

Guidelines for the internal standardisation/ moderation of Cambridge IGCSE foreign language Speaking Tests (June 2011 onwards)

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1. Introduction

1.1 Aim of these guidelines

It is essential that any Centre using more than one Examiner to conduct and assess the IGCSE Speaking test in any language puts in place processes to achieve a consistent approach before, during and after the Speaking test for its candidates. There are a number of ways in which this consistency can be achieved and this document aims to provide guidance on methods which have been used successfully by Centres in the past.

Guidance is provided on the following:

- How to **standardise the conduct** of the test across different Examiners (Section 2)
- How to **carry out Internal Moderation and produce a single rank order for the Centre** after the tests take place (including how to adjust marks for an Examiner whose assessment is out of line) (Section 3)
- What to include in the report to CIE on Internal Moderation procedures (Section 4)

In addition, a suggested format for recording outcomes of internal standardisation after the examination has taken place and reporting to CIE is provided. The final section of the document contains an overview of the process.

1.2 Why is consistency important?

Where more than one Examiner is used to conduct and assess Speaking tests within a Centre the risks are as follows:

- (a) **an inconsistent approach to conducting the test** – this may result in candidates being afforded different opportunities to show what they can do depending on which Examiner conducted their examination;
- (b) **inconsistent marking** – this will mean that a Centre's marks will follow two or more rank orders instead of the single rank order required.

To work effectively, **External Moderation relies on each Centre, for each language, adopting a consistent approach for all candidates taking the Speaking test and producing a reliable rank order of candidates for the whole Centre.**

External Moderation is the process by which CIE brings each Centre's marks into line with the agreed international standard. The CIE moderator checks the assessment at different points in each Centre's rank order and recommends adjustments, where necessary. Any adjustments must be applied to the Centre's rank order as a whole, and cannot be applied to individual Examiner rank orders. If it is necessary to adjust a Centre's marks to bring them into line with the required standard, but the standard of marking at that Centre is inconsistent, eg one Examiner is more severe or more generous in the way s/he awards marks than another, there is a risk that any adjustment will affect certain candidates more or less favourably than others.

1.3 Request for further sample

Centres using more than one Examiner are required to record the Speaking tests for all their candidates. CIE moderators will check the sample provided by the Centre to ensure assessment is consistent. If there is evidence of inconsistency, and in order to ensure that all candidates are treated fairly, it may be necessary to ask the Centre to provide a further sample. It is therefore essential that Centres keep all the recordings of all candidates and keep a clear record of internal sampling and the decisions reached.

1.4 Feedback

CIE will provide each Centre with feedback as to examining technique, the consistency and range of the sample and the way the assessment criteria have been applied.

2. How to standardise the conduct of the Speaking test across different Examiners

This section suggests several ways in which Centres can achieve a more consistent approach to oral examining. This is a separate process from the standardising of the **assessment** through the internal moderation of marks at the Centre (see Section 3 below).

2.1 Appointment of Coordinating Examiner

The first step in the process is for the Centre to identify one teacher to act as Coordinating Examiner. The Coordinating Examiner is responsible for ensuring the standardisation procedures within the Centre.

2.2 Working together to ensure consistency

There are a variety of ways in which Examiners in Centres can work together to ensure consistency and some suggested approaches are outlined in 2.2.2 below. The method each Centre decides on will depend on how familiar Examiners are with the requirements of the IGCSE Speaking test.

2.2.1 Which approach to standardisation will be the most suitable?

This table suggests how the different approaches to ensuring consistency outlined in 2.2.2 below can be combined depending on how familiar a Centre is with the IGCSE standard and requirements. Whichever approach or combination of approaches is adopted, once the live Speaking tests have been conducted, the Centre/Coordinating Examiner will have to implement one of the methods of standardising assessment outlined in Section 3.

