



**National Qualifications 2011
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

Titles/levels of National Courses verified

French: Intermediate 1

French: Intermediate 2

French: Higher

General comments

In general, centres have a good understanding of the requirements of both the conduct and the assessment of the Speaking test at all three levels.

However, there were more Not Accepted decisions this year, with six centres out of a total of thirty verified being Not Accepted (although one of these was as a result of the submission of blank CDs, and this problem was quickly rectified by the centre).

Of the five centres which submitted marks that were not concordant with national standards, four were Not Accepted as a result of over-generous marking, and one as a result of over-severe marking.

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

Almost all 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, there are still many instances of the submission of incorrectly completed forms.

Some centres fail to check recordings, and some still conduct the assessments in inappropriate surroundings and fail to ensure that there is no disruption in the course of the assessments (background noise, interruptions, etc).

Administration of assessments

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

In centres where more than one interlocutor is involved in conducting the tests at the same level, it is usually clear that departmental discussion, involving cross-marking and internal verification, has taken place.

The choice of topics presented and/or discussed was occasionally inappropriate, especially at Higher level, where topic areas which are more suited to Intermediate 2 level did not give candidates the opportunity to develop and demonstrate the level of language required for Higher.

Areas of good practice/areas for improvement

In most centres, there was real and positive interaction between interlocutor and candidate, and members of the verification team were impressed by the supportive manner in which most interlocutors conducted the test. It was clear that this relaxed approach brings the best out of the candidates, making them feel much more at ease in what is a natural conversation which gives them the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to communicate in a meaningful fashion.

At Higher, candidates whose choice of topic(s) was more appropriate to the level tended to achieve better results, as this gave them the opportunity to develop a wider range of contexts in which they could demonstrate their language resource.

Centres should be reminded that the choice of topic(s) can impact considerably on the outcome of the assessment.

Specific areas for improvement

Again this year, in some centres there remains a tendency for the **Discussion** element of the Speaking test at both Intermediate 2 and Higher levels to consist of a series of rehearsed monologues, with the candidate being over-prepared to the extent that there is little or no spontaneity in the performance. This has been highlighted in reports back to those centres.

On other occasions, Verifiers had the impression that the candidates were simply being asked a list of prepared questions which were anticipated by the candidate. This is clearly not in the spirit of the test.

As stated above, the best performances at both Intermediate 2 and Higher levels tended to be those which took the form of 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 basic pronunciation errors (eg the sounding of the final letter **s**) detracting in many cases from the overall performance.

Some centres still seem to ignore this very important criterion when assessing their candidates' performance.