



**General Certificate of Secondary Education
January 2011**

Applied Science (Double Award) APSC1

Science in the Workplace

Unit 1

***Report on the
Examination***

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Activities

Some excellent vocational contexts were seen in this unit and most centres had students who produced work that demonstrated full coverage of the specification. As in previous series, there was evidence of school visits, visiting speakers and good use of work experience placements.

The majority of candidates had access to the full range of grading criteria and they had been given opportunities to use a wide range of resources.

Assessment

Most centres' assessment was broadly in line with the AQA standard. However, there are still a small number of centres who show generosity of marking, particularly at the higher end of the marking grid.

The standard of assessor annotations is continuing to improve from series to series. In most cases, assessor annotations ensured that it was clear to see where, as well as what, credit had been awarded to candidates.

There are still a small number of centres that must address the issue of internal moderation within the centre before submitting work for moderation. Centres must ensure that all their assessors are marking candidates' work to the same standard. If this is not the case, there is a risk of all candidates' marks being regressed if any work assessed by one assessor is out of tolerance.

Presentation of work to the moderator

Work was generally well presented for moderation, being punched and tagged together as requested. There are still a few centres using staples, plastic wallets, bulky folders or piles of loose pages. This can seriously hinder the moderation process.

The prompt sending of marks and requested samples by most centres enabled the moderation process to run smoothly. Many centres sent in marks before the deadline. A quick turn-around of requested samples is required to ensure all candidates receive their results on time.

Most centres completed the Centre Declaration Sheets and Candidate Record Forms correctly. A number of centres need to be reminded of the importance of accurate administration.

Strand A: The Use of Science in the Workplace

There was some excellent work seen, including a good range of organisations that use science. Many candidates achieved high marks that were well deserved. It was clear that these candidates came from centres that had followed the guidance given in the Specification and the Teacher's Guide very carefully.

The guidance on what a 'range of organisations' means had been followed by almost all centres, so very few candidates had been penalised for not studying three organisations. The majority of centres encouraged candidates to describe the locations of the organisations by including a map and address to ensure that the organisation could be actually found using their information. However, there were still a very small number of candidates being incorrectly given credit for simply stating the name of the town or city. At stage 3, generic statements like 'good transport links' (without some justification) would not achieve 3A2.

Most centres had followed the guidance on distinguishing between 1A2 (the list of products or services) and 2A3 (descriptions of the products or services).

The number of jobs required for 2A4 and 2A5 should be appropriate to the size and type of organisation, but should be approximately three. A small number of centres were still awarding these marks for very little information on one job per organisation. Some centres also need reminding that 2A4 should include how the jobs use science as well as the qualifications of the employees.

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. A small number of centres had overlooked the fact that there is only one mark available for all three criteria 3A1, 3A2 and 3A3 together.

There was much less evidence of downloaded information being given credit than in previous series. Most centres had followed the guidance given and not allowed candidates to include unedited downloaded material in their portfolios.

Strand B: Working Safely in Science

The majority of centres had ensured that candidates had good coverage of all three aspects of the specification (hazards and risk, fire prevention and first aid) to achieve full stage 1.

However, as in previous series, some candidates had not been encouraged to include risk assessment in the information on hazards, and, in some cases, coverage of all areas was too brief and/or too general and did not discuss the school science lab.

A named workplace must be included to achieve marks at stage 2 and the same areas of the specification should be covered again for this workplace. Candidates could be encouraged to use one of the organisations covered in strand A as their scientific workplace in strand B. Once again there was pleasing evidence that some candidates were using their work experience organisation as a workplace in both strands. Centres should encourage candidates to do this, if it is an appropriate workplace, as candidates are able to write more information themselves, from their own experiences, and are not tempted to 'cut and paste' information from the internet.

A comparison of the scientific workplace with the school laboratory is required to achieve stage 3, but the stage 2 details for this workplace must be achieved first. The comparison alone is not enough to cover both stage 2 and stage 3 marks. There were still a number of centres whose candidates had simply completed a brief comparison with no actual stage 2 information. In this instance, any stage 3 marks achieved can be used to compensate for a lack of marks at stage 2 up to a maximum of 2marks.

Strand C: Research and Communication

As in previous series, strand C was generally assessed 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 whose work was clear and logically presented being awarded three marks. Instances of centres being too lenient (usually giving three marks where the candidate had not identified their sources or whose work was not clear and logical) or too harsh (usually giving only one mark where it appeared that several sources had been used) were still seen in a small number of centres.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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