



GCSE

English Language

8700/C Spoken Language Endorsement

Report on the Examination

June 2025

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Summary

Overall performance compared to last year

Verifiers have reported positive improvements in the overall quality, management and assessment of the endorsement commenting on the notable development of understanding of the core requirements and clear evidence of more attention being paid to the necessary preparation to facilitate successful outcomes suggesting growing recognition of the importance of spoken language within the English curriculum.

‘Many of the presentations were superb and testimony to the excellent teaching taking place in many schools.’

Areas where students excelled (where positive progress has been noted this series)

- Much more variety in topic choice suggesting more encouragement of independence and ambition.
- More consistent substantive development of talk: students at pass more regularly talking for 3 minutes plus and at distinction, talks of over 6 minutes were pleasingly common.
- Increased evidence of proper preparation – ordering of talk, embedding of selected research to support argument and consideration of the wider frame of reference showing an external focus, thus more commitment to engagement with the audience.
- More consistent evidence of students independently developing their responses to questions and fewer instances of students receiving no questions.

Areas where students struggled (where further developments in practice are to be encouraged)

- Students were not always appropriately recognising the importance of ‘presenting’ and so not successfully meeting the criterion relating to meeting the needs of the audience with over-reliance on scripts a continuing hindrance to higher grade attainment.
- Not all students clearly identified a purpose for their presentation and were thus seen to be talking about a topic rather than in order to achieve a specific impact.
- Students did not consistently develop their ideas beyond the ‘headlines’ such that the discussion of details, examples and reasoning, did not move beyond Pass level descriptor of ‘straightforward’.
- Students presented with insufficient opportunities to demonstrate their response to questioning as a result of lack of prioritisation of this element within the centre, the use of pre-prepared questions or generic, under-challenging questions all of which prevented access to the higher grade response criteria.

Introduction

Our sincere appreciation goes to all those teachers whose commitment to the purposeful promotion of young people's right to a voice which is heard, underpins the importance and vitality of this endorsement which was so effectively celebrated this series in the samples of work reviewed.

'Having the privilege to be party to the current thinking of young people and their 'take' on the world they are experiencing, is always thought provoking, often very educational, and it is inspiring to see young people having the freedom of choice in this aspect of their education and skill building'.

What has stood out this year, is a rising political voice for many young people, often clearly influenced by local and global political, social, economic and environmental instability. Additionally, there has been a real trend for young people to show thoughtful concern regarding 'the negative aspects of growing up in an increasingly digitally controlled world' and regarding their potential readiness for life beyond school. Where students have spoken in positive terms, it has often been in relation to hobbies, pastimes and the positive benefits of sport or the arts. For example, the positive influence of music and artistic expression or the physical, emotional and social benefits of exercise and sport; it was clear that many students are conscious of, and concerned about, how their mental well-being is challenged by the current pressures they experience both in and out of school.

Topics and tasks

Whilst verifiers report a wider variety of topics in use this year, reflecting the encouragement of students to be genuinely independent and ambitious, there are a small number of topics which recur with high frequency.

- Social media: in this series with much more emphasis on the potential negative impacts, suggesting a growing concern that the technological world they have grown up in is presenting problems which require solutions rather than just opportunities.
- AI: there were many enthusiastic discussions of the advances in science and medicine AI has facilitated, but there was already a sense of caution and concern as to the long term impact on their future lives and society, particularly in relation to education, employment and creativity;
- Mental health – clearly a major concern for many students, but not all showed appropriate understanding of the fact that this is an 'umbrella' term and needs unpacking; thus, 'I'm going to talk about mental health' did not actually indicate a clear and specific purpose.
- Climate change – with concern for both the local and global environment.
- Crime – especially knife crime and gun crime in America.
- Video gaming – its potential value and its dangers.
- Animal cruelty – zoos, animal testing, et cetera;
- Football related topics – VAR and the gender pay gap.

