



Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit
State Examinations Commission

LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION 2016

GERMAN

CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT

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1. Introduction

1.1 Syllabus Structure

The current Leaving Certificate German syllabus was introduced in 1995 and first examined in 1997. The syllabus shares a common structure, including common aims and objectives, with those of the other modern European language syllabuses.

The syllabus aims to cater for a wide range of pupil ability. Assessment is at two levels: Ordinary and Higher. While the syllabus is the same for both levels, the performance targets involve language use of varying degrees of complexity. Differentiation between the levels is therefore achieved through differing levels of difficulty and complexity of the tasks set on the examination, along with different relative weightings between productive and receptive language skills.

This report should be read in conjunction with the examination papers, the published marking schemes and the syllabus for this subject. The examination papers and marking schemes are available on the State Examination Commission's website www.examinations.ie and the syllabuses are available at www.curriculumonline.ie.

1.2 Assessment Specification

The core assessment objectives reflect the four areas of language use that arise from the productive and receptive use of the oral and written language. These are: understanding the spoken language; understanding the written language; communicating in the spoken language; communicating in the written language. They are often summarised for convenience as listening, reading, speaking, and writing. The assessment objectives are specified more fully in the syllabus.

The relative weightings assigned to the four areas is also specified in the syllabus. These weightings differ for the two levels, in recognition of the fact that, in the ongoing process of acquiring a language, the receptive skills develop earlier and to a greater degree than do the productive skills. The weightings are as follows:

	Higher level	Ordinary level
Speaking	25%	20%
Listening comprehension	20%	25%
Reading comprehension	30%	40%
Writing	25%	15%

Table 1: Mark weightings by level for areas of language use

The examination at each level comprises three components: an oral examination, which is taken at a common level and tests the candidate's ability to communicate in the spoken language, a listening comprehension test (understand the spoken language), and a written paper containing both a reading comprehension section (understand the written language) and a written production section (communicate in the written language). The marks for these components and sections are allocated according to the above table.

1.3 Participation Trends

Table 2 gives the overall participation rates of candidates in Leaving Certificate German for the last five years. While the participation rates are relatively constant a small increase is evident in the last two years.

Year	German candidature	Total Leaving Certificate candidature*	German as % of total
2012	6788	52592	12.9
2013	6644	52767	12.6
2014	6857	54025	12.7
2015	7272	55044	13.2
2016	7615	55707	13.7

*Total Leaving Certificate candidature excludes Leaving Certificate Applied candidates.

Table 2: Participation in Leaving Certificate German, 2012 to 2016

The breakdown in terms of participation at Higher and Ordinary levels over the last five years is given in **Table 3**. The breakdown in terms of gender at Higher level and at Ordinary level over the last five years is given in **Table 4** and **Table 5** respectively.

A gradual migration from Ordinary Level to Higher Level over the last five years is evident. The gender composition at Higher level remains relatively constant with a 6:4 ratio females to males while the Ordinary Level participation rates according to gender show a slightly higher proportion of males to females.

Year	Total German candidature	Number at Ordinary level	Number at Higher level	% Ordinary level	% Higher level
2012	6788	2420	4368	35.7	64.3
2013	6644	2319	4325	34.9	65.1
2014	6857	2135	4722	31.1	68.9
2015	7272	2118	5154	29.1	70.9
2016	7615	2370	5245	31.1	68.9

Table 3: Number and percentage of candidates at each level, 2012 to 2016

Year	Total Higher level	Female Candidates	Male Candidates	Female as % of total	Male as % of total
2012	4368	2542	1826	58.2	41.8
2013	4325	2576	1749	59.6	40.4
2014	4722	2739	1983	58	42
2015	5154	3044	2110	59	41
2016	5245	3082	2163	58.8	41.2

Table 4: Gender composition of Higher level cohort, 2012 to 2016

Year	Total Ordinary level	Female Candidates	Male Candidates	Female as % of total	Male as % of total
2012	2420	1196	1224	49.4	50.6
2013	2319	1109	1210	47.8	52.2
2014	2135	991	1144	46.4	53.6
2015	2118	1015	1103	47.9	52.1
2016	2370	1118	1252	47.2	52.8

Table 5: Gender composition of Ordinary level cohort, 2012 to 2016

2. Performance of candidates

2.1 Higher Level Statistics

The distribution of grades awarded over the last five years is given in **Table 6** (lettered grades) and **Table 7** (sub-grades).

Year	A	B	C	A, B, C	D	E	F	NG	E, F, NG
2012	15.4	28.0	33.6	77.0	20.7	2.2	0.1	0	2.3
2013	14.9	29.3	31.9	76.1	20.8	2.8	0.3	0	3.1
2014	14.9	29.7	32.4	77.0	20.8	2.1	0.2	0	2.3
2015	14.8	26.6	33.4	74.8	22.6	2.4	0.2	0	2.6
2016	13.0	27.0	31.4	71.4	24.5	3.9	0.2	0	4.1

Table 6 Percentage of candidates awarded each lettered grade in Higher level German, 2012 – 2016

Year	A1	A2	B1	B2	B3	C1	C2	C3	D1	D2	D3	E	F	NG
2012	7.5	7.9	8.5	9.1	10.4	11	11.5	11.1	9.1	6.4	5.2	2.2	0.1	0
2013	7.9	7.0	8.3	9.9	11.1	11.3	11.0	9.6	8.5	6.6	5.7	2.8	0.3	0
2014	7.0	7.9	8.1	9.9	11.7	11.8	10.5	10.1	9.7	6.3	4.8	2.1	0.2	0
2015	8.7	6.1	7.6	9.2	9.8	10.5	11.5	11.4	9.6	7.5	5.5	2.4	0.2	0
2016	6.6	6.4	8.3	8.9	9.8	10.3	11.0	10.1	10.1	7.8	6.6	3.9	0.2	0

Table 7 Percentage of candidates awarded each sub-grade in Higher Level German, 2012 – 2016

Although the percentage of candidates awarded grades A-C has dropped slightly over the past five years this can be explained by the migration of candidates from Ordinary level to Higher level. As the number of candidates presenting for German at Leaving Certificate grows it is clear that this increase in cohort numbers is reflected in the disproportionate increase of candidates taking German at Higher level than those taking the subject at Ordinary level.

The distribution of sub-grades by gender over the last five years is given in **Table 8** (female candidates) and **Table 9** (male candidates).

