



**NCCA**

An Chomhairle Náisiúnta  
Curaclaim agus Measúnachta  
National Council for  
Curriculum and Assessment

# Guidelines to support the Additional Assessment Components in Leaving Certificate Arabic

Oral and Aural examinations

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## Introduction

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This document, *Guidelines for the Assessment of the Additional Assessment Components Oral and Aural Examinations* provides:

- details of the nature and scope of the oral and aural examinations as outlined in the curriculum specification for Leaving Certificate Arabic
- guidance for schools, teachers and students on undertaking and completing the oral and aural examinations
- information on the role of schools and teachers in supporting students with the oral and aural examinations
- descriptors of quality for the oral and aural examinations.

These guidelines should be used in conjunction with the curriculum specification for Leaving Certificate Arabic which can be accessed [here](#).

## Assessment for Certification in Leaving Certificate Arabic

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Assessment for certification is based on the rationale, aims and learning outcomes of the Leaving Certificate Arabic specification. There are three assessment components: a written examination and two additional assessment components comprising an oral examination and an aural examination. The written examination and the aural examination will be offered at higher and ordinary level. The written examination and the aural examination will be administered and completed on the same day and taken at the same level. The oral examination will be assessed at a common level for all students. The marks for the oral examination will then be weighted in line with the level at which the student sits the written examination. The table below provides an overview of the marks allocated to each assessment component.

Assessment component	Ordinary level	Higher Level
Oral examination	25%	30%
Aural examination	30%	25%
Written examination	30% Reading	25% Reading
	15% Writing	20% Writing

Table 1: Overview of assessment for certification

## Overview of the oral examination

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The oral examination for Leaving Certificate Arabic will take place during term 2 of sixth year. The oral examination will assess spoken language proficiency in line with the learning outcomes in the Leaving Certificate Arabic curriculum specification. In doing so, a range of learning outcomes across both strands will be assessed in line with the assessment criteria outlined below. The oral examination will:

- focus on the student's ability to engage in a number of reception, interaction, production, and mediation tasks, using Arabic appropriately and effectively to negotiate meaning.
- involve a discussion of a selection of texts<sup>1</sup> from the student's language portfolio. During the oral examination the language portfolio will be a stimulus for conversation and discussion. However, the content of the portfolio itself will not be assessed for certification purposes.

In the oral examination, the focus is on oral proficiency and communicating the message clearly. During the oral examination questions will be presented in Modern Standard Arabic. Students may use mediation skills and strategies in responding to questions.

### Purpose of the oral examination

The purpose of the *Additional Assessment Component Oral Examination* is to assess spoken language proficiency in Arabic in line with the learning outcomes of the Leaving Certificate Arabic curriculum specification.

The focus is on oral proficiency and communicating the message clearly in line with the learning outcomes and the descriptors of quality for oral examination. To reflect the formal nature of the oral examination and to ensure that the examination is accessible to a diverse range of Arabic speakers, the questions will be presented in Modern Standard Arabic, which is common to all countries of the Arabic-speaking world.

During the oral examination, communication involves negotiating meaning. Therefore, students may use appropriate plurilingual and pluricultural competences, as well as their mediation skills and strategies, such as seeking clarification and asking questions, to effectively communicate during the examination.

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<sup>1</sup> All products of language use—oral, written, visual, or multi-modal—can be described as texts. Multi-modal texts combine language with other systems for communication, such as print text, visual images, sound and the spoken word.

## Format and structure of the oral examination

This section includes information on the format and structure of the oral examination.

The oral examination will take place during term 2 of sixth year.

Approximately 15 minutes will be provided per student.

The oral examination will assess the learning outcomes of the specification for Leaving Certificate Arabic across spoken production, interaction, mediation and plurilingual and pluricultural competence, reflecting real-world communication in everyday interactions across the three domains of language use. More information on the domains of language use can be found in Appendix 1.

The oral examination will include:

- a general conversation
- a discussion of a selection of texts from the student's language portfolio.

Part of the oral examination will consist of a general conversation. This conversation will focus on familiar topics relevant to students' everyday lives and their personal fields of interest in line with the learning outcomes of the specification.

Part of the oral examination will be a discussion of a selection of texts from the student's language portfolio. The discussion will involve texts chosen by the student with the support of their teacher. It is important to note that while the selected texts will be a stimulus for conversation and discussion during the oral examination, they will not be assessed for certification purposes. Students will not bring their language portfolio into the oral examination.

The selection of texts will be developed as part of the development of the language portfolio which should form an integral part of normal classroom practice over the course of the two years of senior cycle and should reflect the student's interests and their achievements and learning experiences in line with the learning outcomes across the two strands and the descriptors of quality for oral communication. Further guidance on the development of the language portfolio can be found in the Portfolio Guidelines.

