



**General Certificate of Secondary Education  
June 2011**

**Citizenship Studies**

**41054**

**(Specification 4105)**

**Unit 4: Controlled assessment: Citizenship  
Studies – Taking Informed and Responsible  
Action**

***Report on the Examination***

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## Unit 4 (41054): Controlled Assessment – taking informed and responsible action

### *General*

This is the first year of examination for this Unit. It has proved to be very successful and there have been few problems.

Centres are reminded that AQA sets the **only permissible tasks** for the controlled assessment. Candidates have a choice of two tasks, and they must respond to one of them. Centres or candidates may **not** set their own tasks.

Where candidates choose to follow on from their task in Unit 2, it is expected that they will make reference to the knowledge gained and build on it in Unit 4 using their suggestions from Stage 4 in Unit 2 as a starting point. Candidates should not change the focus of the task from one organisation to another.

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 vast majority of candidates have shown interest and enthusiasm for their advocacy and have clearly enjoyed participating in the tasks undertaken.

We have seen work that is well presented, of a high quality, and marked accurately. We have also seen some work that lacked detail and was not well thought out, and candidates had not been well guided.

We have seen a great variety of active citizenship that candidates have really enjoyed. This was very interesting and moderators have been pleased to mark the work.

Candidates should submit their work by completing all the stages within the Skills Profile. The Skills Profile Form is the **only** acceptable form of presenting the written work for moderation. It is not permitted to change the Skills Profile Form in any way other than to enlarge the boxes to allow candidates extra space if they are completing the form by hand.

The skills profile must be written up under controlled conditions and a teacher should witness the activity undertaken by candidates, working in small groups or individually. **No other evidence** apart from the Skills Profile Form should be sent to the moderator. Where other evidence has been sent, moderators were instructed not to consider it 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. The teacher comments should help to 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** and should not be used.

Centres are reminded that a Controlled Assessment Adviser 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.

There is also information and advice on the AQA website [www.aqa.org.uk](http://www.aqa.org.uk) and the e-AQA in particular – ask your Exams Officer for login details. The permitted tasks for Unit 2 and 4 are to be found in the Secure Key Materials area of this section. There is also a document giving

guidance about the expected responses for a Unit 4 task on the main Citizenship webpage, which may be useful to use in conjunction with the rest of this report.

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 was a great variety of responses to this stage, some much better than others. Some accurate marking was evident, but 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. For those continuing a Unit 2 task the links should be clearly shown. This stage was reasonable accurately marked.

Question 1 - a fairly detailed response is expected here, giving sound justification for the issue chosen.

Question 2 - candidates should have a limited number of aims that are realistic and which can be achieved.

Question 3 was generally well explained. Candidates who choose to work on their own should explain their choice.

Question 4 often lacked the reasons why the information was necessary. Again, if taking further action from Unit 2, the links and prior knowledge are expected here.

Question 5 was the least well done. Candidates tended to describe the roles and responsibilities of group members for the whole of the activity – the question asks for the roles and responsibilities for each person in **finding out the necessary information**. Marks were lost by the misinterpretation of this question.

Question 6 was quite well done, but often lacked the detail necessary for the higher marks in level 3.

## **STAGE 2 - JUSTIFY CHOICES**

This stage tended to be a rather generously marked.

Question 1 was a little confused. Candidates were expected to give a range of suggestions for different types of activities/action they could engage in. Many gave one or two very basic ideas then wrote about what they had decided to do, which should have been in Question 2.

Question 2 required a description of what they had chosen to do from the range given in Question 1 and some justification for the choice.

Where candidates had been guided through this stage, the responses were good and received due reward.

In general the action plan was not done well. It is possible to add on an extra page to continue the planning, but only a very small minority of centres did this. Some action plans were heavily directed by the teacher as every candidate had exactly the same headings. This is not to be encouraged, as candidates should write their own plans. To gain level 3

marks, we expect detailed plans showing a logical sequence throughout the whole activity. The action plans tended to be far too brief and lacking in detail, sometimes not even giving an indication of what actually happened.

