

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 25 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. A selection of candidate responses is also provided. 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 exam paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from [Teach Cambridge](#).

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Unit 25 series overview

Once again, we saw evidence of substantial research having been carried out in relation to the pre-release material. While all three research articles were accessed the most popular by far was research article B: What is the effect of intergenerational activities on the well-being and mental health of older people. Research article C was the least favoured.

Within Section A many candidates were able to demonstrate their considerable knowledge of ethical practices.

Within Section B candidates were able to show their understanding of appropriateness, trustworthiness and reliability applied to their chosen secondary sources.

The extended pages within the exam paper booklet were used well; with most candidates signposting their additional answers accurately.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
- understood how a randomised controlled trial could be used - were able to discuss ethical practices - addressed the command word of analyse effectively by providing both pros and cons - were able to identify both advantages and disadvantages when locating secondary sources applied to library searches - were able to extract out the requirements for Question 2 (d), findings, conclusions, reference to research question or hypothesis and judgements on findings - gave both positives and negatives when evaluating the reliability of their secondary sources.	- had limited knowledge on how a randomised controlled trial could be used - were only able to identify ethical practices - only considered pros when addressing the command word of analyse - provided evaluation points for locating sources applied to library searches, seemingly confusing selection with locating - were not able to extract out the requirements for Q2d and only focused on findings - only provided positives when evaluating the reliability of their secondary sources.

Question 1 (a)

1 Hospitals use a variety of different drugs to treat pain.

Patients in a hospital are participating in a study to assess the effectiveness of a new drug for pain relief.

(a) State **three** purposes for carrying out this study.

- 1
-
- 2
-
- 3
-

[3]

This was generally a well answered question. The specification reference for this question is 1.2. The most common answers were to improve outcomes, to measure the impact and to establish an evidence base for pain management. The most common error was in stating to identify the needs of the patients; through the stem of the question, it was already ascertained that the needs of the patients was pain relief.

Centres should encourage their candidates to use the stem when developing their answers.

Question 1 (b) (i)*

(b)

(i)* Describe how a randomised controlled trial could be used for this study.

-
-
-
-
-
-

[6]

We saw a wide variety of answers for this question. Many candidates had significant knowledge on how a randomised controlled trial (RCT) could be used and effectively wrote about blind and double blind trials, the use of a placebo, the gathering of quantitative data through standardised instructions and the need to compare the data from the control group and the experimental group. Those who applied their

answers to pain relief were able to be credited marks at Level 3. If a stem is given within a question centres should direct their candidates to make sure that they address this within their answers.

In contrast to these well-developed answers, we saw many that were unable to describe how a RCT could be used, many answers purely focused on the monitoring of the patients and were unable to describe key procedures within randomised controlled trials.

Exemplar 1

A randomised controlled trial is when subjects are randomly assigned to one of two groups. In this study, patients would be assigned to an experimental group which is the group that would be receiving a drug to treat pain, and other patients would be assigned to a control group where they wouldn't receive the treatment but an alternative treatment such as a fake drug. The patients would be assigned to one of the two groups randomly such as by using a random number generator. This is done to test if the drug actually works on patients and treats their pain. Results and findings are then collected and the findings from the two groups are compared and differences are outlined to form a conclusion on whether the drug to treat pain actually works. [6]

Exemplar 1 was awarded Level 2,4 marks. They provided a sound description.

The key points that they provided were:

There were two groups

One group was the experimental group who would have the drug to treat pain

One group was the control group who would be given the 'fake' drug – BOD was given for fake

The results would be collected and comparisons made.

Question 1 (b) (ii)

(ii) The table shows statements about other research methods that could be suitable for this study.

Complete the table by deciding whether each statement is **True (T)** or **False (F)**.

Statement	True (T) or False (F)
A questionnaire about existing pain relief drugs could be given to patients as part of the primary research.	
Informal observation of hospital practice could be used to gather quantitative data.	
Journals and reviews about drugs for pain relief could be used as a primary research method.	

[3]

A significant number of candidates were able to score full marks for this question.

Most candidates correctly identified statement 1 as being true.

Many candidates gave a correct identification for statements 2 and 3.

