

Report on the Units

January 2007

3862/7862/MS/R/07J

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All Examiners are instructed that alternative correct answers and unexpected approaches in candidates' scripts must be given marks that fairly reflect the relevant knowledge and skills demonstrated.

The reports on the Examinations provide 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 syllabus content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

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Advanced GCE German (7862)

Advanced Subsidiary GCE German (3862)

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2661 German Speaking

General Comments

Role-play

No noticeable difference was detected in terms of difficulty between the three role-plays set for this series. Each had easier sections aimed at weaker candidates and each had more difficult sections. The role-play is not a translation exercise and candidates can convey the stimulus material in different ways. However, a brief summary is inadequate and loses marks on criterion 1A. Candidates mostly used their preparation time well and managed to convey at least half of the stimulus material adequately. Fewer candidates this time had written out a translation of the stimulus material and were allowed to read this out. Writing out translations should be discouraged. Similarly, most teacher/examiners played their roles successfully and the Randomisation sequence printed on page 2 of the Examiner's Sheet was applied correctly. Many teacher/examiners listened well to what their candidates were saying. Many are now adept at eliciting further information from the stimulus material where candidates have omitted detail, thus improving the chances of increased marks on criterion 1A Response to written text. Candidate preparation of the initial two questions varied considerably. Some manipulated the wording correctly, some still read out verbatim what was printed. Timing of the role-play was for the most part good. Most centres now seem to be aware that assessment of the role-play ceases after five minutes.

Comments on Individual Questions

Role-play A: Historic Dockyard, Portsmouth

Most candidates were handed this role-play, being the first in the Randomisation sequence. Many were able to convey a good proportion of the text, which contained information on the Dockyard's history, attractions and facilities. A considerable number of candidates ignored parts of the first paragraph, offering a few details before attempting the second paragraph. The second sentence was sometimes omitted in its entirety. The best candidates had a good overview of the text and in addition were able to provide all or virtually all the details.

Attempts at the initial two questions varied considerably. Some manipulated the wording and pronoun correctly, some merely read out *wann er/sie den Ausflug machen will?* as though it were already a question. With the second question, some candidates seemed to confuse *Interessen* with *interessieren/ interessant*. Despite appearing regularly in role-plays, the word century was not always known and, surprisingly, harbour caused problems. The mention of the Apprentice Exhibition, where one could play a role, caused amusement to many and bemusement to some. On occasions, "Warships by Water" was pronounced Waterships, not just by candidates. Most had heard of the famous ships mentioned and knew they were historical, although some conflation occurred (*die Mary Rose ist ein große Schiff, das Nelson hat benutzt*). Many were able to convey the different tickets and eating possibilities adequately. The final bullet point caused mixed reactions, from the enthusiastic to the bored.

Role-play B: Chiltern Railways

This role-play was attempted only by those centres with five candidates or more. Consequently, it featured infrequently, being the third and last in the Randomisation sequence. For the most part, candidates made at least adequate attempts to convey the information involving using Chiltern Railways to explore towns and cities along its route. Some candidates simply offered a brief summary of the text, a few snippets rather than detailed information. For example, *Bicester hat gute Geschäfte* is the essence of the first bullet point but does not convey all the information. The name Bicester itself had many pronunciations (mostly *Bei Chester*). Warwick Castle was often a *Schloss* rather than a *Burg*, and many details were omitted from the Leamington Spa paragraph. Leamington Spa *ist ein Fluss*, apparently. The sections on Birmingham, tickets and prices, being easier, were done well. Mostly sensible suggestions were made in response to the final bullet point.

Role-play C: Camden

Most candidates dealing with this role-play made good attempts at expressing in German the details in the stimulus material on what there is to see and do in Camden. The text itself was very accessible and listed four separate possibilities. As with all role-plays, marks for 1A Response to written text are awarded for conveying the details of the text. Candidates who seem satisfied with offering only some of these details ignore parts of the stimulus material and cannot therefore score the highest marks. It is not a summary. Full of contrasts was often omitted, as was by day and night/ everything in between. In the bullet points, not all four elements of the rich mixture were mentioned and markets had a variety of plural forms, some of them singular. Covent Garden was sometimes Convent Garden and Bloomsbury was Bloomsberg. Home to some of London's most beautiful squares was often ignored completely. When attempted, squares was often Plätzen. Virginia Woolf was often a man (seine Freunde) and some struggled with 20th century. Canal sometimes became a Fluss. The final transport section was done well on the whole. Many made good suggestions as to a sensible programme for the day in response to the final bullet point stimulus.

The role-play has proved to be a very good test of what candidates are able to do at this level. It offers weaker candidates the chance to express some basic knowledge, whilst giving stronger candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their strengths as well as put their imagination and initiative to good use. The level of language heard this series was comparable to that of previous sessions. Weaker candidates tend to express themselves only in simple sentence patterns and restrict themselves to *es gibt/* forms of the verbs *sein/haben*. They often have difficulties with basic verb forms, modals and word order. Stronger candidates have not only a firm hold over the basics but also impress with their use of complex structures such as relative clauses, subjunctives and even passives.

Topic

Most candidates were well prepared for this part of the examination and in this series fewer were over-prepared. Most presentations were well timed at between two and three minutes, although some were still overlong. Centres are reminded that in such cases teacher/examiners must intervene after three minutes. The discussion part of the topic should last 7-8 minutes and proceed along the lines of the headings on the Oral Topic Form, starting with the first heading, unless that has been the subject of the presentation. It is recognised that the presentation is likely to be learnt by heart, but once the presentation is over, the discussion should contain a great deal of spontaneity. Teacher/examiners should react to statements made by candidates and challenge what is being said, especially if it contains generalisations about what Germans do. The best discussions are undoubtedly those where much genuine interchange takes place. This occurs naturally when discussions have not been over-rehearsed. Pre-rehearsed mini-monologues demonstrate anything but spontaneity and candidates penalise themselves on criterion 1E. In this series the full range of marks on 1D and 1E was possible. Mini-monologues were the exception and topics were related to a German-speaking country. Headings on the Oral Topic Form were mostly well presented, although some are still far too detailed. They should be headings, not sentences, and limited to a few words. Their function is to remind candidate and teacher/examiner what the candidate would like to focus on in the discussion. Timing of the topic was good in most cases. Where topics are overlong, assessment ceases after ten minutes.

Topics chosen by candidates ranged, as usual, from some familiar ones, such as *das deutsche Schulsystem / Essen und Trinken* etc. to less common ones such as *die deutsche Lebensrettungsgesellschaft / die T-Mobile Mannschaft / Studentenproteste / Synchronisation / das deutsche Gesundheitssystem* etc. Markers and moderators welcome discussions where candidates have put time and effort into private research and are able to converse knowledgeably on a topic. It is a bonus when that topic is unusual. Centres with several candidates should also encourage them to offer different topics. Centres where all candidates want to offer, for example, *deutsches Essen* or the same film/book should persuade them that this is not in their best interests.

Mispronunciations still occur (*Außenalster und Beinenalster / Sausekraut / Liebewurst*), as does lack of clarity of expression (*Bach war ein sehr heißer Mann – 20 Kinder / Händel war ein Christmann*). As for accuracy, subject/verb agreement is still a major hurdle with weaker candidates, together with verb second idea and word order in subordinate clauses.

Most recordings are good, but the occasional cassette is heard where background noise makes listening difficult. This can occur due to misplaced microphones, poor equipment or outside pupil noise. Centres are reminded that precautions should be made to ensure quiet while recording takes place. Markers and moderators hear the whole ability range, and it is rewarding to hear successful interchanges of ideas and opinions. The most successful discussions are always spontaneous, lively, accurate and liberally sprinkled with solid factual information on the chosen topic. Candidates often research their chosen topic well through reading from a variety of sources including the internet. Not all these sources, however, provide information in a format which can be used directly in a spoken context. Candidates should, for the purposes of this part of the examination, become an expert on some aspect of a German-speaking country which interests them and which they can discuss with enthusiasm.

2662 German Listening, Reading and Writing 1

General Comments

Once more the candidature of about 460 was composed partly of re-takers, partly of first-time sitters, with a sizeable minority of native speakers. Some of the retakers could well have been sitting the examination for the 3rd. time, and a growing level of competence could be discerned. It tends to be the more able candidates who continue with AS German into the 2nd year of their Sixth Form course, as the weaker ones drop the subject at the end of Year 12. The marks obtained covered the whole range from the low twenties to almost the maximum, but very poor scripts were few and far between. Candidates have become quite sophisticated in organising their time round the varying demands of this paper, and it was rare to find a script incomplete because of lack of time. Candidates seemed to find the paper accessible, and tackled it with a degree of confidence. A general comment would be that their understanding of spoken and written German is at a high level: problems arise with their construction of written German, in particular with case, gender, prepositions, adjectival endings and word order.

Specific Comments

1 *Ihr altes Handy*

This listening passage proved accessible to most candidates, with the numbers posing few problems. However, a substantial minority of candidates rendered question (c) TRD instead of the required TAD. The paper specification requires answers to these early Listening questions to be of the non-verbal type. Therefore answers such as *alle* for (e) will never be required and are therefore always incorrect. Moreover the rubric makes this very clear.

2 *Soziale Projekte in Bayern*

This question was generally well-answered, although (c) posed problems for many candidates. They were distracted by the word *Ausflüge* in the script, failing to realize that the outings in question were with older people, not children.

3 *Jazz und Pop in Bildern*

Surprisingly this proved the most accessible of the 3 Listening passages with most candidates scoring highly. The passage seemed relatively difficult, but this was obviously counterbalanced by the straightforward nature of the questions. The only questions to pose real difficulty were (s) and (t).

4 *Safety Stars; Deutschlands beste Fahranfänger*

This question gave the full range of marks from 2 to 10 with relatively few at the top end and a good number of candidates managing only h, i and j correctly. The passage was accessible to candidates but the combination of reading a longer passage, understanding it in detail and then answering questions in German using only the words supplied (and needing to apply grammar rules) is something all but the very good candidates find challenging.

5 Herr Götz am Telefon

This question tests both the listening skills of the candidates, and their ability to communicate the answers in German. The first part of the exercise they achieved with relatively little difficulty, whereas the second part proved more challenging. Examiners are mindful of the fact that this is a listening exercise, and are therefore prepared to accept versions that a sympathetic native speaker would be prepared to understand. Question (a) was quite well-answered, except for those candidates who thought that *Hellendorf* was a place, rather than the name of the firm. It was pleasing that most candidates seemed to understand *beschädigt* in (e) and examiners, as stated above, allowed a little leeway in phonetic interpretation. Similarly a good number of candidates achieved the construction of the passive in the second part of this question, either formally or with the use of *man*. For (g) examiners were looking for some attempt at least at a Dative construction for *wenn es ihm besser geht*. Question (i) proved the most difficult as was to be expected: nevertheless a good number of candidates managed to hear and transcribe the three elements of the answer. However, some manipulation of the German in the stimulus was necessary to make sure that the delivery was going to the correct firm. A second ferry(!) received little sympathy from the examiners. Grammatically the most successful candidates are those who can manipulate persons and adjectives effectively as in this question. Time spent practising such skills on such questions would be well spent. There were 6 non-verbal questions on this passage and thus candidates tended to score a little more highly. Irrespective of this there were many pleasing answers, and generally speaking candidates seem to be getting to grips with this challenging type of exercise.

6 World of Work –Reading

The format of this type of question is now well-established. Candidates are always asked to write a memo for their employer. Although they will not be penalized for translating, it will allow the rendering to flow much better, and therefore be more cogent if the memo style is adopted. It was noticeable this year that a good number of otherwise very strong candidates were unacceptably sloppy in their treatment of this question. Although a memo style is accepted, indeed recommended, the exact detail of the stimulus must be given. Herr Krüger's status was often not precisely given. An unacceptably large number of candidates could not render accurately *am Donnerstag dem 28. Dezember*. Similarly 3 young people visiting the pool was all too common. The most common banana skin, however, was the items stolen. Would thieves really help themselves to water wings (*Armbanduhren*)? And what self-respecting group of young people visiting a pool in a foreign country would take water wings anyway? *Seit der Rückkehr der Gruppe* was also too often translated in a casual way and the final large paragraph in total proved an effective differentiator, particularly *Dieb, verhaften* and *Wertsachen*. A very minor point was that candidates made effective use, where appropriate, of the extra page of lined paper included in the booklet.

7 Letter to Herr Schiller

This letter is invariably topped and tailed for the candidates, and they do themselves no favours by inserting their (sometimes incorrect) beginnings and endings. Similarly small is beautiful, and the most successful candidates can answer the task very well by constructing the bare minimum of perfectly formed sentences. As this is invariably a business-orientated letter, revision of the adjectives and pronouns associated with the polite form (Sie, Ihr, Ihnen etc.) will pay dividends. This is not primarily a vocabulary exercise: candidates will (and generally did) find most of the words they need in question 6. Teachers are to be congratulated on directing their pupils to question 6 to obtain the necessary vocabulary, as most did, even some of the weaker ones. However, word order, the past participle of *finden*, the passive, the use of a singular verb with *Polizei* and *Sporthalle*, genders, and *Vielen Dank für* all caused difficulty.

It is worth reiterating that candidates disadvantage themselves by quoting pre-learnt sentences and formulaic constructions of doubtful relevance to the task in hand. Similarly candidates need to render in an acceptable German form the ten key points of the answer (see detailed mark scheme) before their grammatical accuracy is considered. There were quite a number of delightfully concise and accurate answers showing an ability to manipulate structures suitable for the task. Otherwise this question produced the usual range of German of varying competence.

2663 Reading & Writing

General Comments

Once again the paper produced a wide range of performance but, as is often the case in January, with a predominance of more capable candidates. The comprehension tasks discriminated successfully, as did the essay and the Cloze Test. There was a new format for the Cloze which brings it into line with the presentation of this task in the French paper. It was hoped that fewer candidates would overlook answers and this seems to have been the case. There were no problems with candidates misunderstanding the rubric in the essay questions and non-completion of this task was extremely rare.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A

Question

- 1 The text was about a pop academy in Mannheim and the task involved choosing the correct ending for the sentence out of 3 options. This proved quite challenging for many candidates and apart from sentence 8, all the others had a more or less equal share of incorrect answers. The final sentence relied on inference and only the best candidates achieved a correct answer.
- 2 In general, candidates scored better on this task: where they had to identify which opinion belonged to which person. Unlike a similar task in the summer session, candidates had only 3 people to choose from but 7 opinions (plus the example); and some of the weakest candidates found it extremely challenging. Statement 3 was the one most often wrongly attributed.

Section B

- 3 The text, about an experiment in communal living, seemed generally accessible to all but the weakest candidates. In answer to (i) candidates were asked to describe *Das Mehr-Generationen-Haus*. Out of the 14 points on the Mark Scheme, they needed to pick out just 10 to score full marks for Comprehension (Grid 3B) and very many candidates did just that.

In part (ii) of Question 3 candidates were asked for their opinion of the idea - and whether they would like to live in such a community. Most candidates had no difficulty forming an opinion on the subject, although perhaps more than in past papers they used examples from the text. The vast majority thought *Das Mehr-Generationen-Haus* was a splendid idea – just as long as they did not have to live in it! Some misinterpreted the idea behind the *MGH* thinking it was designed mainly for the poor but there were very few candidates who wandered away from the point. There are still some candidates that need reminding that there are equal marks available for parts (i) and (ii) and that an excessively lengthy answer to (i) cannot compensate for a four line answer to part (ii) and, less commonly, vice versa. The Response is assessed by according a tick to an opinion and a plus to a development or justification of that opinion. Using the ticks and pluses as guidance, the Examiner awards the mark according to Grid 3C.

Report on the Units Taken in January 2007

The Language is assessed over both parts (i) and (ii) according to Grid 3A. Most candidates had sufficient vocabulary at their command to cope with this task but there was a high level of careless error. Very many candidates gave the impression that gender was quite irrelevant: the most obvious case being *Mehr-Generationen-Haus* whose gender was displayed in bold in the title but appeared frequently in answers as *die MGH*. There were also the usual problems with singular/plural, basic word order, random punctuation and capital letters. When these sorts of errors occur, it is then difficult to be impressed by the candidate who gratuitously introduces a member of his/her family into the essay in order to slip in some indirect speech with a subjunctive! The level of language produced in the two parts of Q.3 is often uneven: some candidates are good at manipulating text but go to pieces when asked to write their own ideas, whilst others struggle with the text and are quite fluent in part (ii). Very few lift more than they should from the text but, at the other end of the scale, there are still candidates who tie themselves in knots trying to find alternative ways of expressing the information. They need to be reminded that they are expected to manipulate the text and not re-invent it.

