

NCFE Level 2 Certificate in Food and Cookery (601/4533/X)

Assessment window: 11 October 2019

This report contains general information in relation to the external assessment from the Chief Examiner, with an emphasis on the standard of learner work within this assessment window.

The aim is to highlight where learners generally performed well, as well as any areas where further development may be required, described against each assessment criterion.

Key points:

- administering the external assessment
- standard of learner work
- referencing of external assessment tasks
- evidence creation
- interpretation of the tasks and associated assessment criteria
- planning in the external assessment.

It is important to note that learners should not sit the external assessment until they have taken part in the relevant teaching of the unit to ensure they are well prepared for the external assessment.

Administering the External Assessment

The external assessments must be independent from the teaching of the unit. Work completed during the teaching of the unit cannot be used in the external assessment. Any stimulus materials used by the Centre during the teaching of the unit cannot be used in the external assessment. Learners must complete all of the tasks independently.

The completion of the timed tasks must be invigilated and sat in accordance with the Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment.

Standard of Learner Work

The number of entries was considerably smaller in this window however; the standard of learner work continues to see an improvement with good application of knowledge and understanding, in line with previous examination series.

Centres are making good progress with the qualification, utilising expertise well and significant use of the extensive online resources available to deliver this unit of work. Some outstanding Level 2 responses demonstrated effective teaching and learning at this level with an excellent understanding of the qualification. Where learners were well prepared for this unit, they could apply their knowledge and understanding to scenarios and make the links between the tasks. The variety of questions in the paper gave scope for support, stretch and challenge, with effective differentiation across the ability spectrum.

As in previous assessments, there have also been some weaker responses highlighting that some learners would be better placed accessing the Level 1 Certificate in Food & Cookery qualification.

Centres are reminded that they are responsible for ensuring that this qualification is appropriate for the age and ability of their learners, and they need to make sure that learners can fulfill the requirements of the assessment criteria of this qualification. Most learners are attempting every question and higher performing learners are using the grading criteria to access the grade descriptors for higher levels.

Any unanswered assessment criterion will result in a Not Yet Achieved for that assessment criterion and an overall Not Yet Achieved for the unit.

Some learners in this assessment window answered the questions generically with limited references to the specific scenarios, meal diaries, or recipes given in each of the five tasks. At Level 2 learners must be able to demonstrate skills such as Describe, Explain, Evaluate and Compare as per the assessment criteria.

Some learners utilised readers, additional time, scribes, and word processors, all within the guidance agreed for the qualification. Centres are reminded that all Reasonable Adjustments need to be requested in advance of the external assessment.

It remains a concern again that some learners were clearly under prepared for the external assessment, as the quality of their answers did not reflect a secure understanding of the range, which is published in the qualification specification. Condensing the course into one year is not recommended, as this promotes superficial knowledge and understanding and can be to the detriment of learner progress or achievement. Recruiting learners with integrity, linked to the wider aims of student achievement and progress as an endorsed route in curriculum planning, where learning is accessible and relevant for learners, remains the core purpose of assessment.

Where learners could apply their knowledge and understanding to the assessment criteria, and write coherently with depth and detail, they were rewarded with success.

Centres should use the exemplar materials available on the website to ensure that they are as prepared as possible. Centres must teach to ensure that learners understand what they need to produce to meet assessment criterion and should also structure teaching so that the externally assessed unit comes at an appropriate time in the course, so that learners benefit from the holistic nature of all taught units.

Referencing of External Assessment Tasks

The assessment criterion are clearly visible for each task and learners must be encouraged to refer to the grading criteria throughout the assessment to ensure that their answer fully meets this. This is especially important for learners hoping to achieve Merit and Distinction grades.

Evidence Creation

Learners should use the answer booklet, using the space provided, to answer questions. Where answers are typed or additional pages included, the learners name and centre name must be clearly visible and it must be clear which task the answer refers to.

