



General Certificate of Education

Applied Science

8771/8773/8776/8779

SC09 Sports Science

Report on the Examination

2009 examination - June series

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General Comments

The number of candidates entered for the portfolio units has again increased this year and many centres have continued to guide their candidates to achieve well. These units have generated much high quality work from centres. Credit should be given to both teachers and candidates in making considerable effort to meet the expected standards.

The random sampling of accredited centres confirmed the value of the accreditation process - with centre marking being confirmed as being in line with AQA standards in most cases, but with a small number showing some "slippage" leading to loss of accreditation.

(The accreditation scheme is used where centres have demonstrated that they are able to mark to the required AQA standards. Under the scheme AQA will accept centre marks without the need to complete the moderation process.)

Portfolio issues

Portfolio construction remains a concern with some candidates, and it is evident that further centre guidance is needed. However, it is very important that centres continue to provide the opportunity for candidates to demonstrate flair and individuality. It is easier for moderation if portfolio structure matches the structure of the unit. Centres are also advised to monitor portfolios during their production as some candidates continue to produce unreasonably large portfolios.

For some units, it appears that the level of expectation of the quality of portfolio content and/or the outcomes that candidates are able to produce are set too low. A number of centres are still judged to have marked candidates work too generously and where this was the case, centres marks were deemed out of tolerance by the moderator and had to be reduced.

Some of the causes of overgenerous marking included:

- Misinterpretation of the requirements of unit
- Too much work on non-essential areas and/or too little on required aspects
- failure to fully complete aspects of the unit as required in the "Banner", in such cases work should be assessed in line with the guidance given in section 9.2 of the teachers' guide
- Over-lenient interpretation of the assessment grids
- Lack of rigour in marking/assessment of work – incorrect science accepted, incorrect calculations marked as correct, incorrect statements accepted, praise for work which is of poor quality, marks allocated for work for which there is no evidence – or no supporting teacher comment (# in the assessment grids)
- Poor candidate skills in practical activities leading to a lack of precision and unreliability in results
- A lack of description by the centre assessor of candidate's level of practical skills, their awareness of safety procedures and degree of autonomy (marked # in the assessment grids) and resulting inconsistencies between the marks awarded by the assessor and the portfolio evidence
- The inclusion of materials downloaded from the internet either passed as the candidates own work or not referenced in the portfolio

As stressed at AQA standardising meetings held in autumn 2008, in communications sent to centres and in last year's Principal Moderators report, it is imperative that centres make it very clear to candidates that the incorporation of text downloaded from the Internet into portfolios is plagiarism and must not be tolerated.

Centres are reminded that many issues and points of guidance made in the 2008 Principal Moderators exam report are still valid and this remains a valuable source of information for centres seeking to improve their portfolios.

Unit 9 – Sports Science

Some outstanding work was seen. Very good work was produced from candidates who were actively involved in sports and showed they really understood what they were doing.

Features of good portfolios:

- In most cases an individual and a sport were clearly identified
- A sensible 4-week programme of activities was devised that clearly targeted the areas identified for improvement in performance in the chosen sport
- Candidates provided sensible detailed or outline diets as part of their programme. It was clear that the candidate saw the link between the need of the chosen activities and an appropriate diet
- Appropriate measurements of bodily physical features or capabilities were taken at the outset of the programme, using accepted standard measures of fitness with sufficient accuracy and precision to produce values which were reliable
- At the end of the programme the same measurements were repeated to enable progress to be determined and appropriate calculations used to determine this
- Some monitoring of progress through the 4-week programme was evident: some candidates produce a log of activities; others take interim measurements using the same tests throughout the programme
- Candidates make judgements of the capabilities of the chosen individual in the selected sport at the start and end of the programme, in addition to the measurements of physical capability
- Background science at a high level linked to human performance
- The effect of drugs on performance
- A sports injury and an occupation involving science and sport The best examples included an actual injury, reported from "real life", of an injury sustained by themselves, a close friend or family member where the candidate can talk from real experience - supplemented by research – and provide an account showing high levels of understanding. Work on first aid was specifically related to the sports injury chosen

The following were areas of weakness identified in portfolios from this unit:

- Poor identification of a chosen individual and sport – sometimes difficult to locate and to determine what was proposed
- Inappropriate choice of participant – 12-year-old brother doing weight training, teacher as a subject, someone already following an intense training programme
- Demonstration of a lack of appreciation of what constitutes a sensible programme of activities – some are far too demanding on time or are too strenuous or some include too little or insufficiently challenging activities
- Many diets provided insufficient nourishment. It must be remembered that a dietary programme for 4-weeks is not required – but there should be sensible description of diets and its importance for the success of the training programme

- Some candidates not explaining why they were using the tests they undertook -It was surprising that in some portfolios, even when initial and final measurements of physical capability were taken, the next, logical step of calculating changes was not completed. In some cases candidates were so keen to state their programme had been effective that fractional improvements were taken as significant

It is worth noting that professional sporting “celebrities” injuries still appear in many portfolios – even though now some of these injuries are becoming somewhat historical. Some chose an occupation where, unfortunately, the scientific nature of the work was minimal.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.