Some of the difficulties particular to this session were:

- correct usage of *Leute* and *Mensch* and especially *Person* whose spelling suffers considerable interference from French.
- correct usage of *jeder*, *jemand* and *alle*. The confusion was equally apparent in number 4 of the Cloze Test.
- candidates who tried to manipulate *dreistöckig* could only rarely manage *Stockwerke*.
- the difference between *einige*, *eigene* and *einzig* is not evident to many candidates. *Gemeinschaft*, *Gesellschaft* and *Geschäft* also cause confusion but to a lesser extent.
- *Treffung* was invented (perhaps not unreasonably) by a number of candidates.

Section C

Apart from the two extremes of performance, scores in the Cloze Test and the Language section of Q.3 are often at odds with one another and this session was no exception. A surprising number of candidates, some of whom were otherwise extremely competent, chose the wrong alternative **B** in Q.1. Many chose **A** in Q.4, presumably because they failed to notice the singular verb. In Q.7 (and this was also often the case in their essays) many candidates did not realise that *Nachbarn* was the plural form. More candidates than expected identified **F** as the correct option in Q.10, and identifying the correct adjectival ending in Q.13 appeared to be something of a lucky dip for many!

2665: German Listening, Reading and Writing 2

General Comments

From session to session performance on this paper remains constant. On Teil A Hörtexte the level of comprehension is generally good, the standard of transcription often poor. The answers in German on the first Reading passage in Teil B Lesen are very variable, the Quality of Language usually matching the degree of comprehension. Candidates frequently do less well on the second passage than they might expect, either because their English is not sufficiently good or because their answers are not sufficiently detailed. On the final Part of the paper, Teil C Schriftliche Arbeit, candidates demonstrate most accurately their ability to write German: In the weaker scripts the answers are marked by anglicisms and inaccuracies of every kind, while the stronger candidates express successfully the content of the English passage and give an often lively Personal Response to the issue involved. The range of marks scored by the small number of candidates stretched right across the range.

Section One – Listening

Candidates mostly scored well on this passage, which consisted of an interview with an elderly gentleman in search of employment, a well rehearsed theme at A2. There were problems with *in Rente gehen, der liebe Gott, staatlich geprüft* and *die Manieren der jüngeren Urlauber*. Many candidates thought that the man or God had *die Aufgabe bestellt* and a sizeable number thought that the *Grundgesetz* enshrined *das Richt auf Arbeit*. A disappointing number of candidates did not recognise *manche*, thinking it to be *man*.

In general candidates did only marginally worse on the second passage, an interview with an expert on the affairs and attitudes of young people. There was frequent confusion of *Werte* with *Wirte*, which led to some nonsense being written about young people wanting to liberate themselves from landlords rather than from the values of their parents. Otherwise the majority of mistakes made were of a linguistic nature, the severity of which could lead to the loss of both comprehension marks and Quality of Language marks.

Centres should note that in this section there is no need for candidates to put the answers in their own words: accurate transcription is invaluable.

Section Two – Reading

Performance on the first Reading passage varied widely. Most candidates work their way systematically through the passage, identifying the correct material as they go. Not all have the ability to manipulate the material appropriately and many lift unsuccessfully or excessively in the process. There is a requirement to express the content of the passage in the candidate's own words. A simple example of this came in the first question: Was macht Klaus Töpfer bei den Vereinten Nationen? Credit went to those few candidates who replied "Er leitet das Umweltamt" (or "die Umweltbehörde"), a simple reworking and manipulation of the text "Der Leiter der Umweltbehörde der Vereinten Nationen, Klaus Töpfer, ...".

