GCSE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

HOME ECONOMICS

SUMMER 2014
Grade Boundaries

Grade boundary information for this subject is available on the WJEC public website at: https://www.wjecservices.co.uk/MarkToUMS/default.aspx?l=en

Online results analysis

WJEC provides information to examination centres via the WJEC secure website. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.

Annual Statistical Report

The annual Statistical Report (issued in the second half of the Autumn Term) gives overall outcomes of all examinations administered by WJEC.
Unit 1 – Principles of Food and Nutrition

Q.1  (a) Most candidates gained 2 or 3 marks.

(b) Most candidates were able to provide reasons to avoid sugar in the diet, although some referred incorrectly to reducing sugar in order to reduce cholesterol levels or blood pressure.

(c) Most candidates were able to provide alternative to sweeten foods the common response being sweeteners.

Q.2 Good responses were evident.

Q.3 (a) Most candidates gained 2 or 3 marks.

(b) Good responses from candidates with the majority of candidates correctly referring to growth and repair.

Q.4 (a) Many candidates gained 2 marks. Some candidates incorrectly identified sugar as an ingredient to lower the fat content of the milkshake recipe.

(b) Mostly correct responses with candidates identifying the use of lactose free products.

(c) Well answered with most candidates gaining at least 3-4 marks. The most popular responses focussed on the health benefits such as milkshakes/smoothies providing calcium, protein and fats. Those candidates that discussed the argument that milkshakes/smoothies can be high in sugar and fat demonstrated ability to discuss the full value in a child’s diet.

Q.5 (a) There was an obvious lack of understanding in many responses, with many candidates failing to identify the correct type of packaging. Often confusing the two types and providing a correct response for the wrong abbreviation. Extending the shelf life tended to be the generic answer supplied to cover both types of packaging.

(b) A poorly answered question with most candidates confusing the abbreviations RDA and RDI. There was an obvious lack of understanding in many responses, with many candidates failing to identify correctly the Glycaemic Index. Those candidates that showed understanding and knowledge gained full marks.
Q.6  (a) Many candidates were able to identify correctly the type of flour used in making bread. There were an unfortunate number of candidates who stated self raising and plain flour as responses. 

(b) This was answered quite poorly with many candidates failing to identify with the key words in the question. This question showed a lack of understanding of fortification in food products from many candidates. 

(c) This was answered fairly well, particularly by candidates who were reflecting on practical experience with yeast.  

(d) Generally the question was well answered with many excellent responses reflecting application of knowledge and understanding. Unfortunately, a few candidates focussed on the making of pastry/scones which indicated a lack of transferable knowledge from practical work. Candidates who scored well displayed a good understanding and application of theory to practical work. Some excellent knowledge referred to the importance of yeast and gluten in bread making. It was also encouraging to see many candidates confidently using terms such as kneading, knocking back, shaping, glazing and making reference to the term ‘batch’ making. 

Q.7  (a) Most candidates gained 2/3 marks for this question showing a clear understanding of reasons to cook food. 

(b)  

(i) Far too many candidates focussed on ‘general’ aspects of avoiding accidents in the kitchen rather than focussing on the method of cooking (stir fry). Popular responses included the reference to hot oil and making reference to the pan handle facing in. 

(ii) Most candidates gained 2 or 3 marks for making good references to the quickness and easiness of stir frying and making reference to the ‘healthiness’ of the methods of cooking. Those candidates who also discussed the specific vitamin retention and reference to maintaining colour and texture were awarded for their knowledge. 

(iii) Generally a well answered question with many candidates responding well to the key words in the question. Responses centralised around the correct preparation and cooking of the chicken, giving correct examples of matching colour coded equipment with specific foods and made good reference to avoiding cross contamination and consequent food poisoning through adopting correct procedures. Temperatures stated were also correct and showed that candidates can reflect on practices in the kitchen. 

Q.8  (a) A well answered question with candidates clearly identifying with the key words. Many candidates provided clear responses of how to keep food at a safe temperature, with many candidates identifying correct storage temperatures of perishable and non perishable foods. However, some candidates did fail to read the question fully, missing out how to keep the food in a good condition also. 

(b) This question was answered fairly well, with many candidates expressing how to get good value for money when shopping. Popular responses included deals such as buy one get one free, using own branded supermarket items and buying non perishable items in bulk. As this question focussed on the shopping rather than cooking of food, it was unfortunate that candidates who identified how to ‘save money’ with the cooking of food failed to answer the question correctly.
Q.9  (a) Some excellent responses were evident with discursive comments demonstrating mature understanding. Most candidates were able to identify two items of food preparation equipment and could clearly justify the various roles they play in saving time and energy. However a disappointing number of candidates made reference to the types of convenience foods available, with many candidates discussing instead the use of ‘take away’ food rather than convenience foods. Those candidates that did answer correctly showed a clear understanding of the range and types of convenience foods available to help save time in food preparation.

(b) Again some excellent responses were marked with candidates giving well balanced answers. Good references to avoiding food waste in the home were made with many examples of controlling portion size, only buying what was needed. Some candidates tended to repeat responses made to Q8 (b). Candidates who failed to access high marks failed to discuss the ability to re-use or reheat foods in various ways.

General comments

- Far more candidates are attempting to answer all questions which is encouraging.

- Many able candidates were not gaining marks on the shorter questions but were awarded very high marks for the essay type responses. It is essential candidates practice all question types as part of revision.

- Weaker candidates were gaining average marks for all questions and accessing half marks or more on the last question, which is as expected.

- Reading questions is still a weakness for many candidates. Misunderstanding and choosing the wrong focus is often the reason why candidates are not able to access higher marks. Candidates need examination technique practice sessions and guidance on interpretation of command words used in questions.

