



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

FCO C1 (Operational) Level

Examination Syllabus

Contents

Introduction	p3
Definition of level of proficiency	p3
Expected levels of attainment	p5
Domains	p7
Examination features	p8
Examination Modules	p9
Core Diplomatic Skills Module: Oral	p10
Core Diplomatic Skills Module: Listening	p11
Core Diplomatic Skills Module: Reading	p12
Translation Module	p13
Writing in the Foreign Language Module	p14
Assessment Criteria	p15
Marking and Reporting Results	p19
Sample Material	p20
Contacts	p23

INTRODUCTION

The C1 (Operational) level examination is designed to test whether candidates have sufficient proficiency to carry out substantive business in the foreign language. The examination is modular to recognise the fact that not all officers are required to develop all the skills to the same level. Candidates are expected to handle language commonly used over the normal range of social and professional matters with which a Diplomatic Service officer may be required to deal in an official capacity.

Candidates are expected to demonstrate that they are effective communicators and accepted as such by native speakers with whom they are likely to come into contact.

This is a proficiency examination; as a consequence performance will be evaluated according to established standards.

This document is designed to be a core element for the creation of language specific training syllabi.

DEFINITION OF LEVEL OF PROFICIENCY

The C1 (Operational) Level Examination has been mapped against the C1 Level of the Common European Framework of Reference: Learning, Teaching, and Assessment (CEFR). Further information on the CEFR can be found at:

http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Cadre1_en.asp

<p>“...What seems to characterise this level is good access to a broad range of language which allows fluent and spontaneous communication...”</p>
--

CEFR, 2001

See *Common European Framework of Reference Levels: global scale* overleaf.

User level	CEFR level	Level Descriptor
Proficient User	C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shade of meaning even in more complex situations.
	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
Independent User	B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hope and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
Basic User	A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer question about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

*Common Reference Levels: global scale,
The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, Cambridge University Press*

EXPECTED LEVELS OF ATTAINMENT

At this level candidates are expected to:

- communicate effectively using the wide range of language required for the target activities in fields relevant to Diplomatic Service work;
- express themselves fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions in a professional and social situation, either face-to-face or on the telephone;
- use the language flexibly and effectively for professional and social purposes;
- demonstrate sufficient linguistic proficiency to carry out effectively tasks as listed below, in the foreign language. The Diplomatic Service officer might be required to carry out these tasks in the course of his/her duties because they are considered core activities. Some of these activities will be tested in the examination (please refer to Examination Modules);
- engage in the normal range of social conversation on topics of personal and general interest using language appropriate to the occasion and in various fora e.g. receptions, longer dinner conversations, excursions, small talk prior to meetings;
- produce clear, well-structured and complex texts, selecting the appropriate register;
- have an awareness of regional/social varieties that an officer may encounter;
- have an appreciation of the protocol and etiquette used in the language that an officer may require;
- act as informal “interpreter” in straightforward business situations and social occasions;
- share information on current issues stating UK position, showing understanding of position of others and negotiating outcome;
- participate in formal meetings with native speakers and follow complex interactions in group discussions and debates;
- handle a wide range of enquiries and requests from members of the public;
- gather work-relevant information through formal and informal contacts;
- deal with administrative transactions with officials;
- give short presentations/speeches in the target language;
- give longer (prepared) presentations including speeches on UK policy and fielding questions in the target language;
- argue a formal position convincingly, responding to questions and comments and answering complex lines of counter argument fluently, spontaneously and appropriately in the target language;
- reach agreements, make arrangements and solve problems in bilateral meetings;
- handle telephone conversations confidently and accurately in the target language, being aware of local telephone etiquette;
- understand extended standard speech at normal speed even when some meanings are not signalled explicitly;
- gather information from the local media (press, radio and television) for gist and for detail to report back;

- gain significant understanding of aspects of the country through the media, personal contact and background reading;
- listen to a speech/debate as a member of a live audience and be able to report back as necessary;
- read and understand in detail statements/notices/invitations prepared by LE staff, in order to sign them off;
- read and analyse official documents, e.g. government statements, planning documents or official decisions – including sometimes long, formal and complex documents in the target language;
- understand a wide range of demanding, lengthy written texts and recognise implicit meaning with occasional recourse to a dictionary;
- be able to translate into English texts of general nature and texts relevant to their specific area of work, with the help of a dictionary;
- use email for short formal and informal correspondence with contacts, being aware of local email etiquette;
- draft formal letters/correspondence;
- deal effectively with cultural misunderstandings;
- fulfil the role of cultural intermediary between two cultures.

