

Report on the Units

June 2010

J696/R/10

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This report on the Examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the Examination.

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Chief Examiners Report

2010 has been a year of innovation for GCSE sociology with regard to both the structure and content of the qualification.

The tiered papers of the legacy specification have given way to a common set of examinations and teachers no longer need to select an appropriate level of assessment for each individual candidate. This has proved to be successful with candidates of all levels finding the assessments challenging but accessible. The qualification has been unitised, giving flexibility as to when different papers can be taken by candidates, to suit different rates of skill development. Papers B671 and B673 are completed within a booklet and candidates appear to have found this format beneficial, providing guidance with regard to the length of answers and in helping them to maintain a precise focus. Marking of B671 and B673 has taken place electronically using 'scoris™', a system which has proved to be highly efficient.

The coursework enquiry from the legacy specification has been replaced in the new specification by an examination paper, which avoids the need for the time-consuming collection of data while maintaining the focus on practical research and testing the skills of analysis of methods and evidence studied in pre-release material. There have been positive changes to the structure and content of the other examination papers and the parts considered to be successful in the legacy specification have been retained. The new topic areas such as 'Youth' proved popular and were tackled well in this first year.

Overall the quality of the sociology presented was strong and impressive, especially as many of the candidates were in Year 10. Understandably, B671, 'Sociology Basics' was the most popular unit to be entered by Year 10 candidates this year. B673, Applying Sociological Research Techniques, had a significant entry of over one thousand candidates and B672 had a small entry but again the skills applied in B673 and the breadth of knowledge and understanding in B672 were both very good. Candidates can add to these units to complete the qualification for first award next year (2011).

B671 Sociology Basics

This was the first year of examination for this new GCSE Sociology paper which was sat by approximately 3500 candidates, many of which were in Year 10 and so had only studied Sociology for a year. The paper was untiered, meaning that it was designed to cater for candidates of all ability levels. This 60-mark paper has to be completed in 60 minutes, so that candidates should work on a 'mark a minute' rule in order to best make use of their time. It is hoped that centres and candidates will find this helpful. The paper appears to have differentiated well, stretching candidates at the top end through targeted questions, yet still being accessible to the less able candidates. The examination paper was in a booklet format to help structure candidates' responses and support them in achieving the best marks they were capable of. Some excellent sociology was seen by the examination team and candidates and tutors are to be congratulated for their hard work in achieving this. This was the first year of OCR GCSE Sociology being marked online and this also appears to have been a great success.

General comments:

Only a small number of candidates knew very little Sociology. Nearly all candidates could access the less demanding question, which enabled them to score a reasonable number of marks. The 12-mark questions differentiated between those achieving high and low overall marks. Similarly, other targeted questions performed the same function. At the top end, as one might expect, there was some excellent sociological knowledge shown, with theory and studies sometimes being cited to support points made.

Very few rubric errors and no inappropriate comments were made. The question paper was clear and offered a range of formats that allowed candidates of all abilities to access marks.

There was evidence that many candidates had been prepared well for this examination by their teachers and that they clearly understood the meaning of the rubrics for the different question styles. Where candidates were not as well prepared they confused different skills and often "identified" where they were required to "explain".

Overall, it was clearly felt that the paper achieved its objectives and had successfully tested candidates on the 'basics' of Sociology at GCSE level.

Comments on individual questions:

Section A – Research Methods and Evidence

Q1: This was a true or false question testing candidates' sociological knowledge. Most candidates scored three or four marks, though in part 1(d) a number were unclear as to what was meant by a systematic sample. Centres are advised to give their candidates plenty of practice at this style of question.

Q2: This question was a carry over from the 1990 legacy paper and was also a clear feature of the specimen Basics paper. It should not therefore have been a surprise to either centres or candidates. It is perhaps best approached as a question about representativeness and generalisability, and candidates should therefore focus on issues of sampling and the key word 'all' in the question. The small number of questionnaires given out (30), the fact the research was done in only one area (Warrington) and in only one school, for example, would have been useful points to comment on. Marks will not be awarded here for those candidates who identify and discuss accuracy issues. Centres would be well advised to

give their candidates plenty of pieces of evidence to analyse for these types of issues and ensure a full understanding of the concepts of representativeness and generalisability.

