fruit most often requested was "apples", often with an English pronunciation and rarely with a correct German plural! Many candidates did not respond to task 2 by saying "that's all" but contented themselves with '*nein*'. As previously noted, too many candidates are unable to produce a clear and correct version of "ask for the cost"

Card 4/9: *Wir sprechen zusammen*

This role play caused little difficulty, other than the poor versions of '*ich möchte*' when used and the confusion of '*wer / wo?*' in task 3.

Card 5/8: *Wir sprechen zusammen*

There was occasional confusion in tasks 1 / 2 with '*wenn / wann?*' and '*wer / wo*', but otherwise the role play caused little difficulty.

Section 2 Role play

The five role play cards in this section are intended to give candidates an opportunity to express themselves in a potential range of time references, including past and future time and, if successful, gain potential credit towards the global Quality of Language mark. As stated in the general notes on p9 of the *Teacher/Examiner's Booklets*, where a task requires the use of a verb (of whatever tense), or where a candidate offers a verb, that verb must be totally correct to qualify for the full two marks. Many candidates however, either skilfully or through lack of knowledge, are able to give short answers without a verb, and this could gain full Communication marks for completion of the task set,.

Candidates must expect to initiate some tasks, instead of merely replying to a teacher query, and to respond appropriately to the context of the situation: e.g. using the correct register in conversation, if necessary. The rubric will always contain information helpful for the candidate's role and is expected to be taken into account when playing the role – however, many candidates

did extend their 'working holiday' in the airport role play situation to months or years; this was accepted as an appropriate response!

The task cued as 'Answer the question', proved no more demanding than the other set tasks. This year candidates were not forced into having to use a perfect tense in their response – but were enabled to do so, should they so wish. Not infrequently, Foundation Tier candidates did as well or better on this section than on Section 1.

Card 1: *Wir sind im Hotel*

Most candidates were able to respond appropriately to tasks 1,3 and 4, but only a minority knew the correct word for "bill" or could express the notion of "paying"; 'was kostet das?' or a variation of this was often produced as a poor alternative.

Card 2: *Wir sind im Kaufhaus*

Most candidates were able to say what they had bought, but failed to express appropriately that they didn't like the colour (*ich nicht gern [sic]*); 'Farbe' was not well known; and the question 'Welche Farbe wollen Sie denn?' often needed a repetition or nudge. Only a minority of candidates were able to express the concept of 'anprobieren' successfully.

Card 3: *Wir sprechen über die Ferien*

'Spain' was not universally known – a French version was often preferred or a mangled German one, but most candidates were able to produce relevant information for the other set tasks.

Card 4: *Wir sind im Flughafen*

'Pass' was often rendered as 'Passport' but tasks 2 and 3 were straightforward. Asking 'when your plane leaves' was beyond the scope of most candidates in a totally correct way, but as the mark scheme makes clear, several communicative versions were available for the full two marks!

Card 5: *Wir sind im Fundbüro*

Somewhat surprisingly, many candidates were unable to ask for help or assistance using the appropriate register; the German *ich habe .. verloren* was not rendered totally satisfactorily, despite being fed by the teacher/examiner: *verlassen, vergessen, verlosen, verlesen [sic]* were too common variations. Most were however able to describe the contents of the lost bag and respond with total success to the other question.

Section 3 Role play [Higher Tier only]

The content of the five cards set was as usual expected to be accessible to all correctly entered Higher Tier candidates, allowing them to relate the main points of the story in an appropriate past time frame and expand on them by adding ideas and personal opinions where necessary. Too many candidates still however continue to provide a rather pedestrian exposition of events with little enthusiasm and little extra detail, and slip regularly back into a present tense or a mangled past tense (*ich habe .. gehen; ich habe .. kaufen; ich bin .. aufstehen [sic]* etc).

Although Higher Tier candidates in the C/D range have to tackle this more demanding role play and may not perform particularly well here, the communication mark scheme does allow for some credit to be given. However, it may well be more appropriate for the weaker potential Higher Tier candidates to be entered at Foundation Tier, where marks on Section 1 Role Play are perhaps easier to come by, and the other elements of the test are the same..

This Section remains the best discriminator of the role play situations: candidates continue to broadly divide into two groups: the competent candidates who are in command of the perfect

tense and follow the story – these generally score well in both Communication and Linguistic Quality, irrespective of the card attempted - ; and the second group who fail to communicate the basic storyline and have a only a tenuous grasp of past tenses, leading to ambiguity and significantly lower scores for both Communication and Quality.

Some teacher/examiners intervene too often, correcting candidates or going back unnecessarily, whereas others say too little or nothing at all, turning the role play into a virtual monologue. It should be emphasised that the criteria for Communication do include references to interchanges with the examiner and response to examiner's queries. Most however struck the happy medium and encouraged candidates to tell a good story to the best of their ability. Despite the advice offered in past years, very few candidates set the scene appropriately; a brief introductory sentence ought to be within the linguistic capabilities of most Higher Tier candidates and would allow them to feel more secure in the situation (*Last year I was on work-experience / holiday in Germany and one day*).