- It was pleasing to see a number of candidates draft a plan to help construct a good discussion for the longer response questions in particular question 9. This should continue to be encouraged by centres as it strengthens the candidate’s ability to focus on the key words.

- Lack of specific terminology and subject specific vocabulary needs to be addressed. Examples of poor communication include candidates making references to ‘chucking in food’, ‘adding things’ and ‘putting in stuff’. The use of poor communication prevents candidates accessing the higher marks bands.
Unit 2 – Controlled Assessment

Principal Moderator: Bethan Jones

Administration

Some centres did not include the FN1, FN2 and FN4 forms with the sample which are an essential requirement of the moderation process. Candidates should preferably be listed in rank order.

It is considered good practice to check candidates’ composite mark against the performance criteria for accurate representation.

Face to face CPD events are available in the Autumn term, these can be accessed from the Home Economics: Food and Nutrition subject page on the WJEC website. Guidance and exemplar materials are also available via the subject page and on our secure website.

Task 1

The egg task and the fruit and vegetables task were by far the most popular this year. Many centres are delivering the topics within the scheme of work so that candidates can access this information in their controlled assessments.

Investigation and Planning

It was pleasing to see both secondary and primary research being undertaken and the findings used in interpretation of the task. Surveys and questionnaires need to be relevant, leading to realistic ideas and justification of choice.

Candidates need to show some element of sequencing in planning for practical sessions, with accurate and appropriate references to hygiene and safety. The majority of centres were able to plan for the making of at least two of the four dishes in one session, giving candidates an opportunity to show evidence of logical thinking and dovetailing of tasks. Where this is not evident, it is not possible to award candidates marks in the top band for this component.

Production

Many suitable dishes were made for both tasks. Marks in the top band can only be awarded to candidates who have displayed excellent finish with high quality outcome.

Evaluation

Too many centres are evaluating the whole task instead of nutrition, sensory and possibly costing as required on the assessment criteria. The time and space used would be more beneficially used elsewhere. Costing needs to be realistic and detailed, to show understanding.
Task 2

Many centres are contextualising tasks and although this adds more focus and individuality, care must be taken not to lose sight of the task topic.

Investigation and Research

This section must demonstrate candidates’ knowledge and understanding and progress naturally to the development section.

Some good analytical skills were in evidence but generally, the development of ideas section remains the weakest where candidates miss opportunities to carry out experimental work. This section is not designed to be simply a trial run of recipes for the final practical assessment. Candidates must show ability to analyse and evaluate possible ideas, justifying final practical choices.

Production

It was very encouraging to see the majority of centres time tabling practical assessment to give candidates the opportunity to plan accurately with logical sequencing of tasks. A minimum of four dishes should be completed although many candidates produced five or six dishes. The final practical assessment needs to show progression from Task 1, and candidates need to show and ‘extensive range of appropriate skills’ with “outcomes of excellent finish and high quality” to access the top band marks. There were serious concerns about over generous marking of practical outcomes where high skills were not evident and/or the photographic evidence did not support the awarding of high marks. However, many centres deserve credit for teaching excellent practical techniques supported by aesthetic display skills.

Evaluation

This section was generally good, including all the required areas. Practical work remains as the main focus of evaluation but needs to show evidence of understanding in the supporting comments on sensory and nutritional aspects. Whole task analysis with detailed discursive comments, highlighting strengths, weaknesses and improvements are essential to access the top band of marks for evaluation.

General Comments

Organisation/presentation of work is a major concern in few centres. All work must be identifiable with centre number, candidates’ details with individually labelled and attached photographic work.

Set clear aims for both tasks. Candidates can refer to these continually and draw brief conclusions to summarise each section of the task.

Candidates need clear guidance on the assessment criteria and on completion of tasks. Many centres did not address issues raised in 2013 moderators’ reports resulting in some marks being adjusted. Individual centre reports are available via the Internal Assessment Mark Input System from results day.

It was evident that some centres are unclear as to which specification being delivered. This was quite obvious in candidates’ use of terminology, for example mis-en-place, selling price, profit, product development.
HOME ECONOMICS (TEXTILES)
General Certificate of Secondary Education
Summer 2014

Chief Examiner: Margaret Hopkins

General comments

It was most encouraging to see again this year, new centres opting for the subject and a number of returning centres.

Since CPD last year, considerable interest has been shown in the specification and it is hoped that even more centres will be joining us next year.

A series of CPD events have been arranged for the Autumn term to help and assist in the delivery of the subject specification. There will be an opportunity for teachers to view exemplar work and to discuss any other aspects of the course. Teachers should refer to the WJEC website for further details and booking procedures.

Unit 1 – Principles of Textiles and Fashion

It is obvious that candidates still need further practice in examination technique, their ability to read questions accurately and to relate their answers to the marks available.

Candidates should also be encouraged and reminded to relate their written work to the practical work covered during the two year course. This weakness was highlighted in questions where candidates are requested to give written instructions for a particular practical process as in Question 7 (b) this year, when candidates were asked to show how to complete a practical decorative process. There was a disappointing response to this part of the question and some candidates lost valuable marks. Weaker candidates still appear unable to make this transition of skills.

Q.1 A disappointing response to a very basic question. Very few candidates were familiar with paper pattern terminology.

Q.2 As for Question 1 - this was a disappointing response with some candidates failing to attempt a response.

Q.3 Most candidates were able to underline the correct odd one out, but reasons for choice were often weak or not given.

Q.4 Most candidates gave reasonable examples some candidates did not read the question correctly and failed to explain the method of controlling fullness.
Q.5  (a) This question had a good response with most candidates able to identify textile safety rules.

