Pearson Progress and Assess

GCSE Steps to indicative grades mapping calibration report 2019

Summary and recommendations

The recommendation of the 2019 calibration (GCSE English, Geography, History, Maths, MFL and Science) is **not** to change the Pearson Progress and Assess (P&A) Step to indicative grade mapping.

In some subjects, newer areas of the specifications proved harder to substantiate the Step–grade analysis. This is because candidates performed less well on newer areas than expected. However, we expect to see improvements in these areas over time. **There is no evidence that suggests Pearson should make any changes to the mapping of Steps to indicative grades at this point.** This report presents the findings of our calibration process.

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Background information

What is the 12-Step Progression Scale?

The 12-Step Progression Scale was developed in partnership with teachers and assessment specialists and is used in Pearson's Progress and Assess (P&A) Progression Maps to indicate level of challenge. The Progression Maps are five-year frameworks that outline our view of how learning builds and develops in each subject across Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 (and Key Stage 5 for Maths). They provide teachers and students with a progression route through a subject and highlight learning barriers that may be holding students back.

In the Progression Maps, the curriculum has been broken down into 'progress descriptors' so that you can see in granular detail the specific skills and knowledge that sit alongside the learning. Each progress descriptor in the Progression Map has been assigned a number between 1 and 12. These numbers (Steps) indicate the level of challenge attributed to each progress descriptor. These 12 Steps make up our 11–16 Progression Scale.

Step to indicative grade mapping

Schools employ different policies on how they report on student progress internally, as well as to students and parents. We believe that you should have the flexibility to assess, track, monitor and report on progression using the best-fit approach for your school. That is why, in 2016, Pearson began mapping the 12-Step Progression Scale to indicative 9-1 GCSE grades. We consulted subject and grading experts to help us do this. The mapping makes it simpler for teachers to accumulate the evidence to formulate their own grade predictions, apply any interventions and track student progress.

The table below shows the latest version of the 'Step to indicative grade' mapping.

Pearson Progression Step	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
GCSE Indicative grade	1*		2		3		4	5	6	7	8	9

*Science and MFL: 1st Step is grade U

Accuracy of mapping

Grade boundaries can change from year to year, so Pearson work continuously to make the 9–1 mapping as up to date as it can possibly be.

The first 9–1 GCSEs in Maths and English were awarded in August 2017. This gave Pearson the opportunity to **calibrate** the mapping and examine its accuracy by reviewing our Progression Map against the standard of student work at different grades. The 2017 report presents the findings of that calibration process and can be found on our website.

The first GCSEs in Science, MFL, History and Geography were awarded in 2018 alongside the second awards for GCSE Maths and English. The 2018 report presents the findings of that calibration process and can be found on our website.

In 2019 Pearson have once again calibrated the mapping of Steps to indicative grades at GCSE to examine their accuracy. This report presents the findings of that calibration process.

You can read more about the awarding process on the Ofqual blog and get an overview of the GCSE 2019 results on the Gov.uk website.

Calibration process

Pearson held a calibration meeting with nine subject experts in September 2019. This was to review the mapping of the 12-Step Progression Scale to GCSE grades and make any changes to the mapping if required.

The objectives of the meeting were to:

- Review the grades associated with candidate exam scripts from June 2019 in GCSE Maths, English, Science, MFL (French, German, Spanish), History and Geography, and compare them to the Steps that Pearson Progress and Assess (P&A) would award that candidate.
- Agree recommendations for Step to indicative grade mapping.

The process we used for discovering whether the mapping was accurate or not included reviewing candidate responses at the chosen grade and comparing them to the equivalent Step descriptor on the Pearson Progress and Assess (P&A) Scale. This would help us to determine if the candidate work represented a match in demand between the GCSE grade and the Step.

For all subjects, we looked at each question to see where it sat on the Progression Map and analysed the number of marks candidates achieved at each grade (and thus the average mark for the grade).

If there was a mismatch between the level of the candidate response, or question and Step correlation, experts referred to the examiner annotation and examiner report to decide if it was an anomaly or if the mapping needed to realign.

Next steps

The next calibration meeting will be held in September 2020 following the GCSE awards.

We will continue to monitor feedback from schools over the next academic year and welcome your feedback. Please contact us at progressionscale@pearson.com.

Detailed analysis by subject

English

The overall conclusion is that the mapping of Steps to indicative grades is accurate.

