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Examiners' Report June 2010

GCSE Citizenship 5CS02

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5CS02 Examiners' Report

Centre Administration

It was pleasing to see that for this new examination a good number of centres performed administrative tasks efficiently.

The following characteristics of good practice were identified:

- work submitted by candidates and their teachers was properly authenticated, through the signatures of both the teacher and the student, to meet Edexcel and QCA requirements
- candidates identified their issue and gave a brief summary on the front cover sheet.
- the OPTEMS were completed correctly, matching the marks awarded to the work of individual candidates on their task form grids
- the work of both the highest and the lowest scoring candidates was included in samples
- use of the candidate front cover sheet which contained a grid to record the mark for each of the four assessment areas (Issue, Advocacy and Representation, Participation in Action and Evaluation) together with the total mark
- use of annotation commenting on the work of individual students (not a compulsory requirement but very helpful when provided)

The following are areas that have been identified for Centres to consider in order to increase the efficiency of the external moderation process:

- for the Controlled Assessment Samples to arrive in good time for the external moderation deadline
- full and accurate completion of the front cover sheets (Centre Name and Number, Candidate Name and number, title of the issue to be investigated, with total mark)
- the sample to include substitutions for absent or withdrawn candidates, if applicable
- evidence of internal standardisation, even if the centre has a small cohort

Centre Assessment

It was very encouraging to see that a good number of centres had used the level descriptors in each of the four assessment criteria effectively when assessing candidate's work in this new examination. As the Controlled Assessment is worth 60% of the candidate's total marks it is imperative that Centre Assessor applies the marking scheme both accurately and consistently. This is verified through rigorous internal standardisation, a responsibility required of the Centre Assessor that is acknowledged on the OPTEMS when it is signed.

Where candidates had worked in a group the Centre Assessor should give the level of achievement that reflects the individual input and candidates should attach their own evidence in each section. A list of acceptable types of evidence is available in the 'Teacher's Support Book' (www.edexcel.com). Where there is little evidence, and the individual involvement is not explicit, the task will not meet the higher marks as described in the assessment criteria.

Issues arising from local ethical/moral problems (e.g. racism in football, bullying, knife crime and sweatshops) that can be firmly linked to one of the three themes in the Specification, are good, legitimate topics that can be researched and lead to a variety of activities applicable for 'Participation in Action'. However, just giving a general term for example 'drugs', 'animal rights' or 'religion' are less successful if the primary purpose can not be addressed through advocacy or demonstrate a link to a theme such as legal matters in 'Rights and Responsibilities'.

Candidate Performance

A significant number of candidates entered this Specification in this first year and the overall level of performance was very encouraging. Moderators witnessed a good number of well organised Controlled Assessments that covered the whole spectrum of ability and it is recognised that many young people and their teachers went to great lengths to produce a Controlled Assessment which represents a high personal level of achievement.

Choice of Issue

Moderators also witnessed a good variety of issues arising from local problems that were chosen for the enquiry and were clearly identified as areas of concern:

- How can we reduce crime in the area?
- How can we ensure that the older generation understand young people?
- How effective is the Disability Discrimination Act?
- How are religious differences tolerated in modern society?

The local context was not always very effectively covered and most tended to describe their activity. Candidates needed to have explained in detail why their issue was relevant locally and nationally and explore the links with citizenship themes, using relevant examples, in order to achieve the higher levels of achievement. The responses ranged from those who clearly had no idea what was expected to those who described well-developed links with Citizenship.

Ultimately the Specification and its marking criteria are designed for these issues to be viewed nationally and have a global perspective. Candidates who extended their enquiry to have these perspectives gained higher marks. However, Candidates performed rather less well when the links to the Citizenship theme were not explicitly explained.

Advocacy and Representation

The Specification requires candidates to communicate with two 'People of Power'. Those chosen should not only have specific knowledge of the issue, but also be able to take subsequent action. Clearly any in the peer group can not be interviewed unless they are specifically involved in the nature of the enquiry e.g. a Member of the Youth Parliament, if the issue is regarding young people and their involvement in political matters. Moderators evidenced that candidates who successfully carried out two interviews, submitted evidence (e.g. a Witness statement, script, DVD), and analysed their information and fully discussed in 2b the reasons for different viewpoints on the issue were able to achieve the higher marks. Centres are advised to ensure sufficient time is allowed for effective communication with these people and to stress the importance of discussion as well as candidates being able to highlight their individual input into the Advocacy and Representation. Moderators noticed the common weakness in this section where candidates did not explain personal stance and input and the absence of analysis of the situation.

