

GCE



CCEA GCE Specification in Irish

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For first teaching from September 2016
For first award of AS level in Summer 2017
For first award of A level in Summer 2018
Subject Code: 5550



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1 Introduction

This specification sets out the content and assessment details for the Advanced Subsidiary (AS) and the Advanced GCE courses in Irish. First teaching is from September 2016.

Students can take:

- the AS course units as a final qualification; or
- the AS course units plus the A2 units for a full GCE A level qualification.

We assess the AS units at a standard appropriate for students who have completed the first part of the full course. A2 units have an element of synoptic assessment (to assess students' understanding of the subject as a whole), as well as more emphasis on assessment objectives that reflect higher order thinking skills.

The full Advanced GCE award is based on students' marks from the AS (40 percent) and the A2 (60 percent). The guided learning hours for this specification, as for all GCEs, are:

- 180 hours for the Advanced Subsidiary level award; and
- 360 hours for the Advanced level award.

We will make the first AS awards for the specification in 2017 and the first A level awards in 2018. The specification builds on the broad objectives of the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

If there are any major changes to this specification, we will notify centres in writing. The online version of the specification will always be the most up to date; to view and download this please go to www.ccea.org.uk

1.1 Aims

This specification aims to encourage students to:

- develop an enthusiasm for and an understanding of the Irish language and culture in a variety of contexts and genres;
- communicate confidently, clearly and effectively in the Irish language for a range of purposes;
- develop knowledge and understanding of societal, political and cultural issues in Irish-speaking countries or communities;
- draw together different areas of linguistic competence, skills and understanding;
- develop higher order thinking skills, for example independent learning and analytical and evaluative thinking;
- carry out research and present their findings through multimedia presentations;
- develop advanced study skills that help them prepare for third level education;
- provide extended responses and evidence of quality of written communication;
- engage critically with intellectually stimulating films, texts and other materials; and
- demonstrate that they understand and can use Irish at a high level to discuss and reflect on aspects of society, politics and culture.

1.2 Key features

The following are important features of this specification.

- There are six assessment units in this specification, three at AS level and three at A2:
 - Unit AS 1 – Speaking;
 - Unit AS 2: Section A – Listening, Section B – Reading and Section C – Use of Language;
 - Unit AS 3: Extended Writing;
 - Unit A2 1: Speaking;
 - Unit A2 2: Section A – Listening and Section B – Reading; and
 - Unit A2 3: Extended Writing.
- This specification allows students to develop their language skills, knowledge and understanding of societal, political and cultural issues in Irish-speaking countries or communities.
- It provides opportunities for students to engage in independent research into aspects of Irish society and culture that are of personal interest and to use multimedia to present their findings.
- Assessment at A2 includes more varied question types, more demanding evaluative tasks, extended writing, and synoptic assessment that encourages students to develop their understanding of the subject as a whole.
- There is a varied choice of texts.
- It gives students a sound basis for progression to higher education through skills development.
- A range of support is available, including specimen assessment materials and exemplars along with teacher guidance and support.

1.3 Prior attainment

The specification builds on the knowledge, understanding and skills developed in GCSE Irish. We recommend that students intending to study GCE Irish have already achieved a good GCSE standard or an equivalent level of qualification.

1.4 Classification codes and subject combinations

Every specification has a national classification code that indicates its subject area. The classification code for this qualification is 5550.

Please note that if a student takes two qualifications with the same classification code, universities and colleges that they apply to may take the view that they have achieved only one of the two GCEs. The same may occur with any two GCE qualifications that have a significant overlap in content, even if the classification codes are different. Because of this, students who have any doubts about their subject combinations should check with the universities and colleges that they would like to attend before beginning their studies.

There are no prohibited entry combinations for GCE Irish.

2 Specification at a Glance

The table below summarises the structure of the AS and A level courses:

Content	Assessment	Weightings
AS 1: Speaking	AS 1: Speaking Question 1: students give a presentation based on an AS level theme related to an aspect of an Irish-speaking country or community. (approximately 3 mins) Question 2: conversation (approximately 8 mins) Total time: 11 mins	30% of AS level 12% of A level
AS 2: Listening [A], Reading [B] and Use of Language [C]	AS 2: Section A – Listening Students answer two sets of questions based on two discrete passages recorded on disk. Recording 1: students answer in Irish. Recording 2: students answer in English. (40 mins) AS 2: Section B – Reading Question 1: students answer one set of questions in Irish based on one passage. Question 2: students translate a passage from Irish into English. (50 mins) AS 2: Section C – Use of Language Questions 1, 2, 3 and 4: students complete a series of short grammatical and lexical exercises. Question 5: students translate short sentences from English into Irish. (30 mins) Total time: 2 hours	40% of AS level 16% of A level

Content	Assessment	Weightings
AS 3: Extended Writing	AS 3: Extended Writing Students write one essay in Irish in response to a set film or literary text. Total time: 1 hour	30% of AS level 12% of A level AS: 40% of A level
A2 1: Speaking	A2 1: Speaking Question 1: students introduce and discuss one individual research project based on either: • a cultural aspect of an Irish-speaking country or community; • a historical period from the twentieth century of an Irish-speaking country or community; or • a region of an Irish-speaking country or community. (approximately 6 mins) Question 2: conversation (approximately 9 mins) Total time: 15 mins	18% of A level

Content	Assessment	Weightings
A2 2: Listening [A] and Reading [B]	A2 2: Section A – Listening Students answer two sets of questions based on two discrete passages recorded on disk. Recording 1: students answer in Irish. Recording 2: students answer in English. (45 mins) A2 2: Section B – Reading Students answer two sets of questions and complete one summary exercise and one translation exercise. Question 1: students complete a gap-filling exercise in Irish. Question 2: students answer a set of questions in Irish based on one passage. Question 3: students read a passage in Irish and summarise it in English. Question 4: students translate a passage from English into Irish. (2 hours) Total time: 2 hours 45 mins	24% of A level
A2 3: Extended Writing	A2 3: Extended Writing Students write one essay in Irish in response to a set literary text. Total time: 1 hour	18% of A level A2: 60% of A level

3 Subject Content

Students develop knowledge and understanding by studying themes relating to the society and culture, past and present, of a country or community where the Irish language is spoken.

This course has six units: three at AS level and three at A2. This section sets out the content and learning outcomes for each unit.

GCE Irish gives students the opportunity to explore two broad areas of interest. These are:

- social trends and issues; and either
- political culture, intellectual culture or artistic culture.

Students explore the areas of interest by studying four themes:

- Relationships (AS);
- Culture and Lifestyle (AS);
- Young People in Society (A2); and
- Our Place in a Changing World (A2).

AS level

Relationships

Students have the opportunity to understand and explore these topics/issues in Irish:

- different family structures;
- roles, responsibilities and relationships within families;
- challenges for families;
- intergenerational issues; and
- influences on young people, for example peers, family and friends.

Culture and Lifestyle

Students have the opportunity to understand and explore these topics/issues in Irish:

- physical well-being, for example diet or exercise;
- risk-taking behaviour, for example smoking, alcohol and drugs or extreme sports;
- dealing with stress and challenges, for example school or examinations;
- hobbies and interests, for example sport or music;
- the arts, film, fashion and design;
- social media and new technology; and
- holidays, festivals and tourism.

A2

Young People and Society

Students have the opportunity to understand and explore these topics/issues in Irish:

- part-time jobs;
- education and employment;
- career planning – aspirations and/or intentions;
- young people and democracy;
- European citizenship – advantages, disadvantages and opportunities; and
- societal attitudes and young people.

Our Place in a Changing World

Students have the opportunity to understand and explore these topics/issues in Irish:

- equality/inequality and discrimination/prejudice;
- poverty at home and abroad – causes, consequences and measures to combat it;
- immigration and emigration – causes, benefits and related issues;
- multicultural society and cultural identity – benefits and challenges;
- causes, consequences and resolution of conflict; and
- sustainable living and environmental issues.

3.1 Unit AS 1: Speaking

This unit has **two** elements:

- a prepared presentation based on an AS level theme related to an aspect of an Irish-speaking country or community; and
- a general conversation relating to the AS level themes.

Students make their presentation and converse in Irish. An external visiting examiner assesses the speaking elements, which are recorded for monitoring and scrutiny purposes.

Assessment

Content	Learning Outcomes
Speaking Students deliver a presentation, in Irish, based on an AS theme related to an aspect of life and culture in an Irish-speaking country or community, followed by a general conversation.	Students should be able to: • express information, facts and ideas and justify opinions in Irish; • understand and apply accurately the grammatical system and a range of structures; • adapt spoken and written language appropriately for different situations and purposes; and • speak knowledgeably about the topic that they have researched for their presentation.

Presentation

The presentation lasts **three** minutes and is conducted in Irish. The student chooses and prepares the topic from the AS themes. For their presentation, students should speak knowledgeably about the aspect of the Irish-speaking country or community that they have researched.

Students must prepare a **Summary Sheet** with approximately three to five headings outlining their presentation. Students **must not** choose a topic for their AS 1 presentation that relates to the set work that they studied for the AS 3 Extended Writing examination. Teachers **must** authenticate this on the **Summary Sheet** by specifying the set work and stating that students will not use the topic for A2 1 Introduction and Discussion as the AS 1 topic for the set works they study for Unit AS 3 and Unit A2 3. Centres **must** submit the **Summary Sheet** to CCEA by the deadline set.

Students must also complete a **Preparation Sheet**, of up to 60 words, for their presentation. The centre will keep this to give to the visiting examiner on the day of the examination.

Students will have a copy of their **Preparation Sheet** during the examination. They may carry out their presentation supported by artefacts or technology such as a PowerPoint presentation. Students can only use the wording from their **Preparation Sheet** in their PowerPoint presentation. The examination focuses solely on verbal communication and students' linguistic competence. The presentation is assessed according to the AO4 criterion.

See Appendix 1: Unit AS 1 Sample Content for Presentation.

Conversation

The conversation lasts approximately **eight** minutes. Students converse in Irish about aspects of the themes at a level appropriate for AS. The conversation is assessed according to the AO1 and AO3 criteria.

3.2 Unit AS 2: Listening, Reading and Use of Language

This unit has **three** sections.

Unit AS 2: Section A – Listening

This section lasts 40 minutes. The listening examination at AS level contains **two discrete** audio passages on **two** topics chosen from the themes. Recordings may be authentic sources such as announcements, news items, talks, presentations and discussions. Each recording lasts approximately **two** minutes and has its own set of questions. The recordings are on a disk. Students have full control over the recording and the playback facility.

Recording 1: students respond, in Irish, to questions in Irish.

Recording 2: students respond, in English, to questions in English.

The responses are assessed according to the AO1 criterion only.