There is a tendency for candidates' work in the middle of the grade to more closely match the bottom of the Step descriptor rather than the middle of the Step descriptor. However, it seems reasonable to assume that the quality of candidates' responses will improve over time as candidates and teachers become more familiar with the breadth of skills demanded in the new GCSE. The impact of this on grade boundaries is expected to bring the mapping of Steps to grades increasingly in line with our expectations.

At **grade 1**, many questions were not answered so there was not enough evidence to match or contradict the Step mapping. However, based on last year's outcomes there was no evidence to suggest that there should be any changes made at this level.

At **grade 4**, candidates were working at the 7th Step as we would expect. Responses were more solidly within the appropriate Step than the scripts analysed at either the 2017 and 2018 calibration. Evaluation and synthesis were new to GCSEs but candidates have improved at this. In question 3, candidates showed evidence, for example, of a developing understanding of implicit meaning, which was clearly in line with the 7th Step criteria (see below).

At 7th Step (mapped to grade 4) candidates would be expected to:

'*Focuses [sic] closely on the writer's choices with explicit reference to implicit meaning suggesting a developing awareness of the writer's choices as a means of achieving an identified intention and impact on the reader. Shows awareness of connotation, eg commenting on an association of ideas*.' (Reading / Language / Vocabulary 7th Step)

This was clearly demonstrated in grade 4 responses to 1EN0_01, question 3.

Similarly, for this descriptor:

'*Focuses closely on the writer's choices with comments suggesting a developing awareness of the writer's choices as a means of achieving an identified intention and impact on the reader, eg*

a series of non-finite clauses to create pace and/or tension.' (Reading / Language / Sentences 7th Step)

Clear correlation was shown in 1EN0_01, question 3 with a *developing awareness* clearly shown.

Similarly…

'*Focuses more closely on the writer's structural and/or organisational choices with comments suggesting a developing awareness of the writer's choices as a means of achieving an identified intention.*' (Reading / Whole text / Structure 7th Step)

… was amply demonstrated in 1EN0_01, question 4:

None of these responses from the sample were quite strong enough, however, to consider placing the candidates at 8th Step. They lacked the necessary awareness of the writer's overall intention or a more detailed consideration of the reader's response (for example, why the writer might have wanted to highlight Florence's sadness or how the reader might respond to it).

In the writing section of 1EN0_01, the majority of responses are similarly firmly at 7th Step. Sample responses clearly showed:

'*Features of form are increasingly selected and crafted to achieve purpose and intention.*' (Writing / Whole text / Structure 7th Step) – in this case to engage the reader by building tension / withholding information.

'*Increasing use, and more careful choices of lexical words …sometimes to achieve specific effect, eg emotive language to heighten drama.*' (Writing / Vocabulary 7th Step) – eg *disaster*

'*Accurate use of full stops and increasingly accurate use of commas.*' (Writing / Sentences / Punctuation 7th Step)

At **grade 7** we would expect work to be at the 10th Step. This level is clearly evidenced in scripts from the middle of this grade range, which showed evidence of engaging critically with the text, supported by a synthesis of carefully selected evidence.

'*Increasingly developed analysis of the writer's likely purpose and intention and how it is achieved.*' (Reading / Evaluation / Purpose and intention 10th Step)

'*Responses to vocabulary are confident and increasingly developed, focusing on the implication and intention of specific choices in creating tone and meaning, supporting the implications and intentions of the text as a whole.*' (Reading / Language Vocabulary 10th Step)

This was clearly evidenced in responses to 1EN0_02, question 3 and question 6 effectively demonstrating:

'*Increasingly analytical critical thinking supports fluent expression and exploration of a personal response to the text.*' (Reading / Evaluation / Critical response 10th Step) and '*Ideas and interpretation are supported with a synthesis and summary of ideas and details judiciously selected from the text.*' (Reading / Evaluation / Textual evidence 10th Step)

Finally at this grade, writing criteria for 10th Step were also accurately met. For example 1EN0_02, question 8 clearly shows:

'*Features of form and purpose selected, suggesting significant awareness of the reader.*' (Writing whole text)

'*Clear evidence of deliberate choice in sentence length and structure.*' (Writing / sentences)

'*Vocabulary is frequently selected for clarity, precision, concision.*' (Writing / vocabulary)

At **grade 9**, we would expect work to be at 12th Step. This was found to be far more consistent than in the previous two years.

