



External Assessment Report 2009

Subject	Health and Food Technology
Level	Advanced Higher

The statistics used in this report are pre-appeal.

This report provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers/lecturers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding. It would be helpful to read this report in conjunction with the published question papers and marking instructions for the Examination.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

Dissertation

An improvement in the application of the process was evident from previous years. In the main, candidates approached the dissertation in a sound manner and followed the steps of the dissertation logically.

Topics for the dissertation focussed frequently on dietary targets and food choices. Candidates should be encouraged to select new areas for research.

Some candidates did not achieve full marks as pages were missing from their dissertation.

There is a need for candidates to proof read their dissertation prior to submission and to make use of the spell check facility.

Question Paper

There were a number of candidates whose work showed a depth of knowledge appropriate to Advanced Higher level and had been well prepared for the examination. Less able candidates did not provide sufficient depth in their responses and also, in some instances, an insufficient number of responses to correspond with the marks awarded.

Most candidates answered using bullet points and this has resulted in more focussed responses.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Dissertation

Introduction

Good candidates set out and justified objectives clearly which gave scope for the use of a variety of methodologies.

Methodology

Most questionnaires were well constructed with sufficient questions, linked to the objectives, to allow collection of valid data. Most questionnaires were piloted.

Results

Results were well presented by the majority of candidates.

Conclusion

The best candidates demonstrated a sound ability to synthesise and evaluate the information and research they had undertaken. They were logical and clear in their summations and were able to draw clear conclusions and also cross refer to the literature review.

Most candidates discussed the conclusion in the order of the objectives and this practice gave more structure to the conclusion.

Question Paper

Section A

b. This was generally well done. Some candidates displayed very good knowledge related to specific additives.

Section B

Question 1 (b)

A range of factors which have contributed to obesity was critically discussed by candidates and the overall response was good. Where candidates received lower marks, this was due to insufficient responses being supplied

Question 2

Candidates who completed this question performed well and showed a detailed and accurate demonstration of knowledge in relation to the role of micro nutrients in a teenagers diet. Candidates correctly identified the functions of the micro nutrient but some could have shown a greater link to teenagers in their responses.

Question 4

A range of answers was provided and overall candidates addressed this question reasonably well. Some responses lacked depth and there was a tendency for repetition in this question. Some candidates did not supply sufficient responses to gain the allocation of marks.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Dissertation

Methodology

There is still much room for improvement in this section. Some methodologies were very brief. Candidates should ensure that sufficient detail should be included to allow their research to be replicated in order to validate findings along with a justification of the chosen methodology.

This section is worth 30 marks – some candidates who provided 1 ½ pages gave limited information.

Conclusion

Less able candidates found this section challenging. Very few conclusions were drawn and candidates are still repeating results rather than analysing, discussing findings and drawing conclusions. Candidates did not show a clear understanding of the limitations encountered during their research. Recommendations for further research lacked conviction and justification. Limitations and recommendations were sometimes ignored by candidates except for a passing reference to them.

Question Paper

Section A

- a. Although most candidates gave good responses, there were instances where candidates lifted the information exactly from the text and gave responses far in excess of the five expected.
- c. This was not well answered. Candidates appeared not to understand irradiation and there was some confusion between genetic modification and irradiation. Some candidates did not attempt this part of the question.

Section B

Question 1

- a. A lack of accuracy was shown by candidates in relation to the dietary targets. Some candidates did not link their responses back to obesity. There were instances of candidates inaccurately selecting the salt target as a way to reduce obesity.

Questions 3 and 5 were not accessed by candidates.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Dissertation

General

Candidates should ensure that the title of the dissertation reflects the research undertaken. Referencing could be improved especially when stating publishers and dates when websites were accessed. For correct referencing of resources, centres should refer the Guidance Notes for Candidates. Avoid use of “first person” during the dissertation. Where centres are presenting a number of candidates, candidates should avoid similar topics. Candidates should check that no pages are missing from the dissertation and that each section of the dissertation is clearly identified.

Introduction

There should be evidence of wide reading. A bias towards websites and newspapers can result in a lack of academic or scientific background in the introduction. A variety of credible resources should be used. If possible candidates should access University libraries or the school librarian may be able to gain appropriate resources for the candidate.

Methodology

All objectives should be overtaken by the methodology and only primary research should be included - literary research should be included in the introduction. Information in this section should be sufficiently detailed to allow repetition. Questionnaires – a sufficient number of respondents should be used, 70 – 100 depending on the topic. Twenty respondents are insufficient to give valid results.

Results

Candidates should ensure that dual axis on graphs should be clearly labelled when presenting graphs. Figures and percentages should be carefully checked when presenting graphs. Key points should not include discussion or conclusions.

Conclusions

Candidates should be encouraged to draw together all the information from secondary and primary research in order to draw credible conclusions. Conclusions must be based on evidence found in the dissertation. All results should be discussed and analysed. Candidates should take care not to omit any results from the research.

Question Paper

General

Centres are reminded that candidates should undertake independent research to extend and update the Course content. Candidates must be made aware that current research/ reports must be accessed.

Exam Preparation

Candidates should be encouraged to develop greater discussion skills within their responses to provide greater depth and detail in all questions.

Responses should be linked to the key word of the question eg teenagers, reduction in obesity. The use of headings and bullet points will provide more structure within responses and may help reduce repetition.

Candidates should access the Marking Instructions available on SQA's website.

Section A

a. Candidates are expected to "outline" their responses. Candidates are expected to use their own wording but this should accurately reflect the content of the report and should not include personal opinions. Many candidates gave 6 responses for this area worth 5 marks. In many cases this benefited the candidates and is good practice to continue.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2008	32
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Number of resulted entries in 2009	20
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Statistical information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of Course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of Course awards	%	Cum. %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark - 200				
A	10.0%	10.0%	2	140
B	30.0%	40.0%	6	120
C	40.0%	80.0%	8	100
D	5.0%	85.0%	1	90
No award	15.0%	100.0%	3	-

General commentary on grade boundaries

- While SQA aims to set examinations and create marking instructions which will allow a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional C boundary) and a well prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70% of the available marks (the notional A boundary), it is very challenging to get the standard on target every year, in every subject at every level.
- Each year SQA therefore holds a grade boundary meeting for each subject at each level where it brings together all the information available (statistical and judgemental). The Principal Assessor and SQA Qualifications Manager meet with the relevant SQA Business Manager and Statistician to discuss the evidence and make decisions. The meetings are chaired by members of the management team at SQA.
- The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the exam is more challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.
- The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the exam is less challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.
- Where standards are comparable to previous years, similar grade boundaries are maintained.
- An exam paper at a particular level in a subject in one year tends to have a marginally different set of grade boundaries from exam papers in that subject at that level in other years. This is because the particular questions, and the mix of questions are different. This is also the case for exams set in centres. If SQA has already altered a boundary in a particular year in say Higher Chemistry this does not mean that centres should necessarily alter boundaries in their prelim exam in Higher Chemistry. The two are not that closely related as they do not contain identical questions.
- SQA's main aim is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and all levels and maintain comparable standards across the years, even as arrangements evolve and change.