



**General Certificate of Secondary Education  
June 2012**

**Additional Applied Science**

**AASC3**

**Using Scientific Skills**

**Unit 3**

***Report on the  
Examination***

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## **Additional Applied Science AASC3**

### **Activities**

Most schools/colleges were undertaking investigations which included the required range of tasks and which demonstrated the ethos of this vocational qualification.

Simplicity of task and/or inadequate number of tasks was still an issue for a small number of schools/colleges. These schools/colleges need reminding that this unit represents 40% of a GCSE qualification and that one or two very simple tasks are not sufficient to satisfy the assessment criteria.

Those schools/colleges whose students deserved their stage 3 marks had correctly followed the guidance and ensured that the tasks included at least one which generated quantitative data.

### **Assessment**

The assessment of this unit was broadly in line with the AQA standard for most schools/colleges. Where there was generosity of marking, this was, as expected, mostly at the higher end of the mark range.

Assessor annotation was of a high standard for most schools/colleges. A few schools/colleges still need to ensure that, especially in strand C, annotation is specific to the actual mark being given, so 3C1 should also say 'select' or 'record' for example.

There was evidence of internal standardisation in the students' portfolios from most schools/colleges. These schools/colleges know that internal standardisation can reduce the chances of moderation raising concerns, such as marking differences between assessors and administration errors.

### **Presentation of work to the moderator**

Work was well presented for moderation in most cases. There was less evidence of the staples, plastic wallets, bulky folders and loose pages that hinder the moderation process.

Most schools/colleges sent in their marks on or before the deadline and their samples were sent promptly upon request. This was much appreciated by the moderation team.

Centre Declaration Sheets and Candidate Record Forms were correctly completed by the majority of schools/colleges. There were very few administrative errors.

### **Strand A: The Use of Science in the Workplace**

This strand was generally marked in line with the AQA standard. However, a few schools/colleges had given the stage 3 'explain' mark where the vocational significance was not explained and no link made between the research and the investigation. For example, research on a food scientist should be related to the actual techniques used in the student's investigation.

### **Strand B: Working Safely in Science**

This strand was well marked by most schools/colleges. Plans written in the past tense did not seem to be an issue this series. Some schools/colleges need to be reminded that, at stage 3, plans should include all necessary detail such as quantities used etc. and should probably include an overall plan for the investigation as well as for individual tasks.

Most schools/colleges had correctly awarded marks for risk assessments at stages 2 and 3 that were comprehensive as well as with varying degrees of independence. It is important that the moderator can clearly see the level of guidance given here and it was pleasing to note that most schools/colleges had shown this by appropriate assessor annotation.

### **Strand C: Research and Communication**

This strand was marked reasonably in line with AQA expectations.

In order to achieve 2C1 'suitable format' tables should include headings and units, and this mark cannot be awarded if the template for the table has been provided for students.

As in the previous series, annotation was less clear here than in strand B. Schools/colleges must 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**

Where schools/colleges had completed an appropriate number of tasks and at least one task which generated quantitative data, students scored well in this strand. The quantitative data enabled students to perform calculations and write comprehensive conclusions. Students that had done several tasks but had not pulled their findings together to draw conclusions for the whole investigation should not be awarded stage 3 marks.

### **Strand E: Evaluation and Explanation**

An overall improvement in the quality of evaluations was seen this series. In particular students seemed to have a better idea of how to suggest improvements to the techniques or equipment rather than to themselves, and fewer were seen to be being given the mark for just 'repeating' without any justification.

More students were successfully achieving 2E2 and 3E3 by suggesting the use of their findings in a vocational context. A few schools/colleges were still confused between strand A (the vocational context of the investigation) and strand E (the vocational use of the findings) and had incorrectly awarded marks in both strands for the same very brief information.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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

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