DOMAINS

Following the CEFR approach, this syllabus acknowledges that communication takes place in the context of a particular situation within domains in which social/work life is organised.

These domains are personal, educational, public and occupational, as listed below.

The C1 (Operational) examination will focus on testing candidates in communicative situations related to the Occupational Domain.

However a conversation taking place within a professional context may include references to other domains.

PERSONAL DOMAIN

- Home and family
- Friends
- Housing
- Personal interests
- Entertaining
- Emergencies

EDUCATIONAL DOMAIN

- Own academic background
- FCO training policy
- Language learning

PUBLIC DOMAIN

- Tourism
- Banking system
- Public health
- Cultural life
- Religion and customs
- Public services
- Public authorities
- Sports events

The following topic areas will be tested in the C1 Operational Examination:

OCCUPATIONAL DOMAIN

- Diplomatic life
- Cultural issues or events
- Political parties/bodies
- Elections
- Current affairs
- International political issues/conflicts
- Terrorism
- Domestic/foreign policy of country/countries where examined language is spoken
- UK policy impact abroad
- UK foreign/domestic policy in general
- Overseas territories
- Defence policy
- Environment (UK policy on...)
- UK public diplomacy
- Interaction with media
- Official communications
- Transport
- Education
- Health

EXAMINATION FEATURES

- The examination is modular in order to test, as much as possible, the skills that are relevant to the job specification of each candidate.
- There are 3 modules: Core Diplomatic Skills Module, Translation Module and Writing Module.
- All candidates are required to sit the Oral, Listening and Reading modules as these form the mandatory Core Diplomatic Skills (CDS) module. These have to be taken in the same examination round, i.e. they cannot be split up.
- Candidates that require Translation and/or Writing skills in the target language may apply to sit these modules either in the same examination round in which they are taking the Core Diplomatic Skills Module (Oral, Listening and Reading) or once they have sat and passed the CDS module.
- The examination materials are part of a bank of C1 (Operational) examination items that will be reused. Security of the material is therefore important and candidates are asked not to disclose any information relating to a module that they have sat. The bank will be revised periodically to replace items that have become obsolete.
- Reasonable examination adjustments will be made for those candidates who require reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010 (e.g. dyslexic candidates).

EXAMINATION MODULES

1. CORE DIPLOMATIC SKILLS MODULE (including Oral, Listening and Reading):

- **ORAL EXAMINATION MODULE**

A test of overall oral production which will require candidates to demonstrate an attentiveness to register and social and cultural norms.

The complete examination module lasts 1 hour 5 minutes (including preparation time) and covers a Presentation by the candidate, an Interaction between the candidate and the oral examiner, a test of Liaison Interpreting and a Negotiation exercise using a Brief related to topics within the Occupational Domain.

- **LISTENING COMPREHENSION EXAMINATION MODULE**

A test of overall listening comprehension: listening for gist and listening for detail and analysis.

The complete examination module lasts 40 minutes. Candidates will have two tasks to complete. Candidates will be asked firstly to provide a recorded oral gist summary in English of 5 short recorded texts in the language of the examination. They will then be asked to provide a written report in English of a longer recording in the language of the examination.

- **READING COMPREHENSION EXAMINATION MODULE**

A test of overall reading comprehension: reading for gist, and reading for detail and analysis.

The complete examination module lasts 71 minutes. Candidates will be asked firstly to provide a recorded oral summary in English of 5 short written texts in the language of the examination. They will then be asked to provide a written report in English of a longer text in the language of the examination.

2. TRANSLATION EXAMINATION MODULE

A test of translation skills from the foreign language into English, including understanding nuances of vocabulary and grammar.

The candidate will have two hours in which to translate into English 2 texts of approximately 300 words each. The texts will be on different topic matters within the Occupational Domain.

3. WRITING IN THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE EXAMINATION MODULE

A test of overall written production in the foreign language which will require candidates to demonstrate an attentiveness to register and social and cultural norms.

The complete examination module lasts 1 hour and 30 minutes. The candidate will be asked to produce 2 pieces of writing in the language of the examination. One will be a letter of 200 words based on a given Brief and the other will be a report of 500 words based on a Brief.

