

ML AL grade boundaries for June 2014 and impact on A*

This is written further to the JCQ report on ML AL and A* (July 2014)

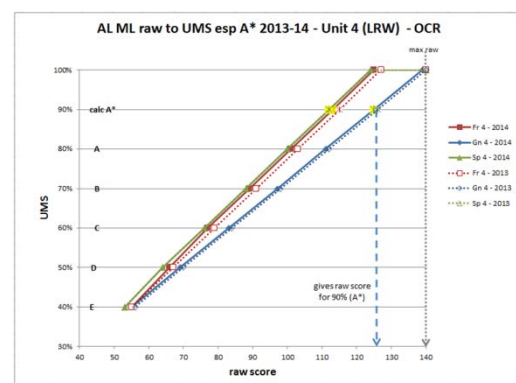
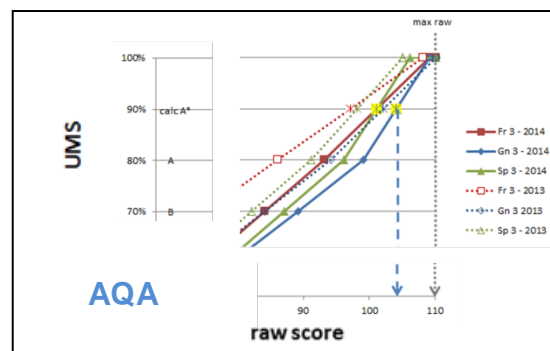
<http://www.jcq.org.uk/media-centre/news-releases>

- [A review of Modern Foreign Languages at A level: A* grade and low take up](#)

which included analysis of the 2013 (and previous) results for several Awarding Organisations (referred to here as "exam boards"). The JCQ Report is extremely thorough and detailed and repays careful study. This paper looks at the ML AL grade boundaries for 2014 and compares them with 2013. It also explains the way grade boundaries and A* grades are defined and allocated, and how that affects ML in particular.

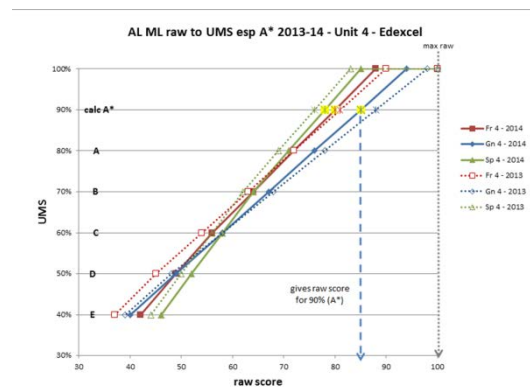
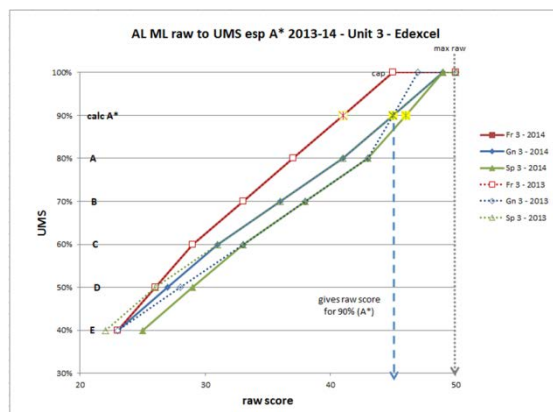
Summary regarding 2014 boundaries

- The AQA boundaries in Unit 3 (Listening, Reading & Writing, worth 140 UMS of 200) have seen a significant movement in all three ML with higher raw marks required (e.g. 105/110 for German for A*), which is likely to exacerbate the issues raised in the JCQ report. There is also variation between the three ML.
- OCR boundaries have remained very similar, but the raw marks required for German are higher than those for French and Spanish.
- Edexcel has a different pattern of assessment (note JCQ report comments of the differences); the boundaries have changed slightly. There is quite a variation between the three ML which differs for Unit 3 (Understanding and Spoken - 70/200) and Unit4 (Written - 130/200)



Definition of A*

In A-level, grade A* is awarded to students achieving grade A overall and 90 per cent or more of the maximum uniform mark on the aggregate of the A2 units. For



qualification, grade A* is awarded to students achieving at least 320 uniform marks on the A-level overall and at least 180 uniform marks on the sum of the two A2 units. The A* is not awarded for individual units or for the AS Level.

Assigning grade boundaries

For each Unit, the examiners set by judgement ("judgemental boundary") which raw mark will be the A/B and the E/U boundary, and these are always assigned a UMS score of 80% and 40% respectively of the maximum UMS for the Unit. The other grade boundaries (B/C, C/D, D/E) are then CALCULATED by interpolation and are assigned UMS of 70%, 60% and 50%. Thus each raw score is converted to a UMS.

example, in a four unit

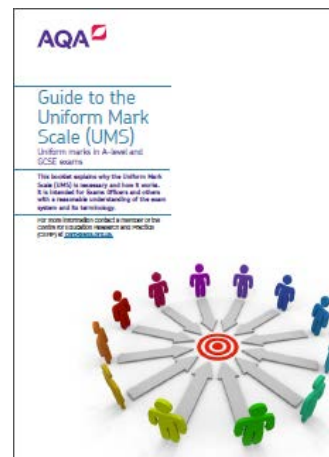
Note that there is not a grade boundary for A* *per se* for individual units because it is only calculated on the A2 units combined. However, the exam boards calculate a *de facto* A*/A boundary (called a*) for each unit (at 90%), by a process of extrapolation, which can become complicated. AQA (and other exam boards) provide an online spreadsheet to help calculate the UMS score from a raw mark for any module,

<http://www.aqa.org.uk/exams-administration/about-results/uniform-mark-scale/convert-marks-to-ums>

as well as a detailed pamphlet with technical details

http://store.aqa.org.uk/over/stat_pdf/UNIFORMMARKS-LEAFLET.PDF.

- see the AQA pamphlet for details (p.6 and Section 5) for details re A* incl the definition of the "cap".



