

Home Economics (Food and Nutrition)

General Certificate of Secondary Education **J431**

Examiners' Reports

June 2011

J431/R/11

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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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Chief Examiner's Report

Overall there has been a significant increase in the candidate entry this session. It was very clear that many Centres benefited from attending the Inset training and gained from the advice. Centres were able to provide guidance to candidates in both the written paper and controlled assessment. The written paper performed well with an even distribution of marks. It is important that candidates are provided with exam techniques so that they are able to perform to the best of their ability. Careful reading of the questions prior to producing answers is vital.

A high standard of work was seen in the controlled assessment in both units. In the Short tasks it is very important that two practical tasks and one investigative task are submitted for each candidate to meet the specification requirements. The Investigative task is the differentiator in this unit and is often the task that candidates find difficult.

In the Food Study many candidates produced high quality work. The area that seemed to cause the most problems was the Selection and Planning. Many candidates had received little guidance on this area and therefore did not meet the assessment criteria.

Generally this was a very successful outcome for this new qualification that is aggregated for the first time this session.

Unit B001 Short Tasks

General Comments

There has been a significant increase in the number of candidates entered for this unit and for the specification as a whole. It is very pleasing to see the enthusiasm of both candidates and teachers for the subject. The commitment of teachers has been rewarded by candidate work of a high standard which demonstrates the excellent guidance given.

It has been clear to see the centres that have benefited from OCR Inset training and this is recommended for all.

It is encouraging to see the quality of work submitted and the good understanding of assessment criteria. Candidates of all abilities have been able to demonstrate a high level of achievement in this component and their enjoyment has been clear to see.

Key issues within the Short Tasks

- These were carried out to a high standard. It was evident that candidates enjoyed the very practical nature of them. Candidates demonstrated a range of different skills across the three OCR set tasks.
- Three tasks, one investigation and 2 practical are required and the vast majority of candidates submitted the three as necessary.
- The practical tasks were very well done, investigation tasks proved to be more problematic.
- A variety of tasks were used by centres without alteration.
- Research skills are not assessed in Short Tasks. The focus is on decision making and justifying choices followed by planning of the task. Candidates do of course need the knowledge in order to make suitable choices but this information, which may have been obtained in a lesson or through individual research, is not part of the assessment.

Practical Short Tasks

- The most popular practical tasks were Eggs, Pastry and 5 a-day.
- Reasons for choice of practical work should be detailed. Responses do need further development.
- Plans of action were generally well done. An accurate list of ingredients followed by a well sequenced accurate timed plan or plans is required.
- Within Planning Candidates should plan and design (or choose) any necessary testing or recording documents for taste panels. There should be evidence of this planning.
- The majority of candidates produced two practical items per practical task. The quantity of practical work should be sufficient to warrant the high mark weighting.
- A good range of practical skills were demonstrated by candidates. The standard was high with excellent presentation of practical work. Teachers should encourage candidates always to demonstrate a range of skills for the practical work.
- Nutritional data if included should be referred to and nutritional information should be specific to the task.
- Reference should be made to the results of any testing.

Investigation Short Tasks

- Popular Investigations were convenience foods, low income and breakfasts.
- Many candidates failed at the beginning to identify and justify their choice of factors to investigate and so did not produce appropriate recording charts. They did however carry out much of the work expected.
- A small number of candidates failed to plan and undertake any form of investigation, producing a third practical task as the response to an Investigation title.
- Reasons for choice of investigation work should be detailed. Responses do need further development particularly regarding factors to be investigated.
- Investigation Task choices should include a clear indication of what factors will be investigated and a justification of this decision.
- Within Planning candidates should plan and design (or choose) testing and recording documents for each of the investigational factors identified.
- All results should be accurately shown and then the evidence used as a basis for making judgements and drawing conclusions within the Evaluation.
- Evaluations of both the practical and investigation tasks need to be well thought out and should contain evaluative comments which are pertinent to the particular task. In some cases candidates made simple and repetitive comments about their personal hygiene or their ability to work safely during their task with little reference to the task title itself. These comments cannot be given full marks under Evaluation.
- Evaluations should include discussion and evaluation of how well organised the taste panels were and areas for improvements. Candidates could be encouraged to comment on the proformas they designed and whether these were suitable or not.
- The drawing of conclusions is a higher level skill which needs further development.
- Centres must ensure that there is clear annotation relating to the assessment criteria on the mark sheets attached at the front of each task. It is recommended that a personal mark grid is designed and used to further support practical marks.

