

Home Economics (Food, Nutrition and Health)

Advanced GCE A2 H511

Advanced Subsidiary GCE AS H111

OCR Report to Centres

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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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Overview

Centres have worked hard in preparing candidates for this series of examinations and I hope that the comments provided by this report prove both informative and helpful to future candidates. Candidates applied their knowledge and understanding to the majority of questions as set on the paper. There was evidence of some excellent answers. Candidates make very few rubric errors which suggests that centres and teachers are effectively preparing students for the specific requirements of the examination papers.

Due to the single entry for the coursework unit G003 it is difficult to make general comments on performance of the cohort in this overview.

There are a number of issues which are evident in all the examined papers.

Firstly, a common weakness was the failure to answer the question set and to remain focused on the key elements. Candidates wrote about the topic rather than the question. Once candidates have started writing they need to stop occasionally to check that they are still answering the question.

Secondly, candidates can avoid losing valuable marks by following the requirements of the command verbs used. It is recommended that candidates underline the command verbs to frame their understanding before attempting the question. Centres need to ensure that candidates understand the requirements of each command verb and can write answers that meet the level of detail necessary to achieve explain, discuss, describe and identify.

Finally, the use of the technical terminology was good; however, some candidates had difficulty spelling technical vocabulary correctly. It would be useful if centres focused some of their revision time for future sessions on the correct spelling of technical terminology. As suggested at INSET the use of 'key terms' check lists or glossaries when revising would be beneficial.

Most candidates managed their time well during the examined units. In the examined units the entire written responses must be contained within the constraints of the examination booklet. The examination booklet has been designed to accommodate a complete response and no additional paper should be required by candidates.

G001 Society and Health

General Comments

The paper was accessible to all abilities although there were some poor scripts with poor knowledge demonstrated by superficial answers. Section A was accessible to all candidates; however, there were a number of candidates who gave a very weak performance on Section B.

The majority of candidates followed the instructions on the paper correctly, answering just two questions from three in Section B, although there were a few candidates who answered all three questions in Section B. As a result of not reading the instructions on the paper, they did not spend enough time answering two out of the three required questions and therefore lost marks.

It would be useful if centres could take note that at this level, the section B answers are extended answers not essays. Candidates need to take note that the second part of each Section B question is worth 15 marks, therefore more time should be spent on answering this part of the question. It is advisable that candidates consider a full and clear explanation or description of each point raised to access the higher mark bands. Some candidates wrote answers to both parts of a Section B question as one piece of continuous prose. This made mark allocation very difficult and was unlikely to have produced clearly focused responses from the candidates. In order that the candidate concentrates on their response, it is advisable that candidates write the number of the question they are answering at the beginning of their response.

Some of the candidates' plans are taking full pages, which is wasting time and taking extra sheets of paper.

There are still a small number of candidates requiring additional sheets, with many often leaving whole blank sheets between answers. This is not a practice that should be encouraged; it is purely a waste of paper. Entire responses should be contained within the examination booklet provided.

When deciding which questions to answer in Section B, candidates should be advised to read all parts of the questions carefully first to ensure they have fully understood what is being asked and that they can make relevant responses to both parts of the question.

Centres need to be reminded that it is imperative that candidates' knowledge is up to date and that they should not just rely on the text book for their information. Areas of this specification are constantly changing with alterations to governmental policies, for example, support for the unemployed and it is imperative that candidates have current knowledge.

Section A

1(a) (i), (ii), (iii) These questions were answered by the vast majority of candidates correctly.

1(b) (i) and (ii) This was generally answered well by the majority of candidates. Many candidates knew that Type 2 diabetes occurred when the body produces some but not enough insulin. Most were able to give obesity as a valid reason as to why Type 2 diabetes has increased.

1 (c) Many candidates were able to identify and explain two dietary changes which are recommended for people with Type 2 diabetes, but lost marks because they identified exercise as an answer and this is not a dietary change. Some candidates were able to identify the dietary change required but could not explain the reasons for the change they identified.

- 1 (d) This was generally answered well with candidates most commonly identifying the Eatwell plate and Five a day as two government initiatives that aim to encourage people to make healthier choices.
- 1 (e) Candidates were often able to identify two support services available for the unemployed, but were not able to explain them fully and confused common terms such as job seekers' allowance and income support.
- 1 (f) This was not well answered by the vast majority of candidates. Geographical location of housing should have included responses such as the cost of housing in some parts of the country, less job availability in rural and deprived areas and the availability of jobs in cities. Number of people should have included responses such as larger households needing more income, collective income may lead to higher standard of living or more dependents may lead to a limited financial contribution. Candidates often made reference to lack of space, overcrowding and poor hygiene which did not answer the question.

