



Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate Principal Moderators' Report

Summer 2017

Grade boundary information for this subject is available on the WJEC public website at:

<https://www.wjecservices.co.uk/MarkToUMS/default.aspx?l=en>

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.

Administration

Entries

- Centres are expected to withdraw candidates who do not submit any work for a component;
- Centres are not expected to enter candidates for the Cash-In of the Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate and the Skills Challenge Certificate if the candidate has not submitted evidence for all 4 components or have failed one of the components. If a candidate has been entered but consequently fails to submit work for a component it is expected that the candidate would be withdrawn.

Submitting Marks

- Centres are reminded that when entering marks that 'A' should be entered for a candidate who does not submit any work for assessment.
- Centres are reminded that only if work is submitted for assessment but is found to not be worthy of a mark should '0' be used.

Submitting Work to Moderator

- A minority of centres failed to adhere to deadlines, it is unacceptable and could compromise the moderation process.
- Centres must ensure they only use the official WJEC assessment sheets for each candidate, filling in each Learning Outcome mark and the total mark. Centres must not use centre devised assessment grids nor must they sub-divide the marks for each Learning Outcome and allocate to each sentence.
- Centres are advised to check that the total marks on the front sheet correspond with the marks input on IAMIS as there were considerable disparities.
- The assessment sheet must be signed appropriately (by assessor only for future series).
- A number of centres used the new 'Time Sheet and Candidate Declaration', centres are reminded that this must be used for all candidates in the future. The hours recorded should clearly identify how many hours are spent on each task of the assessment, this does included the 30 hours for carrying out the Community activity.
- Centres must ensure that appropriate Challenge Briefs are issued to candidates. Post 16 Challenge Briefs are at National level and not suitable for Advanced level.
- Centres should always include a copy of the Challenge Briefs that candidates in the sample have used for assessment. If the same brief has been used by all then only one copy is required.
- Many centres sent the candidates' work electronically to the moderator. If sending work electronically centres must ensure that the work is labelled clearly with the Centre name and number within the usb/cd not just written on a post-it as this can get lost. Each candidate should have an Individual file labelled with the Candidate's name and number. Candidate's documents should be labelled and collated effectively e.g labelled by task. Candidates should not include a large number of documents for a single task, they should combine these in a logical order demonstrating their digital skills.
- Some centres are to be commended on their assessor annotation to justify the marks awarded but it was observed that this was not practised by all.

Enterprise and Employability Challenge

The third cohort of entries for the Advanced Enterprise and Employability Challenge has exhibited candidate responses that demonstrate some high levels of creativity and innovation. In this series, there was a greater array of Challenge Briefs which helped generate a higher level of imaginative ideas. Centres should ensure that evidence for this Challenge is submitted electronically, and not submitted in paper format.

There were some excellent examples of candidate work including Innovation Ventures that were highly comprehensive and demonstrated excellent capacity for evaluating personal effectiveness. In addition, many Destination Passports demonstrated that candidates had thoroughly reflected on their skills and attributes, and had made well-informed decisions regarding career routes and areas to which they need to develop in order to arrive at their selected destinations. Many candidates were also able to draw this information together and present it effectively, thereby showcasing their skills of digital literacy.

Nevertheless, there were some Innovation Ventures that encompassed ideas in response to a brief that were highly simplistic, unoriginal and not commensurate with Advanced level standards. In particular, ideas relating to selling cupcakes, smoothies and stationery, for example, are more suited to National and Foundation level, unless there is something innovative regarding the product/service itself, promotion, placement or manufacture of the product/service. Furthermore, some candidates included Destination Passports that did not demonstrate digital literacy competency or identify two clear career pathways. A university or selected subject at a university is not considered as a career pathway.

The Challenge encompasses 4 tasks; but these must be addressed in conjunction with guidance from the Delivery Handbook as well as ensuring each candidate has a copy of the assessment matrix – (page 22 of the Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate Specification) to ensure that there is appropriate and effective coverage of each component which feeds into each respective Learning Outcome. In some cases, candidate work was presented in such a way that it was not clear as to which evidence contributed to each task as well as containing a great deal of extraneous evidence, including multiple files. Part of the assessment criteria for this Challenge is the ability to present a Pen Portrait, evidence generated from responding to a brief, a Destination Passport and a Personal Reflection in a comprehensive way. This should be a focus for centres before future moderation opportunities.

Learning Outcome 1 – Be able to apply Creativity and Innovation

Page 22 of the Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate Delivery Handbook details what this skill entails. Creativity and innovation can be demonstrated in each of the tasks within the brief. For Task 1, creativity and innovation could be demonstrated in how the pen portrait is developed and presented. There was often evidence of undertaking skills audits in candidate work, but this is not required. Candidates do not need to include their audits in the evidence presented. It is the skill of bringing together the evidence from the audits into an A4 one sided document concerned with 'self-promotion' - (i.e., a pen portrait) that is required. Therefore, candidates could be encouraged to use more digital literacy techniques in making their pen portraits stand

out. Candidates are also encouraged to consider what information they include in their pen portraits that will be most likely to support self-promotion. In some cases, content was either irrelevant or counter to the notion of self-promotion. They could also demonstrate their use of social media by sharing their pen portrait electronically. Nevertheless, in some examples, candidates produced high quality pen portraits.