Q3: The format of this question seemed to work well for candidates of all abilities and was generally answered successfully with many candidates gaining full marks. Weaker responses were sometimes one-word answers, usually giving 'cheap' and 'easy' as the chief advantages of questionnaires as a research method. As the question asked for a description, one-word answers were not appropriate and so did not score the two marks available. Disadvantages were covered particularly well. Centres would be well advised to ensure their candidates keep a methods and evidence checklist of appropriate advantages and disadvantages to revise from.

Q4ai: The majority of candidates were able to identify successfully the secondary data as either 'media', 'a newspaper report' or 'qualitative data'. A significant minority of candidates, however, did not score the available mark here, citing answers such as 'observation' or an irrelevant point such as 'peers'. Teachers are advised to ensure that candidates are clear about the differences between primary methods and secondary evidence as knowledge of these will be crucial to success in several questions.

Q4aii: Most candidates were able to score the mark here, although some need to be reminded to make better use of the source material referred to.

Q4b: As in the case of question 2, this is a carry over from the legacy paper. Here the focus of the question is on issues of accuracy/validity and only answers focusing on this will score marks. Most candidates focused on issues of bias, the newspaper's need to sensationalise, just one journalist's opinion and the fact that the source was adapted.

Q5: It was pleasing to see that far fewer candidates than on the legacy paper seemed to misinterpret the question and answer this as an essay. It is hoped that the bullet point prompts have helped to reinforce a research and evidence report that is required here. This question was answered generally well. The majority of candidates were able to suggest two primary methods and secondary evidence. Overall candidates gave reasonable generic methodologies and a high proportion of them were able to use specific terminology to describe their methods. The higher ability candidates went on to explain these terms in context with the investigation eg stratified/snowball sample, 'enjoying', 'Goths and Chavs' etc. Most candidates were able to give generic justifications for the methods chosen, though few really dealt in adequate detail with how the methods would inform different elements of the specific investigation and it is this factor that would really help to boost marks if focused on. Secondary evidence was often brief and generic. More sociological concepts and context were sometimes needed, but there were some very good answers from some candidates and the majority were able to score in Level 2.

Section B – Key Concepts in Sociology

Q6: This question worked successfully at targeting the bottom end and most candidates scored all four marks with a few confusing primary and secondary socialisation.

Q7a: This question was generally not well answered, with many candidates being unable to define a stereotype clearly, and some confusing it with social role or role model. Only higher ability candidates really understood the concept of stereotype and referred to 'generalisation/simplification/label' etc. Students may be well advised to compose a glossary of key terms found in the specification to help them in future questions such as this.

