

CAMBRIDGE TECHNICALS LEVEL 3 (2016)

Examiners' report

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

05830–05833, 05871

Unit 4 January 2025 series

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Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from [Teach Cambridge](#).

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Unit 4 series overview

In the previous exam series there was a dip in candidate performance, which was linked to Level of Response questions. This exam series showed an improvement in performance, in line with previous exam series (excluding June 2024). Candidates continue to perform well in the point-based questions, with some candidates achieving the vast majority of marks from these questions. Nearly all candidates answer these questions, with only a few leaving the answer section blank. Question 3 (a) on homeostasis was the question that candidates most frequently did not respond too. A number of candidates performed very well on the Level of Response questions, achieving a Level 3 for Questions 1 (c), 1 (d) (ii), 2 (c), 3 (e) (ii) and 5 (b). Nearly all candidates struggled with Question 3 (c) on the evaluation of diabetes treatments. The reasons for this were varied. Many candidates did not evaluate treatments, instead explaining the treatments. Some candidates provided lifestyle changes rather than treatments, with dietary changes been the focus of many responses. Candidates who evaluated treatments well, were limited by not being able to identify three treatments. Candidates who did less well in Level of Response questions often misunderstood terminology, e.g. covered treatments instead of care needs, or did not cover all aspects required by the question i.e. covered symptoms but not causes.

As with previous exam series many candidates used the additional pages, but some did not indicate accurately which question the additional work related to. Also like with previous exam series some candidates who provided word processed answers used small fonts and minimal line spacing between questions. It would be beneficial if responses provided space to annotate them more clearly, as it can be difficult to identify what points were given by the exam markers.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • answered all questions • achieved Level 2 and above for at least 5 Level of Response questions • provided answers as required by the command verbs • addressed all aspects of Level of Response questions • understood subject specific terminology • achieved 70%+ of the marks available on the short answer point-based questions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • did not provide responses to all questions • addressed only one aspect of Level of Response questions • misunderstood subject specific terminology i.e. covered risk factors instead of biological causes • did not achieve Level 2 or Level 3 for any Level of Response questions • achieved less than 50% of the marks available for the short answer point-based questions.

Question 1 (a) (i)

1

(a) Structures of the digestive system have different functions.

(i) Some of the structures found in the digestive system are listed below.

- buccal cavity epiglottis oesophagus rectum**
salivary gland small intestine stomach

Complete the table about functions in digestion using the structures listed.

You may use each structure once, more than once or not at all. The first one has been done for you.

Function in digestion	Structure
Churns the food to help break it up and mix it with enzymes	stomach
Covers the opening of the trachea when swallowing to prevent food entering the lungs
Opening for food to be chewed and mixed with saliva
Produces hydrochloric acid to activate enzymes and kill bacteria
Squeezes swallowed food from the mouth into the digestive system

[4]

Many candidates achieved full marks for this question, with many achieving at least 2 marks. The first and fourth structures were the most frequent correct structures. Common incorrect responses identified the small intestines as producing hydrochloric acid and salivary glands as the opening for food.

Question 1 (a) (ii)

(ii) Mechanical digestion is a process that takes place in the digestive system.

Which **one** of the following is an example of mechanical digestion?

Put a tick (✓) in the box next to the correct example.

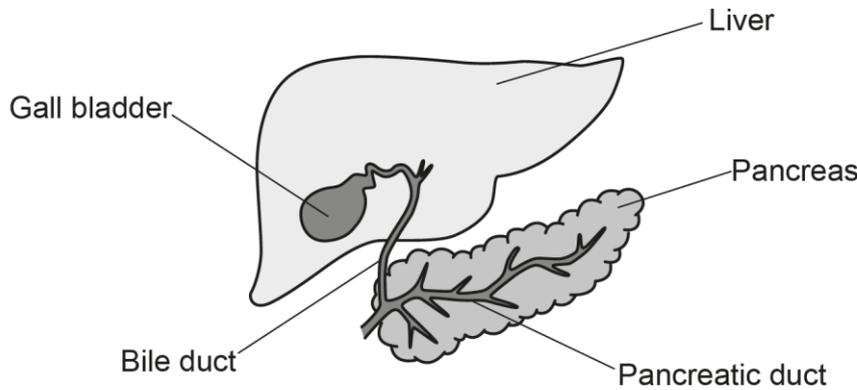
Example	Tick (✓) one only
Enzymes in saliva digest food into smaller molecules.	
Food is chewed into smaller pieces by the teeth.	
Small food molecules are absorbed into the bloodstream.	

