

Examiners' Report

January 2010

Principal Learning

Environmental and Land-based Studies Level 2 Controlled Assessments

Edexcel is one of the leading examining and awarding bodies in the UK and throughout the world. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers.

Through a network of UK and overseas offices, Edexcel's centres receive the support they need to help them deliver their education and training programmes to learners.

For further information, please call our Diploma Line on 0844 576 0028, or visit our website at www.edexcel.com.

If you have any subject specific questions about the content of this Mark Scheme that require the help of a subject specialist, you may find our **Ask The Expert** email service helpful.

Ask The Expert can be accessed online at the following link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/Aboutus/contact-us/>

January 2010

Publications Code DP022787

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Edexcel Ltd 2010

Contents

1.	Unit 1 Report	1
2.	Statistics	3

Level 2 Principal Learning in Environmental and Land-based Studies

Introduction

This was the first series for the subject and just the one unit was moderated at this level.

Evidence was presented mostly in the format of written responses to an assignment brief, but there were opportunities for learners to use a variety of ways including, hand scripted, word processed, sketches, diagrams, photographs, spreadsheets, field notes, and oral/group/PowerPoint presentations. A range of different types of assessment evidence was encouraged and generally annotation of evidence against specific learning outcomes was clear which facilitated moderation. However few portfolios included any explanation or justification of grades awarded by centre assessors. Also in some portfolios it was difficult to assess individual contribution to group activities.

It was pleasing to note that most if not all administrative requirements were met during this moderation series:

- submission deadlines met
- correct paperwork included e.g. candidate record sheets, authentication statements etc.
- marks correctly entered on paperwork

Meeting deadlines and the inclusion of accurate paperwork again facilitated moderation.

There was little evidence of internal moderation however, and where it had taken place there was a wide variation between the two marks with no attempt to come to a consensus, resulting in one set of marks being almost wholly discounted in the moderation process i.e. the internal moderation had been a waste of time for the centre. Moderators also reported that some centres appeared not to have undertaken standardisation activities as a lack of consistency in marking was noted in the assessment decisions submitted by some centres.

A key issue is one of interpreting the wording of the marking criteria and the assignment briefs. Although there was a common assignment brief across a number of centres there was a wide disparity in the weighting and attention each centre attached to different parts of the assignment and mark scheme. At its worst, learners were left to complete the assignments unaided, having no real idea of how much time or effort to spend on different parts, or the impact of leaving sections undone; at its best there was a clear correlation between quantity/quality/mark allocation.

Unit 1: Environmental Influences Upon Ecosystems and Production Zones

This unit requires learners to undertake a single assignment surveying an environment to determine influences plant and animal habitats and land use in order to support decision making. Most centres had delivered and assessed this unit in an appropriate manner. Of particular value was that candidates could achieve the highest marks succinctly while still maintaining clear discrimination between the other mark bands i.e. quality really was the key criterion. However consortia members clearly benefited - a lone centre had not taken full recognition of variations between the wording of the assessment focus and the mark band criteria resulting in all of its learners failing to gain any marks at all in that LO.

The research areas of this unit (LO1.1, 3.1, 3.2, 3.5) were approached through a range of survey methods and activities with learners undertaking visits to a variety of habitats.

Although some learners had evidenced their research activities in an appropriate manner by including a research log and notes on what was discovered in their portfolios, many simply submitted a presentation of their results. Centres should also note that downloaded material from internet sites, e.g. food webs, should not be simply inserted in portfolios without annotating or editing. Although survey data was often appropriately presented centres are reminded that learners must be able to summarise and analyse this material and other research findings to gain the highest marks.

The outcomes of research activities were presented in a number of ways. With the PowerPoint presentations some centres had allowed learners to work in pairs or small groups for this activity. Whilst this is not inappropriate centres must ensure that each learner's individual contribution to the outcome is clearly evidenced. Furthermore, if parts of this presentation are to be assessed by marking grid A e.g. LO 3.4, there must be clear evidence of the learner's contribution, of where and how the marks were awarded. If centres have reduced in size or printed the presentations in black and white to reduce costs, they must make sure these are legible and clear to the moderator. Learners should also further individually annotate the print-offs to represent extra comments/individual conclusions or where the presentation has been little more than an *aide memoire*.

Particular heed needs to be taken of the following:

- LO 2.2 The assessment focus does not include the command word "EVALUATE" and therefore should only be used in the broadest terms. It is better to use the mark band criteria. Learners need some support with this as it is more about judging/weighing rather than describing/explaining, and it refers specifically to climate change effects.
- LO 3.1 "Detailed plan" must include more than just an name of a method - how, where, when, why it is carried out. "Thorough" needs to be a comprehensive list e.g. both quantitative/qualitative methods, different sampling techniques.
- LO 3.3 Interpretation is not simply presenting data, it must include a comment on the meaning/value of the data.
- LO 3.4 Be specific about the different audiences, don't leave it as being "implicit" e.g. planning department, RSPB, building contractors, widows over the age 80.

Statistics

Level 2 Unit 1: Environmental Influences Upon Ecosystems and Productions Zones

	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C
Raw boundary mark	75	65	53	41	30
Points Score	10	8	6	4	2

Notes

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

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

Please note: *Principal Learning qualifications are new qualifications, and grade boundaries for Controlled Assessment units should not be considered as stable. These grade boundaries may differ from series to series.*

Further copies of this publication are available from
Edexcel Publications, Adamsway, Mansfield, Notts, NG18 4FN

Telephone 01623 467467
Fax 01623 450481

Email publications@linneydirect.com

Order Code DP022787 January 2010

For more information on Edexcel qualifications, please visit www.edexcel.com/quals

Edexcel Limited. Registered in England and Wales no.4496750
Registered Office: One90 High Holborn, London, WC1V 7BH