Principal Moderator’s Report on the Controlled Assessment for GCSE Food and Nutrition (45852)

General Comments

It was encouraging to see evidence of centres using the guidelines on the controlled assessment tasks which are available on e-AQA to assist candidates with completing both the Research Task and the Individual Investigation. In addition to these guidelines, for those centres that accessed the Teacher on-line standardisation (via e-AQA), this enabled a better understanding of how to apply the assessment criteria and to practise awarding marks to tasks. This enabled many centres to achieve higher marks across all of the assessment objectives.

There was more evidence of centres offering a choice of titles which allowed candidates to research topics which interested them and enabled them to produce individual responses. The amended titles and new titles, which were submitted for the first time this year, proved popular with some excellent outcomes for the teenage footballer task and the pregnancy investigation. However, some centres continued to use the older titles which are now out of date. Please refer to the AQA secure website, eAQA, to access titles for 2016 and 2017 entries.

There was more evidence of candidates understanding the task/investigation to ensure they answered all parts of the question. This led to the correct use of comparisons for the research tasks on fruit and vegetables and the food additives task. Dishes chosen by candidates were more relevant to the title, for example the dishes chosen for research task 6 were a convenience food high in food additives and compared to a homemade dish with few or no food additives.

For the individual investigation, a weekly meal plan for the elderly (investigation 5) was more evident this year, however, some candidates who carried out this investigation still didn’t include a meal plan.

Presentation

The improvement in the presentation of the written work produced by many candidates continued this year. The use of ICT improved the presentation of the work and was used to great advantage by many candidates. Most candidates numbered pages and included a contents page which aided the moderation process. In addition to this, candidates produced a front cover showing the full title of their chosen task/investigation along with the centre and candidate name and number - this is a requirement and is necessary for the moderation process. For most practical solutions to the tasks/investigations, healthy eating should be a focus. This was more evident this year. Most centres produced a good balance of mainly savoury dishes/meals with fewer sweet dishes, which is good practice. Practical solutions should reflect the eatwell plate in most instances, especially where a meal is made. For example when the non-meat meal (investigation 6) is chosen, it is not appropriate to make mainly sweet dishes as the investigation is about replacing meat in a balanced diet.
Teacher Annotation

It was pleasing to see that the majority of centres are now using the Individual Assessment Record Form (IARF) to record details of where the assessment objectives are being credited and are referenced to the page numbers in candidates’ work; this greatly aided the moderation process. Teacher comments were especially helpful to record the level of independence of candidate work or detail any support needed for the completion of some of the objectives. It is important that comments on the practical work include reference to independent or assisted work, hygiene and safety to help to justify the centre mark awarded by the teacher. The IARF should be used to make comments on all of the assessment objectives. The IARF can be found on the H.E. Food and Nutrition section of the AQA website under the controlled assessment section, or alternatively on the secure e-AQA area. The annotation on candidates’ work may be completed in pencil or pen. However, each page should have an annotation code on it, and if there is work from more than one assessment objective on a page, each should be annotated separately.

Photographic Evidence

Photographic evidence of the candidates’ practical work is a requirement of this specification. Awarding marks for practical work (AO2.5) is an important part of the moderation process, so inclusion of evidence of all dishes made is essential. Photographs downloaded from the internet confused the moderation process and it is recommended that they should not be present in any part of the candidates’ work. Label cards clearly showing the candidate name and number accompanied the practical photographic evidence in some folders and this practice is to be strongly encouraged for future entries. Colour photographs of a large enough size should be presented in candidate folders; a suggested minimum size for photographic evidence is 6 cm X 6 cm for each dish/meal made. Please note that photographs which show candidates’ (or other) faces should not be included.

Specific Comments

Research Task

The recommended minimum time to be spent on the Research Task is 6-8 hours. For the background research, evidence suggests that about two secondary and two primary sources of information are required for top band marks. Approximately 2 hours should to be spent on practical work. Some teachers ask how many dishes candidates should make for the Research Task. The amount of work produced will depend on the ability of the individual candidate. Evidence suggests that two comparisons or four dishes are often sufficient to achieve top band marks.
Individual Investigation

It is recommended that candidates spend a minimum of 18 hours of class time on the Individual Investigation. Practical work should take up approximately 6 – 8 hours of this time. Evidence suggests that about 12 dishes should be sufficient to achieve top band marks in AO2.5, although some dishes which contained different components showed more skills and allowed for dovetailing in a single dish e.g. lasagne. It should be remembered that it is the quality and variety of skills demonstrated that are more important than the quantity of work carried out.

Assessment Objectives

Comments on the Research Task and the Individual Investigation

AO1.1 – There was more evidence of candidates justifying why they had selected the issues they had chosen which allowed some candidates to access higher band marks.