Reports on Units taken in June 2010

- Q7b: As expected, the majority of candidates answered this question correctly although, worryingly, a significant minority clearly did not know what was meant by an agency of socialisation. (See advice above re glossary.)
- Q7c: This question proved to be a good differentiator with only the higher ability candidates achieving full marks for each of the ways identified and explained. A large number simply stated that, for example, girls and boys were spoken to differently by teachers or were encouraged to take different subjects, with no real explanation of how that socialises them into their gender roles. Many struggled to identify clearly two ways in which the school prepares girls for later gender roles and, when they did, the explanation was not explicitly linked to the identification. A high proportion of candidates therefore dropped marks for what was quite a straightforward question.
- Q7d: This was typically done better than 7c. Once again, however, there was sometimes a lack of explanation as to the ways male roles have changed, although discussion often included breadwinners, new men and metrosexuals. Some candidates focused on female roles to the detriment of male (as specified in the question) and a few ignored the guidance of '50 years'.
- Q8a: Many good, interesting and topical answers were seen to this question and a lot of candidates understood that norms differ between cultures but tended to have difficulty in stating two clear specific cultures and comparing two specific norms. Answers sometimes stated 'in some cultures', and therefore dropped a mark through lack of specific clarity. A few gave no examples, but tried to define norms versus culture instead, having misread the question.
- Q8b: This question was answered very well in general and displayed good conceptual knowledge and understanding. Many candidates referred to negative and/or positive sanctions or talked about canalisation and manipulation into gender norms. Most candidates were able to name and describe part of how the process of primary socialisation takes place, although candidates should be aware that they need to demonstrate knowledge rather than merely rephrasing the question. In this case, candidates who stated that parents 'teach' their children how to behave could not therefore be rewarded.
- Q9: Most candidates showed excellent time management skills here and were thus able to finish the paper and not jeopardise their opportunity to score marks on this last question. This was really pleasing to see and again appears to be an improvement from the legacy paper. The question seems to have effectively differentiated between candidates of various abilities with very few one-sided answers seen. The better responses used a range of examples and concepts, and tended to contrast formal methods with the power of primary socialisation when commenting on informal methods. Not all students commented on individual agencies of control which distinguished the mid to higher ability candidates. Weaker responses were often confused about formal and informal agencies of social control and a small minority clearly did not know what this meant. To score at the top of Level 3, candidates were also expected to make a judgement on the effectiveness of the agents and it is this very specific focus on the demands of the question that distinguishes candidates at the top end. Teachers might be advised to practise this style of essay question regularly in preparation for the examination.

Examiner hints, tips and advice:

- 1) Ensure candidates have regular practice at the various styles of examination question well before they sit the paper to help with familiarity and to pinpoint any issues that they may have with particular skills or with time management.

Reports on Units taken in June 2010

- 2) Encourage candidates to keep glossaries of the key terms covered as these will always be needed as a basis for the sociological knowledge and understanding for this paper.
- 3) Understanding the command words in the questions correctly will, of course, be crucial to overall success on the paper. The differences between 'identify', 'describe', 'explain', 'justify', 'evaluate' etc need to be covered by teachers as part of the preparation for the examination.

B672 Socialisation, Culture and Identity

This was the first year of examination for this new GCSE Sociology paper which was sat by approximately 200 candidates, many of which were in Year 10 and so had probably studied Sociology for only one year. The paper was marked out of 120 and was untiered meaning that it was designed to cater for candidates of all ability levels. It appears to have differentiated well, stretching candidates at the top end through targeted questions, yet still being accessible to the less able candidates. The exam paper had both sourced questions and questions that required extended writing. There are six options and students had to answer three. Largely candidates understood the requirements of the exam, but a minority answered more than three options and this impacted negatively on their marks.

The most popular options were Sections C, E and F. A smaller number of centres answered Sections A and B, but only a few candidates answered Section D. However, these seemed to be candidates who had mistakenly answered questions in all sections and therefore performed poorly.

General comments:

Candidates were clearly prepared for the paper and had sociological evidence to discuss; however, weaker responses relied largely on common sense. This distinction was more apparent on the essay questions. The essays are worth 24 marks and allow for more precise awarding of marks. Those who had revised extensively, had used sociological evidence and had developed their ideas, received credit and were awarded a range of higher marks. Candidates whose scripts indicated only partial knowledge and understanding were awarded lower marks.

This untiered paper was accessible to all candidates, with the majority doing well on the multiple choice key concept questions. Generally, candidates understood all instructions, though a minority did not and wasted time copying out the key concepts and all descriptions. As the instructions state, candidates only need to copy out the key concept and the letter that labels the correct definition.

It was pleasing to see that candidates not only knew the key concepts for the matching activity, but also seemed to use them consistently throughout their answers in an improved fashion in comparison to the legacy specification.

Finally, most candidates seemed to use their time wisely by ensuring they spent 30 minutes on each section. Inevitably, a few did not and ran out of time.