(b) Most candidates were able to give reasonable advantages of the overlocker.

(c) A poor response - some candidates failed to recognise and name the BSI label and explain its use to the consumer.

(d) Generally not well answered. The majority of candidates did not know the provisions of the Sale of Goods Act and confused it with consumer rights when returning and exchanging faulty goods.

Q.6  (a) A pleasing response to this question with most candidates fully aware of the points to consider when designing bags/holdalls.

(b) This was a popular question and the diagrams/sketches submitted varied considerably in execution. The majority of candidates produced original design ideas making full use of colour and detail. It is in this type of question that the use of coloured crayons should be encouraged to aid the quality of their response. There was limited annotation in some cases. Candidates should mention the suitability of fabrics when annotating their designs.

(c) A pleasing response to this question with most candidates fully aware of the popularity and usage of sports bags/holdalls as a fashion accessory. Many candidates mentioned the various uses for sports bags/holdalls and included school bags, holiday bags, designer bags and celebrities. There was some element of repetition evident in some cases.

Q.7  (a) All candidates attempted this question. The diagrams/sketches submitted varied considerably in execution. On the whole, the quality of the design work was much improved from last year. The majority of candidates produced original and popular fashion design ideas making full use of design features and detail. There was limited annotation in some cases and a few candidates failed to mention the main design features.

(b) Generally not well answered. The step by step diagrams were generally of a very poor quality, too small and often untidy. Written instructions for the decorative technique were sometimes of a poor quality, candidates failed to apply their basic knowledge of creative sewing techniques. Instructions in many cases were too vague. Some candidates gave instructions for padded appliquéd instead of quilting.

(c) This question was very well answered with candidates very much aware of the reasons why quilting is widely used in fashion and household items. Most candidates were able to discuss at length the various issues pertaining to the insulation and the layering of fabrics but a few candidates tended to concentrate on one or two points and continued to repeat the same point over and over.
Q.8  (a)  A pleasing response to this question with most candidates fully aware of the points to consider when applying dye to fabric. Tie dye was a popular choice with most candidates knowing that cotton gave the best results. Many candidates were aware that a mordant was needed.

(b)  A disappointing response to this question.

This question was generally not well answered - Candidates did not fully understand the importance of colour when choosing a colour scheme for a room. Responses tended to be very repetitive and lacked structure.

Q.9  (a)  This was by far the most popular choice of question and was answered reasonably well by the majority of candidates. Some candidates discussed at length the points and issues involved when using denim as a fashion fabric. Very few candidates discussed the origin of denim and little reference was made to the history or construction of denim. The fashion side to denim is obviously an area that teenagers are interested in and this was reflected in the quality of the response. Many candidates mentioned celebrities, accessories, the wearing of jeans, role-models etc.

(b)  The least popular choice with only a few candidates attempting to discuss the importance and success of lycra. Some candidates did not understand why lycra was mixed with other fibres. Many candidates identified that lycra was used for swimwear and sportswear and that was the full extent of their knowledge. This was a disappointing response with candidates losing valuable marks for poor interpretation of the question and lack of knowledge.
Unit 2 – Controlled Assessment

Administration

Most of the work arrived on time, carefully packed and correctly sampled, thank you. It is vital that all work arrives on time in order to ensure the smooth running of the moderation process – all work must be sent to the WJEC by the specified date.

Please see the Administration Booklet published on the WJEC website for clarification of these dates.

It would be appreciated if candidates could be advised to choose items that are suitable for packing and posting, e.g. cushion/quilt covers and bean bags may be sent without the fillings to save on postage costs. It is acceptable to include photographs of the stuffed items in the design folios, so that the moderator is able to view the finished effect.

Individual work was not always clearly labelled with centre number, candidate number and Task number. Labels need to be attached securely to all practical work and all folder work needs to be clearly identified.

In most instances paperwork had been correctly completed but please note that both the TX1 and the TX2 need to be completed in rank order - this rank order may be different for both tasks.

There were some inaccuracies in the totalling of marks for some candidates.

It is a formal requirement for candidate signatures on the TX1 and TX2 forms, to certify that the work is all their own. Time Record Sheets should also be sent for all candidates in the sample to show authenticity.

It is helpful at moderation when the practical work for Task 1 and Task 2 are packed separately - this was usually done. Thank you.

Some centres again this year included both the folios for Task 1 and Task 2 in the same flip folder, i.e. - one in the front of the folder and one in the back of the folder - this obviously helps to keep all folio pages together and proved most helpful at Moderation – This may also may help to reduce costs.

Sample size changes were adopted by most centres - please refer to the current Administrative booklet on the WJEC website for the correct sample size. A sample of ten is necessary for the majority of centres.

It would also be helpful if those candidates in the moderation sample could be marked with an asterisk on the TX1 and the TX2 forms to help with identification at moderation.

Most centres provided clear annotation of the controlled tasks but not always. It is important at moderation, that the moderator can see how and why marks have been awarded and which four skills have been assessed in practical items. On the whole, teacher comments and annotation were both helpful and realistic - thank you.
It was encouraging to see that the centres’ approach to the utilisation of the ten hours for this task was more realistic and achievable for all candidates.

Sadly some centres failed to follow the recommended time allocation and some candidates failed to complete their written evaluations.

Candidates showed a clear understanding of the requirements of their chosen task.

It would be advantageous to include a clear set of aims to demonstrate their organisational skills in order to access the higher mark grade boundaries and to give a good start as a point of reference when evaluating their work.

Some candidates failed to state their aims.

Folios often contained research and information of a very high standard and were very well presented. Most candidates carried out relevant and meaningful investigation into techniques, with sound justifications for final choice.

