Hampshire Local Authority – MFL Webinar Minutes

Date: Thursday, 22 May 2025

Time: 2:30 PM

Facilitators: Kerry Yates (Hampshire LEA), Adam Clements (Hampshire LEA)

Topic: Establishing Grade Boundaries for the New GCSE MFL Specifications

1. Purpose of the Webinar

Kerry Yates opened the session by outlining the rationale for the meeting:
- To support schools in understanding and developing grade boundaries for the new GCSE MFL specifications.
- To ensure consistency and fairness in assessment across Hampshire.
- To provide reassurance to teachers, students, and parents regarding assessment accuracy.

2. Current Assessment Materials

Participants were reminded of the available resources:
- AQA: SAMs 1 (OFQUAL accredited) and 2 (located on Centre Services) A 3rd set are due to be released in December 2025.
- Edexcel: SAMs 1 (OFQUAL accredited) Specimen Assessment Materials 2 (Dec 2024). Another set will be released in the Autumn term.

Pearson Resources: End-of-year exams on ActiveHub for both exam boards.

Many schools are currently using a mix of these resources and creating bespoke assessments based on taught content.

3. Challenges in Setting Grade Boundaries

Adam Clements highlighted key issues:

- Lack of national grade boundaries until the first cohort completes the new specification.

-Legacy grade boundaries from previous years' exams cannot be used as the demands are incomparable.
- Specimen materials are perceived as easier than legacy papers, especially in listening and reading. This has been clear with the results from the current year 10 cohort.
- Comparability of the legacy and the new GCSE is more feasible in the writing and speaking components due to structural similarities.
- Possible internal benchmarking using current Year 11 students to trial SAMs papers for calibration.

- Suggestion to write to parents to explain that the grade boundaries are estimated and based on professional judgement for this new exam.

4. Suggested Methodology for Estimating Grade Boundaries

Adam and Kerry presented a shared approach which both have used to determine grade boundaries following the recent Y10 exams:

- Use national grade distribution data e.g., from http://www.bstubbs.co.uk/gcse.htm#S to estimate expected outcomes.

-Use outcomes from previous similar cohorts in your own context if vastly different to the national figures.
- Rank students by average scores across listening, reading, and writing.
- Apply national percentages to cohort sizes to determine provisional grade thresholds.
- Cross-reference with writing and speaking performance to validate accuracy (the "feel" for grade 7 in these skills is often embedded with experience and will not have changed.
- Use Centre Services or Pearson ActiveHub to compare school performance against national averages.
A spreadsheet template was demonstrated, allowing schools to input cohort size and calculate expected grade distributions.

Adam' spreadsheet and those for each language produced and kindly shared by Ben Merrit on Linked In and the Facebook MFL group will be shared with these minutes.

5. Proposal for County-Wide Data Collaboration

Kerry proposed a collaborative initiative:
- Objective: To collate anonymised data from multiple schools to generate more reliable grade boundaries with a wider sample.
-**Requirements:**
  - Agreement on a common assessment paper (suggested: second set of specimen assessments for each paper).
  - Inclusion of all four skills (listening, reading, writing, speaking).
  - Commitment to a fixed data collection window (tentatively before Christmas 2025).
Benefits:
  - Larger sample size for more accurate benchmarking.
  - Particularly valuable for schools with small cohorts.
Schools interested in participating were encouraged to complete the poll and follow up via email or at the upcoming network meeting, where the initiative will be shared further.

6. Next Steps and Key Dates
- Poll: Schools to complete the three-question poll on exam board, assessment timing, and paper selection.
- Network Meeting: Scheduled for 10 July 2025, featuring Ben Merritt on the use of AI in MFL.
- Autumn Term: Formal invitation to participate in the data collation project to be circulated.

7. Closing Remarks
Both presenters emphasised the importance of transparency with parents regarding the provisional nature of current grade predictions.
Attendees were thanked for their engagement and encouraged to reach out with further questions or feedback.

Poll Results

LIVE Poll: Names recorded | Results shared

Which exam board are you using?

AQA	55%
EDEXCEL Your response	45%

11 responses

Back to question

LIVE Poll: Names recorded | Results shared

When will your Y11 practice exams be finished?

End Nov 25	18%
End Dec 25	45%
End Jan 25	27%
Other	9%

11 responses

Back to question

LIVE Poll: Names not recorded | Results shared

Which exams will you be using for your Y11 exams

AQA SAMS 1	27%
AQA SAMS 2 (on Centre Services)	36%
EDEXCEL SAMS 1	9%
EDEXCEL Specimen paper	9%
EDEXCEL SAMS 2 (Released in the autumn)	18%
Option 6	0%

Back to question