Section B

Question 2

This was the most popular question.

- (a) This question was generally well answered with candidates able to identify correctly some patterns of employment, including age, immigration, economic climate and women working. However, in many cases these points were not fully developed so the higher mark bands were not always accessed.
- (b) Candidates tended to answer this question quite well, often making reference to issues such as lack of self esteem, social exclusion, debt and boredom and how these affect families. However, some candidates spent far too long discussing issues such as poverty, including both absolute and relative poverty and homelessness. On a positive note, there were some excellent answers for this question, with a good use of subject terminology by the majority of candidates.

Question 3

This was also a popular question.

Too many candidates stated that renting is cheaper than buying and explained student accommodation. Candidates must focus upon the needs of the question and hence the response required. Advantages could have related to the fact that deposits can be saved whilst renting, there is a wide choice of homes available to rent, initial costs may be lower, renting is not necessarily a long term commitment and the landlord is responsible for maintenance. Disadvantages could have included the fact that the house is not yours to change, renting can be expensive, renting may be insecure and some landlords may not always maintain the property.

Candidates who scored highly on this question were able to describe logically how housing design can be adapted for individuals, then family groups leading to the elderly and disabled. They also concentrated on housing design, which was the requirement of the question. Too many candidates described adaptations for the design of the home for the elderly and then repeated the same adaptations for the disabled. There was a great deal of repetition in some candidate's answers which led to a loss of marks.

Question 4

This was the least popular question.

This question was not answered well by the majority of candidates who attempted it. Candidates were often able to identify some health education policies, such as reducing obesity, the support of sensible drinking, the Eatwell plate and increasing exercise. However, candidates often then failed to explain the purpose of these policies. For example the fact that reducing obesity will lead to a decrease in the occurrence of diet related diseases such as diabetes, thus reducing NHS costs. Candidates often repeated the answers they had written for question 1(d), which was not relevant to this particular question.

Most candidates who attempted this question were able to describe the role of private, statutory and voluntary service in the provision of health care but often the services were simply listed with limited descriptions of each service they had identified. This led to the higher mark bands not always being accessed.

G002 Resource Management

The question paper differentiated well and provided the platform for some excellent responses. There were a few very poor scripts. In Section B, it was pleasing to note that not many candidates wasted time writing out the question at the beginning of each response. Virtually all candidates followed the rubric of answering two questions from Section B. A number of candidates' responses in Section B were presented in the format of notes under sub headings or a list of bullet points not in paragraphs, thus affecting the quality of written communication. Spelling of technical terms was generally good.

Section A

Most candidates were able to attempt all of the questions.

- 1 (a) (i) Data extracted accurately by all candidates.
(ii) The majority of candidates answered this correctly.
(iii) Data extracted accurately by all candidates.
- 1 (b) There were some good descriptions of ways in which a home can be designed to save human energy eg kitchen design. However, many candidates misread the question and described ways of saving heat or electrical energy eg loft insulation or double glazing, whilst others referred to the purchase of labour saving equipment eg washing machine or dishwasher.
- 1 (c) Whereas there were some very good responses gaining full marks, many candidates described marketing techniques used to secure customer loyalty rather than supermarket layout. Descriptions of a range of different types of trolleys or provision of transport to the store are not relevant to supermarket layout.
- 1 (d) The majority of candidates were able to explain at least one or two ways that technological advances in supermarkets can benefit the consumer when shopping for food. Hand held scanners and self service check outs were mentioned frequently. Although, some candidates correctly identified a technological advance they failed to explain how it benefitted the consumer. Some candidates misread the question and explained how technological advances benefit food retailers and manufacturers.
- 1 (e) Generally, this was answered well providing the opportunity for many candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the ways a low income household could effectively reduce their expenditure on food shopping. A small number of candidates, however, failed to gain full marks because there was repetition of ways to reduce expenditure.

Section B

Question 2 was possibly the most popular question.

