

Examiners' Report January 2009

Principal Learning

Construction and the Built Environment

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Level 1 Unit 4 Create the Built Environment: Methods and Materials

The set paper was of a multi choice type with 13 questions totalling 60 marks. This is the first year of awarding for the Diploma and therefore there were no previous examinations to agree a continuing standard against. The paper consisted of ramped multi choice questions with the final question, a construction 'Gantt Chart' being comparable with the entry question on the level 2 examination. The earlier questions were generally answered well by most learners. However as questions became more difficult with additional distracters candidates did less well.

This is the only externally assessed component at level 1. The level 1 paper allows for progression to level 2 with a one question overlap ie final question on level 1 was equal in style, type, flexibility and format to the first question on the level 2 paper.

Advice and guidance for centres

- Centres will now be able to use the January 2009 paper to familiarise learners with the format and number of questions they will be asked. Similar sample assessment materials are available on the Edexcel diploma website in PDF downloadable format.
- A number of candidates did initially select the right answers on a number of questions then changed their mind and deselected this answer. Whether this is a lack of confidence in the learners or not enough understanding of construction knowledge it is difficult to assess.
- Centres should note that the concept of 'ramping' implies that the questions become increasingly more difficult as the learner proceeds through the test. Theoretically, questions 1 to 6 are pitched at the C grade level, Q7 to Q11 at about B grade level and Q12 &13 at the A* grade level.
- Centres need to ensure that they cover all areas of the specification when preparing learners for the examinations. Many centres are failing to do this and within some elements, for example with the identification of materials and components on detail drawings, learners appear to be less well prepared.
- Centres should arrange for at least one key member of the programme team to attend the nearest Edexcel examination feedback meeting which are planned for May this year as this will give centres valuable feedback to implement for future series.
- It has been noted on similar qualifications that centres attending INSET events generally perform better than centres that fail to take advantage of the training that is provided each year.

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Level 2 Unit 1 Design the Built Environment: The Design Process

A number of common themes emerged from the moderation exercise. The approach taken here has been to provide a general commentary and to clarify this by attributing the comments to specific units, where appropriate, in brackets afterwards. Advice to centres, based upon the comments of the Principal Moderators, is provided in the latter part of this report.

- Centres must use the correct Edexcel Diploma mark sheets and authentication sheets. One centre was using a centre devised marking scheme out of 34 marks which did not cover the 60 marks for the full unit band 3 award and had pro-rated the marks by ratio percentages which contained errors.
- The delivery institutions do not always appear to have seen or used the tutor support pack which is available on Edexcel's diploma website. This would fully support the correct learner evidence that would produce much higher marks from the cohort within the consortium. Tutors should specifically refer to the extended marking guidance in this document.
- The experience and teaching qualifications of delivery centres may not always have been in the field of construction. This may have misguided the learners in providing evidence to meet the graded banding criteria.
- The samples did not show any evidence of internal moderation by the consortium lead or domain assessor, which would have highlighted short comings in learner's evidence.

Guidance for Centres in raising achievements

- Download the tutor support guide which states clearly what evidence is required to be provided by the learners and work backwards from this such that classroom delivery materials are based on this clear evidence. Tutors should specifically refer to the extended marking guidance which will assist with the setting and marking of assignments.
- Write assignments in line with this guide which would enable a much clearer understanding by the learners of what evidence is required in order to achieve a higher banding.
- Use the sample assignments that are provided within the tutor support guide which have been specifically written in this way.
- Centres should include the assignment brief with the moderation sample.
- Develop robust internal assessment and moderation processes and procedures that would highlight moderated evidence from learners that does not meet a grading criteria identifying what additional work is required for the learner to achieve.
- Use formative assessment procedures to monitor and guide learner's progress through to summative assessments.

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Level 2 Unit 4 Create the Built Environment: Structures

The paper consisted of ramped multi choice questions with two descriptive comparison questions at the end of the paper to challenge higher ability learners. The earlier questions were answered well by all learners. Question 9 required the learner to select the correct item identified within a series of photographs. This challenged all learners to some extent and may have been because of the lack of understanding from one term's delivery. The last two questions asked the learners to undertake some comparison and evaluation of construction methods and were questions set to challenge the A, A* learners.

This is the only externally assessed component at level 2. The level 2 paper provided appropriate progression and differentiation from level 1 with a one question overlap ie final question on level 1 was equal in style, type, flexibility and format to the first question on the level 2 paper.

The senior team cross reference the paper to the level 2 performance descriptors at grade C and A* and considered the ramping of the questions within this range. Subjective sampling of individual papers indicated that the ramping had worked well especially among the learners with higher marks as there is less influence of random selection than in the lower mark ranges.

Advice and guidance for centres

- Centres will now be able to use the January 2009 paper to familiarise learners with the format and number of questions they will be asked. Similar sample assessment materials are available on the Edexcel diploma website in PDF downloadable format.
- A number of learners did initially select the right answers on a number of questions then changed their mind and deselected this answer. Whether this is a lack of confidence in the learners or not enough understanding of construction knowledge it is difficult to assess.
- Centres should note that the concept of 'ramping' implies that the questions become increasingly more difficult as the learner proceeds through the test. Theoretically, questions 1 to 6 are pitched at the C grade level, Q7 to Q12 (part) at about A/B grade level and Q12 (part) &13 at the A* grade level.
- Centres need to ensure that they cover all areas of the specification when preparing learners for the examinations. Many centres are failing to do this and within some elements, for example identification of on site practices, learners appear to be less well prepared in identifying operations from photographs.
- Centres should arrange for at least one key member of the programme team to attend the nearest Edexcel examination feedback meeting which are planned for May this year as this will give centres valuable feedback to implement for future series.
- It has been noted on similar qualifications that centres attending INSET events generally perform better than centres that fail to take advantage of the free training that is provided each year.

Statistics

Level 1 Unit 4 Create the Built Environment: Methods and Materials

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B
Boundary mark	60	50	36	23

Level 2 Unit 1 Design the Built Environment: The Design Process

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C
Boundary mark	60	54	43	32	22

Level 2 Unit 4 Create the Built Environment: Structures

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C
Boundary mark	60	54	44	34	24

Notes

Centres are reminded that this is the first examination for this new specification and that coursework boundaries may change in the following series

Maximum Mark: the mark corresponding to the sum total of the marks shown on the mark scheme or mark grids .

Boundary mark: the minimum mark required by a learner to qualify for a given grade.

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