

Examiners' Report Summer 2008

GCSE

GCSE Urdu (1901)

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

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

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

Summer 2008

Publications Code UG 020469

All the material in this publication is copyright
© Edexcel Ltd 2008

Contents

1.	Paper 1 Examiners' Report	5
2.	Paper 2 Examiners' Report	11
3.	Paper 3 Examiners' Report	21
4.	Paper 4 Examiners' Report	25
5.	Statistics	29

Paper 1 - Listening and Responding

The tasks and the topics in the papers chosen were in accordance with the syllabus. As usual the questions were targeted at each of the possible grades to differentiate candidates across the ability range. The standard achieved by the candidates this year was slightly better than last year.

Paper 1F (Foundation)

This paper tests listening skill appropriate to grades C- G The paper required minimal writing of the target language and candidates had to answer one question by writing 4 to 5 words in Urdu. These answers were marked for communication of the required points from the listening text only, irrespective of spelling mistakes and grammatical errors.

Question 1- 7

The icons used this year were very clear and posed no problems to the candidates. The majority of the candidates managed to answer these questions without any difficulty. A few did not understand the Urdu words for "comb" and ticked the icon for "brush" instead. Q7 (giving direction) was answered incorrectly by a large number of candidates. Teachers are requested to teach vocabulary in Urdu for "turn right or left or go straight".

Question 8

The questions were about Ameena's telephone message on a Sunday and the weather forecast in Lahore. Candidates were asked to tick on 3 items for each question. Some candidates got confused between sewing and ironing. Few candidates could not follow the rubric and put a tick on more than 3 items. Generally these questions were answered correctly by a large number of candidates.

Question 8

The question (targeted at C grade) was about Ameena's telephone message and candidates were required to fill in information about the date, day and time of her birthday. This was the only question in the Foundation Tier where candidates were required to write their answer in Urdu. Two out of three answers were numbers and

could have been written in English but some candidates struggled to write the date (26th) and the time (7 pm) in Urdu numbers or in Urdu words and lost marks.

Although they don't get penalised for spelling, it was disappointing to note that a large number of candidates could not write the word "Saturday" in Urdu. On the other hand there were some candidates who wrote the Urdu word "saneecher" for "Saturday" indicating their good command on Urdu spelling and vocabulary.

Question 9

This question was targeted at D grade. Although no writing was involved in this question, but a large number of candidates could not get the correct sequencing and either got it partially right or totally wrong and lost marks. It goes without saying that candidates are not being prepared thoroughly to tackle these types of questions.

Question 10

Also targeted at C grade, this question was about "mobile phones". Quite a large number of candidates answered this question correctly. A few, who could not read the instructions, got it partially or totally wrong.

Question 11-12

Candidates were asked to tick on 3 items for each question. Some candidates got confused between "small table and cupboard" in Q11. Few candidates could not follow the rubric and put a tick on more than 3 items. Generally these questions were answered correctly by a large number of candidates.

Question 13

Similar layout as Q12, this question was about "personal opinion". The response was similar to Q12.

Question 14-16

These questions were about personal identification. The candidates were required to put a tick against the correct icon. The majority of the candidates managed these questions very well.

Question 17-20

Similar layout to the above questions, the topic was job and profession. Generally the candidates scored full marks.

Question 21-25

Again, a tick question against the right icon, the topic was "hobbies". Some candidates could not understand the word "gardening" in Urdu, but by and large the questions were answered correctly.

Question 26

This question required candidates to listen to the information in Urdu about "Easter Holidays" and complete the grid in English about where they went and what they did. The places mentioned were Scotland, Paris, Lahore and Manchester with a variety of activities.

The majority of the candidates had no problems in identifying the right place. However, some failed to complete the activity grid correctly as they could not understand the words "went around" in Urdu (both words in Urdu have been used and asked in the past papers).

The teachers must target those candidates who either fail to understand the importance of extracting the right information from the listening text or they don't try to listen and pick the key words and write anything which they think is relevant. By and large the performance of candidates for this question was much better than the previous year.

