



ADVANCED SUBSIDIARY GCE
GENERAL STUDIES
The Scientific Domain (Coursework)

2963/IT

INSTRUCTIONS FOR TEACHERS

To be opened on receipt

JUNE 2009



INFORMATION FOR CENTRES

- Assignment Theme: 'Understanding Scientific Methods and their Applications'
- This document provides guidance to assist teachers in the preparation of their candidates for the coursework assignment.
- This document consists of **4** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

Information for Centres

1. Introduction

The tasks contained in question paper 2963/AS provide the June 2009 coursework for Unit 2963: The Scientific Domain.

Unit 2963 comprises 30% of the total AS award and 15% of the A level. The coursework provides an alternative to Unit 2962. The extended assignment offers candidates the opportunity to undertake some personal research and to look critically at a wide range of sources.

The coursework tasks do not replace the teaching of the unit content. To achieve the assessment requirements, candidates need to take part in a planned learning programme which covers the content detailed in Section 5.2 of the specification. It is expected that candidates' submissions will reflect that content, which includes:

- characteristics of the sciences (physical, life and earth)
- understanding of scientific methods, principles, criteria and their applications
- mathematical reasoning and its application.

Candidates should be able to reflect on different types of knowledge and their experience of a contemporary, dynamic and multicultural world.

The number of marks available for the coursework is 90. They are awarded using the following criteria:

Selects and interprets sources and evidence	20 marks
Understands the concepts involved	10 marks
Communicates in a clear, reasoned and effective way	15 marks
Demonstrates awareness of different and similar types of knowledge	10 marks
Demonstrates ability to use problem-solving skills	20 marks
Draws relevant conclusions	15 marks

Teachers are advised to refer to the detailed assessment criteria in the specification.

2. Delivery

Candidates can be given the coursework tasks at any time during the academic year but it is essential that candidates are adequately prepared before starting the coursework tasks.

Teachers are advised that candidates may need guidance when determining the content and scale of the study, so that topics selected address the assignment brief and are neither too complex nor too large. Teachers should note that submissions which do not address the assignment brief are unlikely to access the higher mark levels.

The coursework is a scientific enquiry where the collection of primary data is to be encouraged and will be rewarded.

The report has a **maximum word limit of 2000** words, which includes a short synopsis (about 50 words) and appendices. Project reports should normally include:

- a title
- a review of the evidence and the development of a focus, question issue or hypothesis
- a plan of the way in which the investigation proceeded
- clearly defined technological concepts or models
- coherent use of appropriate technological terms
- clear tabulation of any data collected

- analysis of any issues raised
- appropriate illustrative material such as graphs, charts, statistics and photographs
- clarification of the dilemmas raised and tests of significance applied
- critical analysis of the scientific methods used and the recognition of facts and opinions
- relevant conclusions and the reliability of results
- a list of the source materials used (which may include the Internet and CD roms).

Reports may include drawings, diagrams, computer generated images and expressions in mathematical or graphical form. Excessive use of leaflets and other illustrative material is not encouraged.

Group activity is acceptable, for example, when candidates are carrying out research, but reports submitted must be the work of the individual candidate. It is acceptable for candidates to draw upon their strengths in other studies.

The teacher's role consists of:

- clarifying the issues
- facilitating discussions and presentations
- providing guidance and support, encouraging candidates to show some originality in their choice of investigation, approach and solutions
- encouraging candidates to address a 'General Studies' assignment by discussing the wider and more general issues and applications of their investigation
- authenticating that the outcome is the work of the individual candidate.

Teachers are not required to supervise candidates directly when they are carrying out research or the coursework tasks. Centres are encouraged to hold group or individual tutorial sessions where candidates can share information on their progress and discuss any problems. However the coursework must be carried out under conditions that enable the teacher to be confident that the work is the authentic original work of the individual candidate.

Teachers must take the steps necessary to satisfy themselves that the work submitted is solely that of the candidate concerned. Teachers must complete the form 'Centre Authentication Form for Coursework' [CCS160].

3. Submission of coursework

Candidates must present their work as a hard copy. It must be handwritten or word processed on A4 paper. All loose sheets must be numbered and tied together. The Centre/candidate numbers together with the candidate's name and the unit code [2963] must be recorded on each loose sheet.

The use of a stiff ring binder and the separation of individual pages into clear document pockets is NOT encouraged. It is sufficient to enclose the completed investigation with the Coursework Cover Sheet [CCS2963] provided by OCR.

A Coursework Cover Sheet [CCS2963] must be completed for each candidate and must accompany the work. This document will be dispatched to Centres in February 2009.

Candidates should not submit any material other than their response to the coursework tasks.

Centres are advised that where the coursework is required for key skills evidence, a copy should be retained for this purpose.

Candidates' completed work must be submitted to the OCR examiner by 15 May 2009. Details of procedures for submission will be sent to Centres in May following receipt of final entries from Centres.

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