



**General Certificate of Secondary Education  
June 2012**

**Home Economics: Child  
Development**

**45803**

**(Specification 4580)**

**Unit 3: Child Study**

***Report on the Examination***

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## **General comments**

The controlled assessment tasks proved accessible to candidates of all abilities and provided opportunities for them to achieve positive success while allowing for differentiation.

## ***Controlled Assessment Tasks***

### **Support and Guidance**

It was obvious that where centres had a clear understanding of the requirements of the controlled assessment tasks, they were able to give appropriate guidance and support which allowed candidates to independently produce individual work which clearly demonstrated their knowledge and understanding. It was equally clear that some centres had adopted a very structured approach, which often resulted in some similar work being produced by candidates, making differentiation almost impossible and often leading to mark adjustments

### **Time allocations**

While some outstanding work was seen for both controlled assessment units centres are reminded that there is a recommended time allocation for both tasks. While most centres had clearly tried to work within the respective timeframes it was obvious that some were allowing candidates to spend much more than recommended time resulting in work that was clearly overlong, often in terms of research and sometimes at the expense of other elements of the work. Often this research was repetitive and not always relevant which made it difficult to justify awarding high marks for knowledge and understanding (AO1) and where assessment criteria required work to be “concise”, “selective” and “relevant” (AO2).

### **AQA Controlled Assessment Tasks**

Centres are reminded that to fulfil the requirements of the specification for both controlled Assessment Tasks one of the range of board set tasks **must** be used. These are available on the e-AQA website. Failure to do so invariably leads to some mark adjustments.

### **Assessment criteria.**

Both controlled assessment tasks are marked holistically using the AQA provided assessment criteria. Centres need to be aware of how the assessment criteria reflect and relate to the requirements of the specification and when marking need to select statements/parts of statements within the mark bands that best reflect the levels of skills and understanding shown in the work. Highlighting these and using a “best fit” approach can help both teachers and moderators to determine the marks to be awarded.

While it is important when deciding on marks to be awarded that centres recognise that “strong performance in one area can balance weaker performance elsewhere” marking must reflect any additional support and help given (page 38 of specification). Centres must also be mindful of the mark tolerance for the respective units.

### **Annotation of controlled assessment work**

It is a requirement of the JCQ Instructions for conducting controlled assessment that centres provide clear annotation to support the marks being awarded. While annotation provided by many centres was excellent and detailed, making good use of the annotation sheets provided by AQA and highlighted copies of the assessment criteria, some centres provided no annotation to show how and why marks were being awarded. This made it very difficult for the moderator to support the centres assessments and sometimes marks were subject to possible adjustments – in such cases work can be returned to the centre for clarification of marking.

### Internal Standardisation

Where more than one teacher is involved in the delivery of the subject it is imperative that internal standardisation is rigorous to ensure that all work has been marked to the same standard and to avoid possible adjustment of marks.

### 45803: Unit 3 Child Study

Some excellent and high quality studies were seen demonstrating high level skills, knowledge and understanding. While many centres have recognised the fact that the research requirement is only one albeit important part of the whole study, and that planned research should be concise and selective some centres are still allowing candidates to include an unrealistic amount of unnecessary research which could not possibly have been completed within the timeframe suggested in the specification. This puts unnecessary and unfair pressure on candidates.

Centres are reminded that **the candidates** are required to select one of the Child Study Tasks from the AQA provided tasks available on the e-AQA website which they subsequently research, investigate and use to help them choose and plan appropriate activities for two of the four required visits. While centres should guide choices made, where they dictate the choice of task and the research to be carried out they are limit opportunities for candidates to work independently make decisions and have ownership of the task which impacts across the assessment criteria.

For many centres research is often treated as a ‘stand-alone’ section, often not evaluated and not used to develop the study in any way. This makes it difficult to justify some of the high marks awarded by centres especially for AO2 (i) and AO1.

Centres are reminded that the child being studied should be under the age of 5 years **at the end of the study**.