Paper 1H (Higher)

The overall performance for this paper was slightly better than last year. The paper proved to be balanced and differentiated well across the range of abilities of the candidates and reflected the appropriate levels for which it was set.

Question 1- 5

An overlap from the Foundation tier paper, these questions did not pose any problems in general.

Question 6

Also an overlap from the Foundation tier, this question proved to be fairly accessible for most of the candidates.

Question 7

This question tested the candidates' ability to understand the spoken Urdu and fill in the gaps with appropriate Urdu words. Quite a large number of candidates scored some or even full mark. Some failed to select the right word to complete the sentence, while others could not write a single word of Urdu and did not score any marks at all.

Question 8

Also an overlap from the Foundation tier and targeted at C, this question required a fairly good level of reading ability as well, some got it partially right, while others managed to get full marks.

Question 9

Candidates generally did well in this question, which was an overlap from the Foundation tier. However, the problem of trying to write the numbers in Urdu was also seen at the higher level and some candidates lost marks when they wrote the date as 62 instead of 26 in Urdu.

Question 10

This question was also an overlap from the Foundation tier (sequencing question) and required reading ability in Urdu. By and large candidates did well and only a few of them did not score any marks.

Question 11

This question involved 5 target language sub-questions and answers about meeting a friend. A few candidates managed to write the key word and scored some marks, while others with a good writing ability did very well. It was again disappointing to note that at this Higher tiers entry, quite a large number of candidates either spelled incorrectly or could not write the Urdu words for "car broke down, left at home and glass of cold water". Again some candidates struggled to write 3 o'clock in Urdu and lost valuable marks.

Question 11

The question about five news headlines proved a little difficult for candidates who could not follow or read the target language rubrics and text. Some candidates answered correctly but put numbers in all six boxes and lost one mark. It is imperative that candidates entered for the higher tier should be able to read and understand the target language instructions.

Question 12

This question was about different views on medical profession and candidates were supposed to put a tick against the right statement. Although no writing was involved in this question, candidates with limited Urdu reading ability scored poor marks. By and large, this question was answered well and quite a few of the candidates gained full marks.

Question 13

The question was about an interview with a writer and required the candidates to answer in English. Most of the candidates answered a, c., e and f correctly. The answer to (a) was "a first prize and not prize". For (e and f) some irrelevant details were given by those candidates who lifted the whole paragraph from the listening extract rather than the specific details. Teachers are requested to pay attention to these comments and prepare candidates according to the required task for this question.

Paper 2 - Speaking

General

This is the sixth year in which exam papers have been based upon the new GCSE syllabus. Reports from the examining and Moderating Team indicate that this year there were few significant problems in the actual conduct of the examinations.

There are always some centres where some errors occur, and experience informs us that when the tests are well conducted the candidates score well, within their individual expertise, but if the tests are not properly conducted the ability of the candidates concerned to maximize their potential is compromised. In such cases, the experienced team of Assessors and Moderators are well equipped to deal with them and to concentrate on the job of giving a fair mark to the candidates' performances. The general impression this year has been that the performance of the candidates is not noticeably different from last year. I will now discuss the performance of each component of the examination.

Paper 2F (Foundation)

Once again there was a minority of Urdu candidates (approximately 15%) entered for this component at Foundation level. This is a slight increase, which perhaps reflects the growing number of candidates whose parents have been born and brought up in the UK. Although this pattern would be considered very unusual in Modern Foreign Languages such as French and German, is quite normal for Urdu as it reflects the ability and the familiarity of the candidature with the language examined.

This Paper is designed to test candidates in the G-C ability range and can be said to have discriminated successfully between these ends of the range. In fact, very few candidates failed to score enough marks to qualify for an F on this component.

Key Point

Once again, it is disappointing to have to state that about a fifth of Foundation Level candidates scored very highly in this and it would have been much better for them to have been entered for the Higher Tier, so that they can have a chance of reaching a higher grade. It is vital to doing justice to candidates that their abilities in each of the four skill areas is taken into consideration and entries made accordingly. It is clear that some centres blanket enter some candidates for Foundation in all four components of the exam, presumably on the basis of their lack of written skills.