Section A – Family

Q1: Candidates generally could find from the source how the family affects behaviour. Many could also recall other ways that the family affects behaviour, although some struggled with ensuring their answers focused on behaviour. Most candidates were able to find the agent of socialisation from the source and then recall another agent, although a few were confused between agents of socialisation and agents of social control.

Examiner tip:

- 1 Ensure students are able to give examples of behaviour, values, and norms for each agent of socialisation/control.
- 2 Ensure students know the difference between agents of socialisation and agents of social control.

Q2: This was the matching activity, which candidates found most difficult. Candidates struggled especially with the terms: extended family / reconstituted family and nuclear family.

Examiner tip:

Ensure that students are given the list of key concepts for family from the specification. They need to have a working definition for each and revise these thoroughly. There are ideas for revision games in the schemes of work available on the OCR website.

Q3: Most candidates were able to identify two changes to family structure, though they often did not have any explanation of the change.

Examiner tip:

Ensure students practise for the 8-mark question. They need to be able to identify and explain separately. Show students a clear format: 'One change is... This change has occurred because...'

Q4: This essay divided candidates. Those who did well were able to recall at least four differing ideas that looked at sociological ideas such as symmetrical families vs dual burden. The best answers indicated that the candidate had thought about a wide-ranging answer looking at 'family' and not just conjugal roles. Those who did poorly relied on common sense ideas that lacked sociological language or study. Often these essays lacked evaluative skill and ended up with a simple yes / no format.

Examiner tip:

Students need to plan essays and make sure they have sociological content. For those who struggle they need to use the sociological ideas learnt in class even if they cannot recall the correct sociological language. Practice essay titles can be found on the OCR website for past papers on the legacy specification.

Section B – Education

Q5: Most candidates were able to answer all the source-based questions.

Q6: Most candidates' answers showed a good knowledge of the key concepts, though there was some confusion between National Curriculum and Comprehensive Education.

Examiner tip:

Ensure that students are given the list of key concepts for education from the specification. They need have a working definition for each one and revise these thoroughly. There are ideas for revision games in the schemes of work available on the OCR website.

Q7: Many candidates had difficulty scoring eight marks for this question. While it was highly apparent that they knew what labelling was, they could not identify different effect.

Examiner tip:

Ensure students practise for the 8-mark question. They need to be able to identify and explain separately. Show students a clear format: 'One effect is... This effect can occur when...'. The mark scheme will provide teachers with examples of the different effect to pass on to their students.

Q8: This essay divided candidates. Those who did well were able to recall at least four differing ideas that looked at sociological ideas such as formal vs hidden curriculum. However, those who did poorly relied on common sense ideas that lacked sociological language or study. Often these essays lacked evaluative skill and ended up with a simple yes / no format. Only the best candidates were able to consider evidence of how/why schools are there to help students pass exams. They discussed SATS/league tables and the economic function of education. However, far too many candidates seemed unprepared for this traditional essay on the functions of education.

Examiner tip:

Students need to plan essays ensuring sociological content. Less able candidates need to use the sociological ideas learnt in class even if they cannot recall the correct sociological language. Practice essay titles can be found on the OCR website for past papers on the legacy specification.

Section C Mass Media

Q9: Most candidates could find the type of media in the source, and were able to recall other types and uses. However some relied on examples of mass media eg names of gadgets, not types.

Q10: Most candidates' answers showed a good knowledge of the key concepts, though there was some confusion between News Values and Agenda Setting.

Examiner tip:

Ensure that students are given the list of key concepts for Mass Media from the specification. They need a working definition for each and should revise these thoroughly. There are ideas for revision games in the schemes of work available on the OCR website.

Q11: Most candidates knew examples of the types of censorship, but some had difficulty identifying or clearly naming them eg watershed. It is hoped the mark scheme will help candidates to improve on this.

Examiner tip:

Ensure students practise for the 8-mark question. They need to be able to identify and explain separately. Show students a clear format: 'One type is... This censorship occurs when...'

