

Frequently Asked Questions

GCSE Languages

OCR GCSE in Languages

French (J730) / German (J731) / Spanish (J732)

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This handbook is designed to accompany the OCR GCSE Languages specification for teaching from September 2009.

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Introduction

OCR has produced these FAQ's to provide additional guidance for teachers preparing candidates for the GCSE MFL specification.

The FAQ's should be read in conjunction with the specification document, Teachers' handbook and the Guides to Controlled Assessment Speaking and Writing.

These questions and answers focus on some of the most important points from the above documents and also include extra questions that teachers have raised since the specification began in 2009.

General FAQs

Is there a significant change in the units from the legacy specification to the new?

Candidates are still assessed on the four skills: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Listening and Reading remain a tiered examination. Speaking and Writing are now assessed as non-tiered Controlled Assessment.

There is a change to the contexts (now called topics) – these are required for the assessment of Reading and Listening.

The content for the Speaking and Writing is very different – only two tasks are required for each skill.

Why are the rubrics in English?

Since Curriculum 2000, and in fact since 1998, teachers have told us that rubrics in the target language make the tests unnecessarily complex. They have told us that the focus should be the testing of understanding of target language through the material, not through the questions. For the new GCSEs, there was an opportunity to change the rubrics and OCR has chosen to have them in English. We asked the teacher professional associations – ALL and ISMLA – for feedback on rubrics in English and we got a very positive response.

Can we use dictionaries and if yes, in which papers?

Yes, for Controlled Assessment Writing dictionaries can be used during the preparation and final task taking stages.

For Controlled Assessment Speaking dictionaries can only be used during the preparation stage – see the Guides to Controlled Assessment (on the OCR website) of the specification for specific details.

Dictionaries are not allowed during the Listening and Reading examinations.

Note: Dictionaries used for preparation should be clean copies, i.e. not annotated in any way.

Why did the percentage weightings of skills change compared to the old (legacy) specification?

The weightings changed in accordance with the national QCDA subject criteria and in response to the recommendations of the Dearing Report.

What do you mean by *Unitised* and *Linear*?

The new MFL specifications allow for a **unitised** approach to assessment in that Centres can now schedule assessments for times during the course when learners' understanding is at its best (e.g. at the end of a topic) – giving them a better chance of success. Up to 60% of student assessment is possible before the end of the course.

For example, candidates can take two units in Year 10, bank them or use them to get a GCSE Short Course qualification and then take the other two units in Year 11 (or even repeat the first two) to get a GCSE Full Course qualification.

Alternatively, candidates can take the four units in **linear** mode, i.e. all four units are undertaken at the end of Year 11, in the year of certification.

Please see the specification for specific information about Terminal Rules.

www.ocr.org.uk/download/kd/ocr_9962_kd_spec.pdf

Can a private candidate enter for this specification?

Yes, providing the candidate is attending an OCR centre that will be able to supervise and assess the Controlled Assessment units. Further information can be obtained from the Guidance for Private Candidates booklet available on the OCR website.

Where can I find the grade boundaries for the June 2010 examinations?

These are available on the OCR website under Administration/Key documents/General Qualifications/Results and Certificates/Unit level raw mark grade boundaries – June 2010

Why are grade boundaries not available for specimen papers?

Grade boundaries are only set after candidates have taken a live exam and the papers have been through the necessary marking and awarding processes.

Do all the topics need to be covered before the candidate takes a unit?

The topics in the specification (section 2.3) relate to the Listening and Reading assessments. For the Speaking and Writing Controlled Assessments, teachers have the flexibility to choose tasks from the topic list or a topic of personal interest to the candidate / group. (The specification is available on the OCR website at:

www.ocr.org.uk/Data/publications/key_documents/GCSE_French_German_Spanish_Spec.pdf

Is a short course available?

