ANNEX B

Do the new Modern Foreign Languages A levels succeed in assessing the required skills and content in the most appropriate way?

This report follows Ofqual's research workshop on MFL on 17 January 2019 to discuss 'the reformed A level qualifications and their role in preparing students for higher education language study'; participants were asked to 'consider the extent to which the new A levels succeed in assessing the required skills and content in the most appropriate way'.[1] Time did not permit thorough scrutiny of exam papers, and further comment is therefore provided in this report on the basis of the German 2018 A level exam papers set by AQA and Pearson, focusing on Paper 1 (listening, reading, writing, translation). Ofqual's consultation of HE teachers on the appropriateness of the exam papers is to be welcomed, given the crucial part assessment plays in delivering the aims of the reformed A level qualification. I am grateful to have been involved in the workshop.

Analysis of the 2018 German A level Paper 1 reveals fundamental shortcomings which suggest that its design and linguistic demands need to be thoroughly revised to make it fit for purpose. Moreover, comparison with an equivalent 2017 exam paper (old qualification) indicates a more long-standing pattern of shortcomings that preclude thorough and effective preparation of students for higher education language study. These have interacted with severe and unreliable grading, the participation of native speakers in exam cohorts, and optionality of MFL at GCSE to create a significantly negative impact on the health of the subject.

Analysis of the MFL A level exam papers in languages other than German is neeeded to ascertain to what extent shortcomings identified for German are applicable to other languages. Whether or not there is significant variation, the identified shortcomings indicate a lack of effective quality control suited to ensuring that assessment of the reformed qualification is consistently fit for purpose. Excessive difficulty of exam papers impacts negatively on fairness and reliability of grading, and it impacts more than any other factor on learner experience of the subject. Coupled with severe and unreliable grading, excessive difficulty of exam papers and the course defined by them are critical in driving learners out of the subject especially if other factors are also exerting a negative impact on that subject.

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[1] Invitation by Ofqual to the rescheduled workshop, sent to selected language learning professionals in higher education and subject associations, 12 December 2018; first letter of invitation from Ofqual, 19 November 2018.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1) The context of the reformed MFL A levels

The reformed MFL A levels are key for the learner's experience of the subject and play a key role with respect to the sharp drop in the number of students taking MFL A levels. With many factors impacting negatively on take-up and progression in MFL, the reformed A level exams and the course they define are especially critical. They must provide
- an appealing, motivating and effective learning experience
- an exam experience that is negotiable, and effective in rewarding systematic learning
- an exam outcome that is fair, seen to be fair, and useful for candidates, universities and employers.

It must be evident to students, parents and schools that choosing a modern foreign language is a good choice and in no way disadvantageous for the student choosing the subject at A level.

The old A-level fulfilled none of these criteria. Analysis of the June 2018 German A level Paper 1 demonstrates that the new A-level exam papers are even less suited to meeting those aims.

2) The 'difficulty' of MFL A levels and the knock-on effects for MFL GCSE

There is now a considerable body of evidence to show that perceived excessive 'difficulty' has for a long time been driving learners out of MFL. Analysis of the A level exam papers demonstrates that these are in actual fact too difficult. This also has far-reaching negative knock-on effects for GCSE exams and the GCSE course.

3) Types of linguistic and communicative difficulty confronting candidates in the exam papers

Excessive and uncontrolled difficulty of the 2018 German A level papers (Paper 1, AQA and Pearson) is evident with respect to vocabulary, grammar, register and the communicative clarity of the texts.

4) Content and assessment: linguistic challenge in the light of skills and knowledge assessed

The reformed A level has considerably extended the range of tasks candidates must perform by comparison with the previous A level, though the ALCAB MFL panel 'did not seek to increase the difficulty of the GCE' (ALCAB Report, p. 14). It follows that it is vital for the level of linguistic difficulty to be calibrated appropriately so candidates can use their acquired language skills appropriately and flexibly in responding to the challenge.

5) Design of exam papers, range and number of tasks, and time available

The design of Paper 1 is not fit for purpose. It needs to be simplified and linguistic difficulty must be robustly controlled to make it appropriate for non-native speaker candidates, offering candidates across the attainment spectrum the same opportunity to access grades as they would have in comparable subjects.

6) Linguistic difficulty in the reformed A level by comparison with the pre-2018 qualification

Comparison with the pre-2018 paper equivalent to current Paper 1 suggests that there has been no fundamental change in the format of assessing listening and reading comprehension while the A level syllabus overall has become substantially more demanding. Excessive linguistic difficulty of the exam papers is a long-standing anomaly, and the reformed A level simply piles on more demands. In order to prevent over-loading learners further, and ensure that the reformed A level can meet its objectives, it is essential to ensure that excessive linguistic difficulty is effectively addressed.

7) MFL A level assessment as preparation for university study of Modern Languages

The purpose of reforming A level qualifications was to make them better suited to preparing students for university study. The current Paper 1 is unsuitable. A simplified format and controlled difficulty would not entail 'dumbing down' but would provide scope for learners to develop effective learning strategies, establish a solid grasp of the fundamentals of the language, and develop deep understanding of how it works.

8) Implications for the debate on severe grading of MFL, and for the future of the subject

The format of Paper 1 and its linguistic content have direct significance for severe grading and the 'native speaker' issue. It needs to be simplified and the linguistic difficulty needs to be appropriately controlled in order to make the MFL A level exams fit for purpose.

1   The context of the reformed MFL A levels

The appropriateness of the reformed MFL A levels and specifcally the exam papers needs to be assessed in the light of historical and current framework conditions for language learning in UK schools, the impact of which is often mutually enhancing.

Perceptions of languages in the UK context

The UK has long viewed itself as a nation with poor language competence and poor language learning ability. This has contributed to the perception that languages are 'difficult'. The rise of English as the main global lingua franca and the language of the internet has exacerbated this perception while creating a context in which it can plausibly be argued that a) knowledge of foreign languages is not necessary for practical purposes, e.g. travel; and b) competence in English is now so widespread in other nations that learning foreign languages is pointless for native speakers of English as they will not be able to compete, or use their foreign language in practice. By comparison with young learners in non-Anglophone contexts who learn English, and thereby build a strong basis for learning further foreign languages, young learners in England frequently face the following challenges:

- Lacking ambient context in which competence in one or more foreign languages is seen as essential;
- Lacking incentives to learn a language beyond English;
- Lacking possibilities for immersion in the target language, except where opportunities to travel are available;
- Lack of clarity concerning the most useful first foreign language to learn.

A coherent, ambitious and proactive national languages policy and substantial investment are necessary to counteract these negative effects. In the absence of significant policy measures and investment, it is especially important for qualifications to be attractive in themselves and for assessment to be such that it rigorously avoids acting as a further disincentive.

MFL in UK schools

Over the past two decades, changes to the GCSE and A level system and specifically to MFL, under-investment and external factors have not just failed to counteract the above challenges, but have exacerbated them:

- MFL was made optional at GCSE in 2004, and since then has competed with other optional subjects for around 4-5 non-compulsory GCSE slots out of a total of typically around 10 GCSE subjects (English language, English literature, maths, 3 or 2 sciences/combined science are compulsory), significantly reducing entries overall, and entries in more than one MFL.
- Financial pressures in schools have put pressure on MFL departments, especially since student numbers are fragmented if a school offers more than one language, a factor rendered more critical as numbers diminish.
- A leaking pipeline, diminishing numbers of dual linguists and more recently Brexit developments have contributed to a serious teacher shortage in MFL.
- Vigorous promotion of STEM subjects and investment by its subject community over the past decade have increasingly encouraged pupils to choose three sciences instead of combined science at GCSE and to take sciences further at A level. Such promotion coupled with the non-optionality of GCSE sciences has successfully counteracted negative impacts of severe grading (see Ofqual Decision, p. 10), and has impacted negatively on numbers in other subjects.
- Abolition of AS level as a stepping stone to A level, and reduction of post-GCSE subjects from four to three, have impacted significantly on progression in MFL beyond GCSE, from a low level given the optionality of MFL at GCSE by comparison with e.g. sciences and English.

The last ten years have seen a very marked drop in A level entries in French (from c. 15,000 to under 8,000) and German (proportionately similar to French, to under 3,000), with Spanish increasing until 2017 and then

falling slightly, but without making up for the fall in French and German entries overall.[2] There has been a very significant negative impact of falling take-up and progression on provision in schools and universities.

Take-up and progression in MFL is particularly low in schools in deprived areas and schools characterised by low attainment, with schools in the highest quintile for free school meal eligibility being over three times more likely to have low participation rates in languages in Year 10 than schools in the lowest quintile.[3]

The critical role of GCSE and A level grading standards in MFL in the current context

With many factors impacting negatively on take-up and progression in MFL, it is essential that grading standards should be fair and be seen to be fair at any stage where the learner is able to choose between MFL and another subject – i.e. since 2004 both when it comes to GCSE choices and when it comes to A level choices. It must be evident to students, parents and schools that choosing a modern foreign language is in no way disadvantageous for the student with respect to the following:

- Expectation of a grade that is as high as in a comparable subject for equivalent performance, and consequently serves the purpose of giving the student maximum choice with respect to university entry.
- Grading that is reliable with respect to rewarding performance.

Conversely, the impact of grading that is, or is seen to be, severe by comparison with other comparable optional subjects is likely to impact negatively on the health of the subject, in a way that differs fundamentally from the effect of severe grading on the health of a non-optional subject. Ofqual's conclusions in its Inter-subject comparability study on MFL and sciences failed to take account of this difference (see Annex A).

Current grading in MFL A level is acknowledged by Ofqual to be severe, with French, German and Spanish all being of above average difficulty: French was found to be the seventh most severe subject in 2013 and 2017; German the eighth most severe subject in 2013 and 2017; Spanish the ninth most severe subject in 2013 and thirteenth most severe subject in 2017 (Ofqual Decision, p. 9). Ofqual concluded in November 2018 that no adjustment should be made, on grounds that fail to take account of the factors set out above (see Annex A).

The critical role of the 'native speaker factor' for grading standards and exam difficulty

Modern foreign languages is unique by comparison with other subjects with respect to involving a group within each exam cohort which has an inbuilt systematic advantage over other candidates. This factor is very difficult to take into account appropriately in statistical terms when assessing the appropriateness of grading standards and Ofqual is to be commended for undertaking research on this area in preparation for the decision taken in 2017 to make a small one-off adjustment. The adjustment recognised the 'small, yet important' impact on grading of native and near-native speakers. However, this did not go far enough in the following respects:

- It was recognised that the three languages for which the adjustment was made differed with respect to the nature and extent of the impact. The impact was most significant in the smallest of the languages (German); one may surmise that while non-native speakers had increasingly dropped out, native and near-native speakers continued to choose the subject. They made up a significant proportion of students obtaining the highest grades: almost half the A* students in the sample were native speakers while almost a fourth of grade A students were native speakers.[4] Ofqual's statistical methods for monitoring grading standards at A level involve matching with prior GCSE performance, which means that raw percentages may not give a clear picture of the extent of the impact on grading standards. However, the

[2] For these figures see the Policy Decision document on severe grading, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/757841/ISC_Decision_Document_20.11.18.pdf, p. 11. Referred to below as 'Ofqual Decision'.
[3] https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/language_trends_2018_report.pdf, p. 6.
[4] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/610050/Native_speakers_in_A_level_modern_foreign_languages.pdf.

adjustment was primarily geared to French and Spanish and the high percentage in German was not fully accounted for in the one-off adjustment.

- Ofqual considered a one-off adjustment to be sufficient and it does not currently envisage putting ongoing monitoring of this factor in place, even though it recognises that the participation of native speakers may change over time and that e.g. immigration patterns affect its impact. However, given the impact of this factor on grading standards, appropriate level of linguistic difficulty in exam papers, and critically also learner confidence in fairness of grading in MFL, further research and ongoing monitoring are essential.

- For languages other than French, German and Spanish, no adjustment was made on the grounds that numbers are too small for normal statistical methods to be usable. Yet it is likely that here above all there will be significant participation of native, near-native and other heritage speakers. Even if normal statistical measures cannot be deployed, it is important for Ofqual to gain an understanding of the impact of this factor and to take account of it systematically in its monitoring of grading standards, if grading is to be fair for candidates without a native or near-native speaker advantage, and seen to be fair.

The participation of native speakers is also likely to have a significant impact on the linguistic difficulty of exam papers in MFL: native and near-native speakers form a statistically unidentified part of the exam cohort, and their exceptionally high level of knowledge and linguistic confidence may significantly affect perceptions by setters of what level of linguistic difficulty is reasonable for the cohort as a whole. In particular, there is a significant danger that the participation of such candidates will mask excessive difficulty of tasks for candidates without a native or near-native speaker advantage when it comes to monitoring marks profiles for cohorts and reporting on performance. This factor is likely to go some way towards explaining the inclusion of vocabulary and syntax in the 2018 German exam papers that far exceeds the level of competence which can be expected from a non-native speaker candidate at this level.

The participation of native and near-native speakers in MFL cohorts is likely to have the following effects that contribute to the perceived and actual excessive difficulty of the exams for candidates without such an advantage:

- Creaming off top grades, potentially in excess of what is accounted for in Ofqual's one-off adjustment or taken into account in Ofqual's ongoing statistical monitoring of grading standards.
- Distorting marks profiles, masking bunching of marks attained by candidates without native or near-native speaker advantage at the lower end of the scale.
- Systematically discouraging learners without a native or near-native speaker advantage if they perceive themselves as having no chance of obtaining high marks that would be available to them in other subjects, and potentially driving them out of the subject. Evidence of this effect (with a problematic interpretation by examiners) is given in Ofqual's Decision document: 'All of the panels [of awarders] felt that Spanish was considered to be more difficult than other subjects by students, particularly in terms of achieving A* and A, and that this was leading them to study alternative A levels which they considered 'easier'. This was attributed [by the awarders] to the impact of native speakers within the cohort, *rather than* a misalignment of standards' (Ofqual Decision, pp. 14f., italics added).