At 12th Step (mapped to grade 9) candidates would be expected to show:

'*Highly developed critical thinking supports an independent response to the text.*' (Reading / Critical response 12th Step)

'*Responses to the writer's language choices are confident and perceptive, analysing in some depth.*' (Reading / Language 12th Step)

This is evident in candidates' responses to 1EN0_01, question 3 and question 7, where high marks were achieved by candidates working at this level, amply demonstrating:

'*Detailed comparison of the writers' choices at a number of different levels is synthesised in a perceptive analysis of the relationship between two or more texts.*' (Reading evaluation / comparison 12th Step)

However, it is perhaps worth noting that at this end of the achievement scale, it was quite difficult to find 'typical' grade 9 reading responses (on 1EN0_01 in particular) – a significant number of candidates pulled their overall mark down in the reading sections but pushed them up again in the writing section. Several grade 9 candidates were working at around 10th or 11th Step for reading but at the very top of the 12th Step for writing. Sample candidates work featured:

'*Complex ideas are securely and coherently structured to direct the reader's focus and response.*' (Writing / whole text 12th Step)

'*Consistently deliberate and appropriate choices of sentence lengths and structures to control pace, tone and/or register.*' (Writing / sentences 12th Step)

'*A broad and sophisticated range of choices make a significant contribution to purpose and intention, and the skilful manipulation of tone and register.*' (Writing / Vocabulary 12th Step)

…although there was a marked tendency for candidates at the top end to overwrite, weighing down their writing with complex vocabulary and sentence structure – and so, arguably, very few of the candidates at 12th Step are achieving '*Consistent clarity and precision of written expression, appropriate to intended audience and purpose*.' (Writing design/clarity),

This was most evident in 1EN0_01, question 5.

In conclusion, the mapping of individual questions correlated with the Step–grade analysis. However, there is better evidence that candidates achieving higher grades are more consistently working at the overall Step suggested by the current mapping. Pearson will continue to monitor this as teachers and candidates become more familiar with the demands of the new GCSE.

Geography

The overall conclusion is that the mapping of Steps to indicative grades is accurate.

At **grade 1** (1st and 2nd Step) it was promising to report that candidates are now attempting more questions. Although, it still appears that there is less evidence at this lower range than at the higher ranges, but it is showing improvements and is likely to align better over time.

As in 2018, grade 1 candidates did show limited evidence for the strand 'Contextual knowledge of locations and places'. The 2nd Step descriptor states - '*Pupils share basic knowledge and understanding of the physical and human geography of their local area and this begins to widen out to other examples from the UK and further afield examples*.' Candidates found it challenging to interpret the fieldwork questions correctly.

In the 'Understanding of patterns, processes and environmental change' strand the 2nd Step descriptor states - '*Pupils can recognise physical and human features, offering simple descriptions about their characteristics. Pupils can recognise and describe simple geographical patterns. Pupils can give reasons for their own views on changes to physical and human environments, but will also start to recognise that other people have different opinions*.' Scripts demonstrate that candidates show isolated elements of understanding relating to physical and human patterns and processes through answering the multiple-choice questions and recall questions – e.g. type of igneous rocks, characteristics of sedimentary, type of physical process (erosion / weathering / mass movement). There is some evidence of candidates attempting to offer basic descriptions, although these are often generic and lack understanding.

For the 'Competence in geographical enquiry' strand, the 2nd Step descriptor states - '*Pupils can use their own knowledge and understanding of environments and suggest suitable geographical enquiry questions. Pupils can use a range of geographical skills (through the use of primary and secondary sources) to investigate physical and human geography. Pupils can*

begin to present their findings using basic key terminology.' Many candidates found it challenging to communicate their findings when referring to their geographical enquiry because they misinterpreted the question set. Many candidates at this Step did not have a clear understanding of the difference between primary and secondary data, as well as the classification of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods.

In the 'Application of geographical skills' strand, the 2nd Step descriptor states - '*Pupils can describe the patterns of human and physical features as well as draw and label a sketch map. Simplistic observations of photographs and sketches will be made. They will recognise and use some map symbols and begin to have a working understanding of 4 figure grid references.*' In the scripts that were analysed, similarly to summer 2018, scripts at this boundary show limited evidence of candidates demonstrating basic geographical skills. In comparison to summer 2018, candidates were unable to identify locations using 6-figure grid references when provided as a multiple choice but were able to use maps to extract basic evidence, such as identifying the largest ethnic group. There was variation in performance when asked to complete graphs and charts. For example, at this Step, most candidates were able to complete line graphs but found the completion of the pie charts more difficult. There was a noticeable improvement in candidates attempting to complete the graphs and charts.