There were a significant number of candidates that either did not manage to communicate with anyone in a position of power or who did interview two people but failed to analyse the discussions. The candidates should include a Witness Statement from these people that the interview took place and attach it to the task form. Many candidates expressed their disappointment with the lack of response from their requests for interview or replies to emails requesting a response to their questions. The skill of advocacy was difficult for a large number of candidates and this section proved to be the most demanding. In section 2b the response was often brief. Few realised that they could extend the brief to look more widely at why different people held different views.

Participation in Action

Response to part 3a was rather weak. Candidates either described briefly what they chose to do or gave a list of what they actually did, whereas it needed a personal response as to the possible actions that could have been carried out. This would then have lead the candidates to 3b where they could describe how the decision was made and any negotiating that had to be done in order to carry out their chosen action.

The gathering, inclusion and description of evidence was very good with digital photographic support, DVDs and high-quality PowerPoint presentations very acceptable and relevant evidence to submit. Unfortunately, not all centres realised that candidates need to go beyond a description of the activity and for candidates to describe their part in the group activity. The evidence was in most part very supportive and demonstrated their action very well but the weakness was in the fact that so many described the group effort and not their individual participation. Where candidates submitted work without any supporting evidence, or did not clearly explain their involvement, they penalised themselves as higher levels of achievement were not accessible to them.

Most impressive was the genuine enthusiasm that came through in the activity as candidates described their participation and the local response to their action. This was done in the true spirit of citizenship.

Assessment of the impact of own action

In (a) there was a tendency to underplay the local perspective and a large number thought that this section was for a more general evaluation. Many described the group's impact and not their individual impact. Additionally they could have discussed the impact amongst their peers/local community. (b) was generally too brief. Some candidates found it difficult to show the contribution to the wider world and their assessment was not detailed, or they did not use specialist vocabulary.

Moderators noted that the less able candidates re-wrote the events that took place for the duration of the Controlled Assessment. Others described what they had done but most responses did give some indication of the ability of candidates to reflect on their participation in a citizenship activity. The main weakness was excessive brevity. In particular, this section should be used to demonstrate the ability of respondents both to assess their action, including some mention as to their interaction with others in the group and possibly outside agencies, as well as some appreciation of other people's viewpoints. Many candidates found it difficult to say how it had affected their view. However, the vast majority of responses did indicate positive changes in candidate's views and their subsequent consideration of the issue.

Centres should be aware that this is a harder skill to address than straight forward evaluation and some candidates found this difficult, especially if they were younger than the expected age for entry for this examination. This is also the section where spelling, punctuation and grammar are assessed and some candidates lost marks through poor presentation, weak grammar and sentence structure, with many spelling and punctuation errors and negligible use of specialist vocabulary.

Conclusion

It is rewarding to see just how many young people approach their Controlled Assessment positively, enthusiastically and often selflessly. There is often great pride in reaching a successful outcome and this is demonstrated by candidates of all abilities, many surpassing their original goals and expectations. No doubt many have benefited from the candidate's participation in their investigation, advocacy and actions as they undertook the activity.

Finally, many of these activities undertaken are of incalculable value to young people in the Key Stage 4 age group and they help to provide many successful opportunities for active participation in the school or local community. They, their teachers and their many adult supporters are to be congratulated on what has been achieved.

Looking ahead to 2011.

Summer 2010 was the first assessment of this new Specification in Citizenship Studies. The short course (3CS01) consisted of Unit 1 - written examination (5CS01) and Unit 2 - controlled assessment (5CS02). Centres wishing to continue to complete a full course qualification (2CS01) can take Unit 3 - written examination (5CS03) and Unit 4 - controlled assessment (5CS04) in Summer 2011. Centres must make sure that they are entering their candidates for the correct units and cash-in codes.

Centres are reminded that there are some significant differences between coursework and controlled assessment. The issue, from which the participation in action arises, should ideally be of a local matter that is of concern to the candidates. Therefore work experience will no longer be accepted as a citizenship activity. It may also be the case that other activities, particularly those which have a far greater emphasis on PHSE topics than Citizenship may also be excluded from controlled assessment.

Various resources are available to support the new specification, including a Teacher's Support Book. This document, the specification, sample materials, exemplars and other documents can be found on the Edexcel website. Support and training opportunities will also be available during 2010 and 2011, and Centres can also make use of the 'Ask the Expert' service - see the 'Contact us' page of the Edexcel website for further details.

Grade boundaries

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Raw boundary mark	50	43	38	33	28	23	18	13	8	0
Uniform boundary mark	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20	10

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