Areas to Improve within the Short Tasks

Candidates

- should not carry out research in the planning section.
- should ensure that all tasks have detailed reasons for choices.
- should ensure that investigation tasks do show investigative skills
- should ensure that investigation task planning includes investigative factors in addition to the food choice.
- should plan recording charts and tester instructions, this is essential in investigation tasks. blank copies should be included.
- should complete all planned investigation factor charts and draw conclusions based on the range of factors investigated.
- should use all data collected.
- should develop improved conclusions within evaluations.
- annotation is absolutely essential.

Good practice within teacher's preparation and marking of the Short Tasks

- Refer to OCR guidance and support on marking controlled assessment.
- Attend training.
- Use OCR set task titles as required. Three tasks should be submitted, one of which is an investigation
- Use tasks to apply knowledge gained from teaching the course content.
- Candidates should submit tasks which enables them to demonstrate a range of practical skills as well as cover a range of topic areas. Teachers should encourage candidates always to demonstrate a range of skills for the practical work.
- Clear guidance should be given to candidates so that they are able to understand the assessment criteria
- The use of tasting panels, star diagrams and other sensory analysis methods in all three tasks, this being planned in advance. This can be an aid in making relevant points in evaluations.
- Discuss work with candidates in order to support the evaluative comments produced
- Ensure there is good annotation of all aspects of the tasks but in particular the practical work carried out.
- Make good use of digital photography to support marks awarded – although this is not a requirement.

Good practice within coursework administration

- Decide on appropriate method and timing of entry for assessment.
- Internally standardise all work where there is more than one teacher ensuring that marking is consistent between internal assessors.
- Aim to cross mark practical work between internal assessors
- Complete the MS1 correctly.
- Regularly check email for selection of candidates for moderation.
- Ensure accurate addition and transfer of marks.
- Use OCR website to add marks on CSF.
- Ensure that all work has candidate names and numbers.
- Clearly label work with annotated mark sheets attached to the front of each task
- Short Tasks and Food Studies are separate units and so work should be kept separately.
- Include the Centre Authentication Sheet with the sample of work that is sent to the moderator
- Remember that individual authentication sheets should be retained in the centre.
- Send work promptly once moderator sample is requested.
- Complete relevant OCR documentation applying for lost work to be moderated or for special consideration.
- During moderation return mark amendments quickly to the moderator as requested.

Unit B002 Food Study

The candidates entered for this unit demonstrated positive achievement across the whole ability range; it was encouraging to see the diversity of individually written titles and the continuing enthusiasm for the subject.

The overall standard of work was high with some very good Studies.

The majority of candidates had been well guided by teachers who clearly understood the assessment criteria, so enabling their candidates to produce interesting and well presented Studies.

It has been clear to see the centres that have benefited from OCR Inset training and this is recommended for all.

There has been a significant increase in the number of candidates entered for this unit and for the specification as a whole.

Key issues in the Food Study

- A range of themes were used with Food around the World and Special Diets being most popular.

Research

- A focused title with specific key factors aids candidates throughout the study.
- Reasons for choice of title were generally well done.
- Surprisingly the Research section was an area of some concern as research tended to be either too brief or lengthy and not summarised.
- Candidates summarised secondary research too much leading to very little content and limited detail in this section. To achieve the higher mark band candidates need to include detailed secondary research on the topic chosen and they should use a range of information sources e.g. books, websites, fact sheets, and reports.
- Primary research although completed, at times lacked focus and rarely was used to create ideas for practical work.
- Aims of primary research were not always clear.