Q12: Most candidates were able to discuss the possible influences of the media on its audience. However, too many candidates did not base their debate on the sociological models such as the hypodermic syringe model. Some weaker responses confused ideas and terminology, though some managed to gain marks by explaining their ideas and thus having a relevant discussion. Weaker answers were reliant on anecdotal ideas without any sociological basis. Some responses focused on whether or not the mass media should influence their audience, not whether it does.

Examiner tip:

Students need to plan essays ensuring sociological content. Less able candidates need to use the sociological ideas learnt in class even if they cannot recall the correct sociological language. Practice essay titles can be found on the OCR website for past papers on the legacy specification.

Section D: Work

As mentioned above, this section was answered by only a minority of candidates who did not appear to be trained to answer this section and unfortunately their answers reflected this.

Q13: Most candidates found the source-based questions difficult. While some could find an example of gender equality they had difficulty giving other examples or those of gender inequality. Some focused on equality/inequality outside the workplace.

Examiner tip:

Students need to be able to use unseen sources and retrieve information from these. Teachers should ensure students gain practice of this skill.

Q14: Most candidates' answers showed a good knowledge of the key concepts, though there was some confusion between Double Burden and Sexism.

Examiner tip:

Ensure that students are given the list of key concepts for work from the specification. They need to have a working definition for each one and revise these thoroughly. There are ideas for revision games in the schemes of work available on the OCR website.

Q15: Few candidates answered this question well, and some did not give an answer. Those who did often could not identify two changes to patterns of paid work. It is hoped that the mark scheme will help candidates to improve on this.

Examiner tip:

Ensure students practise for the 8-mark question. They need to be able to identify and explain separately. Show students a clear format: 'One change is...', 'This change is when...'

Q16: Most candidates that attempted this question were able to discuss reasons for working, but only a few could use sociological terminology to discuss economic vs social reasons, for example. This may have been due to candidates answering this question mistakenly when they had not been prepared for this option.

Examiner tip:

Students need to plan essays ensuring they include sociological content. Less able candidates need to use the sociological ideas learnt in class even if they cannot recall the correct

sociological language. Practice essay titles can be found on the OCR website for past papers on the legacy specification.

Section E – Crime and Deviance

Q17: Most candidates were successful in finding crimes that victim surveys had recorded more than police statistics. They also managed to find reasons why some crime might not be recorded in police statistics.

Q18: This question was exceptionally well answered. Most candidates were able to match the concept and the statement accurately.

Examiner tip:

Ensure that students are given the list of key concepts for work from the specification. They need to have a working definition for each one and revise these thoroughly. There are ideas for revision games in the schemes of work available on the OCR website.

Q19: Candidates did well to understand what deviance is but only the best responses were able to show knowledge of types of deviance, others relying instead on examples of deviance.

Examiner tip:

Ensure students practise for the 8-mark question. They need to be able to identify and explain separately. Show students a clear format: 'One type of deviance is... This type is when...'

Q20: Candidates did well to discuss reasons for committing crime. However, responses were divided into those who could discuss the sociological debate of why people commit crime and those who discussed the matter using only common sense.

Examiner tip:

Students need to plan essays ensuring they include sociological content. Less able candidates need to use the sociological ideas learnt in class even if they cannot recall the correct sociological language. Practice essay titles can be found on the OCR website for past papers on the legacy specification.

Overall tip:

The format of the paper is unlikely to change so it is important for students to gain plenty of practice, especially timed as if in an examination. Centres need to ensure that candidates have sociological evidence in order to improve their work.

B673 Applying Sociological Research Techniques

This was the first year of examination for this new GCSE Sociology paper. This paper also represents a new approach in the examining of GCSE and replaces the coursework investigation from the legacy specification. As part of a unitised structure, this paper will contribute 25% of the overall GCSE qualification, which will be awarded for the first time in 2011.

This paper is weighted towards the testing of skills. Candidates are examined on their knowledge and understanding of sociological research techniques. They also need to demonstrate their ability to apply their knowledge, understanding and skills of interpretation to the pre-release investigations made available in January of the year of the examination. Candidates are expected to have studied the pre-release material before the examination and to have gained a sound knowledge of it. A copy is made available to them for reference during the exam.