Regarding the cards set this year, apart from the usual problems of variable verb usage by candidates who could not consistently keep to the expression of material in a past tense, a further disappointing aspect was in many cases the candidates' lack of knowledge of fairly basic vocabulary: daily routine matters and household tasks, basic travel situations and travel problems, arranging to meet friends, simple everyday problems: these were all lacking in many cases. 'Grenze' – perhaps surprisingly – was not well known, many candidates suggesting it was a town (booklets 2 & 7), but the other elements on the card should not have caused too much difficulty but offered opportunity for adequate German. In all situations candidates rarely offered opinions better than *gut* or *langweilig*. However the more able candidates did cope well and produced substantial accounts, adding opinions and imaginative details. They scored high Communication marks on this section and banked up credit for the Quality mark, particularly when the teacher/examiner encouraged the candidate to take the initiative.

Presentation

There was a full range of performance on this part of the test, from candidates whose preparation was at best perfunctory to those who had obviously prepared a topic of their own choice and were able to present it with a degree of enthusiasm and accuracy. Many Centres however offended against the spirit of the exam by offering a virtually identical presentation, which was formulaic, pre-learnt and often poorly delivered.

Few candidates offer a range of opinions and justifications, though these are required by the mark scheme for a mark of 4.

Timing of the Presentation does need to be carefully considered: talks varied again this year from a few faltering seconds to well over three minutes!

Discussion of Presentation and Conversation

The success (or otherwise) of this section of the test really depends on the skill of the teacher/examiner. For many candidates however – at both tiers – this section became no more than a basic set of question and answers with no development, initiative, opinions or justifications. The Discussion element often seemed over-rehearsed and limited to one or two simple questions. Although most teacher/examiners are now actively seeking a range of tenses (sometimes inappropriately as mentioned in the *Introduction*), it is noticeable that they often do so only at the end of each topic. Most candidates were given the opportunity to use a full range of tenses and time frames in this part of the examination, and were therefore able to qualify for the full range of available marks. However, this practice was often used with the very weakest candidates too, who, despite already struggling to perform at the most basic level,, were then further grilled in an attempt to elicit past and future time references. This would seem to be futile and unproductive.

On the other hand, too many candidates – even at Higher Tier – are still asked only very simple closed questions, leading to repetition, one-word answers or *ja / nein*. Too many candidates are content to utter monosyllabic or minimal responses and seem not to wish to stretch themselves beyond the most basic of material in the Discussion or the General Conversation. This is disappointing. Many Examiners still comment that in many cases this section of the Speaking Test continues to appear thoroughly rehearsed, lacking spontaneity and originality, particularly with the weaker and middle range candidates. As was remarked in the *Introduction*, the mark scheme does reward candidates whose conversations show elements of spontaneity and initiative and response at length to the examiner's questions.

It must be said however, that the more able candidates produce fluent and pleasing conversations on topics with which they are familiar, offering spontaneous responses, justification of ideas, good pronunciation and more complex language in a full range of tenses. These candidates, as ever, are a pleasure to listen to and score significantly high marks for this section of the Speaking Test.

At all levels, overlong discussions and conversations continue to be produced; this part of the Speaking Test is intended to last approximately 6 - 7 minutes only (including 2 minutes on discussion of the prepared topic).

Linguistic quality

Teacher/examiners seemed to bear in mind the criteria in the various bands and to encourage the candidates to reach the band which best reflected their ability. These bands are intended to give Centres a comprehensive guide to what is required in the examination. In the Internally Assessed Centres marks awarded were not excessive and were generally appropriate to the individual candidate's performance.

2363 German Reading

Foundation Tier

Section 1

This Section provided an accessible introduction to the Paper and the majority of candidates found no problem in the first exercise; the only error occurring at Q5 where C was given for E for *Gemüseladen*.

Ex.2 too was generally well done. K appeared quite frequently at Q6 for *Briefträger* and occasionally at Q9 for *Kellner*. In Q11 C, F and H all featured for *Sekretärin*. More problems appeared in Exercise 3 where the ordinal numbers and directions seemed not to be well known by a number of candidates. The prepositions *gegenüber* (Q16) and *neben* (Q18) caused the most problems. Candidates encountered few problems in Ex 4. but weaknesses with food vocabulary hampered candidates in Ex.5, although there was no obvious pattern of errors.

Section 2

Most candidates scored well on Qs 1-3 in Ex 1 although some lost a careless mark by offering a plural for *eine Person*. It was surprising that so many candidates offered only 'school director' rather than 'head' or 'headteacher' for *Schuldirektor* in Q4, while the better candidates even offered the correct gender.

Candidates entered at Foundation Tier began to struggle with Aufgabe 2. In Q5 many were led by *heute Morgen* to the answer *vormittags*, and *ein Ei* from the text was often offered as the answer for Q8. Qs 6 and 9 were most frequently correct but *schicken* was not well known and most offered *machen* for Q11.