Selection and Planning

The initial criteria of this section were poorly done by many candidates who had received insufficient guidance.

- Candidates often went straight into recipes and time plans for practical work.
- Ideas for practical work should develop from previous work within the Research section.
- Many candidates did not list possible ideas for practical work.
- Little or no sorting and assessing of ideas was completed before making choices. To achieve the higher mark band in this section the candidates need to select/reject dishes by giving strengths and weakness of each dish listed using a variety of techniques or factors. In some cases even where this wasn't done marks were still awarded in the higher mark band.
- Reasons for choice of practical work were not as detailed as expected as few or no sorting techniques had been used.

- Where a leaflet, poster, recipe book is chosen as the 'fourth' practical item it is essential that reasons for this choice are given. There should be evidence of the designing and planning of this within the Planning section of the assignment.
- Practical choices were generally good and the vast majority planned a minimum of four items.
- Time plans were well done as were most ingredient lists.
- Insufficient candidates prepared recording charts and testing instructions prior to the practical although the testing was often carried out if not pre-planned

Practical Work and Outcomes

- Some very good practical skills demonstrated with very well presented outcomes.
- Recording charts although not planned were usually produced.
- Nutritional data and star diagrams were not always referred to.
- Logs of practical work were not always completed.
- There was good photographic evidence.
- Lack of teacher annotation was apparent and did not assist in the moderation process.

Evaluation

- Some high level evaluations were seen.
- Many evaluated each piece of research or item as completed which is good practice.
- Evaluations did not always refer to the whole task.
- Evaluations sometimes tended to focus exclusively on the practical aspects of the task
- To achieve higher marks for the Evaluation candidates need to review all aspects of the task e.g. comments should be made on how well they did their secondary research, how useful they found the sources of information used, the strengths and weaknesses of their questionnaires, improvements they could make to their selection of ideas and to their planning of the practical work. They could also comment on how well they carried out taste tests and whether they would change any aspect of the task.
- Few commented on any non food items completed such as leaflets. This is most important if the item was one of the four practical choices.
- Some candidates did not refer back to the task title and draw conclusions.

Main areas for improvement in the Food Study

- Tighter more specific title writing
- Better, more personal reasons for choosing the title.
- Better summarising of detailed research.
- Specified aims of primary research.
- Use research to develop ideas for practical work.
- Sort and assess ideas using a variety of techniques before making choices of practical work.
- More detailed reasons for choice based on research and sorting results.
- Plan recording and testing charts, put in a blank copy.
- Plan, carry out and evaluate non food practical work.
- Accurately complete and refer to any recording charts or data.
- Ensure that evaluations address the whole task.
- Draw well evidenced conclusions that refer back to all parts of the Study title.
- Detailed annotation to support practical marks. Design a mark grid.

**Good practice within teacher's preparation and marking of the controlled assessment
Food Study.**

- Teachers should refer to the assessment and marking criteria advice and support provided by OCR. Mark work using 'best fit' marking using the assessment criteria.
- Attend training.
- Read the moderator's individual report for the Centre and act upon this as soon as possible.
- Ensure that candidates understand the assessment criteria within each section.
- Promote use of a checklist to ensure coverage of assessment criteria.
- Encourage candidates to use the assessment sections, promoting a structured flow through the Study.
- Discuss work with candidates.
- Reflect the amount of direct teacher input when awarding marks.
- Annotate work clearly throughout the Study.
- Teach candidates how to write their own title from a chosen theme.
- Encourage candidates to summarise and use the information they gather from the internet or from books/journals rather than just copy or stick it into their work without making reference to it.
- Include only one sample questionnaire from candidates once work is called for moderation.
- Ensure that candidates carry out a minimum of four practical items.
- Ask candidates to keep a detailed record/ log of practical work which is then verified by the teacher as part of their evidence for the Practical section.
- Take into account the candidate's written communication throughout the individual task when giving a mark for the evaluation of this study. A comment to this effect on the work or mark sheet would show that centres have acknowledged this.

