GCSE Examiners' Report

Biology

GCSE

Summer 2026

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Introduction

Our Principal examiners' report provides valuable feedback on the recent assessment series. It has been written by our Principal Examiners and Principal Moderators after the completion of marking and moderation, and details how candidates have performed in each unit.

This report opens with a summary of candidates' performance, including the assessment objectives/skills/topics/themes being tested, and highlights the characteristics of successful performance and where performance could be improved. It then looks in detail at each unit, pinpointing aspects that proved challenging to some candidates and suggesting some reasons as to why that might be.[1]

The information found in this report provides valuable insight for practitioners to support their teaching and learning activity. We would also encourage practitioners to share this document – in its entirety or in part – with their learners to help with exam preparation, to understand how to avoid pitfalls and to add to their revision toolbox.

Further support

Document	Description	Link
Professional Learning / CPD	WJEC offers an extensive programme of online and face-to-face Professional Learning events. Access interactive feedback, review example candidate responses, gain practical ideas for the classroom and put questions to our dedicated team by registering for one of our events here.	https://www.wjec.co.uk/home/professional-learning/
Past papers	Access the bank of past papers for this qualification, including the most recent assessments. Please note that we do not make past papers available on the public website until 12 months after the examination.	Portal by WJEC or on the WJEC subject page
Grade boundary information	Grade boundaries are the minimum number of marks needed to achieve each grade. For unitised specifications grade boundaries are expressed on a Uniform Mark Scale (UMS). UMS grade boundaries remain the same every year as the range of UMS mark percentages allocated to a particular grade does not change. UMS grade boundaries are published at overall subject and unit level. For linear specifications, a single grade is awarded for the subject, rather than for each unit that contributes towards the overall grade. Grade boundaries are published on results day.	For unitised specifications click here: Results, Grade Boundaries and PRS (wjec.co.uk)

[1] ***Please note that where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.***

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Executive Summary

The GCSE Biology, Chemistry and Physics qualifications remain very popular with centres and the cohort contains some very able candidates. The majority of the cohort sit the higher tier. It is noticeable that some higher tier candidates would have benefitted from sitting the foundation tier paper. There has been a decrease in entries. This reduction is due to centres planning the removal of triple science from their curriculum. The late announcement by Qualification Wales that it would continue, resulted in some centres not being able to return it to their curriculum offering for September 2025. Welsh medium centres are particularly evident in the decrease in entries.

Foundation tier candidates attempted the majority of the questions on the paper. The objective style of questioning and the use of multiple-choice options used in much of the foundation tier only section made it accessible for all candidates.

Candidates exhibit much better quantitative skills than qualitative skills. Questions that assessed mathematical skills were generally well attempted with some candidates gaining full marks. Some questions required equations to be rearranged, and this caused problems for some. There is still a group of candidates that substitute incorrectly into given equations. There is a growing trend of candidates not showing their workings. Candidates should be encouraged to logically and clearly show their workings so that some marks can be awarded even when the final answer is not correct. Graph plotting was very good. Very few candidates demonstrated the skills required to successfully answer questions relating to understanding chemical reactions and writing equations. These questions continue to be poorly answered, despite being a key part of the assessment of chemistry.

The quality of handwriting was very poor, and this made it very difficult to read some responses, particularly so for the QER. Candidates need to take more care in reading the questions and taking note of information in tables and diagrams. Some question parts instruct candidates to use data in their answers but even then, candidates choose to ignore this instruction. As ever the performance in the QER questions was variable and very dependent on the topic. Some excellent responses were seen to some of the QERs on the higher tier papers. The life cycle of the Sun and the HR diagram QER produced a significant number of top band responses which is pleasing to note.

Questions that required descriptions and/or explanations were poorly answered, particularly when they required direct recall of knowledge. Recall of knowledge is as ever still very weak.

In the practical assessment unit, there was evidence that candidates are familiar with practical work and the analysis of practical results. As in previous series, candidates were largely successful in making hypotheses and in identifying variables. Notable areas that candidates found challenging were scaling graphs and lines of best fit. Using data to justify evaluations was also weak.

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BIOLOGY

GCSE

Summer 2026

UNIT 1: FOUNDATION TIER

Overview of the Unit

This paper assessed a broad range of Unit 1 content, including cells and movement across membranes, respiration and the respiratory system, digestion and the role of enzymes, the circulatory system, photosynthesis, ecosystems, nutrient cycles and human impact on the environment. Candidates were required to demonstrate AO1 knowledge and understanding, AO2 application of biological concepts and AO3 skills involving analysis, interpretation and evaluation. Practical and mathematical skills were assessed through the interpretation of data, graphing and experimental contexts.