Interpretation of the Tasks and Associated Assessment Criteria

Task 1

A.C 1.1 Explain what is meant by a balanced diet

There was generally good understanding shown by learners when answering this assessment criterion. Almost all learners achieved at least a Pass with many learners achieving the higher grades. Learners were able to name five nutrients, water and fibre and the need for the correct proportion of nutrients to achieve a balanced diet. The Eatwell guide was frequently referenced and the better responses included the percentage recommended for each food group. Some learners also referenced and were able to itemise many or all the Government healthy eating tips.

Named nutrients and their functions were often referenced with excellent subject knowledge, linked to food groups and this progression of understanding was evident across the task. Additional evidence was often found across the paper for this assessment criterion.

A.C 1.2 Describe the nutrients that make up a balanced diet

This was generally well answered demonstrating good nutrition knowledge with many of the learners achieving Distinction and Merit. Learners were able to provide a range of food sources and explain the functions of the specified nutrients and the effects of not eating enough of the named nutrients.

In a few instances there was some confusion between nutrients and food groups. Some learners refer to both nutrients and food groups in their answer and seem unable to differentiate between them.

Task 2

A.C 1.3 Explain nutrient requirements for different groups of people

This assessment criterion focuses on the learner's ability to explain. It is recommended that learners are taught the full range, with specific focus on the nutritional needs for different groups of people. Learners should be aware of both the limitations of specific diets, as well as positive ways of meal planning to ensure the nutritional status is maintained.

Generally, this assessment criterion was answered well, with learners showing a good understanding of the nutritional requirements of different groups of people. The nutritional needs of children in some instances showed a lack of understanding with some of the important nutrients being overlooked such as protein and calcium.

Knowledge of the excess and deficiencies of these nutrients and the impact they have over time is required and learners need to be able to apply these to the given scenario/context of the question.

For Distinction, learners needed to demonstrate their nutritional understanding and comprehensively explain and apply their subject knowledge and this should include examples and references to named nutrient function, sources, deficiencies and excesses.

Specific references to Parvin's dietary needs should be made identifying the nutrients missing, giving reasons why. The learner should also identify the nutrients that are in excess in her diet accompanied by a clear explanation and understanding of the consequences to her health and well-being overtime.

It was clear that many learners had a good grasp of the nutrient requirements for different groups of people and could articulate this clearly, demonstrating sound nutritional knowledge that they were able to apply within the given context.

Task 3

A.C 1.5 Explain how nutritional information on food labels can inform healthy eating

The standard of responses for this assessment criterion varied. Most learners were able to identify the labelling system and how this informs healthy eating. Generally, learners understood the traffic light system and could explain the significance of red, amber and green referencing high, medium and low in their answer and indicating that red is a colour that should be avoided, amber is okay if eaten in moderation and green is the healthy option and should be chosen as much as possible. Many learners could provide a basic outline of the dangers of saturated fat and salt and sugar and some of the consequences of too much in our diet such as high blood pressure, strokes and heart disease.

Some learners did not specifically refer to the information on the label as specified in the question but answered the question in a more generic way. When teaching this assessment criterion learners should be encouraged to specifically refer to information on the label provided as it provides greater opportunity to achieve the higher grades because there is a lot of information on the label that the learner can reference in their answer and show greater understanding of food labelling.

At level 2 for the higher grades the learner should be referring to the data on the label and providing some analysis. If the assessment criterion is taught in this way it also means that the information on the label, if referred to, aids the learner response as it does not rely entirely on recall. The learners that showed a very good understanding of food labelling referred to the data on the label including the number of grams and the RI percentage of energy, fat salt, sugar and saturates on the label.

The food allergy question was generally very well answered. Most learners understood the impact of consuming ingredients that could result in an allergic response and could explain how the information might inform someone with allergies and explained the significance of the allergens being written in a bold font on the label. Many learners also identified a range of allergens including lactose and gluten, providing potential symptoms of an allergic reaction to the above known allergens.

Superficial references to nutritional data or eating more/less of these foods limited the learner's ability to access the assessment criterion.

In the most articulate answers, learners were able to show critical judgment of the data and its use for healthy eating linked to allergens, and they were rewarded with higher outcomes for this assessment criterion.

