

Examiners' report

CAMBRIDGE TECHNICALS LEVEL 3 (2016)

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

**OCR Level 3 Cambridge Technical
in Health and Social Care**

Certificate: 05830

Extended Certificate: 05831

Foundation Diploma: 05832

Diploma: 05833

Extended Diploma: 05871

Unit 4 Summer 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

Most candidates performed successfully in this exam series, with performance being inline or slightly more successful than previous exam series. When compared to previous exam series candidate responses for the extended response questions were more successful. Many candidates performed successfully across the extended response questions achieving high Level 2/Level 3 marks for five or more questions. However, Question 5 (b), on the control and regulation of the cardiac cycle, proved less successful for many candidates with some candidates providing no response. Furthermore, understanding on the dietary changes required for individuals with gallstones and the causes on type 2 diabetes, prevented otherwise detailed responses from being given a Level 3 mark. In contrast to the improved performance for the extended response questions, performance on point based questions was less successful. This could be linked to more point based questions requiring knowledge recall of biological structures or processes. For example, Question 1 (a) (iii) on diffusion gradients and Question 4 (e) (i) on deamination. Many candidates were not given any marks for these questions.

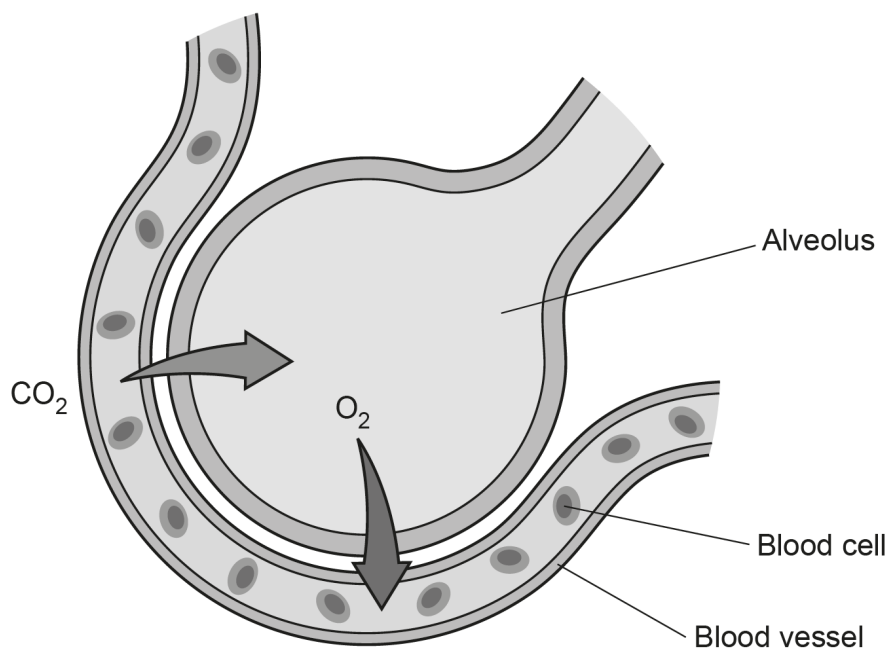
Most candidates who used extra pages indicated this within the exam paper and clearly labelled their extra work. Where candidates produce extra work which is not clearly or incorrectly labelled it could cause issues in determining which questions the extra work relates to. On the whole word processed responses were sufficiently spaced out to allow for annotation.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
• responded to all questions • achieved Level 2 and above for all extended response questions • achieved Level 3 for at least one extended response question • provided responses as required by the command verbs • addressed all aspects of extended response questions • understood subject-specific terminology • achieved most of the marks available on the short answer point based questions.	• did not provide responses to all questions • addressed only one aspect of extended response questions • provided responses including content that was not required/relevant, e.g. covering blood flow through the heart rather than the control and regulation of the cardiac cycle • did not achieve Level 2 or Level 3 for any extended response questions • achieved few of the marks available for the short answer point based questions.

Question 1 (a) (ii)

1

(a) The diagram shows part of an alveolus in the respiratory system.



- (i) The blood vessel labelled in the diagram has thin walls to allow gases to diffuse into and out of the blood.

Name the type of blood vessel.

..... [1]

Many candidates provided a successful response to this question. Common less successful responses included red blood cells and veins.

Question 1 (a) (ii)

(ii) The type of blood cell labelled in the diagram transports oxygen.