Students break for **15 minutes after Section A to allow time for moving to another room before Sections B and C begin.**

Sections B and C last a total of 1 hour 20 minutes.

Unit AS 2: Section B – Reading

This section has a reading comprehension exercise and a translation from Irish into English.

Students should spend approximately 50 minutes on this section.

At AS level, the passage for the reading examination is drawn from sources such as magazines, newspapers, reports, books or other forms of extended writing that relate to the themes.

In Question 1, students respond, in Irish, to a set of questions in Irish. It is assessed according to the AO2 criterion.

Question 2 is a short translation exercise. Students translate a passage (of approximately 130 words) from Irish into English. The passage for the translation is drawn from sources such as magazines, newspapers, reports, books or other forms of extended writing related to the AS themes. It is assessed according to the AO2 criterion and takes account of the students' ability to transfer meaning into accurate English.

Unit AS 2: Section C – Use of Language

Students should spend approximately 30 minutes on this section. Questions 1, 2, 3 and 4 involve a series of short grammatical and lexical exercises.

In Question 5, students translate short sentences from English into Irish.

This section is assessed according to the AO3 criterion.

Assessment

Content	Learning Outcomes
Listening Students answer two questions based on recordings on disk. Reading Students answer one set of questions based on a written passage. Translation Students complete one translation from Irish into English. Use of Language Students complete a series of grammatical and lexical exercises including translating short sentences from English into Irish.	Students should be able to: • understand, infer meaning and draw conclusions from a variety of spoken sources covering different contexts, registers, styles and genres; • adapt spoken and written language appropriately for different situations and purposes; • understand, infer meaning and draw conclusions from a variety of written texts (including authentic sources) covering different contexts, registers, styles and genres; • transfer meaning from Irish into English; • express information, facts and ideas and justify opinions in written Irish; and • understand and apply accurately the grammatical system and a range of structures.

3.3 Unit AS 3: Extended Writing

This is a written essay response in Irish based on the study of **one** set work. Each work has two open-ended question options. Students answer **one** question. Students should demonstrate their knowledge of the work they have studied. The response is assessed according to the AO2, AO4 and AO3 criteria.

Time: 1 hour

Assessment

Content	Learning Outcomes
Film: O'Hara: <i>Yu Ming Is Ainm Dom</i> or Mercier: <i>Lipservice</i> or O'Reilly: <i>Clare Sa Spéir</i> OR Literary text: Peigí Rose: <i>Anne (An Chéad Chnuasach)</i>	Students should be able to: • develop knowledge and understanding of aspects of Irish culture and society or an Irish-speaking country or community; • express information, facts and ideas in written Irish and justify opinions through the study of a set film or literary text; • demonstrate their understanding and knowledge of the work in Irish; and • apply grammatical structures accurately.

3.4 Unit A2 1: Speaking

This unit has **two** elements:

- an introduction (1 minute) and discussion (5 minutes) based on an individual research project; and
- a general conversation (9 minutes) that focuses on the A level themes at a level appropriate to A2.

An external visiting examiner assesses the speaking elements, which are recorded for monitoring and scrutiny purposes.

Students deliver their introduction, discussion and conversation in Irish.

Introduction and Discussion

Students must prepare a **Summary Sheet** with approximately five headings outlining their research. Students **must not** choose a topic for their introduction and discussion that relates to the AS 1 topic or the set works studied for AS 3 and A2 3. Teachers **must** authenticate this on the **Summary Sheet**. Centres **must** submit this to CCEA by the deadline set.

The introduction and discussion are assessed according to the AO4 and AO3 criteria. Students may support their introduction and discussion with artefacts, but they will only be marked on their verbal communication and linguistic competence.

See Appendix 3: Unit A2 1 Content for Introduction and Discussion.

Conversation

The conversation lasts **nine** minutes and is based on the themes studied at A2. It may also incorporate AS themes, where appropriate. The conversation is assessed according to the AO1 and AO3 criteria.

Assessment

Content	Learning Outcomes
Speaking Students deliver an introduction to their individual research project followed by a discussion on this topic, and then a general conversation.	Students should be able to: • understand, infer meaning and draw conclusions from a variety of spoken sources covering different contexts, registers and styles; • express information, facts and ideas and justify opinions in spoken Irish; • understand and accurately apply the grammatical system and a wide range of structures; • adapt spoken and written language appropriately for different situations and purposes; and • speak knowledgeably about the topic that they have researched.

3.5 Unit A2 2: Listening and Reading

Unit A2 2: Section A – Listening

This section lasts 45 minutes.

Students answer **two** sets of questions based on **two** audio passages recorded on disk.

The content of the listening extracts is based on the A level themes and may consist of authentic audio sources such as announcements, news items, talks, presentations and discussions. Listening is assessed according to the AO1 criterion.

Recording 1: students respond, in Irish, to questions in Irish.

Recording 2: students respond, in English, to questions in English.

Students break for **15 minutes after Section A to allow for moving to another room before Section B begins.**

Unit A2 2: Section B – Reading

This section lasts 2 hours.

The stimulus material for the reading examination and the translation exercise is drawn from sources such as magazines, newspapers, reports, books or other forms of extended writing relating to the A level themes.

Reading is assessed according to the AO2 criterion.

The translation is assessed according to the AO3 criterion.

Students complete four tasks:

- Question 1 is a gap-filling exercise in Irish.
- Question 2 is a set of questions that students respond to in Irish.
- Question 3 is a passage in Irish that students read and summarise in English using approximately 100 words.
- Question 4 is a passage of approximately 130 words that students translate from English into Irish.

