

Senior Moderator Report –Central 2004

Assessment Panel:

Biology

Qualification area

**Subject(s) and Level(s)
included in this report**

**Biology, Human Biology and Biotechnology
Access, Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2, Higher and
Advanced Higher**

Central Moderation

General comments on central moderation activity

Evidence from most of the centres was complete and in line with that requested by SQA.

In all cases the evidence submitted for Outcomes 1 and 2 was in the form of a published NAB test and in the vast majority of cases the candidate evidence supplied was for the candidates listed on the moderation request form.

Once again the main reason for failing moderation was the centres' failure to supply any Outcome 3 evidence at all despite the changing of requirements to allow the submission of any one piece of evidence.

The Unit Tests

All the centres moderated had used NAB Tests to test Outcome 1 and 2 and there was evidence that the majority of tests published were being used but there was heavier use of the earlier publications.

Marking was accurate and consistent in most cases. Where centres used the earlier NAB tests most of them applied the updated marking scheme.

However, where inconsistencies arose it was mainly due to:

- not taking amendments in the mark schemes into consideration
- adding inappropriate answers to the mark schemes.

The totalling of scripts was of a very high order with no centres failing due to Arithmetic Errors. Disappointingly there was a noted decrease in centres using internal moderation as a check, causing more centres to fail moderation.

Outcome 3

This area of assessment was of a very high standard across all the levels being moderated and in the majority of cases the level of reporting was commensurate with the level of qualification being tested.

Again it was disappointing that there was a decrease in the number of centres using internal moderation. However, there were more centres indicating on the scripts where the various PC's had been awarded in the marking of O3.

Specific issues identified

A small number of the centres moderated had failed to take into account the published updates of the NAB mark schemes and other amendments particularly in the Higher Biology units.

The regular error to arise was the acceptance of 'accurate' and 'fair' to mean the same as 'reliable.'

Centres that showed no indication of internal moderation were much more likely to cause concern with problems such as - the totalling of reports and the application of changes in the published mark schemes.

NAB tests are 'PASS or FAIL' – many centres also appear to award a variety of grades and marks and transfer these on to the Moderation sample sheet instead of the required wording.

With only one piece of evidence required to achieve Outcome 3 failure to supply the evidence resulted in automatic 'Not Accepted'. It is recommended that centres build in Outcome 3 assessment to the course work.

In the case of PC (f) there is a recommendation that more specific evaluation relating to the experiment rather than use of the generalised statements that regularly appear; particularly in the Higher responses where a greater level of understanding is expected.

Extrapolation of graph work continues to be given marks.

Feedback to centres

- The general standard was excellent with most centres producing evidence of a very high standard.
- Centres must ensure that all the material required for moderation is submitted. In particular Outcome 3 reports.
- As only one completed report is required 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 PCs. Markers should indicate on the report the point at which each individual PC has been awarded.
- Where internal moderation produces changes the final decision should be obvious to the moderation team.
- Any changes to the published mark schemes should be submitted with the evidence for consideration and comment by the moderators.