



General Certificate of Education

Health and Social Care 8626/8629

HC19 Physiological Aspects of Health

Report on the Examination

2008 examination – June series

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HC19 PHYSIOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF HEALTH

PRINCIPAL MODERATOR'S REPORT

Candidate performance on this unit was generally sound, with relatively more portfolios with high marks than in the initial series.

There were few examples of candidates producing incomplete work with most clearly organising their work into the four sections required.

Moderators were grateful for the useful comments written on the Candidate Record Forms by assessors and for the presentation of the work being treasury tagged rather than in plastic folders or bulky files.

In the vast majority of centres the rank order of candidates as determined by the assessors was upheld.

Section A of the work produced some detailed evidence with very clear descriptions of how the different tests are performed to measure physiological status.

It is pleasing to report that in this series more candidates met the requirement to cover pulse rate, blood pressure, body temperature and at least two of the three lung function tests named in the specification, i.e. tidal volume, vital capacity and/or peak flow.

Candidates do not need to describe a variety of methods for a single type of measurement, e.g. using different types of thermometer for body temperature. It is necessary to cover only the method actually used.

Health risks associated with the tests and how these maybe overcome were generally covered well. Most candidates understood that risks are mainly concerned with microbial transfer and over-exertion during physical activity.

Portfolios tending to lack detail on these points were produced by weaker candidates.

Possible errors which may arise and how these may be reduced were also generally covered well. These errors are mainly to do with incorrect use of monitoring equipment, misreading of scales and/or performing the tests for insufficient time.

Again, weaker candidates tended to be vague in their explanations of these points.

Most candidates were able to evaluate their results and compare these with 'normal' range values. The majority of results were within normal ranges and there is no requirement for candidates to seek participants who may give results outside these norm values.

As in the previous series, section C of some reports did contain examples of apparently plagiarised material, often down-loaded, relating to structures and functions and/or homeostatic mechanisms. Candidates should be encouraged to utilise their own results when explaining these mechanisms as a means of demonstrating understanding. Homeostasis and negative feedback was generally understood well. Candidates are not required to consider homeostatic mechanisms relating to functions other than those required in the specification, e.g. mechanisms relating to sugar content in the blood.

Section D of the reports remains the weakest part of most candidates' work. It is recognised that candidates will find this section challenging as it requires candidates to draw together the functions of the various systems to explain their interrelationships on one another. Generally candidates who attempted this by working through one system against another, did not do as well as others who were able to offer detailed interrelationships considering the impact of all three systems on each other. Some work of weaker candidates in this section tended to be

extremely brief and therefore demonstrated a general lack of depth of understanding in the work.

Grade boundaries

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