

Moderators' Report/ Principal Moderator Feedback

June 2011

GCSE Citizenship Studies
5CS02/01

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5CSO2/01

The entry for this examination was significantly higher during the second year of this GCSE Citizenship Studies specification. There were pleasing examples of enquiries into local issues, and the vast majority of candidates made the effort to communicate with two 'people of power' in order to ascertain their views on the issue they had chosen.

Centre Administration

The following characteristics of good practice were identified:

- Controlled Assessment Candidate Record sheets were signed by both the teacher and the candidate; therefore they were authenticated appropriately to meet the requirements from Edexcel.
- Candidates were clear about the issue that they had chosen and explained their choice in section 1 of the task form.
- Candidate Record sheets was used to give the marks for the four sections of the task form (Issue, Advocacy and Representation, Participation in Action and Evaluation)
- There was evidence of internal standardisation from many centres-identifiable by a different colour ink and initials of those who were involved.
- Many candidates submitted very good evidence to support their work.
- A large majority of candidates were able to identify and use citizenship skills: communication, planning, discussion and negotiation.

There are a few concerns, identified below, for Centres to consider in order to increase the efficiency of the external moderation process:

- for the Controlled Assessment sample to arrive in good time for external moderation.
- full and accurate completion of the Candidate Record Sheet – showing the Candidate's full name and Candidate number, Centre Name and Number, title of the issue to be investigated and 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- The sample to include substitutions for absent or withdrawn candidates, if applicable.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.
- Signed witness statements as evidence, but not incomplete (no identification as to what was being witnessed).

Centre Assessment

It was encouraging to see that a good number of centres had used the level descriptors in each of the four assessment criteria effectively. With many assessing this specification for the first time it was good to see that assessment was often at the right levels. As the Controlled Assessment is worth 60% of the candidate's total marks it is imperative that Centre Assessors apply the marking criteria both accurately and consistently. The Centre Assessor is responsible to ensure that internal standardisation takes place, and signs the OPTEMS to acknowledge that this has been carried out.

Some candidates opt to work in a group. Where this is the case, the Centre Assessor should give the level of achievement that reflects the individual input into the group effort and candidates should attach their own evidence in each

section. A list of acceptable types of evidence is available in the 'Teacher Support Book' on Edexcel website. Where there is little evidence, and the individual involvement is not explicit, the candidate is unlikely to gain marks beyond level 2.

Issues arising from ethical/moral problems, for example, racism in football, discrimination or disability, bullying and knife crime, must be firmly linked to at least one of the three Themes in Unit 1 of the Specification in order to fulfil the requirements of the Specification. Centre Assessors must remember that without any evidence the candidate's marks are limited.

The sections should be taken as a whole and not marked separately ie the assessor should not mark a) and b) and then add together to get a section total.

The following observations of lenient assessment in each section of the task form are as follows:

Section 1

Centre Assessors are reminded that the issue is to be primarily addressed from a local perspective of the candidate's choice. Where the candidate does not discuss this from a local perspective, nor do they give a personal view, credit should be limited. This section was generally being leniently awarded and was highlighted by a number of moderators. Just saying 'local and national' without any explanation does not gain credit.

Section 2

Candidates were frequently awarded level 4 marks when there was no interview, an interview but no evidence and/or no analysis. The people 'interviewed' were contacted to seek permission to put up a display or do a power point presentation. This is not the purpose of the interview; rather to find out the views of two people on the issue in question. Some assessors had given top marks for candidates who had not displayed any skill in advocacy or representation.

Section 3

Candidates were awarded marks for pure description of the activity. This is not required in this specification – and responses should be written in paragraphs, not bullet points.

Section 4

Many Centre Assessors did not take note of the quality of written communication which is assessed in this section.

Candidate Performance

Candidates had used a variety of prompt sheets available in publications or devised by the centres. These were very useful in directing the candidate to the specific requirement of the task. Where there were brief responses or indeed sections not completed, it is either a sign that the candidates were unsure as to what to write or that there were timing issues. Should a candidate be absent on the date that the Controlled Assessment is written, it can be re-arranged at a later

date, as the candidate is clearly penalised for not completing the forms and a large percentage of the marks are unavailable to them.

It was encouraging to see so many good, well organised folders where the candidates had clearly enjoyed their citizenship activity and gained a lot of skills and experiences. There was a lot of excellent work carried out most sincerely by many candidates.