Assessment

Content	Learning Outcomes
Listening Students answer two questions based on two discrete passages recorded on disk. Reading Students answer two sets of questions and complete one summary exercise and one translation exercise from English into Irish.	Students should be able to: • understand, infer meaning and draw conclusions from a variety of spoken sources covering different contexts, registers, styles and genres; • adapt spoken and written language appropriately for different situations and purposes; • understand, infer meaning and draw conclusions from a variety of written texts (including authentic sources) covering different contexts, registers, styles and genres; • summarise information from written sources, report key points and subject matter in writing; • transfer meaning from English into Irish; and • understand and accurately apply the grammatical system and a range of structures.

3.6 Unit A2 3: Extended Writing

This is a written essay response in Irish based on **one** set literary text. Each literary text has two open-ended question options. Students answer **one** question. Students should be able to demonstrate knowledge of the literary text they have studied and a capacity for critical thinking by using these skills as appropriate:

- developing arguments;
- presenting views, opinions and justifications;
- analysing critically;
- evaluating;
- comparing characters; and
- appreciating themes and literary styles.

The response is assessed according to the AO2, AO4 and AO3 criteria.

See Appendix 4: Unit A2 3 Content for Extended Writing.

Time: 1 hour

Assessment

Content	Learning Outcomes
Literary texts: either Mac Labhraí (editor): <i>Anam na Teanga</i> or Ó Tuairisc: <i>Lá Fhéile Míchil</i> or A selection of poems by: Ó Ríordáin, Ó Searcaigh, Ó Direáin and Mhac an tSaoi	Students should be able to: • demonstrate their ability to write in Irish about the literary text they have studied; • express information, facts and ideas in written Irish and justify opinions through the study of a literary text; • demonstrate their capacity for critical and analytical thinking in Irish by developing arguments and presenting views, opinions and justifications; • demonstrate a capacity for critical analysis, evaluation and comparison of characters, plot and themes, literary style and motivation; and • apply grammatical structures accurately.

4 Scheme of Assessment

4.1 Assessment opportunities

Each unit is available for assessment in the summer of each year. It is possible to resit individual AS and A2 assessment units once and count the better result for each unit towards the AS or the A level qualification. Candidates' results for individual assessment units can count towards a qualification until we withdraw the specification.

4.2 Assessment objectives

There are **four** assessment objectives in total for this specification.

Candidates must:

- understand and respond, in speech and writing, to spoken language drawn from a variety of sources, including face-to-face interaction (AO1);
- understand and respond, in speech and writing, to written language drawn from a variety of sources (AO2);
- manipulate the language accurately and appropriately, in spoken and written forms, using a range of lexis and structure (AO3); and
- show knowledge and understanding of and respond critically and analytically to different aspects of the culture and society of countries or communities where the language is spoken and demonstrate critical analysis and evaluation of works created in the language studied (AO4).

4.3 Assessment objective weightings

The table below sets out the assessment objective weightings for each assessment unit and the overall A level qualification:

Percentage Assessment Objective Weightings						
	AO1	AO2	AO3	AO4	AS	A level
AS 1	4.0		3.2	4.8	12.0	12.0
AS 2	4.0	6.4	5.6		16.0	16.0
AS 3		5.6	3.2	3.2	12.0	12.0
A2 1	6.0		4.8	7.2		18.0
A2 2	6.0	9.6	8.4			24.0
A2 3		8.4	4.8	4.8		18.0
Total	20.0	30.0	30.0	20.0	40.0	100.0

4.4 Quality of written communication

In AS and A level Irish, candidates must demonstrate their quality of written communication. They need to ensure that text is legible and that spelling, punctuation and grammar are accurate so that meaning is clear.

Quality of written communication is assessed in responses to questions and tasks that require extended writing in English [AS 2 translation into English (AO2) and A2 2 summary in English (AO2)].

4.5 Synoptic assessment at A2

The A2 assessment units include some synoptic assessment, which encourages candidates to develop their understanding of the subject as a whole. In our GCE Irish, synoptic assessment involves:

- building on material from the AS units;
- bringing together and making connections between areas of knowledge and skills that they have explored throughout the course;
- following their own lines of enquiry and recording and observing from primary sources;
- demonstrating understanding and the ability to use advanced language skills in one or more tasks, in both oral and written form; and
- giving them the opportunity to select and present work that demonstrates their strengths from different areas.

4.6 Higher order thinking skills

The A2 assessment units provide opportunities to demonstrate higher order thinking skills by incorporating a wider range of question types to address different skills, for example:

- open-ended questions and questions that require candidates to draw inference and deduce meaning;
- questions that require candidates to summarise an Irish text in English, within a set word limit;
- more demanding evaluative tasks;
- questions that require candidates to make more connections between sections of the specification; and
- extended writing, where appropriate.

4.7 Reporting and grading

We report the results of individual assessment units on a uniform mark scale that reflects the assessment weighting of each unit.

We award AS qualifications on a five grade scale from A to E, with A being the highest. We award A level qualifications on a six grade scale from A* to E, with A* being the highest. To determine candidates' grades, we add the uniform marks obtained in individual assessment units.

To be awarded an A*, candidates need to achieve a grade A on their full A level qualification and at least 90 percent of the maximum uniform marks available for the A2 units. If candidates fail to attain a grade E, we report their results as unclassified (U).

The grades we award match the grade descriptions in Section 5 of this specification.