## Descriptors of quality for oral examination

The descriptors below relate to the learning achieved by students in the Oral examination.

	Students demonstrating a high level of achievement	Students demonstrating a moderate level of achievement	Students demonstrating a low level of achievement
Task completion	Can communicate the message fully and clearly with a high level of awareness of register appropriate to the context and target audience.	Can communicate the message clearly enough to be understood, showing good awareness of the register appropriate to the context and target audience.	Can communicate the message somewhat clearly with limited awareness of the register appropriate to the context and target audience.
Interaction	Can begin, maintain, and end interactions with confidence in unscripted conversations in a wide range of familiar situations and topics.	Can begin, maintain, and end interactions using simple, direct phrases in unscripted conversations in familiar situations and topics, provided they are supported by the interlocutor.	Can begin, maintain, and end interactions with limited confidence and effectiveness in unscripted conversations and about very familiar situations and topics, with collaboration from the interlocutor.
Mediation	Can summarise the main points in texts on topics of interest and answer further questions about details (e.g. characters, events, experiences and emotions). Can ask appropriate questions to check understanding of concepts that have been explained. Can creatively and appropriately use communication and compensation strategies to sustain communication.	Can summarise the main points in texts, at times supplementing with other means to aid communication. Can answer further questions about key aspects in high frequency everyday language. Can answer simple questions to ask for clarification and to help keep the conversation going. Can appropriately apply communication and compensation strategies to avoid misunderstandings.	Can summarise the main points in short and simple texts, supplementing their limited repertoire with other means to further communication. Can express their reactions to work, reporting their feelings and ideas in simple language. Can pose occasional questions to show that they are following.
Plurilingual and pluricultural competence	Can demonstrate high levels of awareness and understanding of cultures associated with Arabic, appropriate to the task and their stage of learning.	Can demonstrate adequate levels of awareness and understanding of cultures associated with Arabic, appropriate to the task and their stage of learning.	Can demonstrate very little awareness or understanding of cultures associated with Arabic, appropriate to the task and their stage of learning.
Range	Has a sufficient range of language to give clear descriptions and express viewpoints on most general topics, using some more complex sentence forms to do so. Can make a connected, linear sequence of points.	Has enough language to get by, with sufficient vocabulary to express themselves with some hesitation on topics such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel, and current events. Can link shorter elements into connected sequences.	Can use basic sentence patterns with memorised phrases, groups of a few words/signs and formulae to communicate limited information in simple everyday situations. Can use simple connectors like 'and', 'but', 'because'.
Accuracy and fluency	Can keep going comprehensibly, with only few pauses, hesitations, and searching for expressions and very few errors that cause misunderstanding. Self-corrects where appropriate.	Can make themselves understood, with pauses, especially in longer stretches. Frequently used expressions in predictable situations are reasonably accurate.	Can use very short and simple sentences with many pauses, hesitations, reformulations. Uses some structures correctly but makes basic mistakes.

Table 4: Descriptors of quality for oral examination

## Overview of the aural examination

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The aural examination will assess listening comprehension skills in line with the learning outcomes in the curriculum specification for Leaving Certificate Arabic and the descriptors of quality of the aural examination. In doing so, a range of learning outcomes will be assessed across both strands. This section includes information on the purpose, format and structure of the aural examination.

### Format, purpose and structure of the aural examination

The aural examination will take place on the same day and at the same level as the written examination for Leaving Certificate Arabic. The aural examination will assess listening comprehension skills in line with the learning outcomes in the curriculum specification for Leaving Certificate Arabic. In doing so, a range of learning outcomes across both strands will be assessed. The aural examination will assess the ability of students to engage in a variety of reception and mediation tasks consistent with the learning outcomes of the specification and the descriptors of quality outlined below.

During the aural examination students will engage with spoken stimulus material reflecting real-world use of Arabic in a range of real-life contexts across the personal, educational and public domains of language use. Further information on the domains of language use can be found in Appendix 1.

Stimulus material may reflect a wide variety of formats including but not limited to conversations, announcements, presentations, news items, and accounts of personal events and experiences. Students will engage with stimulus material by answering a number of questions in a variety of formats including multiple choice questions and short and longer response questions.

Stimulus material will be presented in Modern Standard Arabic so as to be linguistically accessible to a diverse range of Arabic speakers.

## Descriptors of quality for aural examination

The descriptors below relate to the learning achieved by students in the Aural examination.

