



General Certificate of Secondary Education

Citizenship Studies 4106

Unit 2 (41052)

Report on the Examination

2010 examination - June series

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Unit 2 (41052): Citizenship Studies

General Comments

The controlled assessment is worth 60% of the marks for the Short Course and 30% of the marks for the Full Course. The introduction of the new specification has been successful, although centres need to be reminded that AQA set the **only permissible tasks** for the controlled assessment. Candidates have a choice of two tasks, they must respond to one of them. Candidates may **not** set their own tasks.

Some work of exceptional quality has been submitted this year, where candidates have been thoroughly prepared, supported and guided throughout the process of participating in active citizenship. The majority of candidates have shown interest and enthusiasm for their advocacy and have clearly enjoyed participating in the tasks undertaken. Moderators have also seen very little work presented and awarded very low marks.

In Task 1, candidates are asked to advocate the aims of a voluntary group, charity or pressure group, not to pursue a particular cause or issue that the chosen group may be campaigning for at that time. For Task 2, candidates should be able to relate their chosen environmental issue to the task set. The Skills Profile is the **only** acceptable form of presenting the written work for moderation. It is possible to extend the space available within each box for candidates to write their responses.

The Skills Profile must be written up under controlled conditions and a teacher should witness the advocacy undertaken by candidates, working in small groups or individually. No other evidence apart from the Skills Profile should be sent to the moderator. Where this has happened, moderators were instructed not to include such work in their assessment of the Skills Profiles. Evidence should be retained within the centre.

Teacher comments at the end of each stage should be addressed to the moderator (not the candidate), to help justify the mark awarded, especially for Stage 3. The Skills Profiles should be either stapled together or fixed together with a treasury tag. Large folders and plastic pockets are unnecessary.

Centres are reminded that a Controlled Assessment Advisor is appointed to each centre. This person has been trained and is available throughout the year to give advice and guidance on any aspect of the controlled assessment task and the skills profile. For further information please contact the Subject Department at AQA. There is also information and advice on the AQA website www.aqa.org.uk. The permitted tasks for Unit 2 and 4 are to be found in e-AQA – ask your exams officer for access to this area of the website.

The following observations are intended to offer guidance to centres to aid in the further development and understanding of the new controlled assessment, to build on the successes of this year and to make improvements for next year.

Stage 1 – Inform Yourself

There were a great variety of responses to this stage, some much better than others and a lack of accuracy in the marks awarded. A simple sentence in each box does not qualify for a Level 3 mark of 8, 9, or 10.

It is expected that candidates will explain their chosen activity in relation to the specific task set, ie to advocate the aims of a charity/voluntary organisation/pressure group, or which aspect of an eco-friendly community they will pursue.

Candidates should be able to identify **citizenship skills and concepts** that are associated with their chosen advocacy in Stage 1 so that they will be able to review this in Stage 5 and explain where they have used skills and gained greater understanding of concepts during the task. Many candidates highlighted key skills rather than citizenship skills in their profiles and some did not identify any citizenship concepts. Candidates should have a limited number of aims that are realistic and achievable.

Questions 3 and 4 were frequently confused. Question 3 should give details of what research is necessary. Question 4 should give details of how this research will be gathered. Question 5 should discuss at least two different opinions and details of how other opinions will be sought.

Candidates were able to explain their own roles. Sometimes responsibilities were included but the roles and responsibilities of others were frequently lacking in detail and amounted to nothing more than a name and a specific task. For those candidates who have chosen to work on their own, they should consider others they may be contacting during the task, eg teachers, peer group, friends, family, neighbours, members of a specific organisation, a Councillor or council official.

Stage 2 - Justify Choices

The responses in this stage were generally better than in Stage 1, except for Question 8. This stage was also reasonably accurately assessed by teachers.

Question 1 should not be a repeat of Stage 1 Question 1. The candidate should be able to give reasons why their topic for advocacy is important.

In Question 2, the audience has been appropriate in the vast majority of cases. There need not be 'important' people or decision makers in every audience but there may be. This really does depend on the type of advocacy being undertaken. However giving a presentation to friends and family only is inappropriate and cannot be done under controlled conditions.

In Question 4, the message should provide details of what the candidate wants to achieve.

For Question 5, the key points should not run to a long list. It should be concise points that are the most important in the advocacy.

Questions 6 & 7 were completed well in the majority of work.

In Question 8, the responses were very brief and lacked thought and detail. Candidates should be able to show some awareness of how long they will spend on each stage as well as the actual presentation/advocacy/action.