Only the strongest Foundation Tier candidates along with many Higher Tier candidates scored reasonably in Aufgabe 3. Many answers appeared to be guesswork. Few candidates seemed to see the need for an infinitive in Qs 14 and 15 and many overlooked the *nicht* in Q16 and simply copied *geschlossen* from the text. Candidates were most successful in Qs 12, 14 and 19.

Section 3

Ex. 1 produced a full range of marks with Qs 1, 2, 4 and 6 most frequently correct. Candidates who presumably did not know *Witwer* in the text then often offered *Witwe* for Q5.

The weakest candidates struggled to find what would fit grammatically, e.g. *Katrinas Mutter ist möchte*. (Q5)

Ex 2 again produced a full range of marks. Qs 7 and 8 were generally well done. Candidates frequently offered *Möglichkeit* for Q11 and many seemed not to realise that Q12 required a verb.

Candidates scored well on Ex 3. Most ticked the correct number of boxes and were not distracted by the 5/3 split.

Teil A of Ex 4 proved very difficult for the majority of candidates, including those who scored well elsewhere. There was no discernible pattern to mistakes.

Part B was answered a little better than *Teil A* but few candidates scored very well.

In Q19 many candidates stated that Helga's daughters had 'left home' or 'had their own places', but did not mention plans for Christmas.

In Q20 'skiing' and 'work' were mentioned frequently, but answers identifying the correct people skiing and working were rare. Candidates who missed the direct speech obviously thought that Helga had been skiing.

Even stronger candidates struggled with Q 21. Comparatively few offered any translation of *froh*, even fewer *weinend*, although many recognised that Helga spent half an hour by the 'phone. Despite '*nicht allein*' some even thought that Helga was sad or annoyed at having to spend Christmas alone.

There was no evidence that candidates could not complete the paper in the time allowed.

2364 Writing paper

Introduction

Teachers are encouraged to share the contents of the report with their candidates, say, after mock examinations.

The June 2006 GCSE German Writing Paper was again chosen by just over a third of candidates, the remainder choosing Writing Coursework. There was a considerable shift in entry pattern for the Writing Paper, doubtless due to curricular changes mentioned in the introduction. About 28% of the entry took the Foundation Paper, about half the number who sat the Foundation paper in 2003. There were many fewer very weak candidates.

This year, while there were many good candidates, there was a fall in the number of excellent scripts. That is not to say that full marks obtained by non-native speakers were unknown, indeed some were outstanding.

In this specification, following QCA guidelines, dictionaries are not allowed. Questions in Sections 1 and 2 are set in English, and in Section 3, although the questions were in the target language, there is a scene-setting sentence in English which preserves candidates from having absolutely no idea of what was demanded of them.

The generic mark scheme (found in the Sample Assessment Material) and question types followed the pattern of recent papers. As in 2005, this was supplemented by *Examples of Acceptable Answers*. However, it is meant to be indicative only, not exhaustive. Centres are additionally referred to the OCR Website at ocr.org.uk for some of marked scripts from 2005 and a commentary which they can download and study.

The papers were set using the conventions of the *Rechtschreibereform*, which came into force in most of the German-speaking world on 1st August 1998 and had a transitional period until 31st July 2005. In practice, few candidates at this level write precisely enough for this to be much of an issue. The two most frequently occurring changes affecting this examination are that β is written *ss* after a short vowel, eg *dass*, *muss*, *musste* and that the *du*, *dir*, *dein*, *ihr*, *euch* and *euer* are written with lower case even in personal letters. Those wishing to study the matter more intensively will find ample information in *Duden: Die deutsche Rechtschreibung*, 21. *Ausgabe* or 22. *Ausgabe* and in many other related publications.

Comments on individual questions

Section 1 Exercise 1

This list question was well done by nearly all Foundation Tier candidates, despite the lack of dictionaries. However, a few candidates did not find enough items. Candidate should not confine themselves to the items drawn – the rubric says “These are only suggestions. You may include any other relevant words”

The following comments may prove helpful:

- (a) The examples, *Fisch* and *Tee*, were not credited if copied as an answer.
- (b) The marking was done on the “if in doubt, sound it out” principle.
- (c) *Marmalade* was not accepted for *Marmelade*, as it is English. Similarly *Banana* and *Tomato* were not accepted.
- (d) *Küche* was not accepted for *Kuchen*

There were 8 items, each scoring 1 or 0, totalling 8 marks.

Section 1, Exercise 2

This exercise caused few problems in items 1 – 4. Students were helped by Duden’s acceptance of *Disco* and *Disko*. A few students were not able to express no 3, *ich singe*.

Not all knew *ich lese* but alternatives such as *ich lerne* were accepted. Only a minority of candidates knew *Bibliothek*, although many wrote the French *bibliothèque*, which was not credited.