Overall, it is essential for Ofqual to conduct research that takes full account of this factor, and for Ofqual to report on it transparently, fully and persuasively, in order to restore confidence in the suitability of MFL qualifications for learners who do not have a native or near-native speaker advantage in the subject.

If non-native speakers can be confident of being awarded fair grades, it becomes possible for native speakers to be an asset in the classroom, and to be perceived as such by other learners.

2   The 'difficulty' of MFL A levels and the knock-on effects for MFL GCSE

In a recent BBC survey of secondary schools, 76% of respondents in England cited 'perceptions that the course/exams are too difficult' as the factor with the biggest negative impact on MFL provision.[5] This perception by schools indicates the impact of learners' perception of the MFL exams and of the MFL courses that are designed to enable students to perform successfully in those exams.

The impact of these perceptions is confirmed by findings reported in the 2018 *Language Trends* survey, concerning 'a very marked trend, over the last year since the introduction of the new GCSE, towards high and middle ability pupils and away from lower ability pupils and those with Special Educational Needs.' Teachers are reporting that the reformed GCSE has impacted negatively on recruitment; and participation is especially low in schools with high levels of free school meals (*Language Trends 2018* , p. 6).

Neither the exam boards nor Ofqual are taking the well established, widely known and increasing perception of excessive difficulty seriously enough to research the underlying causes let alone address them. Judging by Ofqual's reports and press release on severe grading (see footnotes 2 and 6), this lack of concern appears to be underpinned by perceptions that difficulty is unproblematic or indeed appropriate, and that making the exams easier would constitute 'dumbing down' and make them less well suited to enabling appropriate selection by universities.[6]

However, analysis of the 2018 German Paper 1 exam design, materials and tasks shows that the widely perceived excessive difficulty of the MFL exams and MFL courses designed to prepare students for them is grounded in actual excessive linguistic difficulty and significant shortcomings in the design of exam papers. These go a long way towards explaining the perception, and they need to be addressed urgently by Ofqual and the exam boards. They cause students to drop out of the subject, and hinder appropriate preparation for language study at university for those who stay on. In particular, they impact negatively on the following:

(1) The learners' gradual development of deep linguistic understanding
(2) The learners' self confidence as a language learner, and gradual development of an ability to use the language confidently
(3) The learner's confidence that systematic learning is beneficial and will be appropriately rewarded
(4) The learner's development of transferable study skills designed to foster in-depth intellectual engagement with a subject
(5) The learner's enjoyment of language study as personally and academically 'rich and rewarding'.[7]

The excessive difficulty of the A level exam papers and the linguistic requirements defined by them also has very serious knock-on effects for the MFL GCSE syllabus and exam papers, because a key aim of the reformed GCSE was that it should prepare students more appropriately for the A level course. However, if the A level *course* is pitched too high linguistically because it has to be designed to meet the excessive demands of the A level *exams*, this will inevitably entail pitching the GCSE requirements too high – an effect that is indeed confirmed by teacher perceptions with respect to the reformed GCSE (see also Annex C):

- 'The reformed GCSE was supposed to help MFL recruitment but I think it has done the opposite. […] the reading and listening exams have been made much too hard' (*Language Trends 2018* , p. 6)
- 'The new GCSEs are a much better preparation for A Levels… unfortunately they are also very much more difficult, which deters many potential candidates' (*Language Trends 2018,* p. 6).

This issue should be addressed as a matter of urgency.

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[5] BBC survey of secondary schools on language learning in the UK with a response rate of over 50% (27 February 2019), https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-47334374 (accessed 15.2.2019); additional data courtesy of Clara Guibourg.

[6] See press release announcing Ofqual's Policy Decision on severe grading, https://www.gov.uk/government/news/reviewing-inter-subject-comparability.

[7] The A Level Content Advisory Board, 'Report of the ALCAB Panel for modern foreign and Classical Languages', https://alevelcontent.files.wordpress.com/2014/07/alcab-report-of-panel-on-modern-foreign-and-classical-languages-july-2014.pdf, p. 2

The assessment challenges of target-language 'immersion' and authentic materials, and the 'native speaker factor'

The types of difficulty confronting current learners in MFL exam papers, and at least some of the associated grading problems, have evolved in the course of the following gradual and significant shift in MFL exam requirements and tasks since the 1980s:

> Until 1980s focus on:
> o   translation,
> o   understanding of complex literary texts read (partly) in the target language but tested by essays in English, and
> o   relatively straightforward tasks testing target-language competence
> o   task instructions given in English.
> Post 1980s focus on:
> o   multitude of tasks testing target-language competence in the 'four skills'
> o   authentic materials that may include language which challenges or exceeds the level of competence in vocabulary and grammar that can reasonably be expected at the given level
> o   discursive essays in the target language assessing only, or primarily, language skills.
>   (Assessment Objectives in 'legacy' and post-2017 GCSE, and in 'legacy' A level qualifications, do not include cultural content.)

A decrease in the parts of the exam paper involving English, and decrease in the role of literary/cultural content in the Assessment Objectives, give a significant advantage to native and near-native speakers of the target language.

The framing of **task instructions in the target language** is grounded in the principle of 'immersion'. This is unproblematic if the range of tasks and framing of the instructions are finite and predictable, but even at GCSE that is not the case for the Listening and Reading exams: candidates are given only 'an indicative, not exclusive' 'guide to the sort of rubrics and instructions which will be used'.[8] This practice conflates the meta-level of task instructions with the competence that is being assessed. It disproportionately penalises gaps in target-language vocabulary and misunderstanding of single points of target-language syntax, and can make marks that would otherwise be obtainend inaccessible. It gives native speakers a significant advantage, and particularly disadvantages and psychologically unsettles candidates at the lower end of the attainment spectrum.
See Appendix, AQA, question 03.3: the question begins with 'Inwiefern', which is not listed in the indicative list of instructions and falls well outside the range of vocabulary that should be expected at this level (frequency 4k+).
See Appendix, AQA, question 05: the instruction 'nicht angegeben' ('not mentioned in the text', as a third option beyond 'right' and 'wrong') uses a word that is infrequent (4k+ in this meaning), which compounds the fact that the instruction for the entire 9-part task is not clear.

The use of **authentic materials** is in principle beneficial and an important part of language teaching. However, the use of such materials in exam contexts needs to be carefully controlled, and any such materials used need to be adapted as necessary – in accordance with the Specification (see below, section 3, Register) – for the level of competence being assessed in order to be sure that they are fit for purposes of assessment. The following recommendation for the reformed GCSE suggests that the use of authentic materials is used to justify absence of linguistic control in assessment tasks:

> 'In new GCSEs, if vocabulary lists are provided by awarding organisations as a guide to teachers, assessment tasks should not be restricted to the vocabulary lists, as this could make assessments predictable. We have drafted requirements stating that at foundation tier, students should expect

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[8] https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/languages/gcse/german-8668/subject-content/vocabulary, section 3.5.1.

to deal with common/familiar words that are not on any vocabulary list, and at higher tier, candidates should be expected to deal with less familiar words, particularly in authentic sources.'[9]

The assumption that the range of vocabulary must be unpredictable in an assessment context, and the assumption that 'less familiar' is a suitable definition of assessment expectations, suggest that there is no suitable quality control in place for vocabulary frequency and that the examiner is given carte blanche to include any vocabulary they wish. Systematic learning that can reasonably be expected of non-native speaker GCSE and A level MLF learners cannot equip them to perform tasks where the vocabulary is not covered in a vocabulary list, and also in no way controlled with reference to appropriate frequency levels. An equivalent assumption in another subject would be that it is acceptable to throw the candidate in at the deep end and require them to perform tasks in response to content that has not been defined in the relevant specification and may well be unfamiliar to them with respect to basic understanding.

Such assumptions give a direct advantage to native or near-native speakers, who have a much wider range of lexical knowledge than that realistically available to learners at GCSE or A level even at the high end of attainment, and much greater confidence in dealing with texts that contain vocabulary they are not familiar with.

The involvement of native and near-native speakers in the marks profiles is invisible and masks any excessive linguistic challenge confronting candidates without such an advantage. The exam papers for A level German suggest that this is not a factor systematically taken into account by exam boards. There is also no evidence to suggest that Ofqual currently takes account of this factor as part of its quality control for MFL exams beyond the research that led to the one-off adjustment to grading in selected languages – or that the relevance of this factor is even recognised with respect to the setting and marking of exams.

The shift outlined above should have entailed the implementation of appropriate mechanisms of quality control, including the following elements:
- Realistic matching of expected competence to available classroom time.
- Realistic assessment of time available during the exam for the tasks required, ensuring that this permits candidates at all levels of competence to demonstrate their knowledge and skills.
- Robust methods of ensuring that the use of the target language for instructions and tasks does not impact negatively on the ability of candidates across the competence spectrum to demonstrate their competence.
- Robust methods of ensuring that the vocabulary, syntax and structure of the texts is appropriate to the assessment level throughout (e.g. word frequency, complexity of clauses, suitability of texts with clearly structured communication of content).
- Realistic assessment of appropriate level of challenge for candidates without a native or near-native speaker advantage.
- Systematic and robust methods of assessing the participation of native speakers, and giving candidates the benefit of the doubt where such methods are not available.
- Robust statistical mechanisms for ensuring that the exam requirements are appropriate for candidates without a native or near-native speaker advantage and that the grades awarded to such candidates are in accordance with average accessibility of grades for other subjects.

Ofqual should urgently attend to implementation of appropriate measures where they are not in place.

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[9] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/387691/gcse-modern-foreign-languages-consultation-on-conditions-and-guidance.pdf , p. 13.

3   Types of linguistic and communicative difficulty confronting candidates in the exam papers

Alongside the Specification published by the respective exam board, the exam papers play a crucial role in defining the exam board's expectations for future cohorts, and consequently the course that determines the learner's experience of the subject. UK candidates' learning experience will normally be very far removed from 'immersion' and restricted to a small number of hours per week, often without access to a native speaker language assistant or opportunity to travel to the country. Since the course taught at school in preparation for the A level exams will be the candidate's guiding experience of the subject, it is all the more important to pitch the requirements at the right level with respect to a) vocabulary, b) grammar, c) register, d) clarity of argument.

In order to address the long-standing concerns by teachers and reports from schools that the MFL exams are too 'difficult', it is necessary to analyse the exam papers in order to ascertain what factors might be causing this perception, and to what extent the perception is grounded in verifiable data.

The main exam paper set by the two exam boards is Paper I, which covers Listening, Reading, Writing in response to the recordings and texts, and Translation from and into the language (for Pearson, Translation into the language is part of Paper 2). A detailed analysis of the two Paper I exam papers set by the two boards in June 2018 for German is given in Appendix A. The aim in the discussion below is not to differentiate between the papers set by the two exam boards but to highlight specific relevant features without reaching a view overall.

The analysis is intended to establish whether the level of linguistic challenge is appropriate for ordinary A level learners who have grown up in an Anglophone UK context without the advantage of access to native or near-native German speakers beyond those encountered in the course of a normal education at a non-selective state-maintained secondary school in England.

The analysis was undertaken in the light of familiarity with the competence of learners who enter Oxford University's German course with an A or A* grade. It highlights aspects which are likely to be perceived as challenging, highly challenging or potentially unnegotiable for such learners, and certainly excessively challenging for learners with lower levels of competence. Each aspect should be seen in the light of the challenge as a whole, which is addressed in the concerns and recommendations. Account is also taken of the level of linguistic difficulty of texts in relation to the number and type of tasks set in the time available for completion.

The appropriateness of the linguistic challenge is investigated, by way of example, with reference to the exam papers set by AQA and Pearson for German in 2018, the first year of the reformed A level. The purpose of the following is not to comment on the grades awarded, the process of arriving at those grades, or their fairness, although it is recommended that appropriateness of the grading is urgently revisited for French, German and Spanish A level with appropriate expertise from MFL schoolteachers and HE teachers and on the basis of all the relevant data. A similar exercise should be undertaken for the A levels in less-taught languages, and the reformed GCSE examinations in MFL.

Since the time available for a task is relevant to the degree of challenge, the marks available for each task are given and in each case converted into a notional recommendation for time expenditure relative to the overall time provided for completing the paper.

Vocabulary

Candidates do not have access to dictionaries in the exams, and no vocabulary list is provided for A level (at GCSE, no complete list is provided either). The A level Specifications refer simply to 'an extended range of

vocabulary'.[10] The ALCAB report specifies 'a broad, transferable vocabulary which will equip [students] to deal with everyday situations and tasks for which they have not specifically prepared. Vocabulary should also be expanded systematically in the context of study of themes and works'.[11] AQA supplies a 'minimum core vocabulary list' but this is intended mainly for teacher guidance. It must therefore be a matter of judgement by the exam boards, and in practice the setters, what expectation is reasonable and which controls to implement in order to ensure that the vocabulary required is appropriate for candidates without a native or near-native speaker advantage.

