

GENERAL COMMENTS

Centres collected a great wealth of information on a variety of cultural artefacts. It was indeed a great effort by centres which deserves applause! It was praiseworthy to note that a number of centres included the recorded voices of informants, videos and or pictures, etc. as evidence that the candidates went on fieldwork.

However, some centres did not record all candidates. Such evidence was particularly important for Section A: Presentation and B: Discussion

1. Quality of recording

The recording was in most cases of good quality. The candidates, the examiners and what the candidates played were audible. Centres are applauded for this. Thank you very much.

2. Range of sample

A good number of centres sent samples along with the whole cohort which represented the ability range quite well. Thank you for that. Some centres only sent the sample and not the whole cohort. In cases where moderators wanted to check on a certain candidate, this was not possible. The guidelines are clear that both the sample and the whole population of candidates must be sent for moderation sent the whole cohort. Examiners should familiarise themselves with the instruction and syllabi

3. Comments on specific sections

The oral examination consists of two sections: Section A (Presentation) and Section B (Discussion). The two should be treated apart. Most centres conducted this examination as one with the traditional “warm-ups” for candidates who appeared to be nervous. It was good to observe that examiners were generally sympathetic towards the candidates and made good efforts to let them feel at ease. Where warm-ups were needed, these need not be recorded. Overall, most (if not all) examiners did not go beyond the stipulated time limit of 15 minutes. Good.

3.1 Section A: Presentation

A significant number of candidates were able to briefly present the main thrust of their research. Most were to give detailed reports. A great number of examiners posed questions that stimulate the candidates

3.1.1 The quality of presentations

Despite the fact that most candidates are generally fluent native speakers, it transpired that some candidates needed their presentation skills to be polished.

It was apparent that centres need to work on the presentation skills of candidates as part of teaching and learning.

3.1.2 Interpretation of the Assessment Criteria

Examiners appeared to misinterpret or not use the marking grid at all. They placed candidates in higher bands which were not corresponding with their presentations. It is important for examiners to familiarise themselves with the descriptions in the marking grid.

3.2 Section B: Discussion

In the discussion section it is expected of the examiner to challenge claims (or assertions) made by the candidate in his/her report and to probe him/her to expand on his/her coursework while s/he (the examiner) is testing his/her speaking and listening skills at the same time.

3.2.1 Examining Techniques

The atmosphere was generally good and most candidates were calm and composed. Centres are applauded for this! Some interesting probing questions that have to be asked: "If you are to repeat your research project, what will you do differently? How did your research purpose and questions help you to collect the information that you wanted?" However, most centres did not take the candidates beyond what their informants told them. Thus, candidates were in most cases not probed to evaluate their findings or to consider other alternative opinions. It appeared that examiners did not read the research reports thoroughly and as a result were not well-prepared to pose good questions.

3.2.2 Interpretation of the Assessment Criteria

As already alluded to in the presentation session, examiners generally did not apply the assessment criteria correctly. Candidates were in most cases placed in higher bands which did not correspond with the quality of the discussions. The higher bands (1 and 2) are for candidates who are spontaneous, initiate and lead the discussion not for candidates who need to be prompted. These bands are also not for candidates who narrate what they were told by their informants. They are for candidates who extend their topic, candidates who are confident, and who analyse and evaluate different perspectives. Some of candidates could not do these.

4. Recommendations

The microphone should be placed closer to the candidates.
Study the candidates written report and set relevant and stimulating questions.
Read the moderator's comments of the previous year.
All the required forms must be completed.