There were 6 marks for communication, one per item.

There were also 3 marks for Accuracy. At this level (target grade F), markers were instructed to decide the *Hauptwort* for each picture, and decide whether that was correctly written. There was a grid which amounted to ½ mark per item, with odd halves rounded up. Many candidates did this well, and markers commented on this good performance.

As a tip for improvement, this is definitely an area which would repay additional practice, even with quite good Foundation Tier candidates, as there are some who could do with marks in this easy part of the paper to enable them to cross the D/C borderline.

Section 1, Exercise 3

There is a requirement to write in sentences in response to this question. Candidates and their teachers are to be congratulated on ensuring that nearly all answers were in sentence form. The items were set in English, and very many candidates did this question quite well or very well.

Two of the items were somewhat problematic. In item 1, candidates had to mention both *breakfast* (or some morning meal) and what they consume. Not all did this.

In item 6, candidates needed to mention going to bed (and a surprising inability to spell *Bett* became evident) and the time (but not necessarily 10:30, pictures being indicative). Again, not all did this.

There was a mark out of 6 for Communication, with best fit descriptors, and a mark out of 7 for Quality of Language. Marks of 11, 12 and 13 were the most frequent.

Section 2, Exercise 4

There was a choice of two questions, both requiring an informal letter. The specification also allows faxes and e-mails to be set. Reports and articles are not set in Section 2.

Both question 1 and question 2 were popular with candidates. These were carefully matched to elicit the QCA grade C performance descriptors, namely past, present and future events and the expression of opinions.

Relevant communication was marked out of 10 using a best fit grid of descriptors.

The candidate's best effort at each point was credited. There would therefore seem to be some value in suggesting that candidates produce more than one sentence in response to each point. This is particularly true of the expression of future intent. Many candidates only wrote one sentence in response to this point, thus putting all their eggs in one basket. They would have been better advised to have had more than one go at this. Indeed a counsel of perfection would be to use a paragraph of about 20 – 25 words in response to each of the bullet points, thus ensuring even coverage.

This year, many candidates could cope with a past tense. Further improvement could be effected by ensuring that *letzte Woche* has two "t"s, and encouraging the correct siting of the past participle.

However, many candidates were defeated by the expression of future time. This would repay additional teacher attention.

The following ways of expressing the future were accepted:

- (a) future time expression + present tense
- (b) ich werde + infinitive
- (c) ich möchte + infinitive
- (d) ich will + infinitive
- (e) ich habe vor, ... zu machen etc

These presented various problems. Chief among them was the inability to spell *nächsten Monat* or *nächsten Sommer*. This is another area which would repay extra teacher and candidate attention. Some students seemed mixed up between future and past, with offerings such as *ich werde nach Spanien gefahren*. Past participles were also quite common with modals, and there were many sightings of *ich mochte*.

In **Question 1**, many students could describe a sport, and were able to give an opinion of it. Many did the other two bullet points well, but some missed *other sport* and *different activity* and only wrote about (often) football. Strangely in this year of the World Cup in Germany, *Weltmeisterschaft*, *Pokal gewinnen* and *Wettbewerb* made only rare appearances. *Meisterschaft*, *gewinnen* and *Pokal* were specifically mentioned in the 2005 report. Also worth teacher rehearsal would be *Ich habe es im Fernsehen gesehen*

In **Question 2**, there were many good attempts. Few had difficulty in describing their school, and many could say easily what they did in school last week. A small number of candidates only gave an opinion about one subject, but many answered this point fully, justifying their opinion. The most testing point was expressing "after the exams". *Prüfungen* was not well-known, but more surprising was how many candidates did not know a suitable preposition for "after". Teachers could also usefully check if their candidates can express *in die Oberstufe* or *in die Berufsschule* (or variant as taught).

Quality of Language

This was marked out of 6 using a best fit grid of descriptors. The top band was not usually available to those who had not managed the use of three time frames.

Accuracy

This was marked out of 4 using a best fit grid of descriptors, and was applied independently of tense criteria.

Section 3, Exercise 5

There was a choice of two questions. The specification also allows a report or an article to be set. Letters are not set in Section 3.

This year all but a couple of hundred candidates chose Q1, *My last summer holiday*, perhaps because it is a common Presentation topic for Speaking. However, those who chose Q2 *A theft in an airport* often did it reasonably well. There were very few seriously underlength answers. However, markers complained consistently of over-long answers. For many candidates, more can mean worse.

Centres are reminded that the sub-tasks are mandatory. This could have been better adhered to by some candidates. Teachers are asked to encourage candidates to address the detail of the question in future, preferably in separate paragraphs.

The question includes cues to elicit specific performance criteria. Opinions are cued by *Meinung?* and justifications by *Warum?* Some candidates ignored these, which accounted for modest marks.

Relevant communication

Relevant Communication was marked out of 10, using the grid published with the Sample Assessment Materials. The grid is written so that points of view/opinions, justifications and ease of communication are rewarded – the more variety the better.