The demand of the paper was comparable with previous series. Questions progressed from low demand recall and identification tasks to more challenging application and evaluation questions, including common questions shared with the Higher Tier paper. The paper was generally accessible, allowing most Foundation Tier candidates to access the majority of available marks.

Candidates performed well in the following topics and skills:

- Cell structure
- Identifying processes within the carbon cycle
- Labelling graph axes
- Food chains and ecosystem relationships
- Retrieval of information from stimulus material

Candidates found the following areas challenging:

- Describing trends in graphs
- Evaluating data, graphs and practical methods
- Showing clear working in calculations
- Recall of the word equation for aerobic respiration
- Knowledge of the potometer and its use
- Application of the lock-and-key model
- Understanding the purpose of intensive farming methods

Comments on individual questions/sections

Question 1

Part (a) was answered well by most candidates. However, part (b), which required recall of blood flow through the heart, proved more challenging. Many candidates were unable to recall the required scientific vocabulary and sequence accurately, suggesting that basic recall of this topic remains an area for development.

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Question 2

Part (a) was generally answered well, although some candidates struggled to identify structures common to both plant and animal cells.

Candidates experienced greater difficulty with the mathematical skills assessed in part (b). Measuring a line accurately and converting between units proved challenging for some. Although many candidates were able to use the magnification equation when it was provided, calculating magnification remains an area of weakness for a significant proportion of candidates.

Question 3

Most candidates performed well on part (a). Part (b) required candidates to apply their knowledge of photosynthesis to the effects of deforestation. Many candidates were unable to make the link between reduced photosynthesis and increased levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. This highlighted the need for candidates to recognise links between different areas of the specification rather than viewing topics in isolation.

Question 4

Candidates performed reasonably well when interpreting the food web and constructing food chains from the information provided. However, recall of basic ecological concepts was weaker. Many candidates were unable to explain what arrows represent in a food chain, and very few correctly identified the Sun as the ultimate source of energy in food chains.

Question 5

Most candidates successfully selected relevant information from the text provided about smoking and vaping. It was encouraging to see candidates referring carefully to the source material rather than relying on guesswork.

Part (c) was less successful. Candidates frequently failed to make appropriate comparisons when describing the length of cilia and thickness of mucus layers. Some responses used descriptive rather than comparative language, while others included observations that were not required by the question.

Question 6

This question highlighted several areas of weakness in both content knowledge and practical skills.

Graph construction continues to present difficulties for some candidates. While many graphs appeared visually correct, marks were often lost through inaccurate plotting, missing units on axes, or poor line construction. Describing relationships from graphs also remains challenging, with many candidates failing to use appropriate terminology from the axis labels.

Candidates demonstrated limited understanding of repeatability and often provided generic descriptions rather than applying the concept to the data provided. Very few candidates were able to suggest a suitable improvement to the method of counting bubbles, suggesting limited experience of evaluating practical methods.

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Question 7

Part (a) required knowledge of fertilisers and pesticides. Many candidates demonstrated limited recall of the purpose of these substances and appeared unsure of their purpose.

The QER was generally well attempted. Most candidates were able to identify advantages and disadvantages of battery farming using the information provided. The strongest responses organised information clearly and developed points through comparison with free-range farming. Candidates who structured their responses carefully and clearly separated advantages from disadvantages generally accessed the higher mark bands.

Question 8

Many candidates could identify the correct substrate and use information from the diagram effectively. However, some lost marks through the omission of key scientific terminology such as active site.

The concept of experimental variables presented difficulties, with many candidates unable to identify the independent variable correctly.

Candidates often described the general shape of the graph but were less successful at using specific evidence from the graph to support their answers. Understanding of enzyme action at high temperatures was also weaker than expected. Common misconceptions included suggesting that enzymes melt rather than explaining denaturation and the resulting change in the shape of the active site.

Question 9

This question on transpiration was one of the most challenging questions for Foundation Tier candidates.

The recall of leaf structures and their functions was generally weak. While many candidates could identify structure correctly, they often struggled to describe functions precisely. Common misconceptions included confusion over substances transported by the phloem and incomplete descriptions of the role of palisade cells.

Candidates found the calculation of transpiration rate difficult and often failed to identify the correct mathematical operation required. Most could describe the trend shown in the results, although some failed to use terminology from the question appropriately.

