

Moderators' report

GCSE

# FOOD PREPARATION AND NUTRITION

OCR Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9-1) in  
Food Preparation and Nutrition

**J309**

For first teaching in 2016

**J309/04/05 Summer 2025 series**

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## Introduction

Our Moderators' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on centres' assessment of moderated work, based on what has been observed by the moderation team. These reports include a general commentary of accuracy of internal assessment judgements, identify good practice in relation to evidence collation and presentation, and comment on the quality of centre assessment decisions against individual Learning Objectives. The report also highlights areas where requirements have been misinterpreted and provides guidance to centre assessors on requirements for accessing higher mark bands. Where appropriate, the report will also signpost other sources of information that centre assessors will find helpful.

OCR completes moderation of centre-assessed work to quality assure the internal assessment judgements made by assessors within a centre. Where OCR cannot confirm the centre's marks, we may adjust them to align them to the national standard. Any adjustments to centre marks are detailed on the Moderation Adjustments report, which can be downloaded from Interchange when results are issued. Centres should also refer to their individual centre report provided after moderation has been completed. In combination, these centre-specific documents and this overall report should help to support centres' internal assessment and moderation practice for future series.

## Online courses

We have created online courses to build your confidence in delivering, marking and administering internal assessment for our qualifications. Courses are available for Cambridge Nationals, GCSE, A Level and Cambridge Technicals (2016).

### Cambridge Nationals

All teachers delivering our Cambridge Nationals suite are asked to complete the Essentials for the NEA course, which describes how to guide and support your students. You'll receive a certificate which you should retain.

Following this you can also complete a subject-specific Focus on Internal Assessment course for your individual Cambridge Nationals qualification, covering marking and delivery.

### GCSE, A Level and Cambridge Technicals (2016)

We recommend all teachers complete the module on Online courses – NEA for their subject. These courses provide subject-specific information about course content; how to prepare for planning, marking and submitting; and support with understanding the marking criteria.

### Accessing our online courses;

You can access all our online courses from our teacher support website [Teach Cambridge](#).

These free online courses currently cover the end-to-end NEA process for teachers. You'll find the link to the **Online courses** under the **Assessment** or **Training** tab – hover over **Assessment** or **Training** on the horizontal menu and select **Online courses** from the dropdown.

These self-paced online courses are intended for any teachers. During the course, you will engage with interactive content on subjects such as guidance on unit content, structure and administrative processes.

If you have any queries, please contact our Customer Support Centre on 01223 553998 or email [support@ocr.org.uk](mailto:support@ocr.org.uk).

## General overview

The work showed enthusiasm and a great deal of interest by the candidates. All candidates were able to access each element of both tasks to varying degrees. The tasks provided opportunities for a wide range of abilities to demonstrate their achievement with successful results. Differentiation was seen within the outcomes. The most popular task was based on 'eating at work'.

Practical work reflected confidence and enthusiasm with evidence that candidates could access and deliver the higher more complex skills within the completed work. Where planning was fully completed and all the necessary areas assessed, candidates produced a better quality of work having more information and understanding on which to draw on. This was particularly apparent within the analysis and evaluation sections.

There was clear evidence to show that candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the task. Sensory and nutritional choice, cost, food provenance and seasonality were all addressed.

A good selection of dishes for both tasks from a range of initially chosen suitable dishes was produced, however, those that performed less well did not always evaluate against the factors listed. For example, suitability to the task, skills and techniques, portion control, nutrition, costing, food provenance, seasonality and sensory attributes. Strong work was seen when there was a clear justification for the dishes chosen. Many candidates included a wide variety of complex and demanding skills and techniques.

### Key point - task focus

Candidates who wrote out the task in full at the beginning of their work were focused on the requirements for each section.

The initial research varied; those candidates who produced strong evidence focused and summarised their information to include the nutritional needs of adults and considered the challenges of taking food to work, for example, safe storage and suitable packaging.

