

GCSE

Home Economics (Food and Nutrition)

General Certificate of Secondary Education **J431**

OCR Report to Centres June 2014

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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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OCR REPORT TO CENTRES

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General Comments

The standard of controlled assessment work was very good; it is encouraging to see the quality of work and understanding of the assessment criteria. The work reflected good quality teaching and commitment to the subject. Candidates of all abilities have been able to demonstrate achievement in both Units.

The majority of candidates have completed very interesting and concise work that clearly adheres to the suggested guidance timings, whilst still fully meeting the assessment criteria. It is not expected that work will take significantly longer than the guidance time.

Most Centres have marked the work of their candidates accurately and consistently. Too many Centres however have awarded marks that are too generous even for good quality work. It is important to consider carefully the differentiating factors within each mark band and to then award a mark that is the best fit.

Most Centres have used the new URS forms, many providing comprehensive commentary on the award of marks. Other Centres, whilst using the new URS, have not provided the necessary information. Indicating mark bands on the URS is not a substitute for written explanation of marking.

Clear annotation is essential to evidence and support the marks awarded in all assessment areas and most certainly in the practical work and outcome sections. It can be difficult to accept marks without supporting commentary.

A minority of Centres completed the witness statements which are compulsory from 2015.

There has been an increase in the number of Centres not fully following the instructions and guidance for controlled assessment. This has resulted in a number of instances of suspected malpractice involving teacher comments which could give help to candidates. It is essential that this type of comment is not provided as it does give an unfair advantage.

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

B001/01 B001/02 Short Tasks

The vast majority of Centres used OCR set Short Task Titles as required with minimal alterations.

If candidates do not submit 2 Practical and one Investigation Task, then the best two tasks only are accepted.

- Many tasks 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.
- The Practical tasks were very well done whereas the Investigation task proved more problematic
- Most titles were attempted; eggs, pastry, 5 a day, calcium and vitamin D and vitamin C and iron being the most popular practical tasks. Convenience foods and adapting a traditional recipe were the most popular investigations.

Practical Tasks

- Most candidates made good choices of practical work but many then failed to fully justify these choices with detailed reasons related to the title and also to the skills being demonstrated. Detailed reasons are needed to access the high mark band. This was an area where work was too generously marked.
- The majority of candidates planned the practical work well but did omit the planning of any non-food items chosen and of the necessary testing or analysis charts.
- The majority of candidates completed two items per task demonstrating a variety of skills. The standard of practical work generally is high. Detailed annotation is essential to support the marks awarded, some candidates received marks that were not supported and were not warranted, resulting in adjustments.
- Many candidates completed sensory testing, although not obligatory in all titles. This is generally well done with varying standards of assessment of results.
- Nutritional analysis is a necessary part of some titles and whilst completed by most candidates the quality of assessment varied considerably. Better candidates were able to look critically at the results, suggesting improvements if necessary, whilst others made little or no comments.
- Evaluations were generally quite well done with comments on all areas of the task. Some candidates did not make reference to any data collected nor refer back to the title so making the drawing of conclusions difficult. Detailed conclusions are essential to access the top mark range. The use of evaluation charts or grids often resulted in the completion of a list of points rather than well explained evaluative comment.

Investigation Task

This proved to be the most challenging of the three tasks. Too often these were essentially a third practical task, demonstrating few investigatory skills.

- Some excellent investigations were seen but too often candidates did not fully demonstrate a range of investigation skills. Many were concentrating on the practical skills and omitting the actual investigation.
- It is essential to identify the factors that will form the investigation in addition to choosing 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 forms a major part of the Practical section and similarly the charts are part of Outcome. Too often these elements were over marked as 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. It is expected that candidates will use the results of their investigations as evidence for their conclusions.

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.