	Students demonstrating a high level of achievement	Students demonstrating a moderate level of achievement	Students demonstrating a low level of achievement
Comprehension/ Mediation	<p>Can understand the main points of shorter and extended speech on familiar topics, topics of personal interest and current affairs in a variety of contexts.</p> <p>Can clearly relay the contents of straightforward informational texts using their own words.</p> <p>Can take clear notes on a well-structured presentation on a topic within their field of interest or experience.</p>	<p>Can understand shorter and extended speech on familiar topics, topics of personal interest and current affairs.</p> <p>Can relay relevant information in short, simple texts, using their own words.</p> <p>Can identify the essential information in a straightforward informational text.</p> <p>Can list key points during a straightforward presentation on a familiar subject.</p>	<p>Can understand short and simple conversations, reports, and discussions when the topics are familiar.</p> <p>Can relay the point made in short, clear, simple messages, instructions, announcements, provided they are expressed slowly.</p> <p>Can take simple notes during a short presentation on familiar and predictable topics.</p>
Plurilingual and pluricultural competence	<p>Can creatively use their plurilingual and pluricultural competences to make sense of texts.</p>	<p>Can demonstrate use of their plurilingual and pluricultural competences to make sense of texts.</p>	<p>Can demonstrate in a limited way the use of their plurilingual and pluricultural competences to make sense of texts.</p>

*Table 5: Descriptors of quality for Aural examination*



## Role of the teacher

The teacher has an important role to play in supporting students in developing their oral language and aural proficiency in Arabic. Teaching and learning related to the oral and aural examinations should be integrated into ongoing classroom practice to maximise opportunities for students to achieve the learning outcomes of the specification and support the development of key competencies.

Support may include:

- identifying any particular areas of the specification that students may need to engage with in order to undertake the oral and aural examinations
- ensuring students are aware of the descriptors of quality associated with the oral and aural examinations
- facilitating access to appropriate resources
- providing appropriate access arrangements for students with additional learning needs, in accordance with the State Examinations Commission's provision of reasonable accommodations
- using feedback appropriately to promote a reflective approach to work on the oral and aural examinations
- promoting opportunities afforded by the AACs to develop Senior Cycle key competencies.

Over the two years of Leaving Certificate Arabic each student develops a language portfolio. The purpose of the language portfolio is to create a space where students record and reflect on their growing language proficiency and their plurilingual and pluricultural competence. Students play a key role in the development of their language portfolio, and teachers can support students through guidance and feedback on suitable tasks, activities and texts in line with the learning outcomes of the Leaving Certificate Arabic specification.

When teachers provide formative feedback on the texts created by students, this feedback should be general and nondirective in nature. Teachers should not provide any excessive or inappropriate support to students, such as editing draft work or providing model text or answers to be used in the students' evidence of learning. Further guidance on the development of the language portfolio can be found in the Portfolio Guidelines.

## Appendix 1: Domains of language use

Over the two years of studying Leaving Certificate Arabic, students are supported in developing communicative language proficiency broadly aligned with the A2 – B1 bands of the Common European Framework of Reference and its Companion Volume. As basic to independent users, students will interact in everyday situations relevant to their lives and fields of interest across the **personal, educational** and **public domains** of language use. Their learning will be supported by authentic texts and tasks that reflect real-life experiences in such situations.

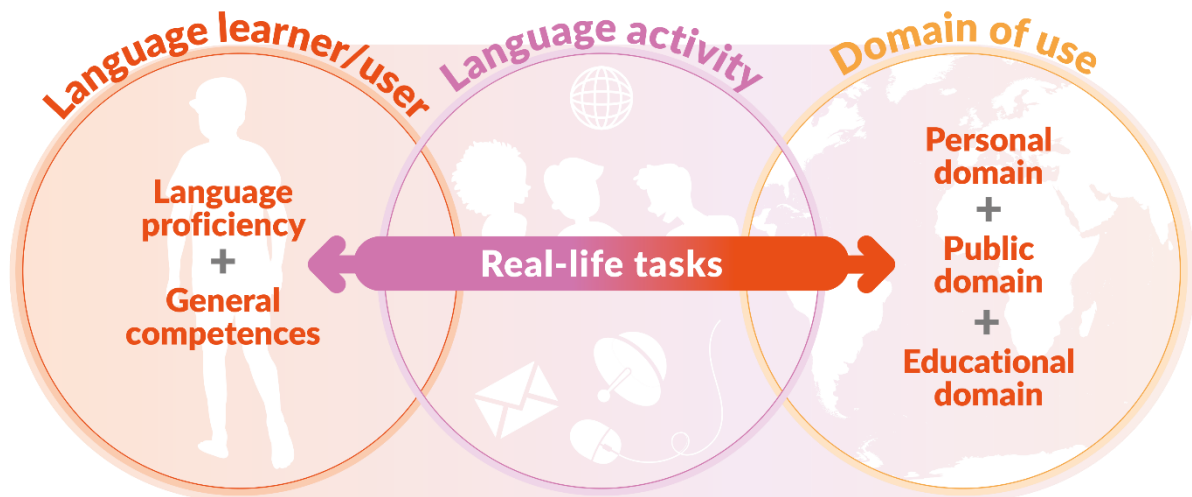


Figure 1 Model of language use within the action-oriented approach

The chart below may support students and teachers in imagining everyday situations or scenarios of immediate relevance when sourcing authentic material and/or planning authentic tasks when working with the learning outcomes of the specification. The examples are purely illustrative and suggestive and not intended to be in any way exhaustive. Given the nature of language use, the three domains should not be seen as rigid and separable. Depending on the context or situation, the task can fall into a number of domains simultaneously.



