



National Qualifications 2013 Internal Assessment Report

French

The purpose of this report is to provide feedback to centres on verification in National Qualifications in this subject.

National Courses

French Intermediate 1

French Intermediate 2

French Higher

General comments

In general, centres are very familiar with the requirements of both the content and the conduct of the Speaking Test at all three levels.

This year, there were only **four** centres out of a total of 29 where grades were discordant and that were therefore **Not Accepted**. This compares favourably with eight centres that were Not Accepted last year.

Of the centres whose grades were not concordant with national standards, **two** were Not Accepted as a result of over-generous marking (one at Intermediate **1** level only and the other at **both** Intermediate 2 and Higher levels) and **two** as a result of over-severe marking (again, one at Intermediate **1** level only and the other at **both** Intermediate 2 and Higher levels).

Course Arrangements, Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

It was clear from the conduct of the tests that the vast majority of the in-school assessors are very familiar with all of the above.

Evidence Requirements

Centres are clearly aware of the requirement to submit CDs or cassette recordings of candidate performance.

However, despite the process having now been in operation for several years, there remain a number of centres who continue to submit incorrectly completed forms. Others still submit extraneous materials (NABs, prelims, etc) which are not required.

There is still evidence that some centres omit to check recordings on completion of the test. On occasion, it was difficult for the verifiers to assess a candidate's performance due to his/her distance from the microphone.

Most centres take steps to ensure that the tests are conducted in appropriate surroundings, eliminating the possibility of disruptions and background noise in the course of the test.

Administration of assessments

Almost all of the centres verified administered the tests in accordance with the available guidelines and documentation, using appropriate assessments at all three levels.

In centres where more than one interlocutor was involved in conducting the tests (usually the case where the centre presented candidates at more than one level), it was pleasing to note that there was clear evidence that cross-marking and internal verification had taken place.

At Intermediate 1 level, some centres showed a tendency to ask too much of the candidates in the course of the test, going well beyond the recommended minimum requirements laid out in the guidelines. This was not always to the candidate's advantage. Candidates who followed over-rehearsed role-plays tended to perform less well than those who took part in more open-ended scenarios.

The duration of candidate performances remains an issue in some centres, especially in the Discussion element at Intermediate 2 and Higher levels, where there was frequent evidence of unnecessarily prolonged exchanges, often to the detriment of the candidate.

Areas of good practice

Several members of the verification team commented on the fact that there was real and positive interaction between candidate and interlocutor, leading to excellent performances. This was commended in the feedback to the centres.

A supportive and involved approach by the interlocutor leads to the candidate performing at a high level and gives him/her the opportunity to demonstrate the ability to communicate in a natural manner on a range of topics.

Specific areas for improvement

Although there was less evidence this year of over rehearsal of the Discussion element of the test, which has often been the case in previous years, there were still some instances where this element of the test was effectively no more than a repetition of the presentation, with the interlocutor failing to stretch the candidates, thus limiting the possibility of their attaining a grade any higher than Satisfactory in this part of the test at both Intermediate 2 and Higher levels.

The best performances at those two levels were those which involved the candidate in real and spontaneous conversations, with the interlocutor reacting to the candidate's responses and encouraging meaningful and positive dialogue.

A major issue again this year was the extent to which poor pronunciation impacted on candidate performance, especially at Higher level, where basic pronunciation errors are clearly inappropriate. Too many centres fail to take account of this essential criterion when grading their candidates' performances.