However, there are many other areas of interest that were well represented, evidencing maturity and purpose in their detailing of issues affecting young people's lives and experiences. Verifiers were praising of centres where students feel empowered to address often quite sensitive and controversial topics, such as:

- Equality – gender, race, class – via educational opportunities and cost of living concerns.
- Period poverty – the pink tax, feminism and its impact on young men.
- Educational experience – opportunities, exam overload, relevance to future life, under-representation of ethnicity and cultural heritage.
- Voting at 16 alongside other topics conveying increasing evidence of political consciousness.
- World conflict – Gaza, Ukraine and other less well known conflicts, Georgia, Kashmir, Congo, Hong Kong, were explored with passion, if not always balanced in perspective.

There were also those topics which though popular, did not readily encourage genuine independence in ideas or substantive development of talk:

- Serial killers: whilst often framed as nature vs nurture, what resulted was derivative reporting of the most notorious examples and concluding judgements were predictably indecisive.
- The death penalty: students were rarely able to show the depth of thinking necessary to present an independently reasoned conclusion.
- School uniform, changing the school day, getting rid of homework: there is little new to explore in these areas and little research to engage with and students rarely succeeded in providing plausible and rational arguments for the changes being proposed or thoughtful consideration of the possible consequences.

Additionally, certain choices of topic – often at the direction of the centre, not only deny students their freedom to choose, but often restrict their potential to succeed against the endorsement criteria. It was noted, however, that far fewer centres were issuing a set common tasks for all students and there was also a reduction in the number of centres using English Literature texts as the basis for all students' presentations. It remains the case that ultimately, when, contrary to the rubric, students are directed as to what their topic/task will be, their individualism and creativity is stifled.

- Room 101, favourite film, game, celebrity, pizza topping – none of these reflect the appropriate challenge and complexity for a GCSE level assessment
- Speaking in role beyond themselves, e.g. as a parent, representative of a company or organisation, is not appropriate as it will potentially impact the content and form of the talk, which is intended to be the student's own ideas and voice. Participating in a job interview for a fictional position presents similar issues.
- Any work based on set texts for English Literature, which does not go beyond the text itself and is therefore reliant on information from classroom teaching and is governed by the priorities of assessment objectives for that subject. For example, presenting the detailed analysis of a poem from the anthology, thus no structural originality; answering the 'who is to blame question' in relation to 'Macbeth' or 'An Inspector Calls', a wholly reductive question which is inappropriate against both specifications' objectives. There were examples of thematic focus – linking the ideas in the text to the

world of today - but this was not always approached with secure perspective and, again, it is challenging to believe that this was the student's preferred choice of topic.

Centres are reminded that the rubric specifies that 'Students must identify the subject for their presentations in advance and agree it with their teacher'.¹ Thus, teachers have the responsibility to support students in selecting topics which will facilitate their achievement appropriate to their skill levels. However, this approval needs to address not only the topic but the actual purpose behind the talk. Many students were seen to have chosen 'worthy' topics, such as mental health or climate change, but with no clear agenda to govern their talk. Specificity is key to the achievement of the criteria beyond pass level where purpose and depth of detail in ideas is expected, rather than breadth of coverage. As noted in previous series, students need to be talking **for** rather than just **about** as this will provide a focus both for selective use of the expected research and for the structure of their presentation, whilst allowing them to reach a reasoned conclusion. The formulation of a question to address was typically seen to be supportive of higher achievement. Some examples seen this series provide useful illustration of this:

- Why social media is bad for our health
- How AI is threatening creativity in music/art
- Are schools setting us up to fail?
- What is the real cost of fast fashion?
- Why space exploration is bad for the planet
- Why are we obsessed with celebrities/true crime/serial killers?
- Why is it important to study history?
- Why we need to rethink sport in schools
- How travel broadens the mind

Some students were seen to be speaking on potentially self-limiting topics where the focus was wholly subjective for example, 'My life in football/My pets, My holiday in India', and questions typically remained in that subjective realm. As detailed in the [8700C NEA: Notes and Guidance document](#), students of all abilities should be encouraged to consider how their topic relates to their audience through consideration of a wider frame where their own experience can function as illustration of a more general and objective argument. This GCSE level assessment requiring **a prepared spoken presentation** should challenge students to go beyond 'show and tell' and the expectation of conducting research supports this as it underlines the need to demonstrate 'new' learning.