This seemed an area where some additional candidate effort at learning a **range** of opinions and justifications is needed. *Weil es gut war* does not justify more than a modest grade in Higher Tier, and even quite reasonable candidates did not justify their opinions. Yet both questions cued *Meinungen? Warum?* Candidates should also be able to express *weil es Spaß gemacht hat* adequately. This is often required, but rarely done successfully. This advice was also in the 2005 report.

The following comments about the questions may be of use:

Question 1

Most candidates were able to say how and with whom they travelled. The spelling of *Flugzeug* was noticeably better this year.

The hotel and its food and drink were generally well described and those who said why they liked or disliked it often did so clearly.

Activities in the town were more variable, covering the whole range from excellent to weak.

The notion of the *größte Problem* often suffered from requiring the examiner to realise that this was probably the point being addressed. Many candidates did not pick up on the superlative, which was a pity.

To repeat – many otherwise sound candidates failed to offer a range of opinions, or any justifications and their marks suffered accordingly.

Question 2

The few candidates who attempted this question often did so creditably, having done something similar in the past. There were really very few candidates, so few specific points have emerged.

Quality of language

14 marks were available, using the published grid.

This part of the assessment is a vital discriminator for the award of A and A*. Consequently, the higher marks require candidates to show increasing command of subordinate clauses and a range of tenses, as well as idiom.

Canny candidates include a range of subordinate clauses introduced by some of: *als, bevor, bis, da, damit, dass; nachdem, obwohl, seitdem, sobald* and *wie* as well as using the ubiquitous *weil* (but sparingly). Very good candidates have even learnt (and written on their paper) a list of conjunctions and constructions to use.

Candidates could usefully include the pluperfect tense (*Nachdem ich das gemacht hatte*), a range of constructions (*um ... zu, ich hatte die Absicht, etwas zu machen, modals in the imperfect*), sequence words (*dann, danach, etwas später, schließlich, am Ende des Aufenthalts*, etc) a range of imperfect tenses beyond *war* and a wider selection of verbs in the perfect. Markers often check how often *war* is used. There are many modest candidates who only have one past tense correct – *war*.

One marker suggested that alternatives to *Das Wetter war schön* might include *Wir hatten schönes Wetter* and *wegen des schönen Wetters*.

Those who are accurate, but can only manage *gut, schlecht* and *langweilig* as opinions, and who only use brief main-clause sentences containing *war* do not fare well in this grid. *Weil* used as the only subordinating conjunction in a piece does not lead to high scores. As a starting point, teachers could encourage the use of *da* as an alternative. Among the advantages of this approach is that *da* is hard to misspell.

Teachers will want to use this element of the assessment to drive standards higher, and to make a sound preparation for further study.

Accuracy

6 marks were available, using the published grid.

Complete accuracy was not required for full marks, and many students scored at least half marks.

Length

140 - 150 words were set in the question. For Communication, everything the candidate had written was read. For Quality of Language and Accuracy, the first 150 words were read.

There is no advantage in writing over length, indeed, the majority of verbose candidates seem to get worse the longer they continue.

Candidates seemed to have enough time, and enough to do.

Conclusion

The 2006 writing paper was often well done. However, there were often candidate weaknesses in Sections 2 and 3, often verb-related.

On the other hand, there were relatively few inappropriately entered candidates, and virtually none who could not progress beyond the early stages of Section 1. Indeed, even the weakest

candidates often scored something on Section 2, even if they did not write to the full length. Teachers have again done a sound job with this cohort.

The questions were accessible to all, and were often well-answered. Very many candidates were methodical in answering each point in Section 2. One marker suggested that students should try to write at equal length about each bullet point. It would certainly make life easier if each bullet point was answered in a separate paragraph, as the best candidates already do.

However, in Section 3, there were some candidates whose writing is mainly in 5-6 word main-clause sentences, and contains few opinions and fewer justifications. This simple language, even if accurate, does not meet the standard required for the highest grades.

That said, this examination provides a worthwhile experience for most candidates, with opportunities for all to show “what they know and can do”.

As a parting shot, spare a thought for the well-being of the candidate who wrote *Ich habe Fritz gegessen*. Ill-digested teaching, perhaps?

GCSE WRITING COURSEWORK

General Introduction

The full details and conditions applying to Writing Coursework are set out in the Coursework Guidance section (*Appendix E*) of the current Specification, and all teachers should naturally expect to make themselves fully conversant with these regulations and with all aspects of the criteria. Furthermore, it is recommended that the requirements and marking criteria be also made clear to candidates, so that a good understanding of what is required of them and how to interpret their own progress may help towards increased motivation.