	(a)	(b)	(c)	All to be followed by one of the approaches to standardising assessment outlined in Section 3.
New IGCSE Centre	✓	✓	✓	
New IGCSE Centres OR a Centre which has received feedback indicating areas for improvement	✓		✓	
		✓	✓	
Centre familiar with the IGCSE requirements which has received positive feedback			✓	

2.2.2 Three approaches which Centres can adopt to ensure consistency:

(a) Meeting in advance of mock/practice Speaking tests

Where a Centre is new to IGCSE, it is important that all the Examiners have the opportunity to meet in order to discuss approaches to the conduct and assessment of the Speaking test and listen together to mock/practice Speaking tests, as well as carry out their own mock/practice tests.

This process ensures that all Examiners feel as confident as possible before they conduct the live Speaking tests for candidates.

A good time to get together is **before the practice/mock Speaking tests**. The Teachers' Notes booklet should be read with great care, especially the notes on guidance on each

section of the test. A common approach should be agreed at the meeting and can then be trialled in the practice/mock tests. Things can be reviewed after the practice/mock tests and any improvements/refinements implemented for the live tests.

Areas that Examiners are advised to consider when they meet are as follows:

- **Role plays:** Examiners should consider both their own role and what they expect of the candidate. As preparation for the practice/mock Speaking tests, they should establish some basic **common** principles such as whether they will split longer tasks and when not to deviate at all from the script provided in the Teachers' Notes Booklet. As well as discussing possible candidate responses, Examiners can try out the role plays on each other. This will help all Examiners at the Centre arrive at a clear, shared view of their own role in the role plays.
- **Timings:** it is helpful to discuss timings at this stage and to ensure that all Examiners are aware of the stipulated timings and the importance of respecting them so that all candidates within the Centre are given equal opportunity to show what they can do.
- **Administration of the Speaking test:** Examiners should agree on how they will introduce each candidate and on how they will introduce each section of the test as the test progresses. This helps ensure that all candidates receive the same treatment and opportunities to talk.
- **The type and style of questions for Topic and General Conversation:** Examiners should go through the requirements for the Conversation sections to ensure they all take a common approach, eg that they are all aware of the need to:
 - give candidates the opportunity to work in a variety of tenses (Past and Future)
 - give candidates the opportunity to answer unexpected questions
 - ask open questions (using a variety of interrogatives) and avoid closed questions
 - cover a range of topics

For successful moderation (internal and external) to take place, it is important that the approach to questioning between Examiners at a Centre should be a uniform one and that the types and levels of questions asked should be similar. However, **although a consistent approach is required, this must not be at the expense of spontaneity.** It is acknowledged that it is common practice to make use of question banks during the learning process prior to the Speaking test but Examiners should only make use of such materials in a judicious way and as a last resort in the test room.

- **Mark scheme:** it will be necessary to go through the mark scheme and ensure that all Examiners have a common understanding of the descriptors and their application **before** they conduct their practice/mock Speaking tests. This process will also help to inform their question techniques.
- **Practice exams from previous years:** it will also be extremely useful for Examiners to listen together to practice/mock Speaking tests from previous years or to listen to CIE samples of work (eg Speaking Test Training Handbook), focusing on good techniques to elicit responses from candidates at all levels of ability. Examiners can then discuss the application of the assessment criteria and how to incorporate examples of good practice into their own Examining.

After the meeting, all Examiners should arrange to conduct and assess practice/mock Speaking tests individually with their own groups before meeting together and considering the work of the Centre as a whole. (See Section 3 for procedures that can be followed after

the practice/mock tests to ensure marking is in line across the Examining team.) **Even though these are practice/mock tests, Centres are strongly recommended to record all candidates so that procedures for standardising the assessment of the tests can be trialled.** (Please note that all candidates have to be recorded for the live Speaking tests in Centres with more than one Examiner.)