Explaining the results proved significantly more challenging than describing them. Many candidates repeated observations rather than relating the results to the process of transpiration. Similarly, candidates frequently struggled to predict the effect of changing environmental conditions on transpiration rates.

Most candidates recognised that repeating an experiment can increase confidence in results. However, there remains confusion regarding the term accuracy, with some candidates incorrectly suggesting that repetition improves accuracy. Identifying suitable control variables also proved challenging.

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Question 10

Many candidates struggled with the recall of the respiration equation.

Part (b) required candidates to apply their understanding of respiration to an experimental context. While some candidates could extract information from the graph, many were unable to explain their observations using scientific knowledge about respiration. Candidates frequently recognised that the peas were dead but did not fully explain the consequences for respiration and heat production.

The practical aspects of the investigation were also challenging. Common misconceptions included misunderstanding the purpose of disinfectants and the use of the cotton wool plug. Many candidates were unable to relate these features to controlling contamination and allowing gas exchange.

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BIOLOGY

GCSE

Summer 2026

UNIT 1: HIGHER TIER

Overview of the Unit

This paper assessed a wide range of Unit 1 content, including transport in plants, respiration, circulatory system, photosynthesis, osmosis, ecosystems, respiratory and digestive systems. Opportunities were provided for candidates to demonstrate AO1 knowledge and understanding, AO2 application of biological concepts and AO3 analytical and evaluative skills. Practical work was assessed through a range of familiar and applied contexts supported by clear stimulus material, graphs and diagrams.

The paper was similar in accessibility to the previous series, and most candidates were able to attempt all questions. Questions included a mixture of familiar specification content and practical applications in contemporary contexts. Although many candidates demonstrated good numeracy skills, poor handwriting and unclear expression occasionally made it difficult to identify creditworthy responses. Recall of key biological knowledge also remains an area for improvement for some candidates.

Candidates performed well in the following topics and skills:

- Evaluating secondary data(1b)
- Completing line graphs (5aii)
- Using formulae in calculations (1bi, 6c, 7bii)
- Mathematical and numeracy skills (1bi, 2bi, 5aii, 6ci, 6cii)

Candidates found the following areas challenging:

- Drawing valid conclusions from data (1bii, 2bii, 2biii, 4bi)
- Providing detailed scientific explanations (4bi, 4bii, 5bi, 5bii, 6b, 8a, 8b)
- Human circulatory system content (3a, 3bi, 3bii, 3ciii)
- Osmosis (5bi, 5bii, 5c)
- The nitrogen cycle (8a, 8b)
- Testing a leaf for starch (4a, 4bi, 4bii)

Areas for improvement include:

- Addressing misconceptions during teaching (8a, 8b)
- Recall of facts (1a, 2a, 3a, 6a, 7a)
- Understanding of steps in experimental methods (1cii, 2ci, 2cii, 4a, 4bii, 5c, 6b)
- Developing comparative response skills (3bi, 6ciii)

Comments on individual questions/sections

Question 1

Many candidates could not recall the name of a guard cell or its function. Numeracy skills and the ability to draw conclusions from and evaluate transpiration data were generally strong. However, two areas of weakness were describing the relationship between the number of leaves and the rate of transpiration and identifying controlled variables.

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Question 2

Most candidates understood the concepts involved in this question; however, the language used when expressing their answers often cost them marks. Part (b)(ii) was poorly answered, with many candidates referring to heat being made or produced. Part (c) was answered well by some; however, many did not know the purpose of the disinfectant or the cotton wool plug.

Question 3

This question focused on the human circulatory system, a topic that continues to challenge many candidates.

Part (a) required candidates to recall the definition of a double circulatory system and was not answered well by many. Part (b)(i) caused confusion for a number of candidates. The question stem referred specifically to differences in the blood, yet many responses focused on structural differences such as blood vessel wall thickness. Part (c)(i) was answered well by many who attempted it. However, a notable number of candidates did not attempt the question. Candidates should read the entire paper carefully to avoid missing questions.

Question 4

This question was not answered well by many candidates. There appeared to be a lack of knowledge and understanding of the experimental method. Part (b)(i) was the most successfully answered section of the question. Many candidates correctly linked the blue-black colour to the presence of starch and recognised that the presence of starch indicated that photosynthesis had taken place.

Question 5

Part (a)(i) was not answered as well as expected. Many candidates lost a mark due to incorrect rounding or by giving an answer to more than one decimal place, thereby failing to follow the format of the rest of the data in the table.

The graph was completed well by many candidates. Most candidates who used a ruler to join the points gained this mark.

