

EXPERT GROUP REPORT FOR AWARD SEEKING ADMISSION TO THE UCAS TARIFF

***University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations
Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE)***

and

Certificate in Advanced English (CAE) grade A

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CONTENTS	PAGE
THE CONDUCT OF THE COMPARABILITY STUDY	4
SECTION 1: SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS	6
SECTION 2: OVERVIEW OF CAMBRIDGE ESOL QUALIFICATIONS	8
2A: CERTIFICATE OF PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH (CPE)	8
2A.1 Aims and purpose of the qualification	8
2A.2 History of the qualification	8
2A.3 Entry requirements for the qualification	8
2A.4 Age of candidates	9
2A.5 Size	9
2A.6 Content and structure of the qualification	9
2A.7 Assessment – procedures, methods and levels	10
2A.8 Grading	11
2A.9 Quality assurance processes	12
2B: CERTIFICATE IN ADVANCED ENGLISH (CAE) – GRADE A	13
2B.1 Aims and purpose of the qualification	13
2B.2 History of the qualification	13
2B.3 Entry requirements for the qualification	14
2B.4 Age of candidates	14
2B.5 Size	14
2B.6 Content and structure of the qualification	14
2B.7 Assessment – procedures, methods and levels	15
2B.8 Grading	16
2B.9 Quality assurance processes	17
SECTION 3: OVERVIEW OF OCR GCE A LEVEL IN FRENCH	18
3.1 Aims and purpose of the qualification	18
3.2 History of the qualification	18
3.3 Entry requirements for the qualification	18
3.4 Age of candidates	18
3.5 Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	18
3.6 Content and structure of the qualification	18
3.7 Assessment – procedures, methods and levels	21
3.8 Grading	24
3.9 Quality assurance and code of practice	24
SECTION 4: SUMMARY OF COMPARISONS AND CONSIDERATIONS	25
4.1 Overview of processes undertaken	25
4.2 Comparison of aims	27
4.3 Comparison of size (GLH and content)	28
4.4 Comparison of assessment models and arrangements	29
4.6 Comparison of candidate evidence	33
4.7 Comparison of Tariff domains	33
4.8 Aligning grades	36



UCAS Tariff Expert Group Report

4.9	Initial recommendations for awarding UCAS Tariff points	37
	SECTION 5: UCAS DECISION MAKING PROCESS	39
5.1	HE auditor's report	39
5.2	Detailed account of the Expert Panel discussions	41
5.3	Summary of Tariff Advisory and Reference Group discussions	43
5.4	UCAS Board decision	43
	APPENDIX 1: BIOGRAPHIES OF THE EXPERT GROUP MEMBERS	44
	APPENDIX 2: THE EVIDENCE CONSIDERED	48
	APPENDIX 3: TARIFF DOMAINS	49
	LIST OF TABLES	53
	LIST OF FIGURES	53



THE CONDUCT OF THE COMPARABILITY STUDY

Given the demands of conducting comparability studies, and the differences in the types of award likely to seek entrance to the UCAS Tariff, the set of procedures and processes to which we adhere are based on the premise that comparisons require collaborative input and judgement from members of an Expert Panel.

Upon receipt of a proposal for Tariff consideration, UCAS staff undertake an initial review of the qualification to ascertain the level and complexity of work involved and a timed and costed work plan is provided to the awarding body or sponsor. An appropriate benchmark qualification is selected at this stage which attracts UCAS Tariff points and is in a related subject, or has a related skills base, to enable comparability.

UCAS staff assemble all appropriate paperwork for the qualification seeking entry to the Tariff and their chosen benchmark. This documentation (see Appendix 2) is sent to Expert Panel task workers along with detailed descriptions of the benchmark and qualification applying for Tariff entry, which are replicated in Section 2.

Task workers for this qualification are:

- Yvette Summers (Cambridge ESOL) – overall liaison
- Diana Fried-Booth (Cambridge ESOL) – comparison work
- Angela Ffrench (Cambridge ESOL) – Expert Panel representative
- John Bates (OCR)
- Ana de Medeiros (University of Kent).

Brief biographies can be found at Appendix 1.

The Expert Panel task workers undertake a series of comparisons, based upon a detailed set of questions used to guide, rather than constrain, their comparability studies. In all the above instances those responsible for making these judgements provide cross references to the presence of evidence in the materials considered, or provide a justification for any judgements made. The outcomes are summarised at Section 4.

An independent HE auditor comments upon the viewpoints and outcomes presented by the task workers, with particular reference to any gaps in evidence and issues which require further expert input. The HE auditor's report constitutes Section 5.1.

All evidence, considerations and the HE auditor's report is considered by an extended Expert Panel made up, in this case, of the following individuals:



- Sarah Barbour (Coventry University)
- John Bates (OCR)
- Ana de Medeiros (University of Kent)
- Angela Ffrench (Cambridge ESOL)
- Diana Fried-Booth (Cambridge ESOL)
- Sue Gemmill (Brunel University)
- Jane Humphrey (University of the Arts London)
- John Slater (Canterbury Christ Church University)
- Yvette Summers (Cambridge ESOL).

The Panel makes judgements presented as suggested allocations of UCAS Tariff points that first and foremost take account of the amount of 'utility' or 'relevance' of an award for use in progression to UK HE. A secondary consideration in determining an appropriate Tariff value will be the size of the award involved. The validity of the judgements to be undertaken is achieved through:

- detailed scrutiny of as wide a range of evidence as possible about the utility of an award seeking entry to the UCAS Tariff and the actual use made of that award for entry to UK higher education institutions.
- careful documentation and detailed reporting of the decision pathways taken in allocating points to an award.
- quality assurance through peer review whereby the decisions made throughout the process of allocating UCAS Tariff points to qualifications are checked by an independent HE auditor.
- agreement of the UCAS Board to the Tariff points allocation.



SECTION 1: SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The allocation of UCAS Tariff points to the ESOL Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE) and to grade A of the Certificate in Advanced English (CAE) is discussed in relation to the benchmark qualification, the OCR GCE A level in French. This is based on utility of the qualifications for progression to HE, as evaluated by representatives from ESOL, OCR and from higher education.

When comparing submissions from those representing awarding bodies for such qualifications and the HE representative, the most desirable outcome is that the proposed Tariff allocations are (a) well supported by the evidence provided and (b) represent agreement between all parties concerned. In practice, full agreement is unlikely to be achieved, but various levels of consensus can be achieved. Where differences occur, the HE representative can provide a useful independent view of the comparative value of the awards for progression to higher education.

In the present case, a high level of agreement was achieved in preliminary work about the utility of the ESOL CPE at grade A for progression to higher education, based on good evidence of appropriate aims, assessment demand, domain scores and grade alignment. Proposed Tariff scores were close, with overlapping ranges. Further discussion was required at the Expert Panel meeting in order to recommend Tariff points allocation to CPE grades B and C.

Prior to the Expert Panel meeting, significant disagreement, however, was recorded between the ESOL representative on the one hand, and the OCR and HE representatives on the other, about the proposed Tariff score for the ESOL CAE at grade A.

Following the first draft of this report, responses were received by all representatives. Resulting corrections were made to the report to produce a second draft, circulated in advance of the Expert Panel meeting. Where additional clarification was necessary this was highlighted for discussion at the meeting, results of which have been incorporated into this version of the report.

Following the responses, the main issues remaining to be resolved by the Expert Panel were as follows:

1. There was reasonable agreement on the allocation of Tariff points to CPE grade A, but not for lower grades.
2. Disagreement remained on the allocation of Tariff points to CAE grade A, based on differing evaluation of demand in relation to CPE grade A.



UCAS Tariff Expert Group Report

Following comments from the HE Auditor (Section 5.1), these issues were resolved during the Expert Panel Meeting, as shown in Section 5.2. As a result, agreement was achieved on the recommended allocation of Tariff points to the Cambridge ESOL CPE at grades A-C, and the Cambridge ESOL CAE at grade A, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Recommended allocation of Tariff points to the Cambridge ESOL qualifications

ESOL qualification	UCAS Tariff points	A level equivalent
CPE grade		
A	140	A*
B	110	A - B
C	70	C - D
CAE grade		
A	70	C - D



SECTION 2: OVERVIEW OF CAMBRIDGE ESOL QUALIFICATIONS**2A: CERTIFICATE OF PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH (CPE)****2A.1 Aims and purpose of the qualification**

CPE is designed to offer a high-level qualification in the language to those wishing to use English for professional or study purposes. The CPE examination contains some tasks which are likely to be more suitable in content for candidates who have achieved a certain degree of maturity in their handling of abstract ideas and concepts. CPE is at Level C2 (Mastery) of the Common European Framework.

The qualification is designed to enable learners to:

- understand with ease virtually everything they hear and read
- make accurate and complete notes during a presentation
- understand colloquial asides
- talk about complex and sensitive issues without awkwardness
- express themselves precisely and fluently.

At this level the learner is considered to be approaching the linguistic competence of an educated native speaker, and is able to use the language in a range of culturally appropriate ways. Users at this level are able to improve their use of the language by extending their vocabulary and refining their usage and command of style and register rather than by learning about new areas of grammar. Their level of competence gives them access to the press and other media, and to areas of culture such as drama, film and literature. Success in examinations at this level is seen as proof that the learner is able to cope with high-level academic work.

2A.2 History of the qualification

The Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE) was first introduced in 1913. Since that time it has been regularly revised and updated to bring it into line with current thinking in language teaching, applied linguistics and language testing theory and practice.

The current version of CPE was introduced in December 2002.

2A.3 Entry requirements for the qualification

There are no strict entry requirements for candidates for CPE. Candidates come from a wide variety of backgrounds from over 90 countries, representing 170 nationalities. The majority are students, although there are considerable differences in the proportion of students in different countries.



2A.4 Age of candidates

The majority of candidates are aged between 16 and 24.

2A.5 Size

Cambridge ESOL does not provide a categorical Guided Learning Hours (GLH) statement for their qualifications as hours of study required 'vary depending upon several factors such as the candidates' language learning background, the intensity of the study, the inclinations and age of the individual as well as the amount of study/exposure outside of lesson times'.

However, their website¹ equates CPE to approximately 1,000 - 1,200 Guided Learning Hours, whilst the National Database of Accredited Qualifications (NDAQ) records 1,180 - 1,300 for CPE and CAE grades A, and 930 - 1,050 for CAE grades B and C, on the basis that the NDAQ hours of learning are quoted for each level as being in addition to the previous levels.

2A.6 Content and structure of the qualification

Cambridge ESOL examinations are intended to reflect a view of language proficiency in terms of a language user's overall communicative ability; at the same time, for the purposes of practical language assessment, the notion of overall ability is subdivided into different skills and sub-skills.

Four main skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking are recognised, and each of these is assessed in a test component of the same name. Reading and listening are multi-dimensional skills involving the interaction of the reader/listener's mental processing capacities with their language and content knowledge; further interaction takes place between the reader/listener and the external features of the text and task. Purpose and context for reading/listening shape these interactions and this is reflected in the CPE reading and listening components, through the use of different text and task types which link to a relevant target language use context beyond the test.

Writing ability is also regarded as a linguistic, cognitive, social and cultural phenomenon that takes place in a specific context and for a particular purpose. Like reading and listening, CPE writing involves a series of complex interactions between the task and the writers, who are required to draw on different aspects of their knowledge and experience to produce a written performance for evaluation.

Like writing, speaking involves multiple competencies including vocabulary and grammatical knowledge, phonological control, knowledge of discourse, and pragmatic awareness, which are partially distinct from their equivalents in the written language. Since speaking generally

¹ www.cambridgeesol.org/exams/exams-info/cefr.html



involves reciprocal oral interaction with others, speaking in CPE is assessed directly, through a face-to-face encounter between candidates and examiners.

A fifth test component in CPE (use of English) focuses on the language knowledge structures or system(s) that underpin a user's communicative language ability in the written medium; these are sometimes referred to as 'enabling' (sub)skills and include knowledge of vocabulary, morphology, syntax, punctuation, and discourse structure.