As the J696 specification does not have tiered papers, the B673 examination has questions structured to test the ability range from grade A* to G. It is therefore anticipated that some candidates will find particular questions challenging (eg question 13). Conversely, all candidates should find some parts of the examination paper to be accessible.

Q1: Targeted at grades D to G, this was a straightforward question and most candidates achieved the mark. It required one of the three aims to be copied from the investigation and some candidates wisely selected the shortest one. Copying the title or re-phrasing an aim did not score marks.

Q2(a): In general this was answered well and most candidates scored at least one of the two marks if a partial description was given. Candidates were expected to understand that a hypothesis is 'a statement to be tested'. Many referred to a 'prediction' and there was some flexibility in the awarding of marks. However, hypothesis is a fundamental concept in research and candidates are expected to demonstrate a precise understanding of the term. Some candidates confused this with methodology and wrote about different methods.

Q2(b): Although many candidates gained both marks, there were candidates who answered 2(a) correctly but did not provide an accurate example of a hypothesis in 2(b). The most common error was to provide an aim rather than a hypothesis and this scored no marks. Those who gave a question were credited with one mark as long as their question related to the topic of primary socialisation. One mark was also gained by candidates who gave a hypothesis (statement) on a topic unrelated to the investigation.

Q3: Most candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of the differences between semi-structured and other types of interview. Candidates need to avoid giving answers that are unclear and too brief eg 'It's quicker' but with no comparison offered. Comparisons with a method other than another type of interview (eg unlike with questionnaires, questions can be explained to respondents) were not credited. Answers that scored well identified advantages such as the possibility of asking additional or follow up questions, being able to gain precise information and also being able to gain qualitative data or in-depth understanding.

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Identification of two different advantages gained two marks. However, few candidates scored full marks as they did not relate back to the source. Those who did score more than two marks seemed to achieve this more by chance rather than with a planned reference back to the interview between the teacher and the parent.

Q4: This question was not well answered. To gain marks, there needed to be reference in some way to there being an impact on the data collected. Responses that simply referred to 'having a one-sided view' did not gain marks.

Candidates demonstrated understanding of the notion of bias but many explained interviewer bias as the planned or intended manipulation of respondents' answers to gain preferred data. Such answers scored only one mark.

Further information on what was required is in the published mark scheme.

Q5(a): This question was generally well answered and, although again there were candidates who lost marks through not referring back to the secondary sources in investigation 1, most did do this. Those who referred back to the primary data were not credited.

To gain full marks, candidates needed to identify two distinct disadvantages. Reference to a source as being from outside the UK could only be credited once. The most common answers related to the internet as lacking reliability or validity, the journal article being out of date, and one source being American and the other from Sweden.

Q5(b): This was also answered well and many candidates gained full marks. The most common response was that the Internet provided free and easily acquired data and cited the professional nature of the journal article as written by 'well-respected' sociologists.

The phrasing of the question as being 'advantages of the use of...' encouraged answers which related to being able to meet the aims of the investigation or providing data to support the primary results. Many candidates scored marks in this way. It was apparent that candidates were familiar with the pre-release material and had considered the usefulness of the sources before the exam.

Q6: This question proved challenging to candidates and was intended to test the higher achieving candidates. Many candidates did not explain a link but just said a particular aim had been met. Neither did they provide clear links between aims and findings. Many therefore achieved only two of the six available marks by simple reference to an aim, and/or a question, and/or a finding on two occasions (Level 1) but with no attempt (successful or otherwise) to relate them. A weak link (eg referring to 'aim 1' with no indication of what this said) scored three marks (Level 2). A candidate could score four marks (Level 2) for a clear and explained link being made and five marks (Level 3) if this was done twice. Only a small minority of candidates achieved full marks by showing how one of their links indicated how the aims had *not* or had only been partially met, thereby demonstrating their evaluation skills.

