



Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate (Welsh Baccalaureate) Principal Moderators' Report January 2023

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

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

Administration

Entries

Number of entries for the Global Citizenship Challenge and the Enterprise and Employability Challenge were very similar for this series, just below 4,000 candidates. Entries for the Individual Project were the smallest ever with only 7 centres with 120 candidates. It was however pleasing to see the increase in candidates taking the Community Challenge with over 1,000 entries.

Submitting Marks

The vast majority of centres submitted their marks before the Christmas holiday. Iamis had opened slightly earlier than in previous years and this has been positive in supported the process.

Centres are reminded that if a candidate who is entered but has not submitted any work, then they should be marked A for absent not 0. As candidates are required to pass all three components to achieve the Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate it is not expected that candidates will be entered with a mark below the Pass grade boundary.

If a clerical error in entering a candidate's mark is uncovered by the centre, it is expected that this is dealt with immediately by contacting wbq@wjec.co.uk. The candidate work will be requested and may be included in the moderation process.

Submitting Work

Centres are to be commended on their ability to upload their samples of candidate work by the deadline date and with all the required administration completed. A few centres were given a small extension due to staff absence.

There were very few issues in this series of candidate work not being uploaded correctly. However, there are still candidate and/or teacher signatures missing, and they had to be requested. This is a regulatory requirement and centres should ensure signatures are gathered appropriately, remember an electronic signature is allowed.

Internal Moderation procedures

It was clear that in a minority of centres that internal moderation had not been able to be completed due to teacher absences. This is a vital aspect of the moderation process and if not completed may result in the whole cohort being requested due to inconsistencies across the assessment.

Individual Project

General comment

Many highly effective Individual Projects were seen that were clearly linked to future employment or career aspirations. Titles were generally focused and of evident interest to candidates, with outcomes that were well presented.

Strengths

- Nearly all responses included appropriate introductions, evidence of carrying out primary and secondary research, judgements, conclusions, and an evaluation of own performance.
- Some responses were highly effective in terms of bringing together different sources of information and making valid judgements that were based on this information.
- Some candidates were able to carry out their own multistage calculations using numerical data they had found in their secondary research.
- Generally, in this series, evaluation of own performance was highly effective, with responses being detailed and comprehensive.

Areas for Improvement

- Whilst the writing of aims and objectives has seen improvement, some candidates are still referring to research methods and sources. Research methods and proposed sources should be included in the rationale.
- Most candidates were able to provide a bibliography but referencing throughout the work was not consistent. Candidates should be encouraged to use consistent referencing styles or conventions; the most common methods are Harvard or the use of footnote style.
- In some responses, the analysis of numerical data was only based on the results of a questionnaire which tends to be very simplistic. The use and analysis of secondary data was a missed opportunity to demonstrate the higher-level numeracy skills required at Advanced level.
- Where the Individual Project is presented in written form, candidates are reminded there is a word count of 3,000-5000 words in length. Candidates who produce much larger pieces of work are not meeting the criteria for this component and will be penalised.
- Some responses included anecdotal judgements and conclusions as opposed to evidenced-based from the gathered primary and secondary research.

Enterprise and Employability Challenge

General comment

Centres are reminded that templates, writing frames and scaffolding are unacceptable at this level. There is still too much similarity amongst candidate work especially in terms of Destination Plans and personal financial considerations. It was disappointing to see that a number of centres assessment was far too generous and marks for the whole cohort or for some assessors were reduced considerably.

Learning Outcome 1 – Be able to apply Creativity and Innovation Strengths

- There were many examples of original thinking, imagination, and some highly effective responses. Some of the ideas generated were unique and demonstrated candidates clearly understanding a brief and engaging in highly effective creative thinking.
- Successful outcomes also demonstrated how the final idea to proceed with has been determined. Techniques such as SWOTIC, decision matrices and diamond ranking were observed in this series, which is seen as good practice.
- Some Pen Portraits were highly imaginative and unique in their presentation and content.