Each of these five test components in CPE provides a unique contribution to a profile of overall communicative language ability that defines what a candidate can do at this level.

2A.7 Assessment – procedures, methods and levels

Candidates are assessed through five papers, as shown in Table 2. The total time of 5 hours 59 minutes for the CPE examination signifies a once-only attempt at the examination. Resits for any part of the examination are not allowed.

Table 2: Cambridge ESOL CPE examination papers

Paper	Task types	Duration	Length of tasks	Weight
Reading	Multiple-choice lexical cloze, gapped text, multiple choice.	1.5 hrs	Candidates read approx. 3,000 words	20%
Writing	A range of text types: articles, essays, reports, letters, proposals, reviews.	2 hrs	Candidates produce 600 - 700 words	20%
Use of English	Open cloze, word formation, gapped sentences, key word transformations, comprehension questions and summary writing task.	1.5 hrs	44 questions	20%
Listening	Multiple choice, sentence completion, multiple matching.	40 mins	28 questions	20%
Speaking	Conversation with examiner; two -way conversation between candidates to perform a collaborative task; individual 2 minute long turn and follow-up discussion.	19 mins	19 mins	20%

Can do statements

Cambridge ESOL exams are aligned to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for Languages: published by the Council of Europe. This internationally recognised framework describes language ability in a scale of levels which ranges from A1 for beginners to C2 for those who have mastered a language. Cambridge ESOL is a founder member of ALTE (Association of Language Testers in Europe), a group of leading language testing organisations in Europe. In order to make examination results easier to understand, ALTE members have developed a series of 'Can-do' statements for each of the CEFR levels.



These statements describe what language users can typically do with the language at different levels and in different contexts (general, social and tourist, work, study).

Table 3: Cambridge ESOL CPE Can-do statements for CEFR level C2

Typical abilities	ALTE Can-do statements for C2 (CPE)	
Overall general ability	Listening and speaking	Reading and writing
Social and tourist	Can advise on or talk about complex or sensitive issues, understanding colloquial references and dealing confidently with hostile questions.	Can understand documents, correspondence and reports, including the finer points of complex texts. Can write letters on any subject and full note of meetings or seminars with good expression and accuracy.
Work	Can talk about complex or sensitive issues without awkwardness.	Can (for example when looking for accommodation) understand a tenancy agreement in detail, including its main implications. Can write letters on any subject with good expression and accuracy.
Study	Can advise on/handle complex, delicate or contentious matters, to the extent that (s)he has the necessary specialist knowledge.	Can understand reports and articles likely to be encountered during his/her work, including complex ideas expressed in complex language. Can make full and accurate notes and continue to participate in a meeting or seminar.
Typical abilities	Can understand colloquial asides and cultural allusions.	Can access all sources of information quickly and reliably. Can make accurate and complete notes during the course of a lecture, seminar or tutorial.

2A.8 Grading

A candidate's overall CPE grade is based on the total score gained in all five papers. It is not necessary to achieve a satisfactory level in all five papers in order to pass the examination.

All the papers are equally weighted, each contributing 40 marks to the examination's overall total of 200 marks, which are further translated to a 'standardised' (or uniform) score out of 100 for the purposes of reporting grades.

Results are reported as three passing grades (A, B and C) and two failing grades (D and E) and are set according to the following information:

- statistics on the candidature
- statistics on the overall candidate performance – statistics on individual items, for those parts of the examination for which this is appropriate (Papers 1, 3 and 4)
- advice, based on the performance of candidates and recommendations of examiners, where this is relevant (Papers 2 and 5)
- comparison with statistics from previous years' examination performance and candidature.



There are set values for each grade:

Grade A = 80–100 standardised marks

Grade B = 75–79 standardised marks

Grade C = 60–74 standardised marks

Grade D = 55–59 standardised marks

Grade E = 54 standardised marks or below.

The score a candidate needs to achieve a passing grade will always be 60.

2A.9 Quality assurance processes

Assessment is based on performance in the whole test, and is not related to performance in particular parts of the test. In many countries, oral examiners are assigned to teams, each of which is led by a team leader who may be responsible for approximately 15 oral examiners. Team leaders give advice and support to oral examiners, as required. The team leaders are responsible to a professional support leader, who is the professional representative of Cambridge ESOL for the speaking tests. Professional support leaders are appointed by Cambridge ESOL and attend an annual co-ordination and development session regionally and in the UK. Team leaders are appointed by the professional support leader in consultation with the local administration.

After initial training of examiners, standardisation of marking is maintained by both annual examiner co-ordination sessions and by monitoring visits to centres by team leaders. During co-ordination sessions, examiners watch and discuss sample speaking tests recorded on video and then conduct practice tests with volunteer candidates in order to establish a common standard of assessment. The sample tests on video are selected to demonstrate a range of nationalities and different levels of competence, and are pre-marked by a team of experienced assessors.

Cambridge ESOL uses an item-banking approach to test construction for the reading, use of English and listening papers. Item-banking involves assembling a bank of calibrated items – that is, items of known difficulty – which have been linked by anchored items in pre-tests. This ensures consistency of difficulty from one session to another. Item difficulties are determined from pre-testing using the Rasch model and calibrated to a common scale. Cut-off ability levels for each grade are defined and grade thresholds for each paper are determined using these cut-offs. Writing and speaking tasks are also trialled on a representative sample of candidates. Qualitative analysis of candidate performance allows for fine-tuning of tasks before they are deemed suitable for inclusion in a live test.



2B: CERTIFICATE IN ADVANCED ENGLISH (CAE) – GRADE A**2B.1 Aims and purpose of the qualification**

CAE is at Level C1 (Effective operational proficiency) of the Council of Europe Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, but for the purposes of this report, we are only referring to CAE grade A, which has been mapped to CEFR C2 and accredited at NQF Level 3.

The qualification is designed to enable learners to:

- read quickly enough to cope with an academic course
- understand complex opinions
- produce clear, well structured and detailed pieces of writing
- express themselves well with a good degree of fluency
- use English flexibly for social, professional and academic purposes.

At this level, learners are expected to be able to use the structures of the language with ease and fluency. They are aware of the relationship between the language and the culture it exists in, and of the significance of register. This means that to some extent they are able to adapt their language use to a variety of social situations, and express opinions and take part in discussions and arguments in a culturally appropriate way. Learners at this level can develop their own interests in reading both factual and fictional texts.

They can also produce a variety of types of texts and utterances, such as letters of varying degrees of formality. They can use language in a creative and flexible way, with the ability to respond appropriately to unforeseen as well as predictable situations, producing, if required, extended and complex utterances.

The written and spoken texts encountered in most common everyday situations can be dealt with at a level below that reached by the CAE learner, but certain more difficult situations, eg discussing abstract or cultural topics with a good degree of fluency, demand this level of language. Users at this level can enjoy a wide range of social contacts.

Cambridge ESOL CAE is recognised as proof that the candidate has the necessary level of language by about 2,300 educational institutions, employers and government bodies worldwide. This includes around 1,400 educational institutions, 240 of which are in the UK.

2B.2 History of the qualification

The Certificate in Advanced English (CAE) was originally offered in 1991. An update in 1999 allowed the examination to keep pace with changes in language teaching and testing. Following the successful revision of the Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE) in 2002



and in light of feedback received, it was decided to review CAE and implement changes as appropriate.

In September 2009, Ofqual accredited CAE performance at grade A as a level 3 qualification (qualification reference 500/7558/5) with the officially accredited title of Cambridge ESOL Level 3 Certificate in ESOL. It is grade A which is considered for Tariff points within this process.

2B.3 Entry requirements for the qualification

There are no formal entry requirements specified, although learners are expected to be able to use the structures of the language with ease and fluency.

2B.4 Age of candidates

The majority of candidates are aged 16-19.

2B.5 Size

Cambridge ESOL does not provide a categorical GLH statement for their qualifications as hours of study required 'vary depending upon several factors such as the candidates' language learning background, the intensity of the study, the inclinations and age of the individual as well as the amount of study/exposure outside of lesson times'.

However, their website² equates CAE to approximately 700 - 800 Guided Learning Hours, whilst the National Database of Accredited Qualifications (NDAQ) records 1,180 - 1,300 for CPE and CAE grades A, and 930 - 1,050 for CAE grades B and C, on the basis that the NDAQ hours of learning are quoted for each level as being in addition to the previous levels.

2B.6 Content and structure of the qualification

Cambridge ESOL examinations reflect a view of language proficiency in terms of a language user's overall communicative ability; at the same time, for the purposes of practical language assessment, the notion of overall ability is sub-divided into different skills and sub-skills.

Four main skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking are recognised, and each of these is assessed in a test component of the same name. Reading and listening are multi-dimensional skills involving the interaction of the reader/listener's mental processing capacities with their language and content knowledge; further interaction takes place between the reader/listener and the external features of the text and task. Purpose and context for reading/listening shape these interactions and this is reflected in the CAE reading and listening components through the use of different text and task types which link to a relevant target language use context beyond the test.

² <http://www.cambridgeesol.org/exams/exams-info/cefr.html>



Writing ability is also regarded as a linguistic, cognitive, social and cultural phenomenon that takes place in a specific context and for a particular purpose. Like reading and listening, CAE writing involves a series of complex interactions between the task and the writers, who are required to draw on different aspects of their knowledge and experience to produce a written performance for evaluation.

Like writing, speaking involves multiple competences including vocabulary and grammatical knowledge, phonological control, knowledge of discourse, and pragmatic awareness, which are partially distinct from their equivalents in the written language. Since speaking generally involves reciprocal oral interaction with others, speaking in CAE is assessed directly, through a face-to-face encounter between candidates and examiners.

A fifth test component in CAE (use of English) focuses on the language knowledge structures or system(s) that underpin a user's communicative language ability in the written medium; these are sometimes referred to as 'enabling' (sub)skills and include knowledge of vocabulary, morphology, syntax, punctuation, and discourse structure.

2B.7 Assessment – procedures, methods and levels

Candidates are assessed through five papers as shown in Table 4. The total time of 4 hours 40 minutes for the CAE examination signifies a once-only attempt at the examination. Resits for any part of the examination are not allowed.

Table 4: Cambridge ESOL CAE examination papers

Paper	Task types	Duration	Length of tasks	Weight;
Reading	Gapped text, multiple choice, multiple matching.	1.25 hrs	Candidates read approx. 3,000 words	20%
Writing	A range of text types: letters, articles, reports, proposals, reviews, essays, competition entries, contributions to longer pieces.	1.5 hrs	Candidates produce 400-480 words	20%
Use of English	Multiple-choice cloze, open cloze, word formation, gapped sentences, key word transformations.	1 hr	50 questions	20%
Listening	Multiple choice, sentence completion, multiple matching.	40 mins	30 questions	20%
Speaking	A conversation with the examiner; individual 1 minute long turn; two-way conversation between candidates to perform a collaborative task and follow-up discussion.	15 mins	15 mins	20%

Performance descriptions

Cambridge ESOL exams are aligned to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), published by the Council of Europe. This internationally recognised framework describes language ability in a scale of levels which ranges from A1 for beginners to C2 for those who have mastered a language. Cambridge ESOL is a founder member of ALTE (Association of Language Testers in Europe), a group of leading language testing organisations in Europe. In order to make examination results easier to understand, ALTE



members have developed a series of 'Can-do' statements for each of the CEFR levels. These statements describe what language users can typically do with the language at different levels and in different contexts (general, social and tourist, work, study). While CEA as a whole is mapped to CEFR C1, grade A is mapped to CEFR C2.

Table 5: Cambridge ESOL CPE Can-do statements for CEFR level C2.

