



**General Certificate of Secondary Education  
June 2011**

**Home Economics: Child  
Development**

**45802**

**(Specification 4580)**

**Unit 2: Research Task**

***Report on the Examination***

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## General comments

It was clear that where centres had a clear understanding of the requirements of the new specification, especially related to the controlled assessment tasks, they were able to give appropriate guidance and support.

While some excellent work was seen there was evidence that a number of centres seemed to have clearly allowed candidates to spend much more than the suggested time recommended for completion of the tasks, resulting in work that was overlong, especially in terms of research. Often this research was not relevant to the chosen task which made it difficult to justify awarding high marks when assessment criteria required work to be “concise”, “selective” and “relevant”.

Similarly some centres made reference to “BAR and FAR” which was a requirement of the legacy specification but not relevant to the new specification.

## The assessment criteria.

Both controlled assessment tasks are marked holistically using the AQA provided assessment criteria. Teachers need to select statements/parts of statements within the mark bands that best reflect the levels of skills and understanding shown in the work. Highlighting these and using a “best fit” approach can help both teachers and moderators to determine the marks to be awarded.

Where work clearly meets all the requirements of the specification and the descriptors at a level expected for candidates working at GCSE then full marks can and should be awarded. It is important when deciding on marks to be awarded that teachers recognise that “strong performance in one area can balance weaker performance elsewhere” (page 38 of specification).

## 45802: Unit 2 Research Task

Some exceptional work was seen for this unit – it was clearly a unit that candidates had enjoyed working on and one that gave opportunities for candidates of all abilities to respond to positively. It was encouraging that the majority of centres had clearly worked within the suggested timescale and had encouraged candidates to be realistic in planning and carrying out research. Consequently work was mainly realistic, manageable and of an appropriate length.

Standards of presentation were very good and the level of ICT skills shown, especially when producing the outcome, at times bordered on professional standards.

Some centres had clearly provided a very tight structure for candidates to follow which often severely limited opportunities for candidates of all abilities to show knowledge and understanding, individuality and an ability to work independently. While this may be a necessary strategy for lower ability candidates, marking should reflect this level of support. For the majority of candidates this support is not permissible - it results in all work being almost identical with little evidence of differentiation and makes it difficult for the moderator to support the centre’s marking.

Centres are reminded that the tasks used for this unit **must** be chosen from the AQA provided Research Tasks available on the e-AQA website. They should not be chosen from the exemplar tasks in the specification.