Year	A1	A2	B1	B2	B3	C1	C2	C3	D1	D2	D3	E	F	NG
2012	8.1	8.7	9.6	9.3	10.5	11.3	11.0	10.1	8.7	5.7	4.8	2.0	0.1	0
2013	8.6	7.1	8.7	10.4	11.5	11.8	11.0	9.2	7.6	5.7	5.3	2.8	0.3	0
2014	7.3	7.8	8.5	10.9	12.4	12.7	10.7	10	8.1	5.7	4.2	1.8	0.1	0
2015	10.1	6.9	8.1	9.8	9.5	11.1	11.6	10.9	8.9	6.5	4.6	2.1	0.2	0
2016	7.3	6.4	8.7	9.5	10.8	10.3	11.6	10.3	8.9	7.2	5.6	3.4	0.1	0

Table 8: Percentage of female candidates awarded each sub-grade in Higher level *German*, 2012 – 2016

Year	A1	A2	B1	B2	B3	C1	C2	C3	D1	D2	D3	E	F	NG
2012	6.4	7.0	6.8	8.7	10.4	10.4	12.3	12.7	9.5	7.6	5.8	2.5	0.1	0.1
2013	6.9	6.8	7.7	9.3	10.5	10.6	11.1	10.3	9.8	7.8	6.3	2.7	0.3	0
2014	6.2	8.0	7.7	8.5	10.8	10.6	10.1	10.2	12.0	7.3	5.7	2.5	0.3	0.1
2015	6.8	4.9	7.0	8.5	10.4	9.6	11.4	12.1	10.6	8.9	6.7	3.0	0.1	0
2016	5.7	6.5	7.8	7.9	8.4	10.2	10.2	9.8	11.9	8.5	8.0	4.6	0.4	0

Table 9: Percentage of male candidates awarded each sub-grade in Higher level *German*, 2012 – 2016

2.2 Ordinary Level Statistics

The distribution of grades awarded over the last five years is given in **Table 10** (lettered grades) and **Table 11** (sub-grades).

Year	A	B	C	A, B, C	D	E	F	NG	E, F, NG
2012	3.8	34.9	37.2	75.9	18.4	4.3	1.1	0.2	5.6
2013	2.4	29.2	35.0	66.6	24.1	6.8	2.3	0.1	9.2
2014	4.1	31.9	34.7	70.7	22.0	5.1	1.8	0.3	7.2
2015	2.7	31.7	37.8	72.2	20.8	5.1	1.6	0.3	7.0
2016	2.2	28.4	41.3	71.9	21.5	4.6	1.7	0.2	6.5

Table 10: Percentage of candidates awarded each lettered grade in Ordinary level *German*, 2012 – 2016

Year	A1	A2	B1	B2	B3	C1	C2	C3	D1	D2	D3	E	F	NG
2012	0.5	3.3	8.0	12	14.9	14.0	13.1	10.1	7.9	5.2	5.3	4.3	1.1	0.2
2013	0.2	2.2	7.4	10.1	11.7	12.7	12.1	10.2	8.8	6.9	8.4	6.8	2.3	0.1
2014	0.7	3.4	5.9	12.3	13.7	14.0	11.5	9.2	9.5	6.0	6.5	5.1	1.8	0.3
2015	0.2	2.5	7.1	11.4	13.2	14.0	12.1	11.7	8.5	6.0	6.3	5.1	1.6	0.3
2016	0.3	1.9	6.2	9.6	12.6	14.0	13.7	13.6	8.8	5.9	6.8	4.6	1.7	0.2

Table 11 Percentage of candidates awarded each sub-grade in Ordinary level *German*, 2012 – 2016

As the cohort of candidates presenting for German at Leaving Certificate increases and as noted above the majority of this increase is reflected in increased numbers at Higher level German it is perhaps not surprising that the A, B, and C rate falls somewhat given that the more able candidates who may have done Ordinary level in the past now opt for Higher level.

The distribution of sub-grades by gender over the last five years is given in **Table 12** (female candidates) and **Table 13** (male candidates).

Year	A1	A2	B1	B2	B3	C1	C2	C3	D1	D2	D3	E	F	NG
2012	0.3	4.5	9.9	12.9	15.5	15.7	12.0	8.7	7.5	4.4	4.6	3.4	0.5	0
2013	0.3	3.3	7.8	12.2	13.3	12.8	12.1	8.8	8.1	7.0	6.8	6.0	1.4	0
2014	0.9	3.5	6.9	13.1	13.7	13.6	12.2	9.4	10.0	6.0	5.3	4.2	1.0	0.1
2015	0.3	3.2	8.1	13.7	14.6	13.0	12.5	12.2	7.5	5.5	5.1	3.4	0.9	0
2016	0.4	2.6	6.0	10.8	13.1	14.1	14.2	13.3	8.1	6.0	6.4	3.8	1.0	0.1

Table 12 Percentage of female candidates awarded each sub-grade in Ordinary level *German*, 2012 – 2016

Year	A1	A2	B1	B2	B3	C1	C2	C3	D1	D2	D3	E	F	NG
2012	0.6	2.0	6.1	11.2	14.4	12.4	14.1	11.5	8.3	6	6	5.2	1.7	0.4
2013	0.2	1.2	6.9	8.3	10.2	12.6	12.1	11.5	9.5	6.8	9.8	7.5	3.1	0.2
2014	0.6	3.3	5.2	11.5	13.6	14.3	10.9	9.1	9.1	6.0	7.3	5.9	2.5	0.4
2015	0.1	1.9	6.2	9.3	11.9	15	11.7	11.2	9.5	6.4	7.4	6.5	2.3	0.6
2016	0.2	1.4	6.3	8.5	12.1	13.8	13.3	13.9	9.5	5.9	7.1	5.3	2.4	0.2

Table 13 Percentage of male candidates awarded each sub-grade in Ordinary level *German*, 2012 – 2016

3. Analysis of Candidate Performance

3.1 Engagement and Performance

Statistical information on engagement with and performance on the various questions in the written and aural components is presented below. Data on performance in the various aspects of the oral component are not captured centrally in a manner that allows for similar analysis.

Higher Level

Table 14 is a summary based on an analysis of a random selection of [390] scripts (approximately 7.5 % of all scripts).

Section	Question	Popularity (% attempts)	Rank order in popularity	Average mark (and as %)	Rank order in average mark	Topic
I	Text 1	N/A	N/A	32 (53%)	6	Literary Comprehension
	1.1	N/A	N/A	6.4 (64%)	3	Conjunctions
	1.2	N/A	N/A	5.7 (38%)	7	Question Words
	Text 2	N/A	N/A	43 (72%)	1	Journalistic Comprehension
II	(a)	55	1	17 (68%)	= 2	Culture of corner shops/ online shopping
	(b)	45	2	15.5 (62%)	4	Attitudes towards hoodies/fashion trends
III	(a)	87	1	34 (68%)	= 2	Response to Letter
	(b)	13	2	28 (56%)	5	Accommodation/Internet platforms/ Social Networks/Media
Aural	I	N/A	N/A	18.8 (85%)	1	Donating blood
	II	N/A	N/A	10.5 (75%)	2	School trip
	III	N/A	N/A	11.9 (59%)	3	Dialogue about a wedding
	IV	N/A	N/A	13.4 (56%)	4	Four short news items

Table 14: Popularity of and average mark for each question, Higher level *German*

Ordinary Level

Table 15 is a summary based on an analysis of a random selection of [160] scripts (approximately 6% of all scripts).

Section	Question	Popularity (% attempts)	Rank order in popularity	Average mark (and as %)	Rank order in average mark	Topic
I	Text 1	N/A	N/A	37 (62%)	2	Literary Comprehension
	Angewandte Grammatik	N/A	N/A	6 (40%)	6	Applied Grammar Section
II	Text II	N/A	N/A	34 (57%)	= 4	Journalistic Comprehension
	Äußerung zum Thema (a)	53	1	10 (67%)	1	Dialogue
	Äußerung zum Thema (b)	47	2	9 (60%)	= 3	Email
III	Text III	N/A	N/A	19 (48%)	=5	Journalistic Comprehension
IV	(a)	79	1	17 (57%)	=4	Letter
	(b)	21	2	18 (60%)	=3	Picture Sequence
Aural	I	N/A	N/A	17 (71%)	2	Donating blood
	II	N/A	N/A	16 (76%)	1	School trip
	III	N/A	N/A	9 (53%)	4	Dialogue about a wedding
	IV	N/A	N/A	24 (63%)	3	Four short news items

Table 15: Popularity of and average mark for each question, Ordinary level *German*

3.2 Attainment of Key Syllabus Objectives

Communicating in the spoken language (oral examination)

The Leaving Certificate German Oral Examination is in its present format since 1997. It is divided into three sections as follows:

Section 1. General Conversation 40 marks

The General Conversation is based on a discussion of the syllabus content; within this section, candidates may avail of the option of briefly discussing a literary work or a German-language film they have seen.

Section 2. Picture Sequence / Project 30 marks

One of these options:

- (a) **Project:** discussing a project the candidate worked on, relevant to the syllabus content

or

- (b) **Picture Sequence:** (One of five). Story narration and brief discussion of issues arising from the story.

Section 3. Role-play 30 marks

A Role-play situation: (One of five chosen at random by the candidate).

Performance of candidates

Section 1: General Conversation

Candidates generally spoke competently and confidently in relation to the Performance

Targets in:

General Activity/ Theme I.1: Giving personal details, stating what languages they speak, discussing family: *Familie, Wohnort, Schule* and *Deutsch*

General Activity/Theme I.2: Discussing future action in particular while declaring intentions about further study or travel/work abroad: *Berufspläne*.

Woven through the entire section was evidence of candidate's ability to engage with General Activity/Theme I.8: Understanding and expressing feelings and attitudes to school and language learning for example. Many candidates spoke well on the topic of *Spracherlernen*,

demonstrating their competence regarding General Activity/Theme II.4: Talking and writing about their experience of the target language. There were some very positive comments about their experience of learning German. This topic often led in to the literature/film option.

While the uptake of the literature option was very low, there were some very good accounts of films. Some candidates spoke for longer than necessary and others tended to speak too fast. Those candidates who kept their accounts short and clear performed well. Not all candidates were prepared for a follow-up question such as *Wie endet der Film?*

Candidates who were less well-prepared struggled with some aspects of the general conversation. Having coped reasonably well with the familiar topics such as family, school and hobbies, they struggled to expand any further and often needed the questions to be re-phrased or simplified to elicit responses.

The standard of language varied greatly throughout the cohort. Candidates' performance in perfect tense appeared to be a little better than in previous years. Some candidates had been on a *Klassenfahrt* to Munich and Berlin.

Some of the films spoken about: *Die Welle*, *Das Leben ist nichts für Feiglinge*, *Goodbye Lenin*, *Der Junge im gestreiften Pyjama*, *Das Wunder von Bern*, *Die fetten Jahre sind vorbei*, *Das Leben der Anderen*, *Die Fälscher*, *Weil ich schöner bin*, *Der Untergang*, *Lola rennt*, *Neukölln Unlimited*.

Section 2: Picture Sequence/Project

Candidates who had prepared the picture sequence did very well on the story-telling. Those candidates whose accounts were concise and accurate were awarded a high mark. Some narrations were unnecessarily long, however. There were some very impressive performances in the projects. In both the story-telling and project presentation, there is a tendency to speak too fast and the language can be indistinct at times. While the picture sequence remains the more favoured option, there were many projects with the full range of standard, very poor to excellent. Some weaker candidates seem to find the project option easier.

While some candidates performed very well in the follow-up questions to both the picture sequence and the project, these proved to be more challenging for the less able or less well-prepared candidates and performance deteriorated when they were asked clarification or opinion questions. Questions in the future tense were often not understood. The follow-up questions on the project were often less well-prepared than those on the picture sequence.

Some candidates were not always familiar with their own projects when it came to thematic/opinion questions.

Some projects examined: *Brüder Grimm, Bier, Schuhmacher, Dürer, Bach, Rittersport, Playmobil, Fahrprüfung, Haustiere, Milka, Volkswagen, Oktoberfest, Schule, Fassbender, Feste in Deutschland, Sport/Musik in Deutschland, Liechtenstein, Wolfsburg, Claudia Schiffer, Heidelberg, Opel, Weihnachten, Berlin, München, Bayern, Silvesterbräuche, Heidi Klumm, Karl Lagerfeld, Tokio Hotel, Das Schulsystem in Deutschland, Südtirol, Austausch in Berlin, Der deutsche Schäferhund, Deutschsprachiges Südtirol, Pferdereiten, Haribo, Boris Becker, Einstein, Nürburgring, Sophie Scholl, deutsche Grillfeste, Mercedes-Benz.*

Section 3: Role-Play

Familiarity with the role-plays meant that candidates performed very well in this section. There were many excellent candidates who gained full or very high marks for communication and were awarded between 8 and 10 marks for vocabulary and accuracy. There was evidence of good preparation and weaker candidates often demonstrated an ability to use the correct vocabulary, even if it was not always accurate. There was also evidence to suggest that weaker candidates who find the oral examination difficult often do well in the role-play section when well prepared. Many candidates who had some difficulty with the language performed their tasks very well and scored highly in communication. Communication is often achieved even where the grammatical elements of the utterance are inaccurate, thereby fulfilling many of the performance targets of the syllabus.

Areas where candidates performed well

- Candidates who had particular interests/hobbies and had prepared well, performed very well in the general conversation.
- Candidates' understanding of German was generally very good. There was evidence that they were used to hearing German in class.
- Some candidates were able to 'think on their feet' and manipulate the language they had to answer an unexpected question.
- Lovely use of idioms with some candidates, e.g. *Das steht in den Sternen, ein Katzensprung von hier entfernt.*

- Some candidates were able to develop topics without prompting, enabling a natural conversation.
- Often the less able candidate who had prepared well communicated very well and could elaborate on topics with which he/she was familiar.
- There was evidence of a good knowledge of German culture.
- Well prepared candidates generally performed well in Role-Plays, regardless of their linguistic ability. Good preparation was rewarded in this section.
- There were some very good projects where candidates spoke enthusiastically about their topic.
- Some candidates performed very well in the narration of the picture sequence.