Assessment for learning



Candidates could develop their own true and false statements for the research methods within 2.2 in the specification and test their peers:

2.2 Research methods

primary methods - experimental method (Randomised Controlled Trial) / survey/questionnaire / observation - formal and informal / interviews - structured, semi structured, unstructured / focus groups / case study / action research

secondary methods - literature review / journals / books / other documentary sources - government organisations / published statistics - census data / government statistics, e.g. ONS, DH, DfE

Question 1 (c)*

(c)* Discuss how the research team could maintain good ethical practices when carrying out the randomised controlled trial.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

..... [8]

This was a well answered question. Many candidates were able to discuss key points applied to many varied ethical practices. The most common ethical practices addressed were informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality, the right to withdraw, providing benefits and maintaining transparency and integrity.

The main error seen was in candidates only identifying the ethical practices, and not to address the command word of discuss.

Question 2 (a)*

2 This question relates to the **pre-release** material and your **secondary research**.

State your chosen research article.

.....

.....

(a)* In response to your chosen article, analyse how you used your secondary sources to enable you to write good research questions.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

..... [10]

Those that understood this question were able to reflect on the aspects given within the specification; relevant, manageable in scope, original / interesting, answerable and clear.

A main error was in not addressing the command word of analyse; most candidates only provided pros. This limited the number of marks that could be awarded.

If the question is asking specifically about the candidate's research question it is good practice to incorporate this into their answer. Centres should encourage their candidates to do this.

Another common error seen was in candidates providing results and research methods within their secondary sources; they did not address the focus of the question.

Question 2 (b) (i)

(b) Library searches are used for locating secondary sources.

When carrying out secondary research for your chosen article:

(i) Identify **two** advantages of using library searches.

1

.....

2

.....

[2]

The most common answers were easily accessible, having a wide range of sources available and access to a professional librarian.

The most common error seen was in candidates addressing how they would select sources, i.e. were they peer reviewed or did they show bias.

Question 2 (b) (ii)

(ii) Identify **one** disadvantage of using library searches.

.....

..... [1]

The most common answers seen were that library searches were time consuming, and many sources may be out of date.

Assessment for learning



Differentiating between selecting and locating secondary sources – specification references 3.1 and 3.2

Complete a mix and match activity using past paper mark schemes

Question 2 (c)*

(c)* In response to your chosen article, discuss how you considered appropriateness **and** trustworthiness when selecting your secondary sources.

.....

.....

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.....

..... [6]

The main error seen in this question was in candidates not differentiating between appropriateness and trustworthiness, this meant that answers could only be placed into Level 1. For example, if a candidate stated that a source was up to date this would apply to appropriateness but not to trustworthiness. When faced with a question that has different aspects to address, good practice would be to develop two separate paragraphs.

The most common answers for appropriateness were being linked to the pre-release material, not showing bias and the accessibility of language.

The most common answers for trustworthiness were peer reviewed, ethical principles being explicit and that the authors were experts in their field.

Exemplar 2

I considered trustworthiness when selecting my sources by ensuring that the sources were ~~trustworthy~~ peer-reviewed to ensure that the work would be double-checked, and the right amendments would've been made. I also ensured it was trustworthy by ensuring that there was statistical evidence to support claims/statements made in the sources. I ensured the sources were appropriate by ensuring that my secondary sources were relevant and linked to the theme of mental health in elderly people. I also ensured the sources included a good use of terminology to make it appropriate to read. I ensured that the sources were accurate and up to date to ensure that there wasn't any old/false information. I also ensured my sources didn't contain any information that would cause harm or disturb any readers. [6]

appropriateness

- reliable
- relevant
- accurate
- good use of terminology
- wouldn't harm/offend
- up to date

trustworthy

- peer-reviewed
- relevant - evidence
- ~~trustworthy~~
- accurate

Exemplar 2 was awarded Level 3 5 marks; the answer provided a detailed discussion of how secondary sources were selected covering both appropriateness and trustworthiness. The candidate clearly differentiated between the two.

For trustworthiness the points they made were applied to being peer reviewed and having statistical evidence to support the claims made.

For appropriateness the points they made were applied to the relevance linked to mental health in older people, the use of terminology that was appropriate to read and that the source(s) were up to date.

Question 2 (d)*

(d)* In response to your chosen article, present your findings **and** draw conclusions to include:

- reference to research question or hypothesis
- judgements on findings or evidence

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

..... [10]

This was a complex question to answer and those that worked out the requirements of the question fared well. In essence this question required the following to be addressed:

- 1) Findings
- 2) Conclusions
- 3) Reference to research question or hypothesis
- 4) Judgements on findings or evidence

Most candidates were able to provide findings. Far fewer candidates were able to give their judgements on these findings. Those that did make judgements picked up on small sample sizes, addressed the effectiveness / ineffectiveness of the research methods used and gave their own opinion on the findings.

