



General Certificate of Secondary Education

**Applied Science (Double Award)
4861**

APSC1 Science in the Workplace

Report on the Examination

2009 examination – January series

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General comments

Activities

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 and achieve the full range of assessment criteria.

Assessment

There was less generosity of marking by some centres than in previous series. Most centres have appreciated the importance of assessor annotation and it was generally clear to see where credit had been awarded to candidates. There was more evidence of internal standardisation in samples. Internal standardisation increases the chance of a centre staying intolerant when compared to those where internal standardisation has not taken place. Some centres still need to address the issues of both annotation and internal standardisation to ensure they provide clear and consistent evidence of assessment to the moderator.

Presentation of work to the moderator

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

Many centres missed the deadline date for sending in their Centre Mark Forms and/or delayed sending their samples to the moderator. Deadlines during the January series are very tight and any delay severely hinders the moderation process.

Most centres completed the Centre Declaration Sheets and Candidate Record Forms correctly. There were a few examples of incorrect transfer of candidates' marks onto the Candidate Record Forms and/or the Centre Mark Forms. Centres are reminded of the importance of checking that all marks submitted are accurate.

Strand A: The Use of Science in the Workplace

Some very good work was seen, with many centres' 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. However, a small number of centres still gave stage 2 marks or above where only two organisations had been studied.

Some centres need to be reminded that candidates must cover the grading criteria at stage 1 and 2 for all organisations in the range.

Centres should note that the 'description of location' should be an actual description not just the name of a town, county or country. An address accompanied by a map is the best way to ensure the marking point is secure.

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 in-depth study should be distinguishable from the other two organisations by the amount of detail included. Candidates should be encouraged to produce one report that is more thoroughly researched than the other two.

The use of downloaded information was less of an issue than in previous series, but still remains a problem for a small number of centres. All guidance given reinforces the fact that downloaded material can only be given credit if the candidate has used it. Unedited downloaded material should not be included in the candidate's portfolio and the assessor should certainly not annotate it as original candidate work.

Strand B: Working Safely in Science

Most centres are following the guidance given and ensuring that candidates have evidence of coverage of all three aspects of the specification (hazards, fire safety and first aid) to achieve full stage 1 marks. Risk assessment is increasingly being included in the hazards section. 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.

A detailed discussion of the three aspects of the specification for this workplace is required at stage 2 before candidates go on to do a comparison of the school laboratory and the workplace for stage 3. A few centres credited candidates with marks for stage 3 without the detailed discussion. Some candidates in these centres did put in enough detail to allow the mark – others did not. In future series centres should take care to address stages 1 and 2 before allowing their candidates to compare health and safety aspects of the school laboratory with the work place.

Strand C: Research and Communication

This was generally assessed well and in line with AQA standards. 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 still a small number of instances of centres being too lenient, giving three marks where the candidate had not identified their sources or 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.