

Home Economics (Food and Nutrition)

General Certificate of Secondary Education J431

OCR Report to Centres

June 2013

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This report on the examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the examination.

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Overview

Overall the standard of controlled assessment work was with some high quality work submitted showing a good level of understanding of the assessment criteria.

Marking was mostly consistent but many candidates are being given high marks for work that does not meet the criteria for good quality work. It is important to consider carefully the differentiating factors within each mark band and to then award a mark that is the best fit.

Where given clear annotation evidenced and supported the marks awarded in all assessment areas including in the practical work and outcome sections. The work of some candidates was fully supported by clear and detailed comments. The marking of other candidates was not fully evidenced, which led to some need to adjust centre marks.

Some candidates completed very interesting and concise work that clearly adhered to the suggested guidance timings whilst still fully meeting the assessment criteria..

B001/02 Short Tasks

All candidates followed the OCR set short task titles as required. Candidates were required to complete two practical tasks and one investigation task. If three practical tasks were completed, only two tasks were accepted.

- Many tasks were carried out to a high standard.
- Candidates demonstrated a range of different skills across the three OCR set tasks.
- The majority of titles were attempted, with pastry, 5 a day, Calcium and Vitamin D and eggs being very popular practical tasks. Convenience foods and adapting a traditional recipe were the most popular investigations.

Practical Tasks

- Most candidates made good choices of practical work but then failed to fully justify these choices with detailed reasons related to the title, and also to the skills being demonstrated. Detailed reasons are needed to access the high mark band. This was an area where work was too generously marked.
- The majority of candidates planned the practical work well but omitted the planning of any non-food items chosen and of the necessary testing or analysis charts.
- The majority of candidates completed two items per task and demonstrated a variety of skills. Detailed annotation is essential to support the marks awarded, some candidates received marks that were not supported and were not warranted, resulting in adjustments.
- Evaluations were generally quite well done with comments on all areas of the task. Some candidates did not make reference to any data collected nor refer back to the title so making the drawing of conclusions difficult. Detailed conclusions were essential to access the top mark range.

Investigation Task

This proved to be the most challenging of the three tasks.

- Some excellent investigations were moderated but many candidates did not fully demonstrate a range of investigation skills. Many concentrated on the practical skills and omitted the actual investigation.
- Many candidates did not identify the factors that were to form the investigation in addition to choosing the actual food items and so then failed to plan the appropriate testing and recording charts.
- The carrying out of the testing or comparison work forms a major part of the 'Practical' section and similarly the charts are part of 'Outcome'. Too often these elements were over marked.

Some candidates produced evaluations that drew conclusions based on their investigation results but these were in the minority. It was expected that candidates would use the results of their investigations as evidence for their conclusions.

B002/02 Food Study

Many high quality studies were seen, with candidates independently writing a title based on an OCR set theme. Candidates were able to demonstrate their research, decision making and analytical skills, in addition to their practical and evaluative abilities. The better studies were logical, structured and had a clear flow.

- Whilst many candidates had well written titles, with good reasons for their choice, there were an increasing number of candidates creating titles that were far too wide; consequently it was difficult to identify the research needs. A lack of clear factors within a title made detailed research and then appropriate sorting of ideas challenging.
- A high proportion of candidates studied 'Food around the World'. Some titles had no specific country, targeted group or issue identified, this in some cases led to studies without structure and flow.
- The 'Research' section was generally well done with a range of information sources used and credited. Detailed selective secondary research was produced by many candidates. Some however used too much copied or downloaded information with no clear indication of summarising or selecting of information.
- The majority of candidates carried out at least one piece of primary research; two were needed for the high mark band. Too often this primary research lacked a clear purpose and questionnaires lacked direction.
- Most candidates chose and then planned the required four or more pieces of practical work, creating good well timed action plans. Often however the selection of the practical work lacked ideas driven by research, adequate sorting of ideas through consideration of appropriate factors and detailed reasons for the choices made. Few planned the recording systems to be used to record results. Consequently 'Selection and Planning of Practical work' remains the main area of concern.
- There was a good standard of practical work seen, although better annotation to support these marks was needed. Most candidates made at least four skilful food items and produced appropriate recording charts, even if not planned previously. A minority completed insufficient work to warrant the marks awarded and so required adjustment.
- Many candidates included nutritional data to support their work with detailed reference made to it and suggestions for improvement. Some candidates only included the data or star diagram with no comment which did not demonstrate analytical skills.
- Evaluations at best considered all aspects of the task reviewing performance and identifying strengths and weakness. Conclusions were drawn and suggestions made for improvement. Other evaluations were simply a description of the practical work undertaken. Well evidenced conclusions are essential to access the high mark band.