Assessment

The following points are a reminder of the mandatory requirements of the current Specification:

- A candidate's submission must be drawn from **3 different Contexts** (and therefore not sub-Contexts). The five *Contexts* offered in total, with their *sub-Contexts*, are listed in *Appendix A* of the Specification (p.27) and are subsequently glossed in considerable detail (pp.42 - 48). It will be realised that this differentiation of *Contexts* is designed to lead candidates to explore different fields of vocabulary and phrasing and to offer greater potential for different task related structures. Implicit here is therefore also the prompt to sample more widely from within the *Defined Content* for the language.
- Each candidate's submission must include a minimum of **one** item completed under *Controlled Conditions*. Teachers are urged to 'over-insure' where candidate attendance is known to be poor.
- A candidate may have recourse to a **dictionary only** when writing under *Controlled Conditions*. *Controlled* items may under no circumstances be word-processed.
- A candidate must cover successfully all 3 principal tenses or time frames - present, past and future - within the overall submission in order to merit consideration for a *Communication* mark of **7** and above in *any* of the three pieces submitted. This reflects the notional requirement stated as signal grade descriptor for Grade C and above.
- **Length:** the directives here are generous, but teachers are reminded that particularly short items within a short overall word count may not be entitled to the full range of **Communication** marks. This reflects the standard length recommendations for the different grade levels. (Ref: *Appendix E, para. 5.2, and the Notes following the Communication mark-scheme, para. 6.*). Thus: -
 - an item of **less than 140 words** within an overall word count of less than 400 words may not score more than **7** marks for Communication.
 - an item of **less than 90 words** within an overall word count of less than 250 words may not score more than **5** for Communication.
 - an item of **less than 40 words** within an overall word count of less than 100 words may not score more than **3** for Communication.

Quality of Language marks are not as such similarly reduced, but the outcome is likely to be self-penalising within both mark-schemes.

Administration

Centres are required to submit a 'Centre Authentication Statement' (form CCS160) **signed by all teachers** involved in the assessments. Separate *Candidate* Authentication Statements need not be submitted.

Centres need not wait for the 15th May Coursework deadline to submit marks to the Moderator. Early receipt should in fact help to speed up the return of the request for samples.

Centres with fewer than 11 candidates should send all their candidates' work, with the authorized list of marks as soon as possible, and without waiting for a request.

Addition of marks and their transcription should be very carefully checked, to reduce the time-consuming administrative procedures for errors.

Treasury-tagged work is greatly preferred by Moderators, this being much easier to work with. However, each candidate's work should be properly collated.

Task details, with clear assigning to different teachers where appropriate, should be included with the samples. Without these it is not possible for the Moderator to consider this element of the *Communication* mark, except to some extent eventually – but clearly rather unsatisfactorily - by comparison with other candidates' items.

Candidates' work should not be annotated in any way.

Candidates' work should show accurate word counts and all relevant sources should be listed.

An explanation of any obvious discrepancy between *Independent* items and *Controlled* should always be given.

UNIT 2366

GERMAN GCSE WRITING COURSEWORK

General Comments & Assessment

Interest in the Writing Coursework option remains high, and constant at around two-thirds of the whole candidate entry, and most teachers are now able to operate the two sets of criteria judiciously and appropriately. Overall candidate performance in Writing Coursework continues to show improvement at all levels, and teachers can feel confident that they are certainly training better. As in previous years the greatest number of candidates is to be found in the C to mid-B range, and the number of low scoring candidates continues to decline, with those few concerned more likely to have pre-limited themselves by offering an incomplete submission. Indeed, it is pleasing that only very few candidates now are unable to achieve any grade at all. It is clearly advantageous to begin preparing candidates in good time, and it seems - in this fourth year of the current Specification - that fewer centres have worked on only the minimum three tasks, and these towards the end of the Spring term. Not only does early practice help to motivate by focussing pupils' attention on what is required of them for this Unit - with plenty of time still for improvement - , but it also secures work that can be usefully "banked" in the event of any shortfall by the time of submission.

A reminder is perhaps in place here that *raw* marks out of 90 for this Unit are not the same as UMS marks, but are 'mapped across' to the UMS mark scale. Each of the subject's four Units is in fact marked out of 90, giving a UMS maximum of 360.

The implications of what is required to score the higher *Communication* marks now seem to be more fully appreciated, and there was pleasingly a much decreased tendency to award marks of 9 or 10 for standard 'pro forma' work on the grounds of task fulfilment alone. Indeed, it will be observed that this mark-scheme makes no further reference to task fulfilment beyond the band of 8, and that the range of descriptors is proportionally greater and more varied as the mark bands rise. Excessive length, however, is sometimes a problem: good candidates worthy of the 9/10 bands do not need to write considerably in excess of the recommended word length in order to prove themselves. Those that do tend to become repetitive in their structures and/or to introduce gratuitous, redundant material, both factors which may ultimately undermine the effectiveness of the whole piece. The principle here also applies to candidates targeting lower marks and grades, who should be similarly discouraged from writing at unnecessary length, as the effectiveness and quality of their writing invariably tends to deteriorate with surplus effort.