Typical abilities	ALTE Can-do statements for C2 (CAE grade A)	
Overall general ability	Listening and speaking	Reading and writing
Social and tourist	Can advise on or talk about complex or sensitive issues, understanding colloquial references and dealing confidently with hostile questions.	Can understand documents, correspondence and reports, including the finer points of complex texts. Can write letters on any subject and full note of meetings or seminars with good expression and accuracy.
Work	Can talk about complex or sensitive issues without awkwardness.	Can (for example when looking for accommodation) understand a tenancy agreement in detail, including its main implications. Can write letters on any subject with good expression and accuracy.
Study	Can advise on/handle complex, delicate or contentious matters, to the extent that (s)he has the necessary specialist knowledge.	Can understand reports and articles likely to be encountered during his/her work, including complex ideas expressed in complex language. Can make full and accurate notes and continue to participate in a meeting or seminar.
Typical abilities	Can understand colloquial asides and cultural allusions.	Can access all sources of information quickly and reliably. Can make accurate and complete notes during the course of a lecture, seminar or tutorial.

2B.8 Grading

A candidate's overall CAE grade is based on the total score gained by the candidate in all five papers. It is not necessary to achieve a satisfactory level in all five papers in order to pass the examination. All the papers are equally weighted, each contributing 40 marks to the examination's overall total number of 200 marks.

For the purposes of this Tariff work, only grade A performance is to be considered. To perform at grade A, candidates will need to achieve minimum performance of 80%. Grade A is accredited as a separate qualification by Ofqual at NQF level 3.

Results are set according to the following information:

- statistics on the candidature
- statistics on the overall candidate performance
- statistics on individual items, for those parts of the examination for which this is appropriate (Papers 1, 3 and 4)



- advice, based on the performance of candidates and recommendations of examiners, where this is relevant (Papers 2 and 5)
- comparison with statistics from previous years' examination performance and candidature.

2B.9 Quality assurance processes

Reading papers are marked by computer.

Use of English and listening papers are marked by selected and trained markers, whose marking is overseen by a marking quality co-ordinator.

The writing paper is marked by teams of examiners working with experienced team leaders and guided and monitored by a principal examiner. All examiners new to writing papers attend a training session. This is followed by compulsory attendance prior to the onset of marking at each session of the writing paper they are examining for. A common standard of assessment is a priority and immediately after the examination set date the principal examiner and team leaders meet to discuss and select scripts that illustrate the range of responses and different levels of competence. Once marks have been agreed, the scripts are used for co-ordination of the teams of examiners, who then mark their apportioned scripts. Team leaders check and monitor the examiners' marking throughout.

After initial training of oral examiners, standardisation of marking is maintained by both annual examiner co-ordination sessions and by monitoring visits to centres by team leaders. During co-ordination sessions, examiners watch and discuss recordings of sample speaking tests and then conduct practice tests with volunteer candidates in order to establish a common standard of assessment.

All papers are set by Cambridge ESOL staff, none of whom is permitted to work as an assessor; this ensures that papers cannot be set and assessed by the same people.

Cambridge ESOL uses an item-banking approach to test construction for the reading, use of English and listening papers. Item-banking involves assembling a bank of *calibrated* items – that is, items of known difficulty – which have been linked by anchored items in pre-tests. This ensures consistency of difficulty from one session to another. Item difficulties are determined from pre-testing using the Rasch model and calibrated to a common scale. Cut-off ability levels for each grade are defined and grade thresholds for each paper are determined using these cut-offs. Writing and speaking tasks are also trialled on a representative sample of candidates. Qualitative analysis of candidate performance allows for fine-tuning of tasks before they are deemed suitable for inclusion in a live test.



SECTION 3: OVERVIEW OF OCR GCE A LEVEL IN FRENCH**3.1 Aims and purpose of the qualification**

The aims of this specification are to encourage students to:

- develop an interest in, and an enthusiasm for, language learning
- develop understanding of the language in a variety of contexts and genres
- communicate confidently, clearly and effectively in the language for a range of purposes
- develop awareness and understanding of the contemporary society, cultural background and heritage of countries or communities where the language is spoken
- consider their study of the language in a broader context.

The qualification also aims to:

- provide a coherent, satisfying and worthwhile course of study for students who do not progress to further study in the subject
- provide a sufficient basis for the further study of languages at degree level or equivalent.

3.2 History of the qualification

This specification was available for first teaching from September 2008, updating the previous OCR French A level specification by adhering to GCE A level requirements from QCA:

- reduction from 6 to 4 units
- removal of coursework from assessment
- stretch and challenge style questions introduced into A2 assessment.

3.3 Entry requirements for the qualification

It is recommended that students should have the knowledge, understanding and skills equivalent to those for GCSE at higher tier in the language.

3.4 Age of candidates

The majority of candidates are aged 16-19.

3.5 Guided Learning Hours (GLH)

Advanced GCE French requires 360 Guided Learning Hours in total.

3.6 Content and structure of the qualification

The qualification is comprised of four units:

- Unit 1: Speaking (AS level)



- Unit 2: Listening, Reading and Writing 1 (AS level)
- Unit 3: Speaking (A2 level)
- Unit 4: Listening, Reading and Writing 2 (A2 level).

Knowledge, understanding and skills are gained through common language topic areas at AS level, with additional requirements for A level candidates, as summarised in Table 6.

Table 6: A level content and structure

AS level	A2 level
Knowledge, understanding and skills	
<p>AS candidates will be required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • listen and respond to a variety of spoken sources, including authentic sources • read and respond to a variety of written texts, including authentic sources, covering different contexts, registers, styles and genres • adapt their spoken and written language appropriately for different situations and purposes • use the language accurately to express facts and ideas and to present explanations, opinions and information in both speech and writing • transfer meaning from English, Welsh or Irish into the modern foreign language • understand and apply the grammatical system and a range of structures as detailed in the AS specification • study materials that illustrate aspects of the contemporary society, cultural background and heritage of one or more of the countries or communities where the language is spoken. 	<p>In addition to the requirements for the AS units, A level candidates will be required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use the language to present viewpoints, develop arguments, analyse and evaluate in speech and writing • transfer meaning from the modern foreign language into English, Welsh or Irish • understand and apply the grammatical system and a range of structures as detailed in the A level specification • study aspects of the contemporary society, cultural background and heritage of one or more of the countries or communities whose language is being studied.
Language topic areas	
<p>Spoken and written sources will include material that relates to the contemporary society, cultural background and heritage of one or more of the countries or communities where the language is spoken.</p>	
<p>The topic areas for AS level are:</p> <p>Aspects of daily life sub-topics</p> <p>The family: different structures and relationships; living conditions (housing, shopping and patterns of daily life)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food, drink, health, obsessions and addictions • Transport: trends and patterns in usage (for the individual and at local and national levels). <p>Leisure and entertainment sub-topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sport (including national sporting concerns and traditions) • Tourism and related themes: tourism as a changing phenomenon; tourism and the environment • Leisure activities: aspects of cultural life, eg film, theatre; the arts as part of leisure time. <p>Communication and media sub-topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication technology: patterns and changes to communication in daily life • Media, eg written press; radio; television (roles and influences). <p>Education and training sub-topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School and school life: individual experiences; local and national concerns • Work and training: individual experiences; school to work preparation, transition and aspirations. 	<p>The topic areas for the A2 specification are:</p> <p>Society sub-topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration and exclusion: age; gender; race; religion; equality of opportunity • Law and order: trends of crime and punishment; civil unrest; policing • Unemployment: causes and consequences (local, national or global). <p>The environment sub-topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The individual and the environment: recycling; reducing individual energy usage and impact; local conservation • Energy management: alternative energy sources; changing use of fossil fuels; nuclear energy; changing energy demands • Pollution: causes; consequences; solutions • Conservation of the natural world: changing habitats; impact of man and pollution; local, national or global initiatives. <p>Science and technology: impact and issues sub-topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical progress: development and change – impacts on health care, lifestyles, ethics and beliefs • Scientific advances: change and innovation – impacts and issues on society, knowledge, education • Technological developments: change and



	<p>development – impacts on lifestyles, habits, work and education.</p> <p>Culture sub-topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literature and the arts: trends, changes, influences and impacts on individuals and society • Political issues: changes at local and national level; impacts on the individual and society • Heritage and history: influence and impacts of heritage (including colonial heritage) and historical events (national and international) on contemporary society.
Grammar	
<p>AS and A level candidates will be expected to have studied the grammatical system and structures of the language during their course. In the examination they will be required to use, actively and accurately, grammar and structures appropriate to the tasks set, drawn from the following lists. The lists are divided into AS and A level.</p> <p>Examples in italics are indicative, not exclusive. For structures marked (R), receptive knowledge only is required.</p>	
<p>Nouns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gender • singular and plural forms <p>Articles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • definite, indefinite and partitive <p>Adjectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • agreement • position • comparative and superlative • demonstrative (<i>ce, cet, cette, ces</i>) • indefinite (<i>chaque, quelque</i>) • possessive • interrogative (<i>quel, quelle</i>) <p>Adverbs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • comparative and superlative • interrogative (<i>comment, quand</i>) <p>Quantifiers/ Intensifiers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (<i>très, assez, beaucoup</i>) <p>Pronouns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personal; subject, object; direct and indirect; position and order • reflexive • relative (<i>qui, que</i>) • relative (<i>lequel, auquel, dont</i>) (R) • object: direct and indirect • disjunctive/emphatic • demonstrative (<i>celui</i>) (R) • indefinite (<i>quelqu'un</i>) • possessive (<i>le mien</i>) (R) • interrogative (<i>qui, que</i>), and (<i>quoi</i>) (R) • use of <i>y, en</i> <p>Verbs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • regular and irregular verbs, including reflexive verbs • modes of address (<i>tu, vous</i>) • impersonal verbs • verbs followed by an infinitive (with or without a preposition) • dependent infinitives (<i>faire réparer</i>) (R) • perfect infinitive • negative forms • interrogative forms 	<p>In addition to the grammar listed for AS level, the following are required:</p> <p>Pronouns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • relative (<i>lequel, auquel, dont</i>) • possessive (<i>le mien</i>) • demonstrative (<i>celui</i>) • interrogative (<i>quoi</i>) <p>Verbs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dependent infinitives (<i>faire réparer</i>) • future perfect tense • conditional perfect tense • passive voice: all tenses • subjunctive mood <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - present - perfect - imperfect (R) <p>Inversion after adverbs</p> <p>Inversion after speech</p>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> tenses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> present perfect (including agreement of past participle) imperfect future conditional future perfect (R) conditional perfect (R) pluperfect past historic (R) passive voice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> present tense other tenses (R) imperative present participle <ul style="list-style-type: none"> subjunctive mood: present (common uses, eg after expressions of possibility, necessity, obligation and after conjunctions such as <i>bien que</i>) <p>Indirect speech Prepositions Conjunctions Number, quantity and time (including use of <i>depuis</i>, <i>venir de</i>)</p>	
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3.7 Assessment – procedures, methods and levels

All units are externally assessed through the methods outlined in Table 7.

Table 7: Assessment methods

Unit	Assessment type	Weight of A level
Unit 1: Speaking (AS)	15 min speaking test	15%
Unit 2: Listening, Reading and Writing 1 (AS)	2.5 hrs written paper	35%
Unit 3: Speaking (A2)	15 min speaking test	15%
Unit 4: Listening, Reading and Writing 2 (A2)	2.75 hrs written paper	35%

Candidates are expected to demonstrate the following in the context of the content described through three weighted assessment objectives (AOs):

- AO1 Understand and respond, in speech and writing, to spoken language
AO2 Understand and respond, in speech and writing, to written language
AO3 Show knowledge of, and apply accurately, the grammar and syntax prescribed in the specification.

Table 8: AO weightings in Advanced GCE

Unit	% of Advanced GCE			Total
	AO1	AO2	AO3	
AS Unit 1: Speaking	8.75	3.75	2.5	15%
AS Unit 2: Listening, Reading and Writing 1	8.75	16.25	10	35%
A2 Unit 3: Speaking	7.5	2.5	5	15%
A2 Unit 4: Listening, Reading and Writing 2	7.5	20	7.5	35%
Total	32.5%	42.5%	25%	100%

Examiners allocate marks to candidates' work on a best-fit basis using standardised marking grids for every assessed element of each unit.



Performance descriptions

Performance descriptions have been created for GCE A level French to describe the learning outcomes and levels of attainment likely to be demonstrated by a representative candidate performing at the A/B and E/U boundaries for AS and A2, and are replicated in Table 9 and Table 10.