Task 2 provides candidates with the opportunity to showcase their creativity and innovation skills in generating, analysing and evaluating ideas and coming up with appropriate and effective responses. In some cases, evidence did not demonstrate how candidates had analysed various ideas and selected one to proceed with. Some candidates had simply stated one idea and their innovation proposal was based on how this idea was to be operationalised. This should be an area for centres to focus on. There are many ways ideas generation and selection can be undertaken with examples such as blue sky thinking, spider diagrams, decision matrices and SWOT analyses which were seen in this series; however candidates should be encouraged to select their own methods. In addition, candidates should also be encouraged to display the findings of their innovation venture creatively, which could also support digital literacy in using electronic methods to present findings. Some candidate responses did this extremely effectively and were able to score highly for their digital literacy skills. Some innovation ventures were highly effective and could have been created and developed by professional bodies which was highly encouraging.

Learning Outcome 2 – Understanding Personal Effectiveness

Personal effectiveness involves auditing and development consideration, management of own role and responsibilities and evaluating personal effectiveness which can be demonstrated throughout the Challenge. In Task 2, attention needs to be given in ensuring that candidates are able to explicitly demonstrate that they have been successful in their time management, utilising appropriate behaviour, skills and working relationships. This should not be regarded as an implicit assumption if candidates respond to the brief. Sources of evidence seen in this series included action plans and photographs, but a variety of methods can be utilised. In some responses, candidates included a self-reflection in the form of a log in terms of how well they managed their time or worked with their peers, which was a valuable method in evidencing personal effectiveness.

In Task 3, candidates are required to plan out a journey which will get them to their required destination. This is termed a 'Destination Passport'. Therefore, candidates should identify 2 options and the CV, letter of application, UCAS personal statement, job adverts etc. are intended to be relevant to those selected options. Candidates are expected to describe the skills, qualifications and attributes of their selected destinations and consider their current skills set, identify gaps and consider how they may address them. These skills should be in relation to the skills required in their chosen destinations, and not simply analysis against a generic set of skills. This point was lacking in some of the evidence presented. The Destination Passport should be a focused activity and not a number of files that contain CVs, job adverts, applications and generic skills analyses; instead, these documents should be entirely relevant to the 2 options described at the start of this task.

Task 4 involves undertaking a Personal Reflection Presentation in terms of the skills utilised throughout the Challenge. It requires candidates to reflect on the skills, qualities and attributes they demonstrated through the Challenge, giving clear examples. In some cases, candidates reflected on skills they had used in their place of employment or elsewhere. Or, they reflected on the outcomes generated in response to the tasks, as opposed to the skills developed in responding to the Challenge. However, the focus is specifically intended to be a reflection based on undertaking the Challenge. This reflection will also provide a naturally occurring opportunity to demonstrate digital literacy skills. In some cases, evidence was lacking in response to Task 4. Candidates should also include any supporting evidence that they have used in carrying out this task.

Learning Outcome 3 – Be able to apply Numeracy

Page 22 of the Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate Delivery Handbook gives examples of the types of topics candidates can engage with in order to demonstrate numeracy at advanced level. Scenarios can be found in Welsh Baccalaureate materials at www.wjecservices.co.uk. Achieving higher band scores will be achieved by the complexity of the cost analysis undertaken. In addition, L03 Numeracy achievement of Band 2 and Band 3 on the Enterprise and Employability assessment matrix: (Page 22 of the Welsh Baccalaureate Advanced Specification) depends on solving a variety of problems. For example, commercialisation of an innovative product (Task 2) and a personal cost-analysis (Task 3).

Most candidates demonstrated some skills of numeracy as part of Task 2 and Task 3. However, complexity was often lacking in relation to both tasks. Some candidates had accessed an online cost calculator in relation to university costs and mortgage calculations. This did not allow candidates to demonstrate their skills of numeracy as the online calculator did this for them. In addition, some candidates had listed the price of food items at various supermarkets. Again, this does not demonstrate skills of numeracy. It is also very simplistic for advanced level standards. In addition, the assessment matrix requires candidates to analyse and interpret numerical results. In many responses, an analysis and interpretation of the results following the application of numerical techniques and methods was missing. This was seen in both the innovation proposal and the personal cost analysis. For example, candidates may have produced a cash-flow forecast, profit and loss account and break-even chart as part of their innovation venture, yet there was no text to accompany these calculations in terms of they were showing and the likely implications. This should be a focus for centres before future moderation opportunities.

Nevertheless, there were some responses that used a variety of techniques to suit their purpose such as percentage change, standard deviation, range and averages. The use of excel is strongly recommended as this will allow candidates to demonstrate their ability to construct formulas in carrying out calculations and also supports skills of digital literacy.