At this Level, candidates had to perform one A and one B Rôle-Play and take part in a conversation on two topics, one of their choice (presumably prepared) and one chosen from the syllabus by the teacher examiner. In general the Foundation Level Rôle-Plays were well performed and there were no significant problems.

Detailed consideration of Rôle-Plays are given below:

Rôle-Play A

The A Rôle-Plays are designed to test the performance of the lower end G-E of the ability range. The candidates have to perform simple transactions involving shopping.

Some required candidates to buy two items from the six pictures provided as stimulus. The candidate had to greet the examiner, buy two items selected from the pictures, ask the price, and say thank you and goodbye. Others required them to buy one item and then state size, colour, etc. The teacher-examiner needs to ensure that

candidates do all the tasks, including greetings, thanks and goodbye. Most of them do a difficult job very competently, but we do hear tapes where a candidate has failed to buy two items, or omits to include the necessary phrases. In such cases teacher-examiners should prompt the candidates, using such phrases as: *awr kwch chahiye?*

One of the main failings of weaker candidates is the use of English words, as in A4, "paper" and "envelopes" whose Urdu equivalents "*kagaz*" and "*lyfafa*" are not at all obscure or difficult. All the words included in the A Rôle-Plays are Common Core vocabulary items included in the Syllabus. The problem is that such English words are commonly used in Urdu in everyday spoken language. However in an exam situation candidates should be expected to use the Urdu words. If the candidate uses such an English word it is entirely legitimate for the Teacher Examiner to ask the candidate "*Urdu meñ envelope ko kya kehte heyñ?*" Although candidates cannot get the maximum marks according to the mark grid, they can get 7 or 8 marks instead of perhaps only 5 or 6 if they were not prompted.

Teacher-Examiners have, in most cases conducted these Rôle-Plays well.

It is important to note that candidates performances are dependent upon not just the words and appropriate interventions of the Teacher-Examiner but by the tone in which the Rôle-Plays (and the Conversations) are conducted. It is important for the candidate to be made to feel as comfortable as possible, and a friendly and sympathetic approach is likely to bring out a better performance from the candidate than a stiff and formal one. That being said only a very small minority of candidates who entered the exam at Foundation Level scored less than 7 marks on the A Rôle-Plays.

Rôle-Play B

For technical reasons it was necessary to send out to Centres a revised Rôle-Plays sequence which removed the following Rôle-Plays B6, B7 and C4. It is necessary to point out that candidates who had already taken the oral test were not adversely affected on the conduct of the test nor the candidates were disadvantaged when conducting or performing the above mentioned Rôle-Plays.

These Rôle-Plays are designed to test the mid-range of candidates and are 'Overlap' tasks, taken by both Foundation and Higher candidates. These Rôle-Plays are based on symbols but there are statements in English telling the candidate what to do. The

majority of candidates clearly knew what the symbols meant and knew what to do even if, in some cases, their lack of Urdu did not enable them to complete the tasks successfully.

Most of these Rôle-Plays caused no significant problems either for candidates or for teacher-examiners. In the B Rôle-Plays the main difficulty for weaker candidates was not in interpreting the symbols, which caused little confusion, but having sufficient Urdu to cope and the use of English words for which there are simple everyday Urdu equivalents.

As far as English words are concerned, Key Vocabulary words are often words deliberately tested, such as days of the week, times and numbers, especially 1½ and 2½, colours, etc. Several of the B Rôle-Plays contained these vocabulary items.

It may be of use to centres to discuss one or two of the B Rôle-Plays that did produce some difficulties for some candidates:

B1 No significant problems

B2 No problems of note. Candidates could find the correct medical problem and ask about taking medicines.

