

Vocational Qualifications (QCF, NVQ)

QCF NVQ Languages

French Entry Level – Level 4 (NVQ)

German Entry Level – Level 4 (NVQ)

Spanish Entry Level – Level 4 (NVQ)

Welsh Entry Level – Level 4 (NVQ)

OCR Report to Centres 2015 – 2016

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This report on the examination provides information on the performance of candidates, which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the examination.

OCR will not enter into any discussion or correspondence in connection with this report.

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QCF NVQ Languages

1. Overview

The quality of work produced by centres is of a good standard.

Most centres now have experienced qualified Assessors and Internal Verifiers in place, as well as assessment strategies and standardisation processes, which conform fully to the required quality assurance criteria.

The quality of resources provided by centres is continuing to improve. The majority of centres use the “iLanguages” materials as their starting point for teaching and learning input as well as for the assessment tasks in the four skills, but many have now adapted and updated these assessment tasks, often localising them to make them relevant to the potential needs of local employers as well as to prepare candidates more appropriately for future employment in local enterprises and organisations and to make them more interesting for candidates. Some of these personalised assessments provide examples of very good practice.

2. General Comments

Most of the centres have offered the NVQ Languages for several years and have developed and implemented all the required Management and Recording systems. Portfolios are almost invariably well presented, with front sheets that clearly summarise and point to candidate achievement, making the verification task an easy one.

Because the majority of centres undertaking the languages NVQ have been offering the qualification for many years, high quality candidate support is universal. All centres have a sound induction programme to familiarise new candidates with the NVQ procedures and the continuous assessment methodology.

Individual candidates are offered support as required to complete assessments. First and subsequent attempts are assessed and any errors highlighted. The candidates are then charged with correcting any errors and resubmitting their work for assessment.

The quality of assessment and internal verification is generally very high, and most Assessors and Internal Verifiers have a long experience of conducting assessments, providing feedback and verifying portfolios, which means that the quality of these processes is now greatly improved. Feedback to candidates has again improved this year, with most assessors implementing the guidance to make comments, check accuracy of pronunciation and question candidates in the target language immediately after an oral assessment – with the tape recorder still running. This process enables verifiers to see exactly how – and how well – feedback is being given to candidates.

The training of new Assessors and Internal Verifiers continues, although it has slowed down substantially over the last session. It is now estimated that there are some 700 qualified Assessors throughout England and Wales.

Most candidates undertake the qualification at levels 1 or 2, with only a handful attempting level 3. Level 2 is the most common level undertaken and centres take full advantage of the fact that candidates are able to take one mandatory unit at the level below the qualification – many candidates take Reading, Writing and Understanding at level 2 with Speaking at level 1, therefore achieving an overall level 2 qualification.

3. Comments on Individual Units

Reading Assessments

Reading assessments are generally very well conducted by centres, with a wide variety of source material being used from newspaper clippings to advertisements and public notices. Candidates generally perform well with these assessments and helpful written feedback is provided on the portfolio.

Understanding Assessments

Understanding assessments are generally very well conducted by centres, although the range of source material tends to be less varied than for the reading assessments because of the difficulty of recording good quality material. Public notices, news announcements and telephone messages were very common. Candidates generally perform well with these assessments and written feedback is provided on the portfolio.

Writing Assessments

For the writing assessments, 100% achievement is required and therefore all assessments must be composed in the target language without any mistakes. Future employers would require all correspondence leaving their companies to be faultless. Employers would also expect all documents to be word-processed, and centres have therefore encouraged candidates to use computers to present their work. Candidates readily accept these quality requirements and strive to achieve this perfection.

Speaking Assessments

Nearly all candidates have access to computers for the recording of their Speaking Assessments, which means that the quality of recording is greatly enhanced. The speaking unit is generally the most problematic of all units, with candidates performing less well than in the other units, often because of poor pronunciation and hesitancy. For this reason they often undertake the unit at the level lower than that of the qualification they are undertaking. However, assessors have recently focussed more on the need for comprehensible pronunciation, and recorded oral feedback had been very helpful in clarifying any areas of uncertainty and the quality of candidate performance across England and Wales in all centres has improved greatly.

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