Those candidates who undertook the specialist equipment task appeared to limit their research to how to use specialist equipment within food preparation, focusing on costs and examples of specialist equipment and their function.

### Misconception



To facilitate their research some candidates completed questionnaires, collecting data which was not required. For example, types of specialist equipment used, why and how often/examples of meals taken to work.

Those candidates who did less well, due to a lack of relevant research, were limited in their reasons for choice, nutritional analysis, exploration of results and final evaluation sections.

The choice of dishes to eat at work demonstrated a wide range of recipes and reflected a stronger performance of higher skill levels and reasons for choice/justification than the specialist equipment task.

The costings were addressed with examples per ingredient. Those candidates that did well discussed how the costs could be further reduced by justifying the costs of their chosen dishes.

Nutritional programmes were used well when suggesting how the dishes could be adapted to make them suitable to transport and eat at work. Charts were presented for each chosen dish containing relevant information which was detailed and provided ideas for improvements, for example using seasonal foods to reduce cost, supermarket brands and changing fresh herbs to dried or reducing fat content by changing beef to chicken or vegetarian alternatives.

### Key point - time plans

Most candidates included a comprehensive list of ingredients and equipment. There were some excellent examples of time plans which provided logical sequencing, colour coded, dovetailed with key safety and hygiene points. Less detail was evident in the food safety and quality points.

There was strong evidence where candidates had planned sensory feedback and organoleptic qualities. The work of less successful candidates included generic descriptors which were not specific to the dish. This resulted in cursory analysis of results and therefore limited suggestions for changes/improvements later in the analysis and evaluation.

The methods of working were generally well justified with centres providing helpful comments as to how the candidates worked. Strong evidence was seen with the inclusion of a photograph journal of skills and presentation of dishes. Candidates then used this when undertaking their evaluation. The majority of centres demonstrated excellent personal preparation and were clearly well organised during the practical sessions enabling candidates to produce quality results.

A wide range of skills, techniques and cooking methods were shown within portfolios. A range of different specialist equipment was used including mandolins, air fryers, pasta machines, piping bags, steam ovens, ravioli cutters, hand whisks, blenders, food processors and attachments, for example the dough hook.

Most centres had produced a wide range of excellent skills, for example, filleting and boning fish, portioning chicken and piping. It was interesting this year that a number of candidates used chicken in two ways after portioning, to avoid waste. Pastry and cake making techniques, bread and pasta, together with presentation were also common skills demonstrated across both tasks. Many candidates chose accompaniments to increase skills, for example, bread rolls, salad dressing and custard.

There was strong evidence where candidates demonstrated superb presentation and food styling. It is clear that candidates are enthused in presenting results to the best of their ability and take a real pride in this aspect. Garnishes and decorations were included for example, spring onion and tomato flowers, drizzles and piping.

Candidates had considered portion size. Relevant side dishes were produced and presented to support the main dish and added additional skills and techniques. These were also presented appropriately.

In the analysis and evaluation there was strong evidence that candidates had considered the whole task from research through to cooking and results produced. There was evidence of reasoned judgements for information gathered. Clear examples of sensory analysis were evident including the use of star diagrams, tables and questionnaires to gain the opinions of others.

### Key point - sensory and descriptors

Strong evidence was seen when a better use of relevant descriptive words that linked both to the task and to the dish was used, as dishes were then tested individually rather than as a whole.

There were some excellent examples of evaluating practical work, with examples of strengths and weaknesses together with relevant improvements. Candidates who did less well did not refer to the original task, clearly explain what they had learnt through the completion of the task and also did not draw conclusions.