<b>Task analysis</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The full task should be written at the start of the work so that candidates can plan effectively.</li> <li>• Candidates need to be encouraged to show their understanding of the relevance and importance of the task within its wider context. This would help them to independently decide on and plan relevant and realistic research.</li> <li>• Frequently candidates simply identified and described ‘key words’ or re-wrote the task using the same words but in a different order, neither of which showed high levels of knowledge and understanding.</li> </ul>
<b>Planning</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Candidates are expected to produce a realistic and manageable plan of action that is logical and concise, identifies with reasons the main aspects of research they consider important, possible sources and methods of presentation. This could be presented as a flow chart, step-by-step plan, a table or chart – but only one plan is needed.</li> <li>• Centres need to encourage candidates to be realistic about what can be achieved within the suggested timescale.</li> </ul>
<b>Research</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Candidates need to try to plan and carry out a range of appropriate primary and secondary research. Sources need to be acknowledged and candidates should be discouraged from using large amounts of often duplicated Internet research without any analysis/annotation as evidence of secondary research.</li> <li>• Candidates who had been encouraged to explain the aim and focus of each area of research before writing it up and followed this with analysis on its completion generally produced more focused information which was used more effectively.</li> <li>• It is acceptable for candidates to work with others to collect data (e.g. questionnaires, surveys etc.) and for teachers to provide class-based activities (e.g. comparisons of home-made and bought baby foods). Candidates must however explain in their own words the aims/purpose and results and analysis. Evaluation of results should be verified by the teacher annotation which needs to show the individual candidate’s contribution. A teacher-initiated class based activity should not be the only evidence of primary research.</li> <li>• Where questionnaires are planned these need to very focused and manageable – to collate, analyse and evaluate 10 – 15 questions within the suggested timeframe is unrealistic.</li> <li>• Where primary research is carried out candidates need to be encouraged to try to use some of this in their final outcome. Too often it was not referred to at all.</li> </ul>
<b>Analysis and evaluation of research</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This needs to concentrate on what is considered to be the most important and useful information and should highlight how and why this might be included in the outcome. This will also enable candidates to show their knowledge and understanding.</li> <li>• Often evaluations were detailed comments on the process and description of what had been done, why and how, which could not be awarded high marks.</li> <li>• It is at this point that candidates should decide on what their outcome might be and why and suggest a possible target audience – this makes the subsequent evaluation of the outcome more effective.</li> </ul>
<b>Planning the outcome</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning for outcomes was variable - while some excellent work was seen often it was limited, done retrospectively or not done at all which made it difficult to justify higher marks for criterion AO2.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There needs to be sufficient detail in planning to show how the outcome will be produced – this could be in the form of sketches, mock-ups or prototypes. There should also be some consideration of how the final outcome will look in terms of layout, font, colour, images etc. as well as content.</li><li>• It is not expected that candidates should include all of their research in their outcome – nor is it expected that all outcomes will be the same.</li><li>• Where leaflets and PowerPoint presentations were produced some centres had encouraged candidates to evaluate existing ones, however too often these were not used when planning the outcome.</li></ul>
<b>Outcomes</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The majority of outcomes were of very high quality and demonstrated excellent presentation and ICT skills and many innovative ideas were evident. More able candidates were selective in what they included based on their stated purpose and the proposed target audience – others simply cut and pasted all their research into the outcome.</li><li>• Where a PowerPoint is the intended outcome, candidates need to understand that this is intended as part of an oral presentation. More able candidates limited the content but included presenter notes. Often these were used as ‘leaflets’ and contained too much information.</li></ul>
<b>Analysis and evaluation of outcome</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This needs to concentrate on the outcome and should comment on its effectiveness and appropriateness in terms of its intended purpose and target audience, although it is realistic and acceptable for candidates to comment on strengths and weaknesses and suggest and justify possible changes and improvements.</li><li>• Too often evaluations were simple a summary of what had been done or repeated information already given in the research evaluation section.</li><li>• Evaluations need to be reasoned and logical - high marks cannot be awarded for simplistic statements.</li></ul>

### **Marking and using the assessment criteria.**

#### **AO1: Recall, select and communicate their knowledge and understanding of a range of contexts**

Knowledge and understanding can and should be evident throughout the work – this includes the task analysis, the choice of what research is needed, the selection and use of appropriate information, the analysis and evaluation of information, its use in planning and producing the outcome and the evaluation of the outcome.

Personal opinions and logical reasoning should be evident – without these it is often difficult for candidates to gain high marks.

#### **AO2: Apply skills knowledge and understanding in a variety of contexts and in planning and carrying out investigations and tasks.**

To justify awarding higher marks planning must be evident for both the research and the outcome. Research needs to be concise and selective, where possible from both primary and secondary sources and presented using a range of different techniques.

#### **AO3: Analyse and evaluate information, sources and evidence, make reasoned judgements and present conclusions.**

For most candidates this was often the weakest element of the work. Analysis and evaluation of research was often descriptive and concentrated on the process – what had been done,

how and why – with generalised comments on the usefulness of sources and/or how easy it was to find information.

Evaluation of research needs to **identify** what is seen as the most important and potentially useful information that could and might be used within the outcome, and why. It should be used to decide on the type of outcome to be produced, the main focus/purpose of the outcome and the target audience. The evaluation of the outcome needs to relate to its effectiveness, usefulness and fitness for purpose and candidates should relate back to their stated aims.