Which **one** of the following identifies the type of blood cell in the diagram?

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

Type of blood cell	Tick (✓) one only
Erythrocyte	
Lymphocyte	
Neutrophil	

[1]

Most candidates successfully identified erythrocytes.

Question 1 (a) (iii)

(iii) Explain how diffusion gradients allow gaseous exchange between the alveolus and the blood vessel to occur.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

..... [3]

Only a few candidates achieved 2 or 3 marks for this question. A common error was explaining gaseous exchange or the structural adaptations of the alveoli, rather than how diffusion gradients allow gaseous exchange.

Assessment for learning



Develop understanding of the role of diffusion gradients in gaseous exchange

Question 1 (b)*

(b)* Cellular respiration is a series of chemical reactions that takes place inside cells.

It can be either aerobic or anaerobic.

Discuss the similarities **and** differences between aerobic and anaerobic respiration.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

..... [6]

Most candidates were given a Level 1 or Level 2 mark for the question, but very few a Level 3 mark. Most responses focused on the differences between aerobic and anaerobic with oxygen, carbon dioxide and lactic acid frequent areas of discussion. Many candidates were less successful in discussing similarities to the same level.

Exemplar 1

one similarity of aerobic and anaerobic respiration is that they both use glucose. Another similarity is they both produce ATP. However, aerobic respiration produces 32 ATP, while anaerobic respiration produces 2 ATP. Another difference is that aerobic respiration uses oxygen, while anaerobic respiration doesn't. Furthermore, aerobic respiration produces carbon dioxide and water as waste products, while, anaerobic respiration produces lactic acid as a waste product. Aerobic respiration occurs in the mitochondria but anaerobic respiration occurs in the cytoplasm.

The candidate has been given a Level 3 mark as they succinctly addressed both the similarities and differences between aerobic and anaerobic respiration. They have used language to clearly indicate whether they are discussing similarities or differences.

Question 1 (c) (i)

(c) Emphysema is a malfunction of the respiratory system that can be caused by smoking tobacco.

(i) Apart from smoking tobacco, state **one other** risk factor for emphysema.

.....
..... [1]

Pollution, dust and genetics were common successful responses. Some candidates did not fully understand emphysema providing risk factors such as obesity and alcohol as their response.

Question 1 (c) (ii)

(ii) Shortness of breath is a common symptom of emphysema.

Describe **one** biological explanation for this symptom.

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

Many responses were vague, with some candidates describing causes closer to asthma.

Question 1 (c) (iii)

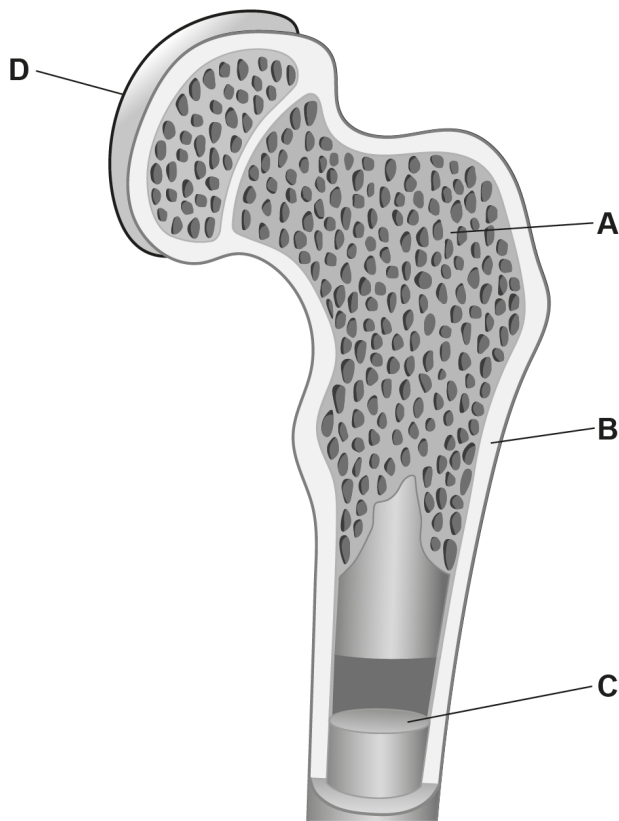
(iii) Identify **one** possible treatment for emphysema.

.....
..... [1]

A common misconception involved identifying lifestyle changes, rather than treatments. Where candidates used the term 'inhalers' as a treatment, it was too vague, the term 'bronchodilators' is required. Oxygen therapy and lung transplants were common successful responses.