### **STAGE 3 - ADVOCACY AND TAKING ACTION**

Responses to this stage varied the most.

A sense of exactly what the candidates did is expected, similar to Unit 2 Stage 3. The instructions above the box seem to have been ignored in many cases. Two or three short sentences here will not justify marks in Levels 4 and 5.

The teacher comments are important at the end of this stage to support the marks awarded and give moderators information on the individual candidates and their performance throughout the activity.

The best Skills Profiles were extremely detailed and gave a real flavour of what took place, providing an account of the action taken, demonstrating interest and enthusiasm for a cause. Others were lacking in detail and did not even provide a basic description of the action taken. Where candidates had given a good account and the teacher's 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. High marks in Levels 4 and 5 cannot be expected unless candidates have given a good account of the action taken and the teacher's comments support and fully justify how well the candidate performed throughout the activity.

### **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, how many signatures on a petition, to completing questionnaires.

Whatever evidence is gathered for this stage, it should be referred to and discussed, demonstrating that some analysis has taken place. Talking of fractions or a percentage is much better than vague conclusions not related to any real evidence. This was lacking in some Skills Profiles where very vague impressions were discussed and awarded high marks, without the supporting comments from the candidate or the teacher.

Question 2 was quite well answered, but a good description of the evidence was frequently missing.

Question 3 - here 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 type of action taken.

Question 4 - some approaches will have an effect on the wider world outside school, especially if the wider community were involved in the action taken. It is acceptable for candidates to say that they do not think their action will have had any impact, with justification.

Question 5 - the evidence gathered should be analysed and the results should be discussed here to comment on how effective the action was. It is more meaningful to express results of questionnaires or surveys as fractions or percentages rather than many/a few/some/most.

This would make a great improvement to responses to this question.

Question 6 - there were some very perceptive comments and some very limited responses too.

## **STAGE 5 - REFLECT AND EVALUATE**

There was a great variation in responses to this stage, but generally evaluations were quite well done and marking was fair.

Question 1 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. Opinions based on the evidence discussed in Stage 4 should be given. Some responses did this, while others provided very vague conclusions without relation to any evidence.

Question 2 again the community could be the school community or the wider community outside school, depending on the type of action taken. Responses should be justified.

Question 3 and 4 - there was some confusion here about skills and concepts: candidates are expected to know the difference. Often key skills were referred to, rather than specific citizenship skills. Candidates should be able to give details of how/when different skills were used, and what concepts were relevant to the task. Some gave details about how their understanding of relevant named concepts had been improved.

Question 5 and 6 - most candidates could describe how their contribution helped to make the task 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 7 - the candidates are expected to give their own opinions and conclusions relating to the task and what else they think could be done.

## ***Administration***

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

This year, there were many centres who did not meet the deadline. Late arrival of Centre Mark Forms causes inconvenience to moderators and delays the whole moderation process. Moderators have deadlines to meet as well, so please assist your moderator by sending marks forms promptly and by returning the sample requested within 5 working days, as specified in the letter which accompanies the sample request.

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

If controlled assessment 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.

A common error in administration is candidate numbers missing from the front page of the Skills Profile and/or the Candidate Record Form. Moderators can waste a lot of time finding the missing details from the Centre Mark Form.

This year, there were some errors in addition of marks. It is not the responsibility of the moderator to check all additions. There were also a number of mistakes in transferring the marks from the Candidate Record Form to the Centre Mark Form. It would be very helpful if the second and third copies of the Centre Mark Forms were checked before posting, to ensure that the marks are very clear on both copies, as these are often difficult to read. Please also ensure that a mark or Abs is shown for each candidate.

A sound beginning has been made to the new controlled assessment. I hope this report is useful in making improvements for the future by enhancing the responses to the questions in the Skills Profile Form, and building on some good practice that has now been established.

The Moderating Team appreciates the hard work that goes on to present work of a high quality and to encourage and motivate candidates to participate successfully 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>.

### **Converting Marks into UMS marks**

Convert raw marks into marks on the Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) by using the link below.

**UMS conversion calculator** [www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion](http://www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion)