

GCSE

Home Economics (Food and Nutrition)

General Certificate of Secondary Education **J431**

OCR Report to Centres June 2016

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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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B001/01 B001/02 Short Tasks

General Comments:

The quality of controlled assessment work both in B001 Short Tasks and B002 Food Study was high. The work reflected continued good quality teaching and commitment to the subject by both candidates and teachers. Centres have clearly benefitted from the moderation advice offered last year. Consequently candidates of all abilities have been able to demonstrate a high level of achievement in both Units.

The majority of Centres marked the work of their candidates accurately and consistently; it is encouraging to see the understanding of the assessment criteria. Some Centres, however, still awarded marks that were too generous even 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.

The use of Witness Statements to support and explain the award of practical marks for the B001 Short Task Unit was beneficial in explaining the award of marks in this area. The majority of Centres did complete these, although not all. It is essential to complete these statements in detail to provide the evidence to support practical marking.

Photographic evidence of practical work, although not essential, was good and reflected the many high level practical skills being encouraged by teachers.

Moderators continued to identify instances of suspected malpractice. The number of instances was significantly lower this year. However, the use of incorrect task titles for the Short Task Unit is a form of malpractice. Some Centres used titles that are not current. Moderation again highlighted the issue of annotation by teachers, which could aid candidates. This is not permissible in controlled assessment work. The majority of cases resulted from overly thorough annotation rather than a deliberate attempt to aid candidates. This however could be considered as malpractice.

A Few Centres entered candidates through the OCR repository.

Comments on Individual Units

B001/01 B001/02 Short Tasks

It was evident that candidates enjoyed the very practical nature of the Short Task Unit. The quality of work remains high. Candidates demonstrated a range of different skills across the three set tasks.

The accuracy of Centre marking was good, showing awareness of the application of assessment and marking criteria.

All candidates submitted two Practical and one Investigation Task as required. There were instances of past task titles being used.

The Witness statement, in addition to the annotation on the URS, assisted the moderation process. These two pieces of evidence are essential to support the award of marks.

Practical Tasks

It was encouraging to see that a range of the Short Task titles had been used across the Centres moderated. Popular Short Task titles included: eggs, heat transfer, pastry, calcium and vitamin D. Least popular were vegetarians and food hygiene.

Short Tasks clearly reflect practical ability and there was evidence of high level and good quality dishes being produced that answered the task. This allowed candidates to meet higher mark band criteria.

Good practice was evident where candidates included detailed planning. Choices and reasons were clearly addressed. In some Centres reasons for choices lacked depth and application of relevant knowledge linked to the task.

It is essential that as titles require either sensory or nutritional analysis This should form part of the assessment. There was good evidence of sensory and nutritional testing being planned as part of the Planning section of the task. The majority of candidates carried out the necessary testing, however the degree and depth of analysis of this data varied considerably. Assessing this should form part of the differentiation process when awarding marks.

Some excellent evaluations were seen, with candidates reviewing the whole task, assessing their own performance, considering outcomes and drawing well evidenced conclusions. Other candidates find the evaluations of these tasks challenging, tending to describe what they have done rather than highlighting strengths, weakness and suggesting modifications. The use of evaluation charts or grids often resulted in the completion of a list of points rather than well explained evaluative comments.

Candidates do need to be encouraged to reflect on what they have learned and whether they have fulfilled the task title by drawing meaningful conclusions from the work completed.

Investigation Task

There was continued improvement in the quality of Investigation tasks, due to the clear requirements of the current titles. However the Investigation is still the most challenging of the three Short Tasks, as it differs from a Practical task in that the quality and range of investigatory skills demonstrated is paramount.

In some cases Investigation tasks were over marked as there was little evidence of actual investigatory work and subsequent results and judgements.

All Investigation task titles were used. Adapting a traditional recipe, convenience foods and breakfasts were the most popular.