Question 2 (a)

2 The diagram shows a vertical section of bone.



(a) Complete the table below by selecting the correct letter that identifies the components of bone.

One row has been done for you.

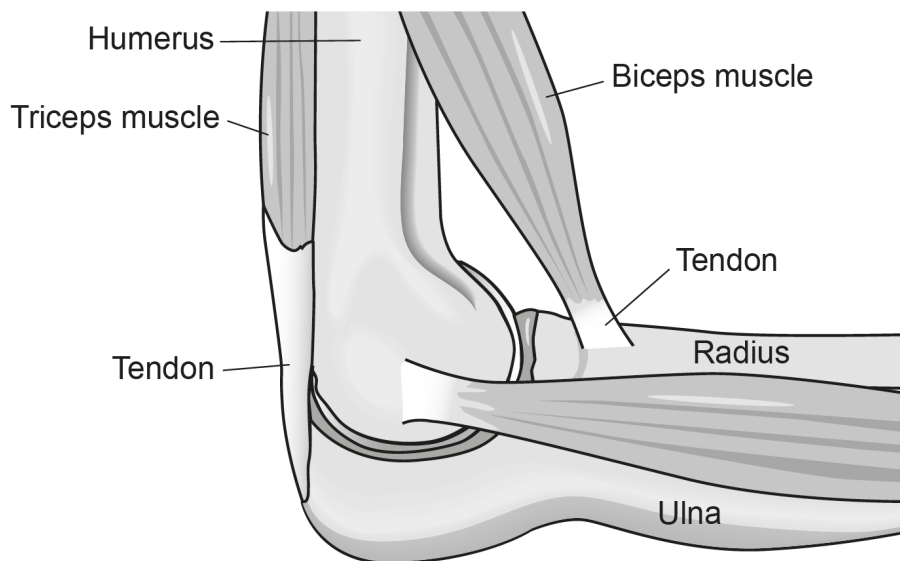
Structure	Letter on diagram
Bone marrow	
Cartilage	D
Compact bone	
Spongy bone	

[3]

Some candidates were given 3 marks for this question. Compact bone was a common successful structure identified. Mixing up bone marrow and spongy bone was a common less successful response.

Question 2 (b)*

(b)* The diagram shows the elbow, which is a hinge joint.



Explain how the action of muscles around this joint results in movement.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

..... [6]

Many candidates provided successful responses to this question gaining full marks. However, some candidates, while understanding the mechanisms involved, less successfully applied terminology. A few candidates explained the structure and function of a synovial joint. Marks could not be credited for that response.

Question 2 (c)

(c) Arthritis and osteoporosis are both malfunctions of the musculoskeletal system.

The table below contains statements about arthritis and osteoporosis.

Complete the table below by deciding whether each statement is correct for either **arthritis only**, **osteoporosis only** or **both** types of malfunction.

Put a tick (✓) in each box that applies to a correct statement.

The first row has been done for you.

Statement	Arthritis only	Osteoporosis only	Both
Risk of developing the malfunction increases with age			✓
Characterised by loss of bone density			
Inflammation or injury results in loss of cartilage			
Steroid injections can be used to treat swollen joints			

[3]

Loss of bone density only affecting osteoporosis was a common successful response. Many candidates achieved 3 marks for this question.

Question 2 (d)

(d) Muscle movements are coordinated and controlled by the brain and nervous system.

The list shows some components of the brain.

cerebellum

cerebral cortex

corpus callosum

frontal lobe

medulla

meninges

Choose from the list above to identify the component for each of the statements below.

You can use each component once, more than once or not at all.

Coordinates muscle activity and fine motor skills.

.....

Controls muscles to help maintain balance.

.....

A bridge of tissue that enables communication between the two halves of the brain.

.....

A set of membranes around the brain and spinal cord to provide protection against infection.

.....

[4]

The first and fourth statements were a common successful response. Medulla was a frequent less successful response for statement two.

Question 2 (e)*

- (e)* Riley is admitted to hospital after suffering a stroke. Riley's symptoms include dizziness and confusion.

Describe **two other** possible symptoms of stroke **and** explain the possible biological causes of these symptoms.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

..... [8]

Most candidates identified two symptoms of stroke, with slurred speech, face drooping on one side and numbness/paralysis frequent responses. Many candidates went on to explain ischaemic and haemorrhagic strokes. Ischaemic strokes were explained in greater depth.