<b>Introductory visit</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This should be the first piece of work that candidates carry out and should be completed <b>before</b> they choose a Child Study Task so that subsequent research can be linked to the child.</li><li>• Generally introductory visits were of a good standard, covered all the required areas and showed sound knowledge and understanding of <b>all four areas of development</b>, play and learning.</li><li>• Assessment of levels of development was usually supported by observations made during these visits and supported by references to norms, quotes and specialist terms. All of this provided a firm foundation for the rest of the study.</li><li>• Where candidates did not support their assessment of development with observations visits often read as an amalgam of milestones which possibly showed awareness of expected levels but only limited understanding.</li><li>• Similarly the use of checklists of milestones was often limiting in terms of showing knowledge and understanding. To simply state “my child can do this” is limiting in terms of showing knowledge and understanding.</li><li>• Conclusions to the introduction were often absent – they should be used to help choose the Child Study Task.</li></ul>
<b>AQA externally-set task</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The choice of Child Study Task should be made after completion of the introductory</li></ul>

<p>visit and based on knowledge and understanding of the child's initial level of development and interests – it should be written out and candidates need to give a clear rationale as to why they have chosen the task. It is recommended that where possible several reasons are given.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• While tasks were usually appropriate to the child being studied it was clear that in too many instances tasks had clearly been chosen for the candidates by the centre. This is not advisable and tasks were not always appropriate making it more difficult for them to justify the choice in relation to the child.</li><li>• Candidates need to be given the opportunity to choose what they feel is right for their child based on their own knowledge and understanding of their child's development and interests.</li></ul>
<b>Research</b>
<p>Where research was planned and had a clear focus, information was often more concise, relevant and useful – and better used.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Candidates need to show that they understand that the purpose of the research is to enable them to choose suitable activities which will help to encourage development and enable them to observe this – this should include some consideration of possible activities</li><li>• To be effective and useful, research for the chosen task needs to be planned. Candidates could also be encouraged to have a clear focus for each piece of research.</li><li>• Where possible both primary and secondary research should be included – it should be <b>concise</b> and <b>selective</b> and <b>related</b> specifically to the child being studied. Often research was overlong</li><li>• Many candidates chose to use questionnaires in their research these are time consuming, often lacked a clear purpose and rarely used to develop the study.</li></ul>
<b>Evaluation of research</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This should be evident – it should not simply be a summary of the research and should be clearly used to identify and justify activities chosen for two of the four visits. Many candidates failed to give any indication of what activities they had chosen and why.</li><li>• While it is acceptable for candidates to base all their visits on the chosen child study task this can often limit opportunities to observe and comment on all areas of development in some depth and can lead to repetition.</li></ul>
<b>Planning for visits – additional research</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Candidates are advised to include a planning chart for their visits identifying chosen activities, indicating which are based on research and which areas of development they will mainly support – often this was included at the start of the study before any research had been attempted.</li><li>• There <b>must</b> be some evidence of additional research for each visit which is used to inform planning and the choice of expectations. Often this was not evident – when it was, it was simply copied information which was not referred to or used.</li><li>• In visits based on the Child Study Task some reference should be made to the research already carried out. Additional research can be included appropriate to the planning of the activities for the visit – this could be a simple interview, inventory, risk assessment, choice of recipe for making cakes etc.</li><li>• For visits <b>not</b> related to the child study task some simple research sufficient to enable planning and understanding of how the activity might help development should be included and referred to.</li><li>• For all visits this “research should be concise and selective” and “should be presented on 1 – 2 sides of A4 paper” (see page 23 of the specification)</li></ul>

