

# National Developments in MFL



## The Languages Ladder Steps to Success

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”

### What is it?

The development of a voluntary national recognition scheme for languages – the Languages Ladder – is one of three overarching aims of the National Languages Strategy. The scheme is designed to endorse achievement in language skills at all levels of competence and for all ages in a wide range of languages.

### It is made up of six stages:

|              |                |                       |
|--------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| Breakthrough | grades 1 - 3   | (Entry level)         |
| Preliminary  | grades 4 - 6   | (Level 1)             |
| Intermediate | grades 7 - 9   | (Level 2)             |
| Advanced     | grades 10 - 12 | (Level 3)             |
| Proficiency  | grades 13 - 15 | (Higher Levels 4 - 6) |
| Mastery      | grades 16 & 17 | (Higher Levels 7 & 8) |

### Who is it for?

The scheme can be used for all language learners in schools, colleges and at work. It recognises

achievement at different levels, in different skills and in different contexts. Designed to sit alongside other assessment frameworks and qualifications, rather than to replace them, it is not associated with any specific programme of study. It might therefore be appropriate in situations where existing formal assessment opportunities are not generally offered: at the end of a programme of language study in Key Stage 3, for example. The scheme is portable and supports lifelong learning.

### The Languages Ladder Steps to Success

#### How will it be assessed?

There are a series of 'can-do' statements for each skill at each grade. Although it may be used as end-of-course assessment, the Languages Ladder is designed to endorse the learner's achievement and assessment will be available when the learner is ready.

There will be external assessment at the interface between the stages and teacher assessment within each stage of grades. Each skill will be certificated separately. This is likely to be available on-line from a relatively early stage in the development of the scheme; just-in-time testing is also likely to be introduced at a later stage. The 'can-do' statements can support formative assessment and Assessment for Learning. The teacher assessment model can lead to a UCLES 'Asset Languages' Grade Award for any skill at any grade. The external assessment, using the UCLES 'Asset Languages' external tests will lead to a qualification recognised within the National Qualifications Framework.

#### When will it be available?

UCLES has been pre-testing and piloting the different models in French, German and Spanish at Breakthrough, Preliminary and Intermediate stages since autumn 2004 in a range of schools in England, and with adult learners.

The scheme will be rolled out nationally in autumn 2005 for the first three stages in eight initial languages: Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Panjabi, Spanish and Urdu.

From autumn 2006 additional languages within the first three stages are likely to be

Arabic, Bengali, Greek, Gujarati, Hindi, Irish, Modern Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Somali, Swedish, Tamil, Turkish, Welsh and Yoruba. At the same time the Advanced level in at least the three pilot languages will also be available. Additional languages and levels will be phased in through to autumn 2008.

#### What might be the benefits?

- In a potentially changing climate of assessment, it supports peer and self-assessment and Assessment for Learning.
- It is flexible enough to meet the needs of a wide range of learners.
- The external assessment attracts assessment and attainment points, and will therefore count towards performance tables.
- It could provide motivation during and recognition of achievement in Key Stage 3 – thus encouraging uptake in Key Stage 4.
- It can support language learning in Key Stage 4 and post-16 within a wide range of learning pathways, including vocational and work-related contexts.
- The range of languages and levels means that speakers and learners of lesser taught languages can have their achievement recognised.
- The scheme has the potential to raise the profile of language learning within and outside the school setting.

#### For more information, please see

[www.dfes.gov.uk/languages/DSP\\_languagesladder.cfm](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/languages/DSP_languagesladder.cfm)

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# The Languages Ladder: Steps for Success

Mapping of qualification levels

| <b>NQF</b>  | <b>NC Levels</b> | <b>General Qualifications</b> | <b>LL Stages</b>     | <b>CEF (approx)</b> |
|-------------|------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Entry level | 1-3              | Entry 1-3                     | Breakthrough:<br>1-3 | A1 (A2)             |
| Level 1     | 4-6              | Foundation<br>GCSE            | Preliminary:<br>4-6  | A2 (B1)             |
| Level 2     | 7-EP             | Higher GCSE                   | Intermediate:<br>7-9 | B1                  |
| Level 3     |                  | AS/A/AEA                      | Advanced:<br>10-12   | B2                  |
| Level 4     |                  |                               | Proficiency:<br>13   | C1                  |
| Level 5     |                  |                               | Mastery: 14          | C2                  |

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