[1]

Candidates answered this question well. There was no pattern to incorrect responses.

Question 1 (b) (i)

(b) The diagram below shows part of the digestive system.



Use the diagram to answer the following questions.

(i) Identify the organ that produces digestive enzymes.

..... [1]

This was a well answered question, with liver being a common incorrect response.

Question 1 (b) (ii)

(ii) Identify the organ that produces bile.

..... [1]

Incorrect responses were more frequent to this question, with gall bladder being a common incorrect response.

Question 1 (b) (iii)

(iii) Identify the duct that releases a fluid that contains fat-digesting enzymes.

..... [1]

Most candidates correctly identified the pancreatic duct.

Question 1 (c)*

(c)* Ben has had symptoms associated with a malfunction of the digestive system.

An ultrasound scan has shown that they have developed gallstones. Describe possible symptoms and causes of Ben's gallstones.

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.....
.....
..... [6]

This question required candidates to describe both symptoms and causes. Nearly all candidates described symptoms well, with abdominal pain, vomiting and jaundice common responses. However, far fewer went on to describe the causes. A common misconception resulted in candidates describing risk factors instead of causes.

Exemplar 1

One of the possible symptoms Ben is experiencing is abdominal pain. This pain would be in the centre of his torso due to the stones in his gall bladder that may also be blocking Ben's bile duct. Another symptom that Ben may have is jaundice. Jaundice is the yellowing of the skin and eyes due to digestive issues. One of the causes of Ben's gallstones could be his age. ~~A~~ ^{Middle} ~~older~~ age, 40+ makes a person more at risk of developing gallstones. Another cause of gallstones is high cholesterol in the diet and high amounts of bilirubin from the liver these lead to the formation of stones, and are linked with obesity. [6]

In this response, the candidate has described the symptoms to a Level 3 standard. However, the causes have not been described to the same standard. They have identified high levels cholesterol and bilirubin form stones, but they don't say how. They have mentioned the bile duct becoming blocked, but they have not developed this point. They have instead described risk factors, which is not creditable. This limited the response to Level 2 4 marks.

Cause refers to the biological factors directly causing the disease, e.g. crystals developing, forming into stones, which then can block the bile duct. Risk factors are factors that can make the development of the condition more likely. For example, obesity increases the risk and likelihood of an individual developing gall stones but does not directly cause the disease.

Assessment for learning



Understanding of the difference between risk factors and causes is an area where candidates need to develop knowledge and understanding.

Question 1 (d) (i)

(d) Amir has been diagnosed with cirrhosis, a disease of the liver.

Amir has been told by their doctor that there is no cure for cirrhosis, but their symptoms can be managed.

(i) Explain **one** possible biological cause of cirrhosis.

.....

.....

.....

..... [2]

Marks of zero, one and two seemed to be equally awarded for this question. Excessive alcohol abuse and the development of scar tissue was the most common correct response. Some candidates provided risk factors instead of causes in their answers, with family history a common incorrect response. Some candidates lost marks by providing vague responses like 'drinking'.

Question 1 (d) (ii)*

(ii)* Discuss the impact caused by the symptoms of cirrhosis on Amir's lifestyle and their likely care needs.

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.....

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.....

.....

..... [8]

This Level of Response question proved to be challenging for candidates, with very few achieving a Level 3. To achieve a Level 3 candidates needed to discuss 3 aspects: symptoms, impact on lifestyle and care needs. Symptoms and impact on lifestyle were by far the best addressed aspect of this question. Care needs was an aspect ignored or briefly answered by many candidates. Candidates achieving a Level 3 gave well rounded responses covering care needs such as support in stopping drinking and organisations/professions providing guidance on living with cirrhosis.