Learning Outcome 4 – Be able to apply Digital Literacy

Digital literacy can be considered as having three elements. Firstly, the organisation, storage, management, sharing and protection of electronic information. Secondly, the ability to use digital techniques to present information, including numerical data, tables, graphs and diagrams along with the manipulation and creation of data and information. Thirdly the application of tools that create, share or exchange information or support collaboration and learning. The use of social media should be evident within the Challenge. However, the use of social media was missing in some submissions. Nevertheless, social media was generally seen in relation to marketing and publicity material for Task 2, and as a solution to a brief in the form of an app.

Evidence should be organised and presented in a comprehensive manner. Many electronic files that have generic or vague file names should be avoided. In order to achieve higher grade bandings, candidates should be aiming to produce well-structured responses to each task which also demonstrate appropriate presentation techniques including effective use of tables, graphs and diagrams. Some candidate responses lacked features such as, but not restricted to, headings, side headings, page numbers, inconsistent use of fonts and diagrams/graphs that lacked keys.

Learning Outcome 5 – Be able to participate in an Enterprise and Employability Challenge

It was pleasing to see that most candidates clearly engaged in this Challenge and produced effective outcomes. Some candidate work was exemplary; particularly with regard to Task 2, where some of the evidence presented was akin to that of a professional standard.

Global Citizenship Challenge

The third series showed an encouragingly consistent and high quality range of responses to the Advanced Global Citizenship Challenge. Overall, centres have prepared candidates thoroughly and appropriately and the wide range of challenge briefs demonstrated a broad view of global issues. Once again, candidates' enthusiasm for engaging in the world around them was evident and it was clear that candidates had been encouraged to consider complex and important issues from a wide range of perspectives. Whilst many had developed the academic skill of critically evaluating sources, there is still work to be done in this area, which will be complimented by their work on the Individual Project. As well as coming up with and promoting innovative and effective solutions to important global concerns, candidates were able to reflect on their own performance and knowledge as active citizens in a global community.

Again, centres should refer closely to the Delivery Handbook and published exemplars to ensure that candidates clearly understand the approach they should take in completing the assessment. The Personal Standpoint requires learners to identify and select information from suitable secondary sources, critically evaluating their credibility. There should be a **presentation of the learner's own opinion** on the global issue, having considered other viewpoints. The candidate's contribution to the Global Choices Conference should focus on a **proposed solution to the problem**. Preparatory work should look at a number of proposed solutions **in detail** before selecting the option (with justification for the choice). Where centres were not clear about the purpose and format of the three tasks, attainment was limited by muddled reasoning, lack of coverage of a relevant Learning Outcome and duplication of ideas.

Centres must also ensure that all Challenge Briefs are either those supplied by WJEC or have been agreed by the Regional Support Officer. This will avoid the potential problem of candidates choosing to focus on unsuitable topics which are either not appropriate or limit the scope of the Challenge. Centres must be aware of the ability level of the learner and the complexity of the global issue. Where candidates selected a topic which was particularly complex, they sometimes struggled to fully access the Learning Outcomes. Similarly, an issue which was fairly simplistic disadvantaged the more able candidates who could not present complex concepts and perspectives. Centres should be encouraged to differentiate topics to ensure enthusiasm and access for all levels of candidates, whilst being mindful of appropriate boundaries.

Centres were more secure in their use of the assessment grids and Learning Outcomes were correctly assessed holistically across all three tasks. Assessor annotation is vital to the moderation process as it allows the moderator to understand the rationale behind the centre's judgement but only if comments refer specifically to the descriptors in the assessment criteria.

The quality of candidate responses in Task 1, the Personal Standpoint, was encouraging. Band 3 responses were fluent and coherent with a clear structure which covered PESTLE factors, various viewpoints as well as the candidate's own opinion and an evaluation of the sources used. Centres should avoid too rigid a writing frame or structure as this restricted the achievement of candidates at Advanced Level. Again, candidates should be reminded that not all issues will cover all of the PESTLE factors; there were some rather 'strained' attempts to cover all the factors and the limit of the word count meant that they then missed opportunities for more fruitful discussion. Furthermore, centres are reminded of the word limit; significantly exceeding the 1000 word limit (not including quotations) penalised candidates in LO1 and LO3. Centres should also ensure that Candidates include a word count and a bibliography but it is not necessary to include sources.

Whilst the majority of centres adopted the correct approach to Task 1, there is still a level of uncertainty about Task 2 as some candidates reproduced their Personal Standpoint as a PowerPoint or evaluated solutions within the conference contribution.

In the Personal Reflection, it was clear to see candidates had developed their skills and knowledge and were able to comment honestly on their own performance. In the best examples, candidates gained marks for LO1 and LO2 through their perceptive and detailed comments on their own skill development. In some centres, this task appeared rushed and lowered the overall quality of the candidates' work. Centres should be reminded that LO3 is assessed across all three tasks and lapses in accuracy here will limit attainment. Centres must devote sufficient teaching and learning time to evaluating skills development and emphasising the importance of this task to avoid it being an 'after thought'. The best responses were completed relatively soon after the Global Choices Conference which ensured that the Challenge was fresh in candidates' minds.