AO1.2 – Good candidates produced two valid primary and two valid secondary methods of research for the research task and three of each for the individual investigation. For the research task about 2 hours should be spent on this background research and for the individual investigation about 6 hours. Excellent presentation of the research produced was evident from more candidates for this entry. Where the internet is used to download material, this should ideally be summarised and presented in the candidates’ own words. Some folders contained many pages of sheets printed directly from websites and no comments were made on the information presented which reduced marks for this objective. Candidates can use carefully selected information which is downloaded from the internet as long as this is acknowledged next to the work itself, or in the bibliography and then some comments/analysis made on the information which is presented. All research for this objective should be UK based.

AO2.1 – More candidates were accessing some marks for this assessment objective this year, but there were still many who did not complete this after the secondary and primary research had been completed, but before the primary research had been analysed. The best examples seen were where candidates reviewed their work so far and stated what they planned to do next, presented as a list of aims. There are examples of this on the secure website eAQA in the sample tasks/investigations.

AO2.2 – Where candidates did not produce enough evidence of research in AO1.2, it made it less likely they could gain higher band marks for this assessment objective. The best examples of this showed on-going analysis throughout AO1.2 or an overall analysis at the end of the research. Analysis of the research should include charts or graphs to show the results of questionnaires and/or surveys along with written comments explaining the significance of the findings. Only one or two copies of the completed questionnaire are needed - including all responses makes the folders too bulky.

AO2.3 – There was evidence that some centres had a narrow range of recipes to choose from which candidates then tried to fit to the task/investigation they had selected. Evidence suggests that where candidates have a free, but teacher guided, choice of recipes the outcomes are more original and the reasons for choice are more relevant to the chosen tasks/investigations.
statement of aims which encompass the aims of all practical sessions is needed for top band marks to be awarded. The reasons for choice should be completed for the dishes which are going to be made. Reasons for choice were linked to their own background research and focused on the chosen title by the candidates who achieved top band marks.

**AO2.4** – In order to be marked in the top band, planning for practical work should include recipes, methods and timeplans. Dovetailing of activities was shown on timeplans for separate dishes or if a more complex dish had different components, these were sometimes dovetailed. This dovetailing, along with details of oven temperature, washing up, comparative testing and/or sensory analysis, allowed higher marks to be accessed. Unsuitable choices of dishes reduced the marks awarded in this assessment objective. For example for the low sugar research task, some unsuitable high sugar desserts were planned, where traditional recipes hadn’t been adapted to reduce the sugar. For the student task and elderly investigation, a wide range of skills to a high standard are still required for top band marks, but these skills should be realistic to the target group.

**AO2.5** – For the Research Task, 2 hours of practical work was produced by more candidates this year, which is the recommended time. However, for the individual investigation there were some candidates who did not reach the recommended time of 6-8 hours of practical work. All practical work must be photographed as this evidence is needed for the moderation process. Where there is no photographic evidence, written evaluations or sensory analysis to show that the practical has taken place, a mark of zero is awarded for practical work. However, there were many excellent examples of candidates producing sufficient practical work and covering a wide range of skills to a high standard which was very pleasing.

**AO3.1** – There was evidence that candidates correctly included a separate evaluation for each practical. The evaluation should clearly state the relevance of the practical outcome in AO2.5 to the task title. Some sensory analysis, using at least four people, with comments on their significance to the chosen title is also worthy of higher band marks. Both the sensory analysis and detailed nutritional analysis should be included for at least one practical in the research task and at least two for the individual investigation. The results of these should be discussed/analysed in words to show the candidate has understood what the chart is showing and how this is relevant to the title/target group. More candidates included a bibliography, these show the secondary sources of information used by the candidate which were useful when crediting marks in both AO1.2 and AO3.1. Where costing is relevant to the title, for example the student research task (task 5) and the elderly investigation (investigation 5), these are credited within this objective. Workings to calculate the costs of recipe should be evident. However, commercial costing software is acceptable but some discussion/analysis by the candidate is required for higher band marks to be awarded.

**AO3.2** – There were some excellent examples of the overall evaluation, which reviewed each part of the task/investigation and referred back to AO1.1 to see if the original issues identified were successfully investigated. Candidates who achieved marks in the top band also discussed their strengths and weaknesses as well as justifying any changes to their plans which needed to be made to the practical or written work. However, some evaluations were much too brief to access higher band marks.
Support

Teacher Online Standardisation (TOLS) for 2015-16 is available from September. TOLS can be accessed on e-AQA and can be found in the teacher tab. It is important that teachers use TOLS in order to familiarise themselves with the standard set for this unit. Examples of work marked by the Principal Moderator are available on TOLS and these will provide the opportunity to compare marking with the standards set by AQA.

Controlled assessment advisers are available throughout the year to assist with any questions regarding the requirements for controlled assessment. If you require details of your controlled assessment adviser please email home-economics@aqa.org.uk

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the Results Statistics page of the AQA Website.

Converting Marks into UMS marks

Convert raw marks into Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) marks by using the link below.

UMS conversion calculator