Some excellent investigations were moderated where candidates planned and carried out a range of investigatory techniques based on a minimum of three identified factors. The results were then carefully analysed and used to make judgements and to draw conclusions.

Other candidates however did not fully demonstrate a range of investigation skills. Some considered nutritional or sensory testing but few other factors. Cost, time, availability and effort may also be investigatory factors. It is important to realise that the five aspects of sensory testing together only constitute one factor.

It is essential to identify the factors that will form the investigation in addition to choosing the actual food items to be investigated. Some candidates did not do this and 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. The use of star profiles was a popular technique however candidates did not always draw conclusions from them.

Good Evaluations of this task included a clear discussion of each of the factors compared with sound judgements and reference back to the original Investigation title, evidencing conclusions. In some Centres candidates did not discuss the results collected nor draw relevant conclusions that related back to the original task. The tendency was to describe the practical work carried out rather than the actual investigation.

B002/01 B002/02 Food Study

Many high quality Studies were seen. 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.

It was evident that advice had been acted upon, as the quality of response within the Selection and Planning section of the Food Studies continues to show improvement.

As in previous sessions the most popular Food Study titles were based on Special Diets, Foods from Around the World and Healthy Eating.

Many candidates produced well written titles, with good reasons for their choice. The best work had a task title that was developed and then worked upon throughout the research and selection and planning sections. Others wrote titles that were too wide making it difficult to identify and focus on the research needs. A lack of clear factors within a title makes detailed research and then appropriate sorting of ideas challenging.

Within the Research section, many candidates were able to select relevant information and summarise this in their own words, whilst others produced work lacking in detail or used copious downloads.

Primary research was well implemented, however sometimes the results of this were limited. The majority of candidates carried out at least one piece of primary research; two are needed for the high mark band. Questionnaires, surveys and food diaries were the most popular techniques used but some interesting interviews and comparison work were also seen. In some cases primary research lacked a clear purpose and questionnaires lacked direction.

It is strongly recommended that candidates draw conclusions at the end of their Research section. These should summarise the key points from both the secondary and primary research that has been completed so that it is made clear what needs to be considered when selecting appropriate practical work in the following section.

The Selection and Planning of Practical Work section shows distinct improvement, although does continue to be the most challenging section for candidates. Centres have implemented advice and are encouraging candidates to assess their ideas for the practical work before making final choices.

Many candidates are now guided into sorting and assessing their ideas for the practical work before making their choices. More candidates are producing charts which consider a range of appropriate factors to be used for decision making.

Whilst some candidates fully justified their choices of practical work making full reference to both research and to assessment, others tended to lack detail and reference to the research and assessment work undertaken previously.

The planning of chosen practical work continues to be good, with the majority of candidates completing if not fully planning testing of outcomes.

The production of high quality practical work continues to be a strength of many candidates. Many produced a range of skilful, quality items that answered the task. The vast majority of candidates completed the minimum of four practical items demonstrating a range of skills.

Most candidates supported their work with nutritional and sensory testing. The degree of analysis of this data varied considerably and should be reflected in marking.

The majority of Centres provided annotation to support the marks awarded, this is essential for moderation.

Throughout the Food Study better candidates had been encouraged to evaluate and draw conclusions as they proceeded, enabling them to achieve well in the Evaluation.

Good evaluations considered all aspects of the task, reviewing performance and identifying strengths and weaknesses and suggesting improvements. Conclusions were drawn that related clearly to the initial title.

Well evidenced conclusions are essential to access the high mark band.

There is a tendency by some candidates to produce evaluation grids. This practice too often resulted in lists of partially explained comments rather than a well evidenced assessment of performance. It is important in an evaluation to assess performance and not to simply describe what was done.

The standard of spelling, punctuation and grammar was accurately reflected in the marks awarded for evaluations and many teachers commented on this as part of their annotation.