Yes. The short course options are:

- Spoken Language: Unit 1 (French A701/German A711/Spanish A721) Listening and Unit 2 (French A702/German A712/Spanish A722) Speaking
- Written Language: Unit 3 (French A703/German A713/Spanish A723) Reading and Unit 4 (French A704/German A714/Spanish A724) Writing

It is not possible to do Listening & Reading or Speaking & Writing together as a short course; this is precluded by the national QCDA subject criteria.

Can you do a short course at the end of Year 10 and then combine two short courses at the end of Year 11?

Yes. Candidates can do a short course in Year 10 and another short course in Year 11 or even after that to get a full GCSE.

In fact this offers even more flexibility because if it was appropriate for them, candidates could do a short course in Y9 and add to that at a later stage.

In the final certification, how will two short course qualifications be listed?

The final certificate will show one overall grade e.g. 'A'. The transcript will show individual results for each of the four units, i.e. the UMS mark and the unit grade, e.g. a lower case 'a'.

Can candidates re-sit?

Yes. Candidates may re-sit each unit once. The better result counts towards certification, provided the 40% Terminal Rule is met. Please see the specification for specific information about Terminal Rules. www.ocr.org.uk/download/kd/ocr_9962_kd_spec.pdf

Can we do re-sits in November?

No. This is not possible at the moment.

What are the costs of re-sitting a particular unit at the end of Year 11?

These will be standard – see website for details of current fees.

www.ocr.org.uk/download/admin/ocr_46302_admin_fees_list_2011.pdf

Will the Foundation and Higher Tier papers “share” questions?

Yes. In the Listening and Reading assessments, the question papers will consist of five exercises for both Foundation and Higher tiers. Two of these exercises (targeting Grades D and C) will appear on both the Foundation and Higher Tier papers.

Can the decision of which tier to enter the candidates for be delayed? This way Centres have more time to decide between foundation and higher tier and get the right candidates into the right level of entry for exams.

Currently, if entry amendments are made within one month of the final entry date (21 February), then a refund is made on the withdrawn entry. This gives a possibility of making an entry change BUT this would be a policy matter within the centre. As always, centres need to check the latest versions of the entry documentation on the OCR website to make sure that they are using the most up-to-date information.

Can you do the Listening and Writing exam on the same day?

You could do the Listening exam and a Controlled Assessment task for Writing on the same day but you have to decide if that is of benefit to the candidates.

The leisure topic includes *online*? What does this mean?

This is one element in ensuring our specification remains up-to-date and relevant for young learners. As they spend a lot of their free time using online social networks, for example, it is important that this is included as a context for their studies in the target language.

Listening and Reading

Are the five topic areas only for Listening and Reading?

Yes, they are. For the Speaking and Writing Controlled Assessments, you can concentrate on two topic areas from the list, or choose different topics which are of interest to your candidates.

Is there a question in the target language on the Higher Listening paper?

No. All five exercises will have rubrics / instructions and questions in English and will require short answers in English (or non-verbal responses).

N.B. The final exercise on the Higher Reading paper will however require non-verbal responses in the target language.

Will the exercises always have the same format?

Each of the five exercises will target particular grades and have a similar format, so that candidates who have had access to the Specimen Assessment Material (available on the OCR website) or have taken a past paper (available to teachers on Interchange) as a mock exam will be familiar with the assessment types for their actual examination paper.

Will there be any grammar-based exercises on the Reading and Listening papers?

No. The Listening and Reading assessments will assess a candidate's ability to understand spoken or written texts and to identify main points and some detail from them.

Why are there so few visuals in the Listening paper?

The main purpose of images in the Listening and Reading papers was to support candidates in their understanding of the rubrics in the target languages. As the rubrics are now in English there is less need for that support. The new MFL subject criteria require that the contexts and purposes in the specification correspond to learners' level of maturity. Using images for the assessment of listening and reading are considered not to be of sufficient relevance and interest.

Are candidates allowed to make notes on their Question Paper during the 5-minute reading time in the Listening exam?

Yes, if they wish to, but as the questions and rubrics are all in English, it is unlikely that candidates will need to write much.

Candidates must be careful not to write over the barcode and must ensure that any notes will not obscure their final answer.

Why must candidates use black ink?

