

GCSE

Home Economics (Food and Nutrition)

General Certificate of Secondary Education **J431**

OCR Report to Centres June 2015

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This report on the examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the examination.

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B001/01 B001/02 Short Tasks

General Comments:

The quality of controlled assessment work, both in B001 Short Tasks and B002 Food Study, was high. It is encouraging to see this standard of work and this degree of understanding of the assessment criteria. The work reflected a continuing good quality of teaching and commitment to the subject. Candidates of all abilities demonstrated a high level of achievement in both Units.

The majority of Centres marked the work of their candidates accurately and consistently. Many had benefited from the training offered this year. Some Centres still, however, awarded marks that were too generous, even for good quality work. It is important to consider carefully the differentiating factors within each mark band and then to award the mark that is the best fit. New updated B001 Short Task titles were introduced for first assessment this year. The new titles have been designed to ensure that all candidates do comparable practical and analytical work, and they have also clarified expectations within the Investigation task, thereby improving the quality of candidate response. Although Centres were informed of the new titles, some have used the old titles, and this may have adversely affected their marks.

Also new this year was the requirement to submit a Witness Statement to support and explain the award of practical marks for the B001 Short Task Unit. Whilst most centres submitted witness statements which were very helpful at moderation, this has not yet been fully implemented, and the detail given on the statements has been variable. It is essential to complete these statements in detail to provide the evidence to support marks awarded in the practical.

Moderators are required to identify instances of suspected malpractice. Centres are reminded that the use of incorrect titles is a form of malpractice, which will result in the centres being referred on for consideration. Centres are also reminded that annotation, which could aid candidates, is not permissible in controlled assessment. There is a danger, for example, that overly thorough annotation might be seen as malpractice.

A very small number of Centres entered candidates through the OCR repository.

Comments on Individual Units

B001/01 B001/02 Short Tasks

It was evident that candidates enjoyed the very practical nature of the Short Task Unit. The quality of work was high, and candidates demonstrated a range of different skills across the three set tasks.

The accuracy of Centre marking was good, showing an increasing awareness of the application of assessment and marking criteria.

All the new, updated practical titles now require that two items are planned and made, and that either sensory or nutritional analysis is carried out. This has ensured comparability across all candidates.

Where old titles were used, then they were moderated to the expectations of the new title, i.e. two items planned and made, plus analysis.

The clear wording of the Investigation titles has improved candidate understanding. All candidates submitted two Practical and one Investigation Task, as required.

The Witness statement, in addition to the annotation on the URS, assisted the moderation process. These two pieces of evidence are essential to support the award of marks.

Practical Tasks

- The Practical tasks were very well done by many candidates, demonstrating high quality practical work supported by thorough planning and evaluation.
- All titles were attempted; Eggs, Pastry and 5-a-day were clearly the most popular.
- Most candidates made good choices of practical work, but some then failed to fully explain these choices by giving detailed reasons related to the title and to the skills being demonstrated. Detailed reasons are needed to access the high mark band.
- The majority of candidates planned the practical work well, although not all planned the testing of their chosen items.
- All candidates completed two items per task, demonstrating a variety of skills. The standard of practical work generally is high, with skilful, quality items being produced.
- Nutritional or sensory analysis is now required in all titles. Whilst data from the analysis was presented by most candidates, the quality of assessment varied considerably. Better candidates were able to look critically at the results, suggesting improvements where necessary, whilst others made little or no comment.
- Evaluations were generally quite well done, with comments on all areas of the task. Some candidates did not make reference to any data collected or refer back to the title, thereby making the drawing of conclusions difficult. Detailed, meaningful conclusions are essential if the candidate is to access the top mark range. The use of evaluation charts or grids unfortunately often produced a list of points, rather than well explained evaluative comment.