B003 Principles of Food and Nutrition

General Comments:

The paper demonstrated a good differentiation amongst candidates with a good range of the syllabus being covered, resulting in a good spread of marks. There were a few areas which required a detailed understanding of the science of the subject, and so stretched the more able candidates. It was felt that some of their knowledge was very good, if not always very clearly written. There were some non-response questions for a few candidates, but on the whole the paper was attempted by all candidates. Candidates need to be aware that the responses are marked from left to right, top to bottom, so for some questions such as 5d candidates made lots of points in the first line but did not fully explain them, therefore limiting the marks they could achieve. Candidates seemed to be able to offer a lot of information for question 4a, but should be reminded to consider the amount of marks available and use the appropriate number of words in their answer

Some candidates used additional booklets but had not used the additional pages provided at the back of the booklet which makes it harder to mark. Candidates should also be encouraged to clearly mark in the paper if they have used extra pages or space as it makes it easier to reference as an examiner.

Spelling, punctuation and grammar was noticeably poor, lots of persistent errors such as “illergic” and “protine”. There seemed to be an increase in the number of candidates either using scribes or word processing answers, which meant there were fewer hard to read scripts.

Overall the candidates performed well and were able to demonstrate a good level of knowledge and understanding of various areas of the specification.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Question No.

Q.1(a) Most candidates were able to name the refrigerator as the place to store, but few were able to give the correct reason. The majority spoke about stopping growth of bacteria, keeping cheese fresh and prevent it from going off. Many also referred to mould growth, melting and being smelly. Some gave detailed answers explaining what would happen if the cheese was left at room temperature. In order to gain the second mark, candidates were expected to state “slow bacteria growth” or “extends the shelf life”.

Q.1(b) Overall well answered, the majority correctly identified “cheddar cheese”, if there was any confusion it was usually between “cottage cheese” and “blue stilton”. A very small number of candidates seemed not to read the question and rather than using the answers provided in the box, used their own examples such as “brie” for a soft cheese.

Q.1(c) Many answered this question well and provided a range of answers from the mark scheme. The most common correct responses were protein, calcium and fat. Iron, vitamin C, fibre and carbohydrates were the most common errors. Some candidates simply gave “vitamins” and “minerals” with no further explanation. Water and salt were not accepted as they are not considered to be nutrients.

Q.1(di) Generally well answered, with candidates giving full fat or whole milk as the correct answer. A few candidates incorrectly stated semi-skimmed, skimmed, powdered (or named formula brand) or pasteurised.

Q.1(dii) Not well answered, candidates most common correct answer was that it 'strengthens teeth and bones'. Errors were in not linking the nutrient to the function. If candidates answered Q1(di) incorrectly then this question was often also incorrect as the two were linked.

Q.1(e) Most candidates stated lactose intolerance as the correct answer. Some candidates were given credit for incorrectly spelling lactose, for example by saying 'lactos'. The most common incorrect responses were coeliac disease and rickets. Some candidates simply left this response blank.

Q.1(f) Most candidates were able to gain at least 2 marks for this question. Many got 2 marks with a varied range of interesting ideas on promoting milk. 'Readily available' and 'more likely to drink it' were the usual answers given by those gaining more than 2. Repeating the question; 'encourage children to drink more milk', was seen too often. Candidates often gained two marks for stating two points but did not gain the further marks as there was not a further explanation of their points. A few candidates did not read the question and spoke about how the parents could encourage the drinking of milk, or how the school could encourage the parents to get the children to drink milk. While "adding milk to foods" or "providing milk based products" was correct and credited, explanations such as "so they do not know its there" or "hide it in other products" were not credited as the question asks how to encourage candidates not to force them.

Q.2(a) The correct methods of heat transfer were mostly given but there was quite a bit of confusion with convection and conduction.

Q.2(b) The most common answers were that it 'reduces fat' and that 'fat drips away'. Most candidates achieved 1 mark but not often 2. The term healthier was used a lot and not always qualified to achieve the mark. Many also referred to grilling being a quick method of cooking or not having to watch the food as it cooks.

