

Home Economics Food Nutrition & Health

Advanced GCE A2 H511

Advanced Subsidiary GCE AS H111

Report on the Units

June 2009

HX11/MS/R/09

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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 syllabus 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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Advanced Subsidiary GCE Home Economics (H111)

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Chief Examiner's Report

It was very pleasing to see that candidates of all abilities have been able to demonstrate a positive level of achievement in both the Society and Health (G001) and Resource Management (G002) units of this new specification. It was apparent that where teachers had a good understanding of the specification appropriate guidance and support was given to their candidates. Some examination scripts were excellent and revealed a considerable degree of subject knowledge and understanding. The majority were satisfactory and often demonstrated a genuine enthusiasm for the subject and a desire to do well.

Centres need to ensure that candidates read the questions carefully to avoid misinterpretation. Some candidates lose marks by ignoring the command word and focus of questions. It would be helpful when practising question paper technique to include a session on identifying the key words in questions to avoid misinterpretations. Candidates could underline the key words on their question papers to help them identify the important elements of the question.

It is clear that many candidates are well-prepared for the structure of this paper. Yet time management is a problem for some candidates. In section B the planning of essay questions, when required, needs to be more concise. Exam questions should not be written out. Too much time is wasted on producing very detailed plans by candidates to inform their written response. Centres must consider the allocation of time to essay preparation activities to ensure there is maximum benefit to candidates. Short, succinct planning is more appropriate at this level. Writing the essay responses is also an area which could be developed. Some candidates gave quantity rather than quality. Sharing the banded mark schemes in lessons will help candidates to understand how they are assessed and encourage a focus on accurate and clear writing. The space provided in the booklet should guide candidates to the length of response required and they should work within this parameter.

I would encourage centres to take careful note of the specific comments made by the Principal Examiners. These Reports should be read alongside the mark schemes. They can be used as a guide to improve candidate performance as they provide more detailed feedback.

G001 Society and Health

General Comments

Section A was answered adequately by the vast majority of candidates. Few missed out entire questions.

The vast majority of candidates followed the instructions for section B and only picked two questions to answer. Where candidates answered all three of the questions, the highest two question marks were awarded.

It was evident that many candidates spent considerable time writing detailed plans, only to then more or less re-write them as their final answer. This may have been a contributory factor in some candidates not completing their final question. Similarly, candidates who wrote out the question they were answering reduced the time available for answering the question. Some candidates wrote answers to both parts of a Section B question as one piece of continuous prose. This proved difficult to mark, and was unlikely to have produced clearly focussed responses.

Comments on Individual Questions

- 1
- (a) The data was extracted correctly by virtually all candidates.
 - (b) Most candidates could identify simply two changes in employment patterns, although several restricted themselves to the data provided in 1 (a). The descriptions giving depth to the answer were often less convincing.
 - (c) The definition of absolute poverty was well known. Some candidates provided muddled definitions of relative poverty.
 - (d) A number of candidates failed to read the question correctly and described the decline within a poor community, rather than the effects of poverty on a teenager. Some of the better candidates used technical vocabulary with confidence in their answers.
 - (e) Four factors were identified by the majority of candidates, but the impact of these on the standard of living was not always clear. A number of responses were muddled and repetitive.

Question 2 was answered by a very high proportion of candidates.

- 2
- (a) Many candidates could identify the causes of obesity at a simple level. Many of the weaker answers were little more than lists of factors without any details. Better answers made explicit the relationship between energy intake and expenditure, and clearly linked dietary factors with exercise and general lifestyle. A small number referred to the effects of obesity on general health, rather than answering the question. A few grouped all "bad" food together stating, for instance, that salt caused obesity.

- (b) Better candidates referred to the "Choosing Health" white paper. A small minority were still referring to "Our Healthier Nation". Perhaps due to the lead in from part a, many candidates made no mention at all of any initiatives other than those relating to diet and exercise. A few candidates wasted a great deal of time writing about private industry initiatives e.g. Sainsbury's "Active Kids" and "Weight Watchers".

Question 3 was answered by a minority of candidates. Those who did attempt it generally had a reasonable knowledge of the relevant facts.

- 3 (a) The majority were able to differentiate between primary and secondary health care and answers were of a reasonable standard on the whole.
- (b) Knowledge of Social Care provision was also reasonable. Many used appropriate specialist terminology competently.

Question 4 was also popular.

- 4 (a) This question differentiated well between candidates. Most could give simple lists of factors causing a decline in environmental quality, but fewer were able to describe the impact these factors had. Most candidates were confused about which gases cause ozone depletion, global warming or acid rain. Many seemed to consider these three terms interchangeable.
- (b) This question produced a wide range of answers. Better candidates were able to write fluently about a wide range of factors relating to the various aspects of household resource management. Less able candidates tended to focus in great detail on varieties of insulation in the home.