Most information in this section was taken from a range of sources. Good recommendations for future cooks were made, clearly linked to the task.

| Candidates who did well generally:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Candidates who did less well generally:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
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| <p><b>Planning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• set out the task at the beginning of their portfolios</li> <li>• provided relevant and concise research</li> <li>• summarised their information to include, food values, types, structure and uses in cooking</li> <li>• considered a wide range of dishes (8-10)</li> <li>• included sensory and nutritional choice, costs, food provenance and seasonality</li> <li>• justified their chosen dishes applying to the specialist equipment and eat at work.</li> <li>• explained the nutritional contents and applied them to the task</li> <li>• used nutritional analysis programmes with suggestions on how to adapt dishes to make them healthier</li> <li>• listed all the ingredients, quantities and equipment to be used</li> <li>• sequenced and dovetailed their time plans</li> <li>• included quality and food safety points in their planning</li> <li>• planned sensory feedback and organoleptic properties.</li> </ul> <p><b>Methods of working</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• worked to time following their plans</li> <li>• were well organised throughout the practical session</li> <li>• demonstrated excellent personal preparation</li> <li>• demonstrated a range of complex skills and techniques across the three dishes and accompaniments</li> <li>• followed safety procedures to a very high standard</li> <li>• completed all planned dishes within the three-hour practical session</li> <li>• served dishes at the correct temperature.</li> </ul> | <p><b>Planning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• were unclear of the task requirements</li> <li>• provided limited sensory analysis</li> <li>• produced research which was brief and not applied to specialist equipment or eat at work</li> <li>• chose dishes but then reasons were not linked to specialist equipment or eat at work</li> <li>• chose dishes that were not compared to any relevant nutritional analysis</li> <li>• did not consider seasonality or food provenance or gave historical information about the origins of commodities</li> <li>• did not mention sensory properties</li> <li>• did not consider accompaniments to enhance their dishes, for example to increase nutritional aspects or increase skills</li> <li>• provided inaccurate costings</li> <li>• included limited sequence plans and no timings</li> <li>• wrote time plans which lacked dovetailing</li> <li>• did not address safety and quality points.</li> </ul> <p><b>Methods of working</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• displayed a lack of preparation and organisational skills resulting in poor time management</li> <li>• were unable to complete their dishes in the three-hour allocation</li> <li>• required considerable help with the use of equipment.</li> </ul> |

| Candidates who did well generally:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Candidates who did less well generally:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
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| <p><b>Skills and cooking</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• were able to show competency through using a range of tools and equipment</li> <li>• produced high level complex skills and undertook them successfully</li> <li>• exemplified creativity and originality</li> <li>• demonstrated excellent cooker management skills</li> <li>• used annotated photo diaries to show skills.</li> </ul> <p><b>Presentation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• finished, styled and presented dishes attractively</li> <li>• demonstrated appropriate and considered portion control</li> <li>• displayed creativity and flair</li> <li>• included testing charts with clear instructions</li> <li>• included sensory analysis results of a high standard.</li> </ul> <p><b>Analysis and evaluation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provided comprehensive evaluation of users' reactions, especially in relation to organoleptic properties</li> <li>• included reasoned interpretation of the overall result and used a range of evidence to draw conclusions</li> <li>• addressed strengths and weaknesses comprehensively</li> <li>• suggested improvements that were realistic and pertinent</li> <li>• interpreted viewpoints and opinions throughout the section showing a clear understanding of the demands of the task</li> <li>• drew conclusions referring to the original task and clearly explained what had been learnt.</li> </ul> | <p><b>Skills and cooking</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrated limited preparation skills and, so needed considerable support</li> <li>• prepared dishes containing limited complex skills in which to showcase their results.</li> </ul> <p><b>Presentation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• produced dishes with no garnish or that were poorly presented, over/undercooked</li> <li>• included food styling that was not appropriate to the dish</li> <li>• did not consider sensory results and outcomes</li> <li>• completed sensory testing charts with no supporting explanations of findings.</li> </ul> <p><b>Analysis and evaluation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• made repetitive comments</li> <li>• included sensory analysis but did not refer to or explore it</li> <li>• produced descriptive accounts of what had been undertaken rather than evaluative</li> <li>• made comments which were not related to the task</li> <li>• provided brief strengths and weaknesses without being substantiated</li> <li>• did not discuss views and opinions</li> <li>• evaluated the practical outcomes of the task without referring to aspects of the research, planning, skills and cooking.</li> <li>• did not provide conclusions or link back to the task.</li> </ul> |

## Most common causes of why centres did not gain a higher level

Recipes were selected due to personal choice rather than their suitability to meet the demands of the task i.e. to choose dishes suitable to eat at work or dishes using a specialist piece of equipment.