(b) Meeting shortly before the live Speaking test period

If a group of Examiners is already familiar with the requirements for the IGCSE Speaking test, it may be more appropriate for them to meet shortly before the live Speaking test period in order to 'cross mark' some previous Speaking tests, eg from the previous year or from the Centre's practice/mock tests. A sample of between 3 and 6 candidates, depending upon the range of ability in a Centre, should be sufficient for this exercise, which will give Examiners the opportunity to refresh their memory of the standard and agree on how to apply this standard. If a Centre has entered candidates for the CIE IGCSE Speaking test in previous sessions, the CIE report and feedback should be re-read at this point so that any feedback previously given as to the conduct and assessment of the test can taken on board.

(c) Meeting in the 4 working days before the Centre's chosen Speaking test period

As already mentioned, this approach is likely to be sufficient on its own where Examiners are familiar with the requirements of the IGCSE Speaking test and where the Centre has received feedback saying that the conduct of the test was satisfactory and the assessment was consistent. **It must be used in conjunction with one of the approaches to standardising the assessment** (see Section 3).

All Examiners meet in the 4 working days before the Centre's chosen Speaking test period and prepare the live examination materials. They discuss between themselves any queries/points arising from the materials and establish basic **common** principles such as whether they will split longer tasks and when not to deviate at all from the script provided in the Teachers' Notes Booklet. They remind themselves of any feedback from CIE in the previous session.

Centres are reminded that, once opened, Speaking test materials (Teachers' Notes Booklet and Role Play Cards) must remain in the Centre, in confidential storage when they are not being used for preparation by the Examiners, and the contents must not be divulged to candidates.

Each Examiner should then conduct and assess his/her live Speaking tests. The next part of the procedure is outlined in Section 3.

3. How to carry out Internal Moderation and produce a single rank order for the Centre

This section suggests how, once Speaking tests have been conducted, Centres can check that assessment across Examiners is in line and ensure marks submitted to CIE follow a single rank order.

This is a separate process from the standardising of the **conduct of the test** at the Centre (see Section 2 above).

3.1 Each Examiner lists his/her candidates in rank order

Once the Speaking tests have been completed, each Examiner should make a list of his/her candidates and their marks, in rank order.

3.2 Each Examiner chooses a sub-sample

Using this rank order, each Examiner should choose a sample of 3 candidates based on candidate performance at the top, middle and bottom of his/her mark range. Because each Examiner may have examined groups of different candidate ability, his/her application of the assessment criteria needs to be checked across the range of marks produced by candidates in his/her group(s).

3.3 Cross check each Examiner's assessment according to the Centre's preferred method

It is up to a Centre how they 'cross check' the assessment. The following suggestions are all acceptable:

(a) The Coordinating Examiner checks each Examiner's sub-sample

One method is for the Coordinating Examiner responsible for the submission of the sample to CIE to listen to and assess the samples each Examiner has selected. At this stage, no changes should be made to the marks on the Working Mark Sheet completed by the original Examiner. The 'checker' should keep a separate record of his/her marks on a 'clean' Working Mark Sheet.

(b) Each Examiner checks the sub-sample for all Examiners

A second way is for each Examiner to listen to and check the sample of work of all the other Examiners. This could be done in a group or individually. This approach may be too time-consuming to be practical for larger Centres, with more than 2 or 3 Examiners, but if time does permit, will ensure consistency of approach to the assessment. Again, each 'checker' should keep a record of his/her marking on a 'clean' Working Mark Sheet: at this stage marks should not be altered on the Working Mark Sheet completed by the original Examiner.

(c) A 'second' Examiner is responsible for assessment

An alternative approach adopted in some Centres is for one Examiner to conduct the test and a second Examiner to be present in the room (out of sight of the candidate) and s/he assesses all the candidates during the test. The second Examiner who carries out the assessment could be the same person for all conducting Examiners or Examiners can work in pairs and mark each others candidates. If the latter approach is adopted a sub sample should still be checked and the marking agreed by both Examiners.