The failure to manipulate bedevilled many answers: eg Was war gerade in Kraft getreten,...? Answer: "Des Kyoto-Protokolls". Thoughtless lifting could cause a total loss of marks: eg Was müsste Deutschland machen,...? Answer: "Deutschland müsste ohne zusätzliche Maßnahmen machen". In question (k) Was bedroht uns – laut Töpfer? it was not unusual to read "Wir haben mit dem Kyoto-Protokoll nicht gewonnen", a careless response to the task set. No doubt the majority of candidates understood the text well but not all answered as carefully as they should have done.

Report on the Units Taken in January 2007

Aufgabe 4 required definitions to four words from the text: *hinterherhinken*, *Klimawandel*, *Dürre* and *Fluten*. It has to be said that this task was performed extremely badly by nearly all candidates. The first word predictably caused the most problems despite the clue contained in the element *hinter*; *Klimawandel* was best explained, usually by use of the verb *verändern*; *Dürre* seemed to be taken to mean “desert” by many candidates; *Fluten* was the second most successfully managed overall, though the errors made while using words such as *überschwemmen*, *regnen*, *Fluss* and *Ufer* were legion.

The second passage was on the problems of excessive demand faced by denominational schools in Berlin. Candidates could not always sort the wood from the trees, perhaps because they attack each question one at a time without taking the time to gain an overall comprehension of the text: sometimes candidates clearly recognise and understand the words but do not grasp the meaning of the sentence in which they are embedded. As ever the quality of the English written is vital, because precise answers are required and ambiguity is not tolerated. Sometimes nonsense was written, particularly in an attempt to render “der gymnasiale Zweig”. Few candidates could make out the nature of a *Schülergebetskreis*. A lot of scripts failed to make clear the way in which the *DDR-Erziehungssystem* was “gottlos”. An equally large number of candidates did not realise the significance of the hyphen in *Asylanten- und Diplomatenkinder*, which could lead to answers like “asylum seekers and diplomatic children”. Often, even where the candidate seemed to grasp the meaning of *Gottesdienst*, the attempt at expressing it failed to involve the use of the simple word “service”.

As has been said before of this exercise: Many candidates clearly do not spend enough time or take enough care in answering these questions, perhaps in the belief that it is ‘easier’ to do than the other passage. The pattern of marks demonstrates the opposite: candidates often perform better, and score higher, when they are operating in the target language.

Section 3 – Writing

This exercise produced the traditional range of performances. Most candidates manage to explain in German the content of the English passage, albeit with much awkwardness in many cases. There were all kinds of problems in explaining the notion of television being responsible for 20,000 deaths per year in Germany: *Mord*, *töten*, *sterben* each had an outing in various guises, many of them wrong. Likewise there were countless inaccurate variations on *Übergewicht* and few instances of *Fettleibigkeit*. “To damage” and “brain” were beyond many candidates, and the perennial problem of how to express “violent/violence” arose here. Finally, lots of children apparently do not taste (or smell) good after watching television! As ever, though, it is rewarding to read the Personal Response: not only do all candidates have a real go at expressing serious opinions but they clearly also work hard at using “useful essay phrases” fed to them by their teachers. Candidates remain poor at using *meiner Meinung nach* correctly but *sollte* is beginning to be used to greater effect.

**Advanced Subsidiary GCE German 3862
and
Advanced GCE German 7862
January 2007 Assessment Series**

Unit Threshold Marks

Unit		Maximum Mark	a	b	c	d	e	u
2661/01	Raw	60	47	41	36	31	26	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2661/02	Raw	60	47	41	36	31	26	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2662	Raw	80	65	58	51	44	38	0
	UMS	120	96	84	72	60	48	0
2663	Raw	60	50	44	39	34	29	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2665	Raw	80	59	52	45	38	32	0
	UMS	120	96	84	72	60	48	0

Specification Aggregation Results

Overall threshold marks in UMS (ie after conversion of raw marks to uniform marks)

	Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
3862	300	240	210	180	150	120	0
7862	600	480	420	360	300	240	0

The cumulative percentage of candidates awarded each grade was as follows:

	A	B	C	D	E	U	Total Number of Candidates
3862	38.3	57.7	81.9	91.9	98.7	100.0	150
7862	0.0	66.7	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	3

153 candidates aggregated this series.

For a description of how UMS marks are calculated see:
http://www.ocr.org.uk/exam_system/understand_ums.html

Statistics are correct at the time of publication

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