Areas where candidates had difficulties:

Grammar/Vocabulary

- Past tense, especially in the General Conversation: difficulty with auxiliary verbs
- Subject-Verb agreement
- Word order
- Omission of prefix at end of sentences, e.g. *Ich komme mit meiner Schwester gut ...*
- Tendency to use *ist* + verb to express the continuous present, e.g. *sie ist lernen, ich bin fahren, er ist gehen* etc.
- Omitting the infinitive at the end of the sentence with modal verbs, and *werden*
- *studieren* used instead of *lernen*
- *besprechen* confused with *sprechen*
- *Geschwister* understood as *Schwestern*
- *Stimmung* not understood
- Inability to understand some questions. For example, candidates did not always realise that *Sie* refers to them
- Commonly used incorrect phrases such as: *der ist* for *es gibt*; *das ist sehr Spaß*; misuse of *putzen, stehen* for *bleiben*; the use of *bleiben* where *wohnen* would be correct
- Some candidates did not understand or misunderstood *Haben Sie Ihr Handy draußen gelassen?*
- There were some difficulties with pronunciation: *Umlaut* not pronounced in words like *Geschäft, Wäsche, enttäuscht, Gebäude, trägt, aufräumen, schön, Universität, möchte, Fächer, Wörterbuch, Gepäck, Verhältnis*

- Mispronunciation of *Euro*, *schwierig*, *meiten* instead of *mieten*, *Mitleid* instead of *Mitglied*
- Some candidates had difficulty in pronouncing some of the vocabulary in the Role-Plays and Picture Sequences: *Bedingungen*, *Hermann Lietz Schule*, *Deutschlandaufenthalt*, *Kochgelegenheit*, *Faber*, *Fahrkartenautomat*, *Skifahren*
- General: Some candidates had great difficulty in manipulating Role-Play tasks and tended to read directly from card, e.g. *Unfall nicht so schlimm*, *Nicht Ihre Schuld*
- Some candidates were unable to spell their name correctly in German.
- Some candidates do not know how to give their address in German.

Understanding the spoken language (listening comprehension)

The Listening Comprehension consists of four parts, (1) an interview, (2) a telephone call, (3) a dialogue and (4) news followed by weather. In 2016 the first part was an interview with a blood donor. All questions were to be answered in Irish/English. The second part was a telephone call from a teacher to a school regarding an incident. At Higher Level Question 1 was to be answered in German and Question 2, which tested the language/ phrases used in the telephone-call, could be answered in Irish/English or German. At Ordinary Level questions were to be answered in Irish/English. The third part was a dialogue between a husband and wife regarding a problem before a wedding. Questions were to be answered in Irish/English. The fourth part was a news bulletin followed by a weather report and all questions in this section were to be answered in Irish/English.

Part I: This section falls under a number of various General Activities, Themes and Performance Targets of the Leaving Certificate German Syllabus including:

I.1 Meeting and getting to know people and maintaining social relations: Giving and seeking personal details; an awareness of appropriateness of register; formal modes of address and the appropriate use of ‘Sie’; the development of correct usage of question forms and appropriate replies; questions with inversion requiring yes/no answers; questions with interrogative pronouns

I.7 Facilitating, encouraging or impeding a course of action: offering advice; use of modal verbs in questions and responses

I.8 Understanding and expressing feelings and attitudes: expressing pleasure, a liking, belief through expressions appropriate to a variety of contexts, feelings and attitudes.

I.10 Engaging in discussion: Expressing something as an opinion by proposing a point of view, confirming that something is true, ordering points in a discussion

III. 5 Understanding, describing and discussing in general terms issues that transcend cultural divisions: health and lifestyle.

Part II: This section falls under a number of various General Activities, Themes and Performance Targets of the Leaving Certificate German Syllabus including:

I.2 Making plans and discussing future action: declaring intentions through the use of future tense, cancelling or altering arrangements by expressions of cause and reason

I.6 Dealing with emergencies: giving an account of an incident using the Perfect Tense and sequencing events; conveying degrees of urgency through the use of words such as *sofort*, *gleich*, and *umgehend*.

I.11 Passing on messages: writing a note at Higher Level

III.5 Understanding, describing and discussing in general terms issues that transcend cultural divisions: teenager culture, health and lifestyle.

Part III: This section falls under a number of various General Activities, Themes and Performance Targets of the Leaving Certificate German Syllabus including:

I.1 Maintaining social relations: awareness of the conditioning of language by social context - for example the use of phrases of intimacy such as *Liebling*, *Schatz*

I.2 Making plans and discussing future action: declaring intentions; cancelling or altering arrangements by expressions of cause and reason

I.6 Dealing with emergencies: giving an account of an incident through sequenced events and conveying degrees of urgency

I.8 Understanding and expressing feelings and attitudes: surprise, horror, disbelief and relief through a choice of expressions appropriate to the context

III.2 Learning in the target language about the present-day culture associated with the target language: customs and traditions (weddings and marriage)

Part IV: This section falls under a number of various General Activities, Themes and Performance Targets of the Leaving Certificate German Syllabus including:

I.3 Understanding, seeking and giving information about climate and weather: using the media to find out what the weather is going to be like during a particular period through a broad range of vocabulary related to weather expressions such as *Regenschauer*, *Tiefdruckgebiet*, *bewölkt*. Familiarity with simple geographical terms and regions such as *Alpennähe*, *aus Nordwest*.

III.1 Learning in the target language about the present-day culture associated with the target language: contemporary aspects of target language community: getting to work

III.3 Everyday life in the target language community: transport facilities; what people eat and drink

III. 5 Understanding, describing and discussing in general terms issues that transcend cultural divisions: environment and ecology; health and lifestyle.

Higher level

First Part: This part was generally well answered and even less able candidates scored high marks.

1. (i) Most candidates scored full marks here. However, the details “two daughters” and “works in a factory// makes car parts/components” were seldom given.

(ii) Almost all had the correct answer.

2. (i) Well answered but “One in three people require blood (at some time)// only 8% of Bavarians donate blood” was often misunderstood or not given at all.

(ii) Most candidates had “2,000 per day” correct, but less able candidates had difficulty with “730,000 per year” with many giving 713,000, 73,000 or 7,300.

3. Most candidates got full marks here. In answers (b), (c) and (d) “recent” was generally omitted as was “particular” in (d).

4. This was well answered for the most part. Candidates seldom mentioned the points “ambassador for blood donation/transfusion service and “grateful for the transfusions he received/thanked donors” and “told the blood donors about his current life”.

Second Part: Telephone call

Less able candidates had difficulty with the “*Problem*” and in Question 2 some had difficulty quoting the exact phrases used when they gave the three examples in German. Almost all candidates answered Question 1 in German as instructed.

1. Anruf von: SCHUMANN: Some added ‘h’ before ‘m’ or inserted ‘o’ instead of ‘u’.

Problem: „Betrunken“ was seldom given. Many candidates had difficulty spelling ‚Alkohol‘

Der Anrufer: Almost all had this correct.

Kontaktnummer: Only very few of the less able candidates got the telephone number wrong. This suggests that candidates are proficient in numbers.