In order to determine what is reasonable at this level, it is important to attend to word frequency as one means of ascertaining the likelihood of the candidate's having encountered a word, and the likelihood of their having learned it. The Goethe Institut specifies a list of c. 2400 lexical units for CEFR level B1,[12] which gives an indication of what might roughly be expected at A level. A useful point of reference is the series *Frequency Dictionary of [French/German/Spanish]: Core Vocabulary for Learners* (Routledge), which provides a list of the c. 4000 most frequently used words in the relevant language, giving a frequency ranking for each word listed. The volume for German by Jones & Tschirner (2006) was used as a basis for the analysis of the vocabulary in the individual transcripts and texts, drawing also on the Goethe Institut list. The introduction in Appendix A provides a detailed account of how frequency data was obtained for the vocabulary in the two exam papers. The findings are as follows:

a) A very significant number of vocabulary items in both exam papers are not among the c. 2400 most frequent words, and a significant number are not within the 4000 most frequent words.
b) For some items of vocabulary this is explained by the fact that the items are part of the semantic field of the relevant set topic; where this is the case, it has been indicated in the analysis.
c) For some further items, it is reasonable to expect that the candidate can work out the meaning of the word by drawing on related more frequent words and by applying knowledge about word formation, or by drawing on similar English words. However, the time available for the individual recordings and texts and the associated tasks do not leave enough time for such creative work with the morphological material.
d) Some infrequent items are not essential for understanding the main information and argument of the text, and not required for completing a task associated with it. However, the distribution of such items did not suggest that discrimination of this kind took place systematically at the point of setting, especially since some tasks themselves introduced further infrequent vocabulary.
e) A significant number of items fall outside the most frequent 2400 words and in some cases outside the most frequent 4000 words while nevertheless being important for understanding the meaning of the text and/or for completing the tasks associated with it. This is also the case for listening comprehension passages, where the candidate cannot even see the words in order to try and work out what they mean.

It must be concluded from (e) that an excessive amount of unfamiliar vocabulary will have significantly contributed to candidates experiencing the exam papers as difficult.

Setters included infrequent vocabulary without availing themselves of obvious opportunities for adaptation, especially where substitution of a more frequent synonym would have eased comprehension. For example, the elevated word 'Gabe' (AQA 06) could have been replaced with the synonym 'Geschenk', and 'ist zuckerkrank' (AQA 06) with 'hat Diabetes', which would have been comprehensible by analogy with the English word. Similarly, the officialese phrase 'käuflich erwerben' (Pearson 5) could have been replaced with 'kaufen'. This suggests a misguided assumption that 'found' 'authentic' texts can or indeed should be set in an exam without regard to lexical difficulty.

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[10] https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/german/specifications/AQA-7662-SP-2016.PDF, section 4.1. The same statement applies to the Pearson specification.
[11] Report of the ALCAB Panel for Modern Foreign and Classical Languages, July 2014, https://alevelcontent.files.wordpress.com/2014/07/alcab-report-of-panel-on-modern-foreign-and-classical-languages-july-2014.pdf, p. 7 (hereafter referred to as ALCAB Report).
[12] https://www.goethe.de/pro/relaunch/prf/en/Goethe-Zertifikat_B1_Wortliste.pdf, p. 5.

A particular concern is the level of difficulty confronting the candidate in a literary text included in each paper, with vocabulary that makes the respective text unsuitable even for candidates at the high end of the competence spectrum unless they have a native or near-native speaker advantage.

Understanding AQA 08 hinges on the elevated words 'heiter' and 'Heiterkeit', which are outside the 4000 most frequent words. The derived verb 'aufheitern' is key for one of the tasks, and comprehension of the complex irony of the whole text is precluded if these items are not grasped. Either such vocabulary should be avoided, or it should be given with a translation as is done for Classical Languages A level.

The literary text in Pearson 9 contains a series of infrequent words, and the key word 'Stromausfall' is likely to be opaque for most non-native-speaker candidates. A number of questions depend on understanding words non-native speaker candidates are very unlikely to have encountered (e.g. 9(c) 'aufgekratzt'). The examiners' report gives no indication that any part of the text might have been inappropriate for the level, instead offering the following comment: 'Question 9(c) discriminated well. A few candidates answered this correctly and gained a mark.'[13] The level of linguistic accuracy of the sample answer given for Question 9 suggests that it is the work of a native or near-native speaker. Indeed it is hard to conceive of any other type of candidate being able to read the 280 words and respond to the six questions in the 12 minutes available to them for this part of the exam paper (calculated on the basis of the available marks and the time available for the answers overall), quite aside from the difficult vocabulary and other complexities. One may surmise that the examiner's judgement 'discriminated well' is a euphemism for 'was far too difficult'.

Grammar

Many of the texts are grammatically far too complex for this level, rendering some listening passages entirely unsuitable. Passive constructions and subjunctive forms are frequent.

Analysis of the recordings and texts shows that many of them contain complex sentences consisting of three or more clauses. For example, the first recording confronting the candidate in the AQA paper includes a sentence that consists of five clauses:

main clause + *dass*-clause + main clause + *dass*-clause + *wenn*-clause (AQA 01)

This is not an isolated case. AQA 04 – again for listening comprehension – includes five sentences with three or more clauses, and a sentence in which the verb and subject are preceded by a 17-word prepositional phrase.

Pearson begins the paper with a listening comprehension passage about unemployment statistics which includes three sentences consisting of three clauses (Pearson 1). Inclusion of such complex sentences especially in recordings that have to be processed aurally suggests that setters are not deploying any principles, methods or mechanisms designed to guard against excessive difficulty.

Register

The Specification for the reformed A level establishes that there will be a variety of register and type across the papers: according to AQA, for Listening, 'a range of contexts and sources covering different registers and adapted as necessary' and for Reading, 'a variety of texts written for different purposes, drawn from a range of authentic sources and adapted as necessary'.[14] According to Pearson, for Listening 'spoken passages covering different registers and types, including authentic communication' and for Reading, texts that are 'authentic or adapted from authentic sources'.[15]

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[13] Pearson, Examiner Report 2018, https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/A-Level/German/2016/Exam-materials/9GN0_01_pef_20180815.pdf , p. 21.

[14] https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/german/specifications/AQA-7662-SP-2016.PDF, p. 8.

[15]https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/A%20Level/German/2016/Specification%20and%20sample%20assessments/Specification_GCE_A_level_L3_in_German.pdf, p. 10.

In fact, there is an almost inexorable diet of material in a high register with a preponderance of material that is of a kind suited to broadsheet newspapers and aimed at the adult intelligentsia. Three out of four Listening passages in both the AQA paper and the Pearson paper are in a high register with formal grammar and lexis, making them extremely difficult for any candidates other than those with native speaker competence. Among the texts for reading comprehension, four out of five in AQA are in a high register with one being informal, and three out of five in Pearson are in a high register, with the other two being of medium formality.

Even where the recordings or texts are about youth culture, and/or less formal, they concern middle-aged adults and deploy a register appropriate to that group. For example, a recording entitled 'A discussion about social networks among young people' consists of an interview with Frau Doktor Grüsenitz and Professor Thomas Biberfeld, introduced as 'experts' (AQA 02). An article about 'German youth culture' (AQA 07) consists of an online article informing adults about youth culture. A less formal conversation about carneval (Pearson 3) offers the implausible perspective of a German businessman wearing a suit and tie who is surprised about customs around the Cologne carneval. Texts about integration and education (Pearson 2, 4, 7) are full of jargon concerning course administration and education policy. A text about the annual New Year's Eve concert of the Vienna Philharmonic orchestra (Pearson 5) is geared to a 50+ audience.

Overall, there is insufficient variety of register. Material set for listening comprehension is in a number of cases linguistically inappropriate for aural processing at this level. The strikingly poor match with the target group suggests that insufficient attention has been paid to making the material appropriate and seeking to engage the candidates.

The preponderance of high register and articles or reports suggest that the more 'academic' focus of the reformed A level has been interpreted as requiring a type of text that is inherently difficult, especially if it has to be processed in an exam context and under extreme time pressure.

Clarity of argument

If the content of a text is complex, it is especially important to communicate the argument step by step, developing it gradually to allow the candidate to assimilate the key points. Such a principle has not consistently informed the setting of the two exam papers.

For example, Pearson 1 concerns a fine distinction between two types of unemployment statistic: official unemployment figures ('Arbeitslosenstatistiken') and a different measure ('Unterbeschäftigungszahl'). While 'Work' is a set topic for the Pearson paper, the text is very poorly suited to a listening comprehension test at this level, let alone the first exercise of the entire paper. It is rendered even more difficult by the way the complex process of reasoning is set up. The title establishes the key point but only if the candidate understands the meaning of 'vertrauen' + dative (not 'infrequent'at 1.7k but not easy either). The first sentence then introduces the argument only implicitly with logical complexity: the first part of the sentence makes a statement concerning an unemployment statistic while the second part calls the statistic into question with the comment 'that sounds like success' (implying 'that sounds like success of the government's employment policy', with the implication that the real picture will follow). The examiner's report does not include a comment on how candidates fared with this exercise – the likelihood is that most will have ticked multiple choice boxes on the basis of guesswork.

The fact that there is not a consistent practice of ensuring that candidates can reliably find a way into the texts even in listening comprehension renders it much more likely that they will experience the exam as difficult and lose confidence in their ability to keep control of the tasks. Even one text can unsettle a candidate to the point where they underperform on the whole paper.

4 Content and assessment: linguistic challenge in the light of skills and knowledge assessed

The reformed A level has considerably extended the range of tasks candidates must perform by comparison with the previous A level, though the ALCAB MFL panel 'did not seek to increase the difficulty of the GCE' (ALCAB Report, p. 14). It follows that it is vital for the level of linguistic difficulty to be calibrated appropriately to take account of the increased demands in the area of content and skills.

In the course of the exams, candidates have to negotiate the following tasks, all in the foreign language except for translation, with instructions also given in the foreign language:

- ***Understand spoken material*** of different types, involving different situations and registers, on ***four prepared themes*** concerning the society and culture of countries where the foreign language is spoken, and perform tasks including the following: multiple choice questions; respond in writing to questions; summarise
- ***Read texts*** of different types and register on the four themes; perform tasks such as the following: classify statements about the material as right/wrong/inapplicable; answer questions; fill gaps; summary
- ***Translate from the foreign language into English***
- ***Translate from English into the foreign language***, in the case of one exam board first reading a related text in German
- ***Write 2 essays in German*** (AQA: c. 300 words; Pearson: 300-350 words) on ***2 prepared works*** (2 literary texts, or 1 literary text and 1 film)
- ***Speaking in response to questions*** about one of the four themes (all four have to be prepared)
- ***Speaking, giving a presentation on, and discussing, an individually prepared research topic***.

A key concern in making the reformed A level more academically demanding was to 'promote the development of transferable critical skills' and provide scope for 'curiosity-driven learning' (ALCAB Report, pp. 3 and 13). The new A level was intended to be:

- Intrinsically motivating
- Challenging but negotiable
- Reliable in rewarding competence. (p. 3)

The range of skills and knowledge tested is challenging, and makes MFL exams exceptionally demanding. It also entails that teachers have to cover much ground in teaching the A level course. The range accords with the aims and recommendations of the ALCAB panel for MFL but appropriate implementation of those aims relies on the overall exam requirement being linguistically reasonable and realistic for candidates who do not have a native or near-native speaker advantage. In other words, the linguistic requirements have to be 'negotiable' for the candidates.

The range can be negotiated if candidates can use relatively simple language and deploy it flexibly in different ways, gaining confidence in manipulating what they know independently and creatively. A register that is pitched too high will generally entail vocabulary and syntax that are well beyond what an A level candidate can comfortably negotiate, and high-register texts will therefore normally have to be significantly adapted, as is permissible within the Specification for authentic sources. A better solution will tend to be text choices with a more informal register. In either case, vocabulary and syntax need to be carefully and systematically controlled to ensure that basic understanding is assured and candidates can perform the tasks with confidence.

The exam papers set in 2018 are far too demanding linguistically in addition to asking the candidates to perform far too many tasks in the time available in the exam.

5   Design of exam papers, range and number of tasks, and time available

The following table gives an overview of the MLF A level exams set in 2018 by the two exam boards. For Paper 1, the available time given below is calculated on the basis of the marks available for each section – see Pearson advice on Paper 1 to 'use [the marks for each question] as a guide as to how much time to spend on each question'. Where the cover sheet gives a recommended time for the section, this is also noted below.

