

AS/ A2 English Literature

A guide to the revised coursework band descriptions for examinations in June 2003 and beyond.

Following work undertaken by OCR after the Tomlinson enquiry, a revised set of coursework band descriptions has been developed for use by Centres in carrying out their internal assessment and moderation. Full details are set out in the coursework assessment pack.

Main features:

- The total number of bands has been reduced to 5.
- Band 1 describes the lowest range of achievement; Band 5 the highest.
- Band 1 describes a level of performance that falls below the target range.
- Bands 2 – 5 represent the 'target range' for AS or A2 and contain detailed descriptions of characteristic performance for all relevant assessment objectives.
- Band 5 provides for the very highest levels of achievement, including some that will exceed the target range.

Rationale:

- The numbering of the bands, working up from Band 1 to Band 5, conforms to the ordering of levels and bands most commonly adopted in marking criteria.
- The new structure will help achieve a better spread of marks across the range and reinforce positive assessment.
- The expectation of a close equivalence of band and grade thresholds has been removed. In addition, the use of value judgements (e.g. 'just adequate'), has been avoided where possible. There are no longer any broad headline descriptors of this kind.
- QCA has been developing draft performance descriptions for the key awarding thresholds at grade E/U and A/B. Although for the immediate purposes of assessment no reference to grades is made, these key performance descriptors have informed OCR's new band descriptions. At the awarding stage it is expected that the E/U threshold will be located in Band 2, and the A/B threshold in Band 4.
- The new OCR exemplar material and commentaries are closely linked to the revised band descriptions.

Continuity:

- Total raw marks, assessment objectives and weightings are unchanged.
- The standard of the award established in June 2002, and endorsed by Tomlinson, will be carried forward to ensure that grade outcomes are equivalent. This standard is demonstrated in the exemplar materials.

Questions to consider:

Will the marks out of 60 we apply for June 2003 be equivalent to the marks we applied in June 2002?

No. The structure of the bands has changed. Broadly this means that raw marks will be slightly lower across the raw mark range in June 2003 compared to June 2002.

Does this mean that coursework is being made harder?

No. The new bands and descriptors will simply achieve better differentiation, or 'spread', across the raw mark range. Candidates will be graded according to the post-Tomlinson standards established in June 2002.

What if we have already assessed using the old system?

This should have established a reliable rank order, but the final raw marks will need to be matched to the new band descriptions.

How can we make best use of the exemplars and commentaries?

Centres will be able to incorporate the exemplars and commentaries into their established assessment and moderation procedures. The material could be used as part of a trial marking exercise. Alternatively, the exemplar folders could be used as 'anchor points' to secure a Centre rank order and to calibrate marks awarded. Some reference to the material will help ensure that the Centre assessed marks are of equivalent standard.

How should we determine forecast grades?

The post-Tomlinson standard for June 2002 will be carried forward. You can therefore expect that grade outcomes in June 2003 for candidates of similar achievement (though *not* the same raw mark) will be broadly equivalent for those in June 2002. Bear in mind also that:

- Candidates placed in Band 5 are likely to be very securely into the A range
- Candidates placed in Band 2 are likely to be in the E/U range
- Candidates placed in Bands 4 and 3 are likely to range from low A to D.

Forecast grades for coursework should be regarded in the same way as those for externally examined units: they give an indication of the expected grade outcome taking account of all the available evidence.

If we need further guidance on coursework assessment, who can we contact?

Each Centre now has an allocated Coursework Advisor to help with any queries they might have. Full details can be found in the Coursework Consultancy Service Enquiry Form.