

Moderators' Report/
Principal Moderator Feedback

Summer 2013

GCE Health and Social Care (6946)
Unit 9 Investigating Disease

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General Comments

This unit concerns individual reports into various prescribed aspects of two diseases chosen by the student. This includes the biological bases, diagnostic methods, causes and distribution, support, treatment and ways to prevent the diseases. One disease should be communicable between people while the other disease is non-communicable. Work-related issues are broad features of the two diseases.

Reports should address the assessment criteria presented in the specification as a tiered grid of 3 mark bands. Some centres are still using assessment guidelines for the purpose of allocating marks rather than the assessment criteria grid.

Moderators reported on centres allowing students to opt for diseases with no known cause or strategy for prevention. This is permitted but centres should be aware that mark limits will apply.

Investigative information must be applied to the chosen diseases, a number of centres still insist on including generic material such as long introductions about causes of disease or diagnostic techniques such as MRI, ultrasound etc. These gain no credit and are passed over. Some students are producing material in unacceptable volume – well over 100 pages, due to including irrelevant material from published sources particularly from web sites. Research should be gathered (preferably primary and secondary) and re-organised into the students' own words to specifically address the assessment criteria. Far too much information is copied directly and in some cases exclusively from published sources and tutors should reinforce this requirement.

Several moderators report that some centres are allowing students to investigate the same two diseases, the assessment evidence clearly states that this is not permitted. However, when a centre has large numbers of students this rule is relaxed somewhat but in the samples seen this did not apply. Previous reports have commented that only one form of a disease is required but students often switch between forms for evidence and Diabeted mellitus is particularly prone to this leaving the moderator quite confused.

Focus and organisation is often a problem and only one final draft should be submitted. The best work is well-organised into assessment objectives with relevant sub-headings not those of web sites.

Some centres annotate the work in a clear and organised way, but moderators report that overall annotation is declining and tick marks are insufficient, not required and often irritating.

Overall, some very good work was seen justifying the marks allocated by the centres, but a large number of centres had marks reduced because the evidence for the criteria was incomplete or lacking in depth and breadth to qualify for the high allocation of marks given. It was noted that many assessors are not drawing attention to inaccuracies whether of content or QWC and QWC is often not included as part of assessors' summaries.

Assessment Objective 1

Generally the biological bases of the diseases were addressed adequately although the bodily responses to the diseases were less well done. Some centres are still giving Mark Band 3 marks when there is no explanation of how the signs and symptoms (3 in number) are produced and displayed. Methods of diagnoses are stated in this objective or in Assessment Objective 3 but very few students relate these methods to the changes produced by the diseases. Differentiation from diseases with similar signs and symptoms is still rare. Mark Band 3 students must include how a final clinical diagnosis is made which distinguishes their chosen disease from the similar disease.

Assessment Objective 2

Distribution and transmission of disease is still being confused in some reports, the latter is best included in the biological basis of the disease. Factors affecting distribution are often muddled and ill-compared. Students working in Mark Band 3 and comparing and contrasting the two diseases generally must include factors affecting distribution. Focus and organisation are often poor and application of knowledge to the chosen diseases can be weak.

Assessment Objective 3

Diagnoses and differentiation have been referred to in Assessment Objective 1. Factors affecting treatment are required in all mark bands and are often not clear, additionally justification for differences in provision and examination are needed for Mark Band 3 and are frequently omitted. Support continues to be given both locally and nationally which has not been required since the re-launched specification in 2009. Centres are reminded that the **role** of the support agent is required and a long list of charities and their work is not required. A comparison of support with other diseases of the same type remains elusive –only one other disease of each type is required. Work-related issues continue to be mainly employment-focussed and not connected to the impact on prevention, support and treatment required for Assessment Objective 4 although more able students strive to make links. These should be related to health/social care such as availability of medication, equipment and professional personnel. Conclusions are required.

Assessment Objective 4

As expected, evaluative skills vary with ability. It is difficult for students who have chosen diseases with no preventive strategy and they produce volumes of material on coping and management strategies but cannot reach Mark Band 3. Clear reasons why prevention strategies might not be successful are required in each mark band. Work-related issues have been referred to in Assessment Objective 3. Finally independent thinking and initiative is assessed and if work is copied from web sites and not applied to the assessment criteria in their own words then this will not be credited. Tutors and assessors are asked to reinforce this message.

Thank you to all tutors for their submissions and the hard work they do in formative and summative assessment and guiding students to produce their reports for this unit. There is some excellent work to be found and with your continued support all students can achieve their potential.

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