Areas for Improvement

- Some candidates were not fully exploiting opportunities to demonstrate their creativity and innovation. Creativity and innovation can be seen in the presentation of their pen portrait, Innovation Proposal, Destination Passport and Personal Reflection Presentation. It can also be seen in the ideas proposed for the Innovation Proposal. Five a side football tournaments, smoothie stands and cupcake stalls limit candidates' opportunity to demonstrate creativity, originality and innovation.
- Centres are reminded that candidates are not required to submit a business plan for Task 2 – Innovation Proposal. In some cases, completing a business plan proforma also limits opportunities to demonstrate creativity and innovation.

Learning Outcome 2 – Understanding Personal Effectiveness Strengths

- In some cases, responses in relation to personal and group effectiveness were highly comprehensive and candidates had clearly reflected on the process and skills that had been developed or were requiring improvement.
- In this series, peer reviews had also been undertaken which were insightful.
- Suitability of job roles for the Innovation Proposal was also strong in many responses. Candidates could be encouraged to undertake a similar approach when considering their suitability in relation to the career paths they have identified.

Areas for Improvement

- Candidates do not need to include their skills audits in their responses. The analysis following the skills audit is the area of focus.
- Candidates should consider their skills gaps in relation to each career pathway. In some responses, this analysis was missing or there was a consideration of skills and attributes that had not been contextualised in relation to the selected career pathways.
- Some candidates identified university pathways as opposed to the career pathways. It is the intended destination which is the focus and not the means to get there.
- The Personal Reflection Presentation should focus on the skills they have developed as a result of participating in the Challenge and not repeat the content in Task 3 – Destination Passport.

Learning Outcome 3 – Be able to apply Numeracy Strengths

- The most effective responses are when candidates decide for themselves what they wish to find out and then select numerical tools and techniques to help them achieve this.
- When candidates understand what they want to numerical information they want to find out, their analysis and interpretation of their findings is much more comprehensive and purposeful.
- There were some highly effective calculations undertaken in this series that used formulae, percentages, averages, and standard deviation. The use of Excel worked particularly well as it allowed candidates to demonstrate their ability to construct formulas in carrying out calculations and also supports skills of digital literacy.

Areas for Improvement

- Candidates should select their own numerical tools and techniques. Templates are unacceptable at this level. Whole cohorts applying the same techniques and exploring the same elements within cost analyses in relation to costings in the Innovation Proposal and independent living decisions was observed. There should not be duplication and each candidate's response should be individual to theirs or their groups' decisions and choices.
- Stating costs or using online calculators does not constitute numeracy. Candidates can use costs or information from online calculators but as a starting point in a multistage calculation.
- Simplistic methods were also seen in many responses. Shopping lists, for example, are often overly simplistic.

Learning Outcome 4 – Be able to apply Digital Literacy

Strengths

- Digital literacy skills have continued to develop after each series. Some candidate responses including sophisticated websites, advanced social media and presentation platforms and promotional videos were observed in this series.

Areas for Improvement

- The Innovation Proposal and Destination Passport should showcase candidate's organisational skills. In some cases, there was an unmanageable number of files uploaded that had not been labelled appropriately.
- Candidate notes were missing for some Personal Reflective Presentations.
- Candidates should be encouraged to explore more creative digital platforms in presenting their responses.
- Some candidate responses still lack features such as, but not restricted to, headings, side headings, page numbers, and inconsistent use of fonts and diagrams/graphs that lacked keys.

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

Strengths

- There were some highly effective responses which could have been created and developed by professional bodies which was highly encouraging.
- It was also very apparent when groups had worked well together and were proud of their achievements.

Areas for Improvement

- There was a lack of clarity, detail, and organisation (both in terms of team working and presentation of information) in some responses.

Global Citizenship Challenge

General statement

It is pleasing to see a continued pattern of consistently appropriate and high-quality responses to the Advanced Global Citizenship Challenge.

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

- Candidates addressed a range of increasingly complex and original global issues. The trend towards more sophisticated and relevant secondary sources is also continuing and candidates were able to confidently synthesise PESTLE factors.

Areas for Improvement

- Overall, whilst there has been significant development in learners' skills evaluating the credibility of sources, it is still only a minority who address each strand of the Learning Outcome and critically discuss each of the characteristics identified in the assessment criteria. Bibliographies are also an area for improvement; too many candidates are still not including these, and it is a missed opportunity to develop this skill in readiness for the Individual Project.
- 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 to ensure that this element can be rewarded. This is an area that still requires further development in many centres with this strand being over rewarded in Task 2.