Folios displayed a far better approach to the editing of their folios including only relevant information within the 4 page limit of Task 1. The limit of four sides of A3 is a skill which can be fostered to select and reject relevant material at the same time as utilising the space effectively.

Some candidates annotated their work by showing written information underneath the fabric or technique samples. This obviously proved most effective and economical on space. To access higher marks candidates should be encouraged to include more supportive comments for their chosen fabrics and techniques.

Candidates should be guided not to include additional illustrations with no annotation candidates need to refine their research. Candidates should not exceed the four A3 sheets.

Folios varied considerably according to the interests and abilities of the candidates, but in most cases the new folio format was well received. Folios often followed a coherent and logical layout enabling candidates to draw sensible conclusions and outcomes.

Most folios were well organised and followed the set criteria for assessment. In the majority of cases the folio pages were formatted well allowing candidates to achieve pleasing investigative ideas. On the whole the folios were well structured allowing the candidates to gain marks in all sections of the marking criteria.

Candidates should be encouraged to show a variety of small practical technique samples particularly on Page 1 of their folios. In some cases, these samples were too large and tended to restrict the information and investigation work allocated for that page. More emphasis is required on experimental work, the results of which should be relevant to the selection and rejection of choice ideas and techniques.

Inevitably, some folios were sparse with no real evidence of investigation work and design ideas with the chosen solution often stated within the first sentence or two of their folio work. Design ideas should show more development before the final design is chosen.

Please note that within the exploration/development section of the folio, it is not essential to design more than one type of item, e.g. fashion items or items for the home.

If a candidate is intending to make a cushion, then their design ideas need only concentrate on the development of cushion shapes, styles, ideas, etc.
Evaluations were generally well written, especially where candidates have been given detailed guidance to encapsulate all the assessment criteria. The best evaluations were written under sub headings, where they were tackled in more detail.

It would be of benefit to some candidates if strengths and weaknesses and further developments were addressed to extend the evaluation.

Star analysis as part of the evaluation is often a good idea, but an explanation is also needed.

Please note that the Task 1 Folio does not require a plan of action sheet, due to this section of the controlled assessment being concerned only with the application of skills, i.e. a skills based task.

Many candidates use ICT opportunities to enhance presentation. Whilst it is pleasing to see the innovative use of ICT, it is not essential in a timed controlled situation. As long as the folio work is clear, legible and in a logical order, it does not hinder in any way the candidates accessing the full range of marks available. Candidates should avoid shading over or highlighting text.

**Production**

A range of outcomes were achieved resulting from clear folio research and a structured route through to the realisation. Once again, more realistic items were achieved by the majority of candidates. Lively and individual interpretations were achieved in most cases, although occasionally the same basic item had been made by the whole sample/cohort which can limit creativity and an individual approach.

Many items were well made and had a strong design element. It was inspiring to mark these items. Unfortunately, some candidates embarked on items that were too large and contained massive amounts of technique repetition. Big does not mean better.

Centres need to guide candidates, early on, to choose smaller more manageable items, with carefully selected techniques and fabrics they can cope with. In many cases, candidates benefited from making smaller items with less repetition of techniques. Valuable time can be spent refining these techniques to a high standard.

Practical items varied with ability but on the whole the practical work was of a pleasing standard. Straight pins should not be included within candidates work.

The “recycling brief” was again very well received and candidates researched and displayed a broad range of innovative ideas in this area. There were some interesting recycling projects, with candidates using patchwork and quilting to create useful items for themselves and family members.

The use of existing items is one way of overcoming the time constraint of the task, this was often carried out successfully but needed to be monitored a little more closely if the initial starting item was difficult to work with. When working with existing items such as shopping bags, fabrics tend to be difficult to embellish and sew. This can, at times inhibit the candidates ability to demonstrate the skills that are of a high standard. If candidates choose to make simple items, they could then utilise these better to demonstrate their range of skills and incorporate more construction techniques as well as decorative techniques.
It was particularly pleasing to see a wide range of creative processes demonstrated including painting, batik, dying etc. Creative/free machine embroidery was a popular choice of technique this year, often carried out very well.

Much of the practical work was well constructed with many candidates making good use of computerised developments.

Please note that the use of basic stencilling, using stencil pens on fabric, cannot be classed as a high quality skill. Also, the gluing of fabrics onto another fabric cannot be classed as high quality appliqué and marked as such.

The application of Bondaweb to a fabric should not be classed as one of the four practical skills.

Many centres are now using CAD/CAM widely and image transfer was quite popular again, often with very successful results.

Please note that basic computerised designs/patterns are not considered to be in the top bracket for assessment in the chosen skill/technique section of the production.

The assessment of candidates' practical skills, in some cases, tended to be a little generous within the accuracy section of the assessment criteria, e.g. an item must have appropriately neatened seams of a very good quality or intricate embroidery of a high standard, if the skill is to access the higher band of marks.

Practical skills must be of a very high level to access the top range of marks.

The choice of the final outcome at times, limited some candidates' potential, restricting the possible range of marks that could be awarded. Further guidance regarding the final selection of the practical work may be necessary in some cases to reflect the students true abilities.

In some candidates' work only three skills were assessed, which did not allow for these candidates to access the full marking criteria.

In most cases the practical items reflected the high level of candidate interest in the task and the thorough approach to constructional techniques, however, it may be advisable to direct certain candidates to make less challenging items as overly ambitious projects could disadvantage many candidates and reduce the time available to complete the creative feature.

It is helpful if candidates are made aware of the assessment criteria to ensure that they achieve their best possible marks.