Exemplar 2

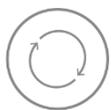
One of the impacts caused by the symptoms is Amir's ability to socialise with ~~his~~ their friends. As Amir's liver is unable to breakdown toxins with ease Amir may not be able to drink alcohol. This could lead to ~~him~~ ^{them} not going out with friends due to embarrassment of not being able to drink the same drinks as others. Therefore, he may become isolated. Additionally, a symptom of cirrhosis is loss of appetite. This could cause Amir to become malnourished as he eats less. He may then have to visit a nutritionalist to help him to become healthy and correctly nourished. Not being hungry may also stop Amir from going to restaurants leading to isolation. Jaundice is another symptom of cirrhosis and is visible to his friends and family. This could lead to Amir becoming very self conscious and cause him to become anxious. He may then need specialist help from a therapist or [8] he may need help from a doctor or nutritionalist to stop his jaundice and try to ~~return~~ ^{better} his health to ~~normal~~ make him less ~~conscious~~ self conscious.

To achieve a Level 3 for this question, candidates needed discuss 3 aspects of the question (symptoms, impact on lifestyle and care needs). This response discusses symptoms and the impact on lifestyle to a good standard. However, there is no discussion of the third aspect of the question, care needs. They do identify individuals who could provide care needs (therapists, nutritionists and doctors), but don't say how they would support them.

For example, they have written 'He may then visit a nutritionist to help him become healthy and correctly nourished'. They have identified a professional who could provide care needs, but they have not said how.

This could be improved by saying 'He may then visit a nutritionist, who can provide guidance on what foods to eat, e.g. vegetables high in vitamins and food to avoid or reduce, e.g. red meat and processed food high in saturated fats'.

Assessment for learning



Addressing all aspects of a question is an area where candidates need to develop their exam technique.

Some candidates do not fully understand the difference between treatments and care needs.

Question 2 (a)

2 The eye is part of the sensory system.

(a) Complete the table below by deciding whether each statement about the function of structures in the eye is True (T) or False (F).

Statement	True (T) or False (F)
The optic nerve transmits impulses from the eye to the brain.
The pupil focuses light entering the eye.
The suspensory ligaments attach the lens to ciliary muscles.
The conjunctiva contains photoreceptors for detecting light.

[4]

Generally, this was a well answered question, with most candidates achieving 3 or 4 marks. Statement 2 was the most commonly incorrect response.

Question 2 (b) (i) and (ii)

(b) Malfunctions of the eye can affect different structures in the eye.

Choose from the list of malfunctions below to answer the following questions.

- AMD**
- cataracts**
- glaucoma**
- retinopathy**

(i) Which malfunction results in cloudy patches developing in the lens?

..... [1]

(ii) Which malfunction results in a build-up of fluid in the eye?

..... [1]

Both Questions 2 (b) (i) and (ii) were well answered, with the first question providing slightly more correct responses. Glaucoma and retinopathy were common incorrect answer for cataracts and glaucoma, respectively.

Question 2 (c)*

(c)* Healthcare professionals can provide advice about the care needs of a person living with the impacts of an eye malfunction.

Explain the likely care needs of a person with an eye malfunction.

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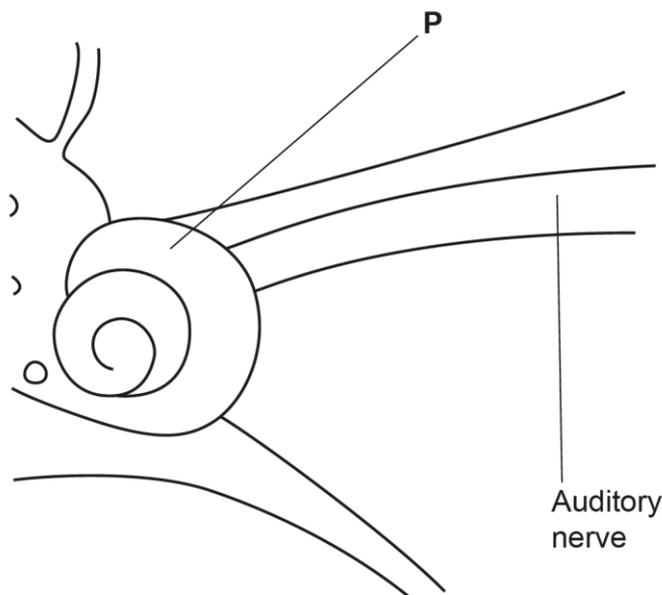
..... [6]