Learning Outcome 2 – Be able to apply Creativity and Innovation Strengths

- It was pleasing to see a significant improvement in the quality of candidates' Global Choices Conference contributions, and this was an opportunity to reward creativity and innovation.

Areas for Improvement

- Overall, candidates are adopting a more consistent and correct approach to Task 2 with a range of solutions being produced and evaluated. As in previous series, this Learning Outcome is still the most likely to be over rewarded and this is commonly seen when the solutions are not sufficiently varied or detailed.

Learning Outcome 3 – Be able to apply Literacy Strengths

- Whilst Task 1 has often been a shop window for candidates' writing skills, it is pleasing to see a rising standard of Task 2 Conference Contributions. Digital submissions of candidates delivering their speeches were welcome and provided excellent evidence of oracy skills and written communication. Attainment in this Learning Outcome continues to improve and be accurately assessed by Centres.
- There is a greater level of consistency in fluency and accuracy across all three tasks in the Challenge.

Areas for Improvement

- If there was a pattern of over rewarding, it was frequently at the top end of Band 3 where full marks were awarded but not justified by the candidate's accuracy and use of language.

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

- Compared to previous series, the quality of contributions to the Global Choices conference has improved in quality. There is evidence of conscious thought being put into the purpose and audience and how this then affects the presentation and material used. Candidates are making better use of media and PowerPoint tools to improve the impact and appearance of their presentations.

Areas for Improvement

- Very occasionally, video evidence of candidates' Global Choices Conference contribution showed them reading from a page of notes. It is more appropriate for candidates to use a prompt sheet whilst carrying out their speech and not to read their speech to be able to access the highest marks and demonstrate the quality of contribution.

Community Challenge

General comment

Generally, the Challenge Briefs selected engaged candidates and provided opportunity for detailed and comprehensive responses, particularly in the Community Activity Proposal. This was particularly evident in proposals that were based on coaching. Candidates provided a range of evidence which demonstrated their effectiveness in carrying out the Challenge including photographs, videos, interviews, questionnaires, and feedback sheets.

Overall, there were some excellent responses and there was clear evidence that communities had benefited positively from the activities.

Learning Outcome 1 – Be able to apply Planning and Organising Strengths

- There was a variety of evidence to demonstrate time management and various roles and responsibilities. These included Gantt charts but other methods such as detailed reports, diaries, and checklists. More complex methods such as fishbone diagrams were also observed.

Areas for Improvement

- In some cases, aims and objectives lacked clarity, or were not appropriate for the intended activity. This included the setting of personal targets and not focusing on the intended outcomes for the community involved.
- It was also evident that some candidates did not understand the difference between an aim and an objective, refer to the Delivery Handbook.
- As an introduction to the Community Challenge, candidates do not need to present a generic definition of a community as a way of contextualising their Challenge.

Learning Outcome 2 – Understand Personal Effectiveness Strengths

- A diary or log, personal action plans and minutes of meetings were helpful for candidates to highlight personal effectiveness in managing their role and responsibilities. These were particularly evident in coaching activities where candidates were formatively evaluating their role and personal effectiveness after each session.
- The evaluation of skills in the Personal Reflection Presentations was often detailed and accompanied by informative and specific speakers' notes. This included where candidates had demonstrated the development and application of skills through the challenge, highlighting clear progress made.

Areas for Improvement

- Candidates are still providing copies of skills audits, which are unnecessary.
- The skills audits must be appropriate for the actual community activity the candidate will undertake. In some cases, they were not relevant to the types of skills required or the roles carried out

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

- Candidates' consideration of the purpose and benefit of the community activity was often detailed, effective and appropriate.
- Most Community Activity Proposals were well structured and broken down into tasks and sub-tasks. There was also evidence of a range of digital techniques and methods used to present the information.

Areas for Improvement

- In some cases, Confirmation Statements did not confirm if the 30 required hours of participation had been completed, or that only one appropriate statement had been ticked. Some candidates' work had all three statements ticked.
- Having clear and measurable success criteria outlined at the start of the Challenge better supports candidates in evidencing successful and effective outcomes of the community activity.
- Candidates should also be encouraged to reflect on whether they have achieved their initial aims and objectives, sub targets and self-development targets.