All scripts are scanned and marked on screen. Black ink ensures that answers are easy to read.

Are bilingual dictionaries allowed in the Listening and Reading exams?

No. Dictionaries are not allowed for the Reading and Listening exams.

Controlled Assessment

General

Can candidates re-sit Controlled Assessments in the same way as an externally set examination paper?

Yes. Candidates can re-sit controlled assessed units but as with any other unit, candidates can only re-sit once. Also, the 40% terminal rule means that 40% of the assessment has to be taken in the examination series in which the qualification is to be awarded.

Centres have the responsibility to ensure that the correct tasks are used for a Controlled Assessment resit.

Is there a Foundation and Higher Tier for Speaking and Writing?

No. However, the Controlled Assessments for Speaking and Writing need to be differentiated to meet the needs of individual candidates. Teachers can use the exemplar tasks or can adapt the tasks or can devise tasks to fit with an individual candidate's learning interests. Open-ended tasks often prove to be the most successful for candidates aiming to achieve the highest grades.

Will there be a question paper for Speaking and Writing?

No. There is no Writing Paper or Speaking Booklet produced by OCR for the new specification. The exemplar tasks on Interchange and in the Guides to Controlled Assessment for Speaking and Writing provide differentiated examples for each topic area.

Speaking - www.ocr.org.uk/download/sm/ocr_30076_sm_gcse_ca_guide.pdf

Writing - www.ocr.org.uk/download/sm/ocr_30049_sm_gcse_ca_guide.pdf

Are there examples of candidates' work?

Yes. There are examples on the website, along with exemplar Schemes of Work. Speaking files are also available on OCR Interchange.

Topics

Do we have to check with OCR for any other Topic we choose for Writing and Speaking?

No. You may choose any other topic without referring to OCR for approval. However, when devising a task, teachers must ensure that it enables candidates to meet the highest level of the assessment criteria appropriate to their abilities. For further detailed information, refer to the Guides to Controlled Assessment for Speaking and Writing.

Can we use sub-topics or just main topics for Speaking and Writing?

For Speaking and Writing, candidates can do OCR topics or OCR sub-topics or a topic of their own choice.

Can candidates use the same topic for a Speaking and a Writing Controlled Assessment task?

Centres can use the same **topic** in Speaking and Writing, but the **tasks** must be different. For example, in Topic Area 4, *Holidays* could be used for both, provided the tasks do not focus on the same detail. Having the same task would be unacceptable since tasks are not allowed to be practised beforehand.

Can teachers use two topic areas in the same task?

Yes, but this should be made clear in the task title, as examiners judge relevance from this.

Forms

Which language should the Speaking / Writing Information Form (Teachers) be written in?

Speaking / Writing Information Forms are to be written in English so that teachers are not providing additional language assistance to candidates.

Is there a limit to the number of suggestions teachers can give on the Speaking / Writing Information Form (Teachers)?

No. In theory there is no maximum. Please refer to the exemplar tasks in the Guides to Controlled Assessment for Speaking and Writing for good practice. In reality, candidates would not need any more than five bullet points to choose from, and some candidates may benefit from less guidance. These forms can be differentiated for students within a class if the teacher deems this to be appropriate.

Which language should the Speaking / Writing Notes Form (Candidates) be written in?

Candidates should write their notes in the target language.

Where can I find the forms?

The forms will be sent to centres based on the number of estimated entries submitted, but they are available on the OCR website on the GCSE MFL pages.

Tasks

Why are the tasks in English?

English is used so that understanding the task is straightforward and not made unnecessarily complex by using the target language in the task title and in the suggestions of points to include.

What does purpose mean?

Examples of different purposes for Speaking are: Role Play, Interview, Conversation, Discussion, Presentation etc.

Examples of different purposes for Writing are: Letter, Email, Blog, Article, Report etc.

Can I devise my own Tasks?

Yes, but care must be taken to ensure that the task for final task taking does not replicate any practice tasks.

How can we modify exemplar tasks to suit the needs of different candidates?

