



National Qualifications 2024: Advanced Higher Modern Languages

Performance–talking: Visiting assessment guidance for teachers and lecturers, January 2024

Note

The modern languages covered by this guidance are Cantonese, French, Gaelic (Learners), German, Italian, Mandarin (Simplified and Traditional) and Spanish.

1 Date and arrangements

The visiting period is **12 February to 22 March 2024**. The assessment must be carried out during this time. SQA requires you to be as flexible as possible when arranging a date with the visiting assessor.

If the date and/or time proposed by the visiting assessor (VA) is unsuitable, or if the majority of candidates will not be available, you must immediately inform the visiting examining team at SQA. The Helpdesk opening hours are:

Monday – Thursday: 08:30 – 16:30

Friday: 08:30 – 15:30

(call 0345 213 6612 option 3 or email visiting.examiningsqa.org.uk)

This is necessary to minimise disruption of the VA's programme of visits.

Please notify SQA of any change in the numbers of candidates.

2 Assessment arrangements

It is not the VA's role to make any decision on assessment arrangements. You must contact SQA's Assessment Arrangements team (aarequests@sqa.org.uk) to agree assessment arrangements before your VA visits.

The deadline for submitting Assessment Arrangement requests is Thursday **30 November 2024**.

Please discuss any assessment arrangements that are in place for your candidates with your VA.

3 Environment

Please provide suitably quiet surroundings for conducting the assessment — any distracting noise may adversely affect candidates' performance.

- ◆ Candidates **must not** bring mobile phones or other types of mobile technology with them to the assessment.
- ◆ You **must not** be present during the assessment.

4 Procedure

Candidates are assessed individually, and SQA co-ordinators must ensure that they are available in good time for the start of their scheduled appointment. Candidates are normally assessed in alphabetical order of surnames. However, if some candidates can be more conveniently assessed out of this order, you can arrange a revised timetable.

As soon as the VA arrives, you must inform them of any change to the order of candidates being assessed, and/or provide them with a revised timetable.

5 Timings

The assessment of each candidate takes approximately, and no more than, 20 minutes. Candidates must be available at 25-minute intervals. Six candidates can be presented in a session. The normal times of assessment sessions are:

Morning session	9.15 am to 12.00 noon
Afternoon session	1.15 pm to 4.00 pm

These times can be modified, in consultation with the VA, to suit local conditions or the VA's travel arrangements. You do not need to inform SQA about any changes in session schedules.

6 Recording

All candidate performances are recorded digitally by the VA on equipment supplied by SQA. Your centre does not need to provide equipment for this purpose.

7 Changes in candidates' entries

If you are presenting additional candidates, you must inform the visiting examining team as soon as possible and well in advance of the VA's visit. You must also ensure that a completed STL/AH form is provided for each additional candidate and submitted to the visiting examining team.

Your SQA co-ordinator must inform SQA through your centre's management information system (for example SQA Connect or SEEMiS) about additional or withdrawn candidates and candidates who have changed level.

Your SQA co-ordinator must also complete an Attendance Register Supplement form for any additional candidates, which the VA will return to SQA along with the Ex6 Attendance Registers.

8 Absent candidates

It is important that candidates are available on the day of the assessment: they may not be absent without good reason.

If any candidates are absent during the visiting assessor's visit, it is your responsibility to submit a request for a return visit. You should complete this immediately once the visiting assessor has finished, along with details of acceptable cause for absence, and with a written note of approval from the head of centre.

A request for a revisit can only be made if the candidate is unwell or is representing their country in a sporting event. Candidates must not miss the assessment due to a holiday arrangement.

A request for a revisit should be sent by email to visiting.examining@sqa.org.uk.

SQA does not require you to submit a medical certificate with your request for a revisit. We only require the reason the candidate was absent from the assessment.

SQA requires centres to hold appropriate documentation on the circumstance to authenticate and/or support the request for an absentee revisit. You are not required to specify the nature of a medical condition when submitting a request, but you must hold documentation, such as a letter or statement from the head of centre, confirming that it affected the candidate. If an absentee candidate is unlikely to be able to be assessed within the visiting period, please inform SQA of this as soon as possible.

Note: visiting assessors do not make arrangements for return visits, the visiting examining team collates requests and allocates visiting assessors accordingly.

9 Withdrawn candidates

If a candidate has withdrawn or is absent with no acceptable reason, you must inform the VA who will record this on the Ex6 Attendance Register and return it to SQA.

10 The assessment

The assessment takes the form of a discussion between the candidate and the VA, sampling across at least one context and related topics studied by the candidate as part of the Advanced Higher course. This sampling also includes discussion of the work the candidate has undertaken in compiling the portfolio.

Candidate performance is assessed against marking information in the [Advanced Higher Modern Languages Course Specification](#).

Before the assessment takes place, you must provide SQA with a completed STL/AH form for each candidate. You can find guidance on how to complete this form under the Visiting Examining tab on the [Advanced Higher Modern Languages webpage](#).

It is important that candidates complete the form in English.

It is your responsibility to ensure these forms are submitted to visiting.examining@sqa.org.uk no later than **26 January 2024**. Centres should submit their STL/AH forms for each modern language in separate emails.

Please note: SQA only accepts forms that have been scanned into PDFs or Word documents. This allows teachers to monitor and check candidates' submissions.

It is important to remember that the performance–talking is not a presentation: it is an opportunity for candidates to give their opinions and views on aspects of the course.

11 Feedback on the day

VAs may provide you with a brief overview of candidates' performance, but will not disclose any marks awarded.

12 Problems or disagreements

If any problems or disagreements arise during the visiting assessor's visit, you must inform the head of centre and/or deputy and forward a detailed report to SQA at visiting.examining@sqa.org.uk. The visiting assessor must not be contacted directly by centres, candidates or parents.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why hasn't the VA contacted our centre to arrange dates?

VAs do not receive their allocation until the end of January. You should contact the SQA Visiting Examining team if your VA has not been in touch by the start of the visiting assessment period.

What happens if we are unable to agree a mutually suitable date with the VA?

Contact the Visiting Examining Helpdesk and provide the reason a suitable date cannot be reached.

Why has the VA not arrived at the scheduled time?

Contact the Visiting Examining Helpdesk, who will attempt to contact the VA.

We have a candidate who is to be assessed at another centre. What do we need to do?

You will have received an email explaining this process on 30 October 2023. This email also contains a link to the online Alternative Assessment Centre form. This form should be completed and submitted to SQA to allow the necessary arrangements to be made. Your candidate will be assessed at the alternative centre.

It is your centre's responsibility to ensure that travel arrangements for your candidate are in place on the day of the assessment.

A candidate has missed their assessment through illness. What should we do?

You must submit a request for a revisit approved by your head of centre or their depute, including details of the cause of absence, for each candidate who has missed their assessment.

You should send the request for a revisit by email to the SQA Visiting Examining team (visiting.examining@sqa.org.uk) as soon as possible following the assessment.

Do we need to submit a medical certificate for our absent candidate?

No, SQA only requires the reason for the absence and for the head of centre to confirm the absence.