



General Certificate of Education

Health and Social Care 8626/8629

HC19 Physiological Aspects of Health

Report on the Examination

June 2009

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HC19: Physiological Aspects of Health

Candidate performance on this unit continues to generally be sound with a good proportion of high scoring portfolios. There were very few examples of candidates producing incomplete work and most candidates clearly organised their work into the four sections as outlined in the assessment specification. Moderators were very grateful for the assessor comments written on the candidate record forms as this greatly assisted the moderation process. Moderators were also grateful for the centres who presented treasury tagged work rather than in plastic folders or bulky files.

There were very few cases where the moderators were unable to support the rank order of candidates as determined by the centre assessors.

Section A

This section produced some detailed evidence with some very clear descriptions of how the different tests are performed to measure physiological status. It is also pleasing to report that in this series the vast majority of 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.

It should be noted however that 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 only necessary to cover the method actually used. The use of mercury thermometers to measure body temperature is inappropriate on health and safety grounds.

Section B

Health risks associated with performing the tests and how these maybe overcome were generally well covered by most candidates. Weaker candidates tended however to provide little detail in these areas. The majority of candidates understood that health risks are mainly concerned with microbial transfer and over exertion during the physical activity

Possible errors which may arise when taking the measurements and how these may be reduced were also generally well covered. Errors are principally the incorrect use of equipment, misreading of scales and/or performing the tests for insufficient or incorrect time periods. Again the weaker candidates tended to offer vague explanations lacking in detail on these points.

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

Section C

This section did not always contain appropriate information as some reports contained examples of plagiarised material, which had been down loaded either verbatim or with superficial modification from internet websites. No marks can be awarded for plagiarised material. Material used to support findings must be appropriately referenced and shown to be used. Candidates should detail the structure and functions and homeostatic mechanisms in their own words. Candidates could utilise their own results in this section and/or the relevant homeostatic mechanism in section B as a means of demonstrating their understanding. Homeostasis and negative feedback was generally well understood.

Candidates are not required to include, nor gain any credit, for information on homeostatic mechanisms relating to functions other than those required in the specification e.g. mechanisms relating to sugar content in the blood.

Section D

As might be anticipated, section D of the reports generally tends to be the weakest part of the candidates' work for all but the higher ability. It is recognised that candidates find this section challenging as it requires that information on the functions of the various systems is brought together to explain how they interrelate with one another. Generally candidates who meet this requirement by working through the three systems in pairs do not score as well as others who were able to offer detailed interrelationships considering the impact collectively of all three systems one upon another. The work of weaker candidates in this section often tended to be extremely brief and therefore unable to demonstrate a depth of understanding.

Grade boundaries

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