



**General Certificate of Secondary Education
January 2011**

Additional Applied Science

AASC3

Using Scientific Skills

Unit 3

***Report on the
Examination***

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Additional Applied Science AASC3

Activities

Most centres were undertaking investigations which demonstrated the ethos of this vocational qualification.

It was pleasing to see that most centres had followed the guidance given regarding the investigation including a range of tasks. Some centres still need reminding that this unit represents 40% of a GCSE qualification and one or two simple tasks are not enough to satisfy the criteria.

Those centres whose candidates were successfully achieving stage 3 marks had ensured that the tasks included at least one which generated quantitative data.

Assessment

Most centres' assessment of this unit was broadly in line with the AQA standard.

Where there was generosity of marking, this was, as in previous series, mainly at the top of the mark range.

Assessor annotations were generally of a good standard but a small number of centres need to ensure that, especially in strand C, annotation is specific to the actual mark being given. See comments below for strand C.

There was evidence of internal standardisation in the samples from most centres. The importance of internal standardisation in detecting problems, issues or even administrative mistakes before work is submitted for moderation cannot be stressed enough. Most centres have now realised that internal standardisation can reduce the chances of moderation raising concerns.

Presentation of work to the moderator

Work was generally well presented for moderation. Most centres had punched and tagged the portfolios together as requested. A small number of centres need reminding again not to use staples, plastic wallets, bulky folders or loose pages.

Most centres sent in their marks by the deadline and their samples were sent promptly upon request. However, there were more issues with centres missing deadlines and responding too slowly to requests for samples than in previous series. These centres must appreciate that these delays could cause problems with their candidates receiving their results on time.

Most centres completed the Centre Declaration Sheets and Candidate Record Forms correctly. A small number of centres need to ensure they check the adding up and transfer of candidates' marks before submitting centre marks.

Strand A: The Use of Science in the Workplace

This strand was generally marked in line with the AQA standard. High scoring candidates were able to describe the vocational context and link their research to the task by explaining the vocational significance. There was some evidence of centres giving marks for research that was not linked by the candidate to the actual investigation. For example, it is not enough just to do some research on the role of a forensic scientist without linking this role to the investigation.

Strand B: Working Safely in Science

This strand was well marked by most centres. Centres had followed the guidance about plans being written in the future tense and about the necessity for risk assessments at stages 2 and 3 to be comprehensive as well as with varying degrees of independence. It is vital that this work has suitable assessor annotation. Generally, this was done well by most centres.

Strand C: Research and Communication

This strand was marked reasonably in line with AQA expectations. Annotation is improving but there were still centres whose annotation did not make it clear why marks had been awarded for this strand. Centres should break down each stage and annotate for each individual mark either by code or by words in order to make it clear what credit has been given. For example, the first mark for 3C1 might be 3C1i, 3C1a or 3C1 'independently select'. Any of these will allow the moderator to see which marking point is being awarded, rather than just 3C1.

Strand D: Processing Information and Drawing Conclusions

As in previous series, centres that had followed the guidance about the number of tasks undertaken had candidates who scored well here. The inclusion of a task which generated numerical data gave candidates more opportunity to draw more appropriate conclusions and potentially achieve higher marks. Candidates that had done several tasks but had only written simple conclusions and had not pulled their findings together to draw conclusions for the whole investigation could not be awarded stage 3 marks.

Strand E: Evaluation and Explanation

There were fewer centres incorrectly allowing candidates to write 'repeat' to gain the 2E1 improvement mark. There must be suitable improvement to the method or equipment and there must be a reason given for the improvement. In 3E1 the review of the task must contain a detailed account of the strengths and weaknesses.

More candidates were successfully achieving 2E2 and 3E3 by suggesting the use of their findings in a vocational context.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.