Table 9: AS performance descriptions for modern foreign languages

	Assessment objective 1	Assessment objective 2	Assessment objective 3
	Understand and respond, in speech and writing, to spoken language.	Understand and respond, in speech and writing, to written language.	Show knowledge of and apply accurately the grammar and syntax prescribed in the specification.
	In the context of materials appropriate to the AS specification, candidates characteristically:		
A/B boundary performance descriptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> show a clear understanding of spoken language understand the main points and details, including points of view are able to infer meaning with only a few omissions are able to develop their ideas, and express points of view, with some appropriate justification respond readily and fluently and take the initiative (speaking) have generally accurate pronunciation and intonation (speaking) are able to deal with unpredictable elements (speaking) show the ability to organise and structure their response coherently (writing) offer relevant information which addresses the requirements of the task (writing). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> show a clear understanding of a range of written texts understand the main points and details, including points of view are able to infer meaning with only a few omissions are able to develop their ideas, and express points of view, with some appropriate justification respond readily and fluently and take the initiative (speaking) have generally accurate pronunciation and intonation (speaking) show the ability to organise and structure their response coherently (writing) offer relevant information which addresses the requirements of the task (writing). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> make effective use of a range of vocabulary and structures appropriate to the task ensure the deployment of grammar, syntax and morphology is generally accurate are able to manipulate language appropriately when required.
E/U boundary performance descriptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> show some understanding of basic, often concrete, spoken language, while experiencing difficulties with more complex and abstract language understand some of the main points and details, including basic points of view have a limited ability to infer meaning where appropriate to the task are able to convey some basic information when transferring meaning may be hesitant in their 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> show some understanding of straightforward written texts, but experience difficulties with more complex and abstract language understand some of the main points and details, including limited points of view have a limited ability to infer meaning where appropriate to the task are able to convey some basic information when transferring meaning may be hesitant in their 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use a restricted range of vocabulary and structures have language characterised by frequent errors in grammar, syntax and morphology may be influenced by the first language demonstrate a very limited ability to manipulate language where required.



	<p>response and their fluency is mostly confined to pre-learned material. Their target language performance may be influenced by their first language (speaking)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • may have some difficulty communicating factual information, narrating events and expressing basic points of view in response to the task set, and do not always address the requirements of the task (writing) • show some ability to structure and organise their response where appropriate. 	<p>response and their fluency is mostly confined to pre-learned material. Their target language performance may be influenced by their first language (speaking)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • may have some difficulty communicating factual information, narrating events and expressing basic points of view in response to the task set, and do not always address the requirements of the task (writing) • show some ability to structure and organise their response where appropriate. 	
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Table 10: A2 performance descriptions for modern foreign languages

	Assessment objective 1	Assessment objective 2	Assessment objective 3
	Understand and respond, in speech and writing, to spoken language.	Understand and respond, in speech and writing, to written language.	Show knowledge of and apply accurately the grammar and syntax prescribed in the specification.
	In the context of materials appropriate to the A2 specification, candidates characteristically:		
A/B boundary performance descriptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • show a clear understanding of spoken language • understand the main points and details, including points of view • demonstrate an ability to infer meaning • are able to transfer meaning with only minor omissions • are able to develop their ideas, and express and justify points of view effectively • respond readily and fluently and take the initiative (speaking) • have generally accurate pronunciation and intonation (speaking) • are able to deal appropriately with unpredictable elements (speaking) • show the ability to organise and structure their response coherently (writing) • offer relevant information which addresses the requirements of the task (writing). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • show a clear understanding of a range of written texts • understand the main points and details, including points of view, and are able to infer meaning • demonstrate an ability to infer meaning • are able to transfer meaning with only minor omissions • are able to develop their ideas, and express and justify points of view effectively • respond readily and fluently and take the initiative (speaking) • have generally accurate pronunciation and intonation (speaking) • are able to deal appropriately with unpredictable elements (speaking) • show the ability to organise and structure their response coherently (writing). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make effective use of a wide range of vocabulary and a variety of complex structures as appropriate • predominantly use grammar, syntax and morphology in an accurate way • are able to manipulate language accurately and appropriately where required.
E/U boundary performance descriptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • show some understanding of spoken usually concrete language, but may experience difficulty with more complex and abstract 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • show some understanding of a range of written texts, usually straightforward, but may experience difficulty with more complex and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use a restricted range of vocabulary and structures. The deployment of grammar, syntax and morphology contains



	<p>language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand some of the main points and details, including basic points of view • demonstrate a limited ability to infer meaning, where appropriate, to the task • are able to convey the basic information when transferring meaning • may be hesitant in their response and their fluency is mostly confined to pre-learnt material. Their target language performance may be influenced by their first language (speaking) • may have some difficulty communicating factual information, narrative events and expressing basic points of view in response to the task set, and do not always address the requirements of the task appropriately (writing) • show some ability of structure and organise their response, where appropriate. 	<p>abstract language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand some of the main points and details, including basic points of view • demonstrate a limited ability to infer meaning, where appropriate, to the task • are able to convey the basic information when transferring meaning • may be hesitant in their response and their fluency is mostly confined to pre-learnt material. Their target language performance may be influenced by their first language (speaking) • may have some difficulty communicating factual information, narrative events and expressing basic points of view in response to the task set and do not always address the requirements of the task appropriately • show some ability of structure and organise their response, where appropriate. 	<p>frequent error and may be influenced by their first language.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate a very limited ability to manipulate language correctly when required.
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3.8 Grading

The Advanced Subsidiary GCE is awarded on the scale A-E. The Advanced GCE is awarded on the scale A-E with access to an A*. To be awarded an A*, candidates will need to achieve a grade A on their full A level qualification and an A* on the aggregate of their A2 units with grades reported on certificates.

A uniform mark scale (UMS) enables comparison of candidates' performance across units and across series. The two-unit AS GCE has a total of 200 uniform marks and the four-unit Advanced GCE has a total of 400 uniform marks.

OCR converts the candidate's raw mark for each unit to a uniform mark. The maximum uniform mark for any unit depends on that unit's weighting in the specification. In French, German or Spanish the two units of the AS specification have UMS weightings of 30% and 70%, and the four units of the A level specification have UMS weightings of 15%, 35%, 15% and 35% respectively. Each unit's raw mark grade boundary equates to the uniform mark boundary at the same grade. Intermediate marks are converted on a pro-rata basis.

3.9 Quality assurance and code of practice

The specification complies in all respects with the revised GCSE, GCE, VCE, GNVQ and AEA Code of Practice 2005/6, the subject criteria for GCE Modern Foreign Languages and The Statutory Regulation of External Qualifications 2004.





SECTION 4: SUMMARY OF COMPARISONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 Overview of processes undertaken

UCAS staff assembled a range of documentation for both the qualification seeking entry to the Tariff and the chosen benchmark qualification. Upon receipt of all the appropriate paperwork from the awarding bodies, UCAS prepared a detailed account of each qualification which was disseminated to the Expert Group task workers to enable them to undertake a range of tasks and respond to the following set questions:

Aims

- How do the aims of each qualification compare? (awarding bodies only)
- How appropriate are the aims of each qualification for preparing students for higher education? (higher education representatives only)

Size

- What are the relative sizes of each qualification?

Content and coverage

- What commonality is there between the content of each qualification?
- Is the common content being treated in the same depth?
- For each qualification, how useful is the unique content for helping learners progress to HE?

Assessment objectives/criteria

- How do the assessment objectives/criteria for each qualification differ?
- How are assessment objectives/criteria applied across the component parts of the qualification?
- To what extent would the differences in assessment objectives/criteria affect a student's ability to study at HE level?

Assessment models

- How do assessment models differ in terms of preparing students for HE study?
- Assess the extent to which the assessment materials make demands in terms of complexity, resources, abstractedness and strategy.
- To what extent does the level of support candidates are given differ?
- Does each qualification have marking instructions? If so, how do marking instructions differ for each qualification?
- In what ways, and to what extent, does assessment differ in terms of the demands they make on a candidate's knowledge, understanding and skills?



Grade/performance descriptions

- How do grade/performance descriptions for each qualification differ?
- How would the knowledge, skills and experiences of candidates achieving specific grades in one qualification differ from those achieving grades A and E in the benchmark A level?
- How do the grades for the two qualifications align against each other?

Tariff domain scoring

Considerations of the extent to which qualifications help prepare students for HE was recorded by scoring against the following Tariff domains:

- knowledge development
- application of ideas
- analysis
- synthesis
- evaluation
- communication
- numeracy skills
- personal and social skills
- learning skills
- work-related skills and attitudes.

Each domain contains three statements against which the task workers scored each qualification on a scale from 0 (no opportunity to develop the abilities and qualities described) to 5 (frequent and significant opportunities for a candidate to develop and evidence the abilities/qualities associated with the strand in question). The full domain scoring framework is attached as Appendix 3.

Strengths and weaknesses

- What do you consider to be the relative strengths and weaknesses of each qualification as preparation for HE study in your discipline?
- Given all the comparisons you have undertaken, please suggest how the incoming qualification may compare with the benchmark in terms of UCAS Tariff points.

Those responsible for making these judgements were required to provide cross references to the presence of evidence in the materials considered, or provide a justification for a judgement.



4.2 Comparison of aims

Listed aims for the qualifications to be compared are shown in Table 11.

Table 11: Comparison of aims

Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE) and Certificate in Advanced English (CAE) grade A	OCR Advanced GCE
<p>The CPE qualification is designed to enable learners to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand with ease virtually everything they hear and read • make accurate and complete notes during a presentation • understand colloquial asides • talk about complex and sensitive issues without awkwardness • express themselves precisely and fluently. <p>The CAE qualification is designed to enable learners to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • read quickly enough to cope with an academic course • understand complex opinions • produce clear, well structured and detailed pieces of writing • express themselves well with a good degree of fluency • use English flexibly for social, professional and academic purposes. 	<p>The aims of these specifications are to encourage students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop an interest in, and an enthusiasm for, language learning • develop understanding of the language in a variety of contexts and genres • communicate confidently, clearly and effectively in the language for a range of purposes • develop awareness and understanding of the contemporary society, cultural background and heritage of countries or communities where the language is spoken • consider their study of the language in a broader context. <p>The specification also aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide a coherent, satisfying and worthwhile course of study for students who do not progress to further study in the subject <p>and in addition, at A level, to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide a sufficient basis for the further study of languages at degree level or equivalent.

The OCR representative considered that there was a broad equivalence between the aims of the qualifications, but that on the basis of the aims, it appeared that the highest level of the CPE is probably above minimum grade A standard at A level and quite probably above grade A*. Grade A in the Certificate of Advanced English appeared, on the basis of these aims, possibly to fall below grade A standard in GCE but above grade E standard.

The ESOL representative requested clarification on where CPE grade C (pass) maps to OCR A2 level, given that CPE has three passing grades, whereas A2 has five passing grades.

In terms of the skills required in HE, the HE representative's view was that the aims of all three qualifications do relate to skills needed in HE. The CPE and A level qualifications would give the students extra skills in comparison with CAE but if all the aims of the CAE were achieved the student should be able to cope in HE. Thus on the basis of aims alone (one small part only of the overall evaluation), the CPE was classified as equivalent to or just above an A level, with the CAE at a lower level, but of value for HE progression.