CORE DIPLOMATIC SKILLS MODULE: ORAL

Part	Features	What is tested
1. Social Introductions and Presentation 7-10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepared in advance by the candidate for presentation to an educated native speaker of the language being examined (i.e. not a specialist). Topic of candidate's choice (must be job specific) submitted for approval on the Examination Application Form. Complex presentation. Contains arguments and counter-arguments, not only facts. Candidates may use their own notes but must <u>not</u> deliver a fully scripted speech. NO DICTIONARIES ALLOWED. 	<p>Ability to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> deliver a focussed, clear, connected and coherent sustained presentation/monologue (uninterrupted by the examiner) in the language of the examination on a topic of the candidate's choice using the appropriate register; demonstrate knowledge of specific vocabulary; use appropriate linking devices (cohesion); structure the content appropriately (coherence); display appropriate fluency, correct pronunciation, range of vocabulary and syntax. <p>Candidate notes will not be assessed.</p>
2. Interaction 15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Candidate listens and reacts to questions and opinions related to the Presentation (10 minutes). Free conversation on a variety of subjects chosen from the domains (5 minutes). Candidate actively participates. Candidate seeks and gives opinions. Candidate engages in free conversation. NO DICTIONARIES ALLOWED. 	<p>Ability to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> interact with a native speaker, answering questions about the presentation, expressing agreement or disagreement, asking questions; communicate effectively with a native speaker on a variety of topics, fluently, spontaneously and confidently using a wide range of vocabulary and accurate grammar; express opinion(s) and give reasons and explanations for them.
3. Liaison Interpreting 10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bilateral issues. Diplomatic life. Main news/current affairs. Examiner and English Interlocutor will be given guidelines. Candidate will be given a short Brief to read (no preparation time allowed). NO DICTIONARIES ALLOWED. 	<p>Ability to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to interpret into English and into the language of the examination; act as an informal interpreter between a native speaker of the examined language (the examiner) and an English speaker in a work or social situation.
4. Negotiation Preparation time: 15 minutes followed by Examination time: 15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The candidate is assessed on a topic area within the Occupational Domain. Candidate and Examiner both given corresponding Briefs in English in the chosen work area. Candidate prepares the Brief by, e.g. writing down key words in the foreign language, so that s/he can take as active a part as possible. Candidate and Examiner carry out the roleplay situation in the language of the examination. NO DICTIONARIES ALLOWED. 	<p>Ability to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> carry out effectively the task described in the Brief, using the language resources at their disposal whilst being as fluent and accurate as possible; cope with complex situations candidate may have to deal with, where there is a need to negotiate, solve problems, compromise, persuade; raise and understand problems; make requests/negotiate; suggest and agree on courses of action; put an argument forward and cope with being challenged; react appropriately to anything the Examiner says; paraphrase or substitute if words/phrases are not known.

CORE DIPLOMATIC SKILLS MODULE: LISTENING

Part	Features	What is tested
1. Listening for Gist 10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listening to 5 short recorded pieces of news (current affairs) in the language of the examination, including a variety of topics and registers, and report back orally topics, issues and main ideas in English onto a voice recorder. Instructions given beforehand. 5 passages recorded to be listened and responded to individually. Each passage listened to only once. 1 minute and 12 second pause between passages to record the answers. Note taking is allowed. Recording to be supervised by invigilator. NO DICTIONARIES. 	<p>Ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> listen under time pressure, understand the gist, and report orally in English. report accurately 1) the topic and/or the issue relating to the topic; 2) the purpose of the item and/or further details.
2. Listening in Depth 30 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Task based activity. Listening to a recorded speech/ conversation/debate in the language of the examination. 5-7 minute recording on a topic area within the Occupational Domain. Answer format: written report in English. The text is heard twice with a three-minute interval between recordings. Candidates who are sitting the examination individually may be able to use headphones. NO DICTIONARIES. 	<p>Ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> listen in depth to complex speech and report back in writing in English according to a Brief; select relevant information.