B3 The second utterance in this Rôle-Play caused some problems, mainly due to the fact that weaker candidates were unclear about the Urdu words for days of the week or times of day. Some candidates simply said '*I want to go on Monday*, while others mixed up '*morning* and '*afternoon*.' The Teacher-Examiner should ask the candidate to clarify what they wanted and give them the chance to get a mark.

B4 In this Rôle-Play candidates had to order food in a restaurant. The third point, asking about the day's special dish caused difficulties for a quite a lot of otherwise competent candidates, who could not produce the right Urdu word for special - '*khas*', in most cases just using the English word. When candidates have used the English words the Teacher-Examiner should have asked something like "*Urdu mein special ko kya kehte heyñ?*"

Again the candidate could have gained some marks.

B5 This is another example where the Teacher-Examiner could help weaker candidates get a better mark. In the final utterance the candidate has to ask if a DVD is 'genuine'. When candidates have used the English words the Teacher-Examiner should have asked something like "*Urdu meñ genuine ko kya kehte heyñ?*"
Again the candidate could have gained some marks.

B6 Withdrawn

B7 Withdrawn

B8 Again, the use of common English words can cause problems. In the last utterance the candidate has to get parent's permission. The Urdu word is 'ijazat'. The Teacher-Examiner should have asked something like "*Urdu meñ permission ko kya kehte heyñ?*"
Again the candidate could have gained some marks.

Paper 2H (Higher)

At this level candidates perform one B Rôle-Play and one C Rôle-Play, and then hold a conversation on two topics as in Foundation but with questions involving greater complexity.

Over three quarters of the candidates were entered for Higher Tier and the performance was, on the whole very good. Compared with French or German, Urdu is in the fortunate position of having speakers maintaining strong family links and spoken contact via the internet and watching Urdu channels on Satellite TV helps to keep the spoken language alive.

Rôle-Play C

These are designed to test the more able candidates aiming for Grade C and above and are taken only by candidates entered for the Higher Tier. Candidates have to negotiate unpredictable situations using appropriate and accurate language. There are two marking criteria, one for communication and one for accuracy.

The main point in these Rôle-Plays is that candidates need to glean information from the stimulus which is in Urdu. Underneath are 5 bullet points in Urdu, two of which

are marked with a symbol '!' which indicates to the candidate that they have to respond to an unpredictable question from the Teacher-Examiner. Those who cannot read Urdu cannot know what key points they are expected to communicate.

The C Rôle-Plays have been by and large well handled by both Teacher-Examiners and candidates this year. The key to success is to read the handbook, do some preparation and read out the introduction given there to get the Rôle-play going.

Once again, apart from being unable to read Urdu, a common problem was incomplete performance. It is clearly stated in the guidance notes that the teacher-examiner must **not** rephrase unpredictable questions and must not give away key vocabulary in what they say to the candidates. Quite a few questions are effectively in two parts, as for example, in C5 point 5, where the candidate has to ask for information about '*tikon ki qimat awr mumkin asraat*'. If the candidate asks only one piece of information, the teacher should prompt by saying something like "*kwch awr puchna hai?*"

However if the teacher prompts '*tikon ke bare men*' OR '*qimat ke bare men?*' the candidate has effectively been given key words and cannot then achieve more than 5-6 marks. The same applies to many other Rôle-Play tasks, such as C3 task 3, where details are required, and in C6, tasks 2 and 4, and in C7, task 2.

On the other hand if a candidate, performing the same Role Play merely says for point 5, "*tikon ki qimat awr mumkin asraat*", they are not going to get full marks. For a start, they have not demonstrated understanding of what they have said, and secondly, they have not elaborated or expanded their responses.

Another Rôle-Play illustrates the importance of a Teacher Examiner's active role in maximising the candidate's performance. In C8, based on a buying a gift, one of the predictable responses, point 3, required the candidate to respond to the teacher's question "*aap kitne peyse kharch kar sakte hayn?*" "*How much can you spend?*" This is of course a very straight forward question but when a candidate simply says sums like "10 rupees" the natural reaction would be to say "What can I buy with that?"