Teachers may also find it helpful in future to use the - mark breakdown sheet “controlled assessment, further guidance task 1 and 2” which can be accessed on the WJEC website under documents, teacher’s resources. This can be used as a form of annotation and attached to the coursework, hopefully saving valuable time.
Task 2

Teachers are requested to check the current “live” tasks at the onset of the course. Please check on the WJEC website for up to date information - thank you.

Please note that a new Task 2 brief has been included in the specification. This brief has replaced the ‘Fantasy’ brief.

Again, it was pleasing to see the development in some candidates work from their coursework Task 1 to that produced for the coursework Task 2. Most work followed the criteria required, showing good teaching and a logical approach.

Both the set briefs produced some delightful and imaginative responses and showed clearly that candidates were up to date with current trends, both in fashion and in the home. Again there was something for everyone, all abilities, all interests and all cultures.

Folio

Both briefs proved to be topical and equally popular with some candidates producing innovative work that was a pleasure to mark. Both themes were well researched allowing for a range of appropriate and manageable outcomes which met the marking criteria.

The folios were often stimulated by the brief and many carried out relevant design work, market research and fabric testing.

Please note that research into both briefs is not necessary.

The folios accompanying task 2, like those of the coursework task 1, were generally well presented, informative and detailed.

Centres should be reminded of the Page Guideline sheet ‘Possible Pathway through the controlled assessment ’which can be found on the WJEC website. Those who follow this sheet will cover all of the required criteria and invariably do well with folio work.

To aid candidates’ research, the chosen task should be highlighted and presented on the first page of the folio as a vital starting point for the candidates.

More able candidates stated their aims clearly at the beginning of their folios and were then able to refer back to these aims in their evaluations. Not all candidates included their aims.

The majority of candidates were able to plan and collate information succinctly adding key features to illustrate application of knowledge and a sound understanding of the requirements of the task. Candidates need to ensure that all research is relevant, related to the task and kept to within the recommended ten sheets. It is important to remember that the use of the research section should flow into the selecting and rejecting of design ideas. Some candidates did not understand the requirements of the brief and failed to discuss fully the outcomes of the analysis.

Those candidates who explored the brief in detail, seem to have enjoyed the challenge and presented well-structured and individual pieces of work.

Candidates should be encouraged to research and develop a range of design ideas fully before making their final choice on page one. Often, candidates had a variety of design ideas from which to develop their final design idea, but this was not always clearly shown or justified.
In many cases, candidates displayed interesting design ideas but would benefit from refining their sketches and presentation in order to gain valuable marks. Candidates should be advised to use their own design sketches where possible, rather than just uploaded images - a combination of both would be acceptable.

Candidates need to choose a range of designs, choose one idea and then develop it. The development of an item needs to be more open to begin with, then refined.

Candidates should be encouraged to plan and prepare carefully, with due regard to the balance of marks available, so that all elements can be accomplished within the time scale allowed. The planning section from some centres was very limited and did not always reflect an ongoing process. Good candidates benefit by including relevant and informed testing of fabrics (referring to the fibre content) to confirm suitability.

Candidates should be encouraged to show an awareness of named fabrics and their possible suitability for the task - this aids the selection and rejection process.

Material samples should relate to the chosen item with the selected materials clearly indicated. The testing of construction techniques are important and sampling work should be included before final decisions are made. However, sample techniques are not always carried out as well as on the final item. Sample techniques need to be carried out carefully in order to make the correct choice and judgement.

Candidates should be advised to show that they have planned their work and investigated the suitability of their chosen fabrics and techniques, in order to improve their marks. Often good and relevant testing of fabrics and techniques was included in folio work. It was very clear that many candidates used their techniques and testing to inform their manufacturing decisions.

Candidates' evaluations continue to improve - many evaluations were thorough and very well done. Most candidates made a reasonable/good attempt at justifying the planning and organisation of the task. What the evaluations do lack in some cases, are the suggestions for improvement and further developments.

More able candidates provided comments on all areas of the work undertaken and accessed the higher marks. The weaker candidates still have a tendency to produce a summative and rather descriptive evaluation of the work undertaken.

Costings could also be discussed when evaluating, e.g. whether cost effective to make an item when compared to a similar bought item, as found and highlighted in the research. Photographic evidence was widely included and very helpful to the moderation process. Thank you.

Production

Once again, there was a wide range of challenging techniques by the candidates and it was a pleasure to see the use of traditional techniques mixed with new and innovative ideas.

The practical solutions to both briefs were, on the whole, modern interpretations and reflected a wide range of abilities, interests and skills. The majority of candidates adopted a creative approach to the brief and explored some exciting colour combinations. Both the set briefs produced some delightful and imaginative responses though far more candidates chose the creative item rather than the garment option. Where garments were submitted, they were generally of a good standard. Many of the creative items involved exciting design ideas and interesting fabrics to create a wide variety of outcomes.
The majority of items made were realistic and showed at least four skills. Where five or six skills are available for marking, teachers should assess all the skills and choose the four best skills for assessment. Candidates should be discouraged from choosing and constructing complex and time consuming items and techniques. The time spent repeating techniques could have been used to develop the design element more. It was pleasing to see, in the majority of cases, a collection of both original and manageable practical items for both Task 1 and Task 2.

Tasks chosen allowed both fashion and creative items to be made and a wide range of both functional and decorative techniques were used. There was plenty of opportunity for candidates to reflect their ability and improve upon their standard of workmanship.

There were many examples of candidates exploring challenging fabrics and components and attempting to complete contemporary items which would appeal to their age group.

Candidates still continue to develop new and innovative ideas using a variety of CAD/CAM, machine embroidery, hand embroidery and beadwork, transfer printing, paints, dyes and burning techniques to achieve varied and exciting effects on new fabrics.