Task 4

A.C 1.4 Explain healthy eating advice

For this assessment criterion learners must be able to make links and connections between a meal diary and the health of an individual. To do this, candidates should be taught to apply their subject knowledge to different contexts of meal planning, identifying cause and effect of excess or insufficient nutrients, linked to healthy eating, which is identified in the range in the qualification specification. The Government healthy eating tips should be referenced and applied; the learner should explain how they could help to improve the specified individual's diet.

A.C 1.6 Assess a food diary and make recommendations

Again, the standard of the learner response varied but many learners did achieve the higher grades. For this assessment criterion, learners must be able to assess and make recommendations. Most learners have been able to give one or two recommendations; however, it is the quality of the recommendations and the learner's ability to apply this to the meal diary that dictates their access to the higher grades.

Some learners annotated the meal diary which effectively supported their answer. Coding with ticks, crosses, high or low status observations, and annotated comments made a positive difference to weaker learners where they could visualise the changes and comment on the impact of the choices. This is an exam technique that has proven to work well for many learners.

Some learners were able to make a full assessment of the food diary demonstrating sound nutritional knowledge, others only commented upon a few of the food items listed. The recommendations were varied, some learners suggesting very obvious changes such as grill the sausages whereas other suggestions included completely substituting the fried breakfast for a much healthier option such as porridge with fruit and yoghurt. The higher grades demand a number of suggestions as the diary always provides plenty of scope for improvement. There were some very good answers that linked to dietary related medical conditions and why they could be potentially harmful.

Task 5

A.C 2.1 Assess a recipe in terms of its contribution to healthy eating

For this assessment criterion, learners must be able to assess a recipe and its contribution to healthy eating. This could include any factors from the range (cooking methods, ingredients, portion control, size, serving suggestions, or cost). The better answers identified the healthy and less healthy features of the recipe but qualified why this was the case showing a good understanding of the nutritional content of the individual ingredients or the method of cookery used in the recipe. Annotated comments on the recipe were very helpful to learners and many were able to show critical understanding in this way. For many learners, they were able to recognise that some ingredients could be seen as having healthy and unhealthy features, and where discussion centred on these observations, it was clear that critical judgment was being applied to the assessment of the recipe.

A.C 2.2 Explain how the recipe could be changed to make the finished dish healthier

Learners could demonstrate some interesting recipe adaption ideas, which included references to lowering the fat, sugar and salt content, increasing the fibre and nutritional content through the addition of ingredients, promoting the 5 a day concept and making changes to cooking and preparation methods. To access the higher grades learners needed to explain why the suggested changes to the recipe would make the finished dish healthier. Low level answers tended to dwell on the removal of ingredients, with no named replacement, or vague references to healthy foods and limited their response to a small number of suggestions. Many learners have been able to give a range of recommendations; however, it is the quality of the recommendations and the ability to apply this to the recipe that determines access to the higher grades.

Pertinent references to changing and/or swapping ingredients or altering the method of cooking were realistic and relevant, whilst other changes often included additional accompaniments that could be served with the recipe to enhance the nutritional content.

A.C 2.3 Describe other factors that could affect the finished dish

This question in some instances was the limiting factor and impacted upon the overall grade. Several learners did not even attempt this question which may have been because they were unsure of what sensory factors are or learners may have simply run out of time as this is the last question on the paper. It is very important that centres impress upon their learners the importance of answering all questions and managing their time effectively. Furthermore, this is particularly pertinent for this question because additional evidence cannot be found elsewhere across the paper. Learners achieved the higher grades where they could comment on specific descriptors linked to taste, texture, moisture, appeal, appearance. Some learners repeated their answer from A.C 2.2, or merely listed the factors identified in the range with no further discussion linked to how or why.

This is one area of the unit that requires thoughtful planning when teaching and making the link to practical work in other units. Functions of ingredients and the working characteristics of primary foods are fundamental to this AC, and it would be beneficial to centres to build this into their schemes of learning across the practical work.

Planning in the External Assessment

Centres are reminded to give due attention to the assessment windows of the external assessment. It is not advisable for learners to sit the external assessment early in their programme. It is far more appropriate to enter learners once they have taken part in the relevant teaching to ensure they are well prepared. Centres would be in a better position to prepare their learners for the external assessment following the support of an external moderation visit for the internally assessed units.

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