3.4 How to adjust the total marks for Examiners whose assessment is out of line

3.4.1 For each Examiner decide whether his/her assessment is in line with the agreed standard

Once the work has been checked, the Coordinating Examiner (or the group of Examiners) need(s) to decide whether the marking of each Examiner is in line with the Centre's agreed standard.

If the marking of an Examiner is **consistently** out of line with the Centre's agreed standard by **more than +/-2 or 3 marks**, the marks of candidates in that Examiner's group will need to be adjusted by the Centre **before final marks are submitted to Cambridge**. Where a particular Examiner is judged to be 'out of line', it is well worth selecting some more of that Examiner's candidates for a further check. It may be that differences occur in a particular area of the test/mark scheme (eg Role Plays) in which case these further checks could concentrate on that particular area.

3.4.2 For Examiners who are out of line, decide whether assessment is harsh or lenient and what adjustment is necessary

Once the marking of a particular Examiner has been identified as out of line with the Centre's standard, the Coordinating Examiner needs to decide whether the original Examiner has been too harsh or too lenient and to what degree. If, for example, the original marking is judged to be too severe by 4 marks, the **final total mark** for all candidates in the group affected needs to be raised

by 4 marks. **Please note, it is not sufficient to change the mark of just the sample candidates.** The sample has been chosen to represent the standard of assessment across the group of candidates examined by a particular Examiner. Therefore decisions based upon checks made on the sample candidates must be applied to the whole group examined by that Examiner.

In some cases, the marking of a particular Examiner may be judged too harsh or too lenient in one part of the mark range, eg marks above 80 are in line but marking is severe for candidates scoring below that mark. In such cases, the Coordinating Examiner should only adjust the marks for candidates examined by that Examiner over the part of the mark range affected.

3.4.3 For Examiners requiring adjustment, enter new, agreed, total mark on the Working Mark Sheet

Where an Examiner's standard requires adjustment, the Coordinating Examiner(s) should not amend the original marks entered by the Examiner on the Working Mark Sheet. Instead, a new total mark should be entered in the final column of the Working Mark Sheet (headed 'External or Internal Moderation'). Returning to the example in 3.4.2, for an Examiner whose standard is judged to be severe by 4 marks, the Coordinating Examiner should enter +4 and the new **total mark** (in a different colour ink is helpful) alongside the original marks in the 'External or Internal Moderation' column

This will ensure that candidates get the mark they deserve and that all stages of the process are easy to track.

3.4.4 For Examiners requiring adjustment, ensure that it is the new, agreed, total marks that are transferred to the MS1 Mark Sheet or to computer (for Centres returning marks electronically)

The final total mark for each candidate at the Centre must be transferred to the MS1 Mark Sheet or to computer (for Centres that are returning marks electronically). Where candidates were examined by an Examiner whose marks have been adjusted, it is the new, agreed, total mark that must be transferred from the Working Mark Sheet to the MS1 Mark Sheet or to computer. To avoid errors, marks should not be transferred to MS1 Mark Sheets or to computer until Internal Moderation on all groups has been finished.

3.4.5 Keep a written record of procedures and adjustments

Centres using more than one Examiner are required to enclose details of their Internal Moderation procedures with the sample they submit to CIE (see Section 4 for guidance). The Centre should also keep a copy of this report.

4. Report to CIE on Internal Moderation procedures

After the Speaking tests have been conducted and marking has been checked across all Examiners, the Coordinating Examiner selects the sample for External Moderation according to the instructions in the syllabus/Teachers' Notes booklet for the appropriate year. This sample must be sent to CIE, to arrive by the date specified, along with the required paperwork (see syllabus/Teacher's Notes booklet), including the 'Cover sheet for Moderation Sample'.