'Presentations must be planned and organised. Students should be advised that lack of preparation is likely to prevent access to the criteria for the higher grades'.²

This is also an element to be considered at teacher approval stage and it is worth noting that the development of effective research skills is something under-represented in the key stage 4 curriculum, suggesting that the endorsement could provide a useful opportunity to support students' skills in readiness for A level study and beyond. This was particularly significant where students chose data and examples from contexts which did not readily relate to the experience of their audience or the focus of their talk. For example, statistics from the USA when the focus was the UK, or data that was outdated when the aim is to illustrate the situation today. There are many freely available resources to support the development of critical research skills and attention to this aspect of preparation would be of benefit beyond

the endorsement itself, particularly given the availability of AI tools which require informed judgement to ensure their use is appropriate.

At a more basic level, it would be helpful if students were encouraged simply to explore their chosen topic against current news and political developments. For example, there was almost no reference to the COP summits or agreements in any of the numerous talks on climate change. Students presenting arguments for and against mobile phones were seemingly unaware of the legal changes planned in the UK and already in force in other countries. The endorsement is an opportunity to open the door of the English classroom to the world outside and beyond the social media feeds so heavily relied on, and this is invaluable in supporting the development of the whole student in terms of their maturity of understanding and perspective. We were privileged to review many thoughtful and thought-provoking talks on topics such as immigration, abortion and euthanasia where students were fully abreast, and indeed motivated by, the current debates, and not just from a UK perspective.

Assessment

Verifiers were pleased to report quantifiable improvements in the development of talk, leading to more substantive presentations at all levels, and in the recognition of the importance of specificity of purpose thus, as in previous series, the vast majority of centre samples received a verify decision indicating evidence of secure application of the standard and the criteria at each grade submitted. Where standards could not be verified, centres will be contacted and offered support to address the identified issues.

The endorsement is 'assessed on a 'competency' basis using agreed common criteria – to be awarded a grade, students must achieve all of the criteria for that grade'.³ This is still not fully recognised in all centres with over-awarding of confident, engaging presentations where the quality and depth of ideas was not substantive. In order to go beyond rhetorically impressive pleas for action or change, students need evidence, examples and precise details to convey secure reasoning in their arguments, and there were many instances where this was not sufficiently acknowledged in the awards made.

Equally, there are still instances where the choice of a 'worthy' topic immediately seems to indicate a grade of Merit or above regardless of the originality and strength of the arguments presented. There was also a trend to under-appreciate the need to show independent control of structure, with a number of centres directing this element via a template model all students then employed. One example of this is the use of 'imagine' scenarios at the start and end of presentations. This did prove effective and appropriate in relation to certain topics, for example in relation to homelessness, but there were contexts where it was at best implausible. For example, in relation to the consequences of global warming, leading to less secure impact at the conclusion of talks. Whilst it is important here and in the written papers for students to build a repertoire of structural and indeed rhetorical devices, where they are used without consideration of appropriacy, their impact is reduced.

The expectations of the criteria and the definition of the key terms, straightforward (pass), challenging (merit) and sophisticated (distinction), have been fully detailed in previous reports and in the [8700C NEA: Notes and Guidance document](#). However, what was evident this year is that centres are not always fully appreciating the breadth of the assessment bands and their

correlation with other English Language mark schemes. As such, having correctly awarded a pass, anything stronger than this is deemed to be Merit standard regardless of the length, substance of ideas or development of talk and with little regard to the quality of responses to questions. The only way to correctly assess students is to apply the criteria in sequence ensuring that the first bullet is given priority since, without the ideas and substance in the presentation, the grade cannot be secured. It may be helpful to reflect on the degree of independence and complexity demonstrated in the stated purpose of the talk; students whose focus is exposition without a clear agenda may well show engagement with some of the complexities of the topic through the range and illustration of their arguments, allowing them to match Merit criteria, but are unlikely to be demonstrating sufficient evaluation, reasoning and analysis to match the 'sophisticated' descriptor.

It was clear in the review of many centre samples that there had been no internal moderation completed despite this being a requirement for all NEA. Whilst some awards at each level could be verified, the review of work assessed by other teachers could not and there were also noted differences in expectations regarding the length of talk and regarding questioning. It is appreciated that the published exemplars lack currency and secure relevance to all contexts, but they do fully illustrate the core expectations and grade level differences, and should be used as benchmarks for review of centre recordings. Such a review should also seek to ensure that there is consistency of practice across teaching groups in relation to management of opportunity, delivery and questioning, as centres do have a responsibility to ensure equality of entitlement.