Investigation Task

- There was an improvement in the quality of Investigation tasks, due to the clear requirements of the new titles.
- The Investigation is still, however, the most challenging of the three Short Tasks, as it differs from a Practical task in that the quality and range of investigatory skills demonstrated is paramount. A minimum of three factors must be investigated.
- All Investigation task titles were used. Convenience foods and adapting a traditional recipe were the most popular investigations
- Some excellent investigations were moderated, but some candidates did not fully demonstrate a range of investigation skills. Many candidates considered nutritional or sensory testing but few other factors. Cost, time, availability and effort could also be considered.
- It is essential to identify the factors that will form the investigation in addition to the choice of the actual food items to be investigated. Many candidates did not do this, and so then failed to plan the appropriate testing and recording charts.
- The carrying out of the testing or comparison work is a major part of the Practical section, and similarly the charts are part of Outcome. In some cases these elements were over-marked, notably where there was little evidence of actual investigatory work and subsequent results.
- Some candidates produced evaluations that drew conclusions based on their investigation results, but these were in the minority. Candidates are expected to use the results of their investigations as evidence on which to draw conclusions, which of course must relate back to the initial title.

B002/01 B002/02 Food Study

Many high quality Studies were seen. Candidates were able to demonstrate their research, decision-making and analytical skills in addition to their practical and evaluative abilities. The better Studies were logical, structured and had a clear flow.

It was evident that advice and training had been acted upon, as the quality of response within the Selection and Planning section of the Food Studies showed a clear improvement.

The most popular Food Study titles were Foods from Around the World and Healthy Eating. Special Diets were also popular, along with making dishes suitable for those on Low Incomes.

- There were many well written titles, with good reasons for their choice. Titles that are too wide make it difficult to identify a focus for the research. A lack of clear factors within a title makes detailed research and then appropriate sorting of ideas challenging.
- The Research section was generally well done, with a range of information sources used and credited. Many candidates were able to select relevant information and summarise this in their own words. At times, however, there is too much use of copied or downloaded information, with no clear indication of summarising or selecting of information.
- Primary research was well implemented. However, sometimes the results of this were limited. The majority of candidates carried out at least one piece of primary research, but two are required for the high mark band. Questionnaires, surveys and food diaries were the most popular techniques used, but some interesting interviews and comparison work were also seen. In some cases primary research lacked a clear purpose and questionnaires lacked direction. Results were not always clearly displayed nor used.
- It is strongly recommended that candidates draw conclusions at the end of their Research section. These should summarise the key points from both the secondary and primary research that has been completed and so make clear what needs to be considered in selecting appropriate dishes.
- The Selection and Planning of Practical Work section remains the most problematic.
- Many Centres have heeded moderator advice in guiding candidates to sort and assess their ideas for the practical work before making choices. Candidates have produced charts weighing up the pros and cons of different ideas for practical work. This could be even further improved by encouraging candidates to make full use of their previous research when justifying their final choices.
- Reasons for choice of practical work in some cases tended to lack detail and did not refer to research and assessment work undertaken previously.
- Candidates should plan all testing and recording systems to be used for assessing their practical results. This planning was often omitted, even when testing was undertaken.
- The standard of practical work was generally very good, as demonstrated by a range of skilful, quality items that fulfilled the task. The vast majority of candidates completed the minimum of four practical items, demonstrating a range of skills. The majority of Centres provided annotation to support the marks awarded. This is essential for moderation.
- Many candidates included nutritional data to support their work, with detailed reference made to it and suggestions for improvement. Some candidates only included the data or star diagram with no comment, which does not demonstrate analytical skills.
- The majority of candidates completed well planned and considered sensory testing.

- Throughout the Food Study, candidates should be encouraged to evaluate and draw conclusions as they proceed, thus enabling them to score well in the Evaluation. The best evaluations considered all aspects of the task, reviewing performance and identifying strengths and weakness. Conclusions were drawn and suggestions made for improvement. Well evidenced conclusions are essential for access to the high mark band. There is an increasing tendency to produce evaluation grids. Candidates should be aware that this practice too often results in lists of partially explained comments rather than a well evidenced assessment of performance. It is important in an evaluation to assess performance and not to simply describe what was done.
- The standard of spelling, punctuation and grammar was accurately reflected in the marks awarded for evaluations, and many teachers commented on this as part of their annotation.