<b>Aims and expectations</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Visits need to have clear aims related to aspects of development and achievable and measurable expectations. However, candidates do not need to identify aims for all four areas of development in every visit and for every activity.</li><li>• Aims and expectations should be based on the <b>activities</b> chosen and supported by reference to expected milestones and knowledge and understanding of the child's levels of development. It is more difficult for candidate to 'fit' the activity to milestones.</li><li>• Where candidates listed expected milestones as expectations these were often repetitive and not relevant to the planned activities. Consequently evaluations were often brief, simplistic, again repetitive and not based on observations.</li></ul>
<b>Observations</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• These need to be recorded in sufficient detail to support analysis and evaluation of development.</li><li>• When observations covered the <b>whole</b> of the visit and did not just concentrate on the planned activities it was easier for candidates to observe and comment on all PIES development and play.</li></ul>
<b>Evaluation of visits</b>
<p>This is an improved and improving part of the Child Study.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It is important that evaluations are based on and supported by observations otherwise they cannot be credited.</li><li>• Although aims and expectations may concentrate on only 1/2 areas of development and learning, candidates must evaluate all four areas of development in every visit, commenting on change and progress as necessary.</li><li>• There should be a brief conclusion to each visit and some consideration of the value of the chosen activities and related research in encouraging development</li></ul>
<b>Final evaluation</b>
<p>Final evaluations were generally well attempted with most candidates able to recognise and comment on change and progress although not all commented on the value of the research/activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To justify the higher marks candidates need to compare how the child's development has progressed from the start of the study to the final visit, identifying where possible specific changes which were evident.</li><li>• There should also be some consideration of how the research and choice of activities have helped the candidate to observe and encourage development and learning</li></ul>

### **Marking and using the assessment criteria.**

#### **AO1: Recall, select and communicate their knowledge and understanding of a range of contexts**

Knowledge and understanding should be evident throughout all of the work submitted - in observations, evaluations of development and learning, planning, selection and use of research and the range of activities chosen for visits. Overall knowledge of development was clearly evident although understanding was variable.

Work should include reasoned logical opinions and be supported with quotes, references to norms and a range of specialist terms. Quotes and references were evident in many studies but in some centres they were used to excess - it was often difficult to determine why they were being used.

**AO2 (i): Apply skills knowledge and understanding in a variety of contexts and in planning and carrying out investigations and tasks**

To gain the higher marks planning must be evident for both research, and especially for all visits, and research should clearly be used to develop the study. Activities should be chosen to encourage the child's development and learning and should reflect their age, stage of development and interests. Additional simple research needs to be included for all visits especially for those not based on the child study task. Often planning for visits was good and included extra research which the more able candidates were able to use effectively. Aims and expectations should reflect the activities chosen and not simply a test of milestones – they need to be appropriate achievable and measurable. When solely based on milestones there were often too many to realistically be observed in one visit. More able candidates produced clear expectations which reflected their understanding of how activities could support the child's development.

**AO2 (ii): Recording, collating and presenting information appropriately**

Overall work was well organised, logical and clearly presented and many candidates demonstrated excellent ICT skills, although there were collation issues where some centres had carried out research before the introductory visit. Similarly, additional research for visits often seemed to be an afterthought – ideally this should be done before the actual planning and the identification of aims and expectations. Visit observations should be sufficiently detailed to enable effective evaluation of all PIES in every visit but understandably these often varied in length and quality. Some candidates integrated observations and evaluations which demonstrated high level skills.

Where candidates included photographic evidence or annotated examples of children's work they were often able to use these effectively to demonstrate their understanding of aspects of development. Where high marks are awarded high level communication skills should be evident throughout.

**AO3: Analyse and evaluate information, sources and evidence, make reasoned judgements and present conclusions**

Where high marks are awarded all aspects of the study should be evaluated – including all research and all visits and observations (including the introductory visit). There should be a final evaluation which comments on change and progress seen as well as on the value of the chosen child study task in encouraging and supporting development. Evaluations of visits were generally well attempted and most candidates tried to comment on all aspects of PIES development, even if they were not part of the aim, expectation or observation.

Candidates were often able to give logical opinions based on their observations although these were not always supported with references and quotes.

**Administration**

Centres must ensure that all documentation is completed and signed appropriately. This includes:

- Centre mark sheets
- Candidates Record Forms
- Centre declaration Sheets.
- Centres must check that marks have been totalled and transferred correctly – often marks on annotation sheets did not match those on either the Candidates Record Forms or Centre Marks Sheets.

Candidates' work must be securely fastened, clearly labelled with the candidates name and number and the centre name and number, and removed from hard backed folders before sending to the moderator.

**Grade boundaries**

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the AQA website at [www.aqa.org.uk/over/stat.html](http://www.aqa.org.uk/over/stat.html)