At **grade 4** (7th Step) the strands showed a correlation between grades and Steps.

For example, in the 'Contextual knowledge of locations and places' strand, the 7th Step descriptor states - '*Pupils can recall basic information about physical and human environments, but with a growing appreciation of different scales. They demonstrate simplistic knowledge of location through specific case studies with geographical ideas referred to in a simple manner and often limited in example detail.*' Candidates demonstrate the ability to offer simplistic references to case studies, like Birmingham and Mexico City with limited specific 'example detail' when using evidence to support their points. Many of the points made at this Step were left undeveloped with candidates often scoring 2 out of 4 marks in an explain question.

In the scripts that were analysed ('*Understanding of patterns, processes and environmental change*' and '*Pupils can understand simple physical and human processes, but be able to recognise that they help develop geographical patterns in a variety of physical and human environments. Pupils will begin to understand that the different views of people will have different effects on how environments are used and managed*'), evidence of candidates understanding between the relation of physical and human processes was clear. They offered possible reasons for human processes, such as rapid population growth, and are beginning to offer explanations. These explanations are limited in depth and lack clarity in the way candidates attempt to develop their points.

For the extended writing questions, candidates show an appreciation for how coastal retreat and rapid urban growth affects people and the environment, drawing on some of the evidence from the resources provided. In most cases, candidates find the skill of 'assessing' or 'evaluating' difficult at this Step, with many candidates providing a narrative of the impact.

In the 'Competence in geographical enquiry' strand the 7th Step descriptor states - '*Pupils can conduct a geographical enquiry and show more confidence in collecting appropriate data (primary and secondary) to help support the enquiry. This will then be collated and presented using a wider range of simplistic techniques. Pupils attempt to make comments about the data but are often brief, with a limited conclusion attempted. They will offer a brief evaluation that is often focused on one aspect of the enquiry.*' For summer 2019, candidates at this Step demonstrate a variation in understanding of the different stages of enquiry with a larger proportion of candidates performing higher when asked questions in an unfamiliar context. In many cases, candidates at this Step were able to provide a narrative about their fieldwork investigation, rather than applying their understanding from the fieldwork experience to make judgements based on the question set.

For the 'Application of geographical skills' strand, the 7th Step descriptor states - '*Pupils have a good understanding of how cartographical and OS skills can be used to describe and interpret geographical patterns. Pupils will be able to understand a range of graphical techniques and how to interpret the data presented. Pupils understand how GIS can be used to interpret and analyse patterns and trends of physical and human features. Pupils will demonstrate a range of graphical skills and can interpret different types of photographs from a range of different landscapes. Pupils will clearly be able to link photographic evidence to OS maps. Pupils will be able to use more sophisticated statistical skills such as percentage change or cumulative frequency as a means of analysing data*.' Most candidates at this step can accurately complete line graphs, bar charts and pie charts using the data provided. Candidates are generally able to extract and manipulate data to complete calculations such as mean and percentage increase.

There was a similar pattern at **grade 7** (10th Step); there was, in comparison to 2018, some notable improvement in the use of appropriate case study detail at this Step for the strand 'Contextual knowledge of locations and places'. 'Understanding of patterns, processes and environmental change' and 'Application of geographical skills' showed a correlation between grades.

A slightly weaker performance for the strands 'Competence in geographical enquiry' was observed at this boundary as many candidates find the significance of hypotheses, or key questions and the reason for the choice of data collection survey sites, the most challenging. It seems reasonable to assume that the quality of candidates' responses will improve over time as students and teachers become more familiar with the enquiry and skills elements demanded in the new GCSE. Over time this is expected to bring the mapping of Steps to grades increasingly in line with our expectations.

There was clear progression from candidates at this level, as we would expect; evidence of links, use of terminology, dates, and developing and linking explanations, which all fit with the criteria for the 10th Step descriptor.