Experience from tests on writing on the previous specification indicates that high achieving candidates do better with open-ended tasks. The exemplar tasks give examples of how to differentiate according to ability.

Can we use the same tasks every year?

No. The tasks should be changed in some way.

Task preparation

Can candidates use departmental vocabulary books and worksheets in the preparation time?

Yes. Departmental vocabulary books and worksheets can qualify as reference materials and are allowed during preparation time, but they must not be annotated. Candidates may also use their own exercise books.

Can any preparation work be done out of the classroom?

No. Section 3 of the Guides to Controlled Assessment states: The preparation of work can **only be completed in lesson time**. All work completed during the preparation time must be collected in and stored under the same secure conditions that apply to confidential examination materials. **Work must not be removed from the centre**. All work must be completed under teacher supervision so that the teacher can sign the centre authentication form to verify that the work is the candidates' own.

Can the same task be used for a group of candidates?

Yes. As the points on the Information forms are suggestions only, each candidate could interpret the task differently. However, we would suggest differentiation of the points given to candidates according to ability.

Can different teaching groups use the same task?

Yes. It is not necessary for all groups to be given the task at the same time, as the task is not prescriptive and the content can be changed by a candidate as desired.

Task taking

Do we have to take the Controlled Assessment under exam conditions/teacher supervision?

Yes. See Section 5 of the GCSE Specification on Controlled Assessment for exact details on this: Candidates will complete all work for assessment under direct teacher supervision except as outlined below. Teachers must be able to authenticate work as the candidate's own and insist on acknowledgement and referencing of any sources used (5.3.2).

The recommended 2 hour preparation period will take more than one lesson: candidates can think about and research the work between lessons, but not pre-prepare a written version with assistance from others. OCR feels it is not disadvantaging candidates by this, but is protecting teachers from possible malpractice / plagiarism issues and is maintaining credibility for the qualification.

Is it necessary to remove / cover up wall posters when the final task is being taken?

Yes. If the final task is taken in a languages classroom where there are posters that may give candidates any help, these should be removed or covered.

Can a candidate take the same task again?

No. Candidates cannot repeat the same task. If they are re-sitting the unit in a different session, we advise that candidates attempt different tasks, although they may be on the same topic areas as studied previously.

Scheduling and timing

When can the Controlled Assessments can be taken?

Controlled Assessment is a form of internal assessment and as such there is no specified date on which it has to be taken.

The deadline for submission of tasks is 15 May in the year of entry. .

The centre can decide when Controlled Assessment will be taken: guidance on this can be found in Section 3 of the Guide to Controlled Assessment and in Section 5 of the specification.

Is there a minimum or maximum time that can be spent on the assessments?

The recommended time limit for the preparation is 2 hours

The maximum time permitted for the Writing Assessment is 1 hour.

The maximum time permitted for the Speaking Assessment is 6 minutes.

Will we be able to get time off time-table to administer the tests?

Arrangements will need to be made by individual centres to suit their own requirements. Preparation time is up to two hours and can be split, so there is no need for candidates to be “off timetable”. Preparation must be supervised so it cannot be done as homework and candidates cannot take away with them the paperwork they have been using during preparation.

Final task-taking can take place at any time after preparation but you must make sure that it is completed under conditions that meet the requirements.

The Final task taking must be completed in a single assessment session.

Can we do the Speaking tests at any time? (When can we do the tests?)

Yes. Within your centre you can decide when candidates complete a Speaking task.

When can teachers and candidates access the material?

There are no restrictions on access to the Exemplar tasks. These are available on Interchange on 1 June of the year prior to an assessment series, i.e. 1 June 2010 for assessment in June 2011 series. They are also available in the Guides to Controlled Assessment.

Centres must review tasks on a regular basis to make sure that candidates are submitting appropriate tasks and to make sure that there is no attempt to plagiarise tasks across different entry cohorts.

Do we have to do both tasks at the same time?

No. Candidates may complete an individual or group speaking task at any time during the GCSE course.