G002 Resource Management

General Comments

The paper was fair and provided the opportunity for all abilities to achieve. There were few very poor scripts but also few outstanding ones. Some excellent essays were seen but rarely two on the same paper. Most handwriting was legible but a few words were impossible to decipher.

Section A was well answered and many candidates did consider the marks allocated to each question by providing more a detailed response for part 1g.

In Section B, many candidates wasted time by writing out the question at the beginning of each essay. There was also evidence of large, diagram style plans which also would have taken time to produce. If required, the planning of essay questions needs to be more concise. Centres need to consider the balance between the time devoted to planning and writing activities to ensure there is maximum benefit to their candidates.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A

- 1 (a) (i) and (ii) Data extracted accurately by virtually all candidates
- (b) (i) Very well answered. Most candidates could identify two advantages of shopping in supermarkets.
- (ii) A disadvantage of supermarkets was usually quoted correctly, many candidates referred to the closure of smaller shops.
- (c) Often answered as advantages to the customer not the retailer. Many candidates just explained that loyalty meant the customer would choose to shop there more frequently, rather than explaining how shopping at the supermarket benefited the supermarket.
- (d) (i) Most candidates were able to identify and explain at least one reason for the popularity of convenience foods. In the main, candidates interpreted convenience foods as ready meals. Speed and ease of preparation/ lack of skill required were popular responses.
- (ii) Many candidates referred to convenience foods as high in fat or sugar. Few explained why this is a disadvantage.
- (e) Some candidates were uncertain of the term organic foods. There was confusion with ethically traded food products such as 'Fairtrade', 'Free range', 'Freedom food' and 'Low Food miles'. Organic foods were also described as free from 'additives and preservatives'.
- (f) Most could identify two considerations other than price to consider. The taste, origin and nutritional content of the food were frequently suggested responses.

- (g) Generally answered well with many candidates able to explain at least one way in which students could manage their resources to provide suitable meals. Some candidates made simple statements without the required explanation and were as a consequence only awarded half marks.

Section B

- 2 (a) The description of the micro-organisms responsible for food poisoning produced a wide range of responses. Some candidates produced a general essay on the factors affecting the growth of microorganisms and gave descriptions of the beneficial uses of yeasts, moulds and bacteria. The question required a focus on the microorganisms responsible for food poisoning only. There was confusion between food spoilage and food poisoning bacteria. Higher achieving candidates were able to quote sources, symptoms and onset times and other relevant information for a range of pathogenic bacteria.
- (b) The description of how the storage, preparation and cooking of food influences its safety was generally answered well. Many candidates, who had performed poorly on 2(a), were able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding on this part of the question. The more able candidates examined each of the three areas in turn with responses including references to temperatures, food storage and the cooking of food.
- 3 (a) This was a popular question. Some candidates approached this question by dealing with individuals and households separately and consequently their responses were repetitious. Good responses differentiated between planning and managing finances and referred to a wide range of realistic strategies for different individual and household circumstances.
- (b) Some excellent responses with a range of methods of payment described fully but a common error was reference to 'higher' purchase. The best candidates had clearly learnt a precise set of facts which could be relayed concisely. Some candidates were confused about different types of cards available e.g. store cards, credit cards and loyalty cards.
- 4 This was the most popular question in this section and was generally answered well.
- (a) Microwave ovens, food processors and steamers were popular choices. The choice of equipment sometimes limited the quality of the response and the possibility of achieving high marks e.g. kettle, coffee maker. The experience of having used the equipment helped in explaining the advantages and disadvantages of the chosen equipment e.g. one candidate wrote of the difficulties of removing bread from the pan when using a breadmaker.
- (b) Generally answered well with a number of factors being identified and described. A few candidates misinterpreted the question and wrote about the factors affecting food purchase and preparation.

Most candidates seemed to complete the paper but a few gave shorter answers to the final part of their second essay question indicating that they were rushed.

Grade Thresholds

GCE Home Economics (H511)
 Advanced Subsidiary GCE Home Economics (H111)
 June 2009 Examination Series

Unit Threshold Marks

Unit		Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
G001	Raw	75	51	45	39	33	28	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
G002	Raw	75	54	48	42	36	30	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0

Specification Aggregation Results

Overall threshold marks in UMS (ie after conversion of raw marks to uniform marks)

	Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
H111	200	160	140	120	100	80	0

The cumulative percentage of candidates awarded each grade was as follows:

	A	B	C	D	E	U	Total Number of Candidates
H111	10.1	24.3	46.1	67.0	83.3	100	487

487 candidates aggregated this series

For a description of how UMS marks are calculated see:

http://www.ocr.org.uk/learners/ums_results.html

Statistics are correct at the time of publication.

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