CORE DIPLOMATIC SKILLS MODULE: READING

Part	Features	What is tested
1. Reading for Gist 11 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading a set of 5 short texts (pieces of news/current affairs) in the language of the examination from a variety of sources (not only newspapers) and covering a variety of topics and registers in 8 minutes. Texts will total 500-600 words (* or equivalent). Note taking is allowed. 3 minutes to report back orally topics and main ideas in English onto a voice recorder. Candidates may refer to their notes and to the 5 texts in the language of the examination during the 3 minutes report back time, but must not provide a sight translation of the texts. Recording to be supervised by invigilator. NO DICTIONARIES. 	<p>Ability to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> under time pressure comprehend and report back gist of all 5 texts within 3 minutes. report accurately 1) the topic; 2) the issue relating to the topic; 3) an impact, consequence or outcome.
2. Reading in Depth 60 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading a longer specialised text. The candidate is assessed on a topic within the Occupational Domain. Text of 700-900 words in the language of the examination (*or equivalent). Completing the task in writing in English according to the Brief given. NO DICTIONARIES. 	<p>Ability to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand what the text is trying to communicate, e.g. what is probable, what is denied or questioned, etc; understand how written communication is organised, e.g. what is the introduction to an idea, how the important points are marked, how examples are shown, etc. No formal discourse analysis will be required; read in detail to understand key points and supporting details, getting key words and their relationships right; select/collect information from different parts of the text and make a record in written English.
* NOTES	Reading for Gist	Reading in Depth
Cantonese:	Length: approx. 625-750 characters. Material will be in full-form characters and related to Hong Kong/Cantonese-speaking areas.	Length: approx. 875-1320 characters. Material will be in full-form characters and related to Hong Kong/Cantonese-speaking areas.
Japanese:	Length: approx. 720-860 ji (depending on the difficulty of the text). Material will be in kanamajiri. Candidates should aim to recognise 1945 kanji characters.	Length: approx. 1000-1450 ji (depending on the difficulty of the text). Material will be in kanamajiri. Candidates should aim to recognise 1945 kanji characters.
Korean:	Length: approx. 1000-1400 syllables/350-420 words. Candidates will not be expected to understand Chinese characters.	Length: approx. 1400-1900 syllables/480-620 words. Candidates will not be expected to understand Chinese.
Chinese Mainland Mandarin:	Length: approx. 625 -750 characters. The material will be in simplified characters.	Length: approx. 875-1320 characters. The material will be in simplified characters.
Hong Kong/ Taiwanese Mandarin:	Length: approx. 625 – 750 characters. The material will be in full form characters.	Length: approx. 875-1320 characters. The material will be in full form characters.

TRANSLATION MODULE

Parts	Exam Time	Features	What is tested
1. Text 1.	2 hours total allowed for both Parts together (timing of each Part to be managed by individual candidate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Text of 300 words (*or equivalent) to be translated into English.The candidate is assessed within a topic area of the Occupational Domain.Dictionaries allowed (hard copy or electronic as specified in the Candidate Regulations).Other reference material, such as a thesaurus, will also be allowed.	Ability to <ul style="list-style-type: none">Produce an accurate, faithful and coherent translation from the target language into English with the emphasis on accuracy, and reflecting the tone and style of the original text.
2. Text 2.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Text of 300 words (*or equivalent) to be translated into English.The candidate is assessed within a different topic area of the Occupational Domain.Dictionaries allowed (hard copy or electronic as specified in the Candidate Regulations).Other reference material, such as a thesaurus, will also be allowed.	Ability to <ul style="list-style-type: none">Produce an accurate, faithful and coherent translation from the target language into English with the emphasis on accuracy, and reflecting the tone and style of the original text.
* NOTES			
Cantonese:	Length: approx. 375-400 characters. Material will be in full-form characters and related to Hong Kong/Cantonese-speaking areas.		
Japanese:	Length: approx. 500-600 ji. Material will be in kanamajiri.		
Korean:	Length: approx. 600 syllables/200 words. Candidates will not be expected to understand Chinese characters.		
Chinese Mainland Mandarin:	Length: approx. 375-400 characters. The material will be in simplified characters.		
Hong Kong/ Taiwanese Mandarin:	Length: approx. 375-400 characters. The material will be in full form characters.		