In many centres it was evident that candidates were well aware of the marking criteria and of the areas required to cover in order to access the full range of marks. Overly ambitious projects could disadvantage many candidates and reduce the time available to complete the other features.

The appropriateness of practical items did not always allow the candidates to complete the necessary skills to a high level, e.g. Smaller more compact items may be more suitable and cheaper to produce.

It may be advisable to steer certain candidates to make simpler items with less challenging selection of fabrics. This would allow them to refine techniques and not be overwhelmed by tricky fabrics. It would also allow them to access higher marks.

Overall, the marking was again fair and realistic, but there are still a few centres where the practical work was slightly over marked, e.g. open seams, depending on how well executed, their positioning within an item and on what fabric, can influence their suitability for a higher skill level. For example - full marks should not be given for a very simple and poorly executed applique, likewise, four squares joined to form a simple piece of patchwork.

A high level of skill must be evident to gain full marks for each skill assessed. When marking the skills on final items it may be helpful to mark one skill for each section rather than grouping skills together.

It is also necessary to consider the amount of chosen techniques and the fabric when awarding the marks, e.g. to show a series of three chain stitches or to attach two beads is insufficient.

Please note that marks awarded for “overall construction” should not be included under the four skills/techniques section.

It was disappointing to note that that some of the above points regarding the marking of the four practical skills were included in last year’s report and do not appear to have been addressed in some instances.
Photographic evidence provided assisted the moderation process enormously.

Please ensure candidates work can be easily identified once the TX3 form is removed.

Centres, on the whole, should be commended for encouraging a positive approach to all aspects of the Task 1 and Task 2 coursework.

**Conclusion**

My thanks also go to the enthusiastic subject teachers for their continued support and passion for the subject and who have worked so hard to ensure its success.

I would also like to express my sincere thanks to my dedicated examiners and moderators for their continued hard work and to the new subject officer Mrs Karen Evans for her support and leadership.
Unit 1 – Principles of Child Development

Q.1 (a) (i-iii) On the whole candidates could provide the correct use of the illustrated pieces of safety equipment but frequently did not identify the correct name of the equipment.

(b) It was good to note that many candidates could correctly describe how to treat a small burn and gained full marks.

Q.2 This question was well answered with many candidates achieving full marks. Candidates need to be reminded to only tick the required three answers as when extra boxes were completed this reduced the marks as it is not clear what responses the candidates have selected.

Q.3 Again the majority of candidates achieved full marks but should be reminded to read the question carefully and only write the letter of the answer in the box and not the full term.

Q.4 (a) On the whole candidates were able to select the three correct answers. If one response was incorrect it tended to be the third answer where candidates stated that babies born to smokers were smaller but just as healthy.

(b) All candidates had some knowledge about the risks of eating undercooked eggs and the harm that cat faeces could have on the unborn child, but not many candidates could identify the risk of toxoplasmosis. Answers tended to be harm the unborn child, cause miscarriages and affect the eyes. The weakest answer for this question was (iii) where candidates were asked why pregnant women should not eat liver too often. Answers included harmful, high in iron or it was not answered at all.

(c) The majority of candidates identified that foetal alcohol syndrome is caused by drinking alcohol during pregnancy but many candidates lost marks because they just stated that the woman drank regularly which did not identify the drink as alcohol. The second part required candidates to provide two ways that foetal alcohol syndrome might affect the baby, the majority of candidates were able to provide at least one answer. The most popular answers were – may be addicted to alcohol, smaller baby, learning difficulties and damage to organs. Few candidates mentioned the smaller head and facial abnormalities and sometimes provided answers that were more relevant to babies born to women who took drugs during pregnancy.
Q.5 (a) Many of the answers given showed rather limited knowledge and many candidates lost marks because both answers in each sentence were underlined. Candidates need to be reminded that only one answer must be underlined.

(b) This question was poorly answered as candidates ignored ‘two other routine tests’ and provided information about screening and diagnostic tests. When answered correctly the most popular tests identified were ultrasound scans, urine tests, baby’s heartbeat and mother’s blood pressure. The weakest part of the answers were the explanations as to why these tests are carried out.

Q 6 (a) Lack of nutritional knowledge was apparent in this question and was disappointing considering that the food task was the most popular task for Unit 3.

(b) More able candidates were able to note several relevant points and discuss them in detail which allowed them to score well. Many merely noted points and scored low marks. Popular answers included making pictures out of the food and serving food on cartoon/picture plates, hiding disliked food in dishes, making food look attractive and colourful and giving small portions.

Q.7 (a) The majority stated negative behaviour would be the effect of the arrival of the new baby, very few candidates considered positive reactions. Even though many candidates gave three correct answers there was a lot of repetition thus limiting the marks that could be achieved.

(b) On the whole candidates answered this question well and those who gave detailed discussion scored high marks. A wide range of points were considered but candidates need to be reminded to state the ‘because.......factor’ if they are to gain marks in the higher mark band. A few candidates discussed what the child could do to help the mother care for the new baby which was not the focus of the question.

Q.8 (a) Good knowledge was displayed as candidates could state several opportunities, the most popular were taking the child to the park, play groups and having friends over.

(b) In this answer the social and emotional skills gained were expected to have been discussed but the social skills were more noticeable in many answers. These included the development of sharing skills, taking turns, improving communication and confidence.

(c) Some realistic suggestions were offered, although in general the candidates’ expectations of how a child should behave and disciplining strategies were inappropriate. When correctly answered candidates discussed in detail the use of a naughty step and the removal of privileges, praise and star charts were occasionally identified. Again, candidates need to be reminded to provide a range of answers with explanations to allow access to the higher mark bands.
Q.9 Many candidates offered a balanced answer giving both advantages and disadvantages of a hospital/home birth. The majority stated the advantages of having ‘professional help’ at the hospital as well a greater choice of pain relief. Some candidates considered how health issues of the mother e.g. age, previous complications etc., or multiple births would have an effect on her choice of place of birth. These points were also awarded marks accordingly.

