

National Qualifications 2006

Senior Moderator Report

Subject: Biology **Standard Grade - Practical Abilities**
National Units

Assessment Panel: **Biology / Human Biology**

STANDARD GRADE

ELEMENT / COURSEWORK MODERATED

PRACTICAL ABILITIES - TECHNIQUES AND INVESTIGATIONS

FEEDBACK TO CENTRES

General comments:

The evidence submitted by centres was generally complete and as requested. The sample contained the broad spectrum of grades as per the sampling format given in the guidelines to centres.

Techniques

There continues to be a number of centres who have candidates that fail to successfully master techniques such as

- Using a biological key
- Testing for reducing sugar
- Choice chamber

This often results in the candidate being penalised a grade

Investigations

Many centres fulfill the requirements of SQA but appear to penalize some of the candidates from their centre by only doing investigations at two points in the course. Candidates absent at these times appear to get little or no other chance to complete the work.

In many cases centres are submitting two investigations where both booklets covered discontinuous variables – at least one continuous variable investigation is requested.

Advice on good practice and areas for further development:

Increased evidence of internal verification – this should continue to be encouraged with the *proviso* that changes in marks and final decisions are obvious to the moderating team.

Centres should ensure that they are using the latest set of guidelines for assessment

Candidates should be given the opportunity to attempt all techniques as part of ongoing course work and several investigations in their two years of Standard Grade work.

In terms of staff development, the Moderator's Report should be forwarded to the appropriate members of staff. This is particularly important where the member of staff responsible for forwarding the moderation evidence is a teacher of another science discipline.

NATIONAL UNITS

TITLES/LEVELS OF NATIONAL UNITS MODERATED

ACCESS / INTERMEDIATE 1
INTERMEDIATE 2
HIGHER
HIGHER HUMAN
ADVANCED HIGHER BIOLOGY

FEEDBACK TO CENTRES

General comments:

The general standard of moderation was excellent with most centres producing evidence of a very high standard.

- All centres moderated had used NAB Tests to test Outcome 1 and 2 with the majority using one of the earlier test papers
- Marking was accurate and consistent with most of the centres using updated Marking Instructions.
- Changes to the published Marking Instructions should be submitted with the evidence.
- No centres failed due to arithmetic error, mainly due to the increased practice of internal verification.
- Where internal verification produces changes these should be obvious to the moderation team.
- As only one completed report is required for Outcome 3 then it need not necessarily be linked to the Unit Test being moderated.
- The Outcome 3 report used as evidence should allow the candidates the opportunity to achieve all of the required PC's.

Advice on good practice and areas for further development:

The practice of internal verification should continue to be encouraged.

Unlike the unit tests, the marking of Outcome 3 was rarely internally moderated and many of the candidate scripts submitted failed to clearly indicate where each of the specific PC's were being awarded.

Unit tests are PASS or FAIL – many centres appear to award a variety of grades.

For Outcome 3:

The degree of complexity should reflect the level of the award, in particular, the practical work undertaken and the reporting of such work at AH;

Extrapolation of graph work should not be awarded marks;

More specific evaluation relating to the experiment should be encouraged, rather than the use of the generalised statements that regularly appear.

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