OCR give a* boundaries

<http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/176557-a2-units-showing-90-percent-conversion-points-june-2014.pdf>

Edexcel give a* boundaries and a spreadsheet

<http://www.edexcel.com/i-am-a/student/results/pages/convert-your-marks.aspx>

http://pastpapers.edexcel.com/content/dam/pdf/Support/Grade-boundaries/A-level/1406_GCE_A_level_Grade_Boundaries.pdf

WJEC publish boundaries

<https://www.wjecservices.co.uk/MarkToUMS/default.aspx>

5. Notional N, the A* conversion point and the 'cap' (from AQA pamphlet)

"There is also a conversion point above the highest available grade called the 'cap' and in A2 units there is an A* conversion point. Notional N and the cap (and, in A2 units, notional A*) are used to ensure that, on conversion to uniform marks, raw marks have the same value just above and just below the boundary for both the highest available grade and the lowest available grade. When using the cap, a student with a raw mark below the maximum may sometimes obtain the maximum uniform mark."

Figure 3(i) (illustrating Table 2(i))

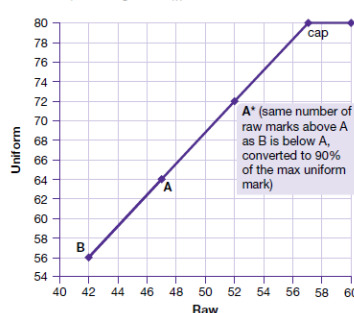
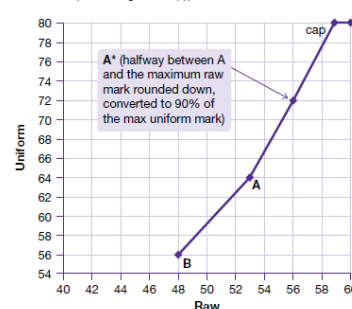


Figure 3(ii) (illustrating Table 2(ii))



5.2. Calculating notional A* and the cap in an A2 unit

- Where the mark width from the A raw mark boundary to the maximum is more than twice that from A to B, the A* conversion point is normally the same amount above A as B is below A.
- Where the mark width from the A raw mark boundary to the maximum is less than or equal to twice that from A to B, the A* conversion point is normally halfway between A and the maximum raw mark. This is rounded down, where necessary, to the nearest whole number below (eg $78\frac{1}{2}$ is rounded to 78).
- The (raw mark) A* conversion point may be adjusted following a review of statistical and technical evidence.
- The cap is the same number of raw marks above A* as A is below A*. This is converted to the maximum uniform mark for the unit. The A* conversion point is converted to 90% of the maximum uniform mark.

Grade boundaries from year to year

It is appropriate that the grade boundaries for the Oral (Units 2 & 4) in AQA should be the same and stay the same as the "task" is the same each year and the assessment criteria / mark scheme the same. Equally it is appropriate that the grade boundaries in the AQA Written (+L+S) (Units 1 & 3) should vary slightly from year to year and language to language as the questions will vary slightly from year to year and language to language.

Marks at AS and at A2

In Chapter 4 - Assessment Instruments and Script Analysis of the JCQ Review - Section 1 Introduction (pp2-3), there are some striking graphs reproduced from Sutch and Wilson 2013:

This investigation focuses upon A2 assessments only. The reason for this is, as reported in Chapter 3, it appears that MFL candidates tend to gain fewer A2 UMS than AS UMS. Without at least 180 UMS from A2, it is not possible to gain an A*. Figure 1 below, (a colour reproduction of a figure from Sutch and Wilson, 2013) illustrates the AS to A2 relationship for five subjects. Candidates on or around the diagonal identity line have similar UMS from AS and A2. Those candidates above the line have more A2 UMS than AS; and those below have fewer A2 than AS UMS. We can clearly see that for both Art A-level and English Literature A-level candidates in particular, there is, generally, symmetry around the identity line. However, unlike other subjects, the French A-level candidates are not at all symmetrical as the vast majority of candidates are below the line, indicating fewer A2 UMS than AS UMS. The impact on the number of candidates reaching/qualifying for A* (crossing the lines in the upper right area in each graph) is conspicuous for French.

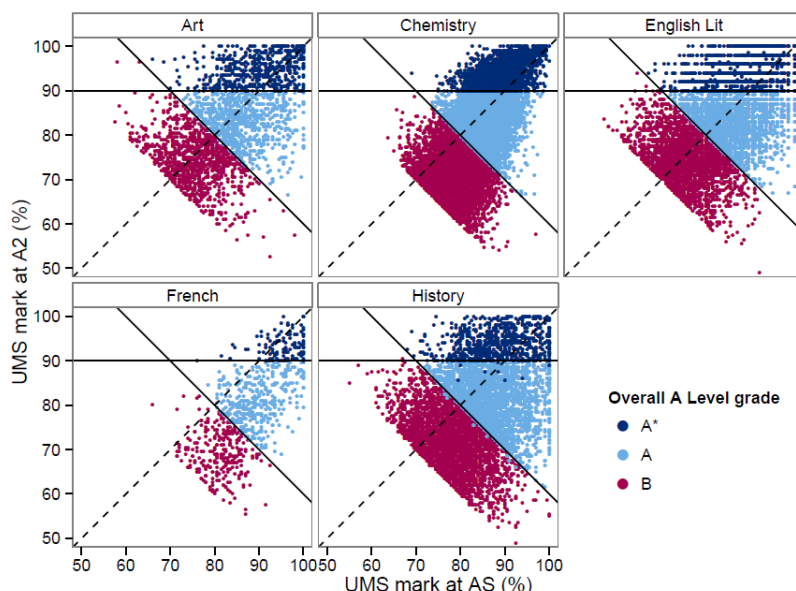
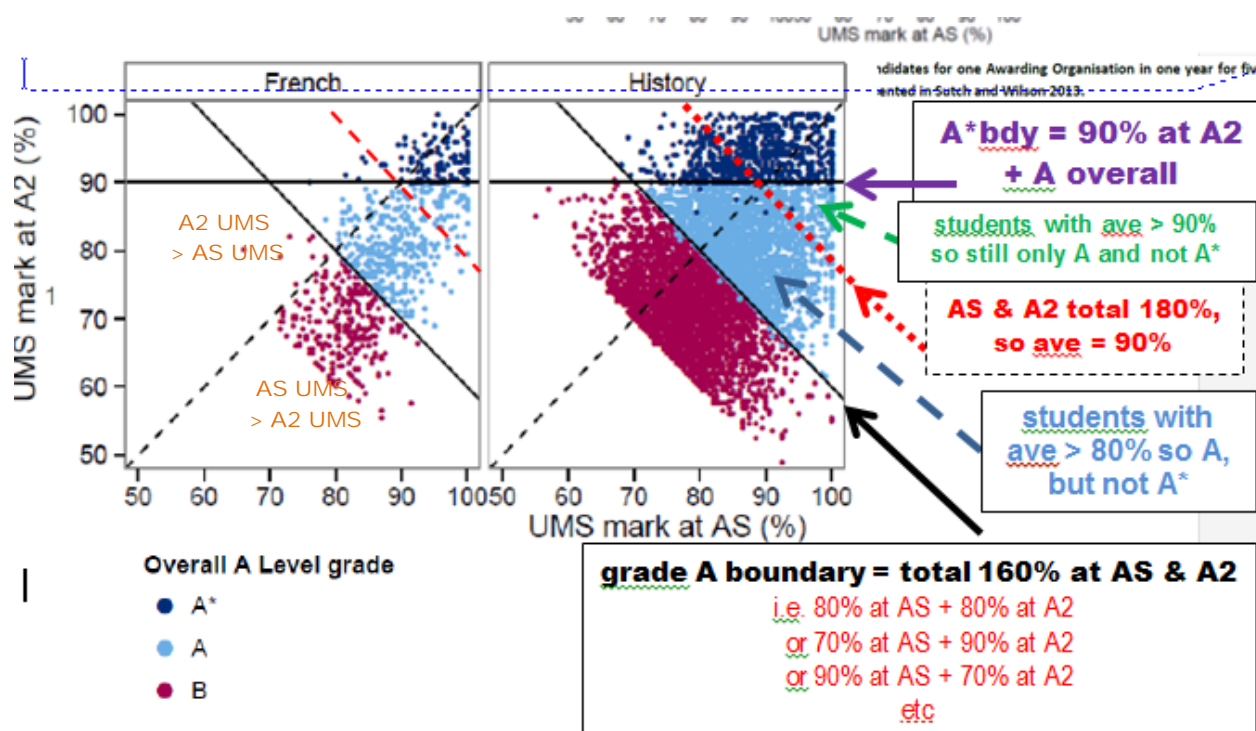