	AQA	Pearson
Listening	Part of: *AQA Paper 1: Listening, Reading and Writing* (whole paper: 2 hours 30 minutes) **4 recordings** (total 8½ mins) • Select 5 statements that are in accordance with recorded content from list of 12 • Write answers to 8 questions (full sentences not required) • Write a summary to include 7 prescribed details [max. 90 words, full sentences, using own words as far as possible] Total time available based on available marks and recommendation: **45 minutes**; incl. c. 8½ mins total recording time. If candidates hear each recording twice, this leaves c. **28 minutes** for orientation, reading, understanding and performing the written tasks.	Part of: *Pearson Paper 1: Listening, Reading and Translation* (whole paper: 2 hours) **4 recordings** (total c. 7½ mins), one consisting of two different interviews) • 4 multiple choice questions • Write answers to 15 questions (full sentences not required) • Write 2 summaries, each focusing on 3 topics covered in the recording Total time available based on available marks: **45 minutes** (recommended on cover: 50 minutes); incl. c. 7½ mins total recording time. If candidates hear each recording twice, this leaves **30 minutes** for orientation, reading, understanding and performing the written tasks.
Reading	Part of: *AQA Paper 1: Listening, Reading and Writing* (whole paper: 2 hours 30 minutes) **5 passages** (total c. 1025 words) • Read 9 statements and identify whether correct/incorrect/not stated. • Fill 9 gaps with verbs from a list of 12 • Write answers to 17 questions (full sentences not required) • Write a summary [max. 90 words] to include 7 prescribed details. Total time available based on available marks: **75 minutes**	Part of: *Pearson Paper 1: Listening, Reading and Translation* (whole paper: 2 hours) **5 passages** (total c. 930 words) • Complete 4 statements each with a choice of 4 phrases • Select 4 correct statements from 9 statements about the content of the passage • Write answers to 16 questions Total time available based on available marks: **45 minutes** (recommended on cover: 50 mins).
Translation fr. German into English	Part of: *AQA Paper 1: Listening, Reading and Writing* (whole paper: 2 hours 30 minutes) Read a German text consisting of c. 100 words • Translate the German text into English. Total time available based on available marks: **15 minutes**.	Part of: *Pearson Paper 1: Listening, Reading and Translation* (whole paper: 2 hours) Read a German text consisting of c. 100 words • Translate the German text into English. Total time available based on available marks: **30 minutes** (recommended on cover: 20 minutes; but cover incl. instruction to use marks per question 'as a guide as to how much time to spend on each question').
Translation from English into German	Part of: *AQA Paper 1: Listening, Reading and Writing* (whole paper: 2 hours 30 minutes) Read a German text consisting of c. 185 words. Then read an English text consisting of c. 100 words on a similar theme, partly paraphrasing the German text. • Translate the English text into German. Total time available based on available marks: **15 minutes**.	Part of: *Pearson Paper 2: Written response to works and translation* (whole paper: 2 hrs 40 mins) Read an English text of c. 110 words • Translate the English text into German. Total time available based on available marks: **27 minutes**; recommended on cover: 30 minutes.

Essay on Literary Works / Film	Part of: *AQA Paper 2: Writing (whole paper: 2 hours)* Read the German questions (choice of two on each work). • Write 1 essay in German on a German literary text (300-350 words) • Write 1 essay in German on a German literary text or German film (300-350 words) Total time available: **2 hours** (1 hour per essay).	Part of: *Pearson Paper 2: Written response to works and translation (whole paper: 2 hrs 40 mins)* Read the German questions (choice of two on each work). • Write 1 essay in German on a German literary text (300-350 words) • Write 1 essay in German on a German literary text or German film (300-350 words) Total time available: c. **2 hours 10 minutes** (1 hour 5 mins per essay).
Speaking	*AQA Paper 3: Speaking (whole paper: 21-23 minutes)* Prepare the oral exam for 5 minutes and perform the following tasks: • Discussion of an aspect of one of the four themes on basis of stimulus card (c. 6 minutes) • Presentation (2 minutes) and discussion (9-10 minutes) of an individual research project	*Pearson Paper 3: Speaking (whole paper: 21-23 mins)* [AS FOR AQA]

The design of Paper 1 is in each case highly challenging because of the sheer number of different recordings and texts that need to be processed and the wide variety of tasks that must be performed. This entails that teachers must spend a very considerable amount of time on instilling effective exam technique and candidates will be distracted throughout the exam by complexities exam strategy.

Paper 1 in each case confronts the learner with the following:

a. Excessively large **number and range** of texts with associated tasks to be processed (AQA 11 in 2½ hours, Pearson 10 in 2 hours)
b. Recordings for **listening comprehension** can be heard as often as the candidate wishes, but it is difficult for them to work out how much time to spend on each listening question since the marks available are unevenly distributed and the difficulty of the recordings varies considerably.
   45 minutes for processing four different recordings is very challenging and rendered more so owing to the excessively demanding content, vocabulary and syntax.
c. Excessively high number of words to be processed in **reading comprehension** in the time allocated:
   AQA: 1025 words in 75 minutes plus questions in the target language
   Pearson: 930 words in 45-50 minutes plus questions in the target language
   Time pressure coupled with excessively difficult vocabulary and syntax makes tasks highly challenging
d. Excessively demanding **translation** tasks in the time available, and stark discrepancy in the number of marks allocated between the exam boards
e. Factually and linguistically unpredictable **task instructions** provided only in the target language, which can mean that a candidate is precluded from gaining a disproportionately high number of marks owing to a failure to understand a word or phrase
f. In some instances, **content** that is inappropriate for the task required (e.g. listening comprehension test consisting of a high-register report on unemployment statistics)

Rewarding sophisticated exam strategy?

The exam is extremely challenging for candidates on many fronts, including the (inappropriate) requirement for a highly sophisticated exam strategy – though it is not in fact clear that even this is systematically rewarded in the way it would be in exams for other subjects.

In accordance with normal practice, Pearson includes the following advice on the cover sheet: 'The marks for **each** question are shown in brackets – *use this as a guide as to how much time to spend on each question*'. While this is standard advice, it is rendered entirely unrealistic by the sheer number of questions the candidate has to rush through (10 questions, each with up to 7 sub-questions that are allocated a varying

number of individual marks). Moreover, the specific recommendations given in relation to specific parts of the exam contradict the calculation yielded by the marks.

A stark anomaly is evident in the handling of Translation from and into German. As the internal discrepancies in matching marks to timing and a comparison between the exam boards indicate, there is lack of clarity surrounding both the time allocated to this part of the exam, and the value accorded to it as signalled by the number of marks. AQA's format for Translation into German is in fact interesting and potentially useful: it requires the candidate first to read a German passage, and then translate an English passage on the same theme into German. This ensures that the candidate has suitable vocabulary at their disposal and can be tested on appropriate manipulation. However, allocating only 10 marks (equivalent to 15 minutes on the basis of overall marks and time available) and giving no other guidance on timing renders planning difficult. The candidate must read 185 words in German, and translate 100 words into German with reference to the German text. The candidate is confronted with a task that is not designed to be appropriately manageable.

The need for well-honed exam strategy is spelt out in the following recommendation by AQA:

> Students for future series are reminded to take careful note of the rubric for different question types, especially for the two summary tasks and for those questions requiring short answers in the target language. In the summaries it is vital to keep within the specified word count, as markers will stop marking at the first natural break between 90 and 100 words.[16]

There are also other pitfalls. Marking principles at least for Pearson include the 'order of elements' rule, which entails that only as many responses are assessed as there are marks, e.g. 'for a 1 mark answer, only the candidate's first response is taken for assessment, even if this response is incorrect but the correct information follows as a further element'.[17] According to the 2018 Examiners' Report, this rule 'often prevented candidates from accessing' all the available marks (p. 6) or resulted in their 'forfeiting' marks because of insufficiently 'targeted' answers (p. 8). Instructions of this kind may be convenient for examiners since they can then legitimately ignore material produced by candidates who have spent insufficient time studying exam strategy, who are concentrating primarily on performing the task set to the best of their understanding of the content and their linguistic understanding, or whose teachers have failed to spend enough time teaching them the finer points of the exam board's marking strategies. However, such a rule runs counter to the purpose of the qualification in that it requires teachers and learners to spend scarce classroom time on rules that have no benefit beyond the performance of the exam tasks. Moreover, if the examinee has to attend to such rules, it is all the more important that enough time is allocated for the candidate to deploy the strategic thinking they have had to acquire.

While the ALCAB panel had no remit with respect to assessment, its recommendation concerning the content and skills covered by Paper 1 suggests a much slimmer, more straightforward exam paper for testing the set themes in Listening, Reading and Writing (ALCAB Report, p. 39):

- a listening comprehension test with straightforward methods of testing understanding, including multiple choice
- a reading comprehension test with one or more written components

It should in any case be clear that in the light of the competence of learners that can reasonably be expected at this level, and the challenging range of content, the design of Paper 1 needs to be simplified and the level of linguistic difficulty needs to be appropriate. The number of tasks needs to be reduced, the time allocations need to be transparent and realistic, and linguistic difficulty must be robustly controlled to ensure that it is suitable for non-native speaker candidates, offering such candidates across the attainment spectrum the same opportunity to access grades as they would have in other comparable subjects.

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[16] https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/sample-papers-and-mark-schemes/2018/june/AQA-76621-WRE-JUN18.PDF, p. 3.
[17] See e.g. 'Order of elements rule'
https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/A%20Level/German/2013/Exam%20materials/6GN02_01_msc_20130815.pdf, p. [11]

6   Linguistic difficulty in the reformed A level by comparison with the pre-2018 qualification

The ALCAB Report expressly states that the panel 'did not seek to increase the difficulty of the GCE' (p. 14), and it highlights the following at the start of setting out its 'Guding principles for reform':

> Research shows that the perceived difficulty of post-16 study of Modern Languages has become a disincentive to learners in the choice of A levels. Uptake is, of course affected by expectations of success. It is therefore important for the new GCE to be:
> * Intrinsically motivating
> * Challenging but negotiable
> * Reliable in rewarding demonstrated competence.' (p. 14; see also p. 3)

The conundrum facing both the ALCAB panel on the content side, and Ofqual and the exam boards on the assessment side, was how to increase the academic challenge as required for the reformed A levels while ensuring that the exams, and the course leading up to them, would not be considered even more difficult than before by learners and teachers. The ALCAB panel was disbanded before the scrutiny of sample exam papers could be undertaken as originally planned, so this task fell to the exam boards and Ofqual.

It is useful in this context to compare an example of the pre-2018 equivalent to the current Paper 1 with the corresponding 2018 paper. Such a comparison is set out below.

AQA Listening, Reading and Writing (2 hours 30 minutes) – Legacy and Reformed qualification

	2017 (Legacy): AQA Unit 3	**2018 (Reformed): AQA Paper 1**
Listening	**4 recordings** (total 7 mins 20 seconds) • Identify positive, negative or p/n comments for 6 specified topics heard in the recording • Write answers to 5 questions • For 3 statements, identify a wrong part of the information and substitute correct information • For 3 dialogue participants, select 2 correct paraphrasing sentences from choice of 12 statements Total time available based on available marks: c. **34 minutes** (recommended on cover: 30 mins); incl. 7 mins 20 seconds total recording time. If candidates hear each recording twice, this leaves c. **19 minutes** (recommended 15 mins) for orientation, reading, understanding and performing the written tasks.	**4 recordings** (total 8½ mins) • Select 5 statements that are in accordance with recorded content from list of 12 • Write answers to 8 questions (full sentences not required) • Write a summary to include 7 prescribed details [max. 90 words, full sentences, using own words as far as possible] Total time available based on available marks and recommendation: **45 minutes**; incl. c. 8½ mins total recording time. If candidates hear each recording twice, this leaves c. **28 minutes** for orientation, reading, understanding and performing the written tasks.
Reading	**4 passages** (the fourth passage consists of 6 individual sentences, to be completed with a further 6 sentences selected from a list) (total c. 800 words; this figure includes the matching sentences required to complete the fourth passage). • Fill gaps in the text from a list of optional words • Answer 5 multiple choice questions, choosing appropriate statement from 4 in each case • Read 8 statements and identify whether correct/incorrect/not stated. • For 6 given sentences, find a continuation of the point among 9 further sentences. Total time available based on available marks: c. **34 minutes**	**5 passages** (total c. 1025 words) • Read 9 statements and identify whether correct/incorrect/not stated. • Fill 9 gaps with verbs from a list of 12 • Write answers to 17 questions (full sentences not required) • Write a summary [max. 90 words] to include 7 prescribed details. Total time available based on available marks: **75 minutes**

Translation fr. German into English	Read a German text consisting of c. 100 words • Translate the German text into English. <u>Total time available</u> based on available marks (10 for this part): c. **13 minutes**	Read a German text consisting of c. 100 words • Translate the German text into English. <u>Total time available</u> based on available marks: **15 minutes**.
Translation from English into German	Read English sentences consisting of c. 70 words. • Translate the English sentences into German. <u>Total time available</u> based on available marks: c. **13 minutes**	Read a German text consisting of c. 185 words. Then read an English text consisting of c. 100 words on a similar theme, partly paraphrasing the German text. • Translate the English text into German. <u>Total time available</u> based on available marks: **15 minutes**.
Essay	Questions on a range of German-related topics (region, 20th-cent. history, literature, creative arts) • Write an essay in German (min. 250 words) <u>Total time available</u> based on available marks: c. **55 minutes** (recomm. 60 mins)	*[Not part of this paper.* *See PAPER 2: Writing]*

The following tentative conclusion may be drawn from a comparison:

• The format of assessing Listening, Reading and Writing appears not to have changed very significantly in the reformed A level with regard to the general outline. However, the syllabus as a whole is significantly more challenging owing to new demands with respect to translation skills, enhanced analytical demands with respect to literary works and films, the inclusion of cultural knowledge in the Assessment Objectives, tested via the themes in Paper 1 and beyond that on the basis of a book and a film or two books, and the independent research project required for the oral examination. In order to prevent further over-loading learners, it is essential to ensure that excessive difficulty is effectively addressed.

Three further conclusions arise from this:

• The excessive linguistic challenge and inappropriate exam design identified in the 2018 exam papers are systemic, and were already a feature of the legacy A level. There is therefore much to suggest that the 'difficulty' of the course and exams perceived by schools as the single most significant factor driving learners out of the subject is indeed a fundamental cause of the plummeting take-up and progression evident in MFL.