The awarding of *Quality of Language* marks in the higher bands, (17 and above) should also be carefully evaluated. Teachers are placing increased emphasis on meeting assessment descriptors such as *opinions*, *justifications* and *longer sequences* . But whilst even quite weak candidates are becoming more adept at subordinate clauses, , it should be remembered that complexity must also be underpinned by accuracy. An apparent sad increase in disregard for gender, case (most notably with prepositions) and adjectival agreements cannot but be intrusive, and work that shows virtually no control in these areas is unlikely to be rescued by some well-drilled clause competence. That said, however, the *weil* clause remains far and away the most predictable and pervasive, and candidates should be reminded that a*range of clause types* is expected, in order to merit higher marks, not merely a variety of the one 'type'.

In deciding on the most appropriate bands of assessment teachers should be looking ultimately for a 'best fit' mark, taking note of each mark band's descriptors taken as a whole. The increasing number of descriptors that quantify each ascending mark band for both *Communication* and *Quality of Language* have already been mentioned, and it follows that a higher standard of achievement is expected for the award of the higher marks. It is therefore not the intention that candidates be rewarded for simply meeting one or two of the criteria in a mark

band in order to merit the relevant mark, nor that they should be expected to clear them all for the same entitlement.

The quality of word –processing in the *Independent* items was at last gratifyingly better this year. However, the lack of *Umlaut* remains one of the principal defects in word-processed items, and credit may not be given for what the candidate perhaps meant or was probably trying to write. Candidates can and should be clearly reminded at the drafting stage that keyboard errors amount to spelling errors. Words joined together, lack of meaningful punctuation, the absence/random use of capital letters and half sentences not only affect *Quality of Language*, but very likely also interfere with successful *Communication*, and work must always be marked accordingly. In particular, the failed *mochte/möchte* distinction is unfortunately still a regular cause of interference as to the intended message, and not infrequently endangers a C-range candidate's success with the future time-frame.

As a final point here, Centres are reminded of the utmost importance - and the considerable value to candidates and their expectations - of thorough and effective internal moderation where more than one teacher is responsible for the entries. It is essential that a wholly reliable merit order is put forward by the Centre as a whole, as, particularly with large Centres, the proportion of candidates whose work is moderated is really quite small. The sample work therefore needs to represent fairly all the other candidates on comparable marks whose work is not called for. Moderators are not allowed to alter the merit order, and where adjustments are felt to be necessary to marks given, the outcome may well be to compromise (and thus unfortunately to penalise) some candidates in order to achieve a more standardised result over the whole range.

Coursework Tasks

Most teachers are now familiar with the *Contexts* requirement and wisely build this into their teaching plans from the beginning. As a result, there were pleasingly few instances of *Context* or *sub-context* overlap this year, and very few entries needed to submit replacement items, thus delaying their Centre's moderation process. Centres must avoid those tasks which overtly straddle several *Contexts*, for example linking *Zuhause* 'Home Life' (*Context 1a*) with *Familie* and *Freizeit* (*Contexts 2a & 2b*), or the inappropriate *Tagesablauf*, with sub-tasks that combined *Schule* (*Context 1b*) with *Freizeit*. 'School' combined with 'Careers & Future studies' (*Context 4b*) has been another unwarranted task sequence. Whilst one task may quite easily be constructed to lead across different *Contexts*, it is nonetheless a different - and clearly easier - assignment to write a separate paragraph on two or more topics than to structure a longer answer on one coherent subject. Teachers are reminded to check carefully when early work is submitted, as this may have been set and marked to a different end at an earlier stage of the course. The favoured "letter to a pen-friend" task is typically at issue in this regard, as most pupils undertake this - often in the earlier part of the course: however, it may have no single or suitable *sub-context* reference. It is wise to check all items before entry for their validity in terms of Coursework requirements, and also for consistency of marking standard, and to remark as necessary.

It is worth repeating that better candidates rarely do significantly well on the 'Schule', task, primarily because so much of the content is predictable, particularly when directed by the standard sub-tasks – school size, routine, subjects, teachers, likes and dislikes, etc. There can then be little scope for creativity (a descriptor of the 9/10 *Communication* bands) or for much independent vocabulary and structure. Indeed, the *Context 1* tasks of both 'School' and 'Home' are invariably explored by all pupils at some stage of their course, but are both relatively straightforward in task terms, inviting principally descriptive language through well-rehearsed and conventional structures. The 'different *Contexts*' restriction thus obliges candidates to explore the language of the Defined Content more widely, offering greater challenge and stimulus. Best practice is therefore to sample across all five *Contexts*, providing maximum

scope for variety and interest, and giving candidates plenty of practice in different topic tasks and styles.