Question 3 (a)

- 3 The ear is part of the sensory system.

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

ampullae	auditory nerve	cochlea	ear drum
eustachian tube	organ of Corti	round window	

The receives sound waves directly from the external environment and transmits them to the middle ear. The sound waves are then amplified by three small bones and the vibrations passed onto the , a membrane between the middle and inner ear. The vibrations pass through the jelly-like fluid of the in the inner ear and are then converted into impulses that are sent to the brain via the

Tiny fluid-filled tubes called are also found in the inner ear. These do not have a role in hearing but help maintain balance.

[5]

The ear drum and auditory nerve were the structures most frequently successfully identified. Marks between 2 and 4 were common, with few candidates achieving full marks.

Question 3 (b) (i)

(b) Ariel has suffered hearing loss due to constant exposure to loud noises.

(i) Identify **one** biological reason how exposure to loud noises may cause hearing loss.

.....
..... [1]

Candidates responded well to this question, with burst ear drum a frequent successful response.

Question 3 (b) (ii)*

(ii)* Discuss impacts of hearing loss on Ariel's daily life.

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

Many candidates provided a detailed discussion gaining 5 to 8 marks. Learning sign language, wearing hearing aids and isolation were recurrent areas of discussion. A common thread for a Level 3 response was to discuss the social and emotional impacts and then go on to discuss support and care needs.

Misconception



A misconception expressed by many candidates was that hearing loss would result in not being able to drive or being in constant danger when out and about.

Assessment for learning



Some candidates seem to confuse the impacts of hearing and vision loss. The most serious impacts on daily life are focused on, and candidates assume that individuals will have extremely limited lifestyles.

Question 4 (a) (i)

4 The digestive system produces fluids that have a role in digesting food.

(a) Bile is a digestive fluid.

(i) Name the organ that stores bile until it is needed.

..... [1]

Many candidates provided the successful response of the gallbladder. The liver and pancreas were common less successful responses.

Question 4 (a) (ii)

(ii) Name the structure that enables bile to enter the small intestine.

..... [1]

Some responses to this question were successful, with a range of digestive structures provided.

Question 4 (b)

(b) Complete the table below by deciding whether each statement about the digestive role of bile is True (T) or False (F).

Statement	True (T) or False (F)
Bile is an enzyme that chemically digests fats.	
Bile helps in digestion by emulsifying proteins.	
Bile helps in digestion by neutralising stomach acid.	

[3]

There was a full range of marks given for this question. Some candidates gave three successful responses while others gave three less successful responses.

Question 4 (c)*

(c)* Chemical imbalances in bile can result in the formation of gallstones, a malfunction of the digestive system.

Amos has been diagnosed with gallstones.

Discuss the impact of gallstones on Amos' diet and lifestyle.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

..... [6]

Many candidates discussed causes, diagnosis and treatment in their responses, none of which was required in the question, the focus should have been on the impact on diet and lifestyle. Impacts on lifestyle was discussed to a higher standard than impact on diet. Pain and its consequences, e.g. absence from work, as well as appointments were regular discussion points. Only a few candidates were able to discuss the impacts of diet to any great depth, with many responses failing to go beyond reducing fat. This resulted in few candidates achieving a Level 3 response.

Question 4 (d)

(d) The pancreas is part of the digestive system.

Outline the role of the pancreas in chemical digestion.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

..... [3]

This question proved less successful. A common misconception was the focus on the pancreas' role in production of insulin and the regulation of glucose. This is part of the pancreas' endocrine role and not its digestive role.

Question 4 (e) (i)

(e) The liver is part of the digestive system that also has breakdown functions.

Deamination and detoxification are breakdown functions carried out by the liver.

(i) Describe the process of deamination.

.....

.....

.....

..... [2]

This question was left blank by some students, with a wide range of less successful responses provided by others. Deamination is an area where candidates had limited knowledge and understanding.

Assessment for learning



Candidates should understand the process of deamination as a breakdown function of the liver. LO5.7 in the Teaching content

Question 4 (e) (ii)

(ii) State **one** example of detoxification.

.....

..... [1]

In contrast to deamination, most candidates understood detoxification, with the removal of alcohol being a common successful response.

Question 4 (f) (i)

(f) Gabi's liver is malfunctioning.