In point 5 when they have agreed on buying a pen and are asked what should we get engraved on it some candidates spoke lengthy sentences like "mere piare dost ke

nam - ap ko salgyra mubarak ho" which would have to have had a huge pen to fit that much writing on it!

The point that needs to be made is that, at this level, candidates are expected to give more than one word or one-phrase answers to most of the questions in order to achieve full marks. The Mark criteria clearly states that the candidate must produce extended replies in order to get high marks. The guidance notes provided were sufficiently detailed to enable the teacher-examiner to play his or her part successfully; the fact that many did get it right indicates that it can be done.

Conversation

In this element of the Oral examination candidates are expected to prepare one topic instead of two. The second topic is now selected by the teacher-examiner from two alternatives supplied by Edexcel which are written in the Handbook following the B Rôle-Play performed by the candidate. Unfortunately some centres did not follow this instruction.

The Foundation and Higher conversations were, by and large, adequately conducted. Most difficulties arose when the types of questions did not let the candidates show their ability. It is vitally important that even the weakest candidates be given questions that test their ability to express Past, Present and Future tenses. This is vital if they are to achieve a C grade. The handbook does contain suitable questions for each topic at both levels but these are not intended to be a list of questions to be worked through from beginning to end. Questions should be tailored to suit the interests and abilities of the candidates and also teachers should pay attention to the candidates' responses and adapt their questions accordingly.

It is recommended that at Foundation Level candidates should be gently eased into their topic with very simple straightforward questions to get them going and that Higher Level candidates should be started off with a few Foundation Level questions to warm them up, rather than going straight in with difficult questions.

Please note that nearly all the questions given in the Handbook are open-ended questions, not those requiring yes/no answers, which tell us nothing about the candidates' linguistic ability.

This year there were the usual two longstanding issues which need discussing once again.

1 Pre-learnt material.

While it is to be expected that candidates will practise their chosen topics, this component of the examination is a Conversation. It is not a monologue or a speech and should not be prepared as such. Teacher Examiners are sometimes heard to say things such as "Start your presentation now." Edexcel does not specify a presentation, it specifies a Conversation. (It must be noted that AQA includes a Presentation.)

It is quite obvious when a candidate speaks without cease and without interruption for two or more minutes, and the Teacher Examiner does not ask a single question, that the piece has been learnt by rote. Sometimes the pauses occur at very odd moments, not at the end of sentence or phrase, as if they were the end of written lines, sounding as if a candidate has been reading from a script! This does not demonstrate understanding, nor the two-way interactive linguistic competence which is tested by a genuine conversation. Examiners are instructed to ignore such material and award marks only to genuine conversation.

2 Topic Coverage

The second problem is when Teacher-Examiners fail to cover more than one topic. In such cases, candidates cannot obtain more than half-marks 15/30. This occurred in a number of centres, in which all the candidates did the same topic, something which is not recommended.

It has already been noted that the teacher-examiner's performance is as important as the candidates in an oral examination. A sympathetic and friendly approach is always better than rigid formality. Taking an exam is a highly stressful business for both candidate and teacher-examiner and every step should be taken to make the candidate feel more relaxed.

As to candidates' performance, it is clear that there is a wide range of ability levels. That being said it is gratifying to note that, unlike in the main European languages, most candidates were entered for the higher level and assessment of their performance indicates that in the vast majority of cases, it was right to do so.

Recording

In the light of several incidents this year, it is necessary to direct teachers' attention to some important points regarding recordings

1. Before starting the exam, it is vital to make sure that the tape recorder is working properly.
2. If possible use a separate microphone rather than a built in one. The sound quality is so much better.

3. Point the microphone towards the candidate. It is more important to hear the candidate than the Teacher-Examiner.
4. After every recording wind back the tape for a few seconds and replay to ensure that the candidate's performance has been recorded and is audible.
5. If you use the pause button after recording introductions, candidate numbers, etc, or between candidates, PLEASE MAKE SURE that you switch off the pause button before conducting the next exam. If there is no candidate's voice on tape they can't receive marks and the centre will have to apply for special consideration from the Board.

Organization of Material in Centres

The main job of the Assessment team is to assess and mark the candidates' performance and that is a job requiring intense concentration. When material arrives from centres with tapes that are un- or partially labeled, and it is extremely time-consuming and wearisome to sort out unlabelled cassettes. Labels are given in the Handbook and should be used and fully completed and on the cassette itself the centre number, tape number and Sides A and B clearly marked. Also when recording candidates, clearly state the candidate's name and number before starting each examination. While it is clearly unrealistic to expect only one candidate on each side of a tape, it is possible to use c60 cassettes that can comfortably fit two candidates on each side.

Paper 3 - Reading and Responding

Paper 3F (Foundation)

The current format of the Specification has been in practice for six years and just over 2500 candidates were entered for the examination of which about 700 were entered for the Foundation Tier and the remainder for the Higher Tier.

Paper 3F is designed to test candidates in the G-C ability range. No lengthy written responses are required for this paper. Candidates are required to read the rubric in order to attempt the questions correctly.

Detailed consideration of individual questions is provided below:

Questions 1 and 2

These questions required candidates to match pictures to individual words and put the appropriate letter against the correct word. The majority of candidates scored full marks for these questions.

Question 3

This question required the candidates to tick five correct items they would choose to take with them for a school trip. About half the candidates scored full marks for this question while the rest either did not understand the rubric.

Question 4

This question was about different rooms in a house and places around their area. Candidates had to match the word/s with a short statement in the box. Most candidates scored full marks for this question.

Question 5 (overlap)

Candidates had to read a short passage about a very common situation at the airport and tick five correct statements from the ten given. This required careful reading of the text. Quite a few candidates scored good marks. The number of candidates who ticked more than five answers was quite low this year as they must have paid attention to the fact that they could lose marks for doing so.

Question 6 (overlap)

Question 7 (overlap)

This question was based on a short text where candidates were required to read a short passage about the description of a house and match sentence halves based on the given information. A majority of candidates found this exercise challenging.

Question 8 (overlap)

This question was based on a short text about cricket. Candidates had to read the text and do a gap filling exercise with the help of vocabulary given. The English letters alongside might have confused some candidates but most chose the correct word or corresponding letter correctly. A minority of candidates misunderstood the demands of the question losing marks as a result.

Question 9 (English question)

This question was based on a very short notice about a museum and its opening times. Candidates were required to answer the questions based on the information given in English. Most candidates did not understand the title "Museum" writing 'funny place' or 'strange place' as their answer to the first part of the question. Most candidates lost marks on the second part as well not being able to transfer meaning of 'Monday to Saturday' and '9.00 AM to 6.00 PM'. Most candidates scored the one mark for 'free entry' .

Question 10 (English question)

This question was a notice about a branch of the Post Office closing down. Some candidates could not transfer meaning of post office and about 50% could understand the rest of the information either. The range of marks scored for this question varied from 0 to 5 with very few candidates achieving maximum marks. This demonstrates the poor quality of reading with understanding meaning.

Paper 3H (Higher)

The Higher Paper is designed to discriminate between candidates aiming for the C to A* Grades, although a D can be awarded to those not achieving a C. The paper consisted of eight questions, four of which (questions 1 to 4) were overlap questions. As expected the responses for these questions were far better at higher Level than those doing them at Foundation Level. Questions 5,6,7 and 8 were intended to differentiate between the B,A & A* grades.

Question 1 (overlap)

Candidates had to read a short text about a very common situation at the airport and then tick five correct statements from the ten given. This required careful reading of the text. Most candidates scored 4 to 5 marks for this question. Very few lost marks for ticking more the required five.

Question 2 (overlap)

Question 3 (overlap)

This question was based on a short text about a house where candidates were required to match sentence halves based on the given information. Once again most candidates scored full marks while a very few lost two marks as a result of matching one sentence incorrectly leading to another being matched incorrectly.