Question 2

- (a) The majority of candidates were able to give some descriptions of how psychological and social factors affect food choice. Generally, both parts of the question were addressed although psychological factors were better known than social ones which were often restricted to social network eg family and friends and peer group pressure. There were few references to factors such as geographical location and social conscience.
- (b) High achieving candidates were able to explain, often with examples, how the choice of food available to eat outside the home is meeting the needs of different consumers. References made to named options available and to whom they were likely to appeal was good eg emergence of coffee shops and their use by busy working professionals. However, many candidates just described the reasons why people choose to eat outside the home.

Question 3

- (a) The majority of candidates confined their response to describing the incidence and patterns of food poisoning in the UK. The question was misinterpreted by a few candidates who described the incubation time, symptoms and sources for a number of food poisoning bacteria and so failed to gain any marks. High achieving candidates were able to describe in detail, often with relevant examples factors which have contributed to the changes in the incidence of food poisoning. The most common factor cited was the improvement in public knowledge about symptoms.
- (b) Candidates who had performed poorly on 3(a) were able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding on this part of the question. There were some excellent responses enabling the candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the conditions necessary for the growth of the bacteria responsible for food poisoning. Accurate explanations of the requirements for oxygen, moisture and correct pH were evident.

Question 4

- (a) Few candidates achieved high marks. The majority had not read the question carefully and so did not focus on different types of cookers. Many wrote about the advantages and disadvantages of the cooker and demonstrated only superficial knowledge of the features. However, there were a few very good responses referring to the types of fuel, ease of cleaning and comparisons with microwave ovens.

Credit was also given where the advantages and disadvantages of contact grills, slow cookers and steamers were described accurately.

- (b) This question produced a range of responses but none were outstanding. Not all candidates read the question carefully and so did not confine their responses to single person households. The best answers were from candidates who had considered the size of kitchen, storage space and money available before suggesting suitable equipment and how it could be used effectively to provide meals in a single household with reference to specific foods or meals. Weaker candidates often gave a list of all the equipment they knew without linking it to the situation.

G003 Investigative study

One centre entered work for moderation this session.

The title of the study should be developed from an area of the specification which the candidate finds interesting. Ideally the title should be worded in the form of a context that sets the scene and a question to investigate. Once the title is established the investigating can begin.

It is a good idea for the candidate to choose an area from the A2 area of the specification to study as it will allow them to research on a topic that may be examined on the paper.

In addition the candidate should choose an area where they are able to access information eg if they choose to do something related to pregnant women they will have to have access to a clinic to test ideas, collect food diaries, interviews etc. The title should provide opportunity for practical work to address a significant proportion of marks in the implementation section.

Addressing the criteria

Assessment criteria 1 – Analysis and aims.

The candidate is required to undertake analysis, select an appropriate context and title, demonstrate an understanding of the opportunities for study and develop aims and objectives. When marking candidates work it is essential that the wording of the assessment criteria is considered carefully as there are subtle differences in language. For instance to achieve high bracket marks for criteria 1a the candidate needs to explore thoroughly possible areas of interest and is able to discuss a range of relevant issues and factors.

Assessment Criterion 2.

The candidate is required to hypothesise, plan and make informed decisions that direct the progress of the study. Good use was made of linking statements in the report which helped to move the work forward.

Assessment Criterion 3.

The candidate is required to carry out a range of appropriate skills and resources to achieve the realisation of their objectives using a variety of primary and secondary investigative methods. It is necessary that they include some relevant investigative food practical work. A suggested list of investigative techniques are:

shop survey, market research, packaging comparison, interview, case study, questionnaire, practical food activity, sensory analysis, costing, nutritional analysis, comparison practical's, study of relevant information on TV/magazines, visits, food diaries, power point presentations, designing of leaflets, background research.

There needs to be a range of these investigative technique carried out in depth in order for high bracket marks to be awarded.

The objectives stated in section 1 should be carried out. Originality, creativity and aesthetic awareness needs to be considered by the candidate. These factors should also be apparent during the development of the products in practical work. Photographic evidence is useful throughout the practical process.

Technical competence need to be clearly demonstrated in the presentation of the work – for example use of ICT, digital images, scanning, colour printing.

Assessment Criterion 4.

The candidate is required to conclude and evaluate the findings and results achieved whilst carrying out the study. They will also need to critically analyse and review the study as a whole.

A critical evaluation should be produced giving full consideration to the prediction and the title's context and question. Everything the candidate states must be backed up by reference to the relevant results achieved and by also referring to the relevant appendix. They must be critical of their findings and also critically review their prediction. Once they have done that they are then in a position to sum up by looking back at their task title and answering it critically.