At **grade 9** (12th Step), candidates were assessing, evaluating and concluding as we would expect at this level and this fits the 12th Step criteria. In comparison to 2018, candidates show an improvement in demonstrating evidence for producing a balanced argument when answering an 'assess' or 'evaluate' question, providing a conclusion addressing, for example, the 'most

important factor'. In the scripts that were analysed, candidates could recall precise information relating to their chosen case studies, including dates of key events, names of organisations involved, and relevant statistics.

In conclusion, the mapping of individual questions correlated with the Step–grade analysis.

History

The overall conclusion is that the mapping of Steps to indicative grades is accurate.

At **grade 1** (1st and 2nd Step), in papers 1HI0_11 and 12, candidates across this group were operating at a low level of knowledge and conceptual understanding. Candidates were not able to show they had a conceptual understanding of change and continuity beyond 2nd Step and their ability to use historical evidence was seen to be in 1st or 2nd Step.

In papers 1HI0_2H and 2R, candidates responding at this level found the concepts of consequence and significance challenging and were operating here at 1st Step. On the other hand, candidates were more comfortable with the concepts being assessed in the depth study option and were consistently accessing 2nd Step. Few candidates in the sample responded consistently across both the period and the depth study questions, putting all their responses in either 1st or 2nd Step.

For paper 1HI0_31, all candidates in the sample found it difficult to engage with material across the paper. They lacked the substantive and disciplinary knowledge to approach some of the questions. This means that, although the 1st and 2nd Steps are appropriate for grade 1, this should be kept under review – and possibly candidate achievement will improve as the new qualification beds in.

At **grade 4** (7th Step), papers 1HI0_11 and 12 are a good fit for the candidates sampled here. Many were able to use evidence to make simple inferences and comment on provenance but this was often undeveloped or confused. With regard to conceptual understanding about change and continuity most of the candidates could describe changes and set changes in some sort of order but this remained undeveloped. Overall, the 7th Step would seem to be the best fit for this grade, although some candidates were operating at a lower level and some at a higher level, on the different aptitudes and skills.

Paper 1HI0_2H and 2R responses at grade 4 demonstrated a similar pattern to the grade 1 responses and candidates found the concepts of significance and consequence more difficult than the second-order concepts assessed in the depth study. Thus responses to the period study tended to fall into 6th Step and sometimes 5th Step, while responses to the British depth study were far more likely to achieve 7th or 8th Step. Thus 7th Step would seem to be the best fit for this grade in papers 1HI0_2H and 2R.

There were a range of responses at grade 4 (7th Step) for paper 1HI0_31; this is likely to be because this paper covers the full range of Assessment Objectives and so different candidates

sampled achieved at various levels in different questions. There was some parity in response that relied on substantive knowledge and understanding of causation but responses to the evidence and interpretations questions could have been placed into 5th, 6th or 7th Step. Overall, the best fit would probably be 7th Step for this grade in paper 1HI0_31, and responses will probably be more secure in this particular Step once the new qualification beds in but this should be kept under review.

At **grade 7** (10th Step), in papers 1HI0_11 and 12, there was some inconsistency in the ways in which candidates reached a mark consistent with 10th Step because of the different conceptual requirements. A few responses did not contain enough evidence to fulfil the skills required by 10th Step but most responses were appropriately located at 10th Step (with some even moving towards 11th Step) but the perceived differences were marginal and subtle. Overall, 10th Step would seem to be the best fit for this grade in papers 1HI0_11 and 12.

For papers 1HI0_2H and 2R, candidates sampled at this grade were able to deal more successfully with the conceptual demands of the period study and were generally producing work within the 7th Step. There was some evidence that the significance questions were still a challenge but this was not as clear as in Grades 1 and 4. Candidates in the Early Elizabeth section of the papers were also clearly producing work which satisfied the demands of 10th Step. So this grade was clearer as the scripts had more parity and satisfied the requirement of the 10th Step.

In the sample of responses for paper 1HI0_31, most of the responses sampled here clearly belonged in the 7th Step. There was an element of consistency across the sample showing an understanding of evidence, interpretations and other concepts. Occasionally, slightly lower Steps might have been used for evidential work as candidates at this grade still seem to have issues with the source questions; but this did not impact on the fact that this is the most appropriate Step for this grade. Overall, the standard of work was at the 10th Step.

At **grade 9**, (12th Step) papers 1HI0_31, all candidates were clearly operating within 12th Step. Their understanding of both the knowledge and the required second order concepts showed that this is the appropriate Step for all the scripts sampled.