- There is no requirement at Advanced Level to submit the sources used for Task 1 and this should be avoided as it can be unclear what is the candidate's work.
- Candidates should be reminded that displaying the word count for their Personal Standpoint is a requirement. Wherever possible, the personal standpoint should be word processed.
- Centres must ensure that sufficient evidence is included for Task 2 (records of Q&A, recordings etc) to justify the marks awarded. It must also be clear whether the contribution was a speech, conference paper or alternative.

Learning Outcome 1 – Be able to apply Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

- It was evident that time had been spent developing the problem solving skills that led to successful critical thinking. This process enabled candidates to select complex and relevant secondary sources to write their Personal Standpoint with confidence, incorporating a range of PESTLE factors. It was evident that learners had formed vigorous opinions on their chosen issue based on the sources they had considered. To further develop critical thinking, the teaching and learning programme must develop learners' skills in evaluating the credibility of sources. Sources should also be correctly referenced as this is academic best practice as well as evidencing the candidate's skill at selecting appropriate sources. It would also discourage any tendency to 'copy and paste' without referencing. Centres must note the requirement for **high control** in this task; therefore candidates should not have the opportunity to 'copy and paste'. There were a number of incidences of large sections of text reproduced without referencing.
- The assessment of problem solving skills was mainly focused on the evaluation of the chosen solutions. Supporting evidence to demonstrate this decision making should include detailed justification of choices.
- Credibility of sources was often overlooked in both the preparation for writing the standpoint and in the standpoint itself; this requirement is clearly set out in the assessment criteria. It is important that centres spend time developing candidates' skills in evaluating sources of information and ensure that is included as part of the Personal Standpoint. It should not be a separate section or annotated bibliography and must be included in the word count.

- Candidates are becoming more skilled and perceptive when evaluating their own performance, with many candidates able to critically analyse their critical thinking and problem solving skills. Where candidates explicitly discussed the **development** of skills, with examples or evidence to support their points. Centres should also be aware that many candidates thought the outcome was the understanding of the global issue and whilst this is very important, there was a lack of evaluation about the skills development. In some instances candidates did not realise they were developing skills, only knowledge. This needs to be addressed in future series.

Learning Outcome 2 – Be able to apply Creativity and Innovation

- Where candidates were clear about the distinction between Task 1 and Task 2, there was clear evidence of creativity and innovation. When candidates proposed solutions in Task 1 and considered different viewpoints in Task 2, they lacked the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to come up with solutions on their own and evaluate their potential success. This severely hampered their attainment.
- The most successful approach was seen when learners generated a range of innovative solutions which were supported by sufficient detail. This detail often demonstrated that they had really thought through the proposed solution and led to a more detailed and critical evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses. Centres must encourage candidates to think outside the box when generating potential solutions, as there were many candidates who just gathered a few basic ideas, although they then developed them in detail. Where candidates had (correctly) developed one chosen solution for their conference contribution, they were able to access the second strand of this LO more successfully.
- Overall, candidates did not reflect in detail on their own creativity and innovation. Future cohorts may find it helpful to consider what they have learned about this skill and how they will develop it further in the future.

Learning Outcome 3 – Be able to apply Literacy

- Candidates produced high quality work and were able to communicate fluently and accurately. Personal Standpoints demonstrated excellent analysis and synthesis and went on to present compulsive evidence to agree with the opinion expressed.
- Where candidates attempted to persuade the audience to support their chosen solution in the Global Choices Conference, high level rhetorical techniques and articulate and fluent arguments were suitably rewarded. Where candidates had simply reworded their Personal Standpoint or produced a stilted summary of possible solutions, it was more difficult to reward for this Learning Outcome. It is not possible to reward this LO in Task 2 where the contribution was simple powerpoints with images but no speaking notes.
- Centres were generally accurate assessing Band 1. However, where a candidate had produced detailed, lengthy response, centres tended to over-reward, regardless of accuracy. The complexity of the sources used for Task 1 was often a deciding factor in distinguishing between Bands 2 and 3. Overall, centres should be aware that for Band 3, candidates should evidence well-judged and detailed arguments which are convincingly developed, well-structured and supported by relevant detail. Control of complex sentence punctuation and spelling should be secure and accurate.

- Centres must be aware that literacy is assessed across all three tasks and candidates must therefore take care over the accuracy and clarity of their work throughout the Challenge.
- In the lower bands, lapses in accuracy clouded meaning and this therefore limited attainment.
- Again, in their Personal Review, candidates did not reflect in detail on their development of this skill and this is to be considered for future cohorts.