Candidates must be encouraged to develop their answers and to discuss fully if they are to access high marks. Merely stating several points that are often repetitive does not qualify for top marks.

Q.10 (a) and (b) were equally popular with candidates. On the whole Q10 (a) was answered better with candidates scoring higher marks.

(a) Many candidates gave a detailed account of how musical activities could help a child’s development. They were able to state the different developmental areas e.g. music helps with fine motor skills as children learn to play instruments, children love to dance to music. .... this helps them with co-ordination and gross motor skills. The better candidates discussed the holistic development and gave good examples.

It was pleasing to see all areas of development being covered in many answers whereas weaker candidates often ignored emotional development and only briefly referred to other areas of development. A few accounts were very narrative with sometimes limited justifications to support their answers. These accounts gained low marks as did a bulleted list of answers.

(b) Again candidates displayed good knowledge and were adamant that parents were an important factor in helping a child develop language skills. Several suggestions such as reading, talking, doing different activities e.g. singing nursery rhymes, taking a child to various places, playing games were offered and when discussed fully the candidates scored well. Many candidates identified a selection of other relevant points, however, some candidates did not develop these points fully by providing justifications for their answers which lost valuable marks. Very few candidates mentioned that the parent should not finish sentences, speak for the child or allow them time to speak and praise the child and not laugh at their mistakes.

Candidates need to be reminded that bulleted lists do not achieve many marks and that the answer should be well balanced covering a range of relevant points to access the higher mark bands.
Unit 2 and Unit 3 – Controlled Assessment

Principal Moderator: Susan Gould

Unit 2 – Child Study

The Child Studies were generally quite well organised with most candidates offering relevant information in the five sections. Candidates should be encouraged to produce well-structured Child Studies as it enables them to give information and discussion about all the required areas of their work in order to access the higher marks. The chosen task should be written out as a title to the Child Study, which would help candidates remain focussed on that specific area of development. Physical development was the most popular task, in a few cases it was difficult to identify which task was being studied.

Plan of Action

There were some pleasing well written plans for both the supervised classroom sessions and the visits to the study child. By producing detailed plans candidates have a clear route through all aspects of the Child Study enabling them to provide relevant information and discussion. There should be six planned visits to provide sufficient opportunities to gather all the necessary information. Many candidates stated the resources required for each visit which displayed a good organised approach to the activities. The plan for the visits provides a very useful framework for the gathering of information section of the Child Study and candidates should be reminded that the visits should correspond with the plan. The visits should cover all aspects of the selected area of development with the first visit being used to set up a good relationship with the child. In some Child Studies the planning was rather vague which resulted in the Child Study lacking a focussed approach.

Introduction

This section contained the aims of the Child Study. In many studies they were incomplete and failed to cover all tasks of the study, in particular the comparison of the results to the norms and the evaluation of the work. Once again, many aims were too generic such as ‘producing attractive work’ and ‘using colour to improve presentation’ which failed to provide the candidates with the necessary route through the study. Candidates should be reminded that while working though the study the aims should be used as a reference, to check that all tasks have been completed.

Most candidates gave some detailed background information on the chosen area of development. This provides candidates with some essential knowledge of the child’s development and helps them focus on the selected task.

It is necessary to list the norms of development which are to be observed during visits and candidates should only record the norms for the selected area of development relevant to the age of the child. Many candidates provide unnecessary information about all areas of development and the norms which frequently results a failure to observe and discuss the selected task.
Gathering Information

The first visit described how the candidates established a good relationship with the child by playing together.

Recording the activities as planned in the Time Plan of visits should provide an outline for this section. There were some very well written accounts of the various activities undertaken and by using side headings candidates were able to provide all the relevant information. However, once again there were narrative accounts in a diary format with gave very little factual information and frequently failed to offer any results about the selected area of development. This method of recording information should be discouraged and should only be awarded a few marks, which was not always the case as generous marking was evident in some Child Studies.

One feature of this section should be the results from the various activities for each visit. Some studies lacked this evidence. Candidates should be encouraged to record their findings in a variety of ways. By observing physical development, candidates could present graphs for height and weight and tick charts for gross motor skills such as walking up steps. Including some of the child’s artwork is excellent evidence of fine motor skills and photographs are also beneficial if permission has been given. Discussion of the results can offer some further evidence of an understanding of the task.

Analysis and Interpretation

This section is becoming a more common feature of the Child Studies and has enabled candidates to undertake some comparison of the results to the norms of development. Candidates should list the norms recorded in the Introduction, then the results collected in the Gathering Information. They should study these lists and note any differences. The final task in this section is to offer some discussion about the findings, which was missing from some Child Studies. As mentioned previously, candidates need to be encouraged to answer the question ‘Why?’ about the differences between the norms and the results. This will give them the opportunity to give some personal viewpoints and achieve a higher mark. In some Child Studies candidates listed norms that had not been tested in activities with the child so there were no results available. Another tendency was to offer a narrative account of the results with no reference to the norms or provide any personal comments. Some centres are still marking this section too generously despite a lack of result evidence and personal viewpoints. Centres need to refer to the assessment criteria more carefully.