2. Those who gave the phrases in English did better than those who tried to quote the exact German phrases. *Kein Grund zur Panik* was sometimes transcribed as ‘kein grunze Panik’. ‘Ordnung’ was used for *Ordnung* and ‘control’ was sometimes used instead of *Kontrolle* when quoting in German.

Third Part

1. (i) Almost all had the correct box ticked.

(ii) This was generally well answered. There was some misunderstanding however, regarding the wedding with some assuming that it was the couple’s own wedding. A few candidates thought ‘Hochzeit’ meant an anniversary.

2. (i) Almost all candidates had the correct box ticked.

(ii) There were nine possible answers so most candidates had no difficulty getting two correct. The least popular answers were ‚Was sollen wir nur machen?’, ‘und ob das schlimm ist!’ and ‘ Oh nein, jetzt sind wir wirklich verloren’.

3. This question proved to be difficult for candidates. Very many only had one answer, failing to mention that Felix had set off too late.

4. (i) Candidates had to mention just one of three details so most scored full marks.

(ii) Many failed to mention that he had already rung the florist or else stated that “he will ring” and so lost available marks.

Fourth Part: News

This part was the least well answered. Questions 1 (ii) and Question 3 (i) and (ii) proving especially difficult for many candidates.

1. (i) Only two means of transport were required by the Marking Scheme and most candidates had two i.e. S-Bahn and U-Bahn. The means of transport were given mostly in German.

(ii) Only very able candidates stated that DB were unlikely to give in to the strikers' demands.

2. (i) This was generally well answered but a few candidates were caught out by the *false friend* 'müde' and thought the drinks improved their mood.

(ii) This was well answered as the subject-matter is topical and age appropriate. There was some mistranslation of caffeine as it was taken to mean 'coffee'.

3. (i) Only more able candidates managed to score full marks. Most did not mention that the bells were too loud for the cows or that a campaign against the use of the bells had been started.

(ii) Less able candidates often failed to gain any marks here. Many more able candidates failed to score full marks as they omitted to include "fog" in the answer: 'The bells help to find the cows in fog/mist'.

4. Most candidates had the two points required. However, many translated "morgen" as 'in the morning' or 'from morning to evening' even though "morgen Abend" was mentioned. Some thought that temperatures had dropped by 15 degrees. 'Tief' was rarely given as an answer and many omitted 'very' before 'cloudy' and so failed to gain two marks.

Ordinary level

The listening comprehension examination consists of four parts. The first part is an interview, the second part a telephone call, the third part a conversation and the fourth part a news bulletin and weather forecast. Apart from two multiple choice questions, all the questions are to be answered in either Irish or English. Examiners commented that most candidates performed well in the listening comprehension examination.

First Part:

1. (i) Most candidates scored full marks here; however *verheiratet*, *Töchter* and even *Fabrik* caused difficulties.

(ii) This was well answered.

2. (i) Most candidates scored full marks here.

(ii) Well answered.

3. Most candidates did well here scoring full marks. “Eat” and “drink water” were the two details which appeared most often.

4. Candidates found this question difficult and therefore was not well answered. Only the better candidates managed to get 2 marks for his age or by mentioning that he had had an accident.

Second Part:

1. Most candidates understood that pupils were drinking while on a school trip, and thus were awarded full marks.

2. Many candidates scored full marks here.

3. Some candidates struggled to get full marks for the spelling of the name. The letter U was often the cause of a mark being lost. The phone number was usually correct again suggesting that candidates have a good knowledge of numbers.

4. This was well answered.

Third Part: Generally, this was the weakest of the four sections for most candidates.

1. Most candidates scored one correct detail here. All four details on the marking scheme appeared regularly but point three was often misunderstood as “he [Felix] was involved in an accident”.

2. Most candidates relied on “no flowers” for their marks here. The other points on the marking scheme were rarely cited correctly.

3. (i) and (ii) Only the better candidates avoided confusion here, though many managed to get 4 marks for “call/get a taxi”.

4. Well answered.

Fourth Part:

1. (i) Well answered. Many candidates got all three options correct.

(ii) Well answered.

2. (i) Well answered, though some weaker candidates wrote 17%

(ii) Most candidates attained full marks here. An incorrect detail which frequently appeared was “health problems” for “heart problems”.

3. (i) Well answered.

(ii) “They help find the cows” was usually correct but many candidates misunderstood point (a) on the marking scheme.

4. As only two details were required, most candidates did well here.

Understanding the written language (reading comprehension)

Higher level

Candidates are tasked with reading two texts at Higher level: one literary text (LVI) and one journalistic text (LVII). This section falls under a number of various General Activities, Themes and Performance Targets of the Leaving Certificate German Syllabus including:

I.1: getting to know people and maintaining social relations

I.5: buying goods and services: text dealing with buying and selling of goods/services

I.8: understanding and expressing feelings and attitudes

I.10: engaging in discussion: expressing something as an opinion based on the stimulus text

II.1: Language Awareness: understanding the main elements of target language material (newspaper, magazine articles)

II.2: Language Awareness: exploring meaning by extracting the main points from a written target language text; by working out the implicit inferences of statements made in a written target language text; by relating language to attitude in identifying attitudes on the basis of a writer’s use of language

III.1: Cultural Awareness: understanding the main elements of target language material on contemporary aspects of target language community life such as customs and traditions

III.2 Reading Modern literary texts (notably novels, short stories, poems and plays, or extracts from these in the target language. Candidates are tasked to show an understanding [of] the main elements of the surface of a modern literary text in the target language; to identify meaning present but not overtly expressed in such a text and to appreciate the ‘tone’ of the text.

III.3 Describing and discussing everyday life (what people work at/ what kind of shops are available)

III.5: Cultural Awareness: understanding issues that transcend cultural divisions: teenage culture, ethnic minorities

Although most candidates were able – to varying degrees of success – to extract details from the texts based on guiding questions many had difficulty in extracting overall meaning and precise details from the text. Equally many found the task of an overall appreciation of the unfolding of the events within the story and an appreciation of the tone and mood of the text unmanageable especially in Text 1. There was little differentiation in the quality of answers depending on the language of the answer. Text 1 was considered age appropriate with two teenage protagonists meeting in an underground train. Themes such as *schwarz fahren*, the Turkish community in Germany, teenage relationships and family were familiar to most candidates. Text II was a modern variation of a traditional style shop - with online shopping facilities making the text very accessible to the candidate.

Although many candidates found Question 4 in Text 1 demanding and often misread ‘indifferent’ others responded with great skill and insight. Basic vocabulary mistakes were also evident such as: confusing *wer* to mean ‘where’; difficulty differentiating between the possessive pronouns *ihre/seine* and the personal pronouns *er/sie*. Inaccurate detail was also an issue where candidates’ answers were not sufficiently accurate to gain marks: ‘one meter’ instead of ‘a few meters’; ‘closed’ instead of ‘half-closed’. Challenges faced in Text II included where candidates were required to answer questions in German: it was evident that some quoted directly from the text rather than paraphrasing and writing in their own words as directed.