Food provenance and seasonality was generic with little application to the dishes that had been selected. Food provenance was linked to the country of origin or ingredients would come from a supermarket. Food security was often not attempted or included a cursory comment.

Recipes had been selected from the internet which, on occasions, contained confusing and inaccurate quantities/which caused unsuccessful outcomes.

Nutritional content was often presented in a tabulated format which frequently provide little detail, just tick boxes. Tables and charts should be used with caution as they frequently do not provide adequate detail to meet the criteria to gain access to the higher mark bands.

Time plans should be sufficiently detailed and could easily be followed to achieve successful outcomes. They also enable candidates to organise themselves and use their time efficiently.

Photographic evidence of candidates carrying out the key skills supports the outcomes and should be encouraged.

General sensory analysis was undertaken across all three dishes. Descriptors used were based on general attributes.

### Misconception



All practical dishes must be carried out within the three hour practical task in an educational classroom environment. The box to confirm this can be located at the top on the right-hand side of the MC2 marking sheet.

A photograph of the final three dishes is a mandatory requirement and must be provided. Centres are recommended to include an A4 colour photograph(s) of the three dishes with any accompaniments.

## Avoiding potential malpractice

Read and act on any updates from OCR.

Explain the 'live' NEA task and the requirements for each section.

Make sure all teaching staff have a clear understanding of the NEA standards.

Large departments undertake internal standardisation.

Make sure that each candidate's work is their own and group work has not been undertaken for this task.

## Helpful resources

OCR GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition Student Book 1 Publisher Hodder Education.  
ISBN:978147186749

OCR GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition Students e Textbook

ISBN: 9781471867132 Publisher Hodder Education

OCR GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition Course Companion

ISBN:9781471867491 Publisher: Hodder Education

My Revision Notes: OCR GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition

ISBN:978-1-4718-8700-0 Publishers: Hodder Education

Cooking Explained ISBN:0-582-30573-X Publisher Hammond.

British Nutritional Foundation BNF [www.nutrition.org.uk](http://www.nutrition.org.uk)

[OCR Skill lists Teach Cambridge subject page.](#)

NHS [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

Food A fact of life [www.foodafactoflife.org.uk](http://www.foodafactoflife.org.uk)

[www.lovefoodlovescience.org](http://www.lovefoodlovescience.org)

[www.soilassociation.org](http://www.soilassociation.org)

## Additional comments

The MC2 Marking Form must be correct and fully completed to include centre name and number, candidate name and number.

To support the moderation process, the MC2 Marking Form should be fully annotated, in each section, to support and justify the mark given.

There were numerous clerical errors. Centres must make sure that the addition of marks and the total mark is correct and matches that of the final mark uploaded onto the Interchange.

When using the digital submission, the correct code should be used J309/04.

When uploading files onto the Submit for Assessment platform, these should be clearly identifiable with candidate number and tasks.

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# Supporting you

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## Teach Cambridge

Make sure you visit our secure website [Teach Cambridge](#) to find the full range of resources and support for the subjects you teach. This includes secure materials such as set assignments and exemplars, online and on-demand training.

**Don't have access?** If your school or college teaches any OCR qualifications, please contact your exams officer. You can [forward them this link](#) to help get you started.

## Reviews of marking

If any of your students' results are not as expected, you may wish to consider one of our post-results services. For full information about the options available visit the [OCR website](#).

