



# **General Certificate of Secondary Education**

## **Applied Science 4861**

**APSC1      Science in the Workplace**

# **Report on the Examination**

*2008 examination – June series*

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*Dr Michael Cresswell Director General.*

## General comments

### **Activities**

It was pleasing to see that most centres undertook activities that gave thorough coverage of the specification. As in January, there were some excellent examples of activities set in a good vocational context. Most centres were giving candidates opportunities to use a wide range of resources.

### **Assessment**

There was some generosity of marking by some centres, this tended to be more at the higher end of the mark range.

Most centres used the guidance given regarding the importance of assessor annotations. Generally it was clear to see where credit had been awarded to candidates. There was evidence of internal standardisation in the samples from many centres and this was encouraging to see.

Some centres still need to address the issues of both annotation and internal standardisation.

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

Work was generally well presented for moderation. Most centres had punched and tagged the portfolios together as requested. Some centres need reminding not to use staples, plastic wallets or bulky folders.

Thank you to all those centres that sent their marks in by the deadline. Some centres missed this deadline and/or delayed sending their samples to the moderator. This severely hindered the moderation process.

Most centres completed the Centre Declaration Sheets and Candidate Record Forms correctly.

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

Some very nice work was seen, with many centres having candidates achieving high marks that were well deserved. It was clear that these centres had followed the guidance given in the specification and the teachers guide very carefully.

Most centres understood that a 'range' should be at least 3 organisations. A number of centres gave stage 2 marks or above where only two organisations had been studied, which was not acceptable. At stage 3, the in-depth study should be distinguishable from the other two in the range by the amount of detail included. Candidates should be encouraged to produce one report that is more thoroughly researched than the other two.

Centres should note that the description of location should not just be a map but an actual description (an accompanying map is even better), and, at stage 3, there should be a full explanation of why the organisation is located where it is. This should be very specific and not just be generic statements like 'good transport links'.

The use of downloaded information remains a problem area in this strand. Centres are reminded that downloaded material can only be given credit if the candidate has used it. There were some instances of unedited downloaded material being annotated by the assessor, such

that the candidate achieved marks where they had done nothing but print downloaded material from the Internet. Unedited material should not be included in the candidate's portfolio at all.

## Strand B: Working Safely in Science

Centres had generally followed the guidance and ensured that candidates had evidence of good coverage of all three aspects of the specification (hazards, fire safety and first aid) to achieve full stage 1. Most centres had ensured that risk assessment was included in the hazards section. Unfortunately there were a number of centres who had awarded candidates stage 2 marks or above where one of the three aspects of the specification was missing at stage 1. These centres need to be directed back to the specification and the teacher's guide.

A second workplace should be included to achieve marks at stage 2 and the same areas of the specification should be covered again for this workplace. This should be a named specific workplace, not workplaces in general, and could be one of the organisations covered in strand A.

It should be noted that a detailed discussion of the three aspects of the specification for this workplace is required for stage 2, before candidates go on to do a comparison of the school lab and the workplace for stage 3. Some centres tried to skip over stage 2 by just giving a comparison (some candidates did put enough detail into the comparison to allow it, others did not).

Once again, centres must be careful to ensure that credit is not given for unedited downloaded material.

## Strand C: Research and Communication

This was generally being assessed well and in line with AQA expectations. Candidates who had done very little work being awarded one mark, those using several sources of information being awarded two, and those who had used and identified many sources and shown understanding being awarded three marks. There were, however, some instances of centres being too lenient (usually giving three marks where the candidate had not identified their sources) and too harsh (usually giving only one mark where it appeared that several sources had been used) in this strand.

## Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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