Ordinary level

Candidates are tasked with reading three texts at Ordinary level: one literary text (LVI) and two journalistic texts (LVII and LVIII). Multiple choice questions to be answered in German featured in texts two and three. Questions to be answered in either Irish/English also featured. This Reading Comprehension section falls under a number of various General Activities, Themes and Performance Targets of the Leaving Certificate German Syllabus including:

I.1: getting to know people and maintaining social relations

I.2: making plans and discussing future action

I.8: understanding and expressing feelings and attitudes

II.1: Language Awareness: understanding the main elements of target language material (newspaper, magazine articles)

II.2: Language Awareness: exploring meaning by extracting the main points from a written target language text; by working out the implicit inferences of statements made in a written target language text; by relating language to attitude in identifying attitudes on the basis of a writer's use of language

III.1: Cultural Awareness: understanding the main elements of target language material on contemporary aspects of target language community life such as everyday activities, customs and traditions

III.2 Reading Modern literary texts (notably novels, short stories, poems and plays, or extracts from these in the target language. Candidates are tasked to show an understanding [of] the main elements of the surface of a modern literary text in the target language; to identify meaning present but not overtly expressed in such a text

III.5: Cultural Awareness: understanding issues that transcend cultural divisions: teenage culture, ethnic minorities

The three texts dealt with age appropriate contemporary issues reflecting contemporary life in Germany including but not restricted to friendship, isolation, youth culture, school holidays, school and study opportunities, refugees, moving out of home, and youth independence. It was evident that candidates engaged well with the texts and were able to relate to them. The quality of responses varied greatly among the cohort. While the vocabulary did not – on the

whole – prove to be an insurmountable challenge many candidates found the necessity to give enough detail in a response challenging thereby highlighting the need to work on II.2, III.2 and III.5 above. The omission of key elements showing comprehension of the texts was a feature of many candidate responses. At times it was difficult to ascertain whether the candidate had understood the text. Some candidates wrote single word (or very short) answers and while these details may have been relevant they were insufficient to gain full or even high marks. Sometimes the responses were inaccurate on account of not including a key detail: *Ich hatte nie einen Spitznamen* where candidates wrote that he had a nickname overlooking the word *nie*. Candidates showed a certain gap in some key vocabulary: *Ferientag, besuchen, Geschäftsmann, Ärztin*.

Angewandte Grammatik (Applied Grammar)

Higher level

This section falls under a number of various General Activities, Themes and Performance Targets of the Leaving Certificate German Syllabus including:

II.1 Learning about language from target language material: exploring target language literary texts as sources of linguistic information and illustration

II.2 Exploring meaning: exploring the workings of the target language; making short pieces of meaningful and coherent target language text out of gapped target language sentences.

Candidates were tasked with choosing the correct conjunctions (from a list) to place in a gapped text based on the reading comprehension they had just read. Most scored well with more able candidates consistently scoring full marks. They also had to re-write sentences given into a different grammatical form: in 2016 candidates were asked to reformulate a statement into a question. The sentences were based on the text they had just read. Candidates scored poorly on the task where they had to formulate questions. Less able candidates mistook *Wer* for „where“ and *Wo* for „who“. Some had the correct question word but the wrong Case i.e. *wer* instead of *wen* or *wem*.

Ordinary level

This section falls under a number of various General Activities, Themes and Performance Targets of the Leaving Certificate German Syllabus including:

II.1 Learning about language from target language material: exploring target language literary texts as sources of linguistic information and illustration

II.2 Exploring meaning: guessing intelligently at the meaning of target language forms on the basis of related forms in the target language.

Candidates were tasked with deconstructing compounds found in context in the text they had just read. They were then required to explain the meaning of the word in Irish/English.

Candidates also had to read five sentences and choose the correct preposition from a list of four in each sentence. The sentences were based on the text they had just read.

Candidates scored well on deconstructing the compounds but found it more challenging to render meaning onto the words. This would suggest that they had difficulty with II.2.

Candidates found the question on prepositions very challenging this year with very few scoring full marks.

Communicate in the written language (written production)

Higher level

There are two written production tasks at Higher level with an option of (a) or (b) within each task. Within the first task *Äußerung zum Thema* (where candidates are asked to produce a short written text) one of the options is largely linked to one of the reading comprehension texts and the second option may have a link to a Reading Comprehension and/or to other aspects of the syllabus not featured in the Reading Comprehension texts. The second task (i.e. the Letter or the extended written piece) is based on general themes from the syllabus. This section, in 2016, falls under a number of various General Activities, Themes and Performance Targets of the Leaving Certificate German Syllabus including:

I.3: Giving information about climate and weather

I.5: Buying goods and services: comparing quality of goods and services

I.8: understanding and expressing feelings and attitudes: expressing pleasure, a liking, dislike and preference

I.10: engaging in discussion: expressing something as an opinion based on the stimulus text; taking sides in a discussion: proposing a point of view, expressing reaction, conviction,

justification, usage of forms of negation; using clauses of contrast; ordering points in a discussion; concluding a discussion: summarising content of utterances

III.3: Cultural Awareness: describing and discussing everyday life (what kind of shops are available); where people live; critically examining stereotypes.

III.4: Understanding, describing and discussing aspects of the relations between the target community and Ireland

III.5: Cultural Awareness: understanding issues that transcend cultural divisions: teenage culture, the generation gap, entertainment, environment and ecology, racial equality, ethnic minorities, health and lifestyle.

Äußerung zum Thema

The *Äußerung zum Thema* is a written exercise of approx. 100 words. Some candidates wrote very long *Äußerungen* even though it is unnecessary and this did not gain them extra marks.

Option (a): Einkaufen

Candidates showed skill and competence in describing the photo well. Some skilfully manipulated and used the vocabulary from the Reading Comprehension text to their advantage. Many candidates were able to express the reason for a comeback of small independent sole traders and some discussed the advantages and disadvantages of shopping online demonstrating competence in I.5, I.8, III.3 and III.4, but some lacked the necessary ability to express their points clearly showing that they were challenged by I.10.

Some candidates had difficulty with the meaning of *nie*, the use of the Subjunctive Mood/Conditional. A number of candidates did not fully answer all parts of the task thereby losing marks.

Option (b): Kapuzenjacken und Mode

Candidates demonstrated no great difficulty in describing the picture. Many relied on their knowledge of the weather demonstrating their competence in I.3. Most candidates demonstrated their engagement with III.5 through their competence of writing about youth culture but many did not understand *Vorurteile* (confusing it with *Vorteile*) thereby suggesting gaps in their learning associated with III.3 (critically examining stereotypes). Gaps in

elementary vocabulary were also evident where many candidates did not understand *Mode-Trends*

Schriftliche Produktion

Option (a) The Letter

Candidates often showed considerable skill in engaging with many of the Performance Targets under General Activity/Theme III.5 i.e. issues that transcend cultural divisions and that are relevant to their immediate environment - for example school life, the illegal downloading of music from the internet and the consequences thereof, issues relating to family relationships, entertainment and tourism.

