



**General Certificate of Education (A-level) Applied  
June 2011**

**Health and Social Care**

**HC19**

**(Specification  
8621/8623/8626/8627/8629)**

**Unit 19: Physiological Aspects of Health**

***Report on the Examination***

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## **Unit 19: Physiological Aspects of Health June 2011**

It is pleasing to report that candidate performance on this unit continues to be generally sound, with some high marks and very few low ones. There were very few examples of candidates producing incomplete work. The majority of candidates organised their work into the four sections as outlined in the specification. This helps to maintain the focus of the work as a practical investigation and assists with the moderation process. Assessor comments on the Candidate Record Forms when included greatly assisted the moderation process. The moderators were able to support the rank order of candidates as determined by the centres in the vast majority of cases.

### **Section A**

There were very few instances of candidates failing to cover all the appropriate tests in this section, i.e. 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.

There were some very clear descriptions of how the different tests are performed to measure physiological status. These good accounts are ones that could be easily replicated from the description. It is not necessary for candidates to describe a variety of methods for a particular measure, e.g. temperature. This was evident in the work of a number of candidates who described using different types of thermometer for body temperature measurement or different ways of measuring peak flow. This is not necessary and gains no additional credit. Candidates should include only the method they actually used. There were still some accounts describing the use of mercury thermometers to measure body temperature. The use of this type of thermometer is now inappropriate on health and safety grounds.

### **Section B**

More-able candidates tended to give more detailed accounts in this section than the less-able candidates.

Most candidates however, gave appropriate accounts covering the health risks associated with performing the tests and how these risks may be overcome. These health risks are principally concerned with microbial transfer and over-exertion during the physical activity.

Candidates also demonstrated a generally sound knowledge of possible errors which may arise when taking the measurements and how these may be reduced. These errors mainly concern the incorrect use of equipment, the misreading of scales and/or performing the tests for too short a time.

The recording of results from the investigations tended to be appropriate, but units of measurement were often omitted by the less-able candidates. In some cases incorrect units were included, e.g. volumes for peak flow. Most candidates were able to successfully compare their data with 'norm' range values. The majority of results obtained were, as expected, within these normal ranges and there is no requirement for candidates to seek participants who may give results beyond these values.

## **Section C**

While there were again fewer examples in this series of candidates using downloaded material from websites or copied from other sources, examples of this were found. Where this information was presented verbatim without referencing, it is considered as plagiarism. When referenced and/or with superficial modification from Internet websites, it is of little, if any value. Information from other sources which is included to support findings must be appropriately referenced and be used, i.e. commented upon, by the candidate. Where the information is simply included as a verbatim download or part-verbatim account, this does not demonstrate understanding by the candidate concerned.

Candidates are required to describe the structure and functions of the three systems and homeostatic mechanisms in their own words. Candidates could use their own results in this section and/or the relevant homeostatic mechanism in section B as a means of demonstrating appropriate understanding.

Homeostasis and negative feedback were again generally understood well and many candidates provided annotated individual diagrams to demonstrate their knowledge.

There is no credit for the inclusion of information on homeostatic mechanisms relating to functions other than those required by the specification, e.g. mechanisms relating to sugar content in the blood and/or osmoregulation.

## **Section D**

In this section candidates are required to demonstrate understanding of the relevant homeostatic mechanisms and the structure and function of the three named systems by interrelating the activities of these systems. It is intended that this section differentiates candidates in terms of their knowledge and understanding. It is recognised that many candidates will find this section challenging as it requires the bringing together of information on the functions of the various systems.

This section of the work remains overall the weakest section but many high ability candidates produced very high quality work. These were often effectively diagrammatically presented with colour coding for each body system. Generally candidates who meet this requirement by working through the three systems in pairs do not do as well as candidates who are able to offer detailed interrelationships considering the impact collectively of all three systems one upon another. Where candidates' work in this section was found to be very brief and limited, the marks awarded should reflect this.

## **Grade boundaries**

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