WRITING IN THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE MODULE

Parts	Features	What is tested
1. Letter Writing 30 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief supplied in written English. Dictionaries allowed (hard copy or electronic as specified in the Candidate Regulations). Other reference material, such as a thesaurus, will also be allowed. 	Ability to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> write a letter of 200 words (or equivalent) in the language of the examination, following letter writing conventions; communicate the message satisfactorily, i.e. fulfilling the task as set out in the Brief; include everything required by the Brief and convey it accurately and appropriately in the language of examination; ensure that the appropriate letter format is used.
2. Report Writing 1 hour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief supplied in written English. The candidate is assessed within the Occupational Domain. Dictionaries allowed (hard copy or electronic as specified in the Candidate Regulations). Other reference material, such as a thesaurus, will also be allowed. 	Ability to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> write a report of 500 words (or equivalent) in the language of the examination on a work related topic; communicate the message satisfactorily, fulfilling the task as set out in the Brief; include everything required by the Brief and convey it accurately and appropriately in the language of the examination in the appropriate format.
* NOTES	Letter Writing	Report Writing
Cantonese:	Length: approx. 250 characters.	Length: approx. 600 characters.
Japanese:	Length: approx. 320 ji.	Length: approx. 800 ji.
Korean:	Length: approx. 400 syllables/120 words.	Length: approx. 1000 syllables/330 words.
Chinese Mainland Mandarin:	Length: approx. 250 characters.	Length: approx. 600 characters.
Hong Kong/ Taiwanese Mandarin:	Length: approx. 250 characters.	Length: approx. 600 characters.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

C1 (OPERATIONAL) LEVEL CORE DIPLOMATIC SKILLS MODULE: ORAL - ASSESSMENT CRITERIA						
	Range: Vocabulary/ Syntax	Accuracy	Fluency	Interaction/ Comprehension	Coherence	Content/Task Completion
General Criteria applicable to all Parts of the Oral Examination Module	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Has a good command of a broad range of language allowing him/her to select a formulation to express him/herself clearly in an appropriate style on a wide range of general, professional or leisure topics without having to restrict what s/he wants to say. ■ Readily overcomes gaps with circumlocutions, little obvious searching for expressions or avoidance strategies. ■ Good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. ■ Appreciates register shifts. S/he may, however, need to confirm occasional details, especially if the accent is unfamiliar. ■ Can use language flexibly and effectively for social purposes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical accuracy; errors are rare and generally corrected when they occur. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously almost effortlessly. ■ Maintains a high level of fluency, including pronunciation. Only a conceptually difficult subject can hinder a natural, smooth flow of language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can understand native speaker speech and can infer the message even when not explicitly signalled. ■ Can adjust what s/he says and the means of expressing it to the situation and the recipient and adopt a level of formality appropriate to the circumstances. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can produce clear, smoothly flowing, well-structured speech, showing controlled use of organisation patterns, connectors and cohesive devices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Fulfils the task completely taking into consideration social and cultural norms and is respectful of roles and relationships.
Part 1 Additional Criteria for the Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ As above 	As above	As above	As above	As above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Delivers a focussed, clear, detailed description of a complex subject. ■ Can give a clear, well-structured presentation of a complex subject, expanding and supporting points of view at some length with subsidiary points, reasons and relevant examples.

Part 2 Additional Criteria for the Interaction	As above	As above	As above	■ Can participate fully in an interview as interviewee or interviewer, expanding and developing the point being discussed fluently without any support, and handling interjections well.	As above	■ Actively participates, questions, seeks and gives opinions.
Part 3 Additional Criteria for the Liaison Interpreting	As above	■ Interprets the meaning expressed precisely in both target languages with no additions or omissions.	■ Interprets the meaning expressed fluently in both target languages with no additions or omissions.	■ Reflects the register, tone and speed of production, including attitude of speaker.	■ Reflects and enables the flow of communication between the two speakers throughout.	■ Meets the requirements of the task.
Part 4 Additional Criteria for the Negotiation	As above	As above	■ Uses fluently a variety of expressions to manipulate the negotiation and to gain time while thinking.	■ Can understand and exchange complex information and advice on the full range of matters related to his/her occupational role.	■ Can argue a formal position convincingly, responding to questions and comments and answering complex lines of counter argument fluently, spontaneously and appropriately.	■ Meets the requirements of the task, as described in the Brief. ■ Puts forward and maintains an argument and arrives at an appropriate conclusion. ■ Copes with being challenged.