5 Grade Descriptions

Grade descriptions are provided to give a general indication of the standards of achievement likely to have been shown by candidates awarded particular grades. The descriptions must be interpreted in relation to the content in the specification; they are not designed to define that content. The grade awarded depends in practice upon the extent to which the candidate has met the assessment objectives overall. Shortcomings in some aspects of candidates' performance in the assessment may be balanced by better performances in others.

The requirement for all AS and A level specifications to assess candidates' quality of written communication is met through AO2.

AS Grade Descriptions

Grade	Descriptions
AS Grade A	For AO1, candidates characteristically: • show a clear understanding of spoken language; • use complex vocabulary and structures; • understand the main points, details and points of view; • develop ideas and viewpoints with justification; • infer meaning effectively; • respond fluently; and • have accurate pronunciation. For AO2, candidates characteristically: • show a clear understanding of written texts; • use complex language; • understand the main points, details and viewpoints; • infer meaning effectively; • develop ideas and viewpoints with justification; and • structure responses coherently. For AO3, candidates characteristically: • make effective use of a range of vocabulary and structures; • use grammar, syntax and morphology accurately; and • manipulate language appropriately. For AO4, candidates characteristically display a good understanding of the society and culture of Irish-speaking countries or communities.

Grade	Descriptions
AS Grade E	For AO1, candidates characteristically: • show limited understanding of basic spoken language; • experience difficulties with more complex vocabulary and structures; • understand some basic and limited points of view; • show a very limited ability to infer meaning; • show clear influence of their first language; and • convey some basic meaning. For AO2, candidates characteristically: • show some limited understanding of basic texts; • experience difficulties with more complex language; • understand, to a limited extent, the main points and details; • have a limited ability to infer meaning; • convey some basic information; • show clear influence of their first language; and • have difficulty communicating factual information. For AO3, candidates characteristically: • use a restricted range of vocabulary and structures; • make frequent errors in grammar, syntax and morphology; and • demonstrate a very limited ability to manipulate language. For AO4, candidates characteristically display a very limited understanding of the society and culture of Irish-speaking countries or communities.

A2 Grade Descriptions

Grade	Descriptions
A2 Grade A	For AO1, candidates characteristically: • show a clear understanding of the spoken language; • use complex vocabulary and structures; • understand the main points, details and viewpoints; • infer and transfer meaning effectively; • develop, express and justify ideas effectively; • respond fluently; and • have accurate pronunciation. For AO2, candidates characteristically: • show a clear understanding of written texts; • use complex language; • understand the main points, details and viewpoints; • infer meaning effectively; • develop and express ideas with justification; and • structure responses coherently. For AO3, candidates characteristically: • make effective use of a wide range of vocabulary and structures; • use grammar, syntax and morphology accurately; and • manipulate language appropriately. For AO4, candidates characteristically display a good understanding of the society and culture of Irish-speaking countries or communities.

Grade	Descriptions
A2 Grade E	For AO1, candidates characteristically: • show limited understanding of spoken language; • convey basic information; • show hesitancy in response; • have limited fluency and show influence of their first language; and • have difficulty communicating factual information and expressing basic points of view. For AO2, candidates characteristically: • show limited understanding of written texts; • understand some basic points, details and viewpoints; • demonstrate a limited ability to infer meaning; • have difficulty communicating factual information; and • show limited ability to structure responses. For AO3, candidates characteristically: • use a restricted range of vocabulary and structures; • have difficulty with more complex language; • show influence of their first language in the use of grammar, syntax and morphology; • make frequent linguistic errors; and • show a very limited ability to manipulate language accurately. For AO4, candidates characteristically display a very limited understanding of the society and culture of Irish-speaking countries or communities.

6 Guidance on Assessment

There are six assessment units in this specification, three at AS level and three at A2:

- Unit AS 1: Speaking;
- Unit AS 2: Section A – Listening, Section B – Reading and Section C – Use of Language;
- Unit AS 3: Extended Writing;
- Unit A2 1: Speaking;
- Unit A2 2: Section A – Listening and Section B – Reading; and
- Unit A2 3: Extended Writing.

The external assessment focuses on candidates' knowledge, understanding and analysis of the content of each unit.

6.1 Unit AS 1: Speaking

This unit has **two** elements:

- a **three** minute prepared presentation based on an AS theme related to an aspect of an Irish-speaking country or community; and
- a general conversation of approximately **eight** minutes, focusing on AS themes.

An external visiting examiner conducts the assessment. Candidates deliver their presentation and conversation in Irish.

Candidates are assessed on their:

- ability to engage with the external visiting examiner;
- knowledge and understanding of the chosen theme;
- grammatical accuracy when communicating orally; and
- fluency.

Candidates may carry out their presentation supported by artefacts or technology such as a PowerPoint presentation. Candidates can only use the wording from their Preparation Sheet in their PowerPoint presentation. The examination focuses solely on verbal communication and candidates' linguistic competence.

In the presentation, the external visiting examiner assesses candidates according to the AO4 criterion.

In the conversation, the external visiting examiner assesses candidates according to the AO1 and AO3 criteria.

6.2 Unit AS 2: Listening, Reading and Use of Language

This unit has **three** sections.

Section A – Listening

In the Listening tasks, candidates are assessed according to the AO1 criterion.

Section B – Reading

The Reading part of this section has a written passage with questions in Irish, which the candidate answers in Irish. Candidates are assessed according to the AO2 criterion.

