Writing a Mark Scheme for OCR

Introduction

The mark scheme is an integral part of the assessment and will:

- demonstrate that the questions set are valid in terms of:
  - assessment objectives
  - subject content
  - mark weightings
  - differentiation between candidates
- inform judgements on assessment materials during revision and at the AMEC meeting
- enable markers to mark scripts consistently and reliably.

Mark schemes are published to centres, and so it is important that they are written in detail, using the OCR mark scheme template.

Writing the mark scheme

- Write the mark scheme using unambiguous language. Markers are required to make judgements based on precise terminology such as 'clearly structured' and 'directly answers the question', rather than vague words such as 'reasonable' and 'fairly'.
- Match the wording, and therefore the demand, to the questions. For example, questions beginning with the word 'Describe' should lead to a different style of response from questions beginning with 'Explain'. The mark scheme must reflect any difference in demand.

Allocating and awarding marks

Ensure marks:

- are commensurate with the demands of the question
- are given for attainment, give credit for what candidates demonstrate they know, understand and can do, and are not deducted for lack of attainment
- are allocated, where appropriate, for quality of language or spelling, punctuation and grammar. There should be an indication as to how these marks are to be awarded
- are available across the full range to the candidates for whom the paper is intended. It must be remembered that there will always be some candidates who demonstrate attainment beyond that required for the award of maximum marks in any particular question. At the other extreme, some candidates may not demonstrate attainment worthy of any marks.

Information about the OCR standard mark scheme template

One of the two OCR mark scheme templates must be used for all externally assessed units. Within each template you will find advice and guidance on how to complete it and what to include.

The template consists of the following sections:
1. Preparation for marking.
2. Marking instructions.
3. Mark scheme template format 1 for questions with a point per mark answer and questions with a range of possible answers and format 2 for questions that award marks for:
    - content and award marks separately for one or more assessment objectives (levels of response) or
    - content combined with a levels of response, e.g. for a specific assessment objective, e.g. knowledge and understanding or
    - content combined with levels of response for more than one assessment objective.
4. Appendices 1 and 2.

All GCE and GCSE subjects used these templates from January 2012. Subsequent mark schemes can now be written by replacing the text and information in these existing ones, which can be obtained from your Qualification Manager/Leader. If you choose to do this, it is important to note the instructions in red in the standard mark scheme template formats. Download the standard mark scheme template, incorporating the two formats.