- Whilst many well written titles, with good reasons for their choice, were evident there were too many titles that were far too wide making it difficult to identify and focus on the research needs. A lack of clear factors within a title makes detailed research and then appropriate sorting of ideas challenging.
- Many candidates studied 'Food Around the World'. Some titles had no specific country, targeted group or issue identified and this in some cases led to Studies without structure and flow. These were often the over marked Studies.
- The Research section was generally well done with a range of information sources used and credited. Detailed selective secondary research was produced by many candidates. There is, however, too much use of copied or downloaded information with no clear indication of summarising or selecting of information.
- The majority of candidates carried out at least one piece of primary research; two are needed for the high mark band. Questionnaires and surveys were most popular techniques used but some interesting interviews and experimental work were also seen. Too often primary research lacked a clear purpose and questionnaires lacked direction. Results were not always clearly displayed nor used.
- The ability to draw conclusions from the research section was a skill shown by relatively few candidates. Thus, making the use of the research results more difficult to demonstrate in subsequent sections.
- The most problematic area of the Food Study was the Selection and Planning of Practical work.
- Most candidates chose and then planned the required four or more pieces of practical work, creating good well timed action plans. Often however the selection of the practical work lacked ideas driven by research, adequate sorting of ideas through consideration of appropriate factors and detailed reasons for the choices made. Few planned the recording systems to be used to record results. Consequently, Selection and Planning of Practical work remains the main area of concern.
- The standard of practical work was high, although better annotation to support these marks is essential. Most candidates made at least four skilful food items and produced appropriate recording charts, even if not planned previously. A minority completed insufficient work to warrant the marks awarded and so required adjustment.
- 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 their analytical skills.
- The majority of candidates completed well planned and considered sensory testing.

- There is an increasing tendency to produce evaluation grids. This practice too often resulted in lists of partially explained comments rather than a well evidenced assessment of performance. Evaluations at best considered all aspects of the task reviewing performance and identifying strengths and weakness. Conclusions were drawn and suggestions made for improvement. Other evaluations were simply a description of the practical work undertaken. Well evidenced conclusions are essential to access the high mark band.

B003 Principles of Food and Nutrition

General Comments:

A good spread of marks was seen across the paper. Questions offered differentiation between candidates. Most candidates attempted all questions, with very few answers left blank. Candidates appeared to have sufficient time to attempt the whole of the paper, and it was noted that when candidates had used extra paper or written in the back of the booklet they indicated to the examiner that this had been done, making marking easier. Candidates demonstrated excellent knowledge of salt intake and ways to reduce it, as well as offering sensible suggestions for adapting a meal to make it fit the healthy eating guidelines. However, candidates did not seem to have a huge amount of knowledge about the importance of fibre in the diet.

Candidates need to be reminded that when a question asks for 2 facts, please do not provide more than 2 facts. Where candidates do provide more than the 2 facts, only the first two given can be credited.

Comments on Individual Questions:

1 (a) i The majority of candidates read the data correctly. The question required the inclusion of units, which a few candidates forgot.

1 (a) ii Most candidates provided the correct answer.

1 (a) iii Most candidates provided the correct answer.

1 (a) iv Most candidates provided the correct answer, the most popular correct responses were “for growth” and “for repair”.

1 (b) This question required candidates to make a link between a sandwich ingredient and a group of people with specific health requirements. Many provided a correct answer in relation to gluten or wheat, a few candidates simply stated “because it contains bread” which they needed to further develop linking to gluten to wheat to gain the mark. A small number of candidates made incorrect reference to those that are lactose intolerant.

1 (c) The majority of candidates gained a mark for correctly stating the storage condition. In order to gain the second mark candidates were expected to make reference to the growth of bacteria slowing, presence of a high risk food or keeping the sandwich out of the danger zone. Answers such as “stops bacterial growth”, “stop it going off” and “keep fresh” did not gain marks.

1 (d) Candidates were able to gain one or two marks for this question, the most common correct answers were “use wholemeal bread”, “use seeded bread” or “add salad”. Candidates that gave “use brown bread” did not gain any marks.

1 (e) This question clearly demonstrated differentiation. Many candidates lacked detailed knowledge of the importance and role of fibre in the diet, but they were able to offer examples of food containing fibre. References to fibre being ‘needed for energy’, ‘providing flavour and texture’, ‘helping the immune system’ ‘for brain functioning’ ‘good for hair and nails’ were commonly seen but not credited. The main correct answers linked to ‘preventing constipation’ and “good for the intestines”.

2 (a) Well answered, with the most common correct answers being “canning” and “freezing”.

2 (b) Well answered. Popular correct answers included 'grilled', 'fried' and 'poached'. Candidates that provided the answers 'boil' and 'cook in an oven' were not awarded marks as they needed to further define the cooking method to gain the full marks.

2 (c) A good range of answers was seen.

