

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

Assessment window: Spring 2018

This report contains general information from the Chief Examiner. The aim is to point out the positives and negatives of the scripts in the assessment window to guide you to areas that where learners perform well and not so well.

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've 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 assessment 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 the external assessment independently.

The completion of the external assessment must be invigilated and sat in accordance with the NCFE Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment.

Standard of learner work

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 Unit 3, 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 criteria will result in a Not Yet Achieved for that assessment criteria 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 pupil 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.

Some Level 1 learners had been entered for the Level 2 paper, and as a result were unable to access the Pass criteria, producing simplistic answers that did not meet the assessment criteria. It is vital that centres are reminded of the importance of recruiting learners with integrity and at the right level for the qualification. Clearly this is in the interest of the learners and the realistic nature of their potential achievement.

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

Evidence creation

This qualification is aimed at 14 to 16 year olds studying the Key Stage 4 curriculum and interested in any of the diet, nutrition and health contexts such as lifestyle, provenance and cookery. The qualification focuses on an applied study of the food and cookery sector and learners will gain a broad knowledge and understanding of working in the sector. The qualifications have been designed to sit alongside the requirements of core GCSE subjects. They are appropriate for learners who are motivated and challenged by learning through hands-on experiences and through content, which is concrete and related directly to those experiences.

The Level 2 qualification is appropriate for learners who are looking to develop a significant core of knowledge and understanding and apply that knowledge in preparing, planning and developing a food and cookery programme. Successful completion of this qualification will enable learners to progress to Level 3 qualifications in related subjects. The knowledge and skills gained will provide an introduction to those required for careers in the food and nutrition industry.

Interpretation of the tasks and associated assessment criteria

Task 1

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

There were many good references to nutrition, Eatwell guide, and the need for the correct proportion of nutrients to be available in a healthy balanced diet. Links to how and why were often more limited in the weaker responses, and for some candidates they were unable to provide a coherent answer.

References to accurate daily requirements for water and dietary fibre were credited, and additionally the effects these have on ensuring a healthy balanced diet. 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.

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

This was generally answered with good nutrition knowledge, but where candidates misread the question and focused purely on food groups, they were unable to access the AC as there was no reference to named nutrients, their function or source in the tabulated format.

It is clear that there is still considerable confusion between nutrients and food groups. Many learners continue to use these terms interchangeably and showed no knowledge or understanding that whilst dairy foods are high in fat most also provide protein, vitamin D and calcium. It remains worrying that many learners refer to dairy as a nutrient.

More able learners were able to name source, function and deficiency of nutrients accurately and provide a clear and coherent description with impressive knowledge of nutrition.

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 the understanding of individual nutritional needs and meal planning issues was strong, and learners were able to provide articulate, well thought through answers. Knowledge of the excess and deficiencies over time of nutrients are needed within the range and learners need to be able to apply these to the given scenario/context of the question.

For Distinction, students need to comprehensively explain and apply their subject knowledge, and this should include examples and references to named nutrient function, source, deficiencies and excesses. Pertinent references to Stephen and his dietary needs were explored with sensible reasoning and discussion, whilst the answers linked to the dietary needs of teenagers showed real insight and understanding, with specific references to meal planning issues and healthy eating concepts. This was a topic that learners were able to discuss with credible experience and application.

Task 3

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

Most learners were able to identify the labelling system and how this informs healthy eating. Superficial references to nutritional data or eating more/less of these foods limited the learner's ability to access the AC.

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 AC.

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.

A.C 1.6 Assess a food diary and make recommendations

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.

Annotations to the meal diary proved to be an invaluable start to the written answer for many learners. 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.

The impact of the recommendations were generally much improved from the previous exam series, and there was some high level answers 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). 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 recognize that some ingredients could be seen as having healthy and unhealthy features, and where discussion centered 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 content, promoting the 5 a day concept and making changes to cooking and preparation methods. To access Distinction for this AC learners needed to comprehensively explain. Low level answers tended to dwell on the removal of ingredients, with no named replacement, or vague references to healthy foods. Most learners have been able to give many 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 fared better for learners where they could comment on specific descriptors linked to taste, texture, moisture, appeal, appearance. Once again, many learners repeated their answer from AC 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. Regrettably, the answers provided by learners in this AC were often the limiting factor in greater achievement for learners. It would benefit learners if the information within the subject range for this AC was used during teaching and learning activities.

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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