



Internal Assessment Report 2010: French (008)

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

National Courses

Titles/levels of National Courses verified

French Intermediate 1
French Intermediate 2
French Higher

General comments

In general, centres have a very good understanding of the requirements of both the conduct and the assessment of the speaking test, which was the element of the Course verified at all three levels.

However, there was an increased number of Not Accepted decisions this year, with five centres out of a total of 30 verified being Not Accepted.

One of the five centres requested a follow-up development visit which was extremely worthwhile.

Almost all assessors are very familiar with the Course Arrangements documents, Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials.

Higher exemplification materials for the speaking test were updated in November 2008.

Centres are clearly aware of the requirement to submit cassette/CD recordings of candidate performance.

However, there are still a few instances of centres submitting incorrectly completed forms, sending in extraneous materials (eg NABs, candidate notes, etc) and failing to check recordings.

Most centres administer the tests in accordance with the available guidelines, using appropriate assessments at all three levels. In centres where more than one interlocutor is involved in the conduct of the tests at the same level, it is clear that departmental discussion, involving cross marking and internal verification, has taken place.

Areas of good practice

In the majority of cases, there was real interaction between interlocutor and candidate, and members of the verifying team commented positively on the supportive manner in which the majority of interlocutors conducted the test. Where this happens, it is clear that the candidate benefits by feeling much more at ease in what is a natural conversation which gives him/her the opportunity to demonstrate the ability to communicate meaningfully in the language in question.

At Higher level, centres whose candidates' choice of topic was more appropriate to this level tended to have better results, as this again gave the candidates a wider

range of possibilities and contexts in which they could demonstrate their language ability.

Areas for improvement

In some centres there is still a tendency for the discussion element of the speaking test at Intermediate 2 and Higher levels to be a series of mini-monologues, with the candidate being over-prepared and the preparation over-rehearsed. This has been highlighted in the reports back to those centres.

On other occasions, over-frequent interlocutor intervention tended to inhibit candidate performance.

As is stated above, the best results tend to be associated with spontaneous and natural conversations, in which the interlocutor reacts to the candidate's statements and encourages him/her to develop themes of interest.

Pronunciation remains an issue, especially at Higher level, with mispronunciation of key words and poor intonation detracting in many cases from what might otherwise have been a good performance. Some centres seem to ignore this important criterion when they are deciding on their assessment of the candidate performance, with the result that there can be a discordance between the centre assessment and the verifier assessment.