Candidates translate a short passage of approximately 130 words from Irish into English. Candidates are assessed according to the AO2 criterion.

Section C – Use of Language

Candidates complete a series of short grammatical and lexical exercises and translate short sentences from English into Irish. Candidates are assessed according to the AO3 criterion.

6.3 Unit AS 3: Extended Writing

Candidates respond, in Irish, to a set film or literary text that they have studied. Candidates respond to one question from the options provided. They are assessed according to the AO2, AO4 and AO3 criteria.

Candidates should demonstrate the ability to present views, opinions and justifications. They should also demonstrate knowledge of their chosen work.

6.4 Unit A2 1: Speaking

This unit has **two** elements:

- Candidates give a **one** minute introduction followed by a **five** minute discussion of their individual research project related to an aspect of an Irish-speaking country or community. There are three prescribed options to choose from. Candidates are assessed according to the AO3 and AO4 criteria.
- Candidates have a **nine** minute general conversation, based on the themes studied at A2, which may also incorporate AS themes, where appropriate. Candidates are assessed according to the AO1 and AO3 criteria.

An external visiting examiner conducts the assessment. Candidates deliver their introduction and conversation in Irish.

Candidates may support their introduction and discussion with artefacts, **but they will only be marked on their verbal communication and linguistic competence.**

Candidates are marked on their:

- ability to engage with the external visiting examiner;
- knowledge and understanding of the chosen theme;
- grammatical accuracy when communicating orally; and
- fluency.

6.5 Unit A2 2: Listening and Reading

This unit has **two** sections.

Section A – Listening

Candidates answer different types of questions about **two** passages based on the themes:

- Recording 1: candidates respond, in Irish, to questions in Irish.
- Recording 2: candidates respond, in English, to questions in English.

In the Listening tasks, candidates are assessed according to the AO1 criterion.

Section B – Reading

Candidates answer **three** questions based on **three** written texts. They:

- complete a gap-filling exercise in Irish;
- respond in Irish to questions in Irish; and
- write a summary in English of approximately 100 words.

In these Reading tasks, candidates are assessed according to the AO2 criterion.

Candidates also translate a passage of approximately 130 words from English into Irish.

In the translation task, candidates are assessed according to the AO3 criterion.

6.6 Unit A2 3: Extended Writing

Candidates write **one** essay in Irish on a set literary text that they have studied. Candidates answer **one** question from the range of options provided. The response is assessed according to the AO2, AO4 and AO3 criteria.

Candidates should demonstrate the ability to develop arguments and present views, opinions and justifications. They should demonstrate knowledge of their chosen text and show a capacity for critical analysis of the question. They should be able to apply grammatical concepts and use a range of grammatical structures, incorporating vocabulary appropriate to the analysis and evaluation of a literary text.

7 Links and Support

7.1 Support

The following resources are available to support this specification:

- our Irish microsite at www.ccea.org.uk
- sample assessment materials;
- sample presentation topics;
- GCE Irish Speaking Instructions and Guidance; and
- guidance notes for teachers.

We also intend to provide:

- past papers and mark schemes;
- Chief Examiner's reports;
- support materials;
- schemes of work;
- a resource list;
- exemplification of standards;
- centre support visits; and
- support days for teachers.

7.2 Curriculum objectives

This specification supports centres to build on the broader Northern Ireland Curriculum objectives to develop the young person:

- as an individual;
- as a contributor to society; and
- as a contributor to the economy and environment.

It can contribute to meeting the requirements of the Northern Ireland Entitlement Framework at post-16 and the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum.

Curriculum Progression from Key Stage 4

This specification builds on learning from Key Stage 4 and gives students opportunities to develop their subject knowledge and understanding further.

Students will also have opportunities to continue to develop the **Cross-Curricular Skills** and the **Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities** shown on the next page. The extent of this development depends on the teaching and learning methodology the teacher uses.

Cross-Curricular Skills

- Communication:
 - Talking and Listening
 - Reading
 - Writing
- Using Mathematics
- Using ICT

Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities

- Problem Solving
- Working with Others
- Self-Management

For further guidance on the skills and capabilities in this subject, please refer to the supporting schemes of work.

7.3 Examination entries

Entry codes for this subject and details on how to make entries are available on our Qualifications Administration Handbook microsite, which you can access at www.ccea.org.uk

Alternatively, you can telephone our Examination Entries, Results and Certification team using the contact details provided.

7.4 Equality and inclusion

We have considered the requirements of equality legislation in developing this specification and designed it to be as free as possible from ethnic, gender, religious, political and other forms of bias.

GCE qualifications often require the assessment of a broad range of competences. This is because they are general qualifications that prepare students for a wide range of occupations and higher level courses.

During the development process, an external equality panel reviewed the specification to identify any potential barriers to equality and inclusion. Potential barriers for some students include:

- Speaking, for some students with a speech impairment;
- Listening, for some students with a hearing impairment, that is, those who cannot lip read (British or Irish sign language may not be allowed, as that would not involve communication in the foreign language); and
- Reading, for some students with visual impairment (that is, those who cannot read Braille). These students may not have the text read out to them, as that would involve testing the different competence of listening.

These competences are included because:

- the GCE is a holistic qualification which must continue to assess all four skills to meet all its assessment objectives; and
- removal of a competence may penalise students for whom that competence is a strength.

Modified visual and hearing papers are available on request.

Where appropriate, we have considered measures to support access and mitigate barriers.