This was a well answered Level of Response question with many candidates achieving Level 2 or Level 3. Many candidates focused their answers on care needs including learning braille, guide dogs, canes and carers supporting individuals with driving, cooking and cleaning. Some candidates explained treatments rather than care needs, which gained no credit.

Question 2 (d) (i)

(d) The ear is also part of the sensory system.

The diagram shows a section of the ear.



(i) Which **one** of the following is the section of the ear shown in the diagram?

Put a tick (✓) in the box next to the correct section.

Section	Tick (✓) one only
Inner ear	
Middle ear	
Outer ear	

[1]

This was a well answered question with most candidates providing the correct response. Middle ear was the most frequent incorrect answer.

Question 2 (d) (ii)

(ii) The structure labelled **P** contains an organ lined with tiny hair cells that converts sound vibrations into nerve impulses.

Name the organ located inside the structure labelled **P**.

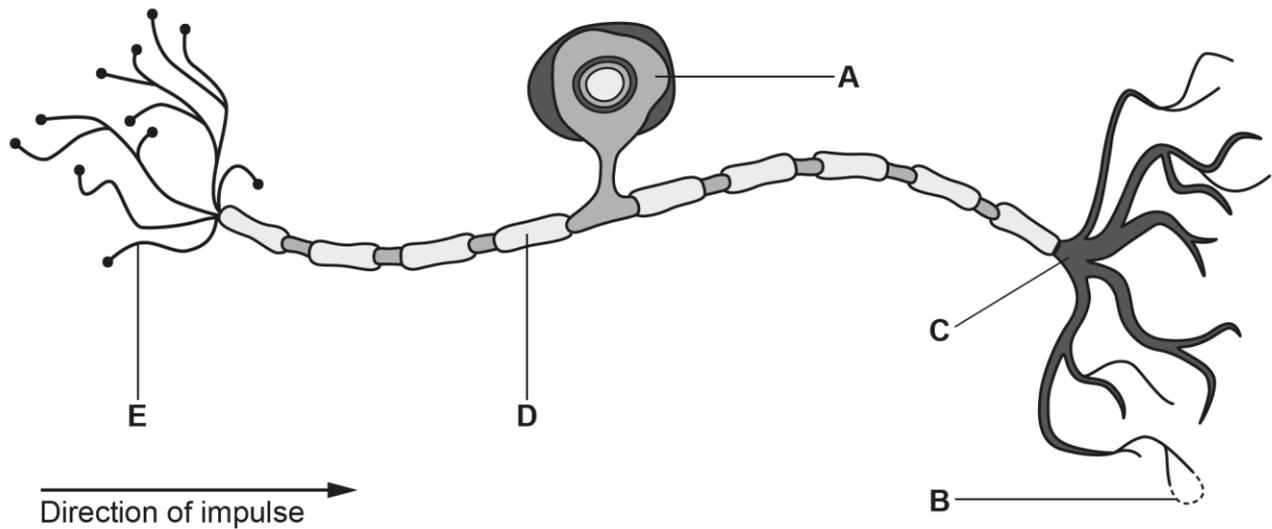
..... [1]

This question was highly challenging, with only a minority of candidates identifying the organ of corti. A common mistake was to identify structure P (the cochlea), rather than the structure inside it.

Question 2 (e) (i)

(e) Sensory neurons transmit nerve impulses from receptors in the ear to the central nervous system.

The diagram shows a sensory neuron.



(i) Complete the table below by selecting the correct letter that identifies the structures labelled on the diagram.

Structure	Letter
Axon
Cell body
Dendrite
Myelin sheath

[4]

There was a mixed performance on this question with, mixing up axon and myelin sheath was a common incorrect response.

