



**General Certificate of Education (A-level) Applied
June 2011**

Health and Social Care

HC02

**(Specification
8621/8623/8626/8627/8629)**

Unit 2: Effective Communication

Report on the Examination

Further copies of this Report on **the Examination** are available from: aqa.org.uk

Copyright © 2011 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

Copyright

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered centres for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to centres to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

The Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (company number 3644723) and a registered charity (registered charity number 1073334).
Registered address: AQA, Devas Street, Manchester M15 6EX.

Unit 2 Effective Communication

June 2011

Principal Moderator's Report

This year there was a further improvement in both the work produced and its assessment. Some centres had clearly guided candidates in the requirements of the specification, and it was pleasing to see that most centres had adopted the AQA tick lists and therefore fully met the requirements for this units. Some centre marking was still out of tolerance but the extent of marking too leniently/severely was greatly reduced. There were some very interesting talks and some candidates achieved some very high marks.

The main requirements of the report

- A brief introduction to the talk stating the client type and the intended audience. (The client must have problems in communication.) The comprehensive list of clients and care settings is in the specification.
- The text (a transcript) of a talk focussed on communication skills for use by a practitioner/informal carer when working with the specified client type. The candidates should be encouraged to indicate where PowerPoint slides, if used, were displayed.
- A blank copy of a questionnaire designed to measure the effectiveness of the talk and especially the candidate's own use of communication skills.
- Presentation of processed data from the questionnaire.
- An evaluation section, including the justification of design decisions and an evaluation of own skills based on feedback and suggested improvements.
- An appendix, including all completed questionnaires, sources used and evidence of teacher feedback.

Section A

It is pleasing that most candidates are now giving the required brief introduction to the client, setting and audience and producing some very informative talks.

Some candidates are still including talks that were not about, or not mostly about communication skills, i.e. concentrating on the medical condition of the client rather than how to communicate with him/her.

Some candidates chose to give a talk on subjects such as obesity, smoking, anorexia, etc. which does not meet the requirements of the specification and, therefore, penalised the candidate. In centres which checked with the portfolio `advisor about the suitability of the client/group, candidates benefited by choosing appropriate clients/groups.

Some candidates are still ignoring the requirement to refer to communication barriers in the talk.

There were some excellent talks which included a range of relevant communication skills related to their actual application with a specified client type, and usually illustrated by realistic concrete examples. Evidently, research for these talks combined some practical experience or observation (perhaps on a work-experience placement or visit) with thorough research of published sources. These talks did not follow any one pattern. For example, some used visual aids and/or audience participation, while others did not.

Some candidates introduced quizzes and/or simulation tests to be carried out by the audience and then sometimes lost the focus of the talk. It is likely that candidates, whose talks worked best, designed them in ways that played to their own individual strengths, rather than adopting a uniform style or pattern.

A common weakness in talks that did focus on communication was a tendency to give generic descriptions of communication skills, which might be applicable to almost any type of client, rather than relating the skills to their specific client group. Also evident was a tendency to rely too much on just one source of data, such as a visit or placement.

To assess a good talk the question should be asked. 'After hearing that talk has the audience been given enough information to go and communicate effectively with that client/group?'

Section B

Questionnaire design

Again the standard of the questionnaires was greatly improved, but again some candidates only used items about the design decisions, rather than their own skills as a presenter. As required, most candidates produced questionnaires which they had devised themselves. However, many did not adhere to the requirement to include a blank copy of this at the start of Section B.

The most successful questionnaires were those that featured clear, unambiguous items and produced informative feedback. These also featured clear instructions for the audience on how to complete them, e.g. values on rating scales.

Most candidates wrote questionnaires that used a variety of item types. However, there was a common tendency to write items, which restricted the choice of responses. For example, a candidate might ask whether the speed of their speech was 'right' and give the options of Yes or No for respondents. Candidates also had difficulty in designing effective open question items. These were sometimes used to follow up previous closed questions, e.g. "If NO, why not?"

It would be useful for candidates to bear in mind that the purpose of designing the questionnaire is not merely for assessment purposes, but its main purpose to collect the data that they will need to write an effective evaluation.

It should be noted that questionnaires completed by members of the audience should be anonymous, apart from the feedback provided by the teacher, which should be signed and dated. Some teachers provided useful and legitimate help for their candidates by giving feedback additional to the questionnaire. This is particularly helpful for candidates whose questionnaires fail to provide much useful information.

Data analysis

Data processing and presentation presented a range of problems for candidates. Many appeared to lose sight of the need to produce a clear and accurate summary of the data from the questionnaires. Lack of clarity resulted from a number of errors. One was to present graphs separately from the other information presented. Another was the failure to indicate what the item reported was about. The best way to do this is to state the item and then give the summarised responses. There is a fine line between reporting on a set of results and analysing what they actually mean. Some candidates still need help with analysis.

Another omission was the failure to give collated data (the actual number of respondents who gave each particular response). Some candidates presented raw data in this section (for example, tally charts and verbatim lists of all responses to open items), and some included calculations. These should be put in an appendix.

Candidates should understand that unanimous responses do not require graphical illustration.

Many candidates are still unable to manage the software they used, omitting to alter the default setting and as a result they produced poorly-labelled graphs that had no meaning. It would be better to hand-draw graphs, rather than produce poorly-labelled printed graphs. Again some candidates are still failing to label the axes which makes the graph impossible to read.

Some candidates used a range of different graphical styles, when the consistent use of one style would have been clearer for the reader. Graphs that cannot be read for this type of information such as 'line' or 'spider' should not be used.

There was a tendency for many centres to over-credit the content of Section B. In some cases this might have been because of unfamiliarity with the skills required. A03 was given

high marks by some centres when there was no evidence of appropriate quantitative and qualitative techniques.

Section C

A positive feature of candidates' work for Section C was a tendency to be frank and open when evaluating their own communication skills.

Most candidates attempted to say something about design decisions, own communication skills and suggested improvements. Candidates produce the best evaluations when they use sub-headings to focus the work. After gathering data from their feedback, some candidates fail to refer to it in the evaluation, thus reducing the marks available for A04.

The need to justify design decisions tends to be done well. Candidates have made conscious decisions such as whether or not to use visual aids, how much to involve the audience, how to engage attention and how to make the talk interesting.

There is no requirement to evaluate the questionnaire.

Section D

Most candidates included all completed feedback forms. These are essential for assessors and moderators to check the accuracy of data analysis. Failure to include all feedback forms has an impact on A03 as there is no authentication of the data the candidate has presented.

When giving references to sources used, it is helpful if candidates give brief statements of what information they obtained from each one. This is not a specification requirement; it is just an example of good practice.

Grade boundaries

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the AQA website at www.aqa.org.uk/over/stat.html