We can make reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities to reduce barriers to accessing assessments. For this reason, very few students will have a complete barrier to any part of the assessment.

It is important to note that where access arrangements are permitted, they must not be used in any way that undermines the integrity of the assessment. You can find information on reasonable adjustments in the Joint Council for Qualifications document *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments: General and Vocational Qualifications*, available at www.jcq.org.uk

7.5 Contact details

If you have any queries about this specification, please contact the relevant CCEA staff member or department:

- Specification Support Officer: Joan Jennings
(email: jjennings@ccea.org.uk)
- Education Manager: Philip Cummings
(email: pcummings@ccea.org.uk)
- For a full list of contacts within CCEA visit our website at
www.ccea.org.uk/examiner-centre-support/examinations-support/key-contacts

Appendix 1

Unit AS 1 Sample Content for Presentation

The presentation is based on AS themes related to aspects of Irish-speaking countries or communities. It is assessed according to the AO4 criterion. The presentation topic **must not** relate to the A2 1 topic or the set works studied for AS 3 and A2 3.

Some sample presentation titles:

- Mná na dtithe agus na coláistí Gaeilge i dTír Chonaill
- An tOireachtas
- An Scrúdú Cainte sa Ghaeilge
- Cumann Lúthchleas Gael
- Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann
- Lá Fhéile Pádraig
- Cultúr na dí agus aos óg na hÉireann
- Foireann rugbaí na hÉireann
- Taithí oibre le heagraíocht Ghaeilge
- Gael Linn
- Slite beatha agus an Ghaeilge
- Fás agus forbairt na Gaeilge i gCúige Uladh

Appendix 2

Unit AS 3 Content for Extended Writing

This unit is based on set films or literary texts. Each work has two question options. Candidates respond to **one** question only in Irish.

Film:

- O'Hara: *Yu Ming Is Ainm Dom* (first release 2003)
- Mercier: *Lipservice* (first release 1998)
- O'Reilly: *Clare Sa Spéir* (first release 2001)

Literary text:

- Peigí Rose: *Anne* (*An Chéad Chnuasach* first publication 1991)

Appendix 3

Unit A2 1 Content for Introduction and Discussion

The introduction and discussion elements of the A2 Speaking examination are based on an individual research project on an aspect of an Irish-speaking country or community. This **must not** relate to the topic for AS 1 or the set works for AS 3 and A2 3.

The options for the introduction and discussion elements are:

Culture

Candidates study a cultural aspect of an Irish-speaking country or community, for example the arts, music, sport, folklore, festivals or traditions.

or

Historical period

Candidates study a historical period from the twentieth century of an Irish-speaking country or community.

or

Region

Candidates study a region of an Irish-speaking country or community.

Appendix 4

Unit A2 3 Content for Extended Writing

This unit is based on set literary texts. Each literary text has two question options. Candidates respond to **one** question only in Irish.

The literary texts are:

- Mac Labhraí: *Anam na Teanga* (first publication 2012)

Liam Ó Flaithearta: *An Beo*

Peigí Rose: *An Cumann*

Pádraic Ó Conaire: *Nóra Mharcais Bhig*

Pádraig Mac Piarais: *An Gadaí*

Micheál Ó Conghaile: *Athair*

Fionntán de Brún: *Na Déithe Bréige*

- Ó Tuairisc: *Lá Fhéile Míchíl* (first publication 1967)

- A selection of poems:

Ó Ríordáin:

Fill Arís

Tost

Rian na gCos

Ó Searcaigh:

Níl Aon Ní

An Tobar

Caoineadh

Ó Direáin:

Faoiseamh a Gheobhadsa

Cuireadh do Mhuire

Stoite

Mhac an tSaoi:

A fhir dar fhulaingeas ...

Jack

Gráinne

Appendix 5

AS and A Level Grammar and Structures List

AS grammar and structures list

Part(s) of Speech	Examples
Nouns	Gender Singular and plural forms Genitive, vocative cases Aspiration, eclipses
Articles	Definite Singular and plural forms including genitive
Adjectives	Agreement – number, position Comparative/superlative, equative (<i>níos/is, chomh le</i>) Demonstrative (<i>seo, sin, úd</i>) Possessive (<i>mo, do, a etc.</i>) With copula (<i>is beag nár/is fíor go etc.</i>) With modifiers (<i>an-mhaith, iontach maith, maith go leor</i>)
Adverbs	Of place, time, quantity In relative clauses (<i>dóigh, áit, fáth, treo, am</i>) (R)
Copula	Present (<i>is/ní, an/nach, gur, nach</i>) Past/conditional (<i>ba/níor(bh), ar(bh)/nár(bh), (R) gur(bh)/nár(bh)</i>) With definite/indefinite nouns (<i>is é an múinteoir é/is múinteoir é</i>) With adjective + definite nouns (<i>is breá an ceoltóir é</i>) To express ownership (<i>is le Seán é</i>) To express feeling/emotion (<i>is maith liom</i>) For emphasis (<i>is go Doire a chuaigh sé</i>) (R) With adverbs (<i>is minic a théann sé</i>) With adjectivals (<i>is ionann iad, is maith sin</i>) With domiciles (<i>is as Doire mé/dom</i>)
Conditional conjunctions	<i>má/mura, dá/mura, murar, murarbh</i> With copula (<i>más/mura, má ba, murar(bh), dá mba/murar(bh)</i>) (R)
Verbs	Regular and irregular forms of verbs, including negative forms Interrogative forms and indirect speech