Conclusions were often given but many candidates just re stated some of their findings; conclusions should be made with reference to the research question or hypothesis.

A key error found was in candidates simply describing the methodology used within their secondary sources; no further comments were given on the effectiveness or even the weaknesses of the methodology adopted.

Exemplar 3

In my chosen article which was 'what is the effect of intergenerational activities on the wellbeing and mental health of older people?' I found that it used randomised controlled trials and stratified sampling with a systematic review. When going through this article I noticed that it said a lot about loneliness but not how this was actually exacerbated, which then led me to come up with the research question of 'How did COVID affect elderly mental health and wellbeing?'. Then from this I was then able to find my secondary sources.

My first secondary source followed on from my research question, which was 'How did COVID affect elderly mental health and wellbeing?' (this was the name of my secondary source). However, unlike my chosen article the methodology for this was semi-structured interviews, qualitative data, literature reviews and volunteer sampling.

My second secondary source was 'Identification of depression among elderly during COVID-19'. Similarly to my first secondary source this [10]

2) d). Source used volunteer sampling, however, additionally, it ~~also~~ also used

standard questionnaires and surveys. Like my article chosen, this source also used stratified sampling.

In my chosen article there were some areas classified as unethical, for example, the results were not certain due to the small sample sizes and the length of the overlap was poor, which could indicate that it was a waste of resources and therefore it could be considered as provide no benefit. It also did not have an accurate outcome due to this, but it did state that the outcome was only that these intergenerational activities had a small positive impact.

In my first secondary source, like the article it was in some areas unethical as there were potential wellbeing threats and participants were not informed, however, unlike my article it was also ethical in some areas as it had a London ethics committee approval, and it did obtain informed consent and maintained anonymity. Unlike my article my second secondary source (like my first)

was ethical, and it had informed consent, was beneficial and had ethical approval.

Between both my secondary sources the outcomes were that a lot of participants did experience depression during COVID however, it is left to be uncertain as to whether this was caused by pre-COVID health concerns, but there was a definitive change in wellbeing which could be due to mortality, isolation or grief.

However, both my secondary sources left room for further research on whether 'health concerns pre-COVID were worsened' or 'why did certain groups of elderly not have heightened mental health risks or depression?'

This answer was awarded Level 2, 6 marks.

This candidate stated their research question; How did COVID affect elderly mental health and well-being?

The findings given within this answer were limited – they stated that many did experience depression and that this was due to grief or isolation.

The judgements provided were much more comprehensive and it was these comments that pushed the marks awarded into Level 2. They talked about the small samples size and that some of the research was unethical due to participants not being informed. Another secondary source was ethical due to having had ethics committee approval.

While they did not state a conclusion, they did acknowledge that there was room for further research.

Question 2 (e) (i)

(e) In response to your chosen article, state **one** implication of your findings for each of the following:

(i) practitioners or professionals

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

The most common answers were training and working hours.

Question 3 (e) (ii)

(ii) government policy

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

The most common answers were funding and specific resources that would be needed.

Question 2 (f)*

(f)* Evaluate your secondary research sources with reference to their **reliability**.

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..... [6]

Many candidates were able to provide positives applied to the reliability of their secondary sources. Fewer candidates were able to provide any negatives. Only providing positives limited the number of marks that could be awarded to 3.

The most common positives given were being peer reviewed, the use of academic search engines and websites, and giving comment on the research method that was used.

The most common negatives given were the use of socially desirable answers, conformation bias and having a small sample size and thus low generalisability.

The most common error seen was in stating that the secondary sources used were up to date.

Question 2 (g) (i)

(g) With reference to your secondary research:

(i) Identify **one** area that requires further research.

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

Many candidates applied their answers to the pre-release material:

A – to increase the sample size

B – To look at different activities as some of the set activities were not appropriate

C – To have a greater focus of the academic aspect applied to HRQOL

Question 2 (g) (ii)

(ii) Describe how an alternative research method could be used to obtain further evidence.

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..... [2]

Most candidates were able to provide an alternative research method; they were then able to describe how this would generate further evidence. We saw both primary and secondary methods.

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