Learning Outcome 4 – Understand issues involved in a Global Citizenship Challenge

- It was quite clear that candidates had understood the Challenge and genuinely engaged with the global issue, demonstrating a desire to do something about it.
- Whilst the most successful examples demonstrated understanding of the global issue from several points of view, there were pieces of work which contained significant sections of copied and pasted work. This meant there had been limited critical thinking or synthesis and must be avoided.
- The PESTLE factors were generally evident in the Personal Standpoint. There were several successful approaches including i) considering the issue from each of the PESTLE viewpoints (where relevant) and referring to sources accordingly, ii) considering the PESTLE factors in each source. Candidates should be discouraged from labouring to find each of the PESTLE factors in each source. The most relevant are sufficient – particularly with the restriction of a word limit.
- There were some very high quality contributions to the Global Choices Conference which ranged from 10 minute speeches to animations. In the best centres, there was clear evidence of brainstorming a range of potential solutions **in detail**, SWOT analyses of those solutions and then one final solution presented in the conference. Centres must ensure that it is clear which approach the candidate has taken (e.g. speech, conference paper with Q&A etc.). Where the latter approach has been used, further evidence of the questions posed and the responses must be included. This could be assessor observation notes or a video recording; the 500 word paper by itself is not sufficient.

Community Challenge

It was encouraging to see a significant number of centres who allowed candidates autonomy to select activities of interest to them, enabling pupils to develop their own personal skills and transferring them to others in the community. Candidate should be provided with suitable Challenge Briefs that are of interest to them and in particular allow them to make their own decisions in what activities they will do, thus allowing the candidates to plan and organise purposeful activities and produce detailed and effective outcomes. It was evident in some cases that the activities had already been planned by the centre or organisation, therefore not allowing the candidates to access the higher bands. This is an area for development within centres for the next series.

A variety of Challenge Briefs were seen, which provided candidates with an opportunity to focus on real-life concerns and needs in a community and successfully engaged in activities which have made a difference. It was evident that in general, candidates had gained valuable experiences helping them understand what it means to be an effective and responsible member of a community. Some candidates were engaged in a distant community by travelling to Lesotho and Patagonia to carry out their community activity, whilst others carried out community activities in the closer community effectively. Good practice was seen in centres where pupils engaged with younger pupils becoming Young Leaders in a variety of sports and curriculum areas such as Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy. Some chose to become ambassadors for school charities arranging a variety of activities and succeeded in raising awareness and monies for the charities in the process very successfully.

This series again demonstrated the importance of providing candidates with suitable Challenge Briefs that are of interest to them and in particular allow them to make their own decisions in what activities they will do. Unfortunately some Challenge Briefs restricted the learners and did not provide enough opportunity to demonstrate planning and organisation and personal effectiveness skills, which limited the learners' experiences and overall success. For the next series, centres must ensure that all Challenge Briefs are either those supplied by WJEC available on the website or have been agreed by the Regional Support Officer. Centres must also ensure that the Challenge Briefs are suitable for Advanced learners and enable pupils to make the progression from Key Stage 4. Centres that provided a generic brief and allowed learners to choose their own community and activities were much more successful than centres who limited all learners to one or two options. Centres are advised to develop a bank of different briefs for learners, to allow for more individuality in candidate approaches. It would appear that in some centres the whole year group had undertaken the same activity of raising awareness and raising funds for a charity, this is not acceptable. If candidates choose to partake in the Supporting a Charity Brief, a programme of activities must be planned and organised by the individual/team and evidence of the 30 hours submitted.

Candidates achieved the higher bands when choosing a community activity relevant to their studies and future career choices, as they could clearly identify the purpose and benefit of the activity within the community, which resulted in stronger planning and implementation. There were some fantastic examples of coaching activities such as peer mentoring younger pupils in specific subject areas and working with local feeder schools planning and organising transition days. Successful social welfare briefs included working with dementia patients, developing mindfulness activities with younger pupils facing exams stress and a program of activities for younger pupils with low self-esteem. The charity brief was implemented well by some candidates. This was evident when the candidate planned and organised a series of activities for the charity. Centres are reminded once again that activities such as looking after younger siblings, raising money and awareness of a charity and organised voluntary work do not provide opportunity for planning or skills development and so should be avoided in future.

As noted in the Advanced Skills Challenge Delivery Handbook page 12 'The Confirmation Statement must provide testimony and validation of the learner's 30 hours of active and purposeful participation in completing the community activity'. Examples that are not acceptable are working in a charity shop or helping out at an event for 30 hours. It was apparent that some learners were using their week's work experience to complete the 30 hours and this will not be acceptable in future series. Centres must make it clear to learners that the Community Challenge is not about volunteering for 30 hours, it is about them taking responsibility and demonstrating specific skills for assessment. It is about the learner making decisions of what they want to do in or with the community and to be able to plan this in detail and then implement their plan.

Centres were more secure in their use of the assessment grids and Learning Outcomes were correctly assessed holistically across all three tasks. Teachers should refer closely to the Delivery Handbook and published exemplars to ensure that candidates clearly understand the approach they should take in completing the assessment. It was evident that some candidates had not been given access to the tasks nor the assessment grid so they were not clear about the requirements. However, candidates should not have access to the exemplar materials placed on the WJEC secure website. These exemplars should be used for internal moderation purposes only. Centres are to be reminded that the Community Activity Proposal is a controlled assessment task between 4-6 hours. The controlled assessment must be carried out following procedures in the Centre Code of Practice and the Administrative Handbook. Once a task from the Challenge has begun, no lessons or guidance can be provided other than that stipulated in the Challenge Brief controls.