Differentiation of tasks where there is a wide range of ability is a further important consideration. Wherever possible, the construction of tasks should take account of candidates' abilities and potential, ideally aiming to encourage each candidate to reach his/her individual ceiling. Consequently, the middle-ability 'C' pupil will benefit from prescriptive tasks with a carefully directed sub-task structure - an immediate example would be the *Freizeit* task, that invites candidates to write about their pastimes, perhaps with prompts to 'when', 'where' and 'why', followed by the further sub-tasks of *letztes Wochenende* and *nächstes Wochenende*. Such tasks provide familiar prompts cuing certain information, structures and opinions, and possibly a necessary future tense. Such a task, however, can do no favours to candidates targeting higher grades, as they are left with no real room or opportunity to expand and develop their own ideas and material. Aspiring 'A' grade candidates when faced with simple tasks, can really only distinguish themselves through a higher level of accuracy in the conventional taught structures. And, just as complexity *without* accuracy (as already mentioned above) is unreliable, accuracy on its own is insufficient, as can be seen from the various descriptors in each mark band; indeed, it will be noted that as an individual descriptor, it does not appear at all. The potential 'A' and 'A*' grade candidate is often better served - and stretched - with a less structured task, that can be developed independently of any given framework and with individuality. Of course, it is essential that this is not, however, centrally prepared in advance, as candidate independence is *per se* then obviously denied.

There also continues to be some templated work, set for the 'C' level, and even above. It should be noted that the simple adaptation of a model - for example, the *Hotelreservierung* or *Beschwerdebrief* - should only be offered in the lower mark bands, as it encourages a lower order skill: the substitution of words and phrases. This is clearly designated as an 'F' grade descriptor. It has to be said, that on occasions *Urlaub* tasks are still heavily over-prepared, or 'templated', with candidates merely substituting different destinations, means and duration of travel, comments about the journey, etc., ending with their hoped-for destination next year. Whilst the first candidate can be first moderated at face value, the extent of over-preparation quickly becomes clear when fellow candidates' items come to be assessed. This never works to the Centre's benefit.

Finally, the desirability of simple opinions is now certainly well-drilled, and even the weakest candidate can produce *gut*, often with *weil*. It would be a step forward if the meaning of *nett* could perhaps be properly highlighted, as candidates' lexical research invariably leads them into using this adjective ubiquitously, in obvious English fashion. Another expression, mentioned here in previous years, is the ongoing misuse of *Spaß*; this is quite frequently to be found wrongly with *ist/war*, as well as confounding the intended message in *wir haben Spaß gemacht*, and many candidates would clearly benefit from clarification on the German usage here.

Lexical research by candidates inevitably produced more amusing - and sometimes puzzling - constructs this year. *Hüfte Hopfen* was a favourite pastime for one candidate, whilst another confessed to a liking for *Diätkoks*. Holidays, as always, figured quite frequently, and one could only feel sorry for the following tale of woe:

meine ferian war hübsch langweilig das Hotel war in der Mitte von nein wo.

**Unit Threshold Marks – 1926: GCSE German
June 2006 Assessment Series**

Unit Threshold Marks

Unit		Maximum Mark	a*	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	u
2361/01	Raw	50	N/A	N/A	N/A	39	34	30	26	22	0
	UMS	59	N/A	N/A	N/A	50	40	30	20	10	0
2361/02	Raw	50	43	39	34	29	23	20	N/A	N/A	0
	UMS	90	80	70	60	50	40	35	N/A	N/A	0
2362/01	Raw	50	N/A	N/A	N/A	27	21	15	9	3	0
	UMS	59	N/A	N/A	N/A	50	40	30	20	10	0
2362/02	Raw	50	40	35	30	25	18	14	N/A	N/A	0
	UMS	90	80	70	60	50	40	35	N/A	N/A	0
2363/01	Raw	50	N/A	N/A	N/A	35	31	27	23	19	0
	UMS	59	N/A	N/A	N/A	50	40	30	20	10	0
2363/02	Raw	50	35	28	23	19	16	14	N/A	N/A	0
	UMS	90	80	70	60	50	40	35	N/A	N/A	0
2364/01	Raw	50	N/A	N/A	N/A	34	27	20	14	8	0
	UMS	59	N/A	N/A	N/A	50	40	30	20	10	0
2364/02	Raw	50	44	36	26	16	9	5	N/A	N/A	0
	UMS	90	80	70	60	50	40	35	N/A	N/A	0
2365/01	Raw	50	N/A	N/A	N/A	27	21	15	9	3	0
	UMS	59	N/A	N/A	N/A	50	40	30	20	10	0
2365/02	Raw	50	40	35	30	25	18	14	N/A	N/A	0
	UMS	90	80	70	60	50	40	35	N/A	N/A	0
2366/01	Raw	90	82	76	67	58	47	36	26	16	0
	UMS	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20	10	0

Syllabus Aggregation Results

Overall threshold marks in UMS (i.e. after conversion of raw marks to uniform marks)

	Maximum Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
1926	360	320	280	240	200	160	120	80	40	0

The cumulative percentage of candidates awarded each grade was as follows:

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U	Total Number of Candidates
1926	10.7	24.1	42.4	73.9	90.6	96.5	98.9	99.7	100	14,756

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