Part (b)(i) required answers to be given in the context of the potato cylinder in the 0.5 mol/dm^3 sugar solution. Many responses simply provided a generic definition of osmosis without linking it to the investigation.

Part (b)(ii) was not answered well, particularly the explanation. Neither was part (c). There still appears to be some confusion regarding the term accuracy among some candidates.

Question 6

Basic recall continues to be an issue for many candidates, resulting in part (a) being poorly answered.

Part (b) caused two main difficulties. Some candidates gave answers that referred only to the human thorax and not the bell jar model, while others could not accurately or fully explain how the model represented breathing. A small number of candidates appeared to confuse expiration and inspiration.

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Part (c) was answered well by most candidates, demonstrating secure basic numeracy skills.

Part (d) was interesting because considerably more candidates knew that smoking paralyses cilia than could explain the function of cilia. Some of this may be attributed to difficulties in expressing their understanding clearly.

Question 7

Part (a) required recall of the definition of digestion and an explanation of its importance. This proved more challenging than anticipated, particularly the section requiring candidates to explain its importance.

The remainder of Question 7 was answered well, with the exception of part (c)(iii). Only some candidates were able to link the low pH of the stomach to the denaturing of enzymes.

Question 8

The QER was attempted by most candidates. There were some excellent, coherent, well-ordered and detailed accounts of the relevant parts of the nitrogen cycle.

Many responses contained good partial answers, while others demonstrated considerable confusion. Some of the weaker responses were difficult to follow because ideas were presented in an illogical sequence. In a small number of cases, poor handwriting made responses difficult to read.

Part (b) was answered well by some candidates. However, there remains confusion among a significant number of candidates regarding why oxygen levels in the river decrease. Many referred to a lack of photosynthesis, which was not creditworthy.

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BIOLOGY

GCSE

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UNIT 2: FOUNDATION TIER

Overview of the Unit

This paper assessed a broad range of Unit 2 content, including plant responses, reproduction, inheritance, drug development, natural selection, treatment of kidney disease, growing microorganisms and genetic profiling. All assessment objectives were represented, providing opportunities for candidates to demonstrate biological knowledge, application and analytical skills. Practical skills were assessed through contexts such as glucose testing and the safe growth of microorganisms, while mathematical skills included graph plotting and interpretation.

The paper was generally accessible, and most candidates attempted all questions, including the quality of extended response (QER) question. Performance was strongest on the early questions, where greater structure and support were provided. As expected, some candidates found the common questions shared with the Higher Tier paper more demanding. In some cases, poor handwriting made it difficult to identify creditworthy responses.

Candidates performed well in the following topics and skills:

- Structured recall and application questions
- Graph plotting (9bii)
- Retrieval of information from stimulus material

Candidates found the following areas challenging:

- Practical procedures for growing microorganisms safely (Q3)
- Higher-demand common questions shared with the Higher Tier paper (Q8+9)

Comments on individual questions/sections

Questions 1, 2 and 3

These questions were attempted extremely well and were generally answered successfully, perhaps due in part to the scaffolding provided. Candidates were particularly successful when completing the Punnett square. However, many struggled to recall the term clone to describe a genetically identical organism.

Question 4

This question was generally well answered. Candidates performed best when they used the information provided in the question to support their answers. Many were able to sequence the stages of drug testing correctly.

Candidates were less successful when recalling the meanings of the terms double-blind and placebo. The most common error was describing the placebo effect rather than describing a placebo itself.

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Question 5

Although fairly well attempted, this question as a whole was not answered particularly well. Candidates struggled to recall the definition of a mutation. They were able to interpret the results of the investigation successfully in Question 5(b)(i) but were often unable to explain their reasoning in sufficient detail to gain both marks in Question 5(b)(ii).

Question 6

It was pleasing to see that this QER was well attempted. Many candidates accessed the middle band of marks, and some reached the upper band.

The strongest responses used the information provided and referred to all of the apparatus listed. Most candidates could identify that glucose in the urine is an indicator of diabetes, but some failed to conclude that sample B was the sample indicating diabetes and therefore lost credit.

Question 7

Candidates generally struggled with this question, suggesting gaps in their content knowledge or practical understanding of microbiology techniques.

Some candidates were able to use the information provided in the diagram to identify aseptic techniques. Candidates found the calculation involving the number of bacteria particularly challenging. However, most were able to identify the safe level of bacteria from the graph correctly.

Many found it difficult to explain why milk could be stored for longer in a freezer. The most common misconception was that low temperatures kill bacteria rather than simply reducing their rate of growth and reproduction.

