

Examiners' Report Summer 2008

GCSE

360Science

GCSE Science (2101)

GCSE Additional Science (2103)

Internal Assessment Activities

(Units 5002-5004 and 5012-5014)

Edexcel is one of the leading examining and awarding bodies in the UK and throughout the world. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers.

Through a network of UK and overseas offices, Edexcel's centres receive the support they need to help them deliver their education and training programmes to learners.

For further information please call our Customer Services on 0870 240 9800, or visit our website at www.edexcel.org.uk.

Summer 2008

All the material in this publication is copyright
© Edexcel Ltd 2008

Report on the Moderation of Internal Assessment Activities

In June 2008, the moderation of GCSE Science and GCSE Additional Science assessment activities (IAAs) was available to centres. Centres were able to choose assessments from two series of IAAs for GCSE Science, and one series for GCSE Additional Science, giving a total of 36 assessment activities. Centres are to be commended for their efforts in overseeing and supplying this work, which involved a lot of organisation and attention to detail.

From the total of 24 GCSE Science IAA's, it was the first series, (those available in the first year) that predominated in the samples sent to moderators. This may well have been a consequence of centres not having submitted work for moderation until this year, or may have been as a result of centres feeling confident with applying mark schemes from the first series and thereby ensuring a greater consistency of marking. In some cases centres utilised the wider range of GCSE Science IAA's to improve marks for some of their candidates.

The quality of marking was generally good and consistent; however there were a number of centres where internal standardisation did not occur. Centres are reminded of the requirement of the Code of Practice that internal standardisation must take place - as set out in their Moderation Guidance April 2008. Not all assessors used red ink to mark, in the worst cases they used the same colour as the candidate had used to complete the script, which in some cases led to errors of addition.

Marking style and quality was variable and the same responses had been awarded different marks. Some scripts had correctly placed ticks in the text and a mark in the margin. However in a number of moderation samples submitted assessors used ticks but no marks and only totals were shown. For some centre samples, there were no ticks and the total at the end of the question was ringed or altered to indicate the mark. This was often confusing, as it was not clear where the mark came from. Some assessors placed too many or too few ticks on the scripts and this then led to addition errors being found. Transposition errors from scripts to the OPTEM sheets were to be found as well as transcription errors in marks taken from the back page of the script to the front.

In some longer questions, which awarded 3 or 4 marks some teachers appeared to be awarding a global mark as an overall assessment of the response rather than allocating marks as required in the mark scheme. In general teacher judgement was applied appropriately, where responses that were not found on mark schemes but were creditworthy, centres awarded marks correctly. In many cases annotation to indicate this accompanied the usual ticks and crosses seen on the scripts.

The assessment of the quality of written communication (QWC) was variable. Teachers should note that when making an assessment of QWC, they should bear in mind the ability of the national cohort, and not just the students in their centre.

Edexcel has issued guidance on the assessment of QWC, which indicates that students should be assessed on their ability to: - present information in an appropriate form, ensuring the accuracy of spelling, punctuation, and grammar, and to use a suitable style of writing. The award of three marks should only be given when: - students use scientific terms appropriately, sentences contain verbs, and their answers are well structured using a suitable narrative.

It was not unusual to see teacher marks of 1, and sometimes 0, for written responses where the handwriting was poor, but the quality of spelling punctuation and grammar would have attracted 2 marks.

GCSE Science

The quality of response across Series 1 and 2 of GCSE Science IAA's was comparable. As was the case last year, some topics were more popular than others. The majority of candidates scored between 15 and 25 marks, with few scoring in single figures. Full marks were seen with a slightly greater frequency than last year on some of the most popular topics. The most popular topics were found to be as follows, however series one topics were far more popular than series two.

Biology - topics 1 and 2 in both series

Chemistry - topics 5 and 6 in series 1 and topic 6 in series two

Physics - topics 9 and 10 in series 1 and topic 10 in series two

Work was seen across all 24 topics by moderators, but in the case of topic 4 of Biology and topic 8 of Chemistry and topic 11 of Physics far fewer were seen.

GCSE Additional Science

A similar situation was found in the 12 GCSE Additional Science topics. The standard of response was found to be similar across all the topics with a similar mark range to that found in the GCSE Science topics. The most popular topics were found to be as follows

Biology - topics 1 and 2

Chemistry - topic 7

Physics - topics 9 and 11

Work was seen across all 12 topics by moderators, however there were few seen of some topics, for example topic 4 of Biology, topic 5 of Chemistry and topic 12 of Physics.

Across all topics students usually scored highly in the first one or two (low demand) questions in, but it was fairly common to see students starting to encounter difficulties with the more difficult questions towards the end of each topic which required extended writing, often where thought provoking issues in "How Science Works" were being tested.

Raw Mark Grade Boundaries for GCSE Science and Additional Science Internal Assessment Units

5001 5011 5024 5034 5044	Max mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
	18	16	14	12	11	9	7	5	3

5002	Max mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
	30	27	24	21	18	14	11	8	5

5003	Max mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
	30	27	24	21	18	14	11	8	5

5004	Max mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
	30	26	23	20	17	14	11	8	5

5012	Max mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
	30	26	23	20	18	14	11	8	5

5013	Max mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
	30	25	22	19	16	13	10	7	4

5014	Max mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
	30	26	23	20	17	13	10	7	4

Uniform Mark Grade Boundaries - All Units

Max UMS	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
40	36	32	28	24	20	16	12	8

For more information on Edexcel qualifications, please visit www.edexcel.org.uk/qualifications
Alternatively, you can contact Customer Services at www.edexcel.org.uk/ask or on 0870 240 9800

Edexcel Limited. Registered in England and Wales no.4496750
Registered Office: One90 High Holborn, London, WC1V 7BH