Please read in conjunction with the information provided in the introductory section above.

ENGLISH TEST SPECIFICATION

1 AIMS

The AEA in English should be accessible to the most able students studying English Language, English Literature, and English Language and Literature.
The AEA in English should encourage students to:

- acquire greater skills of enquiry, analysis and synthesis within the three English disciplines;
- write with precision and conviction;
- sustain their interest and enjoyment of literary and/or linguistic study;
- engage intelligently and creatively with a wide selection of unseen texts, regardless of the Advanced GCE English specification/s being followed; and
- Work with insight and originality on tasks that move beyond those of the English Advanced GCE synoptic modules.

2 CONTENT

The AEA in English will assess candidates' ability to:

- understand and analyse texts of different types and periods using appropriate conceptual frameworks;
- understand and evaluate the ways in which contextual variation and choices of form, style and vocabulary shape the meanings of texts;
- generate and synthesise insights and apply knowledge gained from Advanced GCE specification content;
- articulate independent opinions and judgements on the significance of texts, informed by knowledge of other approaches to interpretation and analysis; and
- write precisely and with some originality in response to tasks set.

3 ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVE

The AEA in English will assess candidates' abilities to apply and communicate effectively their knowledge and understanding of English, some of its methodologies and texts, using the skills of critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis.

4 SCHEME OF ASSESSMENT

External assessment will be a three hour written examination, of which up to one hour will be recommended as reading time. Candidates will answer two equally weighted questions from a choice of up to six. The examination will be taken under controlled conditions.
The examination will be based on a collection of textual material which will invite candidates to focus on a central issue/major ideas in the subject. It will typically comprise the following elements:

- unfamiliar primary texts from different genres and periods, drawn from spoken and written language, and selected to facilitate comparisons and connections;
- some secondary texts linked to the primary reading material by, for example, authorship, context, or specific commentary, and which raise issues of literary or linguistic debate relevant to the interpretation of the primary texts;
- other secondary materials which demonstrate a range of critical views, theoretical positions and analytical approaches which have the potential to illuminate and challenge ways of reading the package as a whole.

The tasks set or routes through the material should enable candidates to draw on either literary or linguistic studies or a combination of both. Where appropriate to the textual material, question styles may include opportunities for candidates to produce their own imaginative or recreative writing.

Questions will require candidates to:

- closely read and analyse some of the primary texts;
- discuss some of the relationships between the primary and secondary texts;
- reflect critically on issues raised by the package as a whole, taking account of such matters as contextual factors, methods of analysis, topics of literary or linguistic debate.

Use of resources

In common with Advanced GCE examinations, the use of dictionaries will not be permitted. The use of any other resources must take full account of the need to ensure fairness to all candidates and the rigour of the assessment.

5 PERFORMANCE LEVEL DESCRIPTORS

Distinction

Candidates:

- analyse unfamiliar texts in ways which demonstrate critical understanding and insight, using conceptual frameworks, knowledge of contextual factors and other analytical approaches to reach secure and stimulating judgements;
- make connections and comparisons between texts at different levels, generating sophisticated and convincing readings of the inter-relationships between language, ideas, viewpoints and content;
- discuss literary/linguistic issues rigorously and elucidate their debates with knowledge, evidence and conviction, arguing a point of view from a coherently constructed position;
- demonstrate skills of synthesis in writing which is precise, individual and mature in style.

Merit

Candidates:

- analyse unfamiliar texts perceptively and cogently, selecting relevant conceptual frameworks and demonstrating knowledge of contextual factors or other analytical approaches;
- make thoughtful and original connections and comparisons between unfamiliar texts and concepts to illuminate meanings and to validate judgements or support hypotheses, drawing on knowledge of texts already studied;
- discuss literary/ linguistic issues perceptively and reflectively and to argue a point of view convincingly, using well-selected evidence;

write in a lively, cogent and convincing style with accuracy and control