Figure 1: Plots of AS and A2 marks for all A* to B candidates for one Awarding Organisation in one year for five subjects. Colour reproduction of graphs originally presented in Sutch and Wilson 2013.



AL ML and boundaries for 2013-14

AQA

For **AQA**, French, German and Spanish are four-unit A Level which have 400 UMS and four Units

AS: Unit 1: Listening, Reading and Writing (LRW) - max 140 UMS (*max 110 raw*)

Unit 2T: Oral (Centre Conducted) - externally marked - max 60 UMS (*max 50 raw*)

A2: Unit 3: Listening, Reading and Writing (LRW) - max 140 UMS (*max 110 raw*)

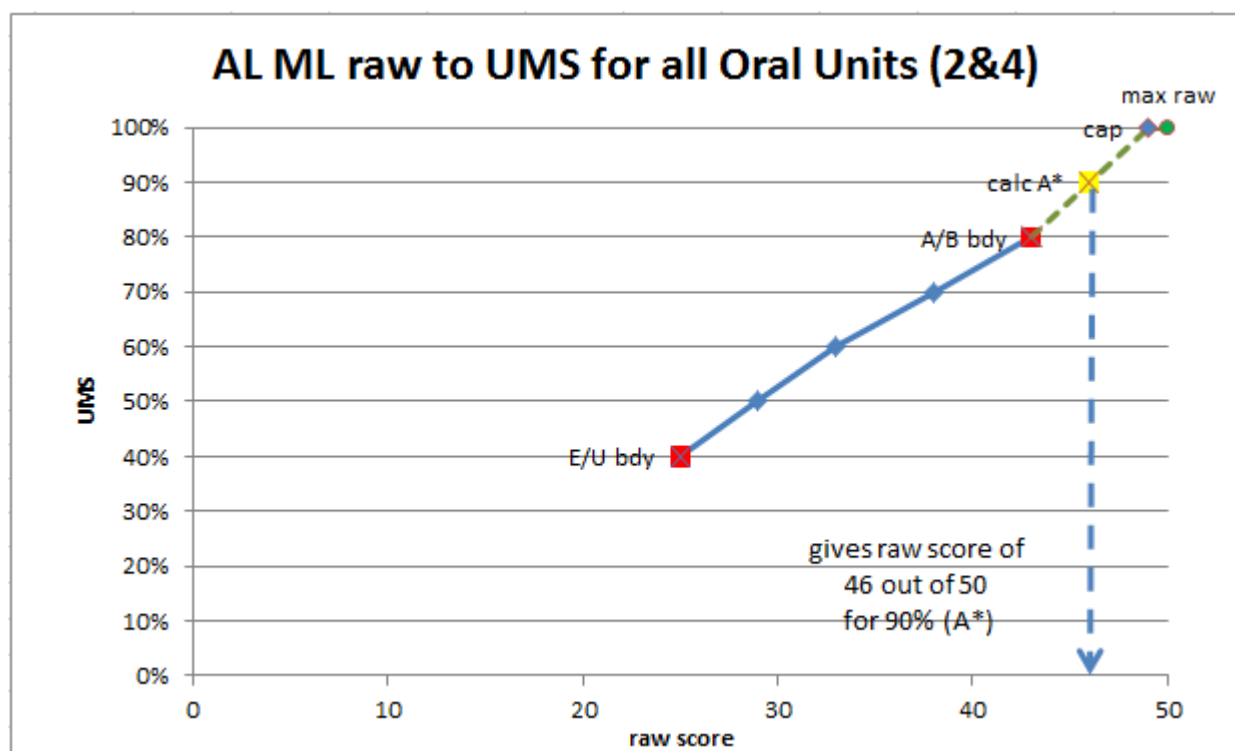
Unit 4T: Oral (Centre Conducted) - externally marked - max 60 UMS (*max 50 raw*)

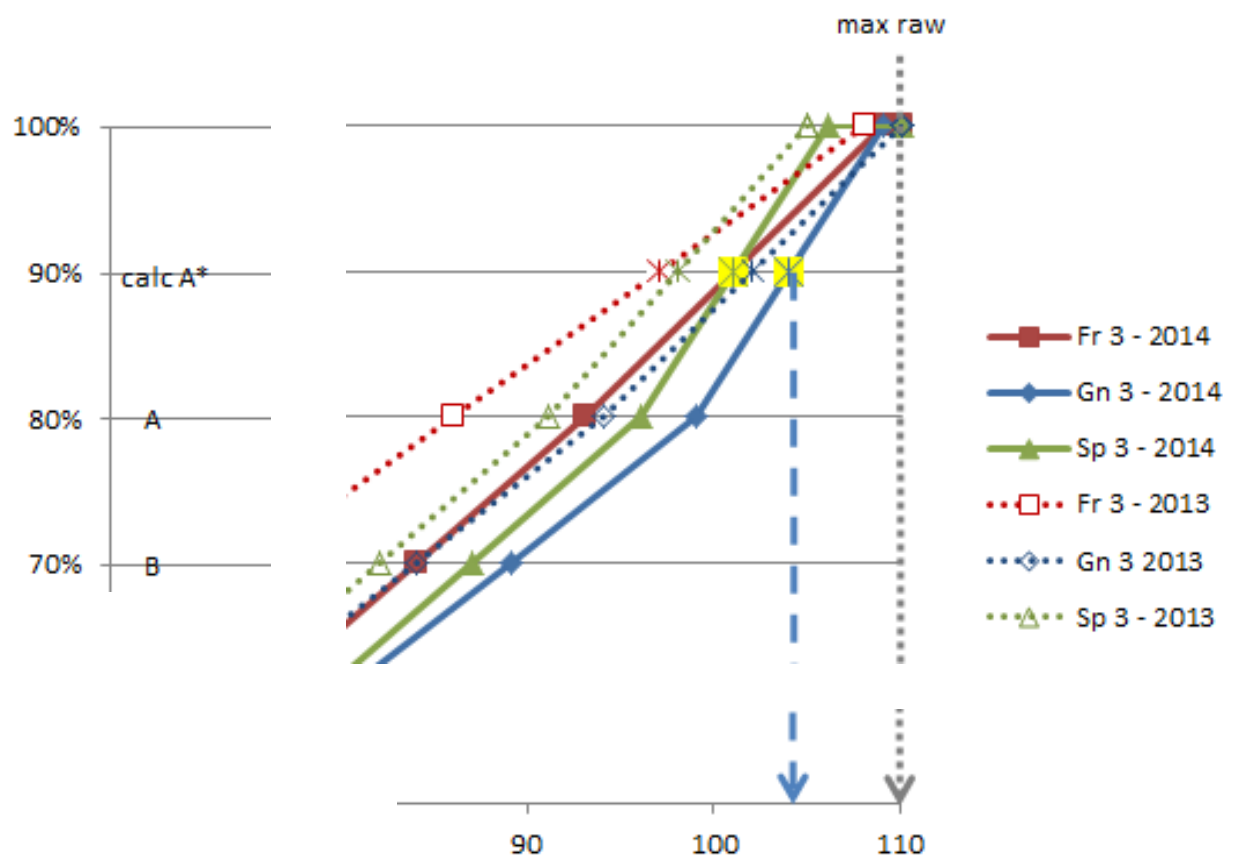
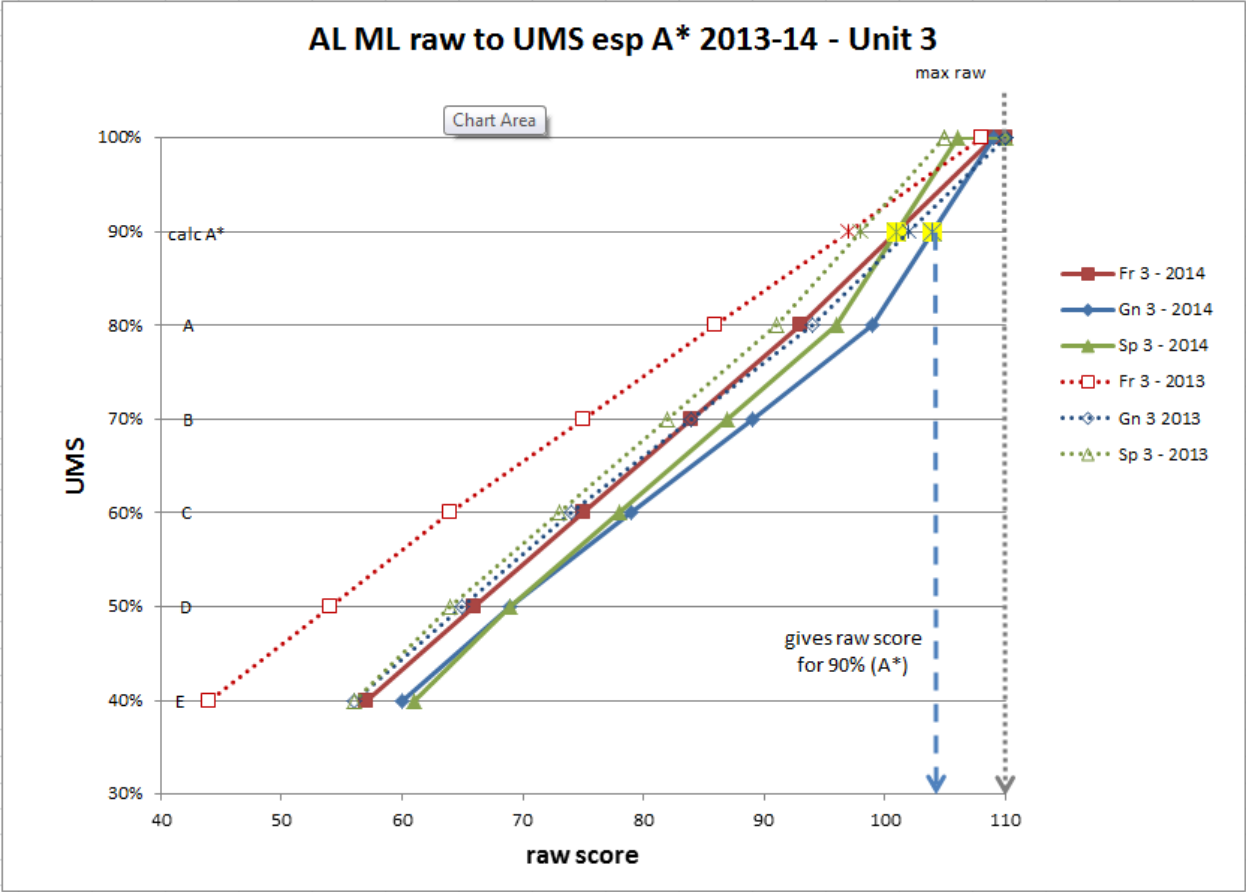
Alternatively, the Oral can have an External Examiner, but the marks remain the same.

Fr3	2014		Gn3	2014		Sp3	2014		Oral	2014	
Max.	110	140	Max.	110	140	Max.	110	140	Max.	50	60
A*	101	126	A*	104	126	A*	101	126	A*	46	54
A	93	112	A	99	112	A	96	112	A	43	48
B	84	98	B	89	98	B	87	98	B	38	42
C	75	84	C	79	84	C	78	84	C	33	36
D	66	70	D	69	70	D	69	70	D	29	30
E	57	56	E	60	56	E	61	56	E	25	24

Fr3	2013		Gn3	2013		Sp3	2013		Oral	2013	
Max.	110	140	Max.	110	140	Max.	110	140	Max.	50	60
A*	97	126	A*	102	126	A*	98	126	A*	46	54
A	86	112	A	94	112	A	91	112	A	43	48
B	75	98	B	84	98	B	82	98	B	38	42
C	64	84	C	74	84	C	73	84	C	33	36
D	54	70	D	65	70	D	64	70	D	29	30
E	44	56	E	56	56	E	56	56	E	25	24

AQA





AQA ML AL grade boundaries for June 2014

Note the difference between 2013 and 2014 for Unit 3 in Fr, Gn, Sp



French

FREN1		FRE2T		FREN3		FRE4T	
Lowest mark for each grade Grade Scaled Mark		Lowest mark for each grade Grade Scaled Mark		Lowest mark for each grade Grade Scaled Mark		Lowest mark for each grade Grade Scaled Mark	
Max	110	Max	50	Max	110	Max	50
A	85	A	43	A	93	A	43
B	78	B	38	B	84	B	38
C	71	C	33	C	75	C	33
D	64	D	29	D	66	D	29
E	57	E	25	E	57	E	25

German

GERM1		GER2T		GERM3		GER4T	
Lowest mark for each grade Grade Scaled Mark		Lowest mark for each grade Grade Scaled Mark		Lowest mark for each grade Grade Scaled Mark		Lowest mark for each grade Grade Scaled Mark	
Max	110	Max	50	Max	110	Max	50
A	87	A	43	A	99	A	43
B	76	B	38	B	89	B	38
C	65	C	33	C	79	C	33
D	54	D	29	D	69	D	29
E	44	E	25	E	60	E	25

Spanish

SPAN1		SPA2T		SPAN3		SPA4T	
Lowest mark for each grade Grade Scaled Mark		Lowest mark for each grade Grade Scaled Mark		Lowest mark for each grade Grade Scaled Mark		Lowest mark for each grade Grade Scaled Mark	
Max	110	Max	50	Max	110	Max	50
A	92	A	43	A	96	A	43
B	83	B	38	B	87	B	38
C	74	C	33	C	78	C	33
D	65	D	29	D	69	D	29
E	56	E	25	E	61	E	25

June 2013

French 2013

FREN1		FRE2T		FREN3		FRE4T	
Lowest mark for each grade Grade Scaled Mark		Lowest mark for each grade Grade Scaled Mark		Lowest mark for each grade Grade Scaled Mark		Lowest mark for each grade Grade Scaled Mark	
Max	110	Max	50	Max	110	Max	50
A	88	A	43	A	86	A	43
B	80	B	38	B	75	B	38
C	72	C	33	C	64	C	33
D	64	D	29	D	54	D	29
E	56	E	25	E	44	E	25

German 2013

GERM1		GER2T		GERM3		GER4T	
Lowest mark for each grade Grade Scaled Mark		Lowest mark for each grade Grade Scaled Mark		Lowest mark for each grade Grade Scaled Mark		Lowest mark for each grade Grade Scaled Mark	
Max	110	Max	50	Max	110	Max	50
A	91	A	43	A	94	A	43
B	80	B	38	B	84	B	38
C	70	C	33	C	74	C	33
D	60	D	29	D	65	D	29
E	50	E	25	E	56	E	25

Spanish 2013

SPAN1		SPA2T		SPAN3		SPA4T	
Lowest mark for each grade Grade Scaled Mark		Lowest mark for each grade Grade Scaled Mark		Lowest mark for each grade Grade Scaled Mark		Lowest mark for each grade Grade Scaled Mark	
Max	110	Max	50	Max	110	Max	50
A	83	A	43	A	91	A	43
B	74	B	38	B	82	B	38
C	65	C	33	C	73	C	33
D	56	D	29	D	64	D	29
E	47	E	25	E	56	E	25

Statistics for all AQA Centres for June 2014

Unit	Max (Sca)	Mean	SD
FREN1 GCE FRENCH UNIT 1	110	75.4	16.0
FRE2T GCE FRENCH UNIT 2 CENTRE COND. ORAL	50	40.9	6.8
FREN3 GCE FRENCH UNIT 3	110	79.4	13.7
FRE4T GCE FRENCH UNIT 4 CENTRE COND. ORAL	50	40.7	6.3
GERM1 GCE GERMAN UNIT 1	110	73.6	21.4
GER2T GCE GERMAN UNIT 2 CENTRE COND. ORAL	50	40.7	7.1
GERM3 GCE GERMAN UNIT 3	110	83.2	15.9
GER4T GCE GERMAN UNIT 4 CENTRE COND. ORAL	50	40.6	6.6
SPAN1 GCE SPANISH UNIT 1	110	79.8	16.5
SPA2T GCE SPANISH UNIT 2 CENTRE COND. ORAL	50	40.9	6.5
SPAN3 GCE SPANISH UNIT 3	110	84.4	13.1
SPA4T GCE SPANISH UNIT 4 CENTRE COND. ORAL	50	39.8	5.9

Statistics for all AQA Centres for June 2013

Unit	Max (Sca)	Mean	SD
FREN1 GCE FRENCH UNIT 1	110	76.7	17.0
FRE2T GCE FRENCH UNIT 2 CENTRE COND. ORAL	50	40.0	6.9
FREN3 GCE FRENCH UNIT 3	110	72.4	15.9
FRE4T GCE FRENCH UNIT 4 CENTRE COND. ORAL	50	39.8	6.3
GERM1 GCE GERMAN UNIT 1	110	77.6	18.6
GER2T GCE GERMAN UNIT 2 CENTRE COND. ORAL	50	39.8	7.1
GERM3 GCE GERMAN UNIT 3	110	80.5	15.9
GER4T GCE GERMAN UNIT 4 CENTRE COND. ORAL	50	39.5	7.1
SPAN1 GCE SPANISH UNIT 1	110	70.6	18.2
SPA2T GCE SPANISH UNIT 2 CENTRE COND. ORAL	50	39.9	6.3
SPAN3 GCE SPANISH UNIT 3	110	79.0	13.4
SPA4T GCE SPANISH UNIT 4 CENTRE COND. ORAL	50	39.3	6.3