Q.2(c) Many were able to score 1 mark on this question. Hitting meat was the most popular, or variations of it. Marinade was also popular, but many stated 'marinade in a 'sauce'' which was not credited. Others mentioned adding ingredients which would add flavour, but not tenderising liquids. There were a whole range of incorrect ideas including leaving it to defrost, come to room temperature, and soaking in (boiling) water. Some misread the question and mentioned cooking methods such as slow cooking.

Q.2(d) As with all explain questions, most candidates gain half the marks for making a point but do not get the second mark as they do not explain the point made. Few were able to give reasons for the changes given. Colour, flavour and texture were the most popular areas of discussion, but shrinking and killing of bacteria were the areas where candidates tended to gain full marks. The explanation for the change in colour was usually a description of the actual change of colour (pink to white). Many talked about gelatin, collagen, connective tissue, haemoglobin, myoglobin, dextrinization and caramelisation, but often inaccurately. Many seemed to find it difficult to find the correct words to use. For example, they would refer to meat being soft/slimy and becoming hard/tough when cooked.

Q.2(ei) Candidates tried to give too many options or too much detail and limited their marks due to scattergun or contradictory marking. Some did not know the bread making steps. Many simply stated to make the bread right/so it works, which was considered too vague to be awarded a mark.

Q.2(eii) Candidates responded better to this question. Common correct responses were adds/traps air and stretches the gluten. Pushing or knocking air out was seen often. Candidates needed to be specific when giving their answers; “stretching starch” is not the same as “stretching gluten”.

Q.2(eiii) Generally well answered, the most common correct response was ‘dough to rise’. ‘Keep bacteria out’ and ‘set the dough’ were the most common incorrect answers.

Q.2(eiv) Very few candidates were able to get this right. Most said ‘so it cooked properly/thoroughly’. Many also referred to the bread rising. ‘Killing bacteria’ or ‘yeast’ were popular correct answers.

Q.2(f) The majority of candidates were able to gain 2 or 3 marks for this question. If candidates lost marks it was usually because they gave one word answers – colour, flavour, texture. In order to gain the mark for these terms the candidates were expected to offer some qualification such as add, give or sweetens.

Fat: Not well answered. Colour and flavour were the most common correct answers. Many incorrectly referred to fat being a binding ingredient.

Sugar: Well answered, with most giving sweet flavour or caramelisation.

Eggs: Well answered, with binding being the most popular response.

Q.2(g) On the whole well answered. Some candidates incorrectly referred to bread not cake, so misread the question. Some referred to leaving the cake out by a window to get air. Folding and rolling was seen quite a few times, obviously they are familiar with linking the two together. The most common correct responses were whisking, beating and sieving/sifting. Candidates were not expected to link the method to the ingredients such as sieving the flour, however, some candidates provided this extra information.

Q.3 The question allowed for differentiation. However, there was a large variation in the quality of responses given. Some candidates did not even attempt the question. Candidates usually demonstrated a higher level of knowledge on one part of the question compared to the other, therefore not always being able to achieve the marks at level 4.

Many candidates had a fair understanding of how a family with a limited income could have a balanced diet, however many talked about nutrients which were not needed (although implied). Own brand, offers, buy in bulk, tinned/frozen foods and cooking from scratch were the most common answers. Many candidates said ‘grow your own’.

‘Explain a variety of factors’ – some candidates struggled with this part and discussed many different religions and special diets as their main responses, rather than including other factors. Many responses did not explain the point given. There was limited mention of others that appeared on the mark scheme.

Although the majority of candidates only used the answer space provided for this question, some, but not many used extra space or booklets.

Q.4(a) Candidates of all abilities were able to gain at least some marks for this question. The mark scheme allowed for clear differentiation. The question was often answered with a similar length to Q3, or longer. Despite there being less marks available for this question candidates used the extra pages or additional books more often.