## Access to Scripts

We've made it easier for Exams Officers to download copies of your candidates' completed papers or 'scripts'. Your centre can use these scripts to decide whether to request a review of marking and to support teaching and learning.

Our free, on-demand service, Access to Scripts is available via our single sign-on service, My Cambridge. Step-by-step instructions are on our [website](#).

## Keep up-to-date

We send a monthly bulletin to tell you about important updates. You can also sign up for your subject specific updates. If you haven't already, [sign up here](#).

## OCR Professional Development

Attend one of our popular professional development courses to hear directly from a senior assessor or drop in to a Q&A session. Most of our courses are delivered live via an online platform, so you can attend from any location.

Please find details for all our courses for your subject on **Teach Cambridge**. You'll also find links to our online courses on NEA marking and support.

## Signed up for ExamBuilder?

**ExamBuilder** is the exam paper builder platform for a range of our qualifications. [Find out more](#).

Free for all OCR centres with an Interchange account, it allows unlimited users per centre. We require an [Interchange](#) username to verify your centre's users for ExamBuilder.

If you do not have an Interchange account, please contact your centre administrator (usually the Exams Officer) to request a username.

Once you have an Interchange username, use the form on [this page](#) to sign up for ExamBuilder, or ask an existing user at your centre to create an ExamBuilder account for you.

## Active Results

Review students' exam performance with our free online results analysis tool. It is available for all GCSEs, AS and A Levels and Cambridge Nationals (examined units only).

[Find out more](#).

# Online courses

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## Enhance your skills and confidence in internal assessment

### What are our online courses?

Our online courses are self-paced eLearning courses designed to help you deliver, mark and administer internal assessment for our qualifications. They are suitable for both new and experienced teachers who want to refresh their knowledge and practice.

### Why should you use our online courses?

With these online courses you will:

- learn about the key principles and processes of internal assessment and standardisation
- gain a deeper understanding of the marking criteria and how to apply them consistently and accurately
- see examples of student work with commentary and feedback from OCR moderators
- have the opportunity to practise marking and compare your judgements with those of OCR moderators
- receive instant feedback and guidance on your marking and standardisation skills
- be able to track your progress and achievements through the courses.

### How can you access our online courses?

Access courses from [Teach Cambridge](#). Teach Cambridge is our secure teacher website, where you'll find all teacher support for your subject.

If you already have a Teach Cambridge account, you'll find the link to the **Online courses** under the **Assessment** or **Training** tab – hover over **Assessment** or **Training** on the horizontal menu and select **Online courses** from the dropdown.

If you don't have a Teach Cambridge account yet, ask your exams officer to set you up – just send them this [link](#) and ask them to add you as a Teacher.

Access the courses **anytime, anywhere and at your own pace**. You can also revisit the courses as many times as you need.

### Which courses are available?

We recommend all teachers complete the module on Online courses – NEA for their subject. These courses provide subject-specific information about course content; how to prepare for planning, marking and submitting; and support with understanding the marking criteria.

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
- the assessment objectives and marking criteria for the NEA units
- examples of student work with commentary and feedback for the NEA units
- interactive marking practice and feedback for the NEA units.

We are also developing courses for some of the examined units, which will be available soon.

### How can you get support and feedback?

If you have any queries, please contact our Customer Support Centre on 01223 553998 or email [support@ocr.org.uk](mailto:support@ocr.org.uk).

We welcome your feedback and suggestions on how to improve the online courses and make them more useful and relevant for you. You can share your views by completing the evaluation form at the end of each course.

# Tell us what you think

Your feedback plays an important role in how we develop, market, support and resource qualifications now and into the future. We want you and your students to enjoy and get the best out of our qualifications and resources, but to do that we need your honest opinions to tell us whether we're on the right track or not.

You can email your thoughts to [resources.feedback@ocr.org.uk](mailto:resources.feedback@ocr.org.uk) or visit our [feedback page](#) to learn more about how you can help us improve our resources.



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