Question 4 (overlap)

This question was based on a short text about cricket. Candidates had to read the text and do a gap filling exercise with the help of vocabulary given. The English letters alongside might have confused some candidates but most chose the correct word or corresponding letter correctly. A minority of candidates lost a mark or two but it was very well attempted by the majority of candidates.

Question 5

This question required the candidates to read a text about reading habits or the lack of it. They were then required to do a gap filling exercise with the help of short phrases. Most candidates scored full marks for this question while a few could not select the appropriate response and lost a mark or two but on the whole this question was very well attempted.

Question 6

Question 7

This question was aimed at A* level and required answers to be written in Urdu. Candidates had to read the text about gardening and its benefits. The answers required were not lengthy responses as short phrases would have sufficed. Most candidates' performance was very poor for this question. They did not acquire marks for 'lifting' chunks of information from the text. A majority of candidates copied the whole of the three sentences containing the answer. This clearly indicates that they did not have the ability to select and write the information in their own words hence the loss of marks. Candidates must be taught to write brief answers in their own words and not to 'lift' information.

Question 8

This question is aimed at the achievement level A-A*. This question consisted of a text about a very well known figure in the British society and his achievements. The candidates were expected to read it and answer questions based on the text, in English. Most candidates scored good marks in this question but very few scored full marks as some candidates tried to answer from their own information rather than from what was in the text. The other weaknesses that came to light were, the candidates could not transfer meaning for 'training centres' and 'deprived'. Most candidates lost marks in these parts of the question.

Papers 4F and 4H - Foundation and Higher Writing

Both of these papers involved approximately the same level of difficulty and standard as in previous years. The overall performance of candidates was similar to that of the cohort last year. Examiners noted some outstanding performances from candidates in Paper 4H. Similarly, candidates at Foundation Tier were able to write their best Urdu and scored well. Like previous years, the English stimulus certainly helped weaker candidates to understand what they had to do. There were some excellent Paper 4F scripts gaining in excess of 40 out of 50 marks. Those candidates may have been able to gain a higher grade on Paper 4H.

Foundation Question 1

This question required the candidates to make a list of 10 items which they would take with them on holiday. The illustrations at the top of the page did help the candidates and most of them gained reasonable marks. However the number of those who scored full marks was quite low.

Foundation Question 2

In this question, candidates were required to produce 5 verbs conjugated in the third person singular present tense and to interpret 5 pictures as a noun. Although some candidates scored full marks for this question, many were unable to produce correct verb forms in agreement to the gender.

Foundation Question 3

In this question, candidates had to write a short note to their parents and there were five bullet points to be covered. This question proved to be very accessible and most candidates gained good marks, although more for communication and content and less for knowledge and application of language.

Foundation Question 4/Higher Question 1 (overlap)

Question (b) proved to be more popular of the two alternative questions, possibly because it enabled candidates to draw on well-established and familiar categories of

vocabulary and structures. Many Foundation candidates succeeded in communicating the main points but lost marks for weaknesses in application and accuracy of language. At Higher Tier, most candidates produced coherent responses, longer than required, but clearly at ease with a range of tenses, opinions and descriptions.

Although less popular at both tiers, Question (a) was fairly well done by those who opted for it, and seemed fairly accessible to all levels of ability. At Foundation Tier, most responses were short and simplistic, but conveyed the main points reasonably well. The third bullet point of this question was misunderstood by some candidates.

Higher Question 2

Question (b) was by far the more popular option, giving candidates an opportunity to use their imagination and experience of attending wedding parties. Most candidates were clearly well trained to write fluently about their elder brother's wedding and were able to express quite sophisticated ideas and opinions.

Although a minority choice, question (a) stimulated many excellent scripts. Generally, the candidates who opted for this question performed well and tended to produce concise and coherent responses.

However, a number of candidates, at Higher Tier, did not have the linguistic resources and range of vocabulary to produce work of sufficient quality to score good marks. Quite a few candidates lacked appropriate skill to produce longer sequences of writing.