Evaluation

In this section many candidates offer some focussed reviews about all aspects of the task undertaken. There was some good discussion about the advantages of producing plans to assist with the organisation of the visits. Reviewing the aims of the study enabled candidates to reflect on what had been achieved. Candidates gave some personal opinions about the various methods used to gain information as well as analysing the results. Some comments were offered about the strengths of the work undertaken and problems encountered along the way. There were some very narrative evaluations which just offered a report of ‘What I did’ and lacked any review comments, which only can be credited with a few marks.
Presentation

Most studies were organised well and presented in soft files. Centres should instruct candidates not to use hard-covered or lever-arch files in order to avoid unnecessary bulk and postage costs. Please discourage candidates from placing the whole Child Study in a plastic pocket, resulting in a pile of loose sheets of paper which is extremely difficult to manage and moderate. Diary notebooks should be retained by centres and not sent with the coursework. Candidates are required to produce individual, personal Time Logs. Generic Time Logs are not acceptable. Please ensure all candidates include the Time Log in the studies.

Centres can view exemplar material on the WJEC website.

Administration

Most centres sent coursework to the moderator by the deadline date. Please check the WJEC website for details of the current tasks that can be chosen for the Controlled Assessment.

Unit 3 – Child Focused Task

As in previous years, Task 2, based on multicultural food was more popular.

Interpretation and Analysis

Candidates need to identify and explain the key words in the task to help them gain knowledge and an understanding about the requirements of the various aspects of the coursework. The aims are an essential component which enable candidates to list all the necessary tasks to be undertaken to complete the work. Frequently the aims did not cover all the required tasks and occasionally were recorded in the incorrect order, e.g. making the food dishes before undertaking the selection and rejection process. Primary research work should be a feature of this section. It provides useful information which can be recorded and gives a basis on which to help with the development of ideas. Candidates should be encouraged to produce a questionnaire, interview parents and visits shops and stores. Secondary research findings must be relevant to the task and applicable to under 5 year old children. Sometimes candidates gave background information which was irrelevant and should not be credited.

Task 1

Candidates studying the social skills task had carried out relevant primary and secondary research work, such as interviews with parents, visiting toy stores and websites. This provided the candidates with a good knowledge and understanding of how young children learn and use different social skills.
Task 2

This year there was more background detail on culture and research evidence about multicultural food. Some candidates had produced a questionnaire for parents although frequently the questions did not cover the relevant topic. Asking about the child's favourite drink and how often sweets are given failed to provide useful information and should not be awarded marks. By visiting food stores some candidates had gained good primary research evidence which assisted them with the development of ideas for food dishes. The no longer valid topic of fussy eaters was discussed and, although relevant for feeding young children, it should only be referred to briefly as it is not the main focus of the current task. Candidates should be reminded that the healthy eating guidelines must be relevant to the under 5's age range as this was not always evident.

At the end of this section candidates should be encouraged to draw up a conclusion of their research work which would help them in producing specifications for the item or food dishes.

Selection and Development of Ideas

In general candidates provided a selection of possible ideas for the social skills play item or food dishes with some description. A common feature in this section were criteria charts which helped in the selection and rejection process. Some candidates offered discussion related to the task to support their final choice. To access the higher band of marks candidates should be encouraged to provide some focussed detailed discussion which supports their final selection. Sometimes it was difficult to identify which item or dishes had been chosen due to a lack of information.

Planning

This year the experimental work was a more common feature of this section. Candidates had tested various materials, adhesives and different size fonts for the social skills play item. There was trialling of recipes, discussion about changing ingredients and well-labelled sketches illustrating ways of presenting the food dishes. Some experimental work could have been supported by more discussion and candidates should be encouraged to offer both positive and negative comments about their experimental work. By undertaking some form of experimental work candidates gain a better understanding of how to produce an acceptable outcome.

In general the making process of both the social skills play item and the food dishes was recorded quite well with some evidence of personal hygiene and safety rules. Some planning information could have included more detail regarding oven temperatures and cooking times as well as the task of washing up. Candidates must produce well-discussed experimental work and detailed planning of the task to achieve marks in the higher band marks. There was evidence of candidates being marked generously when the work was limited and did not justify the mark band.

Making

Candidates must work independently to produce either a social skills play item or a range of multicultural food dishes. In the evaluation section there should be photographic evidence of the final products as it is extremely difficult to moderate practical work without photographs. Once again there seemed to be some generous marks given to candidates who showed only limited skills and weak presentation. Some centres need to study the marking criteria more carefully.
Evaluation

Candidates carried out quite pleasing evaluations and photographic evidence showed some suitable and well-produced social skills play items and food dishes from various cultures. There was some excellent evidence of the social skills play item being used by a young child and of a wide range of food dishes served attractively to encourage young children to eat them. Please remind candidates that they only need to make small quantities of the food dishes appropriate for serving to young children. Sensory evaluation of the food dishes could have been more descriptive with some discussion about the visual appeal to a young child. The use of side headings enabled most candidates to address all aspects of the task. There was a tendency for the evaluations to be descriptive and lack analytical discussion. Candidates should be encouraged to give their personal thoughts about the work undertaken. As mentioned before, the aims should be reviewed in the evaluation which can assist with identifying and discussing positive and negative issues as well as future developments.

Administration

It is a requirement that each candidate produces an individual Time Log and completes all sections of the CD3 coversheet. Please ensure that the candidate’s name and number is written on the front of the folder as in several instances, once the CD3 coversheet had been removed, it was impossible to identify the candidate’s work.

Placing the papers inside plastic files is unnecessary as it creates extra weight to the package.

The 8 page limit, or equivalent, was not always observed and pages should be stapled together either at the top left corner or along the left hand side of the page. Some centres submitted loose sheets which made moderating difficult.

Please ensure the WJEC website is visited for details of current tasks and exemplar materials.

Conclusion

There was pleasing evidence of some very good coursework which showed the commitment and effort of both the candidates and teachers.