Candidates have succeeded well in this Challenge when carrying it out as an individual. This has enabled them to develop their own personal skills and as an individual improving their own personal effectiveness. This was evident in their Personal Reflection presentations. Some centres chose to approach the Community Challenge as a team task which provided additional opportunity for skills analysis and reflection. A team is defined as having 3 to 6 members; there were a number of instances where the team seemed to be a whole class. If working in a team it is expected that they will have met before the controlled assessment starts to determine what community and what activity they will carry out. Evidence is required demonstrating how the team makes decisions - this could be in the form of minutes of meetings. When working as a team some proposals were very similar. When producing evidence for Task 1 each member of a team will produce their own version of a proposal.

Unfortunately not all candidates produced evidence for all three tasks: a Community Activity Proposal, a Confirmation Statement and a Personal Reflection Presentation. This resulted in a restriction of marks awarded. Centres should ensure that all candidates have the opportunity to complete all three tasks.

Learning Outcome 1 – Be able to apply Planning and Organising

Generally, there was clear structure to the Proposals, with research into the community groups and potential impacts on the community being particularly strong. On the whole, candidates' work provided a realistic level of detail and the ability to provide justifications for decisions based on their chosen proposals. Candidates should be encouraged to research thoroughly into similar activities in order to strengthen their justification to carry out the chosen activity. In some cases, learners in a cohort used the same sub-headings in their work, which they followed rigidly. Centres are to be reminded that Task 1 is to be completed under controlled assessment and therefore candidates' work should not follow the same format. The candidates should be encouraged to write less prescriptively, which is appropriate at this level.

Candidates' aims and objectives were generally relevant and appropriate. But in some cases aims and objectives were not always clear or realistic. A clear understanding of aims and objectives should be a focus in the teaching and learning programme. If a candidate can be accurate and realistic with their aims and objectives this will then provide a clear structure and guide for the remainder of the planning and organisation of the Community Activity Proposal.

The planning of the activities still lack details in some cases and is an area to be developed. Candidates should be encouraged to use Gantt charts and other digital programs as a project management tool. It is essential for the next series that candidates have the opportunity to discuss in detail their planning of the activities especially when working as a group. Candidates should be encouraged to set personal SMART targets when planning the activity.

The Personal Reflections were weak and candidates did not always reflect on the planning and organisation skill and how it had been applied during the activity. It was evident that candidates require support with reflection, as many tended to describe as opposed to providing evaluative comments. This should be a feature of the teaching and learning programme prior to the controlled assessment, with candidates being taught to refer specifically to the planning and organisation process to address this Learning Outcome.

Learning Outcome 2 – Understand Personal Effectiveness

Most of the candidates demonstrated a realistic ability to use skills audits and analyse the results. Where this was done particularly well, candidates made clear links between the proposal and an explanation of how their personal skills would make an impact upon the final Challenge. Centres are to be reminded that the skills audit should be analysed in Task 1 before deciding on an appropriate community activity. Generally, candidates' skills audits lacked the detail and analysis to access band 3. Candidates' analysis of the skills audit were descriptive and generalised rather than making specific links to their Community Proposal and the skills they required to carry out the activities. Where candidates achieved the higher bands more than one skills audit was done and analysed effectively and SMART targets were set by candidates linked to the community activity. A number of centres encouraged the use of The Enterprise Catalyst skills audit. This skills audit is more relevant to the Enterprise and Employability Challenge. It is imperative that the skills audits chosen are relevant to the Challenge.

Not all candidates provided clear visual evidence of them being personally effective in carrying out the activities. It is essential that all candidates produce evidence of carrying out the activity to access the higher bands. Many successful students included annotated pictures, videos, pupil voice questionnaires, diaries as supporting evidence. When sending evidence it should include a sample of evidence collated and annotated effectively. Evidence is required that the learner has monitored and changed, if necessary, the activity plan, whilst carrying out the activity. This is an area for further development in centres.

Some confirmation statements were missing from candidates' work. Confirmation statements are required by all candidates and are essential for assessment. Many confirmation statements did not include supporting comments. The confirmation statement should include comments on how the learner has performed; this may be done by a member of staff or someone in the community in which the learner has worked. The Confirmation Statement must also provide testimony and validation of the learner's 30 hours of active and purposeful participation in completing the community activity.

As stated previously in LO1, the Personal Reflections were weak. Although most candidates referenced their personal effectiveness in their Reflection, this was generally basic with limiting descriptive accounts. Some candidates were able to provide basic reflections on the strengths and weaknesses of their own personal effectiveness but very often when working as a team did not reflect on team skills. This is clearly an area for development for future submissions. It is appreciated that candidates find the nature of reflection a difficult concept but in order to achieve the higher mark bands, candidates are required to produce a detailed reflection of the development and application of skills both personally and within the team. Where this was done well candidates annotated photographs and discussed good and bad sessions during their activities, whilst recommending areas for further improvement. All this evidence should be included in the personal reflection presentation. In order for candidates to access higher mark bands they must provide clear evidence of their Personal Reflection Presentation. This can be in the form of speaker's notes or speech cards which support a powerpoint.