(i) Name a malfunction of the liver.

..... [1]

Some candidates provide vague responses including liver diseases and liver failure. Many candidates named a successful malfunction, with most providing cirrhosis as their response.

Question 4 (f) (ii)

(ii) State **two** possible symptoms caused by Gabi's liver malfunction.

1

2

[2]

A well responded question with jaundice, abdominal pain and nausea being common successful responses.

Question 4 (f) (iii)

(iii) Which **two** of the following are risk factors that may have caused Gabi's liver to malfunction?

Put a tick (✓) in the box next to **two** correct risk factors.

Risk factors	Tick (✓) two only
Eating disorder such as anorexia	
Excess alcohol intake	
Exposure to UV light	
Food allergy	
Hepatitis C infection	

[2]

Most candidates were given marks for this question, with the majority given 2 marks. Food allergy was a common successful response. A few candidates only ticked one box, suggesting the question had not been fully understood.

Question 5 (a) (i)

5 The heart pumps blood through the cardiovascular system.

(a) Choose from the list below to answer the following questions about the structure and functions of components of the heart.

aorta	atrium	bicuspid	pulmonary artery
pulmonary vein	semi-lunar	vena cava	ventricle

You can use each component once, more than once or not at all.

(i) Identify a **valve** that closes to prevent blood flowing back into ventricles as it is pumped out of the heart.

..... [1]

Many candidates provided the successful response of semi-lunar. Bicuspid was identified in most less successful responses.

Question 5 (a) (ii)

(ii) Identify **two** blood vessels that carry oxygenated blood.

1

2 [2]

Pulmonary artery and pulmonary vein were the most common vessels identified, meaning 1 mark was given. Few of the candidates successfully identified both pulmonary vein and aorta.

Question 5 (a) (iii)

(iii) Identify a **chamber** where blood enters the heart.

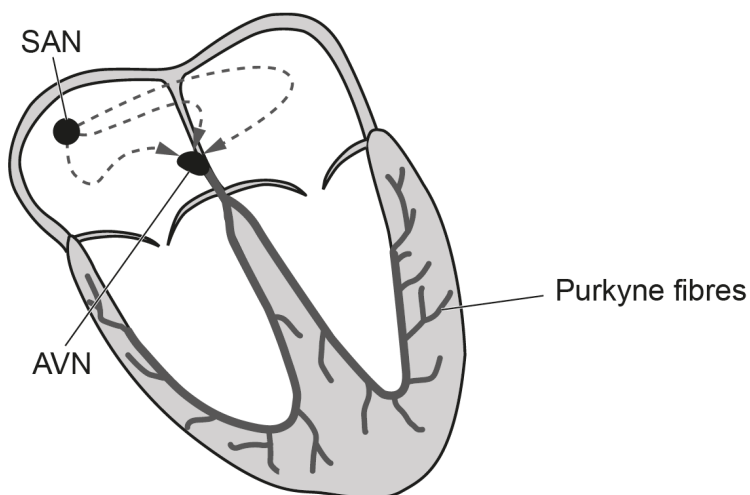
..... [1]

Most candidates successfully identified the atria, with the ventricles a frequent less successful response.

Question 5 (b)*

(b)* The diagram shows the internal structure of the heart and the positions of:

- sinoatrial node (SAN)
- atrioventricular node (AVN)
- Purkyne fibres



Describe the roles of these structures in the control and regulation of the cardiac cycle.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

..... [6]

This question was the most common question not responded to. Some candidates described the flow of blood through the heart, which wasn't given. Valid responses tended to focus on the sinoatrial node being the pacemaker and the atrioventricular node delaying the impulse. Only a few candidates described their roles in greater depth and/or provided successful responses in relation to the purkyne fibres.

Exemplar 2

Sinoatrial node is the pacemaker of the heart ^{as it produces} ~~that~~ ^{making atria contract} ~~cardiac cycle~~ its own heartbeats by producing an electrical impulse. This electrical impulse is then travelled down the atrium to the Atrioventricular node. The AVN's role is to delay the electrical impulse very slightly to give the blood enough time to be emptied out of the atria and into the ventricles. From here, the electrical impulse is then travelled down the bundle of His which is situated in the septum, and branches out to the Purkyne fibres which is spread across the both ventricles which induces ventricular ~~contraction~~ (ventricles contracting) which pumps the blood out of the heart. Then there is complete cardiac diastole, when the ~~the~~ whole heart ~~is~~ relaxes. That is one cardiac cycle.