4.3 Comparison of size (GLH and content)

Comparison of size was complicated by the different terminology used for the two types of qualification: 'Guided Learning Hours (GLH)' in the case of the A level; 'Total Learning Hours' in the case of the ESOL qualifications. The latter may include private study, computer-assisted learning, work placement, individual private lessons, and a formal teacher-led course of study; whereas the former tends to exclude much private study and informal learning. A further source of inconsistency was that it is possible to study the ESOL qualifications without formal entry requirements, whereas the A level would normally be preceded by the GCSE, which the OCR level representative estimated as equivalent to an additional 500 - 600 GLH. This would be in addition to the 180 GLH for AS and 360 GLH for the full A level. However, the ESOL representative pointed out that the National Database of Accredited Qualifications (NDAQ) hours of learning for the ESOL qualifications are quoted for each level as being in addition to the previous levels. On this basis, NDAQ records 1,180 to 1,300 for CPE and CAE grades A, and 930 - 1,050 for CAE grades B and C. This suggested the following comparison:

CPE & CAE grades A	1,180 - 1,300
A level	860 - 960

Because of the differences in definition between total and Guided Learning Hours, this may be as close a comparison as is possible. The HE representative commented that the variation in learning hours seemed reasonable given the possible variations of ability and starting point of candidates (as discussed above) but considered also that the aims of the three qualifications were very different:

'The students learning French are expected to continue to learn French if they wish but it is not what will allow them to succeed in university in general since they will be doing most of their work in English not French and will be able to continue their French studies if they wish.'

N.B The above approach to learning hours was not accepted by the HE auditor, as shown in Section 5.1.

When considering the content of the awards, there appeared to be general agreement between commentators that the CPE qualification is less closely specified in scope than the A level and is therefore more wide-ranging. However, it was difficult to compare content directly because of the different ways in which this is categorised.

The ESOL representative suggested that whereas CPE and CAE candidates are expected to employ the relevant skills in order to deal with any topic, lexis or structure appropriate to the level, the more prescriptive nature of the A level provides more support for candidates. Another difference is the reference to specific topics in the A level content, which contrasts



with utilisation in the CPE and CAE of topics relevant to the learner to demonstrate skills, without testing knowledge of topics per se.

The OCR representative commented that while the content of the A level qualification is very precisely defined in terms of specific grammatical requirements and topic areas, CPE and CAE specifications define the content in terms of the four main skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking. They also refer to vocabulary and grammatical knowledge, phonological control, knowledge of discourse, and pragmatic awareness. The CPE statement that the learner is approaching the linguistic competence of an educated native speaker and is able to use the language in a range of culturally appropriate ways could seem to imply an ability to deal with topics outside the range of A level topic areas.

The OCR representative also considered that the CPE, with its lack of specific topic areas, appears to require a slightly wider vocabulary range than A level French, as borne out by the vocabulary and idioms included in its question papers, although its marking schemes for writing and speaking were judged comparable with the A level schemes. For the CAE it was deduced from the papers and the marking schemes that the highest levels of speaking and writing are not as demanding as the highest levels of A level, although the topic areas and grammar are not defined. This is considered further under the heading 'Comparison of assessment models and arrangements', below.

The HE representative commented that the A level qualification allows perhaps for more variety and less depth than the ESOL qualifications and might require less time, as a result of inferior depth and level of detail.

4.4 Comparison of assessment models and arrangements

Assessment objectives/criteria

Assessment objectives differ in detail between the awards, with the ESOL awards each assessing separately single skills, while the A level combines assessment of different skills within a single assessment objective (Table 12).

Table 12: Comparison of assessment objectives

Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE) and Certificate in Advanced English (CAE): Breakdown of skills for assessment	OCR Advanced GCE: assessment objectives
Reading	Understand and respond, in speech and writing, to spoken language.
Writing	Understand and respond, in speech and writing, to written language.
Use of English	Show knowledge of and apply accurately the grammar and syntax prescribed in the specification.
Listening	
Speaking	

In the view of the OCR representative, this did not appear in practice to lead to any major differences in the methods by which the different skills were tested, except that at A level, items testing listening and reading could be linked in the same task with the assessment of



writing skills. The assessment objectives, though expressed in different ways, were said to cover all the key skills of listening, reading, speaking and writing and they were considered appropriate for meeting the aims of the qualifications. The HE representative considered that in all three qualifications the four skills are equally weighted, which is appropriate at this level. According to the ESOL analysis, taking in to account the weightings of each unit in the A level assessment, reading, writing and listening skills (70%) are together weighted more heavily than speaking skills (30%). This analysis was subsequently accepted by the HE representative.

The OCR representative pointed out that this implies on the face of it that each of the individual skills of reading, writing and listening are weighted at less than 30%; however this is complicated by the inclusion in the A level speaking assessment of comprehension questions on a printed text, thereby including reading skills in the speaking test.

The ESOL representative considered that the assessment objectives appropriately assess the content of each qualification, for CPE, CAE and A2.

The HE representative considered that the assessment objectives are appropriate to meet the aims of the qualifications and are appropriately weighted. Assessment objectives were deemed to be consistent, and the skills assessed are not specific to each individual unit but work together even if each unit has a predominant assessed skill. It was noted that students do not need to meet all objectives in order to obtain the qualification and that for the A level it is possible to compensate/resit the AS components whilst preparing the A2 elements. However, the OCR representative pointed out that obtaining the qualification without meeting all of the objectives applied to virtually all qualifications at this level.

In terms of progression to HE, the OCR representative commented that for both the CPE and CAE the linguistic skills are of a very high order and would be of great value in pursuing an HE course, but there was a suggestion that neither actual written tasks nor the examples in the handbook place as much emphasis as the A level does on analysis and evaluation. In response, ESOL has subsequently provided examples of CPE writing tasks, in which candidates were required to assess or evaluate.

The HE representative considered that about 50% in each case could be said to be focused on higher level skills. It was suggested that accuracy and written presentation skills could be strengthened and that the policy should be revised which allows certain components to be failed and yet the overall qualification to have been achieved.

Following the initial version of this report, further information was supplied by Cambridge ESOL on the assessment of the above skills in the CPE and CAE, as shown in



Table 13.

Table 13: Details of ESOL assessment

Examination paper	Task details	
	CPE	CAE
Reading	The paper contains nine texts with accompanying vocabulary and comprehension tasks. Tasks: Lexical cloze, gapped text, multiple choice.	The paper contains four parts, with a range of texts accompanying comprehension tasks. A text may consist of several short pieces. Tasks: Multiple choice, gapped text, multiple matching.
Writing	The paper contains two parts. Tasks: A range of tasks form the following text types: articles, essays, letters, proposals, reports, reviews. Each task has a given purpose and a target reader.	The paper contains two parts. Tasks: From the following: an article, a competition entry, a contribution to a longer piece, an essay, an information sheet, a letter, a proposal, a report, a review. Each task has a given purpose and a target reader.
Use of English	The paper contains five parts. Tasks: Open cloze, word formation, gapped sentences, sentence transformations, comprehension questions and summary writing task.	The paper contains five parts. Tasks: Multiple choice cloze, open cloze, word formation, gapped sentences, key word transformations.
Listening	The paper contains four parts. Each part contains a recorded text or texts and corresponding comprehension tasks. Each part is heard twice. Tasks: Monologues, prompted monologues of interacting speakers: interviews, discussions, conversations, radio plays, talks, speeches, lectures, commentaries, documentaries, instructions.	The paper contains four parts. Each part contains a recorded text or texts and corresponding comprehension tasks. Each part is heard twice. Tasks: Monologues: announcements, radio broadcasts, speeches, talks, lectures, anecdotes etc. Interacting speakers: radio broadcasts, interviews, discussions, etc.
Speaking	The speaking test contains three parts. Two candidates and two examiners. One examiner acts as both interlocutor and assessor and manages the interaction either by asking questions or setting up the tasks for candidates. The other acts as assessor and does not join in the conversation. Tasks: Short exchanges with the examiner and with the other candidate; a collaborative task involving both candidates; a 2 minute long turn and follow-up discussion.	The speaking test contains four parts. Two candidates and two examiners. One examiner acts as both interlocutor and assessor and manages the interaction either by asking questions or providing cues for candidates. The other acts as assessor and does not join in the conversation. Tasks: Short exchanges with the interlocutor and with the other candidate; a 1 minute long turn; a collaborative task involving the two candidates; a discussion.

Assessment models

In considering assessment models, the ESOL representative noted that for the CPE and CAE, the skills-based approach prepared candidates to cope with whatever they could expect to encounter in the course of HE study. The assessment models are all based on external assessment and combine objectively marked formats (OMR), clerical marking, and specialist examiner marking. For A level, in preparing students for HE study, teachers and learners are guided by the grammatical, structural, and cultural syllabuses. Again, in a similar fashion to the CPE and CAE, assessment models are based on external assessment and combine objectively marked formats as well as specialist examiner marking. In Unit 3, 'Speaking', an option exists for the test to be conducted and recorded by the teacher, and



sent for assessment to an external examiner, or conducted and assessed by a visiting examiner.

The OCR representative commented that, although both ESOL qualifications use a discrete-skill assessment model, the demands and even the nature of the tasks are not significantly different in nature from A level. The very high linguistic levels and the study skills required for the CPE and the CAE are a good preparation for HE study, although the latter does not reach the level of demand of the A level or CPE.

The HE representative considered the assessment models all appropriate to prepare students for HE study, where they might encounter similar assessment models. The A level qualification prepares students for HE study in French but not entirely for study of other subjects. It was suggested that the amount of writing in each of the qualifications is fairly limited and could be increased to better prepare students for HE. For example, some of the assessment models such as those used for the theme 'use of English' could possibly be subsumed in the writing sections and then those could be extended to allow the students to write more - as that is what they would need to do in HE.

CRAS (complexity, resources, abstractedness, strategy) analysis

The results of this analysis are summarised in Table 14 in terms of the mean scores allocated by each of the reviewers.

Table 14: CRAS analysis summary - mean scores

Qualification	Reviewer	Complexity	Resources	Abstractedness	Strategy
CPE	ESOL	3.2	2.7	3.1	3.3
	OCR	3.4	2.8	2.8	2.9
	HE	3.3	2.3	2.0	2.5
CAE	ESOL	3.3	2.5	3.1	3.3
	OCR	2.8	2.4	2.4	2.4
	HE	2.5	2	2	2.3
A level	ESOL	1.8	1	1.4	2
	OCR	3.2	2.6	2.6	2.8
	HE	2.5	3	2.5	2.5

It is clear from the table that there was, with occasional exception, reasonable agreement on the relative scores for the CPE and CAE qualifications, particularly between the OCR and HE representatives. However the ESOL scores for the A level were considerably lower than those for OCR and HE representatives, who again showed reasonable agreement with each other.

The ESOL assessment was consistent with an evaluation that overall, the cognitive demand of the CPE and CAE question papers is more challenging than A2 Units 3 and 4. This was based on reduced preparation time, more 'thinking on one's feet', restricted replay of recorded material, less guided support and a wider range of genres in written assessment.



The OCR representative agreed that in all categories the CPE assessment was found to be slightly more demanding than A level, due to the greater linguistic demand of a number of tasks as well as the need to cover a non-defined number of topic areas. The A level was considered more demanding in the essay-writing Unit F704, where the requirement to include analysis and evaluation is more explicitly stated in the questions and more strictly applied in the mark scheme, but this did not invalidate the general conclusion. However, the OCR representative also considered that the benefit to candidates of the 'defined content' of the A level was easy to overestimate. The grammatical content leaves very little out and it is unlikely that anything not included would be worth testing. The A level topic areas cover a very wide range and there is limited evidence in CPE and even less evidence in CAE of material being tested which lies outside those topic areas.

In contrast to ESOL, the OCR representative considered that in all categories the CAE assessment is less demanding than A level, as a result of the greater amount of help included in the assessment units. There were said to be more indications to candidates of the type of material they could include in their responses to speaking and writing tasks and fewer cases where the candidate has to generate the answers to reading and listening tasks, rather than selecting from a list of possibilities. In response, the ESOL representative commented that CPE and CAE have a skills-based approach to language testing, where each skill is discretely assessed.

The HE representative commented that on average the A level qualification reached a higher level in the analysis, except for in the 'complexity' category, with the difference between the two most marked in 'resources'. This was perhaps consistent with the comment that there seems to be somewhat less guidance for the A level qualification. Nevertheless, overall the assessments were considered to be fairly similar in the demands they make on students.

This difference in views about the relative assessment demand of ESOL qualification and the benchmark A level was a key factor in the initial consideration of Tariff scores.

4.6 Comparison of candidate evidence

None available.