Learning Outcome 3 – Be able to participate in a Community Challenge

Generally, proposals completed by all learners were credible. Unfortunately in some cases candidates were misguided by the centre, partaking in community activities that were inappropriate for the level of the learners. Generally activity proposals were detailed and presented in a structured and logical format. This allowed candidates to provide a good level of detail across the planning stages. In some cases candidates' work was similar to the exemplar material. Learners must not have access to these materials. All proposals are to be written individually and under controlled assessment. It was evident that these controls may not have been adhered to and in some centres and instances of plagiarism were identified.

It was evident that candidates most candidates had understood the Challenge and successfully participated in community activities. Unfortunately in some cases the evidence provided was not substantial enough and restricted learners from achieving band 3. Candidates were particularly restricted due to lack of evidence to demonstrate the outcomes of partaking in the community activity. In many cases the Confirmation Statement was the only evidence provided. All Centres should focus on improving this area with the use of photos, videos, statements, questionnaires to demonstrate the candidates' participation and the impact and outcomes of their work.

Not all Community Confirmation Statements were fully completed with notes supporting the level of contribution to the Challenge. Most centres ticked all three statement boxes on the Confirmation Statement. Please note that Confirmation Statements should just have one statement ticked, not all three. Centres must ensure that the correct statement is ticked to reflect the learners' participation in the activity.

The use of candidate log books support this and is considered good practice. Learners who approach the Community Challenge as a team task must ensure that the annotation of the evidence is individual even though completing the same activity. The most successful work saw candidates provide annotated photographs and videos of their activity. Good practice was also seen by some centres including pupil voice, diaries and lesson plans. Photographs of the whole cohort carrying out an activity is not sufficient, as the success criteria requests a personal record from each candidate.

Generally, the personal reflection presentations were weak and therefore candidates were unable to achieve the top grades in band 3. This is an area for all centres to improve. Where candidates had spent 30 hours over a longer period of time, the evidence collated was appropriate, allowing candidates to reflect and adapt activities throughout evaluating the success of the activity and their own performance. In many cases powerpoint presentations were produced with limited detail or lacking evaluative approaches and content.

Some centres submitted videos of the presentations and supporting evidence by assessors this aiding the moderation process. Centres are reminded that the Reflection Presentation should be of at least 10 minutes and Task 3 should include a copy of the presentation with speakers' notes.

Individual Project

This second series saw a broad range of topics and a significant increase in artefacts submitted compared to the January series, as well as a decrease in the amount of centres still guiding candidates to present a comparison between Wales and another country.

It was pleasing to see a number of candidates awarded very high marks for project that clearly met the band three criteria throughout, within the word count. The project is designed to be planned, refined, edited and improved and centres must not lose sight of this when considering the standard of work required to obtain a distinction.

Centres are reminded that when an artefact is undertaken as a project, a log should be presented in addition to the written element. The skills challenge certificate handbook states:-

“A learner who produces an artefact as part of their project should keep a Development Record of how the artefact has been designed and produced. The analysis of data and information should be contained in the Development Record as it must inform the design of the artefact. “

In this series there was a great variety in the quality and detail contained in the development record of artefacts, often making it difficult to see how marks had been awarded to candidates.

Learning Outcome 1

Identify the focus and scope of an Individual Project

This outcome was less successful than in the spring. Whilst some candidates presented an introduction that identified the focus of their project and related to their own context, these were few and far between. Centres are advised to follow the guidance in the Delivery Handbook as noted in January’s report:-

“There should be a personal explanation as to why they have chosen their title; that it is an extension of a topic encountered in an A level or vocational course, a topic related to future university study, or could be very relevant to their planned career.”

Across the series there was significant variation in the standard of aims and objectives presented as part of LO1. Successful aims and objectives clearly lay out what will be accomplished to achieve the title (aims), and the actions to be undertaken to achieve each aim (objectives). This is not the place to discuss research methodology, nor go into detail about sources to be used.

Centres are reminded that well-crafted aims and objectives take time to refine and develop. As the project is the only element of the skills challenge certificate prepared by candidates not under controlled conditions; centres are strongly advised to ensure sufficient feedback and guidance is given to candidates whilst creating their aims and objectives, and before they proceed further with their project. This approach should ensure candidates have a framework from the outset that will enable them to present appropriate evidence for all of the remaining objectives, and support candidates considerably when drawing conclusions.

Learning Outcome 2

Select and plan research methods, resources and materials

Many candidates presented a clear methodology, but a number fell short when providing reasons for the methods chosen; this is essential for candidates to receive the higher marks. Whilst a comprehensive rationale doesn't need to be very long, it does need to discuss the main methods of research to be used and the reasons behind those methods being chosen. Few candidates were able to do this successfully.

When presenting an artefact this outcome is crucial in explaining the methods to be used in order to produce the artefact. This was often neglected causing candidates to miss out on marks.

Any rationale should make reference to the primary research to be undertaken, and this again was underdeveloped in most candidates' work. At Advanced level, discussion of sampling techniques and types of questions would be expected of band 3 candidates.