Good practice within coursework administration

- Decide on appropriate method and timing of entry for assessment.
- Internally standardise all work where there is more than one teacher ensuring that marking is consistent between internal assessors.
- Aim to cross mark practical work between internal assessors
- Complete the MS1 correctly.
- Regularly check email for selection of candidates for moderation.
- Ensure accurate addition and transfer of marks.
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- During moderation return mark amendments quickly to the moderator as requested.

Unit B003 Principles of Food and Nutrition

General Comments

Overall it was felt that the difficulty of this paper was appropriate and achieved differentiation. The overall performance of many candidates has been good with an even distribution of marks. It would seem that the time available was sufficient, as all questions were attempted by the vast majority.

The majority of the candidates made an attempt at all of the questions and there were very few “no response” answers, where these were more common it was often by a candidate, (i.e.) several appearing in one script. Even where there was NR answers, it was not the end questions.

Answers which required ‘explanation’ tended to reveal a lack of knowledge, or ability to apply knowledge, or explain one’s self clearly. These questions demonstrated differentiation quite clearly. Candidates often do not give time to develop their thoughts/answers, and give hasty responses which do not fully explain the point they are trying to make. With a little more care and or time, more marks could easily be gained.

Too many candidates use words such as ‘easy’, ‘healthy’, ‘better for you’, without explaining them, limiting the marks they can achieve.

A few candidates had poor hand writing which proved very difficult to read in some cases and some are writing outside the lines on the paper, also making the answers difficult to read. There were some questions which were clearly not understood by the candidates. In question 5b candidates seemed to mis-read some words in the question (i.e.) Processor, which by many was taken to mean processed foods. Question 2d asked for the ingredients added by law when making white bread, many candidates simply listed ingredients to make bread (i.e.) flour and yeast, rather than the nutrients given on the mark scheme.

Specific Comments

Q1(a)(i)

Reasonably attempted. Most candidates put to prevent yogurt going off/mouldy. Some lost marks for stating that putting the yoghurt in the fridge “stopped bacteria growing/dormant” whereas the fridge just slows the growth of bacteria.

Q1(a)(ii)

Most candidate earned marks with “to be eaten by this date”. Few made any mention of quality attributes. Many candidates simply seemed to think it would go off after this date.

Q1(a)(iii)

Answered well. Most gave answers i.e. to see nutrients/fats/allergy information/know vegetarian.

Q1(b)

Well answered with the most popular answers relating to allergies/vegetarians/name/weight/manufacture details. Incorrect answers included nutritional information, bar code, price, and sell by date.

Q1(c)

Few candidates scored full marks. Answers were generally repetitive or too vague (i.e.) 'complain' or 'statutory rights'. Many candidates talked about the state of the yoghurt if it was found to be unsatisfactory and whether it would make you ill. Many also keen to 'sue' and 'claim compensation'.

Q1(d)

Majority of candidates gained 3 marks and were able to suggest ways of advertising. Most common answers seen posters/ leaflets/ offers/ tasting /display. Many also went on to gain full marks. Some did not read the question carefully and talked about TV and newspaper adverts.

Q1(e)(i)

Generally well answered. A common error was to say 'are healthier' without 'thought to be'. A popular response was 'better quality'. Other popular answers related to 'not using of pesticides /taste better /more available and a few better for environment'.

Q1(e)(ii)

Well answered the most popular response was 'expensive' and a few 'shorter shelf life'.

Q2(a)

Some very muddled/vague responses about yeast expanding. Few candidates were able to refer to 'fermentation' or 'proving' and did not give any of the conditions necessary for it to happen. Many discussed gluten and its role in making bread rise. Many also talked only about air bubbles rather than CO₂. Often the question was repeated as a statement.