The candidate has described the role of each structure in a logical and coherent manner. Not only have they described what is happening but have gone on to explain why. Many candidates stated that the atrioventricular node delayed the impulse, but only a few went on to explain that it was to allow the ventricles to fill with blood.

Question 5 (c) (i)

(c) Shanti has developed hypertension (high blood pressure).

(i) State **one** risk factor for hypertension.

.....
..... [1]

Some candidates misinterpreted this question stating what, hypertension was a risk factor for, e.g. heart attack. More successful responses included stress, alcohol and obesity.

Question 5 (c) (ii)

(ii) Outline **one** method that Shanti can use to monitor their hypertension.

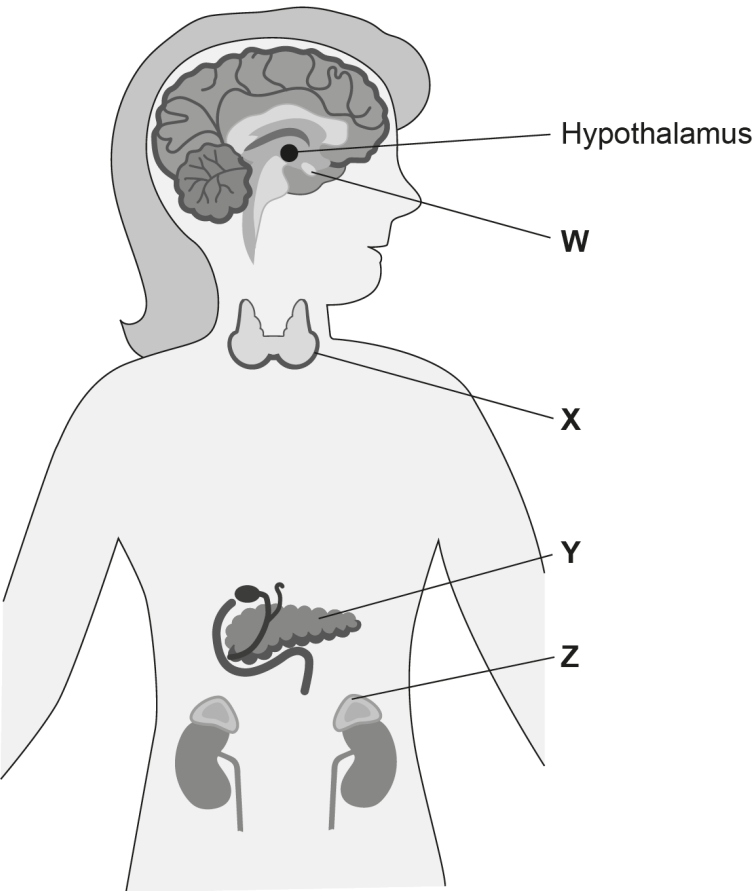
.....
.....
.....
..... [2]

This question was generally well responded to with most candidates given 1 or 2 marks. Blood tests and ECG were common less successful responses.

Question 5 (d) (i)

(d) The blood has a role in transporting hormones produced by the endocrine system.

The diagram shows some parts of the endocrine system.



(i) Use the diagram to help you complete the table below about the functions of parts of the endocrine system.

Part of endocrine system	Letter on diagram	Function
Pancreas		Produces insulin to control blood glucose levels
.....	Z	
Pituitary		Produces hormones that help to regulate other endocrine glands
Thyroid	X	

[5]

The locations of the pancreas and the pituitary were successfully identified by most candidates. Some candidates mistook the adrenal glands for the kidneys.

Question 5 (d) (ii)

(ii) The parts of the endocrine system have a role in homeostasis.

State what the term **homeostasis** means.

.....
.....
..... [1]

Only a few candidates were given marks for their responses. Many candidates provided responses,, e.g. controlling body temperature, without providing sufficient detail.

Question 5 (e)*

(e)* Diabetes is a malfunction of the endocrine system.

There are two types of diabetes, type 1, and type 2.

Explain the causes of **both** types of diabetes.

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

Only a few candidates achieved 4 or more marks for this question; however, most candidates did achieve some marks. Most candidates understood that in type 1 diabetes the pancreas can't produce insulin, and some explained that this due to autoimmunity. However, candidates struggled to explain the causes of type 2, with responses limited to comments on insulin resistance.

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