Some candidates interpreted this question as requiring an evaluation of the methodology used in the investigation and discussed sampling in their answer. Credit was not given for this. Candidates who used the secondary data rather than the interview were not credited.

Question 7: As with question 1, this question was intended to be accessible to all candidates including those at the lower end of the grade range. The majority of candidates scored marks but

those who re-phrased the hypothesis, converted it into a question or gave a general aim of the investigation were not credited.

Q8: Candidates who gave a question for their answer rather than an aim were credited with one mark, provided the question related to the topic of the investigation. Those who gave a hypothesis were not credited. Candidates who correctly identified an aim (eg 'To find out'...) and who related this to the topic were credited with both marks and this was achieved by many. There is a need for candidates to be clear about the differences between hypothesis, aim and question.

Q9(a): Although most candidates indicated some understanding of the pilot study, a significant number did not gain both marks as their answer was too brief or lacked clarity. It was evident that examples outside of social research had been used in lessons to facilitate understanding. Unfortunately, when these examples were used in answers, they could not be credited (eg reference to piloting TV programmes). Candidates who gained two marks indicated the use of a small study (some referring to a 'practice run') to test or check methods, sampling or indicate possible findings before the main study. Reference to or indication of research was needed to gain marks. 'Something done to check for problems' was not adequate for credit to be given.

Q9(b): Generally this question was answered well and candidates had been prepared for this during their study of the pre-release material. Common responses related to the overlap of ages but specific reference to why this was a problem had to be made for both marks to be gained. The response 'causing confusion' was not deemed to be specific. Candidates also successfully identified that some questions from the questionnaire (3, 4 and 8) contained two questions and also pointed to the lack of choices in the pre-coded answers. There were some excellent examples of candidates using complex ideas such as operationalising to explain how terms used in the questionnaire lacked precision. However, full marks could be gained without answering to this level.

Candidates who identified the lack of introduction in the questionnaire and no indication to the respondents of anonymity or confidentiality were credited as offering a 'reasonable response', with a second mark given if there was reference to why this was a weakness. Candidates who questioned the age range in relation to the questions on driving were also credited but otherwise reference to the content of the questionnaire rather than the design, were not credited (eg the suggestion that some questions were too personal or unethical).

Q10(a): There were many candidates who did not gain marks for this question. Answers needed to refer to non-official statistics as those not produced by the government (or ONS). A large number of candidates stated them to be 'not official' or 'not approved' by the government and were not credited.

One mark was awarded for an answer which identified statistics as numerical data or which gave a specific example of non-official statistics but neither of these points were necessary for the award of two marks if the reference to 'not produced by the government' had also been made.

Q10(b): Very few candidates failed to identify 9% as the correct answer. A large number of candidates wasted time by writing a sentence to explain their answer.

Q10(c): A few candidates failed to identify 187 as the correct answer. These mostly stated 57 which was the top number on the table. Some candidates added together the numbers on the

table and seemed to assume they were cumulative. This and the last question were both intended to be straightforward questions in which all candidates, including those in the lower grade ranges would be able to gain marks. In some cases, further practice is needed in selecting from statistical data. As with Q10 (b), a large number of candidates wasted time by writing a sentence to explain their answer.

Q11: This was a more challenging question but often done well. It was apparent that candidates had considered possible conclusions to investigation 2 during their preparation for the examination. A large number of candidates scored four marks as they successfully identified two conclusions and supported these with evidence from the questionnaire results. However, reference to the data was fleeting by some candidates (eg 'in the pie charts') and candidates should be encouraged to be specific and identify actual statistical differences in their study of the pre-release material. The few candidates who used the secondary data instead of the questionnaire were not credited for doing so.

A significant number of candidates misunderstood the question and, instead of drawing conclusions, they focused on the weaknesses in the research, giving their own opinion of it. While there was some scope for crediting a good answer which justified that conclusions were compromised by the flaws in the research and lack of reliability, this was not the purpose of the question, which had asked specifically for conclusions.