The need for internal standardisation means that the occasional instances where verifiers observed teachers telling students their grades at the end of their presentations, is, of course, completely inappropriate. However, there were instances where teachers took the time to offer constructive praise to the students and it was pleasing to see evidence of individual feedback being offered for what, in the vast majority of cases, represents a significant effort and commitment on the part of the student.

Respecting the rubric

In addition to monitoring standards, the verifying panel is charged with the responsibility of monitoring centre practice in order to ensure equality in the delivery of the endorsement entitlement for all students in all centres. The assessment requirement for the endorsement is for all students to 'deliver a formal extended individual presentation and respond to questions'. Each of the words in this task bears significance in relation to the findings from this series, where aspects of rubric were not being sufficiently respected leading to centre awards not being wholly supported. Where deemed significant, verifier findings will be communicated to centres in support of ensuring more consistent delivery and management of student entitlement.

'formal'

This relates not only to topic/task choice, but also the management of the environment in which the students are assessed. Teacher approval was not seen to be consistently operative in ensuring that students selected topics with appropriate respect for this being a formal examination assessment and for the ethics and values which all schools work to. Where

extreme or unreasoned opinions are expressed, they should be challenged, ideally at teacher approval stage, and any indications of inappropriate focus would be flagged and alternatives recommended. Students were sometimes being recorded in corridors, on staircases, next to noisy lunch halls or in rooms where other students were engaged in distracting conversations. Question and answer sessions were also not consistently formally managed, making it challenging for students to properly complete this required element. Conversely, it was clear in the majority of centres that specific efforts had been made to facilitate an appropriate environment for the assessments and that audiences had been briefed as to the expected standards of behaviour of engaged listeners.

‘extended’

As has been referenced above, the length of a student talk is of significance to the depth of detail and argument presented. It is challenging to support Pass awards for a talk of less than one minute and equally, to accept that a student who has spoken for little over a minute can be deemed to have matched the ‘sophisticated’ descriptor. The allowance for this GCSE level assessment is 10 minutes, so it is reasonable to expect centres to guide their students towards a minimum speaking time of 3 minutes to then be followed by 2 minutes of questioning. Such a target would allow them to properly demonstrate their ability to structure and organise talk as the criteria value, whilst also stressing the need to prepare through appropriate research, thus allowing their presentations to have genuine substance (body) to support achievement of purpose. Students targeting higher levels should be speaking for longer – as indeed many were seen to do this year, a pleasing development. However, it is equally important that all centres respect the 10 minute limit as they would any word limit for other NEA assessments. Those centres allowing students to continue their presentations for as long as they wish – 37 minutes being the longest reported this year – are also not respecting the rubric, as the principle is that students need to plan the content and structure of their presentations in order that the talk and the questioning can be accommodated within the 10-minute allowance. This is a skill requiring prioritisation and selection of information against a specific and defined purpose. The current allocation is more than adequate to evidence the skills targeted by the assessment criteria.

‘individual’

The rubric is extremely clear on this issue. Students must prepare and present individually; there is no scope within this endorsement for any collaborative talk. There were still too many centres where students were presenting in pairs or groups with no student having complete control over their topic or task and with questioning being unequal. Other instances of group work, where students were filmed undertaking a rehearsed group discussion, are equally disenfranchising and cannot be seen to have any real value in terms of supporting individual communication skills. In all these cases, verifiers are compelled to award NC meaning that centres have denied students a valid opportunity to achieve this qualification. Individual also embodies ‘individuality’, such that any use of directed or derivative tasks is inappropriate.