2 (d) i The question asks for a specific guideline amount of salt, and therefore only "6g" could be accepted. Candidates were expected to also supply the unit "g" to gain the mark. A large range of quantities were given, indicating guessing for some candidates.

2 (d) ii As in previous years candidates tended to either offer 3 ways and no descriptions so only being credited with 3 marks. Candidates should be encouraged to re-read their work and check that there is no repetition of ways or descriptions.

2 (e) Well answered by most candidates. "Yeast extract" and "bacon" were the most popular correct responses.

3 A wide spread of answers and therefore marks was seen for this question. There were many excellent responses offering clear and detailed descriptions of how a supermarket could advertise a food product as well as explaining the different factors that could affect consumer choice. Other answers needed to offer further explanations of the factors affecting consumer choice in order to reach the higher bands. Some candidates remained in the lower bands as they were able to offer good or in some cases excellent descriptions of how a supermarket could advertise but were not able to offer many or any explanations of the factors affecting consumer choice. Candidates tended to offer better responses for the descriptions than for the explanations.

4 (a) The answers given to this question often contained a lot of repetition of ideas and responses in relation to energy. The most common correct responses were "breaks the overnight fast", "energy for the day ahead", "helps concentration" and "fills you up". Responses such as "kicks starts your metabolism", "gets brain to work" and "getting you going" were not awarded marks.

4 (b) This question asks for 4 changes and 4 explanations of those changes in order to gain full marks. As with 'explain' questions in the past, many candidates only achieved 4 (half) marks as they gave 4 changes but did not offer any explanations of these changes. Common changes related to "changing the cereal to wholemeal", "changing the milk to semi-skimmed", "changing the toast to wholemeal", and "changing the fizzy drink to water/juice". The common correct reasons were "reduced sugar", "increase fibre", "gain one of your 5-a-day" and "reduce fat". Responses relating to "brown bread, thus increasing fibre intake" were not credited.

4 (c) Generally answered well, with candidates gaining two or three marks. 'Gender', 'age', 'physical activity level' and 'occupation' were the most popular correct answers. Where candidates made reference to 'weight' or 'diabetes' marks were not credited. Answers relating to where energy comes from could not be credited either.

4 (d) Candidates demonstrated a good level of knowledge in correctly naming three vitamins or minerals. However, the question also needed the candidate to correctly state the vitamin or minerals function in order to gain full marks. Few candidates were able to correctly name the function of the mineral or vitamin named, resulting in many muddled responses such as "vitamin C is good for calcium absorption".

5 (a) Generally well answered, the most common correct responses were "insulation", "protection of organs" and "energy store". Candidates needed to be clear with their reason to be awarded the mark. Responses such as "provides a cushion for the organs" was too vague to be awarded a mark.

5 (b) Well answered with “obesity/overweight” and “increased risk of CHD/diabetes/high blood pressure” being the most common correct responses.

5 (c) A few detailed answers with excellent examples were given, while other responses seemed muddled and confused. Candidates did not seem to understand the word “function”. Answers relating to “flavour/taste” were not credited.

5 (d) Overall well answered by most candidates. ‘Visible’, ‘you don’t know it’s there’ and ‘you wouldn’t expect’ were the most popular correct answers. Answers such as “look at the packaging/label” “don’t know about” or simply repeating the question by saying the fat is hidden were not credited.

5 (e) Most candidates accessed this mark. “Avocado”, “biscuits”, “cakes”, “nuts”, and “chips” were popular answers. “Meat” was not credited.

5 (f) Candidates demonstrated a good level of knowledge and understanding for this question, many gaining full marks. The most commonly seen definition was “quick and easy to make or cook”. “Ready meals” was another commonly seen answer. “Food prepared by a manufacturer” was a common incorrect answer.

5 (g) Again candidates were able to demonstrate a good level of understanding in relation to convenience foods. Most candidates gained the first marks for correctly identifying the “elderly”, “students” and “busy people/parents/workers” as people who may benefit from convenience foods. “Lack of time”, “lack of skills” and “limited budgets” were common reasoning. In order to gain full marks candidates were expected to provide a detailed reason for the group(s) chosen. Answers such as “(elderly) not able to cook food” were considered too vague to be credited. A further explanation of the reason such as “due to manual dexterity problems” or “due to the death of their partner who did the cooking” were required to gain the full 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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Head office
Telephone: 01223 552552
Facsimile: 01223 552553

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