4.7 Comparison of Tariff domains

Mean scores, across all reviewers for Tariff domains, are shown in Table 15 and Figure 1.

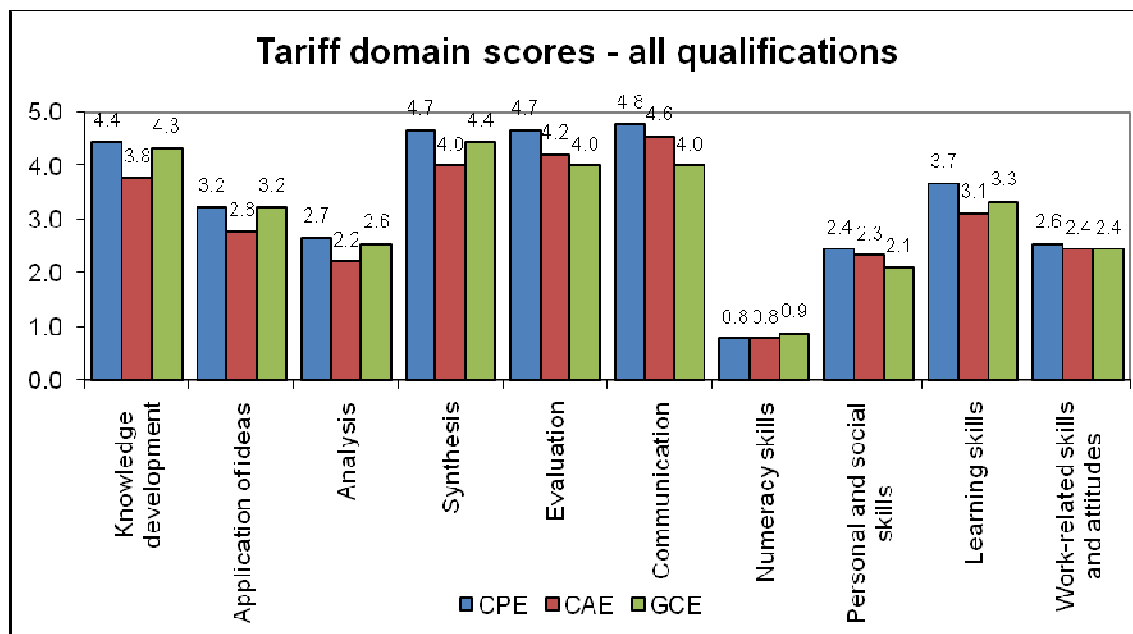
Table 15: Mean scores for Tariff domains

Domain element	Mean Score		
	CPE	CAE	GCE A level
Knowledge development	4.4	3.8	4.3
Application of ideas	3.2	2.8	3.2



Analysis	2.7	2.2	2.6
Synthesis	4.7	4.0	4.4
Evaluation	4.7	4.2	4.0
Communication	4.8	4.6	4.0
Numeracy skills	0.8	0.8	0.9
Personal and social skills	2.4	2.3	2.1
Learning skills	3.7	3.1	3.3
Work-related skills and attitudes	2.6	2.4	2.4
Overall Mean	3.39	3.02	3.13

Figure 1: Mean scores for Tariff domains



Based on the mean scores, the general pattern for most domains was for the ESOL CPE to be given the highest score, followed by the OCR A level and the ESOL CAE in that order. The main significant exceptions were in the domains of 'evaluation', 'communication', and 'personal and social skills', where the A level moved to a position just below the ESOL CAE.

A more detailed examination of the results shows, however, that one of the reasons for the lowered position of the A level in these cases was a major difference between the ESOL scores and those of the other reviewers in these domains, as well as in the 'learning skills' domain. This is illustrated in Tables 16 - 19 below.

For 'evaluation', 'communication', 'personal and social skills' and 'learning skills', there was in general reasonable agreement between the relative OCR and HE scores for the three qualifications; though the OCR scores tended to be higher in absolute terms. However, the ESOL scores were all significantly lower than the others for GCE A level, relative to the CPE and CAE qualifications.



The differences in the ESOL evaluation of these domain scores appear, from the comments supplied, to be linked to a perceived increased demand of the CPE and CAE qualifications in terms of a reduced level of guidance in assessment, increased depth of written and spoken assessments, and increased requirement for collaborative working, intellectual risk taking and independent learning. They are consistent with previously-noted differences in perceived assessment demand, and have major consequences for allocation of Tariff scores.

Table 16: Evaluation

	CPE			CAE			GCE A level		
	ESOL	OCR	HE	ESOL	OCR	HE	ESOL	OCR	HE
Assess the validity of a range of information and arguments.	5	5	4	5	4	4	3	5	4
Judge and appraise arguments and evidence to reach informed judgement.	5	5	5	5	4	4	3	5	5
Use the results of analysis to formulate and defend independent opinions and judgements or make predictions.	5	5	3	5	4	3	3	5	3
MEAN SCORE	5.0	5.0	4.0	5.0	4.0	3.7	3.0	5.0	4.0

Table 17: Communication

	CPE			CAE			GCE A level		
	ESOL	OCR	HE	ESOL	OCR	HE	ESOL	OCR	HE
Produce written work using a form and style of writing appropriate to purpose and complex subject matter.	5	5	5	5	5	4	3	5	5
Produce essays or other forms of extended writing with correct spelling, grammar and punctuation.	5	5	4	5	5	3	3	5	4
Select and use appropriate forms of oral communication to convey information. Read or listen critically and comprehend longer arguments or examples of applications.	5	5	4	5	5	4	3	5	3
MEAN SCORE	5.0	5.0	4.3	5.0	5.0	3.7	3.0	5.0	4.0



Table 18: Personal and social skills

	CPE			CAE			GCE A level		
	ESOL	OCR	HE	ESOL	OCR	HE	ESOL	OCR	HE
Plan, undertake and review work with others making an appropriate contribution and involving other participants.	3	4	3	3	4	3	1	3	3
Carry out tasks to meet responsibilities, including agreeing personal targets and plans and how these will be met over an extended period of time, using support from appropriate people.	0	3	4	0	3	3	0	3	4
Identify personal strengths and weaknesses and make recommendations for improvement.	0	3	2	0	3	2	0	3	2
MEAN SCORE	1.0	3.3	3.0	1.0	3.3	2.7	0.3	3.0	3.0

Table 19: Learning skills

	CPE			CAE			GCE A level		
	ESOL	OCR	HE	ESOL	OCR	HE	ESOL	OCR	HE
Demonstrate independence, self-direction and persistence in learning eg looking for answers to questions rather than being spoon fed.	5	5	4	5	4	3	3	5	4
Demonstrate intellectual risk taking.	5	4	2	5	4	1	3	4	2
Research, obtain, select and cite appropriately information from a range of sources.	0	4	4	0	3	3	0	5	4
MEAN SCORE	3.3	4.3	3.3	3.3	3.7	2.3	2.0	4.7	3.3

4.8 Aligning grades

According to the ESOL representative, a key feature of the assessment criteria for the CPE and CAE qualifications is alignment to the Common European Frame of Reference (CEFR) and the location of grade C for CPE and grade A for CAE qualifications at Level C2 in that framework. It was also pointed out that in addition to the full performance descriptors contained in the CEFR, the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) 'Can-do' statements expand what a learner can typically do at C2 level in each of the four skill areas and in a range of contexts. Based on this, it was the view of the ESOL representative that the ESOL qualifications better evaluate language skills compared with the A level, which was perceived as more knowledge based. Although all qualifications are graded A to E and



each qualification aims to provide worthwhile and relevant learning experiences, the CPE and CAE learners were considered better placed to follow an academic course of study than the A2 learner; and grades could therefore not be directly aligned.

The OCR representative carried out a comparison of performance descriptions at the A/B and E/U boundaries for the CPE and A level and concluded that there is a slightly higher level of demand for CPE at grade A, while CPE grade C seemed a little more demanding than the minimum for A level grade E. In detail, the highest grade for CPE seems to require a linguistic level above that of A level grade A and appears to be about one grade more demanding. For the CAE it was considered that the grade A descriptions fall some distance below the A level grade A and are probably in the grade C area, as borne out by the question papers and by the samples of writing performance in the CAE handbook.

Commenting on the first draft of the report, the OCR representative suggested that, given that the ALTE research set CPE typically at ALTE level 5 and CEF level C2, while CAE is typically at ALTE level 4 and CEF level C1, and the demand of the questions seems entirely consistent with that, it is very difficult to see how grade A could be seen as equal in the two qualifications. For writing, a comparison of the level 5 example answers given in the CPE and CAE handbooks confirmed the impression that work awarded at level 5 is significantly more impressive in CPE than in CAE. Indeed, work awarded level 5 for CAE seems to be fairly clearly equivalent to the level 4 examples in the CPE handbook.

The HE representative commented on the mapping of the ESOL qualifications onto the CEFR, pointing out that this system could be interpreted in different ways in different institutions and different countries. It was suggested that an A in the ESOL CPE is comparable to an A at A level, and that the CPE grades match the A level grades in general, with the CAE aligning to AS level grades.

4.9 Initial recommendations for awarding UCAS Tariff points

Strengths and weaknesses of qualifications

The ESOL representative highlighted the international recognition of the CPE and CAE as high-level qualifications for academic, professional and managerial purposes; and considered that they encourage learners to develop skills and initiatives which reflect independent, intellectual rigour. In comparison, the A level strengths lie in the support which candidates are given in preparing for a qualification where the content, although not entirely predictable, is circumscribed by its syllabus. However it was considered that this degree of guidance and support could also be viewed as a weakness if it reduces the opportunity for candidates to develop independent learning strategies that are of value in HE.

The OCR representative commented on the very high linguistic standard set by the ESOL CPE, providing the linguistic tools to allow students to perform very well, both orally and in writing, in HE study and providing the skills to relate well to other people. The main



weakness was said to be in the comparatively lower demand in analysis and evaluation, but only in comparison with the standard reached by the very best A level candidates. It was suggested that, because of the lower demands in terms of essay-writing, CAE grade A candidates would not be as well prepared for HE study as the best A level candidates but should, nevertheless, be as capable of performing as successfully in HE as A level candidates achieving grade C.

In terms of strengths and weaknesses, the HE representative made no distinction between the qualifications, but commented that the area which should be strengthened across them all is that related to writing significant texts. This would underline acquisition of skills in research, organisation, time-keeping, cohesive thinking, development of arguments, clarity of expression and command of the language in question, as well as historical and cultural awareness.

Allocation of Tariff points

Based on their assessments of strengths and weaknesses, as well as considerations of size, assessment demand, domain scores and grade alignment, the reviewers made the recommendations for allocation of Tariff scores compared in Table 20. This includes revisions made after circulation of the first draft of this report. It also includes a correction by the ESOL representative of the initial submission, which had suggested equivalence of CAE grade A with A level grade A; but had meant to indicate equivalence with A level grade C.

Table 20: Suggested allocation of Tariff points

Grade	GCE A level	ESOL CPE			ESOL CAE		
	Benchmark	ESOL	OCR	HE	ESOL	OCR	HE
A*	140						
A	120	140-145	140-145	140	80	85-95	100
B	100		85-95	80-90			
C	80		50-60	50-60			
D	60						
E	40						

The above comparison indicates quite good agreement about the Tariff allocation of a grade A in ESOL CPE at around 140 points. This is consistent with comments previously noted on size, assessment demand, domain scores, and grade alignment, which demonstrated agreement that the CPE grade A should be placed at a higher level than the A level grade A. The initial significant differences in the proposed Tariff allocations for the grade A in the ESOL CAE, where the ESOL grade was very far above that recommended by the other reviewers, were removed by the latest ESOL correction.



SECTION 5: UCAS DECISION MAKING PROCESS

5.1 HE auditor's report

Initial considerations prior to Expert Group meeting (January 2010)

An immediate issue arises with one of these qualifications in that the Certificate in Advanced English (CAE) is accredited into the National Qualifications Framework at Level 2 and is therefore ineligible for inclusion in the UCAS Tariff. I would recommend that this is discussed immediately with Cambridge Assessment and a signal given to Expert Panel members that it may be inappropriate to proceed with consideration of this award. At this point I have, therefore, not worked on this qualification in detail.