• The impact of the participation of native and near-native speakers of the target language on the performance profile of every MFL cohort is a feature specific to MFL in any exam format which relies primarily or exclusively on work in the target language. This factor should therefore have been taken into account from the time when MFL exam syllabuses ceased to include essays written in English on literary works and extensive translation work. In fact, this was only discovered by Ofqual to be statistically relevant in 2017, and then only factored partially into the statistical processes. It may be concluded from this that severe grading has played a part in MFL assessment since at least the 1990s and certainly since the subject was made optional at GCSE in 2004, given that native and near-native speakers are least likely to opt out of a subject in which they have a predictable advantage.

• It is predictable that assessment in the reformed A level will exacerbate the problems identified for the legacy A level, and take-up and progression will therefore continue to fall unless Ofqual and the exam boards proactively address the issues outlined in this paper.

7 MFL A level assessment as preparation for university study of Modern Languages

The reform of the MFL qualifications implemented from first teaching in 2016 and first examining in 2018 was designed to make them better suited to preparing students for university study and create 'a rich and rewarding qualification with an appropriate level of cognitive challenge and suitable for progression to university study or to employment' (ALCAB Report, p. 2).

In order to assess the appropriateness of the reformed A level Paper 1 for the specified purpose, it is useful to compare it with the exams set by the University of Oxford for first-year students of German in 2018 after one year's full-time study (single honours or joint honours) of German language, literature and culture, following admission in 2017 on the basis of an A or A* grade in the MFL A level (German). There is no directly equivalent paper, but the paper that comes closest is a 3-hour paper with a very much simpler format that requires little focus on exam strategy:

The candidate has to write one essay in 90 minutes. The other 90 minutes are devoted to a reading comprehension test, which consists of 1 passage (550 words) to be read in 90 minutes, as opposed to 5 passages aggregating to 1000 words in 50 minutes (Pearson) or 75 minutes (AQA). The Oxford students are required to complete 3 writing tasks (c. 500 words in total) in response to the text, following a set format with familiar instructions. This contrasts with a plethora of tasks required by AQA and Pearson, framed in instructions that are not predictable. The purpose here is not to suggest that one format is better in principle, but to highlight the complexity and time pressure of the A level exam. Correspondingly, Oxford first-year exams allow 90 minutes for translating some 220-225 words, by contrast with 20-30 minutes (Pearson) or 15 minutes (AQA) for 100 words. It is safe to say that no university German department would set its first-year students an exam that is as difficult as the A level Paper 1 exam.

The exam format used by the University of Oxford is in principle more akin to that in other humanities or social science subjects than to the exam format used for MFL A level. It suggests that simplifying the format of MFL exams and allowing candidates more time to complete the tasks would not entail 'dumbing down'. It also suggests that the current A level exam format may not be well suited to preparing learners for language learning at university, where well-developed learning strategies, a solid grasp of basics, and habits of deep learning and understanding provide the best starting point. Key benefits of a simpler exam format and more time given for the performance of exam tasks include the following:

- Fewer, more extended texts allow candidates to settle into understanding them, develop a personal response to them, and focus on completing the tasks to the best of their linguistic ability without being driven by continuous intense time pressure.
- Teachers can use classroom time to develop their students' language skills and learning strategies rather than having to devote valuable time to instilling complex exam strategies.
- Learners can develop language learning strategies systematically and see a more direct connection between learning efficacy and exam performance if appropriate time is allowed for deploying their learning to full effect during exams.
- Assessment is more likely to reward demonstrated language skills and knowledge if the format does not require complex exam strategies and continual switching of tasks.
- Assessment can distinguish more reliably between candidates on the basis of linguistic knowledge rather than on the basis of successful exam strategy, good exam nerves and luck.
- High marks are available not just for exceptional (especially native speaker) candidates but also for non-advantaged learners and exams can be completed with a sense of success by the whole range of candidates.

All the above factors play a powerful part in learner motivation. Candidates who are continually confronted with tasks that elude successful completion will inevitably feel that they are not gifted at languages, that language learning is stressful rather than enjoyable, and that learning effort does not pay off. The result is a demotivated learner who drops out at the first opportunity and passes on their disaffection to peers.

8   Implications for the debate on severe grading of MFL, and for the future of the subject

The format of the A level exam papers testing Listening, Reading, Writing and Translation in response to selected themes is ultimately the product of a long process. This started when the focus of the syllabus shifted towards the 'four skills' and transactional language, the use of authentic materials, the almost exclusive use of the target language for all parts of the examination including instructions, a diminution of cultural content and a corresponding move away from essays in English on literary texts. The use of authentic materials could encourage uncontrolled inclusion of language that was beyond the candidate's level of competence, and the focus on the target language coupled with the focus on skills rather than cultural content favoured native speakers while leaving many UK candidates feeling correspondingly unconfident. These latter problems are now being compounded as cultural content, literature, translation and an individual orally presented research project have been added to the past exam demands without taking anything significant away.

The crisis now is significant, and it goes to the very hearts and minds of the learners on which the future of the subject depends. For in the UK's Anglophone context, it is the exams above all which drive the learners experience of the subject. And teachers can only support learners as well as the exam format will allow.

As the analysis of the two exam papers set in 2018 demonstrates, the shortcomings affect every aspect of assessment and grading, including grading standards.

The 2018 exam papers are not well suited to implementing the following recommendations set out in the ALCAB Report:

- to 'be a rounded, challenging and rewarding learning experience, encouraging students to develop linguistic strategies and metacognition' (p. 3)
- to 'enrich the cognitive and linguistic challenge, developing independent language use' (p. 3)
- to promote the development of 'independent language use' and transferable critical skills' (p. 3)
- to provide scope for 'curiosity-driven learning' (pp. 3 and 13)
- to provide a qualification that is
    - Intrinsically motivating
    - Challenging but negotiable
    - Reliable in rewarding competence. (p. 3)

These objectives define an exam that would prepare MFL learners effectively for further study of languages and for employment. Analysis of the 2018 exam papers in German assessing Listening, Reading and Writing by contrast suggests the following:

- The level of linguistic challenge, and the requirement with respect to the number and range of tasks required in the given time, are far too high to meet the above aims.
- There is too much emphasis on complex language and formal style, and too little opportunity to develop the target language as part of confident, individual, personal expression.
- The exam papers are so difficult that they make the learner's experience of the exam and the course leading up to it demoralising and stressful rather than rewarding and motivating.
- There is too little scope for developing and demonstrating an ability to manipulate the basics correctly and effectively. This is of particular concern for stakeholders including higher education because it fails to promote the establishment of solid foundations in the understanding and use of grammar and lexis.

The inappropriately high challenge with respect to the number, range, type and linguistic difficulty of the texts on which the tasks are based, exacerbated by the excessively short time allowed for performance of the tasks and in some cases the difficulty of the language in which the tasks are framed, is further of concern with respect to reliability and appropriateness of grading because excessive linguistic demands cause the following anomalies, which are specific to exams in Modern Foreign Languages:

- They cause weaker candidates to be unable to demonstrate their skills because they do not sufficiently understand the text on which the tasks are based to be able to perform those tasks.
- They cause candidates to lose confidence, give random answers to multiple-choice questions, lose control over the medium of expression, and in some cases panic, which renders them unable to demonstrate their skills.
- They cause an inappropriate distribution of marks and thereby reduce reliability of grading because excessive adjustments have to be made to produce a reasonable distribution.
- They give an unfair advantage to candidates at the top end of the grade spectrum, because the level of difficulty is such in large parts of the exam that they are the only ones who can reasonably be expected to be able to understand the texts on which the tasks are based, and potentially the instructions for the tasks that have to be performed.
- They increase the advantage given to native or near-native speaker candidates since in addition to the competence advantage enjoyed by such candidates with respect to performance of the tasks, they gain the following prior advantages:
  - Inability of non-advantaged candidates to perform to the best of their ability owing to the excessive challenge and inaccessibility of texts and marks
  - Full and confident understanding of the language in which the tasks are framed where these pose difficulties for other candidates
  - Confidence and a sense of being in control of the medium of expression.

  These factors exacerbate the negative effects on grading reliability and fairness of a <u>factor that is specific to assessment in the subject of Modern Foreign Languages and that crucially affects the statistical measures used to assess grading fairness</u>.

The negative knock-on effects for teaching of inappropriately and unpredictably difficult assessment materials and task requirements are very considerable and fundamentally affect the quality of competence that can realistically be achieved by learners of Modern Foreign Languages in GCSE and A level courses in the limited classroom time available. The effects include the following:

- Teachers are unable to offer candidates sufficient opportunity for deep learning of the basics of the language so there is too little scope for gradual and thorough development of knowledge and skills.
- Coverage of cultural content during the course has to be rushed so there is too little scope for gradual and thorough development of knowledge.
- Extensive teaching time has to be devoted to training exam strategies, significantly reducing the time available for language learning and understanding the cultural content.

The format of Paper 1 needs to be simplified and linguistic difficulty appropriately controlled in order to make the MFL A level exams fit for purpose.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. For all parts of the exam, even the highest marks should be accessible to English native speakers with no native or near-native target language competence in the language being assessed, in the same way they would be in exams set in other A level subjects.

2. The linguistic demands of the listening comprehension passages and reading comprehension texts set in A level Paper 1 (AQA and Pearson) must be suited to the linguistic competence that can reasonably be expected of candidates at this level who do not have a native or near-native speaker advantage in the language being assessed, taking account of the classroom time typically available for learning the language.

3. It should be ensured that the linguistic demands across languages in which the qualification is offered are equivalent to the extent that is appropriate or, where they diverge, that such divergence is based on sound and transparent criteria appropriate to the qualification.

4. The format of the exam paper overall, and the number of passages, texts and words should enable candidates without a native or near-native speaker advantage in the language being assessed to draw systematically on their linguistic knowledge and understanding without excessive time pressure.

5. The types of task should be limited to reduce the need for extensive training for different tasks. Potential task instructions should be published in complete form as part of the specification to avoid disproportionate penalisation of a gap in vocabulary or misunderstanding of a syntactic construction.

6. Recordings for listening comprehension should consist of material that is appropriate for listening purposes, a preponderance should be in a conversational register, and the general gist should be accessible to learners who have no native or near-native speaker advantage in the language being assessed, across the attainment range relevant to this qualification.

7. Vocabulary in the texts and recordings should be carefully controlled and checked to ensure that it accords with the knowledge that can reasonably be expected at the relevant level of attainment. Vocabulary needed for understanding the main content and completing the tasks should be controlled with respect to frequency, and if it is likely to exceed the candidates' range, it should be given with a translation. Requirements should be realistic with respect to learners who do not have a native or near-native speaker advantage in the language, and it should be designed to promote and reward systematic vocabulary learning and use.

8. Ofqual should routinely monitor the distribution of marks to ensure that the spread is appropriate for candidates with no native or near-native speaker advantage in the language being assessed and who have had a typical amount of classroom time learning the language.

9. School teachers, first-year HE teachers and school-age learners without native or near-native speaker advantage should contribute to monitoring appropriateness of recordings and texts to ensure that they are generally suitable in terms of content and linguistic accessibility.

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7 May 2019

APPENDIX A

Analysis of A level German Paper 1: Exam papers set in 2018

The following analysis focuses on A level German Paper 1 exam papers set by AQA and Pearson in June 2018, the first year of the reformed qualification. Paper 1 tests Listening, Reading, Writing in the context of testing comprehension, and Translation from and into German (for Pearson, Translation into German is part of Paper 2). The papers are analysed on the basis of the question paper and recording provided to the candidate (without recourse to the marking scheme or examiners' report). The purpose of the analysis is to assess the level of 'difficulty' confronting the candidate, and factors that contribute to potential experience of difficulty. **The points set out below indicate all the the factors that contribute to the perception and reality that the exam papers are too difficult for candidates who do not have a native or near-native speaker advantage.**

A challenge in setting appropriate exam papers is the choice of vocabulary if there is no word list and candidates have no access to dictionaries. The vocabulary in recordings, texts and tasks needs to be accessible at least in general terms if not in detail to all candidates. The appropriateness of the vocabulary in the June 2018 Paper 1 recordings, texts and tasks is here assessed with reference to the frequency of words as defined in Randall L. Jones and Erwin Tschirner, *Frequency Dictionary of German: Core Vocabulary for Learners* (Routledge, 2006); this corpus-based work is designed to list the c. 4,000 most frequently used words in the German language. A further point of reference is the CEFR level B1, deemed here to be approximately equivalent to the level of attainment that is realistic at the higher grades of A level. While this does not specify a numerical threshold, it is generally set around the 2000-2400 most frequent words. The Goethe Institut includes c. 2400 in its German vocabulary list designed for CEFR level B1; the preface states that the listening and reading texts in the B1 exams contain words that are not in the B1 list but that these are not necessary for the purposes of understanding the texts and completing the tasks.[18]

Words given below as '**infrequent vocabulary**' are listed by Jones/Tschirner as not within the 2400 (2.4k) most frequent German words; though these have not been included below if they appear in the Goethe Institut B1. The purpose of highlighting 'infrequent' words in the texts is not intended to make definite claims about the method or point of reference best suited to assessing appropriateness of vocabulary, not least since defining frequency appropriately for a given purpose is no straightforward matter. However, frequency (general and context-specific) is widely accepted as relevant to effective language learning and assessment, and attending to it must play a part in assessing the level of difficulty experienced by the candidate.

Where candidates can reasonably be expected to work out the meaning of an infrequent word on the basis of a related frequent word in a different word class, or via an English word, the word is not listed or it is listed with comment indicating that it can be worked out. Similarly, compound words that can be comprehended via their parts are not listed, or listed with comment. A further aspect to take into account is the specified themes for the two respective exam boards, which mean that candidates will have been exposed to certain items of vocabulary used in the texts that go beyond the general B1 level. For items of 'infrequent vocabulary' that can therefore reasonably be deemed to be familiar, this is indicated.