Figure 2 Illustrative examples of real-world language use across the domains of language use

## Appendix 2: Links to further resources

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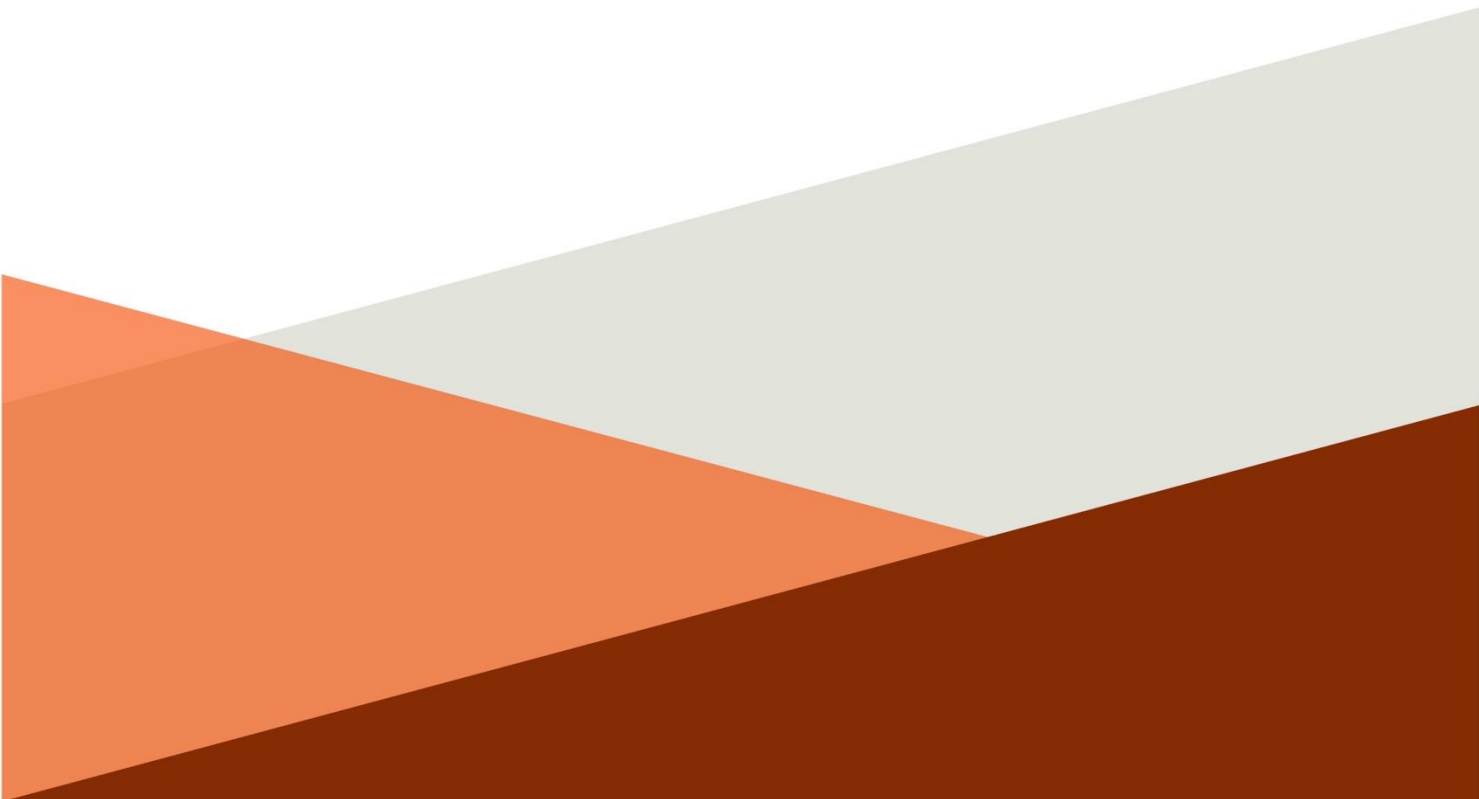
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Department of Education. (2024) Curriculum specification for Leaving Certificate Arabic. Available at: [Arabic | Curriculum Online](#)

Portfolio Guidelines [Arabic | Curriculum Online](#)

Additional support materials [Arabic | Curriculum Online](#)



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