As far as the Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE) is concerned, there appears little doubt of the relevance of this qualification in terms of progression to UK HE for individuals whose first language is not English. Four of the five components examined align with the focus of assessment in the French A level, but the fifth component, use of English, perhaps has more in common with the type of topic examined in A level English Language. I am not convinced that the assessment involved in the CPE requires the display of language skills across the same number of contexts as the A level French, but this is a point which could be elaborated by the two examiners making comparisons between the two qualifications.

I think the main challenge in respect of the CPE is determining its size. The only guideline we have at present is 1,000 - 1,200 GLH, but my initial instinct tells me that this qualification is not more than three times the size of the A level. I think the only way to determine the relative sizes of the CPE against the A level is for detailed curriculum mapping to be undertaken. This should be done either internally by UCAS staff, or commissioned externally, but urgent consideration needs to be given to this area, as it is difficult to see how the Expert Panel can determine an appropriate starting position for UCAS points without this more detailed information. This may involve mapping against both the A level French and part of an A level English Language specification.

Observations on draft Expert Group report and initial findings immediately prior to Expert Group meeting

For the purposes of the Expert Group meeting, I believe it is essential that consideration of the allocation of UCAS Tariff points to the CPE and CAE is undertaken separately. Further to my comment above, I still have concerns about the way in which and the extent to which the CAE even at grade A constitutes a Level 3 qualification, given the assessment of it as a Level 2 qualification in NDAQ, on the basis of the documentation I have received, and that which I have personally sourced from the ESOL website and NDAQ.

CPE

On the basis of the Expert Group report, it would appear that the CPE is a demanding qualification, clearly aligning with A level in terms of qualification level, and the evidence of



alignment between grade A in the CPE and grade A or higher in the A level seems robust. It would be useful to know the proportion of CPE candidates who gain grade A. However, I am concerned about the reported Guided Learning Hours (GLH) for this qualification in the Expert Group report. First, there is the issue of terminology which is discussed in Section 4.3 of the draft report. According to the ESOL website, GLH are used for ESOL qualifications, not total learning hours. Second, despite a thorough search of the NDAQ, I can find no reference to the GLH included in the draft report in Section 4.3. NDAQ for qualification 500/2429/2, which is the CPE, provides a value of 250 GLH. This is only 69% of the 360 GLH recommended for an A level on NDAQ. The larger figure in Section 4.3 provided for both the CPE and A level, seems to have been arrived by a process of accumulation. This has never been an agreed principle for the allocation of UCAS Tariff points. Logically it cannot be because where could we start the process of calculating accumulated learning hours from? Do we, for example, include all the learning in Years 7, 8 and 9 and add that to the GLH for GCSE and GCE A level? If Ofqual is allocating a smaller number of GLH to a qualification, then that suggests it has less breadth and/or less depth than a qualification at the same level in the National Qualifications Framework allocated more GLH.

If we take the NDAQ GLH at face value, this would suggest that whilst an A grade in the CPE might align with an A* in the GCE (though there is no objective way of reaching such an alignment given the lack of grading criteria for A*), the CPE should attract a lower quantum of UCAS Tariff points because it is a smaller qualification. In Table 20, 'Suggested allocation of Tariff points', no rationale is provided for the allocation to grades B and C of the CPE; this needs to be included. On the basis of size alone of the CPE, we should be looking at an initial starting point for the grade A of the CPE of somewhere between 83 to 97 UCAS Tariff points.

CAE

This has a much more difficult set of issues. First, I can find no reference on NDAQ to a qualification that says it is the grade A of the CAE. Qualification reference number 500/7558/5 is termed 'Cambridge ESOL Level 3 Certificate in ESOL International' and is simply a Pass/Fail qualification. Qualification reference number 500/2598/3 is the 'Cambridge ESOL Level 2 Certificate in ESOL International', a qualification graded A to E: ie the latter seems to be the qualification we are looking at. I am assuming that if you score a grade A on this qualification, ie you take assessments marked against criteria for an NQF Level 2 qualification, and score above 80 standardised marks (you have done very well on a Level 2 qualification), then somehow you are deemed to have achieved a Level 3 qualification, even though you have not been assessed against Level 3 criteria. I note with interest the way, for example, how the ALTE 'Can-do' statements for grade A in the draft report have been altered to those for a C2 qualification – where is the evidence that a CAE grade A candidate is being assessed against C2 criteria? Do they sit different examination papers? According to Table 12, the answer would appear to be 'no'. The CAE therefore seems to purport to be a qualification that spans two levels in the National Qualifications



Framework. This would suggest, as the HE representative points out, that at most, the CAE aligns with AS level. The OCR representative also concluded that in all categories the CAE assessment was less demanding than A level. Thus, I can find no justification for the alignment of the A grade in the CPE with the A grade in the CAE as suggested in Table 20 by the ESOL representative.

Turning now to size, again, I have scrutinised the NDAQ database and I cannot find a reference to the purported number of GLH for this qualification at grade A being over 1,180 - 1,300. NDAQ for qualification 500/7558/5, which I believe may be the grade A of CAE (although it does not actually say so) provides an unequivocal figure of 250 GLH for this qualification. This would suggest that the CAE is approximately 40% larger than an AS (at 180 GLH). Assuming that a grade A of the CAE aligned with a grade A of an AS level, this would suggest a value of about 85 UCAS Tariff points for this qualification, very close to that recommended by the OCR representative.

I would need to be persuaded by unequivocal evidence on GLH and assessment criteria that the CAE grade A is worth more than this value in terms of supporting progression to higher education.

One further point: it is not logical, as reported at the end of Section 4.2, to claim anything about the ranking of qualifications on the basis of their intended aims. This can only be done on the outcomes reached by students attaining different levels of proficiency within a qualification.

5.2 Detailed account of the Expert Panel discussions

Discussion revolved around providing clarification of perceived inconsistencies and resolving differences involving the allocation of Tariff points to the CPE grades A, B and C and to the grade A of the CAE in relation to the benchmark qualification, the OCR GCE A level in French.

It was considered by the HE auditor that the CPE qualification is a demanding qualification that should be viewed as equal to the A level, with a grade A in the CPE being equal to, or higher than, an A grade at A level. ESOL representatives were asked to estimate the percentage of candidates achieving a pass at grade A in the CPE; they estimated this to be around 8%.

Concerns were raised concerning the number of GLH contained within the CPE qualification, reported by the HE auditor to be 69% of the GLH contained within the A level. It was felt by ESOL representatives that this was difficult to establish as, despite the NDAQ listing a total of 250 GLH for the qualification, the qualification is the cumulative result of a process that candidates typically begin at 11 years of age (though this could be earlier or later, depending on individual circumstances) and typically complete at 18/19. It was suggested that the



qualification be judged on Total Learning Hours (TLH), however this was considered to be inappropriate as the panel felt many of the cumulative hours would have been gained below the level 3 standard.

It was agreed that the CPE qualification uses a skills-based approach to testing, with the language skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening tested in isolation on separate papers, but including also a use of English paper, which underpins the other papers by testing enabling skills for using language (lexical and grammatical). Tasks within exam papers are pre-tested to establish the level of difficulty. Pre-testing and trialling allow statistical performance data to be obtained to ensure the test material performs as expected and at the correct level. The defined content of the qualification more clearly demonstrates than GLH the demand on learners' time of acquiring the skills required.

Given the large measure of agreement derived from the preparatory work as shown in Section 4.9, and the small number of top-grade candidates, it was proposed that grade A in the CPE would be equal to, or higher than grade A at A level (120+ Tariff points). This was agreed and provided the starting point for discussions on placement of CPE grades B and C.

ESOL representatives reported that 60% of candidates, targeted at C2 level for examination, achieved a grade C; compared with about 20% achieving grade B, and 8% grade A. It was therefore suggested that when aligning the CPE grades to Tariff scores, consideration first be given to the relatively narrow band width of grade B in comparison to the broader band of C grade candidates. Taking these points into consideration, agreement was reached that the allocation of Tariff points should be as follows:

CPE grade	Tariff points	A level equivalent
A	140	A*
B	110	A - B
C	70	C - D

It was felt that the narrow points range for CPE grade A and B candidates accurately reflects the small percentage of candidates achieving those grades, with both grades therefore receiving more Tariff points than their A level equivalents. On the other hand, the breadth of the band at grade C is consistent with a Tariff score slightly lower than the A level equivalent. The resulting larger gap of 40 Tariff points between grades B and C, compared to 30 points between A and B, thus accurately reflects the breadth of the C band compared to those for grades A and B.

It was noted by ESOL, in support of this, that the ESOL qualifications enhance the qualifications that the candidate has achieved from their own country, and that the equivalent of CPE in terms of IELTS would likely be a very high band score of 9+.



In relation to the perceived lower number of GLH, following discussion it was decided that, as the CPE is a skills-based qualification and not a content based qualification, 'diluting' the grades as a result of fewer GLH would send the wrong message regarding the value of the qualification as a whole.

The panel were then asked to consider the possible allocation of Tariff points to grade A of the CAE. It was reported that the qualification is based on level 2 criteria with candidates at grade A giving level 3 quality responses. It was therefore suggested that the top grade in the CAE be considered as the equivalent of a low grade at level 3.

A proposed allocation of 70 UCAS Tariff points was made based on Ofqual evidence, stating that CAE grade A is the equivalent to a grade C in the CPE. A query was raised about the original ESOL submission, which it was thought had requested that the qualification receive a possible 140 UCAS Tariff points for a grade A. However, ESOL representatives identified this as an error and confirmed that they were looking for parity with the CPE grade C.

The proposed allocation of 70 Tariff points was agreed.

5.3 Summary of Tariff Advisory and Reference Group discussions

To be completed following discussions.

5.4 UCAS Board decision

To be completed following discussions.



APPENDIX 1: BIOGRAPHIES OF THE EXPERT GROUP MEMBERS

John Bates

Deputy Chair of Examiners for Languages

OCR

MA (Cantab) in Modern & Medieval Languages, PGCE

Brief Biography

Throughout his career, John taught languages (French and Spanish) from beginners to A level and university entrance in grammar and successful comprehensive schools, ending his teaching career teaching part-time for two years in an independent school. He also taught languages for the International Baccalaureate for six years (1992-2002).

He was involved in the development of GCSE languages, both for MEG and as Vice Chair of the SEC/SEAC Committee for GCSE French. He was later a SCAA/QCA consultant for AS and A level languages. From 1983 to 1996 he was Principal Examiner for Cambridge A level Spanish Listening and Chief Examiner for the last three of those years, before becoming Chair of Examiners for OCEAC/OCR A level Spanish and then, from 2000, Deputy Chair of Examiners for OCR Languages. For nearly all of the last seven years he has, in that role, had responsibility within OCR for most of the A level languages, including French.

He has now retired from teaching and, since last autumn, has been reducing his involvement in examinations, though still chairing a number of meetings and acting as a consultant.

He has led courses for language teachers in Trinidad, Argentina, Chile and the USA, as well as in the UK. He has published two study guides for language students and contributed sections to two textbooks.

He has had experience as a governor of a comprehensive school and of a college of further education and was for several years a member of the Court of the University of Essex.



Angela Ffrench

Assistant Director, Assessment and Operations Group

Cambridge ESOL

Cert Ed., MEd., MA, Dip.TEFL

Brief Biography

Angela holds an MEd in Language Testing from the University of Bristol, and an MA from the University of Cambridge. Having been involved in teaching and testing English for 20 years, both in the state and private sectors, Angela joined Cambridge ESOL in 1991 as an Examinations Officer, with special responsibility for Speaking. In 2001 she became responsible for the management of a suite of general English examinations ranging from upper intermediate to advanced levels (FCE, CAE, and CPE). In this capacity she was involved in all aspects of developing and administering tests and assessment criteria, in the training of item writers, in pretesting and analysing test material, and in the grading of examinations. She has also collaborated in the writing of research papers concerning the work of Cambridge ESOL.