Complex phrasing (idioms and extended collocations, extended verb phrases), verb forms and syntactic constructions receive comment where they are deemed likely to cause difficulties of understanding at the level appropriate for A level or make a task excessively challenging.

Complexity of argument receives comment where this may be expected to impede understanding, especially given the brief time available for processing individual tasks.

Since the **time available** for a task can significantly affect its perceived difficulty and the candidate's performance, the time available for each text with its associated tasks is given below, calculated on the basis of the marks available for that task in the context of the time available for the exam as a whole.

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[18] https://www.goethe.de/pro/relaunch/prf/en/Goethe-Zertifikat_B1_Wortliste.pdf, p. 5.

AQA, A level German, June 2018

The A level examination in German as a whole consists of the following:
Paper 1 50%; **Paper 2** (Writing in German on 1 film and 1 book OR 2 books) 20%; **Paper 3** (Speaking) 30%

Paper 1: Listening, Reading and Writing (2 hours 30 minutes)

https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/sample-papers-and-mark-schemes/2018/june/AQA-76621-QP-JUN18.PDF
https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/sample-papers-and-mark-schemes/2018/june/AQA-76621-TR-JUN18.PDF

The subject content is drawn from four prepared themes (and sub-themes) on German societies and cultures:

Aspects of German-speaking society
> The changing state of the family (incl.: 'Ehe')
> The digital world (incl.: Internet, Soziale Netzwerke)
> Youth culture (incl.: Mode, Musik, Fernsehen)

Multiculturalism in German-speaking society
> Immigration
> Integration (incl.: Maßnahmen, Hindernisse, Erfahrungen)
> Racism (incl.: Opfer, Ursprünge, Kampf gegen Rassismus)

Artistic culture in the German-speaking world
> Festivals and traditions
> Art and architecture
> Cultural life in Berlin (incl.: Geschichte, Theater,Musik,Museen, Vielfalt innerhalb der Bevölkerung)

Aspects of political life in the German-speaking world
> Germany and the EU (incl.: Rolle D's in Europa, Vor- und Nachteile der EU für D., EU-Erweiterung
> Politics and youth (incl.: Politisches Engagement, Werte und Ideale
> German re-unification and its consequences (incl.: alte und neue Bundesländer)

Candidates are advised to allocate 45 mins to Listening and Writing; 1 hour 45 mins to Reading and Writing
Marks out of 100 (Section A Listening and Writing: 30 marks; Section B Reading and Writing: 70 marks)
[On the basis of marks allocated and overall time available, 1½ minutes are available per mark.
Minutes in square brackets and italics reflect the time available based on this calculation.]
The English translations of the titles of recordings/passages given below are not part of the exam paper.

SECTION A Listening and Writing (30 marks) *[= 45 minutes]*

01 Listening – Zuwanderung in die Schweiz [Immigration to Switzerland] (5 marks) *[= 7½ mins, incl. recording 2 mins 24 seconds]*
High-register introduction; informal radio interview about the speaker's immigrant husband.
Infrequent vocabulary: 'Zuwanderung' (4k+, but set topic), 'wohnhaft' (4k+), 'Elternteil' (4k+), 'Eheschließung' (4k+), 'Einreise' (4k+), 'flüchten' (3.4k, but potentially part of set topic), 'Mobbing' (4k+), 'Abstammung' (4k+, but potentially part of set topic), 'Ausländerfeindlichkeit' (4k+, but potentially part of set topic), 'Fachkräfte' (4k+), 'Zusammenleben' ('zusammenleben' 3.3k), 'Verfolgung' (4k+, but potentially part of set topic), 'Hausordnung' (4k+)
Proper names potentially confusing: Hakin (first name of speaker's husband, not mentioned on question paper), Uster (place, not mentioned on question paper)
Complex sentence: main clause + *dass*-clause + main clause + *dass*-clause + *wenn*-clause
TASK: Select 5 correct statements from 12 written statements
Statement G: 'Arbeitskräfte' (3.8k)
Statement M: complex phrasing: 'hat sich als Schweizer einbürgern lassen' ('einbürgern' 4k+)

02 Listening – Eine Diskussion über soziale Netzwerke unter Jugendlichen [Discussion about social networks among young people] (7 marks) *[= 10½ mins, incl. recording 2 mins 23 seconds]*
High register. Interview with two academics about social networking among young people.

Infrequent vocabulary: 'Gleichaltrige' (4k+), 'austauschen' (2.8k), 'abseits' + genitive (4k+), 'Pinnwand' (4k+), 'Vereinsamung' (4k+)

Complex idioms/phrasing: 'in Verbindung treten', 'nach wie vor', 'an Bedeutung gewinnen'

Complex syntax: 1st sentence: 'Frau Doktor Grüsenitz' + main clause + *dass*-clause + main clause + *dass*-clause

2nd sentence: main clause + *dass*-clause with negative + *um…zu*-clause + 'sondern' with *um…zu*-clause. Incl. passive construction.

3rd sentence: main clause with 10-word noun phrase before verb in passive + main clause with passive

4th sentence: high register (e.g. 'Erfahrungen ... ergänzen', 'abseits der Erwachsenenwelt')

Final long sentence: two clauses with complex verb forms in the future tense, the complex negation 'zwar ... wohl nicht' and the complex idiom 'an Bedeutung gewinnen'.

TASK: Write answers to 5 questions.

Question 02.1 (with complex passive verb form) difficult as it does not just require straightforward identification of details but recognition that the first detail is not among the required ones ('nicht vor allem dazu genutzt werden, um neue Freunde zu finden').

Answer to question 02.2 requires understanding of a highly abstract statement in which it is difficult to identify the required information.

03 Listening – Eine Französin in Berlin [A French woman in Berlin] (6 marks) *[= 9 mins, incl. recording 1 min 26 seconds]*

Informal register. Podcast consisting of commentary and statements by a French immigrant.

Infrequent vocabulary: 'kinderreich' (4k+)

Complex idioms/phrasing: 'im Laufe der Zeit'

Complex syntax: First sentence starts with prepositional phrase dependent on verb ('An ihren ersten Besuch in Berlin kann sich die Französin … gut erinnern.'); '…schätzen gelernt'

TASK: Write answers to 3 questions.

Introductory instruction contains complex collocation in relative clause, which mirrors phrasing in text: eine Französin, die Berlin zu ihrer Heimat gemacht hat'

Qu. 03.3 starts with 'Inwiefern' (4k+)

04 Listening – Die Zukunft der EU [The Future of the EU] (12 marks) *[= 18 mins, incl. recording 2 mins 20 seconds]*

High register. Radio news report on a press conference about the EU.

Infrequent vocabulary: 'Austritt' (4k+, but part of set topic), 'Bemühung' (3.4k, sich bemühen 1.2k), 'Zusammengehörigkeit' (4k+, but potentially part of set topic), 'Währung' (3.9k, but part of set topic), 'gegeneinander' (4k+), 'ausbrechen' (2.9k), 'bewältigen' (3.3k), 'bedrohen' (2.5k).

Difficult designation (though written out in question): 'Litauens Staatspräsidentin Dalia Grybauskaite'

Complex idioms/phrasing: 'ein Zeichen der Zusammengehörigkeit setzen'; 'In ihrem Gespräch … erinnerte Angela Merkel an die Bedeutung…'; 'äußerte sich ..... optimistisch'; 'in der Lage gewesen',

Complex syntax: 'dass der … Brexit ... weitere Austritte ... nach sich ziehen würde'; 'Wer so eng … zusammenarbeitet, wer eine gemeinsame Währung hat, der führt …'; main clause with passive + *um...zu*-clause + relative clause; 17-word prepositional phrase before the verb and subject: 'Mit Blick auf die Globalisierung, auf Länder wie China und Indien mit jeweils über einer Milliarde Einwohnern sagte die Bundeskanzlerin, es sei gut, dass Europa … zusammenhalte'; main clause + sub-clause + infinitive clause + *um…zu*-clause; main clause + *um…zu*-clause, *was*-clause + *warum*-clause. [NB 5 sentences consist of 3 or more clauses.]

9 verbs in the subjunctive for reported speech.

TASK: Write 90-word summary, to include 7 prescribed details. Each one depends on understanding the complex and linguistically demanding argument.

SECTION B Reading and Writing (70 marks) *[= 1 hour 45 minutes]*

05 Reading – Sollte man christliche Feste abschaffen? [Should Christian festivals be abolished?, c. 180 words]
　　　(9 marks) *[= 13½ mins]*
High register. Online article about Christian festivals.
Infrequent vocabulary: 'Überzahl' (4k+), 'verordnen' (4k+), 'umstritten' (2.9k), 'Karfreitag' (4k+ but part of set
　　　topic), 'veraltet' (4k+), 'ersatzlos' (4k+ / Ersatz 3.6k), 'Anrecht' (4k+), 'beibehalten' (4k+)
Complex idioms/phrasing: 'sind ... eindeutig in der Überzahl', 'in Anspruch nehmen', 'christlich geprägt', 'hat
　　　... ihr Gutes', 'ins Leere laufen'
Complex relative clause: 'Feiertage, die jeder seinem Glauben gemäß in Anspruch nehmen kann'.
TASK: Read 9 statements about the text and identify whether they are correct, incorrect or not stated.
Instruction to mark as **R** ('richtig'), **F** ('falsch') or **NA** ('nicht angegeben')
NB the force of 'nicht angegeben' esp. in relation to 'falsch' is insufficiently clear
Qu. 05.1 ('Immer mehr Deutsche sind Atheisten') – **NB** *Should this be R; or F because the text only indicates*
　　　the status quo, not a development; or NA because no development is explicitly stated in the text?
Qu. 05.2 depends on understanding question 'Die Meinungen ...gehen auseinander'.
Qu. 05.3 depends on understanding 'umstritten' (2.9k) and 'Eine Minderheit schätzt sie hingegen als Zeichen
　　　des Respekts...'
Qu. 05.4 (incl. 'abschaffen') depends on understanding 'In der Diskussion sollte es keineswegs darum gehen,
　　　religiöse Feiertage ersatzlos zu streichen.'
Qu. 05.5 ('Man hat die Zahl der Feiertage schon erhöht') depends on understanding 'Vielleicht brauchen wir
　　　religionsunabhängige, freie Feiertage, die jeder seinem Glauben gemäß in Anspruch nehmen kann.').
Qu. 05.6 Depends on appreciating difference between 'Feiertag' and 'Urlaub', on 'gelten als' in the text, and
　　　on 'durch ... ersetzt werden' in the question
Qu. 05.07 Depends on understanding 'ein christlich geprägtes Land'
Qu, 05.09 Required answer not clear – F or NA?

06 Reading – Hannelore Kattner aus Kassel erinnert sich an die Wiedervereinigung [Hannelore Kattner from
　　　Kassel looks back on Reunification, c. 140 words] (10 marks) *[= 15 mins]*
High register. Memoir about the fall of the Wall [not in fact Reunification as announced in the title.]
Infrequent vocabulary: 'verhasst' (4k+), 'bewirten' (4k+), 'Ansturm' (4k+), 'wildfremd' (4k+), 'vergießen' (4k+),
　　　'darbieten' (4k+), 'Gabe' (4k+), entgegennehmen (4k+), 'zuckerkrank' (4k+), 'Süßigkeiten' (4k+),
　　　'bescheiden' (3k), 'Kegelklub' (4k+, 1.5k), 'Kegelturnier' (4k+, 2.9k), 'sich sehnen nach' (4k+),
　　　'vorhersehbar' (4k+)
Syntax: Highly complex last sentence: 'Wir dürfen uns also die grenzenlose Freude von 1989 durch die
　　　finanziellen Probleme, die im Übrigen vorhersehbar waren, nicht runterziehen lassen'. Also not
　　　idiomatic (normally 'sich nicht runterziehen lassen' not 'sich etwas runterziehen lassen'.
TASK: Write answers to 9 questions on text
06.5 Depends on understandig complex implicit force of question 'Und ihr sollt unsere Feinde gewesen sein?'
06.6 Depends on understanding 'Diätartikel besorgen' (3k)
06.7 Depends on understanding 'zuckerkrank' (4k+)
06.8 Depends on understanding 'Kegelklub' (4k+)
06.9 Two details required for answer are not self-evident. One detail is presumably the complex statement
　　　'Jahrzehntelang hatten wir uns danach gesehnt' (4k+). Is the second detail supposed to be the past
　　　joy ('die grenzenlose Freude von 1989')?

07 Reading – Deutsche Jugendkultur [German youth culture, c. 235 words] (9 marks) *[= 13½ mins]*
Medium register. Online article informing adults about youth culture.
Infrequent vocabulary: 'Anhänger' (3k), 'sich abwenden' (3.5k), 'schäbig' (4k+), 'Sicherheitsnadeln' (4k+, but
　　　can be worked out from parts 'Sicherheit' 0.7k + 'Nadel', in Goethe Institut B1 list), 'Plattenspieler'
　　　(4k+), 'ging ...hervor' (3.5k), 'düster' (3.4k), 'grenzen sich ... ab' (3.8k), 'sich ... zusammenfinden' (4k+)
Complex phrasing: 'geht es weniger um .... als um...'
TASK: Fill 9 gaps with a verb from a list of 12 verbs (3 are redundant)

Verbs incl. 'gekennzeichnet', 'verwechselt' (4k+) (the latter redundant)

One gap depends on understanding 'Klamotten (4k+), die an überdimensionale Jogginganzüge <u>erinnern'</u>

08 Reading – Der Amüsierdoktor [The Amusement Doctor, c. 220 words] (10 marks) *[= 15 mins]*

High register. Extract from a short story (adapted).