Question 8

Question 8(a) had the lowest facility factor on the paper and was therefore the most challenging question. Candidates were generally unable to describe the process of genetic profiling.
However, the remainder of the question was answered very well. Candidates successfully analysed the genetic profiles, understood their uses and demonstrated a good understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of DNA databases.

Question 9

This question was generally answered very well, particularly considering the higher demand associated with a question shared with the Higher Tier paper.

Candidates were able to interpret the experimental results successfully, and their graph-plotting skills were particularly impressive. Candidates demonstrated strong practical skills throughout the question but struggled with responses relating to the structures of the eye, suggesting that content knowledge was weaker than practical skills for this question.

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BIOLOGY

GCSE

Summer 2026

UNIT 2: HIGHER TIER

Overview of the Unit

This paper assessed a broad range of Unit 2 content, including genetic profiling, nervous system, microbiology, biological control, the kidney, natural selection, homeostasis, genetics, disease, defence and treatment. Candidates were required to demonstrate AO1 knowledge and understanding, AO2 application of biological principles and AO3 analytical and evaluative skills through a range of practical, data-based and applied contexts.

The paper was similar in accessibility to the previous series, and most candidates attempted all questions. Questions covered both familiar specification content and practical applications supported by clear stimulus materials. While many candidates responded well to calculation and genetics questions, poor handwriting and unclear expression occasionally made it difficult to identify creditworthy responses.

Candidates performed well in the following topics and skills:
- Evaluating secondary data (2b)
- Completing Punnett squares and predicting genetic crosses (8c)
- Using formulae in calculations (5cii, 9bi)

Candidates found the following areas challenging:
- Drawing valid conclusions from data (4a)
- Providing detailed scientific explanations (4b 7b, 9bii)
- Explaining the formation of clear zones around antimicrobial agents on agar plates (3b)

Areas for improvement include:

- Addressing misconceptions during teaching (3a, 7b, 8d)
- Recall of facts (1a, 5a, 5c, 7a, 7b, 8b)
- Understanding kidney structure and dialysis(7ai)
- Developing comparative response skills (4a)

Comments on individual questions/sections

Question 1

Many candidates could not recall the basic stages involved in DNA profiling. Most were able to draw valid conclusions from the DNA profiles provided.

Most candidates could identify advantages and disadvantages of storing DNA profiles on a police database. However, some responses were not given in the correct context, for example suggesting that the guilty suspect might object to their DNA being stored or that the system could be abused by corrupt police officers.

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Question 2

Most candidates performed well on this topic. The recall questions relating to the structures of the eye were answered successfully by most candidates.

This was followed by questions about an investigation into pupil size at different light intensities, which was also answered well. However, some candidates interpreted the data correctly but failed to use the appropriate scientific terminology in their responses.

Question 3

Many candidates struggled with parts (a) and (b).

In part (a), many candidates suggested aseptic techniques that were not relevant to the investigation. A common example was the use of inoculating loops.

Many candidates performed well on part (b)(ii).

Question 4

In part (a)(i), many candidates failed to gain credit because they did not answer the question that had been asked. In many cases, this appeared to be due to not reading the question carefully.

The question specifically required candidates to describe the effect of the presence of predators on mite numbers in July and August. Many responses referred instead to the absence of predators or failed to make clear reference to both July and August.

Question 5

The recall questions relating to the kidney were answered poorly by many candidates. However, the numeracy question was answered very well by most.

Many candidates struggled to explain why blood and dialysis fluid flow in opposite directions.

Question 6

Candidates answered this question well overall. Many demonstrated a strong understanding of natural selection and provided full and accurate answers to part (b).

Some candidates, however, gave generic responses rather than tailoring their answers to the specific context of the question.

Part (c)(i) was answered poorly by most candidates. Once again, the application of knowledge presented the greatest challenge.

Question 7

It was pleasing to see that almost all candidates attempted the QER. Nearly all gained some credit for their responses.

There remain several misconceptions that continue to appear across multiple centres. Many candidates referred to blood vessels moving closer to the skin surface. This was not creditworthy. Candidates needed to state that blood vessels in the skin dilate, allowing more blood to flow near the skin surface.

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In addition, only the strongest responses correctly explained the role of hairs lying flat. Almost all responses referred to sweating.

Question 8

The definition of mutation was answered more successfully than the definition of allele. Definitions continue to present difficulties for many candidates, despite these often being accessible marks.