OCR

F703

A 01 French: Speaking (A2) – Externally marked (OCR Repository)

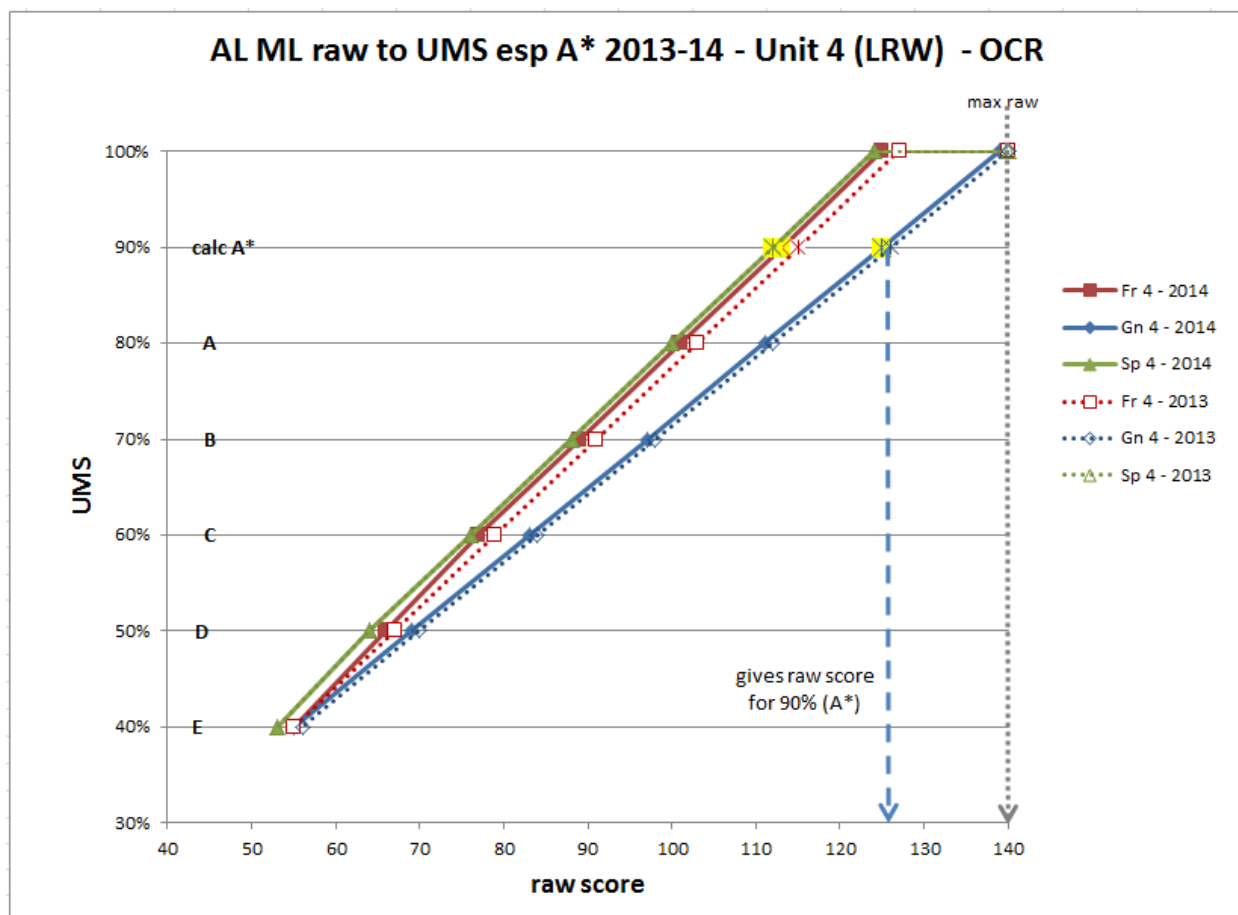
B 02 French: Speaking (A2) – Externally marked (CD)

C 03 French: Speaking (A2) – Visiting examiner

(raw / 60), UMS / 60

F704 01 French: Listening, reading and writing 2 (A2)

raw / 140; UMS / 140

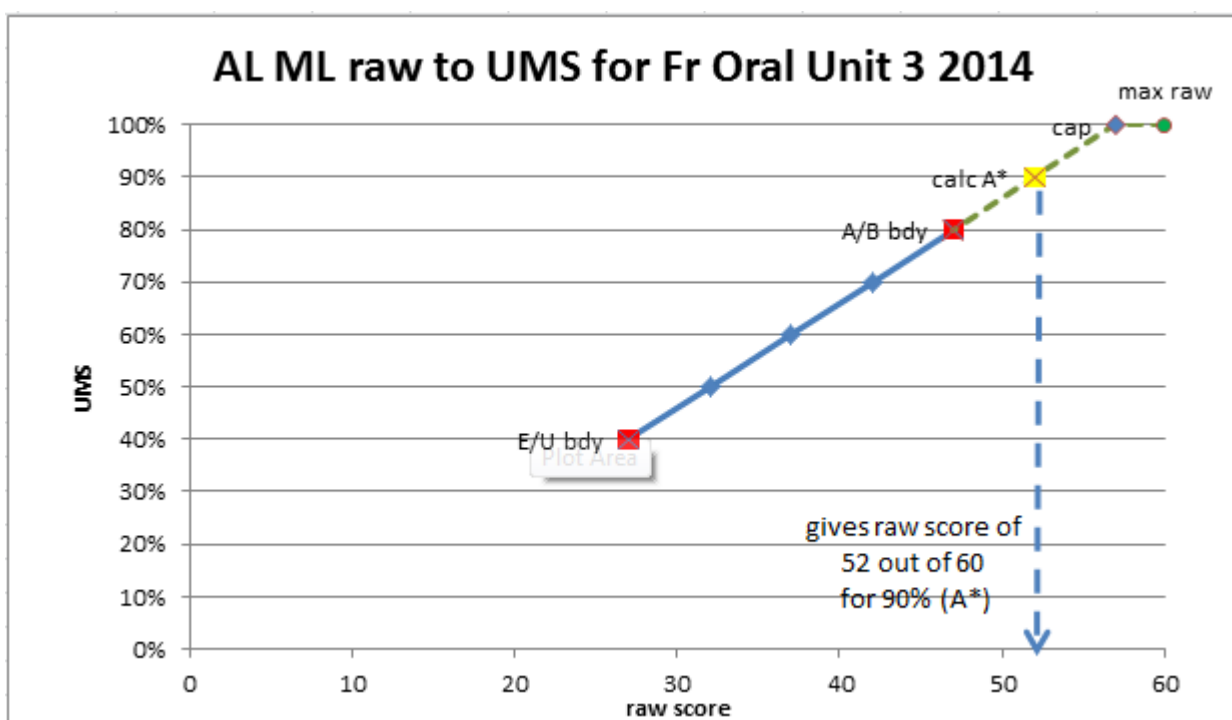


Listening, reading and writing 2 (A2) - Unit 4

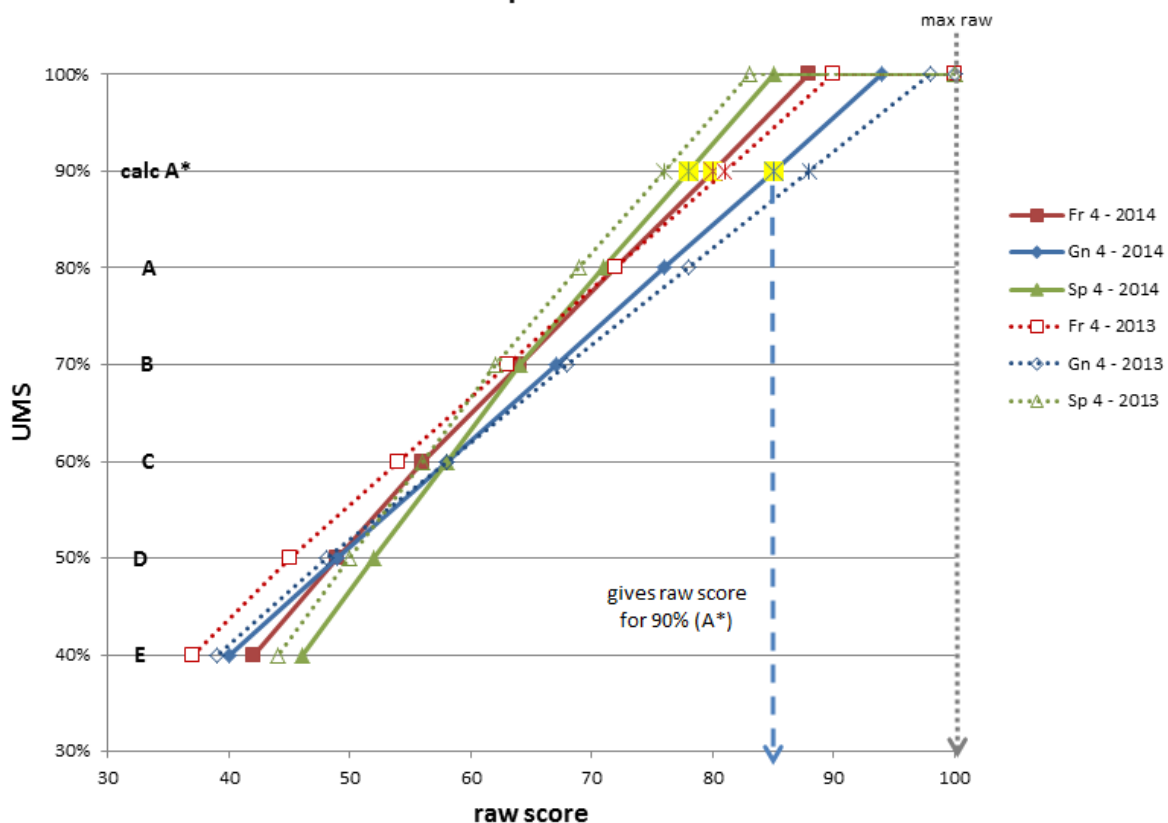
Speaking / Oral (Unit 3)

	French F704			German F714			Spanish F724			French			Germ	Span
	2014 raw	2014 % UMS	2014 UMS	2014 raw	2014 % UMS	2014 UMS	2014 raw	2014 % UMS	2014 UMS	2014 raw	2014 % UMS	2014 UMS	2014	2014
Max	140	100%	140	140	100%	140	140	100%	140	60	100%	60	60	
Max cap	125	100.0%	140.0	139	100.0%	140.0	124	100.0%	140.0	57	100.0%	60.00		
calc A*	113	90%	126	125	90%	126	112	90%	126	52	90%	54	53	53
A	101	80%	112	111	80%	112	100	80%	112	47	80%	48	47	47
B	89	70%	98	97	70%	98	88	70%	98	42	70%	42	41	41
C	77	60%	84	83	60%	84	76	60%	84	37	60%	36	36	35
D	66	50%	70	69	50%	70	64	50%	70	32	50%	30	31	30
E	55	40%	56	55	40%	56	53	40%	56	27	40%	24	26	25