Infrequent vocabulary: 'ermutigen' (4k+), 'gewissermaßen' (3.5k), 'zufriedenstellende (4k+) Gehaltserhöhung (2.7k + 2.8k)', 'Bärenfellmütze' (3.1k + 4k+ 4k+), 'zerknittert' (4k+).
Understanding of the text depends on understanding the infrequent high-register word 'Heiterkeit' (4k+) (also 'heiter' (4k+), 'aufheitern' (4k+)), incl. '"Heiter der Mensch – heiter die Geschäftsabschlüsse (4k+)"'. A connection with the verb 'amüsieren' in the title is not clear enough to be helpful. The AQA vocabulary list contains 'heiter' under 'Weather' translated as 'bright, fine, clear, fair' but this would not help here.

Complex syntax: '… eine Stimme, die so klang, wie ich mir das … Meer … vorstelle'

Complex syntax/word order coupled with confusing name: 'Schuld daran ist einzig und allein Pachulka-Sbirr, ein riesiger Kunde aus Alaska'

Complex argument: Begins with statement 'Nichts bereitet (2.4k) mir größere Sorgen als Heiterkeit (4k+)'
Depends on understanding complex irony, which is notoriously difficult to understand in a foreign language, especially for non-adult learners, and especially in a time-pressured situation.

TASK: Write answers to 8 questions.

08.1 depends on understanding 'Gehalt'. Required two details not clear – one is 'dass ich die ausländischen Kunden glücklich mache', but what is the other? Candidate may also be confused by the title, which suggests that the protagonist is a doctor.

08.2 depends on understanding 'wenn die anstrengenden Verhandlungen des Tages aufhören'

08.3 depends on understanding 'soll sie ermutigen, weitere Geschäfte zu machen'

08.5 depends on understanding 'aufzuheitern'

08.6 depends on understanding 'Gehaltserhöhung' (2.7k + 2.8)

08.7 requires two details that are not clear – one is 'erschrak ich leicht', but what is the other?

08.8 requires complex answer to question 'wie war die Stimme', since what is given is what it reminded the narrator of, not what the voice was like (though 'stürmisch' can be worked out)

09 Reading – Fremdenfeindlichkeit in Deutschland [Xenophobia in Germany, c. 250 words] (12 marks) *[= 18 mins]*

High register. Article about xenophobia in Germany.

Infrequent vocabulary: 'Fremdenfeindlich/keit' (4k+ but set topic), 'Feindseligkeit' (4k+), 'Rechtspopulisten' (4k+ but set topic), 'Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung' ('Stiftung' 3.1k), 'Neigung' (4k+) 'Ausländerfeindlichkeit' (4k+ but set topic), 'vermeintlich' (3.8k)

Complex idioms/phrasing: 'politisch Kapital zu schlagen'; 'fänden sich ... bereits in der Mitte'

Complex syntax: 'sollte ... erheblich eingeschränkt werden'; 'der Widerstand gegen alles ..., was man ihnen zu vermitteln versucht'

8 verbs in the subjunctive (reported speech)

TASK: Summary incl. comment on 2 or 3 details concerning three specified areas (7 details overall).

10 Reading & Translation into German – Moderne Kunst [Modern Art] (10 marks) *[= 15 mins]*

German text: medium register

Complex phrasing/argument: 'Wer hat das nicht schon mal gedacht, wenn...'; 'Wie kann das Kunst sein'? [NB pronoun 'das' easily confused with an article]; '...sind gar nicht so leicht zu beantworten'; 'Das gilt, egal ob es...'

TASK: Translate into German a passage in English on the same theme as the German passage, partly paraphrase of the German text and with some similar vocabulary.

Final sentence has three clauses.

[German passage c. 185 words, English passage c. 100 words].

11 Translation into English – Das Wahlrecht in Österreich [The right to vote in Austria]

(10 marks) *[= 15 mins]*

High register. Article about the electoral system in Austria.

Complex syntax: 6 sentences, 4 of which have more than one clause, with some complex word order.

> Sentence 1: includes genitive construction 'der Grundstein (4k+) politischer Beteiligung'.
>
> Sentence 2: lowering of voting age introduced in a subordinate clause with embedded relative clause rather than in the initial main clause.
>
> Sentence 3: starts with ambiguous word 'schließlich' ('finally' OR (HERE:) 'after all').
>
> Sentence 4: makes a complex point in a main clause with complex word order followed by two parallel subordinate clauses with subjunctives.
>
> Sentence 6: consists of a main clause completed by a subordinate clause, plus subordinate clause.

Complex argument: starts with a general statement, though the text hinges on a specific change of policy that is introduced in the second sentence.

> Whereas the first paragraph is about a change in the Austrian right to vote, the second focuses on criticisms from German critics, presumably voiced at the time though this is only implicit in the past tense); presented as something of a non sequitur.

<u>TASK:</u> Translate passage into English (c. 100 words).

Pearson Edexcel , A level German, June 2018

The A level examination in German as a whole consists of the following:
Paper 1 40%;   **Paper 2** (Writing in German on 1 film and 1 book OR 2 books, and Translation) 30%;
Paper 3 (Speaking) 30%

Paper 1: Listening, Reading and Translation (2 hours)

https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/A-Level/German/2016/Exam-materials/9GN0_01_que_20180611.pdf
Transcript of Listening at end of Mark Scheme:
https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/A-Level/German/2016/Exam-materials/9GN0_01_rms_20180815.pdf
The subject content is drawn from four prepared themes (and sub-themes) on German societies and cultures:

Development of society in Germany
> Nature and the environment (incl.: Umwelt, Recycling, erneuerbare Energie, nachhaltig leben)
> Education (incl.: Bildungswesen und Situation von Studenten, Sitzenbleiben, Berufsausbildung)
> Work (incl.: Arbeitsleben und Arbeitsmoral, deutsche Geschäfte und Industrien)

Political and artistic culture in the German-speaking world
> Music (incl.: Trends, Einfluss der Musik auf die populäre Kultur)
> Media (incl.: Fernsehen, Digital-, Print-, Onlinemedien, Einfluss auf Gesellschaft und Politik)
> Festivals and Traditions (incl.: Feste, Feiern, Sitten, Traditionen)

Immigration and German multicultural society
> The positive effects of immigration (incl.: Beitrag der Immigranten zur Wirtschaft und Kultur)
> The challenges of immigration and integration (incl.: Maßnahmen von Gemeinden; Ausgrenzung und Entfremdung aus der Sicht von Immigranten)
> Response to immigration by state and society (incl: Rechtsextremismus, politische Annäherung an Gastarbeiter, Immigranten, Asylbewerber, öffentliche Meinung)

Reunification of Germany
> Society in the GDR before Reunification (incl.: Arbeit, Wohnungswesen, kommunistische Prinzipien, Verhältnis zum Westen)
> Events before Reunification (incl.: Zusammenbruch des Kommunismus, Fall der Berliner Mauer)
> Germany since Reunification (incl.: Migration von Ost nach West, Arbeitslosigkeit in der früheren DDR, Auswirkungen auf Schulen in Deutschland)

Candidates advised to allocate 50 mins to Section A, Listening; 50 mins to Section B, Reading; 20 mins to Section C, Translation into English)
Marks out of 80 (Section A Listening: 30 marks; Section B Reading: 30 marks; Section C Translation: 20 marks)
[On the basis of marks allocated and overall time available, 1½ minutes are available per mark.
Minutes in square brackets and italics reflect the time available based on this calculation.]
The English translations of the titles of recordings/passages given below are not part of the exam paper.

SECTION A: Listening   (30 marks) *[= 45 minutes on basis of marks; recommended 50 mins]*

1 Listening – Kann man Arbeitslosenstatistiken vertrauen? [Can one trust unemployment statistics?]
>   (4 marks) *[= 6 mins, incl. recording 1 min. 17 seconds]*
Formal report, high register. Article about different unemployment statistics.
Infrequent vocabulary: 'verschweigen' (4k+)
Jargon (employment administration): 'Unterbeschäftigungszahl' (4k+ and only 29 hits on Google; more usual is technical term 'Unterbeschäftigungsquote'; 'Beschäftigung' (2k))
High-register verbs that need to be understood immediately (aurally) for argument to be clear: 'einer Sache vertrauen' with dative; 'klingen nach'; 'verschweigen'; 'erscheinen' [distinct from 'scheinen' in the question]; 'berücksichtigen' [in the passive]; 'erfassen' [in the passive].
Complex phrasing: 'verschweigt (4k+) eins' ('ein(e)s' used as a pronoun is difficult for learners);
Complex syntax: 2 x main clause + *obwohl*-clause; 2 x main clause + relative clause; main clause + relative clause + *wie*-clause.

Argument: Content part of set topic of 'Arbeit' but very dense content. Complex argument, concerning differentiation between official unemployment figures ('Arbeitslosenstatistiken') and a different measure ('Unterbeschäftigungszahl').

Title sets up argument but depends on aural understanding of 'vertrauen' + dative (1.7k).

First sentence sets up argument only implicitly. Logically complex: first part of sentence makes a statement concerning an unemployment statistic, second part calls the statistic into question with the comment 'that sounds like success' (implying 'that sounds like success of the government's employment policy', with the implication that the real picture will follow).

TASK: 4 multiple choice questions, each with 4 options.

(i) is very difficult as it relies on extrapolation from a figure and associated argument.

(ii) demands extensive analysis even for a native speaker, on the basis of the transcript, and the required answer is not 100% convincing as the long-term unemployed may be 'auf Stellensuche'.

(iii) requires the candidate to understand the highly infrequent technical term 'Unterbeschäftigungszahl'.

(iv) like (iii) focuses on technical term 'Unterbeschäftigungszahl'. A native speaker might recognise that the question in fact only requires substitution of a synonym (tick for D 'präziser' where text has 'genauer'). But the sense of the question relies on understanding the highly technical, official distinction between 'Arbeitslosenstatistik' (unemployment statistics) at the very beginning of the text and 'Unterbeschäftigungszahl' (underemployment figure) at the end.

2 Listening – Integrationskurse als Starthilfe [Integration courses as an aid for getting established] (5 marks)
[= 7 ½ mins, incl. recording 1 min. 12 seconds]

High register. Formal report on integration courses for immigrants.

Infrequent vocabulary: 'Zuwanderer' (4k+ but set topic), 'Erlernen' (2.5k, though 'lernen' 0.2k), 'Gestaltung' (2.6k), 'festigen' (4k+)

Jargon (educational administration): 'Einstufungstest' (4k+), 'Einstiegsniveau' (4k+), 'Vorkenntnisse (4k+), 'Bundesamt' (4k+), 'Fortbildungsmöglichkeiten' ('Fortbildung' 4k+)

Argument: Title does not make clear what the text is about since it does not set up the context of immigration.

TASK: Write answers to 4 questions.

(a) Answer relies on understanding that the answer is implied in the previous sentence ('learning a language is important as the prerequisite for becoming integrated in society' – but the text is ambiguous, also correct could be: for taking part in an integration course).

(d) relies on aural understanding of high-register verbs 'erwerben' (1.6k) and 'festigen' (4k+).

3 Listening – Ein Besuch im Rheinland [A visit to the Rhineland] (9 marks) *[= 13 ½ mins, incl. recording 2 mins 5 seconds]*

Medium to high register. Two adults talking about an episode on a business trip.

Infrequent vocabulary: 'erblicken' (4k+), 'sich etwas gönnen' (4k+), 'Ausnahmezustand' (4k+), 'Narr' (4k+, but potentially part of set topic festivals)

Complex phrasing: 'beschloss ich …, mir … einen … Besuch in die Rheinmetropole … zu gönnen'; 'ich war mir jedoch nicht bewusst, was es bedeutet, … zu…'; was sein', 'stieß ich auf …', 'indem Frauen dem Bürgermeister den Schlüssel … abnehmen'; 'es gab kein Durchkommen'

TASK: Write answers to 7 questions.

(b) relies on understanding of high-register 'sich etwas gönnen' in text.

(c) question uses high-register 'gelangen'.

4a & 4b Listening – Schulische Inklusion [Educational inclusion] (12 marks) *[= 18 mins, incl. recordings 1 min. 21 seconds and 1 min. 40 seconds]*

High register. Two interviews, with a teacher and two academics, on education policy for disabled students.

Infrequent vocabulary: 'schulisch' (title) (3.7k, but can be worked out from frequent 'Schule'), 'Förderbedarf' (can potentially be worked out from 'fördern' 1.1k, 'Bedarf' 2k), 'Sonderschule' (4k+, but likely part of set topic), 'anschaulich' (4k+), 'seitens' (3.9k), 'zustehen' (3.4k)

Jargon (educational policy) – potentially all taught as part of set topic: 'schulische Inklusion' (Inklusion 4k+ but can be understood via English), 'Sonderschule' & 'Regelschule' (4k+, 4k+), 'sonderpädagogischer

Förderbedarf' (4k+, 4k+; elements: 'sonder-' 4k+, 'pädagogisch' 2.8k, 'fördern' 1.1k, 'Bedarf' 2k), 'UNO-Behindertenrechtskonvention' (4k+; elements: 'behindert', 'Recht', 'Konvention' 4k+), 'Rahmenbedingungen' (3.8k), 'Begleitung' (4k+, 'begleiten', 1.4k), 'Förderschullehrer' (4k, but 'fördern' 1.1k), 'Disziplinstörungen' (4k+, but 'Disziplin' 2.2k, 'Störung' 1.3k).