Q2(b)

Well answered, with the common answers relating to taste/colour/sweetens /makes it rise and a few, food for yeast/preservation.

Q2(c)

Well answered on the whole. The most common answers were soft/crusty/ hollow when knocked on the bottom /golden brown. Poor answers referred to the sensory qualities of a loaf of bread – look, smell and taste good.

Q2(d)

Poorly answered by the majority of candidates. The most popular answers were to give two ingredients in bread (i.e.) Yeast, flour, sugar. It seemed that this question was misread by candidates. They may have known the answer but were put off by the word 'ingredient' in the question.

Q2(e)

A lot of confused muddled responses many confusing 'coagulation' and 'binding' with 'gelatinisation'. 'Heated' was given by many and 'absorbing liquid' but often unrelated to heating. The better candidates were able to identify absorbing water/swelling/bursting and gelatinisation. The weaker candidates had a poor knowledge and talked about starch being fat. This question clearly demonstrated differentiation.

Q3(a)

Many candidates gained half the marks available. They could often give 4 points but they were not explained fully. Many gave all nutrition points. A popular response was 'to disguise foods' and 'not to give them foods they don't like/are allergic to' which are not considered encouraging to the toddler. With more care over the quality of their written response, many were close to gaining better marks. Candidates need to check that their answers make sense when it is read back. Too often more than 4 points were given but were unexplained or poorly explained. More able candidates were able to give answers relating to colourful food and small portions.

Q3(b)

Most gained 2 marks but this question was not as well answered as expected. Many candidates lost marks by just stating nutrients needed by the elderly or gave general points they could apply to other age groups e.g. food they like. Many answers were too brief, and didn't say enough to award the mark. Good answers referred to poor skills/ability to cook/can't get to shops/poor digestion and having a limited income.

Q3(c)

Most candidates were awarded a mark for calcium being linked to strong bones or teeth. Some lost marks for 'healthy teeth' many also gave the correct response to iron. The vitamins were often mixed or simply seemed to be random guesses.

Q4

It was pleasing to see how many candidates scored well on this question. The vast majority gained middle to high marks. A little more evidence in their answers to prove they really know what they are talking about and responses could have been higher. It is a concern that many talked about 'eating fruit with the fish and chips', thus negating the fat in the 'fish and chips' or other such similar meanings – so long as we have healthy food with a high fat/sugar food, all is OK. Often poor answers contained a lot of repetition of points particularly to do with exercise/5-a-day. Weaker candidates often gave replacement meals whereas better candidates gained marks for explaining some of the changes made.

Q5(a)(i)

Poorly answered. Candidates talked about removing a vegetable/using canned or fresh tomatoes or less salt. The most common correct answers were pulses/beans/lentils or nuts.

Q5(a)(i)

Meat was the most common response. Incorrect answers included 'add vegetables' or change to use a chicken stock cube.

Q5(a)(iii)

Very few understood complementary proteins. Many left it blank or guessed. Many confused LBV and HBV. Common incorrect answers included proteins that taste nice together, intrinsic protein and side dishes.

Q5(a)(iv)

Good answers included 'beans on toast', 'bean curry'. Incorrect answers included lasagne, spaghetti bolognese, soup and bread.

Q5(b)

Very poorly answered. Candidates may have mis-read the question as a lot of responses confused 'food processor' and 'processed' soup. A large proportion of responses discussed nutritional losses through food processing techniques. There was a lack of understanding of the word 'value'. In food studies at GCSE level the word value is used in association with either LBV/HBV and nutritional values i.e. other comments made by candidates included not being 'able to add things to the soup' and 'hand made' soup was cheaper but without any explanation of why. 'Quantity' and 'feel good factor' were also popular responses.

Q5(c)(i)

Many scored half marks with Quick or Quicker many gave easier without qualifying.

Q5(c)(ii)

Well answered with 'tinned' and 'powered' being most popular. Common poor answers bottled, in restaurant, home made.

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