



General Certificate of Education

Health and Social Care 8626/8629

**HC21 Research Methods and
Perspectives**

Report on the Examination

2008 examination – June series

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Dr Michael Cresswell Director General.

HC21 Research Methods and Perspectives

Principal Moderator's Report

This unit was a popular choice and there was a marked improvement in the quality of the work submitted from previous years.

The focus of this unit is to evidence formal report writing skills, not to provide an account of how to write a report and many centres were more successful in directing candidates to this end. Reduced word count is welcomed where it reflects tighter formalized report-writing. With time, as centres become more familiar with the requirements, formal scientific reports and not commentaries will be the norm.

On the whole, reports generated by candidates were both practical and applied. It was pleasing to note that very few centres used children as participants. Participants under sixteen, even with parental consent, should not be used.

Topic choices were mostly sensible and related to health and social care issues. It was frustrating to see that some centres once again used A-level Psychology coursework. This should be avoided, as it has a different focus and is likely to prevent access to the higher mark bands.

The transfer of knowledge and skills between subject areas is permissible (and should be encouraged when relevant) but candidates should be monitored and guided carefully, as judgment is required. Synoptic input from other units was excellent; a few candidates used their experience of HC13 to generate a research topic.

Structurally the reports were excellent.

The sections and subsections outlined in the specification were followed and competence was evidenced in the use of technical language.

Data collection was performed in a professional and expedient fashion by many of candidates. Most centres have responded to the request not to forward all of the questionnaires or raw data for moderation.

Design decisions were justified and there was some improvement in the type and level of analysis performed on the raw data. However, attention to detail still needs to be improved.

Graphs should have sensible titles and axes must be labeled. Many candidates did include graphs and charts but they tended to be floating and not used to illustrate or reinforce qualitative and quantifiable conclusions.

The use of background material is an area that could be improved. Where possible, empirical studies should be cited.

Anecdotes or personal opinions are not to be encouraged.

All support materials should be fully referenced.

The reporting of the limitation of the studies has improved from last year but there is still a tendency to bullet point lists of problems.

Candidates should be encouraged to consider the theoretical limitations or issues linked to their study as well as methodological problems.

Many candidates did not discuss implications, reliability and validity.

However, insightful remarks were made, conclusions were drawn and this year's submissions were, by and large, solid, logical reports.

Grade boundaries

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