B003 Principles of Food and Nutrition

General Comments:

Examiners felt that this was a fair paper which allowed everybody to demonstrate their ability. Most candidates were able to gain good marks, and there was a good spread of marks across the paper. Questions differentiated well between candidates. Most candidates attempted all questions, with very few “NR” responses seen. Candidates appeared to have had sufficient time to attempt the whole of the paper. Examiners were pleased to note that when candidates had used extra paper or written in the back of the booklet, they indicated that this had been done. This makes marking easier.

Where a question asks for three ways, and candidates give more than required, only the first three will be marked. Any other answers will be annotated as ‘seen’ but will not be credited

Comments on Individual Questions:

Question No.

Q1 (ai) – Most candidates provided the correct answer. Inclusion of units was required for the mark. A few candidates did not provide any units or provided the incorrect units and so could not be credited.

Q1 (aii) – Many candidates did not attempt this question. Candidates had to provide the exact answer to be credited. Some gave ‘amount’ instead of ‘allowance’.

Q1 (aiii) – Most candidates provided the correct answer. The percentage was required, so any answers providing the amount in grams were not credited.

Q1 (aiv) – Candidates need to be specific in their answer in order to be awarded the marks for this question. They needed to identify ‘strong’ in relation to teeth and/or bones. Phrases such as ‘healthy’, ‘for growing bones/teeth’ and ‘for development of teeth/bones’ were not credited.

Q1 (av) – Most candidates gained the mark for this question. A few made vague statements relating to ‘cool/dry place’ or contradicted themselves, e.g. ‘in a fridge, below 18°C’, so were not awarded the mark.

Q1 (b) – Generally candidates demonstrated a good level of understanding and were able to apply their knowledge sufficiently to gain marks. Those who scored full marks provided concise answers, making three clear points followed by explanations. Candidates were expected to apply their knowledge and use the information given in the previous page. Those who provided general facts about the drink, such as, ‘as it is flavoured children will like it’ or, ‘as it is made from milk it is good for children’ were not credited.

Q1 (c) - In this question candidates were expected to name three types of milk that are not stored in a fridge. The wording ‘types of milk’ made some candidates think of ‘goats’ and ‘semi-skimmed’ rather than other milks that are not fresh. Common incorrect answers were ‘tinned/canned’, ‘long-lasting’ and ‘pasteurised’.

Q1 (d) – To be awarded the mark, Candidates had to make reference to nutrients/minerals or vitamins or the increase in nutritional value. Some candidates used vague terms such as ‘things added ...’ which were not credited. More candidates gave correct answers than in previous years.

Q1 (e) – Good application of knowledge was seen on this question. Candidates were able to correctly identify and describe two ways food labelling could be useful for the consumer. Nutritional information, best-before dates and an ingredient list were the most common correct answers. When writing about special diets, candidates need to specify the type of diet to gain the mark, for example, ‘weight loss diet’, ‘gluten-free’, ‘low fat’. The term ‘diet’ alone is considered too vague to be credited.

Q2 (a) – Most candidates provided a correct response for this question.

Q2 (b) – Marks were fairly evenly distributed between 0 and 3 for this question. Candidates had to make sensible changes to the meal (any part) in relation to healthy eating guidelines. Overall, candidates demonstrated a mixed knowledge about fat, many incorrectly stating, ‘use a low fat or healthier oil’, which was not credited. There were many sensible suggestions, including, ‘have vegetables with it’, ‘no batter on the fish’ and ‘oven cooking the fish/chips’. Candidates must ensure that they are specific with their suggestions: statements such as, ‘grill it’ could not be awarded marks, as the examiners could not be sure whether the candidate was referring to the fish or the chips; the fish could be grilled but the chips could not.