Similarly, in papers 1HI0_2H and 2R, all candidates sampled were operating within 12th Step and comfortably so; their grasp of historical narrative, significance and the other concepts tested demonstrated a clear understanding.

In paper 1HI0_31, the candidates in this sample were clearly working at 12th Step. This was relatively consistent across the sample although two responses showed work at slightly lower Steps. However, this is to be expected in a paper with such a broad scope. Overall, 12th Step was clearly the correct Step for this grade.

In conclusion, the mapping of individual questions correlated with the Step–grade analysis.

Maths

The overall conclusion is that the mapping of Steps to indicative grades is accurate.

The inclusion of additional Steps for Reasoning and Problem Solving in the latest version of the Progression Map, which were recommendations from the 2018 calibration, has improved the Step-grade accuracy.

At **grade 1** (1st and 2nd Step), in paper 1MA1_1F, the first questions and question 19 candidates found the level of difficulty in line with this grade, with the level matching the Progression Map.

Paper 1MA1_2F matched expected Steps apart from questions 4 and 7. Question 4, conversion of grams to kilograms, was poorly done at both grade 1 and grade 4 and relied on candidates remembering the correct conversion between grams and kilograms, however the demand of the Step descriptor places it at the correct grade.

In paper 1MA1_3F the grade 1 candidates scored much better on the lower Step questions at the beginning of the paper and stopped scoring when the Step level became higher.

At **grade 4** (7th Step), in Paper 1HI0_31, question 13 proved problematic for the majority sampled. Even though this question was a seemingly straightforward conversion, it was complicated by the introduction of algebra and while conversion is 4th Step the question was made harder by having to write an expression in millimetres for a line *x* centimetres long. The grade aligns with the 4th Step, however it is definitely a case where putting something quite straightforward into a slightly different situation puts the grade up by a couple of Steps. This was backed up by the quote from the Principal Examiner's report: '*it is fair to say that the majority of Foundation candidates found this question challenging.*' Similarly, question 17 was found equally demanding and this shows that a question given in a 'reasoning' context is definitely to be graded 1 or 2 Steps above the Step at which the topic would normally be. It was suggested that the question was at the 5th Step but made harder by at least 2 Steps because of the reasoning involved.

Paper 1MA1_2F matched as would be expected, however question 7 (4th Step) ('*Create simple expressions*') proved more difficult than expected for candidates. The Principal Examiner's report stated, '*This question was not well answered; y = 7 and 7 + y were the most common incorrect answers seen*', suggesting that the question was more demanding than intended.

In paper 1MA1_3F, the grade 4 candidates generally did extremely well at the beginning of the paper and as the paper increased in difficulty (higher Steps) they gained fewer marks. Therefore, there were no questions that suggested that the progression scale was not correct.

At **grade 7** (10th Step), candidates achieved across the Higher papers as would be expected at this level.

In paper 1MA1_1H, question 22 was a probability question. This would be Step 10 on the Progression Map but made harder by 2 Steps as it was put in a problem situation. The

Progression Map can now take account of this requirement and ensures correct Step-grade accuracy.

In paper 1MA1_2H, grade 7 candidates performed as expected and evidence clearly aligned with the Steps.

In paper 1MA1_3H there were no questions that suggested the Progression Scale was not correct. The grade 7 candidates tended to score marks throughout the paper with notable gaps where it is assumed that their knowledge is not up to the level of the grade 9 candidates.

Grade 9 (12th Step) candidates scored well throughout and the Steps aligned with the grades.

There were no issues with the Step-grade accuracy in paper 1MA1_1H.

In general, as paper 1MA1_2H progressed, the grade level and the Steps on the progression map increased. Problem solving and reasoning questions always seemed to come out more poorly and as an example Question 17, with part (a) requiring an explanation (reasoning), was very hard for most candidates - even those getting 95% of the marks on the paper (grade 9).

In paper 1MA1_3H there were no questions that suggested the Progression Scale was not correct; the grade 9 candidates scored consistently well throughout and grades aligned with the Steps.

In conclusion, the mapping of individual questions and mapping across the papers correlated with the Step–grade analysis. This is a similar finding to the 2017 and 2018 GCSE calibration and 2018 and 2019 GCE calibration exercise.