The Coordinating Examiner in the Centre should complete the cover sheet. This includes ticking the boxes to confirm that Internal Moderation has taken place and that a brief report on the Centre's Internal Moderation procedures is enclosed. The purpose of the report is to explain how conduct of the examination was standardised in the Centre and how the application of the assessment criteria was agreed and checked. The report should include the following:

- (a) the name of the Coordinating Examiner, the names of all Examiners used at the Centre and a **brief** description of the procedures used in the Centre to ensure that conduct and assessment of the Speaking test was consistent.

- (b) confirmation that a minimum of 3 candidates has been checked for **each** Examiner and that these candidates cover the range of marks awarded by that Examiner.
- (c) the names of any Examiner(s) found to be out of line, why the differences in marks awarded occur (eg 'Examiner X was more generous in awarding the mark for linguistic content for the conversation sections') and whether the 'size' of the differences mean it was necessary to adjust the final total marks for this Examiner (eg differences of **more than +/-2 or 3 marks**).
- (d) for any Examiner requiring adjustment, details of any further candidates checked.
- (e) for any Examiner requiring adjustment, details of the adjustment: size of adjustment, whether marks have been raised or lowered, whether the adjustment covers all or part of the range.
- (f) confirmation that the original Working Mark Sheets for all Examiner(s) are enclosed and that for any Examiner found to require adjustment the final column has been used to indicate the adjustment required and the new agreed total mark for each candidate.
- (g) confirmation that the new agreed total mark for each candidate has been transferred to the MS1 Mark Sheet (or to CAMEO) and that this transfer has been checked and is correct.
- (h) confirmation that a sample of candidates, across the full mark range of the Centre, has been selected as the EXTERNAL MODERATION sample and checked
- (i) a list of the candidates in the EXTERNAL MODERATION sample, including the name of the Examiner who conducted their test and the marks awarded in the Centre (including the original marks and total and the new agreed total mark).

On the next page is a suggested format for providing the information listed in (a) to (i) which Centres may wish to adapt to their own purposes. This format is intended to provide a framework for Centres to ensure they provide CIE with the necessary information for External Moderation and also retain a clear record of their own procedures and decisions.

Report to CIE on Internal Moderation procedures	Centre name	
	Centre number	
Name of Coordinating Examiner (in capitals)		

Brief description of the approach used in the Centre to ensure that conduct and assessment of the Speaking test was consistent:

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To be completed for each Examiner at the Centre (a completed example is provided below):

Examiner name	Range of marks awarded	Candidates in sample	Examiner's mark	'Checker's' mark	Difference	Requires adjustment	Reason for adjustment
						yes/no	
						yes/no	
						yes/no	

Completed example:

Examiner name	Range of marks awarded	Candidates in sample	Examiner's mark	'Checker's' mark	Difference	Requires adjustment	Reason for adjustment
DGS	58-94	1. Smith 0111	94	98	+4	yes/∅	Marking for linguistic content is generous in both conversation sections
		2. Jones 0222	76	80	+4	yes/∅	
		3. Wright 0333	58	62	+4	yes/∅	

To be completed for each Examiner requiring adjustment (a completed example is provided below):

Examiner name	Size of adjustment	Range of marks to be adjusted	Required adjustment entered in final column of Working Mark Sheet	New, agreed, total mark entered in final column of Working Mark Sheet

Completed example:

Examiner name	Size of adjustment	Range of marks to be adjusted	Required adjustment entered in final column of Working Mark Sheet	New, agreed, total mark entered in final column of Working Mark Sheet
DGS	+4	all marks	yes	yes

Tick the box to indicate that:

The Working Mark Sheets for all Examiners, showing the original Examiner marks as well as any new, agreed, total marks, are enclosed.	
The new, agreed, total marks for each candidate have been transferred to the MS1 Mark sheet/computer and the transfer checked.	
The sample of candidates for EXTERNAL MODERATION has been selected according to the instructions and checked.	
A list of candidates in the EXTERNAL MODERATION sample, including Examiner name and marks (original marks as well as any new totals) is enclosed.	