The Punnett square was completed well by most candidates. However, a small number still demonstrated confusion between the terms genotype and phenotype.

Part (d) was answered poorly by many candidates. There remains significant confusion regarding the function of a triplet. Many responses stated that triplets make amino acids. More successful responses explained that triplets code for amino acids.

Question 9

The recall sections of Question 9 were not answered well by many candidates. Very few could recall the name *Plasmodium*.

However, the numeracy question in part (b)(i) was answered very successfully by most candidates.

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UNIT 3: PRACTICAL ASSESSMENT

Overview of the Unit

In this unit candidates are assessed on their practical skills including, forming hypotheses, recognising and preventing hazards and risks, recording and presenting data, understanding the variables that are involved in experiments, evaluating the success of the experiment and planning improvements. There was evidence that candidates are familiar with practical work and the analysis of practical results.

The tasks all proved to be accessible for most candidates who usually attempted all sections. As in previous series, candidates were largely successful in making hypotheses and in identifying variables. Notable areas that candidates found challenging were scaling graphs and line drawing. Using data to justify evaluations was also weak.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A

Hypotheses and risk assessments
Most candidates were able to make a sensible hypothesis in each of the tasks, which linked the independent and dependent variables. Most candidates can make a reasonable hypothesis, identifying the expected relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable. However, some responses remained too vague to credit. A common error was failing to state how the dependent variable would change.

In producing risk assessments, the most successful candidates linked the risk with a particular action in the method. In other cases, candidates identified a hazard but did not include a clear action such as touching or pouring.

Tables
Most candidates structured tables appropriately, with more consistent use of appropriate headings and units, and fewer errors such as abbreviated headings or units placed in the body of the table than in previous series. Weaker candidates made errors in calculating means correctly or rounding accurately. A small number of candidates failed to determine means.

Section B

Controlled variables
Each of the tasks included a section on variables. Candidates were usually able to identify the independent and dependent variables, and most were able to state the range of these variables when required. When describing controlled variables, candidates often did not provide both the value of the variable and how it was controlled. This was particularly evident where no numerical value was required and candidates needed to explain that the variable was kept consistent for each result. Weaker candidates selected variables that did not require control, such as use of the same stopwatch in the yeast task. The use of incorrect terms such as ‘amount’ in place of volume or concentration was still evident in the work of many candidates.

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Graphs
Graphs were drawn more accurately than in previous years, with many candidates labelling axes and plotting points appropriately, however, several common errors remained. These include axes plotted the wrong way around, starting values on scales not given for both axes, and the use of awkward scales, for example intervals of 3.

Drawing lines remained a key area of difficulty. Candidates were often unsure whether to use dot-to-dot plotting or a line/curve of best fit and frequently drew lines that did not leave an even spread of results on either side.

In all tasks candidates are often asked to identify the relationship between the plotted variables and this was usually done well. Whilst most candidates were able to describe a relationship between the independent and dependent variables in the graph, a description of the shape of the graph, where it was required for the second mark, was poor. Many candidates used incorrect terminology, for example describing relationships as proportional when they were not or stating that change occurred at a constant rate when the graph was curved.

Processing data
Processing results was problematic in some cases.
In common with previous series, calculations were often done well, however, as with mean calculations, rounding was often inaccurate.

Evaluation of results
Questions directly assessing understanding of repeatability and reproducibility were answered well however when judging repeatability, imprecise language often limited candidates' access to marks. Many referred to "results" rather than "repeats". Even where candidates used the term repeats correctly, few used data to support their judgement.

The use of data to support judgements of repeatability was generally weak. Rather than describing variation within sets of repeats or comparing each set with the mean, candidates often quoted one or two individual values. For reproducibility, candidates usually recognised the need to compare with other groups, but weaker responses suggested more repeats or asked other groups to repeat the experiment without explicitly comparing results or identifying whether patterns were similar.

Inaccuracies and Improvements
The quality of responses varied significantly**.** Some candidates were able to identify specific inaccuracies in the method and suggest a suitable linked improvement. However, many candidates gave generic improvements, such as "take more repeats" or "take more care when obtaining results", rather than linking the improvement directly to the identified issue. Others suggested inaccuracies that would not have affected the results.

Planning
Planning questions were generally answered more successfully than in previous years, and candidates often identified the dependent variable correctly. However, the range of independent variable values was sometimes insufficient, with some candidates providing only two or three values rather than the required four. Common errors in identifying controlled variables included stating only one variable instead of two, repeating the independent variable rather than identifying a suitable control variable or selecting an irrelevant variable.

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