B003 Principles of Food and Nutrition

Overall, it was felt that the paper was appropriate for the examined level and produced a wide spread of marks. There seemed to be very little misunderstanding of the questions in either the way they have been phrased or presented. Overall candidate responses demonstrated a good understanding over a wide range of topics. Some responses needed to show a deeper knowledge in order to achieve higher marks; however, questions such as 2a and 5 enabled a good differentiation amongst candidates.

- Q1 (a)** Most candidates made an attempt at this question, tending to achieve 3 or 1 marks, indicating that the candidates found it a challenging question. The most common correct answer was bran.
- Q1 (b)** The question was answered well by the majority of candidates. A common error was to state “wholegrain/multi grain/whole wheat” or repeat “wheat” which was in the question. Responses such as “(Named) breakfast cereals” were not awarded marks.
- Q1 (c)** A well answered question where candidates demonstrated a good level of understanding. Where candidates did not achieve full marks “vitamins” “minerals” on their own were often incorrectly identified so did not gain marks.
- Q1 (d) (i) (ii) (iii) (iv)**
Were data response questions where most candidates achieved full marks.
- Q1 (e)** Very few candidates scored marks for this question which was set as a higher level question, so the outcome was expected. Most candidates attempted the question but seemed to be confused seeming to state nutrients at random. Ingredients used in bread making were not credited. The most common correct responses were “iron” and “calcium”.
- Q1 (f)** Candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of the benefits of making bread at home, giving a variety of good responses. The most common correct answers given were “to control ingredients”, “it is cheaper”, and “people preferred taste”. To be credited marks for this question candidates needed to qualify the terms “healthy” and “fresher”.
- Q2 (a)** Differentiation was clearly seen with this question. The majority of responses were well structured and showed a good level of nutrition knowledge. Most candidates gained at least 3 marks. In order to achieve level 3 candidates needed to state the specific food item and nutrient(s) it provided and further state the function of nutrient in the body. For example ham sandwich, the ham provides protein for growth and repair. Also in order to be awarded level 3 the candidate was expected to provide a fully balanced lunch including a drink.
- Q2 (b)** A range of responses was seen for this question. Many candidates found iodine and the function of goitre challenging. “Anaemia” and “Scurvy” were the most common correct answers given for iron and vitamin c respectively. Some common errors included “gout” for goitre and “rickets” for Vitamin C deficiency.
- Q2 (c) (i)** This question was well answered as this seems to be a popular topic for controlled assessment also. Many responses included “allergy to meat” as a reason, which was not credited or “they dislike meat” which was not qualified so again could not be credited.

- Q2 (c) (ii)** In order to gain full marks candidates needed to state “use animal products” as well and “not eating animal products”. Many candidates gave a correct response for one mark, usually “not eating animal products”. A common contradiction was stating “vegans do not eat animal products” and then stating an incorrect list of foods they eat, often implying vegans eat fish. A number of candidates thought vegans only ate meat and no other animal products.
- Q3 (a)** There was some confusion for this question, some candidates gave methods of cooking such as “boiling” and “frying” which were not credited. . Some described convection or conduction, but didn’t name it.
- Q3 (b)** This question was generally well answered. Commonly seen incorrect answers were; “to change white sugar to brown”, “butter to margarine”, “double the ingredients”, “add more flour” or “use brown flour”. In order to gain a mark for the addition of fruit the candidates had to name a suitable fruit, “fruit” on its own was not awarded a mark.
- Q3 (c)** A significant number of candidates demonstrated a lack of knowledge stating “too much salt makes you fat” or “raises cholesterol”. Where candidates stated “heart problems” no marks were awarded. This question saw a lot of scatter gun responses.
- Q3 (d)** This was a well answered question with candidates showing a good knowledge of the changes which occur when biscuits are cooked. The most common correct answers made reference to changes in “taste” “texture” and “colour”.
- Q3 (e)** Generally well answered, candidates who did not gain full marks often gave answers such as “stirring”, “mixing” “kneading” “hot oven” and “leaving the mixture to trap air” which could not be credited. In order to gain a mark for “folding” candidates needed to state “rolling and folding”. The most common correct answers were “sieving”, “whisking”, “beating” and “creaming”.
- Q3 (f)** To get marks for this question candidates needed to stated “increasing shelf life”, “slowing bacterial growth” or “slowing down natural spoilage”, many gained one mark for reference to “increasing shelf life”. Marks were not awarded for “killing bacteria”, “pickling”, or “improving taste/flavour/colour”.