‘presentation’

The endorsement task is not ‘reading’ a speech, or ‘making’ a Power-point, it is to deliver a prepared spoken presentation. A presentation needs ‘presence’ both physically, considering stance, eye contact and how to manage notes, and vocally, through voice projection, variation in intonation and expression, management of pace and emphasis, such that the audience feel engaged in the experience. All of this needs not only conscious planning but also rehearsal

and revision as is appropriate prior to any assessment, hence the use of 'prepared' in the definition of the task. The degree of security of understanding of what is involved is immediately obvious to verifiers and, in those centres where it is assured, it is clear that the culture of oracy and principles of communication in the oral mode are properly embedded in the curriculum; therefore, students are confident to 'present' and know how to prepare. However, there are many instances where it is clear that students have not been sufficiently prepared for this aspect of the endorsement. As such, what verifiers often see, in the most extreme cases, is head down monotone reading of written scripts from paper, tablets and this year more notably, from phones, or students reading from Power-point screens with their backs to their audience. JCQ guidance is clear on this:

'Teachers should advise students that reading entirely from pre-prepared notes is unlikely to enable them to access the criteria for the higher grades which require engagement with the audience'.⁴

The skill set and confidence needed is too often under-estimated and is dependent on progressive development from key stage 3 in line with the programmes of study for English. When monitors engage with centres whose awards have not been verified, this is a key area of focus, as it is challenging for students to succeed in this endorsement if they have not had previous experience of addressing an audience and all that this entails. A number of students were again seen to be operating on the misconception that making a Power-point was the end goal, and whilst there were students who used this visual aid effectively to present graphics and images relevant to their talk, many appeared to believe that this was their presentation and had not considered how to present beyond it.

Achieving the criterion, 'meeting the needs of the audience', does not only relate to physical factors, but also encompasses consideration of the use of language, appropriacy of examples and evidence and the management of structure. At Distinction level, students are expected to show use of an 'effective range of strategies to engage the audience', implying that both verbal and non-verbal strategies will be demonstrated and, where they are not, the award of this grade will often not be supported. It is important to note that fulfilling this requirement can be made more challenging for students if they are not provided with an appropriate audience with whom to engage.

The prevalence of teacher only audiences is still far greater than can be justified against the rubric of the endorsement. Whilst such a context does convey the formality and importance of the assessment, it does deny the students the opportunity to 'present to an audience' and to receive recognition and feedback from the audience; as such, they are typically targeted with questions reflecting only the teacher's adult perspective. Many students state that their purpose is to make young people aware of the issues/topic chosen and they appeal passionately for their attention and action, but they do not have that audience, and their peers are denied the experience of hearing their opinions and appreciating their skills. There may be a perception that the assessment model from MFL is appropriate for this endorsement, but the assessment priorities differ. In the former, linguistic competence is the challenge, whilst in the endorsement, that is assumed, and students are instead charged with showing their ability to employ language and structure to communicate their ideas/opinions/arguments to achieve influence, for which an appropriate audience is essential, as the JCQ guidance emphasises.

'An audience consisting of two people can more likely create the circumstances under which a student can demonstrate the knowledge, skills and understanding necessary to reach the higher specified levels of attainments in the spoken language assessment. The audience should be composed of individuals able to provide the student with opportunities to respond to appropriate questions and feedback.' ⁴

It is acknowledged that many students are not sufficiently confident to present to a whole class and, whilst this again should be a concern to be addressed from key stage 3, it is important to facilitate achievement for all. Expectations should be clear and consistent in regard of the challenge of this GCSE level assessment and exceptions minimised in order that all students are provided with equal opportunities to succeed. It was again noted by verifiers that year 11 students were both more assured and more ambitious in their presentations, and there is no doubt that the increased maturity afforded by completing the assessment in year 11 rather than earlier, is beneficial to attainment. As a means of addressing the need for a real audience, many centres were, this series, seen to be using small group audiences with exchanging speakers and there were sometimes indications of differentiation in the groupings used as a further support to student confidence. All were involved in actively listening and asking pertinent questions in a setting which was potentially less intimidating, where it was easier to manage visuals and sound in the recording whilst potentially being no more disruptive to the timetable. In these recordings, some of the questions asked genuinely reflected the perspective of the audience the presenter was targeting, making for a more realistic and productive experience of listening and responding. This is surely of cognitive benefit to all involved, whilst also affording the presenters the opportunity to feel the evident pride and status from their achievements, which verifiers so frequently appreciate.

'respond to questions'

Verifiers report that the management of the required question and answer session remains variable although there were pleasingly fewer instances where students received no questions as this technically prevents students from achieving the endorsement. The core expectations here are that students will be asked questions, which specifically target elements from their presentation, allowing them the opportunity to demonstrate their ownership and extend their thinking around their chosen topic and purpose through detailed explanation/evaluation/analysis to a level appropriate to their abilities. These questions should be spontaneous, rather than pre-prepared, in order for the student to demonstrate their processing skills against the criteria, and quality of question and response should be prioritised over quantity of questions asked. The response criteria at Merit requires elaborated responses, whilst at Distinction verifiers are looking for evidence of perception, so it is vital that the type of questions asked is carefully considered with quality prioritised over quantity. A significant number of awards at these levels were not agreed as a result of this key response criterion not being matched and where students had been overly reliant on their written scripts. There was too often insufficient attention paid to this potentially influential element of the assessment, where it is necessary that students engage. Ideally, questions will come from both students and their teachers, as they are responsible for managing this segment and ensuring students do receive appropriate opportunities to demonstrate this key assessment objective. However, the objective also encompasses listening and the skills of processing, required to formulate meaningful and challenging questions. These are an integral element of the endorsement experience and should be a focus for all students, as

explored in the [8700C NEA: Notes and Guidance](#) document and are a benefit to cognitive development. It is to be reiterated that questions should follow the presentation, allowing the student to present their prepared talk uninterrupted, which was not consistently the case this series.

The following issues were reported by verifiers as areas where centre practice was not supportive of attainment in relation to questioning:

- Questioning appeared to be a mechanical exercise with little evidence of interest shown in the talk given and a very limited amount of time allocated, sometimes with the impression of a treadmill approach. Many students were only asked one question.
- A significant number of students appeared to have pre-prepared questions, which were then asked by members of the student audience and sometimes their teachers, with answers being read from the same script used during the presentation. The prevalence of this in some centres led verifiers to believe that the practice was directed. There were some concerns that AI tools might have been employed to generate these 'good' questions in a small number of cases.
- Many students were asked generic questions that demonstrated no link to a specific aspect of the presentation given. For example, "Why did you choose this topic?" or "What can schools do about this?" or "What can the government do about this?". Where these were the standard questions asked, it stands to reason that students had prepared their answers in advance, so again, reducing the 'realism' of the Q&A element.
- Many students were asked straightforward 'what' questions which naturally resulted in the sharing of content rather than ideas regardless of the complexity of the presentation given. For example, in a talk about music which went into the science behind it, and how it brings people/cultures together, the student was asked 'what's your favourite song?' Where student questions are not appropriately challenging, it is the responsibility of the teacher assessing to provide the necessary opportunities.
- The responses students make are not 'heard'; there are no follow up questions and no acknowledgement of what has been explained, such that the experience is perfunctory rather than properly meaningful.
- Student audiences are sometimes not invited to ask questions, leading verifiers to question what benefit they are deriving from the experience. Conversely, there are multiple, sometimes competing and inappropriate questions from the student audience to which the presenter makes minimal response greatly reducing the formality and value of this required segment. Audience expectations should be made clear and consistently managed by the assessing teacher.
- Owing to the position of the microphone, there were many instances where questions, especially those from students, could not be heard. Where this arises, teachers are asked to repeat the questions so that verifiers are able to fully appreciate the exchange

However, better practice in questioning was seen in many centre samples often with very probing and genuinely interested enquiries, particularly where potential solutions were being explored. Supportive approaches were particularly note-worthy in non-mainstream settings

where the challenges facing students can often prove significant. The following observations were shared by verifiers:

- Many students demonstrated their understanding that it was their responsibility to independently develop their responses to questions, even where they might not be that 'promising' in scope. They knew that they had the floor and took full opportunity to show their authority on their chosen topic.
- Teachers nominating questioners from the student audience, implying that all knew that they might be called upon and so were engaged and actively considering their response to the presentations whilst listening.
- There were several instances where specific examples/statistics/claims from the talks were picked up by students and teachers in their questioning, using for example, a 'you said.... but don't you think....' approach to encourage development of particular details and so enhance outcomes against the 'ideas' strand of the criteria.
- Teachers were frequently seen to be actively supporting students in expanding their ideas against the wider frame agenda which might not have been considered within the prepared talk. For example, following a talk about a personal pet, asking the student why they thought so many people were so committed to pet ownership and how the current financial crisis was impacting pet welfare and ownership.

Administration

Centres are thanked for their diligence and efficiency in managing the submission of marks and samples for the endorsement. Overall, the quality of recordings was much improved. However, there are a number of issues which regularly arise which impact on the verification process. These are listed below:

- The deadline for submission of marks and samples is always in the first week of May, yet many centres do not submit until much later. Your efforts in submitting punctually would be appreciated.
- There are specific requirements for the indexing of file names for the video submissions. These are rules which apply to any NEA submission and so need to be respected, particularly the requirement to include a clear student identifier and the grade awarded within the file name. Where this differs from the mark entered on CMS, perhaps as a result of internal moderation, centres are contacted and asked to amend the latter as the mark on the work has primacy. Centres are therefore urged to check their entries carefully to ensure students are not disadvantaged.
- The absence of the key details is particularly challenging when all student videos are uploaded against the first student on the CMS list instead of individually against the student to whom each video pertains.
- Sound quality on many recordings was again often found to be insufficiently clear either as a consequence of the position of the microphone or owing to distracting background noise. This was often more of an issue with audibility of questions and centres are asked to check their recordings before submission in order to ensure that those that are uploaded are fully audible.

- Many students are recorded side on which is not ideal especially where they are using a Power-point which the verifier cannot therefore see. Equally, at the distance many recordings are made from, screens are challenging to decipher. Centres are asked to ensure that verifiers are enabled to appreciate student presentations fully however they are being delivered.
- The required evidence for this endorsement is a video recording on which a student can be seen and heard. Any deviation from this is subject to AQA approval as per JCQ rules and is not within the purview of a centre to grant.
- There is no need to upload any candidate record forms with the recordings.

Monitoring

Where standards have not been verified, centres will be contacted with appropriate advice or notification that they will be contacted by an experienced verifier who will act as a monitor charged with supporting the centre in a review of assessment and practice in relation to the endorsement. Centres have responded positively to this engagement and in the majority of cases, have successfully secured verification of standards in the following series.

Even where standards can be verified, part of the remit of the verifying panel is to report on aspects of centre practice which are seen to be impacting students' opportunities and attainment. Many centres will therefore be receiving letters of advice to encourage an internal review of practice in support of consistency of practice against various aspects of the endorsement rubric or relating to technical aspects of NEA submission.

Full details of the appropriate key skill preparation and rubric requirements for the endorsement can be found in the [8700C NEA: Notes and Guidance document](#) which is available from the GCSE English Language pages on the main AQA website.

Conclusion

Verifiers consistently enthuse about the privilege we are granted in monitoring this specification. We feel very fortunate to be charged with the task of listening to young people as they share their passions and ideas about the world and to see in to such a variety of classrooms where the support and enthusiasm of teachers for this important opportunity never ceases to inspire. A selection of their comments makes a fitting end to this report.

'It's wonderful to see what students choose to talk about and how enthusiastic so many of them are to share their ideas!'

'It's always a pleasure to see young people speaking about subjects that interest them.'

'Listening to students from a wide variety of settings talk on a number of different interests and topics has taught me a lot about my own teaching. I'm taking away a lot of helpful knowledge from this process.'

'As ever, this process has been a privilege and an education to be a part of.'

References

1. [JCQ Instructions](#) for conducting non-examination assessments(GCE & GCSE specifications), page 32
2. Ibid page 32
3. Ibid page 32
4. Ibid page 33

Further support

Mark ranges and award of grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [results statistics](#) page of our website.

Enhanced Results Analysis (ERA)

Use our exam results analysis tool to create and customise as many different reports for comparison as you like.

Professional development

Attend one of our feedback [courses](#) where you can review example responses from students and commentaries from our examiners. This does not apply to this component.

Contact us

Our friendly team will be happy to support you between 8am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.

Tel: 0161 957 7504

Email (GCSE): english-gcse@aqa.org.uk

Email (AS and A-level): english-gce@aqa.org.uk