Q12(a): This proved to be a challenging question and many candidates did not score marks. Many responses were vague and referred to the data as not accurate, as non-official or from the internet and these were not credited. Most of the candidates who did gain marks cited the data as being pre-2004 and therefore out of date and possibly inaccurate. Some identified the source as potentially biased and with an interest in manipulating the statistics. A small number recognised that asking young people about illegal behaviour may not produce honest answers.

Q12(b): This was another challenging question as it required analytical skills of some sophistication. Many did not understand the requirements of the question and scored only one or two marks for reference to the hypothesis and conclusions. The candidates who understood the question and made clear links between the hypothesis and the data gained full marks. Most of these candidates discussed the lack of connection between risk-taking and driving or the lack of evidence regarding socialisation, or they recognised the data as not indicating gender difference. There was a significant number of candidates who failed to read 'secondary data' and used the primary data instead. They were not credited.

Q13: This question will always be challenging, especially for those at the lower end of the grade range. However, some candidates who had not scored highly in the rest of the paper did manage to score marks for this question and there were some high achieving candidates who were placed at the lower end of Level 2. A common error by candidates was misinterpreting the question. The required focus of the question was on *sampling* but often candidates simply went through the guidance bullet points without relating their answers to issues of sampling. This meant that a large number of candidates (even at the top level) wrote large amounts of irrelevant material. Candidates need to read the question carefully and ensure the issues identified in the bullet points are explored in context. The candidates who did this successfully considered whether the aims of the research could be achieved using the samples specified, the use of pilot studies to test response and the likely composition of the sample. General discussion or identification of the aims of the research and use of pilot studies to test questionnaires was not credited.

At Level 1, responses were limited to descriptive points about one or both of the investigations such as identifying the size or nature of the sample (eg five females or he asked his friends) and

at the top of the level there were more descriptive points and/or some weak or implied criticism. At Level 2, the responses were more analytical and there was some use of sociological terms such as different types of sampling technique and those relating to representation. At the top level, candidates evaluated the sampling used in both investigations, relating the bullet points in the question to sampling and discussion of ways the sampling could have been improved.

Overall Comments

This new unit has proved to be successful in testing the skills of candidates to use and interpret data and evaluate the techniques used to produce this. It is evident that teachers have prepared their candidates by using the pre-release material to inform their knowledge and help them develop evaluation skills. The pre-release material provided in the examination is intended to be a prompt and it was evident that candidates were familiar with it. However, more candidates could have made use of information not in the main body of the research (eg researcher details and location). This would have been useful for questions involving representation or bias.

Successful candidates demonstrated good analytical skills and teachers do need to consider when to enter candidates for this unit; in some cases, candidates may have benefitted from having an additional year to develop their skills.

The format of the examination paper proved to be successful. Candidates followed the instructions for completion of the paper well and there was adequate space provided for candidates to complete their answers. The small number who required additional space used the pages at the end of the booklet successfully. Candidates would be well advised to try to keep the length of their answers within the space provided whenever possible as some candidates, particularly at the top end of the grade range, spent too long on some of the shorter questions and achieved full marks early in their answers. This meant that some ran out of time and lost marks from being unable to complete question 13. However, most candidates coped well with the demands of the examination within the time constraints.

Candidates do need to pay attention to the instructions to complete the required number of points within the numbered sections on the question paper. They can only be credited for one point (or reason etc) within one numbered area. Candidates who gave two correct answers under point 1 but nothing under point 2 could only be given marks for one of the two answers given.

This is a challenging examination paper because there Assessment Objectives 2 and 3 have a large percentage weighting. However, there are questions which test knowledge, so that precise knowledge of sociological concepts and definitions will benefit candidates at all levels of the grade range.

Teachers would be advised to remind their candidates to adhere to the 'mark per minute' when completing the paper. This would help to enhance marks for question 13 for which some candidates ran out of time.

One of the most significant ways candidates could improve their marks is to note the need to refer specifically to the source if the question refers to 'Investigation 1' or 'Investigation 2'.

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