Q2 (ci) – Most candidates knew the three main ingredients found in batter and gained full marks. Those that did not score well often incorrectly quoted, ‘butter/oil’ as a main ingredient. Some thought outside of the traditional batter mix and correctly identified ‘beer’ rather than water or milk.

Q2 (cii) – Many candidates gained 1 or 2 marks for this question. Those who scored only one identified two types of battered meat or vegetables which were on the same line of the mark scheme, and so could only be awarded one mark. A common misconception was that spring rolls were made from batter rather than pastry.

Q2 (ciii) – Most candidates did not score on this question, not knowing what happens when to food when it is cooked. For two marks Candidates needed to state:

Liquid – heat/steam rising

Protein – setting/coagulating/solid along with a reference to structure

Starch – absorbing liquid/bursting and setting/gelatinisation/dextrinisation

Answers were often muddled and generic rather than specific to the ingredient, so were not credited.

Q3 – This question differentiated clearly. The first part was usually answered well, offering a range of reasons why someone may become a vegetarian. The second part produced a more mixed response. To achieve top marks, candidates were required to offer specific information regarding the nutritional needs of vegetarians, rather than just general healthy eating guidelines. Some candidates offered very general information such as, ‘they like animals’ and ‘they need carbohydrates’ so could not be credited in the top levels.

Q4 (ai) – Most candidates were able to use the graph given and correctly identify Japan.

Q4 (a ii) – Candidates were expected to read from the graph and provide ‘500’ as the correct answer. A few candidates were not credited as they either misread the graph or gave, ‘500,000’ as their answer.

Q4 (b) – There was a good spread of marks for this question. The question is about diet so answers relating to smoking and exercise were not credited. The majority of candidates correctly identified some changes that could be made but did not offer the correct description of how these changes might be implemented. Some candidates' descriptions simply repeated the stem or question, '... to reduce the risk of coronary heart disease', and so were not credited.

Q4 (c) – Many candidates scored either one or nought for this question. They were expected to give the exact name of the food group on the eatwell plate, meaning that the only answers accepted were exactly those as on the mark scheme. Answers such as, 'carbohydrates' or 'meat and fish' could not be credited. The most common correct answer was, 'fruit and vegetables'.

Q4 (d) – Most candidates gained at least two marks for this question. Answers similar to CHD, such as CVD and heart attacks, were not credited.

Q5 (a) – The question asked about specific qualities of fruit and vegetables that may appeal to consumers, so statements relating to 'air miles' or 'best-before dates' were not credited. One-word answers were not accepted, so words such as 'colour', 'fresh' and 'texture' had to be explained in order to achieve the mark.

Q5 (b) – Most candidates scored on this question. A few candidates stated 'milk' and 'cakes', which were not credited.

Q5 (c) – Candidates needed to be clear with their statements. For example, some did not score as they contradicted themselves: 'in the freezer at 12°C'. Candidates often limited the marks they achieved by repeating themselves, including, for example, 'low temperatures' and also 'refrigerated', and so could only achieve one out of the two marks. Temperature ranges had to be correct to be credited.

Q5 (d) – Good knowledge was demonstrated by the majority of candidates. Marks were lost only if the spelling of the bacteria was so bad that the examiner could not understand it.

Q5 (e) – In order to achieve full marks, candidates had to name and explain three different ways of avoiding food poisoning when preparing, cooking and storing meat in the home. Some candidates did not achieve full marks as they repeated their methods or explanations. Good answers provided a range of things to consider. Again, temperature ranges provided by candidates must be correct to be awarded the mark.

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)
1 Hills Road
Cambridge
CB1 2EU

OCR Customer Contact Centre

Education and Learning

Telephone: 01223 553998

Facsimile: 01223 552627

Email: general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk

www.ocr.org.uk

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