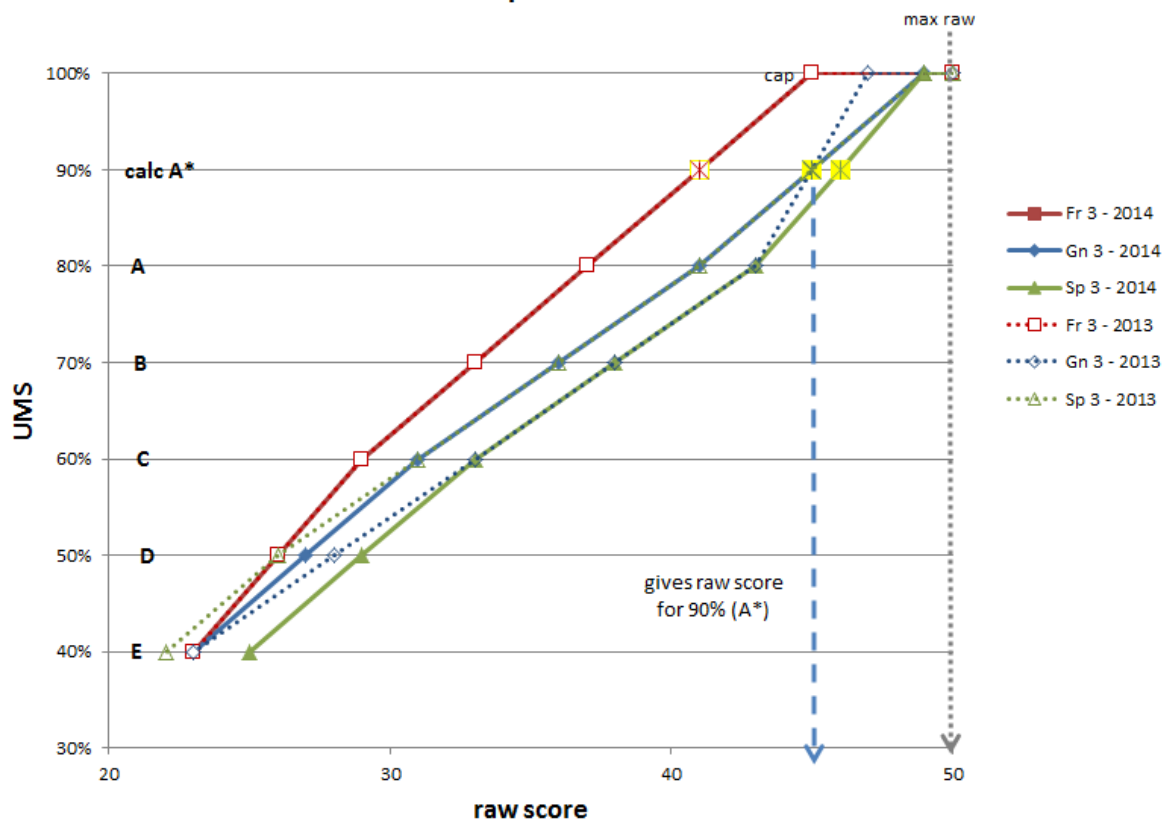
	French F704			German F714			Spanish F724			French t			German 2013	Spanish 2013
	2013 raw	2013 % UMS	2013 UMS	2013 raw	2013 % UMS	2013 UMS	2013 raw	2013 % UMS	2013 UMS	2013 raw	2013 % UMS	2013 UMS		
Max raw score giving 100%	140	100%	140	140	100%	140	140	100%	140	60	100%	60		
cap	127	100.0%	140.00	140	100.0%	140.00	124	100.0%	140.00	56	100.0%	60.00		
calc A*	115	90%	126	126	90%	126	112	90%	126	51	90%	54	53	53
A	103	80%	112	112	80%	112	100	80%	112	46	80%	48	47	47
B	91	70%	98	98	70%	98	88	70%	98	41	70%	42	41	41
C	79	60%	84	84	60%	84	76	60%	84	36	60%	36	36	35
D	67	50%	70	70	50%	70	64	50%	70	31	50%	30	31	30
E	55	40%	56	56	40%	56	53	40%	56	26	40%	24	26	25



AL ML raw to UMS esp A* 2013-14 - Unit 4 - Edexcel



AL ML raw to UMS esp A* 2013-14 - Unit 3 - Edexcel



Edexcel			Research, Understanding and Written Response (Unit 4)									Understanding and Spoken Response (Unit 3)								
			6FR04 French			6GN04 German			6SP04 Spanish			6FR03 French			6GN03 German			6SP03 Spanish		
	2014 raw	2014 % UMS	2014 UMS	2014 raw	2014 % UMS	2014 UMS	2014 raw	2014 % UMS	2014 UMS	2014 raw	2014 % UMS	2014 UMS	2014 raw	2014 % UMS	2014 UMS	2014 raw	2014 % UMS	2014 UMS		
Max	100	100%	130	100	100%	130	100	100%	130	50	100%	70	50	100%	70	50	100%	70		
Max	100	100%	130	100	100%	130	100	100%	130	50	100%	70	50	100%	70	50	100%	70		
cap	88	100%	130	94	100%	130	85	100%	130	45	100%	70	49	100%	70	49	100%	70		
calc A*	80	90%	117	85	90%	117	78	90%	117	41	90%	63	45	90%	63	46	90%	63		
A	72	80%	104	76	80%	104	71	80%	104	37	80%	56	41	80%	56	43	80%	56		
B	64	70%	91	67	70%	91	64	70%	91	33	70%	49	36	70%	49	38	70%	49		
C	56	60%	78	58	60%	78	58	60%	78	29	60%	42	31	60%	42	33	60%	42		
D	49	50%	65	49	50%	65	52	50%	65	26	50%	35	27	50%	35	29	50%	35		
E	42	40%	52	40	40%	52	46	40%	52	23	40%	28	23	40%	28	25	40%	28		
	2013 raw	2013 % UMS	2013 UMS	2013 raw	2013 % UMS	2013 UMS	2013 raw	2013 % UMS	2013 UMS	2013 raw	2013 % UMS	2013 UMS	2013 raw	2013 % UMS	2013 UMS	2013 raw	2013 % UMS	2013 UMS		
Max	100	100%	130	100	100%	130	100	100%	130	50	100%	70	50	100%	70	50	100%	70		
score giving 100%	100	100%	130	100	100%	130	100	100%	130	50	100%	70	50	100%	70	50	100%	70		
cap	90	100%	130	98	100%	130	83	100%	130	45	100%	70	47	100%	70	49	100%	70		
calc A*	81	90%	117	88	90%	117	76	90%	117	41	90%	63	45	90%	63	45	90%	63		
A	72	80%	104	78	80%	104	69	80%	104	37	80%	56	43	80%	56	41	80%	56		
B	63	70%	91	68	70%	91	62	70%	91	33	70%	49	38	70%	49	36	70%	49		
C	54	60%	78	58	60%	78	56	60%	78	29	60%	42	33	60%	42	31	60%	42		
D	45	50%	65	48	50%	65	50	50%	65	26	50%	35	28	50%	35	26	50%	35		
E	37	40%	52	39	40%	52	44	40%	52	23	40%	28	23	40%	28	22	40%	28		
2014	http://pastpapers.edexcel.com/content/edexcel/grade-boundaries.html?Qualification-Family=A-Level																			