



**National Qualifications 2011  
Internal Assessment Report  
Cantonese and Mandarin**

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

Cantonese, Mandarin (Simplified) and Mandarin (Traditional): Intermediate 1

Cantonese, Mandarin (Simplified) and Mandarin (Traditional): Intermediate 2

Cantonese, Mandarin (Simplified) and Mandarin (Traditional): Higher

### General comments

This year represented the third year of National Course delivery at Intermediate 1 and 2 levels, and the second for Higher and Advanced Higher. Candidates were presented for Mandarin (Simplified) and Mandarin (Traditional) at Intermediate 1 and 2 and Higher levels. Candidates were also presented at Intermediate 1 and Higher level in Cantonese. The verification of Speaking was sampled across the three levels.

At Intermediate 1 and 2 levels, Verifiers were pleased to note that centres continue to build on sound practice. At Higher, centres had generally prepared candidates very well for the activity, and are to be commended for the manner in which tests were conducted.

Centres are encouraged to share Pegged Mark Descriptors with candidates. This will allow preparation to focus on successful aspects of performance. SQA hosted a support event for practitioners in January 2011, and activities focused on several areas of performance, including Speaking.

Again, centres should note that judging candidate performance should be done by means of the Pegged Mark Descriptors only, and that candidates from native speaker and non-native speaker backgrounds should be assessed identically against these criteria.

On the whole, performances were very good, and centres are to be congratulated on their preparation for the activities.

### Course Arrangements documents, unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

Verification activities made it clear that centres on the whole were familiar with approaches, and most had clearly made effective use of published guidance.

### Evidence Requirements

Evidence submitted indicated clear understanding.

### Areas of good practice/areas for improvement

At all levels there were again performances where candidates had engaged very well with the task. Skilled interlocutors facilitated authentic exchanges which allowed candidates to develop ideas and express themselves clearly and skilfully. At Intermediate 2 and Higher, for instance, many candidates coped well with the transition from presentation to the less predictable demands of the discussion. Notably, several candidates were able to speak at some length on topics which interested them, and coped very well with the demands of the task.

### **Specific areas for improvement**

At Intermediate 1, there were a few instances of performances which would have benefited from a greater degree of reaction and intervention on the part of the interlocutor, although there was less evidence of this than in previous years. The role of the interlocutor in encouraging and drawing out can be crucial, particularly when candidates are reticent and lack confidence. It is entirely appropriate in such instances for interlocutors to repeat, rephrase and allow time for response. At this level some performances were short, which did not allow candidates to express themselves adequately.

At Intermediate 2 and Higher, only a few performances were over-prepared and rigidly structured. Such performances can be restrictive for candidates, and rarely allow for a degree of spontaneity which more able candidates, for instance, find both rewarding and challenging.