Many had good knowledge but didn't write succinctly. Some candidates provided many changes but failed to state why these changes should be made or link them to healthy eating guidelines, limiting themselves to 4 marks.

Overall, candidates covered all the guidelines but did not always give adequate explanation. Level 3 was a common mark, but high achieving candidates had very good knowledge and easily gained 8 marks. Few mentioned the importance of eating breakfast, and many would talk about having a filling evening meal, and the importance of lots of energy for a teenager. The most common changes and guidelines given were linked to sugar, fruit and vegetables, fish and water.

Q.4(b) This question tended not to be answered well by candidates, usually achieving only 1 mark. Marks were often lost for being too general ; 'stay healthy/prevent illnesses'. Healthy weight was a commonly seen correct answer, as was reference to all the nutrients. Many incorrect answers referred to being healthier and preventing disease. Prevention of a disease was not credited, candidates needed to state "reduce the risk of the disease" as there are more factors than just having a balanced diet that affect people suffering from a disease. It was felt that the candidates knew what they were talking about but could not express themselves in the right way to gain the marks.

Q.4(c) This question was attempted by all candidates and reasonably answered. Candidates knew about labelling but still too many included nutritional information as a correct answer when it isn't included by law (unless the food is making a health claim). 'Sell by date' is still appearing, even though it is not used anymore. Allergies was often given as a one-word answer so could not be credited, candidates were expected to extend their response to gain this mark, such as allergy information. The most common correct answers included ingredients, allergy information and name & address of manufacturer.

Q.4(cii) This question was not answered as well as 4(c). 'Specific nutritional information', and knowing if the food contained ingredients that may not be suitable for allergies and ingredients, were the most popular correct answers. Candidates that mentioned 'date', didn't give food poisoning. Many gave vague statements such as 'knowing what's in it/what they are eating'. Too many gave vague responses that were too similar to the previous part of the question, for example – 'so you know how to cook/store the food', rather than why this is important to know. Some of the answers indicated that candidates need to read the question more carefully to avoid repeating themselves or not giving sufficient detail.

Q.5(ai) The most common response was high blood pressure, many candidates only achieving one mark. Links to kidney strain/damage and dehydration were the most common correct answers for the second mark. Many incorrectly offered CHD, strokes, diabetes and obesity as an answer.

Q.5(a)ii) Generally well answered with 'herbs, spices and pepper' being the most common correct answers. Some candidates did not read the question "savoury" and gave sugar as an alternative. A few common incorrect answers were 'vinegar, oil and butter'.

Q.5(b) Most candidates answered 'protein' correctly. For 'calcium' the most common correct response was strong bones, but many still refer to healthy/growth of bones, which on its own is not correct. 'Vitamin A' was not well answered. 'Healthy skin' and 'vision in dim light' were the most popular correct answers. Although vague references to 'healthy/helps or improves eyesight and preventing blindness' were common incorrect answers. To gain the mark for 'vitamin A', they needed to be specific about 'seeing in the dark/dim light' or 'making visual purple'.

Q.5(c) Well answered and attempted by the majority of candidates. However, there were some candidates who did not make any attempt at this question. 'Salmonella' was the most common answer followed by e-coli. Common incorrect answers included 'campylobacter, bacillus cereus, mould, fungi and mercury'.

Q.5(d) A range of responses was seen for this question, candidates tended not to quantify their responses with explanations or gave a repetition of cross contamination. Many also gave two or three points in one statement without a description which resulted in less marks for later responses. The application of the marking procedure, left to right, top to bottom, meant that some candidates did not receive full marks or the full response could not be credited.

The most common answers were concerning storage; 'on the bottom shelf/dripping', 'store in fridge/freezer'. Candidates often said 'wash hands/equipment/surfaces **after** handling fish' which was not correct. 'Cleaning fish/qualities to look in fresh fish' were also common incorrect responses.

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