MFL

The overall conclusion is that the mapping of Steps to indicative grades is accurate.

Candidate work across all three languages (French, German and Spanish) and across all of the papers performed in the same way.

In the Foundation Reading papers (1FR0_3F, 1GN0_3F and 1SP0_3F) **grade 1** candidates are able to understand some familiar words and phrases, so are operating at 1st and 2nd Step. Their marks tend to come from scoring a few marks on questions targeting grade 1 (1st and 2nd Step) and also a few marks from questions targeting grade 2 (3rd and 4th Step). Where the translation into English was attempted, candidates were only able to translate isolated words correctly and guessed the remainder or left the remainder blank, but this fits with the 1st and 2nd Step which only require translation of words and not whole sentences.

For the Foundation Writing papers (1FR0_4F, 1GN0_4F and 1SP0_4F) **grade 1** scripts meet 1st and 2nd Steps in terms of being able to write a few short sentences giving basic information

using familiar words and phrases from memory. Spelling was frequently inaccurate yet the message was generally comprehensible. Candidates were able to translate familiar words and / or phrases into the target language from full sentences, so were operating at 1st or 2nd Step.

Grade 4 (7th Step) candidates, in the Foundation Reading papers (1FR0_3F, 1GN0_3F and 1SP0_3F), demonstrated an ability to understand a range of short and longer texts which include justified opinions. Candidates are more successful at the questions with English rubric requiring response in English than those with target language rubric requiring response in the target language. Candidates have some ability to translate a short passage into English, showing awareness of grammar. The Spanish candidates performed better in the translation than the German and French candidates at this level.

For the Higher Reading papers at **grade 4** (1FR0_3H, 1GN0_3H and 1SP0_3H) candidates demonstrate the ability to understand a range of short and longer texts which include justified opinions. For example, (1FR0_3H) a typical response to question 1a 'Why does Florence do voluntary work?' gave the answer, 'She likes to get to know the people'. This shows candidates understand the sentence 'J'aime développer de nouvelles compétences et rencontrer de nouvelles personnes', which shows understanding of opinion, present tense and longer sentences.

With the Foundation Writing papers (1FR0_4F, 1GN0_4F and 1SP0_4F) at **grade 4** (7th Step), candidates wrote short texts in a range of contexts, giving information and opinions. Their written work was mostly accurate with clear meaning, but with some minor errors. Candidates translated sentences into the target language, referring to present and past activities.

Grade 4 (7th Step) Higher Writing paper candidates (1FR0_4H, 1GN0_4H and 1SP0_4H) wrote short authentic texts in a range of contexts, giving information and justified opinions. Their work tended to be longer but not more accurate than candidates operating at the same grade on the Foundation paper, which would imply greater confidence but equal ability. Their written work was mostly accurate with clear meaning, but with some minor errors and an occasional major error. Candidates demonstrated the ability to translate a short passage into the target language, showing awareness of grammar.

In the Higher Reading papers (FR0_3H, 1GN0_3H and 1SP0_3H), **grade 7** (10th Step) candidates demonstrate ability to draw inferences from longer authentic texts, including extracts from literary texts, which include a combination of different tenses, opinions and some more complex grammatical structures and less common vocabulary. They tend to score just less than full marks on the questions targeting grade 7 but also score a few marks on questions which target grades 8 and 9. They are able to translate longer passages into English, containing a range of grammatical tenses and structures, mainly accurately.

For the **grade 7** (10th Step) Higher Writing papers (1FR0_4H, 1GN0_4H and 1SP0_4H), candidates demonstrate ability to write coherent extended texts on a wide variety of topic areas, using language effectively to narrate, inform, interest and convince. They perform well on the question targeting grades 4 - 5 and perform quite well on the other 2 questions which target

grades 6 - 9. They use language creatively to express individual thoughts, ideas and points of view. They use a range of grammatical structures and a combination of tenses. Their writing is mostly accurate and clear with isolated minor errors. They translate into the target language longer passages containing some more complex grammatical structures, a typical example (German) translated 'I am hoping to go to Berlin next March to see them there' as 'Nächste März, hoffe Ich, in Berlin gehen um ihm dorthin zu sehen'.