- Q4** This question was attempted by all candidates with a wide range of marks seen across all levels of response and few seen in level 1. The majority of responses were level 2 or 3. The question enabled able candidates to show their depth of knowledge and to use a range of technical terms. Less able candidates also accessed marks, although this often showed a lot of repetition and a lack of detail. Candidates tended to perform better in the second part of the question, although not always giving accurate explanations. Quality of language was not always consistent. In order for candidate to achieve level 4 they needed to use correct terminology and facts had to relate to the question. Some candidates provided some confused responses, for example “all foods must be cooked to a core temp of 63c to kill off bacteria”. Those achieving level 4 correctly identified and accurately used freezing, chilling, hot hold and core temperatures. Cross contamination was written about by most candidates but again with many common errors such as a red board for meat, the red board should be raw meat, green board fruit and veg. The cooking of food showed some misunderstanding. A number of candidates stated that to prevent cross contamination never put raw meat with vegetables and they must be cooked separately, this was not credited as many dishes such as casseroles and stir fries place raw meat and vegetables together before being cooked. Some candidates demonstrated some confusion, offering responses relating to food business/chefs rather than the ‘home’ as the question asks. However, overall candidates made a good attempt at answering both parts of the question and some excellent knowledge and understanding was demonstrated.
- Q5 (a)** This question was generally well answered and attempted by all candidates. As seen with many describe or explain questions candidates often achieved half (3) or full (6) marks. A common error was that candidates repeated the same point three times so limited the marks achieved, for example “shows the protein content”, “shows the fat content” and “shows the sugar content”. The common correct answers included “allergies”, “use by dates” and “manufacturer’s address for complaints”. Candidates who gained full marks tended to state three items found on a food label and then provide three descriptions as to why these were important/useful to the consumer.
- Q5 (b)** This question caused no difficulties. If candidates did not achieve full marks it tended to be due to repetition of answers on the same line of the mark scheme. Answers such as “free samples”, “posters” and “banners” were not credited.
- Q5 (c) (i)** A mixed response was seen to this question. Some candidates seemed to have guessed rather than have used knowledge to provide an answer. This was a question where the scattergun approach of giving multiple responses was evident.
- Q5 (c) (ii)** Again the scattergun approach was evident with this question. Answers including “vegans” or simply “vegetarian” on its own were not credited. In order to achieve a mark for this question “suitable for vegetarians” had to be stated. Quite a few also correctly stated “recommended/approved by the vegetarian society”.
- Q5 (c) (iii)** In order to achieve the marks candidates had to identify the symbol as “does not contain gluten/suitable for coeliacs”. Answers referring to “wheat” such as “wheat free/no wheat/ no wheat or gluten/no carbs” were not credited. The scattergun approach was evident in this question.
- Q5 (d)** Many candidates correctly identified “soya milk” or “nut based milks”. Answers such as “lactose-free”, “skimmed/semi skimmed” and “goats” were not awarded marks.

- Q5 (e)** This question was well answered with many candidates achieving full marks. The most common correct answers were “eating less fat/sugar/salt” and “not drinking alcohol or smoking”. There was some evidence of the scattergun approach throughout this question.
- Q5 (f)** This question challenged the candidates’ clarity of written responses. Candidates offered a wide variety of accurate guidelines. In order to achieve the high marks candidates were expected to offer a further explanation of these guidelines. Candidates were able to show a good depth of knowledge for this question.

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