Learning Outcome 3

Select, collate, reference and assess the credibility of information and numerical data

Many candidates succeeded in selecting a broad range of complex sources, which was well referenced and effectively evaluated. However, the types of sources chosen continued to hamper some candidates. To quote from my report in January; "A large number of candidates relied on news websites to provide the vast majority of their information, even when published data and research was readily available on the topic. Such decisions limit the marks available to candidates, who are rewarded in the higher bands for selecting information from complex sources."

Again this season a disappointing minority presented projects without any referencing in the text, simply including a bibliography at the end of the project. At Advanced level the use of an established referencing tool should be the expectation, rather than the exception. Centres are strongly urged to ensure they are teaching referencing skills to candidates.

The choice of primary source continued to be an area for development for many centres this series; a significant number of candidates presented projects where primary information had been gathered via a questionnaire of their peers. In reality there are few topics that lend itself to this type of questionnaire; centres are once again strongly advised to provide sufficient guidance to candidates to ensure that questionnaires are conducted to an audience appropriate to the topic; failure to do so can limit the marks available in LO3 and often limits the analysis they candidates are able to present for LO4.

The second element of LO3 is assessing the credibility of sources. Many candidates did this well, though in some centres there was little or no evidence of it. Centres are strongly advised to provide sufficient support and guidance to candidates to ensure they present evidence to meet all of the learning outcomes.

Learning Outcome 4

Analyse the numerical data and display using digital techniques

It is encouraging to note that assessment of this objective was more in-line with the standard from a number of centres than in January, though it continues to be the weakest outcome in terms of assessment in line with the expected standard.

I re-iterate what was quoted from the Delivery handbook in January report that states:-

“The analysis of quantitative data (numbers) involves examining the data collected in ways that reveal patterns, trends, relationships, etc. that can be found within it. Whilst analysing data learners should make use of suitable statistical methods”

Centres are urged in the strongest possible term to re-visit this outcome to ensure that future cohorts present evidence sufficient to be rewarded in the middle and higher band and ensure candidates consider this outcome when selecting their topic, aims and research methods for their project.

Where basic numerical analysis was seen a number of candidates presented work where axis were not labelled, or data was presented without analysis, again severely limiting the marks available which is well below the expected standard at Advanced level.

Learning Outcome 5

Synthesise, analyse and use information and viewpoints

This outcome was the most consistently assessed and fairly rewarded. Often, weaker candidates struggled to do anything more than presenting information; this severely limits their ability to be rewarded beyond band 1 in this outcome. A small minority of candidates seen during moderation presented work based on a historical topic. Whilst these were clearly of interest to the candidates, it can be difficult synthesizing information and viewpoints when discussing a historical perspective. These were often over-rewarded by centres.

It is encouraging to note a number of candidates who demonstrated the ability to synthesise and analyse a range of information and viewpoints in an effective way, without compromising the word count. Centres are reminded that it is the depth of analysis and the range of viewpoints that are rewarded in the higher mark bands.

Learning Outcome 6

Produce and present an outcome

The vast majority of projects seen during this series were in written format. LO6 was consistently assessed across most centres. It is encouraging to note that fewer issues were seen with regards to overly-long projects, though centres are encouraged to include a word count with candidates' work to support the assessment and moderation of LO6.

It is worth noting that when a written project is presented it is expected to be seen as one document; this is also true when projects are submitted for moderation electronically (e.g. USB drive). A project presented as multiple files cannot be considered to have good presentation, and limits the marks available in this outcome.

Candidates who undertook artefacts often presented their final outcome in portfolio format with accompanying photos. These often demonstrated significant detail and a high quality outcome for the project.

Learning Outcome 7

Make judgements and draw conclusions

An increasing number of candidates presented evidence for this outcome by presenting a conclusion which was both aim by and aim and then summative. This continues to be the best practice with this outcome (and again emphasises the need for well-crafted aims and objectives referred to in the comments for LO1).

Few candidates presented a successful abstract during this series. Centres are reminded of the guidance from January's report:

“... a short summary of the whole of the learners' work. Approximately the last half of the abstract should be dedicated to summarising and interpreting the results.”

This should be present in all projects, and sits outside of the word count.

When an artefact has been undertaken, candidates should use the conclusion to make judgments on their aims and therefore the completion of their artefact. As noted in the Skills Challenge Certificate handbook:

“The conclusion should include a detailed evaluation of the artefact and its fitness for purpose”

These judgments should be well-reasoned and based on the evidence presented in the project and in the accompanying log. These types of conclusions were seldom seen in artefacts presented for moderation this series.

Learning Outcome 8

Evaluate own performance in managing an Individual Project

It is encouraging to note a significant improvement in the quality of evaluations seen since the January series. Candidates had clearly been guided to discuss the skills in turn. Having said this, a significant number of candidates presented a narrative of their use of the skills, rather than evaluative comments of their own performance with regards to the individual skills. This is a clear point for improvement from centres for the next series.

Centres are reminded that the self-evaluation can be placed outside the research project, and therefore sits outside the word count, allowing candidates to evaluate each of the skills in turn in detail.