Grade 9 (12th Step) candidates on the Higher Reading papers (FR0_3H, 1GN0_3H and 1SP0_3H) typically score maximum marks on questions targeting grades 4 - 8 and score well on questions targeting grade 9. Notably, they also perform well on questions set in the target language requiring a written response in the target language. They recognise implicit meaning in a wide range of longer texts including authentic newspaper articles and web pages containing multiple complex structures. A typical response from candidates working at this Step (Spanish) gave the acceptable response, 'Some festivals will no longer happen' to the question 'What warnings are given about tourism?' by demonstrating understanding of this short part from a longer passage 'También, el turismo hace que la gente del lugar pierda algunas de las fiestas que han tenido desde hace años'. This shows the ability to infer from 'The people are losing some of the festivals' that some of the festivals will no longer take place. This demonstrates understanding of a range of complex grammatical structures. Candidates successfully translate into English a passage containing a wide range of less common vocabulary and complex grammatical structures.

Candidates in the Higher Writing papers (1FR0_4H, 1GN0_4H and 1SP0_4H) at **grade 9** (12th Step) typically scored highly on question 1 which targets grades 4 and 5. They wrote coherent, fluent, extended texts for question 2, manipulating language and used a wide variety of tenses and complex grammatical structures with secure control. Candidates use linguistic structures with accuracy throughout, with only isolated inaccuracies. Candidates are able to translate a passage from English into the target language, containing a wide range of less common vocabulary and complex grammatical structures.

In the Listening and Reading papers at **grades 1**, **4**, **7** and **9** candidate performance is as per the corresponding 1st and 2nd, 3rd and 4th, 10th and 12th Steps respectively, so the Steps reflect these grades well.

In the Writing paper at **grades 1**, **4**, **7** and **9** candidate performance is as per the 1st and 2nd, 3rd and 4th, 10th and 12th Steps respectively, so the Steps reflect these grades well.

The Speaking papers were not reviewed. The Steps for Listening and Speaking are parallel to the ones for Reading and Writing and as the transcripts / recordings were not available at the time of the calibration we used the outcomes of the Reading and Writing, along with the Speaking exam data to confirm that the Step expectations for Speaking were commensurate.

Science

The overall conclusion is that the mapping of Steps to indicative grades is accurate.

In **Chemistry**, there is a correlation between Step and indicative grade across all question types and grade ranges.

At **grade 1** (1st and 2nd Steps), where performance was similar on both papers, candidate performance matched the Steps very well. Basics of Chemistry theory were not as well demonstrated as other areas at this level though, particularly in 1CH0_1F.

At **grade 4**, in the scripts that were analysed, there was a better correlation between candidate performance on the Foundation tier where the Steps for several of the overlap questions were better aligned to grade 4 candidates on the Higher tier. However, writing word equations still remains a challenge for most candidates at this grade.

In most instances at **grades 7** and **9**, in the scripts that were analysed, candidate performance in these two grades matched the Step.

It was noted that questions based on knowledge of specification-key practicals did not score well overall and this is an area that the panel felt should be addressed by schools to enable all candidates at all grades to have access to those marks.

In **Physics**, there was a much better correlation between Steps and candidate grades with the redeveloped Progression map after last year's calibration recommendations.

Grade 1 (1st and 2nd Steps) were aligned across both separate and combined Physics, particularly for short answer and multiple choice questions.

For extended response questions, candidates' performance at **grade 4** (7th Step) differed across separate and combined. The question testing '*Describe how and why the atomic model has changed over time including reference to the plum pudding model and Rutherford alpha scattering leading to the Bohr model*' - Question: Explain what the information shown in figures 10 and 11 shows about the structure of the atom, in 1PH0_1F, was clearly a 7th Step. However this did translate over to the 1SC0_1PF where the outcomes were more aligned to a 6th Step.

Grades 7 and **9** (10th and 12th Steps respectively) were better aligned across the combined and separate Physics, but it was obvious that the overall level of the combined Science was still lower than that of the separate.

The panel were in favour of developing the Progression Map to include additional Steps for practical skills, which would incorporate the 'Working Scientifically' key skills to show the increased level of demand for these areas. It also recommended a review of Maths skills with the possibility of adding in additional Steps for these as well.

Conclusion

The recommendation of the 2019 calibration (GCSE English, Geography, History, Maths, MFL and Science) is **not** to change the Pearson Progression Step to indicative grade mapping.

We will continue to monitor feedback from schools over the next academic year and welcome your feedback. Please contact us at progressionscale@pearson.com.