Part(s) of Speech	Examples
Tenses	Tenses: present, past, future, including autonomous forms Moods: imperative, conditional, including autonomous forms Direct relative clauses (<i>an duine a bhí ag caint</i>) Direct relative questions (<i>Cé a bhí ag caint?</i>) Indirect relative clauses (<i>an duine a raibh mé ag caint leis</i>) (R) Indirect relative clauses with adverbs (<i>dóigh, áit, fáth, treo, am</i>) Indirect relative questions (<i>Cé leis a raibh tú ag caint?</i>) (R) Dependent forms (<i>fuil, raibh, deachaigh, dearna etc.</i>) Use of verb <i>bí</i> (<i>tá sé ar scoil/bíonn sé ar scoil</i>) – with measurement/time (<i>tá sé a trí a chlog</i>) – location (<i>tá sé ag an doras</i>) – obligation (<i>tá orm dul abhaile</i>) – in idiomatic phrases (<i>tá cóta agam/orm/liom/uaim</i>) – to express state, health or emotion (<i>tá sé ina chónaí, tá biseach air, tá áthas air</i>) – in progressive phrases (<i>tá sé ag léamh</i>)
Verbal noun	Formation (<i>bailigh>bailiú, déan>déanamh etc.</i>) Use as infinitive, noun gerund With nouns (<i>ag baint an fhéir/an féar a bhaint</i>) With object pronouns (<i>á bhaint</i>) (R) As imperative (<i>dúirt sé liom imeacht</i>) As passive voice (<i>tá siad á mbaint [aige]</i>) (R) As active voice (<i>tá siad do mo bhualadh</i>) With verbs of motion (<i>chuaigh mé a luí</i>) To express state (<i>ar oscailt</i>) To express purpose/intention (<i>chun/leis na soithí a ní</i>) Adjective: (<i>tá sé déanta [state] v déantar é [action]</i>)
Verbal adjective	Formation and use (<i>bailigh>bailithe, déan>déanta etc.</i>) Perfective (<i>tá sé déanta agam</i>)

Part(s) of Speech	Examples
Prepositions	Prepositional pronouns (<i>agam, agat etc.</i>) Simple prepositions (<i>amhail, mar, gan etc.</i>) Prepositions causing genitive (<i>chun, timpeall etc.</i>) With articles (<i>leis an, sa etc.</i>) Use in time (<i>sa deireadh, ar ball, leis sin etc.</i>) State (<i>ar buile, faoi bhrón, ina chónaí etc.</i>) In idiomatic structures (<i>tá aithne agam air etc.</i>) With adjectives (<i>bródúil as, buíoch de etc.</i>) With verbs (<i>iarr ar, abair le, mol do etc.</i>) Compound prepositions (<i>ar son, faoi choinne etc.</i>)
Defective words	<i>dar le</i>
Number, quantity and time	Ordinals, cardinals, personal

The examples in italics are indicative, not exclusive. For structures marked (R), receptive knowledge only is required.

A level grammar and structures list

All grammar and structures listed for AS level, plus:

Part(s) of Speech	Examples
Verbs	Past habitual (<i>théadh sé, ba ghnách leis dul</i>) Subjunctive mood (present and past) Universality (<i>sin a bhfuil agam etc.</i>) Subjunctive of copula (<i>gurab amhlaidh duit</i>) (R) Verbal patterns (<i>níl sé chomh maith agus a shíl mé a bheadh sé/cad é a chreideann tú a chonaic tú?</i>) Verbal noun
Verbal noun	<i>lucht déanta brící/lucht foghlamtha na Gaeilge</i> (R)
Genitive	<i>lucht siúil v lucht siúlta bóithre</i> (R)
Adverbial phrases	Openers (<i>i dtús báire, is é mo bharúil féin etc.</i>) Middlers (<i>áfach, ámh, ar an drochuair etc.</i>) Closers (<i>mar fhocal scoir, i dtaca le holc etc.</i>)
Natural idioms/proverbs	<i>dá n-éireadh linn/má théann agam/sháraigh orm/dá mba mhaith leat/ní mó ná gur sásta atá sé ní mar a shíltear a bhítear/ní fál go haer é/is fearr an tsláinte ná na táinte</i>

Part(s) of Speech	Examples
Verbal phrases	Indirect relative (<i>an té ar leis é/an baile arb(h) as é</i>) (R)
Copula	Idiomatic prepositions (<i>is mór agam/is beag orm</i>) Semantic prepositions (<i>is gá dom/is gá liom</i>)
Abstract nouns	Formation (<i>áille(acht), fuaire/fuacht, feabhas/maitheas</i>)
Abstract noun degree	With <i>a</i> (<i>a mhinice</i>) (R) (how) (as ... as) With <i>dá</i> (<i>dá laghad, dá fheabhas etc.</i>) (however) (the ...er ... the ...er) With <i>cá</i> (<i>cá mhinice, cá mhéad, cá fhad etc.</i>) (how)
Adjectives	Genitive (<i>carr an fhir mhóir, carr na mná móire</i>) Comparative/superlative – past (<i>níba, ba/ab etc.</i>) Superlative with preposition (<i>ar an duine is fearr/ar na daoine is fearr</i>)

The examples in italics are indicative, not exclusive. For structures marked (R), receptive knowledge only is required.

Summary of Changes since First Issue

Revision History Number	Date of Change	Page Number	Change Made
Version 1	N/A	N/A	First issue
Version 2	6 November 2018	34	Changes to Contact details



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