It is worth bringing to attention the fact that Controlled Assessment is different from coursework in that the candidates do not have to describe in full the roles and responsibilities of each group member but rather explain why the issue was chosen.

Choice of Issue

Moderators witnessed a good variety of local issues – How to reduce knife crime/litter/recycle and seek more local facilities. Diversity in the community. Other issues were more from a national perspective – discrimination or disability and the media and its representation of candidates or from a global perspective – fair trade, global warming

Some issues were more akin to PSHE than Citizenship and should be linked to legislation or rights if undertaken. Examples of such activities are: health issues – eating disorders, teenage pregnancy/sexual health and fundraising.

The local context was not always very effectively covered and a significant number of candidates tended to describe their activity, rather than to research the issue and say why it is important. Candidates need to explain in detail why their issue is relevant locally and nationally and explore the links with at least one citizenship theme, using relevant examples. The responses ranged from those who described their group and roles to those who clearly stated why it was so important with well-developed links with citizenship themes, and a strong personal point of view.

Ultimately the Specification and its marking criteria were designed for issues to be viewed locally and nationally, and possibly have a global perspective that can be discussed. Candidates who extended their enquiry to these different perspectives gained the higher marks. However, candidates performed rather less well when the links with the Citizenship themes from Unit 1 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, for example, a Member of the Youth Parliament, if the issue is regarding candidates and their involvement in political matters. Moderators evidenced that candidates who successfully carried out two interviews, and 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 common weakness in this section, where candidates failed to 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. Some 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 some candidates and this section proved to be the most demanding. This is especially noticeable if candidates are completing this before Year 11. 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. Candidates should consider the reason for no replies: how many requests are made and content of the email (does it contain specific questions to answer? Is it polite, formal and written in good English?)

There were a significant number of candidates who sought permission, classing it as an interview, from headteachers or senior staff as to whether they could put up a display or show a power point presentation to a specific year group. This is not the intended interpretation of the interview. Those that did obtain different views often did not analyse them sufficiently to take them beyond level 2. It was surprising that some had no contingency plan should first requests for interviews fail to materialise.

Participation in Action

There were a good number of skills used and noted but there often was no evidence to show this. Many discussed the group effort and it was unclear exactly what the individual candidate actually did. However, it was pleasing how much evidence had been included; this should not only be referenced, but used to demonstrate the citizenship skills. This section is more demanding than the old coursework section 3. It is important for each candidate to discuss their own input and the impact that was anticipated as a result of the action.

Moderators noted the quality of the evidence. There were digital photographic support, DVD's and high-quality power point presentations. Candidates clearly enjoyed their activities and carried them out in the true spirit of citizenship. They are to be commended for their diligence and responsible actions. A number were mentioned in school newsletters and many brought the school community and local communities together. There was much to encourage these candidates.

Assessment of the impact of own action

The responses to this section varied. Some candidates wrote very well but others either had a timing issue or did not finish the task in a fitting manner.

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, as was the case in the old coursework. Many described the group's impact and not much on 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, neither did they use specialist vocabulary.

A number of centres assessed without due regard for the quality of written communication element of this section. Candidates are expected to use a good vocabulary, spell and punctuate to a good standard.

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 and, in particular, this section should be used to demonstrate the ability of respondents both to assess their action, with some mention as to their interaction with others in the group and possibly outside agencies, with some appreciation of other people's viewpoints. Many 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.

Conclusion

It is pleasing to see the number of candidates who approach their Controlled Assessment positively, enthusiastically and often selflessly. The candidates express 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. Some even stated that they are carrying on with the action from their own personal choice. This surely has to be a very positive outcome.

Finally, many of these activities undertaken are of incalculable personal value to candidates 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 to the future

Summer 2011 saw an increase in the entry for this Specification in Citizenship Studies. The short course consisted of Unit 1 – written examination (5CS01) and Unit 2 – the Controlled Assessment, which is worth 60% of the total marks for the examination. In this respect, Centres have a big responsibility to guide and support the candidates in their investigations and activities, and there are a number of support documents available on the website to help and support the teaching staff. Centres wishing to continue to complete the full course qualification can take Unit 3 – a written examination (5CS03) and Unit 4 (5CS04) a campaign, organised in the format of a controlled assessment.

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 PSHE topics than Citizenship, may also be inappropriate for 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 2011 and 2012, and centres can also make use of the 'Ask the Expert' service – see the 'Contact us' page on the Edexcel website for further details.

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