Question 2 (e) (ii)

(ii) A synapse connects neurons allowing nerve impulses to cross from one neuron to the next.

Complete the sentences about synapses by choosing the most appropriate word(s) from the list below.

axons dendrites hormones neurotransmitters receptors

When a nerve impulse reaches the end of a neuron,

are released. These are chemicals that cross the synaptic gap to transmit the impulse.

The chemicals bind to the on the membrane of the next neuron.

The impulse is then transmitted through this neuron.

[2]

Nearly all candidates achieved at least 1 mark for this question, with many gaining full marks. Hormones was a common incorrect answer for neurotransmitter and dendrites for receptors.

Question 3 (b) (ii)

(ii) State what will happen to Nina's blood glucose levels if they cannot produce insulin.

..... [1]

Only slightly over half of candidates provided the correct response.

Question 3 (b) (iii)

(iii) State **three** symptoms of diabetes.

1

2

3

[3]

Nearly all candidates achieved at least 1 mark, with many obtaining 3 marks. Thirst, increased urination and fatigue were frequent correct responses. Low blood glucose and weight gain were common incorrect responses. Some candidates dropped marks by repeating responses, e.g. fatigue and tired.

Question 3 (c)*

(c)* Evaluate **three** treatments available to help Nina manage diabetes and reduce the impact on their lifestyle.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
..... [8]

This was the most challenging Level of Response question with hardly any candidates achieving Level 3. Candidates achieving 0 or Level 1 often identified at least one correct treatment, but did not evaluate it, explaining the treatment instead. Candidates achieving Level 2 demonstrated an ability to evaluate but often covered lifestyle changes rather than treatments within their responses. Insulin injections and insulin pumps were the most common treatments evaluated, with fear, pain, malfunctions, infections, ease, replacing insulin and reducing blood glucose common evaluation points. Some candidates explained in detail the process of monitoring blood glucose through finger prick tests, without actually covering insulin being injected, which meant that the response could not be credited.

Exemplar 3

Insulin injections can be used for both type 1 and 2 diabetes which will help lower blood glucose levels and bring it back to the optimum. This is a quick and easy way to receive insulin and the needles/pen pens are portable which is convenient as it can be done anywhere, anytime which helps prevent ^{the} diabetes going out of control. However, this may not be as effective for type 2 diabetes since this type makes the body resistant to insulin. Furthermore, it may be embarrassing to have to take an insulin injection before eating a meal in public which may make them avoid socialising/going out leading to feelings of isolation/loneliness. Another treatment is regular blood tests, this will help monitor the blood glucose levels which helps prevent the diabetes from going out of control. ~~that~~ ^{if it wasn't} controlled properly, other complications can arise like infections, kidney failure and so on which have further challenges associated with ~~its~~ ^{it's} life style changes. [8]

This response includes a detailed evaluation of one treatment (insulin injections), where they have provided several strengths and weaknesses of this treatment. However, the second treatment (regular blood tests) is not a treatment it is a monitoring method. A third treatment has not been identified.

As they provided a detailed evaluation of one treatment, they have achieved a Sub-max of 5.

Assessment for learning



Candidates need to develop their understanding of the command verb evaluate, so that they can provide higher quality responses and achieve Level 2 and Level 3.

Question 3 (d)

(d) Gaseous exchange is a process that takes place in the respiratory system.

Complete the sentences about the structure of the respiratory system by choosing the most appropriate word(s) from the list below.

- alveoli bronchi bronchioles diaphragm
- intercostal larynx pleural trachea

The windpipe splits into two tubes called that enter each lung. These two tubes divide further into many airways that end in small air sacs known as During inspiration, the muscular flattens and the ribcage is pulled upwards and outwards by the action of the muscles.

This enables air to enter the lungs.

[4]

This was a well answered question, with diaphragm and intercostals the most common correctly identified structures. Bronchi was the most frequent error with bronchioles and trachea common incorrect responses.

Question 3 (e) (i)

(e) Asthma is a malfunction of the respiratory system.

The symptoms of asthma include breathlessness, wheezing and tightness in the chest.

(i) Explain **one** possible biological cause for these symptoms.

.....

.....

.....

..... [2]

Most candidates were able to identify that the airways are narrowed, which reduces airflow. A common issue related to structure (bronchioles) of the respiratory system affected by asthma. Candidates either gave vague responses i.e. just airways or identified incorrect structures, e.g. alveoli.

Question 4 (b)

(b) The blood contains plasma proteins.

Which **one** of the following is a function of plasma proteins?

Put a tick (✓) in the box next to the correct function.

Function	Tick (✓) one only
Destroy bacteria	
Help form tissue fluid	
Transport oxygen	

[1]

Most candidates correctly identified plasma proteins function of helping to form tissue fluid.

Question 4 (c) (i)

(c) Coronary heart disease (CHD) is caused by a build-up of fatty deposits in part of the cardiovascular system.

(i) Name the part of the cardiovascular system where a build-up of fatty deposits occurs.

..... [1]

Only a few candidates identified the walls of coronary arteries as the location where fatty deposits build-up. Many candidates identified arteries or the heart as the site, and while we accepted coronary arteries alone, these responses were too vague.

Question 4 (c) (ii)

(ii) A diet high in cholesterol can increase the risk of developing CHD.

State **two other** lifestyle factors that can increase the risk of developing CHD.

1

2

[2]

This was a well answered question with most candidates achieving full marks. For candidates who did not, common issues were stating non-lifestyle factors, e.g. gender or fatty diet, which was deemed too similar to a diet high in cholesterol to be credited.

Question 4 (c) (iii)

(iii) Describe **one** symptom of CHD.

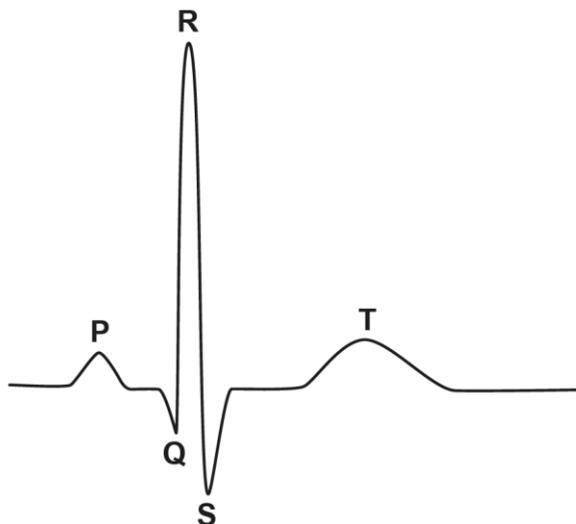
..... [1]

As with Question 4 (c) (ii), this was also very well answered. Chest pains, breathlessness and angina were common symptoms provided. High blood pressure was perhaps the most frequent incorrect symptom provided. High blood pressure is a risk factor and not a symptom.

Question 4 (d)*

(d)* An electrocardiogram (ECG) can be used to detect signs of coronary heart disease.

The diagram shows part of an ECG trace for a patient with normal heart activity.



Describe what the ECG trace shows about what is happening in the heart.

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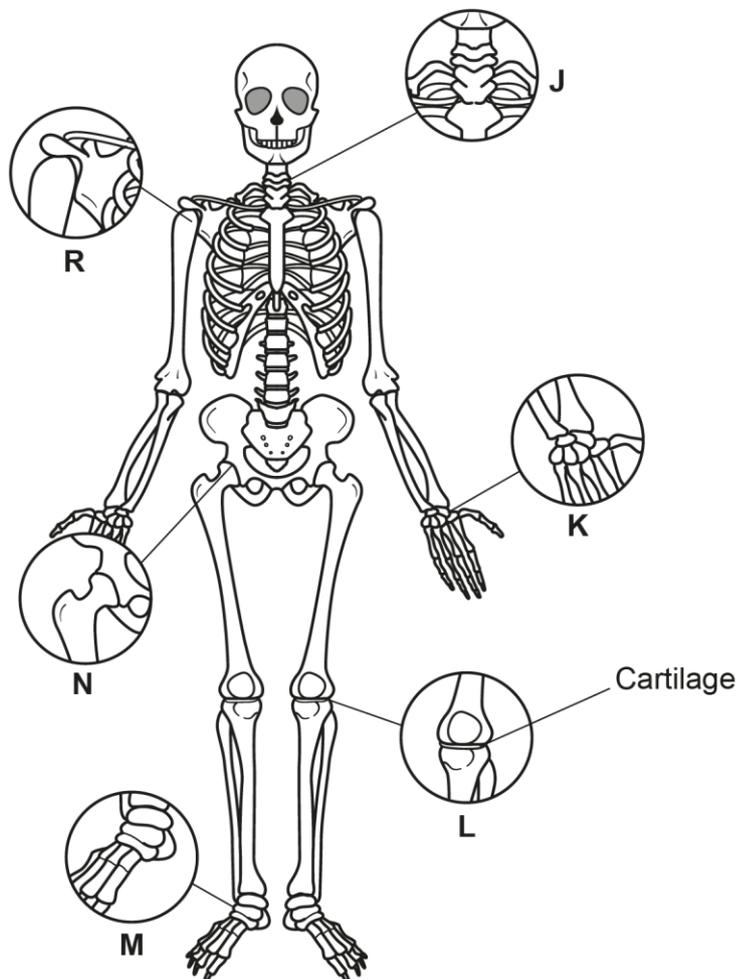
.....

..... [6]

Responses to this question were highly varied. With equal amounts achieving Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3. For candidates who did less well on this question responses focused on the flow of blood or the action of SA and AV nodes.

Question 5 (a) (i)

5 The diagram shows some of the joints in the musculoskeletal system and where they are found in the body.



- (a)
 (i) Complete the table below by selecting the correct letter that identifies the joints labelled on the diagram.

Joint	Letter
Hinge
Pivot
Sliding

[3]

Most candidates achieved 2 or 3 marks for this question.

Question 5 (a) (ii)

(ii) Cartilage is labelled on one of the joints in the diagram. Explain the importance of cartilage in a joint.

.....
.....
..... [2]

Responses primarily focused on cartilages function in reducing friction and stopping bones from rubbing.

Question 5 (b)*

(b)* Amaya is 75 years old and has been diagnosed with osteoporosis, a malfunction of the musculoskeletal system.

Amaya's doctor has explained that weak bones is a normal part of the ageing process but that other factors have also contributed to the condition.

Discuss the factors that could have contributed to Amaya's condition. Include possible risk factors and biological causes.

.....
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.....
.....
.....
..... [6]

As with previous exam series some candidates confused the diseases of osteoarthritis and osteoporosis. Most candidates addressed risk factors well but less were able to cover the biological causes to the same standard. Only some candidates were able to discuss the causes beyond the lack of bone density. However, a reasonable number of candidates provided excellent responses covering the role of osteoblasts and osteoclasts.

Question 5 (c) (i)

(c) Osteoarthritis is also a malfunction of the musculoskeletal system.

(i) Describe **one** impact of osteoarthritis on lifestyle.

.....
.....
..... [2]

One mark was by far the most common mark awarded for this question. Candidates often correctly identified an impact, e.g. reduced mobility, but didn't describe why this occurred, e.g. joint pain to be awarded 2 marks. A common issue related to simply stating pain, which was too vague.

Question 5 (c) (ii)

(ii) State **one** method that can be used to treat osteoarthritis.

..... [1]

This was a very well answered question with most candidates achieving the mark for treatments such as physiotherapy, steroids and joint replacement surgery. Some candidates gave vague responses of medication and surgery, which was not creditable.

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There are **two types** of online course: an **introductory module** and **subject-specific** courses.

The introductory module, Building your Confidence in Internal Assessment, is designed for all teachers who are involved in internal assessment for our qualifications. It covers the following topics:

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- the principles and methods of standardisation
- the best practices for collecting, storing and submitting evidence
- the common issues and challenges in internal assessment and how to avoid them.

The subject-specific courses are tailored for each qualification that has non-exam assessment (NEA) units, except for AS Level and Entry Level. They cover the following topics:

- the structure and content of the NEA units
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