Paper 4C - Coursework

There was a wide range of performance and the overall standard was slightly better compared with previous year. Most of the chosen tasks were appropriate but the approach was not suitable in many cases. There was little evidence of linked-research as there were several instances of identical or near-identical pieces of work. Copying out from references material/text books was also common.

As in previous years many centres did not provide suitable stimulus for the tasks and some centres even failed to provide any stimulus. Some centres appeared unsure of the difference between stimulus and reference materials. The later became a problem when candidates copied whole chunks of language and information from them and in many cases the same identical work was seen across a whole centre. The more a candidate copies from the stimulus/reference materials, the lower the mark will be. Groups of candidates who produced virtually identical pieces of work can not score high marks. Some teachers/centre still award high marks to identical work which does not deserve more than a few marks. Similarly, short pieces of work cannot score high marks.

Topics overlap was once again a great cause of concern. Each folder should contain three units of work from the main topic areas and there should not be more than one unit from one topic area. There were several examples of combinations of coursework units that were unacceptable e.g. a description of school and work experience (both Education, Training and Employment) or an account of a holiday and a description of a town (both Home and Abroad). When such combinations appeared in a folder, the higher of the two moderated marks was taken and the lower mark discounted completely.

Centres also need to be aware that it is their responsibility to ensure that the work submitted by candidates is their own. In the coursework candidates may copy work from fellow candidates or receive outside assistance, this goes against the spirit of the paper. Centres should be diligent that candidates do produce their own work.

Centres are reminded that they must comply with the basic requirements of the coursework option including the following:

- a) one front sheet per candidate correctly filled in and signed;
- b) first and final drafts and copies of all stimulus/reference materials must be included in the sample sent for moderation;
- c) at least one third of the work must be done under controlled conditions and this should be indicated on the front sheets and
- d) all documentation, such as OPTEM should be correctly completed and sent with the sample.

Statistics

Paper 1F - Listening and Responding

Grade	Max. Mark	C	D	E	F	G
Raw Boundary Mark	50	38	33	29	25	21
Uniform Boundary Mark	59	50	40	30	20	10

Paper 1H - Listening and Responding

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E
Raw Boundary Mark	50	46	40	34	28	20	16
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	80	70	60	50	40	35

Paper 2F - Speaking

Grade	Max. Mark	C	D	E	F	G
Raw Boundary Mark	50	27	23	19	15	11
Uniform Boundary Mark	59	50	40	30	20	10

Paper 2H - Speaking

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E
Raw Boundary Mark	150	140	134	128	123	117	114
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	80	70	60	50	40	35

Paper 3F - Reading and Responding

Grade	Max. Mark	C	D	E	F	G
Raw Boundary Mark	50	33	29	26	23	20
Uniform Boundary Mark	59	50	40	30	20	10

Paper 3H - Reading and Responding

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E
Raw Boundary Mark	50	41	34	27	20	17	15
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	80	70	60	50	40	35

Paper 4F - Writing

Grade	Max. Mark	C	D	E	F	G
Raw Boundary Mark	50	35	32	29	26	23
Uniform Boundary Mark	59	50	40	30	20	10

Paper 4H - Writing

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E
Raw Boundary Mark	50	38	34	30	26	20	17
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	80	70	60	50	40	35

Paper 4C - Written Coursework

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Raw Boundary Mark	60	51	45	39	33	27	21	15	9
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20	10

Overall Subject Boundaries

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Total Uniform Mark	360	320	280	240	200	160	120	80	40

Notes

Boundary mark: the minimum mark required by a candidate to qualify for a given grade.

Further copies of this publication are available from
Edexcel Publications, Adamsway, Mansfield, Notts, NG18 4FN

Telephone 01623 467467
Fax 01623 450481

Email publications@linneydirect.com

Order Code UG 020469 Summer 2008

For more information on Edexcel qualifications, please visit www.edexcel.org.uk/qualifications

Edexcel Limited. Registered in England and Wales no.4496750
Registered Office: One90 High Holborn, London, WC1V 7BH