Angela is currently Assistant Director in the Assessment and Operations department of Cambridge ESOL, with overall responsibility for IELTS and Cambridge Young Learners English Tests. She is also a key consultant to the Cambridge ESOL Modernisation programme.



Diana Fried

Cambridge ESOL Consultant

Cambridge ESOL

Brief Biography

Diana Ludmila Fried began her teaching career in London before moving to Ghana where she taught English Language and Literature, returning to take up a research post in Rural Communications at Reading University. She went on to work in the West Midlands on language resource centres in primary schools and integration schemes for immigrants (Punjabi and Gujarati speakers) in the secondary sector.

She worked for the Bell Educational Trust for 8 years, where she was involved with teacher training and directing pre-sessional courses for various universities. As a freelance teacher trainer she has worked on short courses for The British Council and continues to contribute to conferences and seminars worldwide – Argentina, Australia, Belgium, France, FYR, Hong Kong, Italy, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, and Turkey.

For many years she has been closely involved with the Cambridge ESOL Examinations. She chairs CPE Papers 2 and 3 (Writing and Use of English respectively) as well as the FCE Listening Paper. She has been an Oral Team Leader with Cambridge Assessment for many years at both the LMS (KET, PET) and Upper Main suite (FCE, CAE, CPE) levels. She writes for the IELTS Listening paper, PET for Schools Reading and Writing and also acts as an assessor and trainer for Skills for Life.

She has written many ELT books, including Project Work (in the OUP Resource Books for Teachers series), and Focus on the Preliminary English Test which won the English-Speaking Union's Duke of Edinburgh Prize for Course Books for Adult Learners.

She is co-founder of TEFLIS, a professional organisation for teachers in the south-west of England, and most recently taught on the University of Zurich PHZH course for primary teachers. She is a consultant with CIE involved in the development of Grades 6 and 9 for the Bahrain Ministry of Education English examinations, a role which also involves working with teachers and examiners in Bahrain.



Yvette Summers

MA Modern Languages (Cantab)

Brief Biography

Yvette holds an MA in Modern Languages from the University of Cambridge. Yvette joined Cambridge ESOL in 2006, working first in the Assessment and Operations Group before joining the Business Development and Management Group. As Business Management Officer Yvette's areas of work include Ofqual accreditation of examinations and recognition of exams for immigration, along with other business development work.



APPENDIX 2: THE EVIDENCE CONSIDERED

Cambridge ESOL Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE)

- CPE handbook
- CPE sample papers
- CPE information for candidates
- Instructions to oral examiners

Cambridge ESOL Certificate in Advanced English (CAE) – grade A

- CAE handbook
- CAE sample papers
- Instructions to oral examiners

OCR GCE A level in French

- Specification
- Candidate booklets
- Examiner booklet
- Specimen papers
- Sample audio files



APPENDIX 3: TARIFF DOMAINS

1. Knowledge development

Retrieve, recognise and recall relevant knowledge from long-term memory; construct meaning from oral, written and graphic messages through interpreting exemplifying, classifying, summarising, inferring, comparing and explaining

	Domain strand	Explication and exemplification
.1	Recall, summarise and explain facts, terminology, principles, concepts	Higher scores for qualifications that require all four. Key words on papers will be 'state', 'outline', 'name', 'explain' complete gaps in sentences. The word 'explain' is used in a number of questions. The score and range of concepts that an explanation is required for determines the score. Includes bibliographic reference where appropriate.
.2	Select, organise and present relevant information clearly and logically, using specialist vocabulary where appropriate	For example, candidates are being asked to answer questions (orally or in writing) that require exemplification with appropriate terms.
.3	Describe and interpret phenomena and effects using appropriate concepts	'Describe' is likely to appear in the question. Phrases such as 'Use the information to...'

2. Application of ideas, knowledge and theory

Carrying out or using a procedure through executing or implementing

	Domain strand	Explication and exemplification
.1	Select and apply appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills to solve familiar problems	'Select' 'Complete the table ...' 'How should a procedure be altered ...' 'Explain how' could be used here. Reading a value of a graph is a favourite here in a science context.
.2	Select and apply appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills to solve unfamiliar problems	'Select' – the difference here is in the familiarity of the context.
.3	Develop and execute plans and apply to realise a project	Interpret 'project' widely.

3. Analysis

Breaking material into constituent parts, determining how the parts relate to one another and to an overall structure or purpose through differentiating, organising and attributing

	Domain strand	Explication and exemplification
.1	Analyse simple problems and issues understanding relationships between cause and effect	Problems are more likely to take the form of numerical calculations or other mathematical operations; issues more akin to global warming, cause of the French revolution.
.2	Analyse complex problems and issues and wider context of problems and projects	
.3	Review different options/plans using appropriate analytical tools, risk analysis and costings to produce justifiable recommendations	Candidates might be asked to compare and contrast, make comparisons, think of other ways of doing something or achieving an outcome.

4. Synthesis

Putting elements together to form a coherent and functional whole; reorganising elements into a new pattern or structure through generating, planning or producing

	Domain strand	Explication and exemplification
.1	Draw together knowledge, principles and concepts to produce ideas, insights and/or artefacts	Idea =; insight indicates a higher order skill. This strand could also be evidenced by making something which requires the synthesis of ideas as in art and design.
.2	Generate simple arguments clearly and logically drawing on knowledge, principles and concepts from different areas of a subject	Mathematical proofs can be seen as arguments. This is unlikely to be signalled by a simple word in a question.



.3	Generate complex arguments clearly and logically drawing on knowledge, principles and concepts from different areas of a subject	Look for reference to more than one concept and a requirement to construct an argument to answer the question.
5. Evaluation Making judgements based on criteria and standards through checking and critiquing		
	Domain strand	Explication and exemplification
.1	Assess the validity of a range of information and arguments	The extent of the range will determine the score. For example, using one or two pieces of information would score low, but having to make sense from five or six would generate a higher score.
.2	Judge and appraise arguments and evidence to reach informed judgement	'To what extent do you agree with ...' 'Discuss...'
.3	Use the results of analysis to formulate and defend independent opinions and judgements or make predictions	The more the candidate is required to make predictions the higher the score. 'Express your view' questions where asked to adopt an ethical position.
6. Communication Developing and demonstrating speaking, reading, listening and writing skills		
	Domain strand	Explication and exemplification
.1	Produce written work using a form and style of writing appropriate to purpose and complex subject matter	Candidates choose own form of response and structure of output.
.2	Produce essays or other forms of extended writing with correct spelling, grammar and punctuation	Explicit requirement for extended writing, eg essay, Extended Project, report. Level of complexity will determine score.
.3	Select and use appropriate forms of oral communication to convey information. Read or listen critically and comprehend longer arguments or examples of applications	Specific requirement for oral presentation. Score will indicate amount or lack of specific direction, and scope/requirement for choice of medium. Case studies; listen to others with respect; learning outcomes may emphasise compliance and willingness to respond.
7. Numeracy skills Developing and using numerical and mathematical skills		
	Domain strand	Explication and exemplification
.1	Choose and use appropriate techniques to address simple numerical problems	This would be rather simple one or two step procedures requiring the application of arithmetic, for example calculating an average. Recall and use appropriately financial ratios.
.2	Choose and use appropriate techniques to address complex numerical problems	Here learners would be required to demonstrate the use of basic arithmetic to solve multi-step problems, for example calculating a chi-square statistic. Recall, use and assess impact of financial ratios.
.3	Choose and use appropriate mathematical techniques	This would cover estimation, proportional reasoning, algebraic manipulation, and interpretation of graphs.
8. Personal and social skills Evidencing skills that have relevance for managing time, tasks and personal effectiveness in a range of contexts		
	Domain strand	Explication and exemplification
.1	Plan, undertake and review work with others making an appropriate contribution and involving other participants	Planning, applying and seeking feedback in a variety of contexts. Specific requirement for a plan and self-reflection. Understanding of different roles; effective groups and teams; agree suitable working relationships and responsibilities; seek effective ways to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - keep yourself and others motivated - anticipate the needs of others for information and support - protect your own rights and those of others



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - avoid actions that offend, harass or discriminate against others - resolve conflict - contribute and get accurate information on progress towards achieving the agreed objectives, including the extent to which work is meeting deadlines and quality requirements.
.2	Carry out tasks to meet responsibilities, including agreeing personal targets and plans and how these will be met over an extended period of time, using support from appropriate people.	Quality, quantity and timeliness of the work, review progress and establish evidence of achievement.
.3	Identify personal strengths and weaknesses and make recommendations for improvement	Be alert to any changes that need to be made to working arrangements, timescales and methods, and agree these with others.

9. Learning skills

Evidencing skills and attitudes that demonstrate their potential for learning in higher education

	Domain strand	Explication and exemplification
.1	Demonstrate independence, self-direction and persistence in learning eg looking for answers to questions rather than being spoon fed	Learners are required to take responsibility for their learning using plans, seeking feedback and support from relevant sources to meet targets. Open-ended questions (short answer questions would attract 0; data response a low score; project work could attract high score); requirement for analysis and evaluation in addition to recall; unfamiliar contexts; complex material; requirement for independent learning.
.2	Demonstrate intellectual risk taking	(eg opportunities for presentation of arguments using an approach which is more associated with a different context or level of learning)
.3	Research, obtain, select and cite appropriate information from a range of sources	Are learners required to use appropriate bibliographic skills? This could cover the use of experimental results in addition to text based sources.

10. Work-related skills and attitudes

	Domain strand	Explication and exemplification
.1	Developing vocational knowledge and skills to nationally recognised standards	Qualification relates to sector of work; knowledge may be developed in context but outside workplace.
.2	Developing knowledge and experience of work	Generic and specific to particular sector; engaging in work experience (score will depend on scope and extent); demonstrating knowledge of practices and culture.
.3	Developing relevant work-related attitudes	Listening to others with respect; participating in group discussions with awareness of appropriate behaviour; sensitive towards individual and cultural differences; evidencing commitment to task and to people.



Scores are given on a scale from 0 to 5 based on the following evidence descriptors:

0	There is no opportunity to develop the abilities and qualities described in the strand.
1	The qualification provides practically no opportunity for a candidate to develop and evidence the abilities/qualities described in the strand, for example a single assessment item requiring a candidate to demonstrate the skill.
2	The qualification provides little opportunity for a candidate to develop and evidence the abilities/qualities associated with the strand in question, with only two or three assessment items requiring candidates to demonstrate the quality or ability.
3	The qualification provides reasonable opportunity for a candidate to develop and evidence the abilities/qualities associated with the strand in question, for example opportunities in about half of the material in a qualification with about half the assessment items requiring candidates to demonstrate the ability or quality.
4	The qualification provides a number of different opportunities for a candidate to develop and evidence the abilities/qualities associated with the strand in question.
5	The qualification provides frequent and significant opportunities for a candidate to develop and evidence the abilities/qualities associated with the strand in question, for example opportunities across the whole of the specification and in practically all assessment items.



LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1: Recommended allocation of Tariff points to the Cambridge ESOL qualifications	7
Table 2: Cambridge ESPL CPE examination papers	10
Table 3: Cambridge ESPL CPE Can-do statements for CEFR level C2	11
Table 4: Cambridge ESOL CAE examination papers	15
Table 5: Cambridge ESPL CPE Can-do statements for CEFR level C2	16
Table 6: A level content and structure	19
Table 7: Assessment methods	21
Table 8: AO weightings in Advanced GCE	21
Table 9: AS performance descriptions for modern foreign languages	22
Table 10: A2 performance descriptions for modern foreign languages	23
Table 11: Comparison of aims	27
Table 12: Comparison of assessment objectives	29
Table 13: Details of ESOL assessment	31
Table 14: CRAS analysis summary - mean scores	32
Table 15: Mean scores for Tariff domains	33
Table 16: Evaluation	35
Table 17: Communication	35
Table 18: Personal and social skills	36
Table 19: Learning skills	36
Table 20: Suggested allocation of Tariff points	38

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1: Mean scores for Tariff domains	34