Complex idioms/phrasing: 'in Kraft treten'; 'beschritt (4k+) den Weg'; 'weiterhin umstritten (2.9k) bleiben'; 'Zusammenhänge anschaulich (4k+) erklären'; 'voneinander (2.5k) lernen'; 'sich gegenseitig (1.9k) nachmachen (4k+)'; 'lernen bei uns mit … umzugehen'; '…ist an sich gut'; 'Den Kindern ….. steht … eine Begleitung … zu' ('zustehen' 3.4k);

Complex syntax: 'Das Ziel …ist, … lernen zu lassen'; 'Obwohl …., ist oft noch nicht klar, ob …. und wie …'; 'Um … zu …, muss man … erklären, … mitbringen …, … einsetzen und … lernen lassen.'; main clause + *dass* clause + *weil* clause; main clause + infinitive clause + *da* clause + *wenn* clause.

TASK 4a: Write answers to 4 questions.

(i) Question asks 'How has school life changed for disabled students' and requires two details. There is in fact only one obvious detail in the text: they can (now) go to normal schools. (The mark scheme reveals that 'Answers must imply change': 1) 'they <u>used to</u> have to go to a special school', and 2) 'they can <u>now</u> go to a normal school').

TASK 4b: Two summaries, each focusing on 3 topics.

Three of the six topic prompts rely on understanding jargon compound terms with 'Förder-' ('Förderbedarf', 'Förderlehrer', 'Förderschulen').

SECTION B: Reading   (30 marks) *[= 45 mins on basis of marks, recommended 50 mins]*

5 Reading – Das Neujahrskonzert [The New Year Concert, c. 150 words] (4 marks) *[= 6 mins]*

High register. Article about New Year's concert of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra.

Infrequent vocabulary: 'alljährlich' (4k+), 'Prosit' (4k+), 'abschließend' (3.5k), 'Untermalung' (4k+), 'zugehörig' (4k+), 'Balletteinlage' ('Einlage' 4k+), 'einblenden' (4k+), 'Verlosung' (4k+), 'käuflich (4k+) erwerben'. Infrequent words concerning concerts/music may be familiar from the set topic 'Music': 'Zugabe' (4k+), 'Beifall' (4k+), 'Takt' (4k+). See also 'Strauss-Dynastie' and 'Radetzky-Marsch'.

TASK: 4 statements to be completed with one of a choice of 4 phrases.

Answers depend on knowledge of 'Klatschen' ('4k+), 'Schunkeln' (4k+), 'Tanzeinlagen' (4k+), 'umsonst' (3.8k).

6 Reading – Alpenkrimis [Alpine Thrillers, c. 150 words] (4 marks) *[= 6 mins]*

Medium register. Letter about a genre of popular literature.

Infrequent vocabulary: 'weiterempfehlen' (4k+, but can be worked out from 'empfehlen' (1.2k), 'lesenswert' (4k+), 'widersprüchlich' (4k+, 'Widerspruch' 2.6k), 'Inbegriff' (4k+), 'Almwiese' (4k+, Alm 4k+, Wiese 3k), 'Verbrechen' (3.7k), 'Genre' (4k+, can be worked out from English if candidate knows meaning of English word), 'heiter' (4k+), 'gelassen' (4k+), 'Gestaltung' (2.6k), 'Murmeltier' (4k+)

Complex syntax: 'ein Blick … lässt erkennen, dass es sich nicht um … handelt'

TASK: Select 4 correct statements from 9 statements about the content.

Statements require understanding of 'Mord' (2.8k), 'Verbrechen' (3.7k), außergewöhnlich (3.7k), einsam (2.9k), traurig (4k+); high-register genitive phrase 'sich keiner großen Beliebtheit (4k+) erfreuen (3.3k)'.

7 Reading – Zeit des Vergessens [Time of Forgetting, c. 150 words] (6 marks) *[= 9 mins]*

High register. Article written around time of Reunification about policy concerning teachers in GDR schools.

Infrequent vocabulary: 'unzureichend' (4k+), 'spitzeln' (4k+, but likely part of set topic GDR), 'beabsichtigen' (3.4k), 'gerichtlich' (4k+, can be worked out from 'Gericht', 1.2k), 'Widerspruch' (2.6k), 'einlegen' (3.7k), 'Unschuld' (4k+, but 'Schuld' 1.6k), 'Aufarbeitung' (4k+, potentially part of set topic), 'Anhörungskomitees' (4k+).

Jargon (educational policy) – potentially part of set topic education: 'Kultusministerien (4k+)', 'Lehrkräfte' (4k+), 'Oberschulämter' (4k+), 'Pädagogen' (4k+; pädagogisch 2.8k)

Complex idioms/phrasing: 'gut die Hälfte', 'Widerspruch (2.6k) einlegen (3.7k)', 'sodass eine Welle an Prozessen auf die Gerichte zukommt'.

TASK: Write answers to four questions.

Tasks require knowledge of 'Lehrkräfte' (4k+), 'Justiz' (4k+), likely to be confused with 'justice'.

Two of four questions include word 'entlassen' (2.2k)/'Entlassung' (4k+).

Task (d) asks for two details but only one is clearly relevant.

8 Reading – Anmeldung Bergwaldprojekte [Registration Mountain Forest Projects, c. 200 words] (8 marks)
[= 12 mins]

High register. Call for participation in an ecological initiative.

Infrequent vocabulary: 'Fachleute' (3.9k), 'Landesforstdienste' ('Forst' 4k+, but synonym for 'Wald' and close to English), 'Kulisse' (4k+), 'beheben' (4k+), 'Berichterstattung' (4k+), 'sensibilisieren' (4k+), 'Betroffene' (4k+, can potentially be worked out from 'betreffen'), 'Grundbesitzer' (4k+), 'Jäger' (3.6k), 'Anliegen' (3.1k)

Complex idioms/phrasing: 'Aufmerksamkeit (2.5k) finden', 'soll Begegnungsort ('Begegnung' 2.3k) werden', 'Probleme beheben (4k+)'

TASK: Write answers to 6 questions.

9 Reading – [No title, extract from novel by T. Brussig about East Berlin, 280 words] (8 marks) *[= 12 mins]*

Medium register, literary text. Extract from a novel about East Berlin in the 1970s/80s.

Infrequent vocabulary: 'Stromausfall' (4k+; can potentially be worked out from 'Strom' 1.7k, 'ausfallen' 2.3k), 'Grenzer' (4k+; can potentially be worked out from 'Grenze', 0.6k, and GDR is a set topic; but 'Grenzer' is a colloquial word, the first meaning of which is 'inhabitant of a border region'), 'Stromnetz' (4k+; but can be worked out from 'Strom' 1.7k, 'Netz' 1k), 'erlöschen' (4k+), 'zappenduster' (4k+), 'Verschwörung' (4k+), 'durchschauen' (4k+), 'blitzartig' (4k+), 'trojanisch' (4k+, though can be worked out from English if candidate is familiar with word), 'aufgekratzt' (4k+), 'Leuchtmunition' (4k+, 'leuchten' 1.7k, 'Munition' 4k+), 'Schauspiel' (4k+), 'Staubsauger' (4k+, 'Staub' 3.2k), 'versehentlich' (4k+), 'Grenzstreifen' (4k+, 'Streifen' 3.5k, but GDR is a set topic), 'Rüssel' (4k+), 'Leuchtkugel' (4k+, 'leuchten' 1.7k, 'Kugel' 3.6k), 'gleißend' (4k+), 'sich abzeichnen' (3.1k), 'sich verzerren' (4k+), 'rätselhaft' (4k+), 'ineinander' (4k+), 'voneinander' (2.5k), 'ausreißen' (4k+).

Complex idioms/phrasing: 'einzig und allein'; 'dem Zoll in die Hände gespielt'; 'an dem es wohl lag, dass … alle in Berlin etwas aufgekratzter (4k+) waren als sonst.'

Complex syntax: 'Der Grenzer, geübt in …, durchaute …, dass … . Dass sie …, um … .'; *als*-clause + main clause + *um… zu* clause; 'Es war ein Feuerwerk, wie sie es noch nie gesehen hatten, weder … noch … .'; main clause + sub-clause + relative clause + relative clause.

Argument: Understanding of the text depends on understanding the infrequent word 'Stromausfall' , which appears as the third word. Candidates who do not understand or succeed in working this out (as one among many challenges to be negotiated within 12 minutes) are unlikely to be able to understand even the gist of the text especially in the light of the other infrequent vocabulary.

TASK: Write answers in response to 6 questions.

(a) Answer relies on understanding infrequent vocabulary: 'Stromausfall' (4k+), 'erlöschen' (4k+) and 'zappenduster' (4k+)

(b) Complex question requiring candidates to respond with two out of three possible details. The first of the three ('Der Grenzer … durchschaute …) is highly complex and includes a mythological reference to a metaphorical Trojan horse; the second is straightforward ('Er schrie "Grenzalarm"'); the third relies on the infrequent word 'Leuchtmunition'.

(c) Relies on understanding the infrequent word 'aufgekratzt'.

(.e) Question uses the infrequent word 'Staubsauger' (4k+) and relies on understanding the infrequent word 'Rüssel' (4k+).

(f) Relies on understanding the highly complex last four sentences, or repeating the sentence that contains the word from the question.

SECTION C: Translation (20 marks) *[= 30 mins on basis of marks, recommended 20 mins]*

10 Translation into English (20 marks) *[= 30 mins on basis of marks, recommended 20 mins]*
High register. Article about immigration.
Infrequent vocabulary: 'Einwanderung' (4k+, but part of set topic), 'Migrationshintergrund' (4k+, but part of set topic), 'Lebenserwartung' (4k+; can be worked out from 'Leben' and 'Erwartung' 2k), 'Arbeitskräfte' (3.8k, but part of set topic), 'Rentenkassen' (4k+, 'Rente' 3.1k, 'Kasse' in this sense of '(pension) fund' 4k+, may be familiar from set topic), 'einzahlen' (4k+, may be familiar from set topic), 'Durchschnittsalter' (4k+, 'durchschnittlich 2.3k), 'unentbehrlich' (4k+), 'Weiterbildung' (3.8k, but part of set topic), 'friedlich' (2.8k)
Complex idioms/phrasing: first sentence 'ist ... zu einem Land mit ... geworden'; 'der Beitrag, den Immigranten zur Wirtschaft … leisten,'
Complex syntax: second sentence: main clause + *da*-clause + main clause (incorrectly not separated off by a comma); final sentence: *obwohl*...clause + main clause + infinitive clause + *um ... zu* clause.
TASK: Translation of c. 110 words into English.

TRANSLATION INTO GERMAN INCLUDED IN PAPER 2:

SECTION A: Translation into German 20 marks *[= c. 27 mins on basis of marks; recommended 30 mins]*
Medium register. Reflections by a mother on a visit to a museum about the GDR with her daughter.
Infrequent vocabulary: 'surveillance' ['überwachen' (3.5k), but GDR is a set topic]
Complex syntax: 'What she didn't understand was ...., when no one knew whom to believe.'
  'As politics becomes increasingly unstable ... + we ought to ask ourselves + whether it is positive + that the government knows ...'
TASK: Translation of c. 110 words into German.

APPENDIX B

Note on the reviewer

KATRIN KOHL

Qualifications
- BA, English and German, University of London, 1978
- MA, German Twentieth-Century Literature, University of London, 1980
- PhD, German literature, University of London, 1988
- MA (CNAA), General Linguistics, University of Westminster (then PCL), 1989
- RSA Certificate in Teaching English as a Foreign Language, International House, London, 1979

Professional experience
- TEFL teacher, Business English, Linguarama Iberica, Madrid
- German A-Level teacher (part-time), Kingsway Princeton 6th-Form College, London, 1980-81
- University teacher of German including first-year language teaching, 1984-88 (University of London) and 1988– (University of Oxford)
- Admissions for German, 1984-88 (Westfield College, University of London)
- Admissions for Modern Languages, 1989– , including German oral interviews and marking of German language tests (MLAT) (Jesus College, Oxford)
- Setting German language test for Modern Languages Admissions (MLAT, German), University of Oxford (some years)
- Design of ab initio course in German, and 2015– admissions interviews, University of Oxford
- Examiner First-Year course in German, University of Oxford, 1990– (some years)
- Director and founder of the Oxford German Network; includes forum for primary and secondary school teachers of German, and annual Oxford German Olympiad for primary, secondary and tertiary level students of German
- Member of the A Level Content Advisory Board (ALCAB) panel for Modern Foreign Languages, 2014
- Member of the Modern Foreign Languages Pedagogy Review Advisory Group for KS 3 and KS 4, Teaching Schools Council, 2016
- Member of MFL groups consulted by Ofqual since 2013
- Principal Investigator for the multi-institutional research programme 'Creative Multilingualism', funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council as part of its Open World Research Initiative (2016-2020)

Other relevant experience
- Bringing up three children with native English and near-native German competence
- Contribution to preparing them for extra-curricular or school-based GCSE and A level in German

Publications (language teaching)
- Researcher and consultant for BBC multi-media German ab initio and advanced courses incl. *Deutsch direkt!* (1984-1988), and co-author of course books
- Co-author of grammar reference work with exercises for A level and university first-year level, *Essential German Grammar* (2nd ed., 2015)
- Co-author of grammar course for advanced A level and university, *Practising German Grammar* (4th ed., 2017)

Membership
- Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Linguists (CIOL)
- Member of the Association for Language Learning (ALL)