

GCSE

Edexcel GCSE

Health and Social Care

2321

January 2006

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Examiners' Report

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January 2006

Publications Code UG017398

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Chief Examiner's Report

In general the responses given by candidates did reflect an accurate level of knowledge and understanding and thus the performance by candidates was good. There has been no change to the style of format of the examination paper.

The content of the paper provided students with an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to recall and apply the knowledge, skills and understanding specified in the subject content. Candidates are also required to evaluate evidence and draw valid conclusions, the examination paper gave them the opportunity to demonstrate these skills.

This structure of the examination paper allowed candidates to access a range of marks, from this perspective the paper was both positive and supportive to all candidates.

The majority of candidates demonstrated a sound and accurate knowledge and understanding of the specification. This was reflected in the fact that no major gaps of knowledge have appeared in candidates' responses.

It was apparent that the unit specification had been comprehensively covered by centres and that teaching was effective in allowing candidates to achieve their potential. Very few centre specific issues have been highlighted by the Principal Examiner. Centres are reminded that they should be referring to the May 2002 version of the specification.

It was also apparent that some centres had carefully prepare their candidates using sample assessment material to develop their examination technique, for instance candidates appear to be reading the questions more carefully and accurately applying their knowledge to the requirements of the question.

It was also noticeable than many candidates used the vocational language relevantly and appropriately, this is to be congratulated. It was encouraging to observe that many candidates were attempting to develop their responses more fully when given the opportunity for extended writing.

Despite these strengths some weaknesses were evident. Some candidates failed to gain marks due to misinterpretation or inaccurately reading of the question.

Some candidate responses lacked understanding and inappropriate use of vocational terms and concepts such as self esteem and self image and led to inaccurate responses. This needs to addressed by centres if candidates are to progress onto higher level awards.

In addition it was disappointing to see that many candidates viewed life changes, such as the menopause, negatively and could not identify positive aspects to such life changes.

Many candidates appear to find it difficult to apply theory to practice, however, this is an important aspect of the subject content and is an area which requires further development in centres.

Lack of understanding of what is required of the verb hierarchy is a problematic area for some candidates and unfortunately this has meant that some seemingly very capable candidates fail to maximise both their marks and potential by only being able to provide lower level responses that are weak and descriptive in content.

Centres should be encouraged to fully integrate candidate knowledge and understanding through the use of simulations, role plays, case studies and past papers. The use of guest speakers, educational visits and work experience to help candidates relate theory to practice and understand the roles of professionals in those occupations is felt to encourage a full understanding of the subject content.

Centres should develop a more holistic approach to the qualification and where possible make links between the internally and externally assessed units.

With regard to the internally assessed units centres are reminded that a Candidate Mark Record Sheet, should be fully completed, ensuring that the Declaration of Authentication at the bottom of the page is signed by both the candidate and the teacher.

5323: Understanding Personal Development

The January 2006 GCSE in Health and Social Care provided candidates with the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the unit content which covers the following areas:

- Human Growth and development
- Factors Affecting Human Growth and Development
- Effects of Relationships on Personal Development
- Effects of Life Events on Personal Development

The paper consisted of five questions, there were a total of 90 marks available and the duration of the examination was 1 hour and 30 minutes.

The paper which covers the unit specification, accurately tested candidate knowledge of the following life stages:

- Childhood
- Adulthood
- Later adulthood

Question 1 focused on adulthood and examined the physical, social and emotional changes which individuals may experience during this life stage. Although the majority this question was well answered it was disappointing to see that many candidates do not view the menopause as a expected life event and when questioned as to the effects this may have on an individual many candidates identified negative responses, and were unable to suggest anything positive about this life event.

Adulthood was the focus of the question 2. This question was generally well answered by candidates which was encouraging to see, many candidates were able to access all the marks available for parts (a) and (b). Part (d) required candidates to focus on the positive effects of self-esteem on growth and development, many of the higher ability candidates responded very well to this question giving a full and meaningful discussion, and hence gaining full marks. However, the lower ability candidates were able to gain approximately half of the marks available.

Question 3 focused on Kay's younger sister Barbara and her current life situation as outlined in the information given at the beginning of the question. Some candidates found it difficult to place the life stages in the correct order; this question required a basic level of knowledge recall. A significant majority of candidates gained all of the marks available for both parts (b) and (c). Although part (d) was generally well answered, some candidates' responses were weak; consequently these candidates were unable to gain the third mark available due to the vagueness of their response. Both sections of part (e) required candidates to provide a definition, firstly of self-image and then of self-esteem. These sections were poorly answered by the majority of candidates. Some responses were very general and lacked precision. Part (f) was well attempted by the majority of candidates, many scoring 3 - 4 of the marks available. However, it was generally only the higher ability candidates that were able to access all of the marks available due to the depth and detail of the discussion in their response.

Question 4 focused on childhood and the importance of present and future relationships. The question also examined emotional and intellectual development and the importance of socio-economic factors on development. Parts (a) and (b) of this question were well answered by the majority of candidates. Parts (c)(i) and (ii) focussed specifically on relationships, this appeared to have been problematic for candidates. The part of this question that saw the weakest responses was part e which required candidates to discuss the impact socio-economic factors can have on an individual's intellectual development. Many responses lacked comprehensiveness and accuracy. Many candidates failed to achieve more than four of the six marks available.

Question 5 focused on later adulthood. Although many candidates did accurately identify and state physical features associated with this life stage some candidates were still providing inappropriate answers such as 'wrinkly' and 'hair going grey'. Many candidates appeared to struggle with a response to parts (c) and (d), often because explanations given were inaccurate or generally weak.

Statistics

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

5323

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	90	67	58	50	44	38
Uniform boundary mark	100	80	70	60	50	40

Notes

Maximum Mark (Raw): the mark corresponding to the sum total of the marks shown on the mark scheme.

Boundary mark: the minimum mark required by a candidate to qualify for a given grade.

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