If we can now use one topic area on which to examine, is it permissible to conduct two different speaking assessments (with different purposes) on the same day? There would be two different tasks with different purposes but from the same topic area.

Yes. This is permissible. Any decision regarding the conduct of the final tasks rests with the centre.

Speaking

Recording

Do we have to record every test?

Only one task per candidate needs to be recorded. However, it is good practice to record a number of tasks so that centres have the opportunity to select the best one for submission purposes.

Will we be able to use cassettes for recording?

No. Cassettes may not be used for recording the new Speaking tests. Recordings should be submitted on CDs by post or submitted digitally via the OCR Repository and in MP3 format.

Speaking tasks

Will there be Higher and Foundation Tier papers for Speaking?

No. There is no Speaking Booklet produced by OCR for the new specification. The Exemplar Tasks give examples of a differentiated task for each topic area.

The Controlled Assessments for Speaking need to be differentiated to meet the needs of individual candidates. Teachers can use the exemplar tasks or can adapt the tasks or can devise tasks to fit with an individual candidate's learning interests and ability.

Do we have to do role-play?

Not necessarily. Candidates need to complete TWO Speaking tasks for two different purposes. This might be a conversation or discussion, a presentation followed by unexpected questions or indeed a role-play situation. But you will need to make sure that the task gives candidates the opportunity to access the higher mark ranges in the assessment criteria.

Candidates can do a role play task similar to Role Play 3 on the legacy specification. However, the series of pictures for the visual stimulus during the preparation time must not include words, letters or symbols.

If we decide to use a narrative (in the style of the legacy Role Play 3) could the whole class prepare the same one, independently?

Yes. The whole class can prepare the same Role Play, as the outcome for each candidate will be different. However, you will need to make sure that the task is suitable for all candidates.

Task taking: preparation

What reference material can candidates have access to during the preparation time?

They can have bilingual dictionaries, internet resources, centre-produced materials, text books, and work sheets, but they all must be clean copies (not annotated). Exercise books can also be used for reference.

Can candidates work together?

It is the teacher's responsibility to ensure that each candidate produces his / her own work. However, candidates may practise their speaking tasks out loud providing they are not disturbing others.

Can candidates produce a practice recording during the preparation time?

Yes, if they practise individually using a recording machine.

Task taking: Final

What resources are candidates allowed for the Final Task?

Speaking Notes Form (Candidates). This is written during the preparation stage and can have a maximum of 5 bullet points with no more than 8 words per point [40 words max] which can include conjugated verbs.

OR a visual stimulus. This is a non-verbal image (can be a photograph) with no words, letters or symbols.

Speaking Information Form (Teachers). This gives suggestions of information to include.

Could candidates have an English document in front of them (tourist leaflet style) and have a task which required them to explain the leaflet to a non-English speaker?

A brochure is allowed if it contains only images (no words, letters or symbols). Having a brochure with English text as the basis of the Speaking exam, would transform a speaking exercise into a translating one, which draws on very different skills.

Can candidates draw pictures on their forms?

No. They should have either words or a visual stimulus on their forms.

Can candidates have time at the start of the time allotted for the Final Task taking to study the notes they made during the preparation time?

Yes. The recommended two hours preparation time can be split to incorporate five minutes just before taking the final task taking. Candidates would need to be supervised in the same way as specified for any preparation time.

How should the unexpected questions be used?

The teacher should ask a question on something that the candidate has not covered on their notes form in order to encourage spontaneous use of language. This should focus on something that the candidate is not expecting, but can still be within the same topic.

If a candidate decided to use a PowerPoint presentation to assist a presentation to the class, does OCR need a copy of the PowerPoint?

This comes under the visual stimulus regulation. See Section 5 in the specification:

A visual stimulus is a non-verbal image, it can be a photograph (Note: words, letters and symbols are not allowed). This is not submitted but must be retained in the centre until the December following the June examination series.

Is there a limit on the number of candidates involved in a group activity?

OCR does not prescribe a limit but centres need to consider logistics so that no candidate is disadvantaged by taking part in a group speaking activity. In group work in Speaking, only one candidate's contribution can be assessed.

How long should a group activity last?

OCR does not prescribe a time but the candidate being assessed must be given the equivalent of 4 to 6 minutes per task. Teachers also need to ensure that the task gives the candidate being assessed the opportunity to access the higher mark ranges in the assessment criteria.

Would the minimum length be shortened if an activity involves only pupils, with no teacher interventions (the latter often accounting for at least 50% of what is said in traditional 1-to-1 speaking assessments).

No, because the requirement is for 4 to 6 minutes and candidates should be allowed the same time as any other candidate doing a speaking task.

Does the maximum of 6 minutes include the teacher's introduction?

No. The timing of 6 minutes starts when the actual test begins.

Marking

Where can the Mark Schemes be accessed?

Mark Schemes are included in the specification or the Guide to Controlled Assessment for Speaking, which can be downloaded from the OCR website.

For examples of how to apply the mark scheme, please see our Additional Support Materials on the OCR website, which includes commentaries on the marking of candidate pieces.

Do we mark the tasks or does OCR?

Controlled Assessment tasks for GCSE French, German, and Spanish Speaking are internally marked by centres and externally moderated by OCR.

Where can I find support materials to use with my department for training?

On the GCSE MFL pages on the OCR website you will find the Teachers' handbook, the Guides to Controlled Assessment and Additional Support Materials with commentaries on candidate tasks.

Is there a correlation between mark bands for Communication and Quality of Language?

No. These marks should be considered separately. It is possible for a candidate to achieve more highly on one set of criteria than the other.

Are all three tenses required for a mark in the highest band?

No. The Assessment criteria for the new specification require a wide variety of clause types, vocabulary and structures, including verb structures and tenses.

Can we give feedback on marks and tasks to candidates?

Feedback to candidates / classes should be restricted to skill specific advice, not task specific advice relating to individual performances or marks.

Can we mark after the task has taken place (rather than during)?

Yes. If you are recording the task, you may listen to it again later. The recorded items and the marks awarded must be kept secure, under the same conditions that apply to all confidential examination materials. If you are not recording the task, it will need to be assessed whilst the task is being taken.

Do we have to standardise the speaking tasks?

Yes. All work is assessed by the teacher and internally standardised within the centre to ensure that each teacher has applied the standards appropriately across a range of candidates within the centre. For this reason, it is recommended that centres record a number of tasks for each candidate.

Can a foreign language assistant mark a controlled assessment, provided the mark is standardised within the centre?

Yes, provided that they have been trained to do so by the department and that the Head of Centre has approved.

Will submitted recordings be sent back to centres?

Yes. These will be sent back at the end of the series. Centres will also receive a Centre report on the conduct of the Speaking tests, intended to provide support for future series.

Writing tasks

Will there be Higher and Foundation Tier papers for Writing?

No. There is no Writing Paper produced by OCR for the new specification. The Exemplar Tasks give examples of a differentiated task for each topic area.

The Controlled Assessments for Writing need to be differentiated to meet the needs of individual candidates. Teachers can use the exemplar tasks or can adapt the tasks or can devise tasks to fit with an individual candidate's learning interests and ability.

What is the maximum word limit for the Writing Controlled Assessment unit?

Candidates aiming at grades G – D should produce up to 350 words across the two tasks.

Candidates aiming at grades C – A* should produce up to 600 words across the two tasks.

Is there a minimum word count?

No, but if candidates write too little, they tend to self-penalise, as there would not be enough content in their writing to gain marks in the higher bands for Communication.

Task taking: preparation

What reference material can candidates have access to during the preparation time?

They can have bilingual dictionaries, internet resources, centre-produced materials, text books, and work sheets, but they all must be clean copies (not annotated). Exercise books can also be used for reference.

If candidates can word-process and have more immediate access to an online dictionary, how can they be prevented from accessing further online language support / grammar sources?

The centre must make sure this does not happen – by switching off online language support, for example for spelling and grammar.

Can candidates write a draft during the preparation time?

Yes. They can but teachers may not mark or give feedback on the draft. The draft can be used as a resource for preparing notes for the final task taking on the Writing Notes Form (Candidates).

Task taking: final

What resources are candidates allowed for the Final Task?

- Writing Notes Form (Candidates). This is written during the preparation stage and can have a maximum of 5 bullet points with no more than 8 words per point [40 words max] which can include conjugated verbs.
- Writing Information Form (Teachers). This gives suggestions of information to include.
- A bilingual dictionary

Do candidates have to include all the suggestions on the Writing Information Form (Teachers)?

No. Candidates can use these, but can also use their own ideas and suggestions.

Do candidates have to include everything they have written on the Writing Notes Form (Candidates) in the final task?

Under the new specification candidates will NOT be penalised if they do not refer to all the points. The candidates must, however, keep to the task title and chosen purpose.

Do we have to take the Controlled Assessment under exam conditions/teacher supervision?

Yes. See Section 5 of the specification for exact details on this: Candidates will complete all work for assessment under direct teacher supervision except as outlined below. Teachers must be able to authenticate work as the candidate's own and insist on acknowledgement and referencing of any sources used (5.3.2).

The recommended 2 hour preparation period will be more than one lesson: candidates can think about and research the work between lessons, but not pre-prepare a written version with assistance from others. OCR feels it is not disadvantaging candidates by this, but is protecting teachers from possible malpractice / plagiarism issues and is maintaining credibility for the qualification.

Is it allowable for the final task taking to be supervised by the class teacher alone? Normally for invigilation this is not allowed.

See the specification (section 5.3.4): the final task is produced under supervised control (teacher, teaching assistant, or language assistant) and supervision must be sufficient to make sure that plagiarism does not take place.

So it can be the teacher alone but he/she must make sure the controlled conditions are adhered to.

Can the final task taking for writing be taken in two separate sessions?

No. There is a time restriction for completing the final task – 45 to 60 minutes for each task and this must be in a single assessment session.

Marking

Do we mark the tasks or does OCR?

Controlled Assessment tasks for GCSE French, German and Spanish Writing are externally marked by OCR Examiners.

Where can the Mark Schemes be accessed?

Mark Schemes are included in the specification or the Guide to Controlled Assessment for Writing, which can be downloaded from the OCR website.

For an example of how the mark scheme is applied by OCR Examiners, please see our Additional Support Materials on the OCR website, which include commentaries on the marking of candidates' work.

Once candidates have completed a Controlled Assessment Writing task, can teachers correct it and return it to the student to help them improve in the future?

No, because candidates could attempt a similar task again and this level of feedback goes beyond what is permitted for any task that is being submitted. Teachers may give general feedback to help candidates improve, such as advice on using a range of language and grammar.

Can teachers mark the work and tell candidates their marks?

Teachers can mark the work according to the criteria, but if they give feedback to candidates, they must make it clear that these marks may not be accurate and are not the final marks.

Is there any correlation between the Communication and the Quality of Language mark?

No. They are assessed independently and according to different criteria.

What is meant by a common idiom mentioned in the Assessment criteria for Writing?

A common idiom is a phrase without a literal translation in English. This can be as simple as *tengo 15 años* in Spanish, *il fait froid* in French or *mein Kopf tut weh* in German.

Submission

Do we need to submit two tasks on two different topics?

Yes. For Writing, candidates complete two tasks – each one for a different purpose and each one on a different topic. Both tasks are submitted for marking at the same time.

Can we choose which pieces of a candidate's Controlled Assessment work can be submitted to OCR or will it be specified or asked for?

For Writing, two tasks must be submitted to be marked by OCR examiners. Centres choose which two tasks.

Do the tasks have to be treated as exam material?

Yes. All tasks completed as part of final task taking must be kept under secure conditions until the centre submits two tasks to be marked by the OCR Examiner.

Can we submit writing tasks via the OCR Repository?

At present written work cannot be submitted via the OCR Repository. Centres submit candidates' work by post directly to the Examiner.