Some candidates had difficulty with certain broader aspects of the syllabus for example ecological issues in school, the difference between *Flüchtlingskinder* and *Ausländer*, tasks which required candidates to consider negative effects for Ireland of film making. Generally only the more able candidates were able to argue these issues. Candidates sometimes did not attempt all aspects of a given task - for example the integration of young refugees into school life was dealt with well whereas many candidates omitted to add an opinion on their integration in society in general, suggesting that General Activity III.5 had not been mastered. Candidates also had difficulty expressing their arguments in the Subjunctive Mood/Conditional when required to do so.

Option (b) Extended Written Piece

Candidates showed skill in describing the photo well, in writing about the difficulties students encounter in trying to find accommodation and the options for accommodation whilst on holidays demonstrating their competence regarding General Activity/Theme III.3. While it is evident that candidates had engaged well with the subject matter of these issues from the syllabus they had, at times, difficulty in engaging in a discussion. Difficulty arose where candidates were asked to propose solutions to particular issues such as accommodation shortage for students, the dangers of booking accommodation online and the concept of online Sharing Communities. As in the Letter option candidates struggled with the meaning of *Aktion*. Candidates restricted their answer to a discussion of one form of social media – rather than seeing that the question was in the plural form.

Ordinary level

There are two written production tasks at ordinary level with an option of (a) or (b) within each task. The first task *Äußerung zum Thema* (completing a dialogue or writing an email) is based on one of the reading comprehension texts and the second task, the Letter and the Picture Sequence task is based on general themes from the syllabus:

I.1: getting to know people and maintaining social relations: giving and seeking personal details; stating what languages you speak; discussing family and home

I.2: making plans and discussing future action: offering to do something; expressing an intention

I.4: Travel and transport: relaying concise information; summarising itinerary

II.1: Language Awareness: understanding the main elements of target language material (newspaper, magazine articles)

II.2: Language Awareness: exploring meaning by extracting the main points from a written target language text; making short sentences of meaningful and coherent target language text out of jumbled or gapped target language sentences.

II.4: Talking and writing about your experience of the target language:

III.5: Cultural Awareness: understanding issues that transcend cultural divisions: teenage culture, ethnic minorities

Äußerung zum Thema

Option A: Dialogue

The vast majority of candidates understood the questions posed in content points A and B and consequently covered these points well. Content point C was often less successfully attempted as candidates did not seem to understand the question. Content points D and E were usually answered much more competently. More candidates chose this option this year and seemed more familiar with the task.

Option B: Email

This task was well handled. However, candidates did not seem to know the word for “refugees”, not realizing the word was provided on the advertisement. Only the better

candidates knew the correct word for ‘when?’: *wenn* appeared quite frequently. The word *will* often appeared instead of *wird* and the verb “to begin” was also a problem for many candidates.

Expression: In general, the accuracy of candidates’ expression varied considerably. Most candidates were marked from the middle expression category which meant verb endings and word-order were reasonably accurate. Use of English vocabulary was uncommon. However, it is clear from mistakes made in both options that candidates found the use of questioning words challenging.

Schriftliche Produktion

Option (a) The Letter

The start (Opening Paragraph) was usually fully correct. Content point A was reasonably well covered but weaker candidates had difficulty finding a recognizable verb and the destination of the journey was not always clear because *von* and *nach* were either incorrect or missing. Content point B was usually well covered with only the weaker candidates losing a content mark because they simply described the two friends and did not make clear they were coming to Vienna too. However, the vast majority of candidates scored full marks here. Most candidates were able to make a good attempt at content point C, saying that the friends were in their class, lived in their village or played on the same team. The first part of content point D was where most candidates lost marks as they were unable to form the past tense. The other D content marks were usually achieved by everyone. As in the AT (*Äußerung zum Thema*) section, the formation of questions was very challenging for most candidates whereas suggesting a joint activity was reasonably well covered. Most, but not all, candidates made a good attempt at writing a suitable closing sentence.

Option (b) The Picture Story

Most candidates scored well on content marks by writing three basic sentences for each picture. However, the opening paragraph – where it is necessary to insert words/phrases that are given to candidates on the paper into the spaces provided in the sentences – was challenging for some candidates.

In the answering for both options, the accuracy of expression varied but, as in the AT (*Äußerung zum Thema*) section above, most candidates showed an adequate level of

vocabulary but mistakes in word-order, verb endings and tense formation, accurate use of pronouns and the formation of questions using an interrogative pronoun were encountered frequently.

4. Conclusions

Oral Examination

There was a broad range of ability and performance, from weak to excellent. Good preparation was a significant factor in achievement. Candidates who were well prepared performed well. Quite a number of candidates had spent some time in Germany, Austria or Switzerland and this was evident in their oral proficiency. There was obvious enthusiasm for the language in the conversations and a willingness and ability to expand on topics with varying degrees of linguistic competence. There were instances, however, where candidates, even those with a good command of the language, had difficulty in dealing with relevant deviations from or in-depth discussions of the topic in question. An over-reliance on learnt-off sentences was often evident. This is both regrettable and unnecessary.

Candidates who had prepared the picture sequence did very well on the story-telling. Those candidates whose accounts were concise and accurate were awarded a high mark. Some narrations were unnecessarily long, however. There were some very impressive performances in the projects. While some candidates performed very well in the follow-up questions to both the picture sequence and the project, these proved to be more challenging for the less able or less well-prepared candidates and performance deteriorated when they were asked clarification or opinion questions. The follow-up questions on the project were often less well-prepared than those on the picture sequence. Familiarity with the role-plays meant that candidates performed very well in this section. There was evidence of good preparation and weaker candidates often demonstrated an ability to use the correct vocabulary even if it was not always accurate. There was also evidence to suggest that weaker candidates who find the oral examination difficult often do well in the role-play section when well prepared.

Aural and Written Paper

In the aural sections of the papers the main messages of the aural pieces were mainly understood by many of the candidates whereas the finer details were more challenging. Candidates lost marks by not giving an appropriate amount of detail. There was a marked

improvement of the comprehension of numbers/figures especially at Ordinary level. Requiring candidates to give answers in German sometimes proved a challenge for them, in particular in giving the precise detail or writing the words/phrases accurately. Sometimes candidates did not understand what could be considered as basic vocabulary suggesting perhaps that more aural work could be carried out.

Appreciating the tone of reading comprehension texts was quite a challenge for many candidates. Often candidates were able to extract specific details of the plot, descriptions of the characters, places and events but were unable to piece them altogether to appreciate the text as a whole. The topics of the texts would have been familiar to candidates but the task of understanding the text as a unit was challenging, suggesting that they were unable to piece together different themes/topics when they feature in one text. Gaps in knowledge of vocabulary became evident as candidates were asked to give the finer details of the text and to try to piece them all together. In other parts of the papers it also became evident that candidates found question words challenging.