C1 (OPERATIONAL) LEVEL CORE DIPLOMATIC SKILLS MODULE: LISTENING - ASSESSMENT CRITERIA		
	Comprehension	Content/Task Completion
General Criteria applicable to both Parts of the Listening Examination Module	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can understand native speaker speech and can infer the message even when not explicitly signalled. ■ Can recognise a wide range of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms, appreciating register shifts. ■ Has a good understanding of a broad lexical repertoire. ■ Has good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can quickly identify and select the content and relevance of news items, articles and reports on a wide range of topics
Part 1 Additional Criteria for the Listening for Gist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can understand gist of speech at speed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can take notes recording the information accurately with the aim of reporting back orally in English the main points (the topic, the issue and the purpose) of each of the 5 texts individually under time pressure.
Part 2 Additional Criteria for the Listening in Depth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can understand enough to follow extended speech on abstract and complex topics. ■ Can review a wide range of factual texts, commenting on and discussing contrasting points of view and themes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Responds fully to the Brief given. ■ Can quickly identify and extract in English extracts from news items or interviews containing opinions, argument or discussion within a strict time limit.

C1 (OPERATIONAL) LEVEL CORE DIPLOMATIC SKILLS MODULE: READING - ASSESSMENT CRITERIA		
	Comprehension	Content/Task Completion
General Criteria applicable to both Parts of the Reading Examination Module	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can scan quickly through texts, locating relevant details. ■ Can recognise a wide range of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms, appreciating register shifts. ■ Has a good understanding of a broad lexical repertoire. ■ Has good understanding of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can quickly identify and select the content and relevance of news items, articles and reports on a wide range of topics. ■ Can extract and reproduce in English material from news items or interviews containing opinions, argument or discussion
Part 1 Additional Criteria for the Reading for Gist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can understand gist of written texts at speed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can take notes recording the information accurately with the aim of reporting back orally a summary in English of the main points of 5 texts.
Part 2 Additional Criteria for the Reading in Depth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can understand in detail long and complex texts, appreciating distinctions of style. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Responds fully to the Brief given. ■ Can review a wide range of factual texts, commenting on and discussing contrasting points of view and main themes.

C1 (OPERATIONAL) LEVEL TRANSLATION MODULE - ASSESSMENT CRITERIA				
	Comprehension	Format	Cohesion	Content/Task Completion
Criteria applicable to all Parts of the Translation Examination Module	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Faithfully reflects the meaning of the source text accurately in the translated text without addition or omission. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Uses conventions, format and presentation which are appropriate to the intended purpose as stipulated in the Brief. ■ Reflects the attitude and style of the author of the source text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Produces a coherent and cohesive text using suitable equivalent expressions if no direct equivalent exists in the target language. ■ Does not provide alternatives to translated words or leave gaps in the translated document 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Produces a translation of consistent quality throughout. ■ Responds fully to the Brief given.

C1 (OPERATIONAL) LEVEL WRITING MODULE - ASSESSMENT CRITERIA				
	Production	Range	Accuracy	Content/Task Completion
General Criteria applicable to all Parts of the Writing Examination Module	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can express him/herself in clear, well-structured text, expressing points of view at some length. ■ Can write about complex subjects emphasising what he/she considers to be the salient issues. ■ Can select a style appropriate to the reader in mind. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Uses language flexibly and effectively. ■ Has a good command of a broad lexical repertoire/ vocabulary. ■ Has good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can express him/herself with clarity and precision in personal correspondence. ■ Spelling, grammar, vocabulary, syntax and semantics are accurate apart from occasional slips of the pen. ■ Layout, paragraphing and punctuation are consistent and helpful. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Responds fully to the Brief given.
Additional Criteria for the Letter Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Respects social and cultural norms and the local correspondence conventions. ■ Uses appropriate letter format. 	As above	As above	As above
Additional Criteria for the Report Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can write clear, well-structured texts of complex subjects, emphasising the relevant salient issues, expanding and supporting points of view at some length with subsidiary points, reasons and relevant examples, and rounding them off with an appropriate conclusion. 	As above	As above	As above

MARKING AND REPORTING RESULTS

All Parts of each Module are equally weighted. A result will be issued per Part and per Examination Module, graded 1, 2 or 3 (Pass) or Performance Improvement Needed 4, 5 or 6 (Fail):

90-100%	= 1 (Pass/ Very Good)
80-89%	= 2 (Pass/ Good)
70-79%	= 3 (Pass/ Sufficient)
46-69%	= 4 (Fail/ Insufficient)
23-45%	= 5 (Fail/ Insufficient)
0-22%	= 6 (Fail/ Insufficient)

Candidates will need to pass all the Core Diplomatic Skills (CDS) Module sub-modules (i.e. Oral, Listening, Reading) in order to achieve an Overall Pass at the C1 Operational level. Candidates who pass at least one of the three, can bank the sub-module(s) they have passed for six months only.

The Core Diplomatic Skills Module result will be the average of the Oral, Listening, and Reading sub-module results. For example:

Core Diplomatic Skills Module result: 2 Pass/ Good (82)

Oral Module result: 3 Pass/ Sufficient (78)

- | | |
|--------------------------|----|
| 1. Presentation: | 85 |
| 2. Interaction: | 80 |
| 3. Liaison Interpreting: | 70 |
| 4. Negotiation: | 75 |

- Listening Module result: 3 Pass/ Sufficient (77)

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|------------------------|----|
| 1. Listening for Gist: | 75 |
| 2. Listening in Depth: | 78 |

- Reading Module result: 1 Pass/ Very Good (90)

- | | |
|----------------------|----|
| 1. Reading for Gist: | 85 |
| 2. Reading in Depth: | 95 |

Translation Module result: 1 Pass/Very Good (90)

- | | |
|-------------|----|
| 1. Text 1.: | 95 |
| 2. Text 2.: | 85 |

Writing Module Result: 3 Pass/ Sufficient (70)

- | | |
|--------------------|----|
| 1. Letter Writing: | 75 |
| 2. Report Writing: | 65 |

MATERIALS AVAILABLE FOR PREPARATION

Language specific training syllabi and language specific C1 and C2 examination sample papers are available on FCONet.

SAMPLE MATERIALS

Sample Presentation Topics (Oral Module, Part 1)

- Preventing Extremism - the Foreign Office role
- Working for the Foreign Secretary
- Al-Qaeda's global strategy
- The Stern Review of Climate Change
- Energy Policy in the European Union
- International dimensions to the crisis in X (country)
- Comparison of transport systems in London and X (capital city)
- Comparison of banking systems in Britain and X(country)
- the UK approach to counter-terrorism
- British Policy towards Z (country) since X (date/event).

Sample Negotiation Brief (Oral Module, Part 4)

Sample Briefs for Candidate and Examiner are given below.

Candidate's brief:

There has been a recent change of government in the country where you are posted, and the new government is less sympathetic towards the UK and less likely to back British proposals on international issues. There is a need for a public diplomacy project to improve the situation, and you would like to launch a project using sport as its theme.

You are meeting the Director General of the local State-owned television company to try and organise a film festival of UK sport films, to be shown both in the capital and on one of the State television channels.

1. Create a common ground:

- Explain what you are trying to achieve (need to strengthen/improve current relations).
- Stress the similarities between the two countries (love of sport and films).

2. Negotiate:

- The programme is to be over 6 weeks, with one British film per week.
- The films to be shown at a reasonably early time, for mass viewing.
- Some of the film directors can be interviewed on one of the local State channels.
- The Ambassador, who is both a passionate football follower and a film expert, will also give an interview to be broadcast on two of the main radio bulletins, one in the morning and one in the evening.
- The Ambassador will open the film festival with one British film to be shown in one of the capital's cinemas, to be mutually agreed.

3. The main aim of the negotiation is to reach an agreement to the film festival, for at least 4 films to be shown on the state channels. *Always bring the negotiation back to what is stated in the brief, repeating your initial argument if necessary.*

Examiner's brief:

AS ABOVE PLUS:

Prepare yourself thoroughly on what the candidate is going to request.

Listen to the requests and object to them individually, asking the candidate to go back and repeat points if necessary. Only agree when the candidate has presented a fluent and coherent argument – support the candidate if s/he has difficulty with the content (rather than the language), by making further suggestions.

- You are the Director General of the local State-owned TV and radio station.
- You are concerned that Britain is not seen in a particularly good light at the moment and people will not be interested in the British films, they prefer locally made films anyway.
- The locals like sports, not so much films on sport.
- Can agree to show the films (to be chosen and agreed on in a separate meeting). Will probably be considerably fewer than 6.
- They will be shown late at night (after midnight). All films directed to selected audiences are shown at this time.
- British directors interviewed by local journalists could be interesting, but we will choose whom to invite.
- Not sure about interviewing the Ambassador, only if s/he can speak the local language fluently.
- Opening ceremony and local cinemas outside your remit (you can make alternative suggestions if time allows).

Sample Listening / Reading for Gist Texts (Listening / Reading Module, Part 1)

A model answer for the reading is given, for award of a minimum pass, following each sample text.

Text 1

There is a water shortage in Spain, whereas Austria has too much water. Is it possible for Austria to help Spain by selling them water? Might that not present a good deal for Austria? No, say Austria's water experts; it would be uneconomical and a danger to the Austrian environment. Austria needs only three percent of the water at its disposal. However, to sell water to other countries less rich in water would not be good business, says Harald Schneider, President of the Austrian Association for Gas and Water. Transporting water from Austria to Spain would be both technically and economically unfeasible. The distances are too long. A pipeline would be enormously expensive and, in comparison to a water desalination plant in Spain, more than twice as costly.

Model answer

1. The topic: this is about the fact that Austria has a surplus of water and Spain has a shortage.
2. The issue is whether or not Austria could export its water to Spain.
3. The outcome: Austria says this is impossible.

Text 2

It is estimated that almost 2 million Poles have emigrated for economical reasons and most of them live in London. The Polish government has had an educational advice scheme here since April 2008. Teachers are responsible for making sure that the education of Polish children in London is complete – so that if or when they return to Poland, they do not have to catch up on courses they have missed. According to pedagogy experts, this sort of schooling is good for Polish students. It follows a program which familiarises the students with the language and culture of both countries. Children of emigrants are often caught between two cultures and they find it difficult to integrate back into typical Polish schools on their return.

Model answer

1. The topic: this is about Polish children and education.
2. The issue is that children brought up in London miss out on Polish culture and language.
3. The outcome: the Polish government is funding courses for them

Text 3

The European Union and several east European countries are calling on Washington to allow visa-free travel to the US from all EU countries, warning yesterday that the issue is festering and could poison pro-American public opinion in those countries. The discrimination particularly rankles in those countries such as Poland and Hungary, that have supported the US by sending troops to Iraq and Afghanistan and whose citizens are very pro-American, unlike much of Western Europe. The US administration has said that these countries do not yet meet the technical requirements for visa-free travel, in particular a visa rejection rate of less than 3 per cent, a reduction in the number of their citizens who overstay visas in the US and the adoption of biometric passports.

Model answer

1. The topic: this is about visa-free travel for all EU citizens to the US.
2. The issue is that some EU countries that have been supportive of US recent military action are not entitled to visa-free travel.
3. The outcome: the US says this is because these countries have not yet met technical visa and passport requirements.

Text 4

Storage of communications data so that law-enforcement agencies can access them as part of their investigations into terrorism and other serious crimes has been a bone of contention between some European governments and industry for years. The UK had identified securing a deal on data retention as a priority during its six-month presidency of the European Union. The European Parliament finally approved proposals after lengthy shuttle diplomacy between London, Brussels and Strasbourg.

Model answer

1. The topic: this is about the storage of communications data and access by law-enforcement agencies across Europe.
2. The issue is that data retention has been a bone of contention between EU countries for some time.
3. The outcome: The UK secured a deal with the European Parliament finally approving proposals.

Text 5

Top employers who regularly comb the universities on the annual milk round are dissatisfied. The problem is deep-rooted in Britain's education system. University admissions staff complain that new students lack independent learning skills and expect to be spoon-fed. Yet they cannot afford to wait for the long-promised improvement in secondary education to solve the problem. Perhaps employers should cast their recruitment nets more widely. There are plenty of graduates from the newer universities that would participate in the milk round if more attention was paid to vocational needs. If employers select only graduates with the highest degrees, they encourage students to believe that academic achievement is all that is needed for success.

Model answer

1. The topic: Employers can't rely on the milk round to find good graduates.
2. The issue is that universities claim that students arrive from school lacking independent learning skills.
3. The outcome: Employers should cast their nets wider to consider graduates from newer universities, and pay more attention to vocational needs.

Sample Report Writing Brief (Writing Module, Part 2)

Sample Brief for Candidate is given below.

Write a report in the language of the examination on the following topic. The report should be clearly structured and addressed to an educated member of the public, but someone who may not necessarily have any in depth knowledge of the subject you are writing about. Your report should be approximately 500 words (or equivalent) long. Dictionaries are allowed, but candidates may not use any notes or other support material.

“Delivering high-quality support for British nationals abroad, in normal times and in crises” is one of the FCO's Strategic Priorities. Give examples of how an overseas Post and the FCO in London are able to achieve this goal.”

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