Stage 3 - Advocacy and Taking Action

Responses to this stage varied the most. A sense of exactly what the candidates are trying to achieve needs to be presented here, demonstrating the strength of the advocacy; how they are trying to raise awareness, make a difference, change opinions or persuade people to support a cause, or effect a change in behaviour.

From the responses to Question 1, the best were extremely detailed and gave a real flavour of what took place, providing a thorough account of the advocacy and action, demonstrating interest and enthusiasm for a cause. Others were lacking in detail and did not even provide a basic description of the advocacy.

Where candidates had given a good account and the teachers comments pertained to the individual, supporting the marks awarded, there was no problem. However where details were sparse, and teacher's comments generalised and not specific to the candidates, or where teachers had made no comment at all, many problems arose.

The responses to Question 2 were varied, the best gave details of the evidence, where and how it was gathered, as well as a brief description of how it was used, either in the advocacy or in the assessment of the impact the advocacy had.

Stage 4 - Assess the Impact

A great many ways of assessing the impact were presented, from simply asking the audience for a show of hands, asking members of the audience to sign letters or petitions, to how many hits on a specially designed website there were.

Whatever evidence is gathered for this stage should be referred to and should demonstrate some analysis has taken place. For example, candidates could show that a number of the audience had improved knowledge of an organisation or issue, or had changed their minds on an issue, or would change their behaviour, eg recycle more, or would now support the cause advocated. This was lacking in some Skills Profiles where very vague impressions were discussed and awarded high marks, without the supportive comments from the candidate or the teacher.

In Question 2, the community could refer to the school community if the task was school based or it could be the wider community – this will depend on the task chosen and the method of advocacy chosen.

In Question 3 there should be some analysis of the results of Question 1 rather than vague generalisations. Candidates could mention charts or graphs that they have drawn and what they show, to give a clear indication of the effect of their advocacy.

Question 4 should have a link back to the original aims; that the suggestions given really relate to the aim and method of advocacy chosen.

For Question 5, some approaches will have an effect on the wider world outside school, especially if the wider community were involved in the advocacy. It is acceptable for candidates to say, with justification, that they do not think it will have any impact.

Question 6 - is asking candidates to think about and describe what else they could do to carry on and take further action to support a cause etc. This could be the starting point of a task in Unit 4 where there will always be the opportunity for candidates to pursue the task they advocated in Unit 2. Candidates were very good at suggesting a variety of ways in which they could take further action.

Stage 5 - Reflect and Evaluate

There was a great variation in responses to this stage. Responses to Question 1 should give at least opposing views on an issue. Some candidates were very good at presenting a range of opinion but others were extremely vague and could hardly manage opposing views.

Questions 2 and 3 were often confused. Candidates did not seem to know what the citizenship skills and concepts were, or even the difference between skills and concepts. Many tended to discuss key skills rather than citizenship skills.

Most candidates could describe how their contribution helped to make the advocacy successful, but frequently the contributions of others were vague and uncritical, or merely repeated what each member of the group did, which did not answer the question.

Question 5 should refer back to the initial aims set out in Stage 1 and show some reflection of how well those original aims had been achieved. The best quoted evidence to support their opinion, whilst others did not refer to the original aims and provided very vague conclusions without relation to any evidence.

Question 7 was reasonably well done, as most candidates could comment on their plans and how the advocacy could have been improved.

Administration

The team of moderators wish to thank all centres who sent in the Centre Mark Forms by the deadline.

This year there were many centres who did not meet the deadline. We accept that the volcanic ash cloud caused disruption for some centres this year but it is worth reminding centres that late arrival of Centre Mark Forms causes much inconvenience to moderators and delays the whole moderation process. Moderators have deadlines to meet as well, so please assist your moderator by sending Centre Marks Forms promptly and by returning the sample requested within 5 working days as specified in the letter which accompanies the identified sample.

The importance of thorough internal standardisation of coursework cannot be stressed too enough. The Centre Declaration Sheet should be signed by all those responsible for marking work and by the person in charge of internal standardising and the Head of the Centre or Exams Officer.

If coursework is lost there are established procedures for dealing with this. Please include a copy of the appropriate letter to the moderator when submitting the mark form and identify the candidates whose work has been lost.

The moderating team appreciates the hard work that goes on to present work of a high quality and to encourage and motivate candidates to successfully participate in active citizenship.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the Results Statistics page of the AQA Website: <http://www.aqa.org.uk/over/stat.html>.