G004 Nutrition and food production

The standard of answers observed was largely similar to previous years. Many candidates appeared to have noted the recommendations in previous reports. Candidates applied their knowledge and understanding to the majority of questions set. The question paper was accessible to all abilities. There was evidence of some excellent answers; however, it was disappointing to see some very poor responses made by a minority of candidates.

Generally, handwriting was legible. In Section B, a few candidates wrote out the question at the beginning of each essay. Some candidates wrote lengthy introductions which were too generalised and as a result could not be credited. A number of candidates produced detailed plans and or bullet lists of key points before embarking on their response.

Most candidates appeared to have completed the paper and distributed their time between their two essays responses fairly. However, some essay responses were far too brief demonstrating only a limited subject knowledge and understanding.

All candidates followed the rubric of answering two questions from section B.

Section A

- 1 (a) (i) The majority of candidates were able to name two nutrients which provide energy, although a few named foods which are good sources of energy.
- 1 (a) (ii) This was answered well with a sound understanding shown.
- 1 (a) (iii) Many candidates did not refer to actual dietary changes but gave generalised responses such as 'eat less foods high in fat'. Often changes suggested were not explained. Some misread the question and referred to the need to undertake more exercise.
- 1 (b) (i) The majority of candidates were able to state correctly one function of folic acid in the body. The link to the development of the spinal cord in the embryo was the most frequent response. However, candidates found it difficult to state correctly a second function.
- 1 (b) (ii) Generally answered well with candidates stating correctly two good food sources of folic acid. A few candidates offered bread and breakfast cereals without reference to fortification.
- 1 (c) (i) Most candidates were able to identify at least one source of essential fatty acids.
- 1 (c) (ii) Few candidates were familiar with the functions of essential fatty acids. Many confused their functions with those of fats.
- 1 (d) (i) Answered well by most candidates who were able to give two advantages of metal as a packaging material for food manufacturers. Popular responses included 'variety of shapes/sizes', 'strong so less damage during storage/transportation'.
- 1 (d) (ii) Candidates were generally able to give one disadvantage of metal as a packaging material for food manufacture. Most chose to refer to metal being expensive, whereas some candidates referred to not being able to reseal a metal can once opened which is a disadvantage to the consumer not to the manufacturer.

- 1 (e) A range of responses were seen but few candidates achieved full marks. Concerns were often stated but not explained. Good explanations referred to reductions in packaging and encouraging consumers to re-fill jars. The inclusion of more local and organic products was referred to frequently.

Section B

Question 4 was the most popular question.

Question 2

There were some excellent responses. All candidates were able to demonstrate at least superficial knowledge of the role of mineral elements in maintaining good health. Generally, responses were well structured with the role of each mineral element being explained in turn. Unfortunately, a few candidates limited the possibility of achieving a high level response by restricting their explanation to calcium, iron and one other mineral element. High achieving candidates were able to explain dietary sources, functions in the body and the effect of possible deficiencies together additional information for all the major mineral elements. A minority of candidates attributed the sources and functions to the wrong mineral elements. Toothpaste as a dietary source of fluoride was not credited.

Question 3

There were a few very good responses where high achieving candidates were able to demonstrate an accurate knowledge of the functions of food additives and their role in the food industry. Detailed understanding was shown of the different types of food additives with relevant examples quoted. However, there were also some very weak responses where knowledge was limited to the naming of some types of additives with little explanation of their use. Frequently too much emphasis was placed on the role of food colourings with irrelevant lengthy descriptions of their use in confectionery and possible effect on children. Some candidates confused preservatives with methods of preservation. The role of antioxidants seemed less well understood.

Question 4

Whilst most candidates who chose this question demonstrated at least a superficial knowledge of the advantages and disadvantages of the choice and uses of fat and oils in food preparation and cooking, there were only a few outstanding responses. Generally high achieving candidates planned and structured their responses so that they discussed the different types of fats and oils available and then explored their suitability in food preparation and cooking, whilst in weaker responses, candidates often discussed the uses of fats and oils without specific references. Some candidates were able to explain the process of hydrogenation but few were able to explain accurately the properties of the resulting fat. Oil was often referred to as being healthier than solid fat without an explanation and there still remains the misconception that oil is of a lower calorific value than fat.

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