Most candidates were able to write enough text to gain a reasonable mark in the written section showing that they had a wide knowledge of many topics on the syllabus. Some found it difficult, however, to score highly as it became apparent that they found expressing their opinion in a convincing way a challenge. The Subjunctive mood /conditional proved quite difficult for many candidates. Some aspects of the written sections were overlooked by candidates. More care should be taken when reading the examination paper to ensure that all points have been covered in the answers. Ordinary Level candidates have developed skill in engaging with the reading comprehensions in such a way that they can use their understanding well and transpose this understanding into the writing of the dialogue question. This is an encouraging development.

The separation of marks for Content and Expression in the written section serves the candidates well in that they can score Content marks for communicating the message and separate Expression marks for how eloquently they achieve this communication. This is a key factor of language and is a good reflection of the intentions of the syllabus.

5. Recommendations to Teachers and Students

The comments below refer to both levels unless otherwise specified. The depth of understanding and level of mastery required of candidates at Ordinary level is obviously less than that expected at Higher level.

5.1 Preparing for the examination

Recommendations to teachers

Oral Examination

- Teachers should put emphasis on oral communication from First Year on and use German as the everyday classroom language in a creative and engaging way.
- Teachers should encourage the use of idiomatic language but discourage the use of too many *Redewendungen* as conversation can sound unnatural and less authentic. Teachers should work on pronunciation with their students.
- Teachers should link the oral topics thematically with other topics in the year plan so that students will recognise a single unit rather than a separate piece of work for the oral examination.
- Teachers should encourage students to elaborate on answers and discourage very brief answers, while ensuring that students avoid an unnecessarily long narration in the picture sequence or project sections.
- Teachers should encourage students to opt to speak about a film or a literary text in the General Conversation section and encourage them to prepare it well - keeping it short and simple while avoiding rote learning of difficult sentences. Teachers should encourage students to be prepared for some obvious questions such as *Wie endet der Film? Was gefällt Ihnen an diesem Film?*
- Teachers should ensure that students doing projects are prepared for follow-up questions.
- Teachers should start preparing the role-plays and picture stories with students early in Fifth Year. Teachers should encourage students to make up questions for the picture sequence/project/role play sections – perhaps as a *Gruppenarbeit* exercise and practise manipulation of language on the Role Play cards and encourage them to listen to the examiner.
- Teachers should ensure students are familiar with the *Sie* form of verb i.e. that it can also be a way of addressing the students themselves.

- Teachers should practice the use of *Fragewörter*, the past tense and they should help students expand their knowledge of different adjectives.

Aural and Written Paper

- Teachers should use German as much as possible in class.
- Teachers should practise the use of interrogatives, pronouns and possessive adjectives, the Imperfect/Perfect Tenses, the Passive Voice, the Subjunctive mood especially the Conditional, separable verbs (to avoid errors such as: *sie sehen glücklich* and *das hört gut*).
- Teachers should practise the plural forms of common words with their students. (*Lehrern* and *Freunden* are very often used).
- Teachers should emphasise word-order and verb endings in the various tenses.
- Teachers should emphasise the necessity to read the questions on the examination paper carefully and the necessity to manipulate the German when answering questions in the Reading Comprehensions.
- Teachers should draw students' attention to interference from English/ Irish:
 - I am going – *ich bin gehen*;
 - to become – *bekommen*;
 - you are right – *du bist Recht*;
 - that's a pity – *Das ist eine Schade*;
 - I will – *ich will* etc.
 - Irish: one hour – *eine Uhr*

Recommendations to students

Oral Examination

- Students should speak and listen to as much German as possible in and out of class, practising speaking out loud, especially words that are difficult to pronounce. There are many opportunities online – some examiners recommend “voki.com”
- Students should record themselves on their mobile phones to make sure what they say is correct.
- Students should download German apps, watch/listen to German internet sources, TV, radio, music.
- Students should learn and use idiomatic phrases and avoid learning meaningless phrases off by heart – context is key!
- Students should practise tenses regularly by talking about everyday activities and be familiar with question words: *Wie, Warum, Wann, Woher* etc.
- If students opt for the project they should select a topic of interest and one on which they will be able to answer questions.
- Students should begin preparation early, focussing on oral work from First Year and using the two years before the Oral examination to become familiar with the tasks on the Role-Play cards. Students should remember that preparation is key and it takes time to become proficient in spoken language.
- Students should remember that short, correct sentences are better than long, inaccurate ones.
- Students should learn the German alphabet and be able to spell, for example, their name in German.
- If students decide to talk about a film or literary text, they should keep the account short, speak distinctly and be prepared to answer a few questions on it.
- Students should take their teacher’s advice and get a separate folder to keep all the oral materials together.

Aural and Written Paper

- Students should speak and listen to as much German as possible: Internet, CDs, German films, TV Channels such as *Deutsche Welle, Spiegel, Tagesschau*.

- Students should practise basic, common verbs (including modal verbs) in the present, future and past tenses. The inability to use common verbs correctly often results in a loss of marks in expression and this can be avoided by repetition and practice.
- Students should practise their writing skills and focus on the basics first: correct use of capital letters, spelling, simple but accurate wording and phrasing in order to improve the overall accuracy of their written German. Some students especially at Ordinary Level showed a lack of vocabulary when they needed to use basic verbs such as to visit, to travel, to meet, to book etc. Knowledge of these basics would enhance students' marks significantly by avoiding common mistakes in expression e.g. use of *stehen* for *bleiben/wohnen*, also for *auch*, confusion of *Freund/Freundin*, *der ist* for *es gibt*, *will* for *wird* etc.
- Students should practise the use of pronouns in the different cases.
- Students should learn different phrases to express opinion (*Ich bin der Meinung, dass...*; *Meiner Meinung nach ist das nicht richtig...*; *An deiner Stelle würde ich das nicht machen*)
- Students should continue the good progress which has been made in the aural section where they have shown increased proficiency with number recognition.
- Students should work on building up their bank of vocabulary as a way of improving in both the listening and reading comprehension sections.
- Students should practice the use of interrogatives and the formation of questions.
- Students should go through previous Marking Schemes

5.2 In the examination

Oral Examination

- Candidates should be prepared for the challenge and be able to expand on topics. If candidates choose to do a project, they should expect follow-up questions and be prepared.
- Candidates should avoid *Ja/Nein* answers and try to give full answers.
- Candidates should slow down when speaking, especially in the story-telling and project presentations as examiners must hear and understand what is said.
- If a candidate has been to a German-speaking country, it might be useful to use some aspect of the trip as a project.
- Candidates should not read from the role-play script, but rather use it as a guide having the questions/answers prepared.

- Candidates should try not to be over-anxious in advance of and during the examination as it affects performance. The examiner is just human too!

Aural and Written Paper

- Candidates should remember to manipulate the German in the German-language answers.
- Candidates should pay special attention to verbs: position in sentence, endings, tenses, modal verbs, passive voice, and conditional tense.
- Candidates should answer all comprehension questions in detail.
- Candidates should try to stay within the guidelines for the length of essays and letters.
- Candidates should use idioms/*Redewendungen* judiciously.
- Candidates should allow time to read back over work especially the Letter/Essay.
- Candidates should not use pencil in examinations.