

GENERAL COMMENTS

The moderation exercise found that many centres submitted most of the required and relevant information as well as documents for the moderation process.

It was noted that most centres submitted worksheets of high quality. However, some centres' worksheets need improvement. Marks for most centres were allocated in such a manner that it was beneficial to all candidates. However, a few centres still awarded five marks per criteria/skill instead of just three marks per criteria/skill as required. It was noted with concern that a few centres are still assessing five practical exercises while others could not submit all the required documents for the moderation process.

The moderation team would appreciate it if individual worksheets are submitted by each centre instead of group written work. There was an improvement in the evidence submitted in a form of pictures/photographs or models as required. However, some centres failed to submit any evidence of work done. Where there are two Agricultural Science teachers teaching the same grade at a centre, it is expected that they should collaborate in designing/developing the common worksheets or practical exercises. They should also complete the coursework assessment summary and the MS1 forms together. Internal moderation is applicable to all centres and the school management should ensure that it is done.

There was an improvement in the selection of researchable topics as well various topics per school. However, there are still a few centres where all candidates have investigated the same topic. This is not acceptable.

Candidates who are submitting typed reports are advised to use **Arial / Times New Roman font** and font **size 12 with 1.5-line spacing**. There was an improvement in the submission of evidence (photographs) individually in the candidates' reports, as well as questionnaires used during the investigations. However, a few centres still could not submit their evidence.

Centres are encouraged to ensure that photographs submitted as evidence should be clear enough for moderation. They also need to ensure that topics of practical investigations should be researchable. A few example of researchable topics are given in the syllabus and Coursework Teachers' Training Manual from the Directorate National Examinations and Assessment (DNEA), 2020.

Appropriateness of Assessment Tasks

It was noted that most centres submitted good quality worksheets for the practical tasks. Many centres managed to select practical tasks from various themes outlined in the syllabus. However, a few centres selected practical tasks from only one theme and or split a task into 3-4 exercises just to complete the assessment e.g. soil preparation subdivided into small exercises such as seedbed preparation, fertiliser application, sowing, weeding etc. The majority of centres developed challenging practical tasks that also assess a candidate's investigative skills optimally. However, a few centres prepared simple tasks that are not challenging enough for candidates at this level. In addition to the appropriateness of assessment tasks, some centres are still selecting tasks from the legacy syllabus. Most centres were able to develop specific marking criteria for each task; however, few centres are still using the general marking criteria directly from the syllabus instead of using it as a guide to develop their own specific marking points.

While the growing of vegetables is encouraged at every school, centres should not only prepare the seedbeds without showing which crops were ultimately produced or harvested and evidence of the crop grown should be provided.

Centres are encouraged to make use of the Coursework Teachers' Training manual (2020) and the moderator's comments report when selecting topics for practical exercises. This manual is obtainable from DNEA and all regional offices in the country. Centres could also seek advice and support from sister schools and the Senior Education Officers (SEOs) in the regions.

Interpretation and application of assessment criteria

Most centres were aware of the five assessment criteria that should be assessed in each practical task. However, a few centres still experience problems in the development of the practical tasks and generating appropriate as well as specific marking points which are required before marks can be awarded to candidates.

Centres are urged to prepare more challenging and practically related questions on the written tasks of the worksheets instead of theory-based. It is important for the centres to realise that work generated from the practical tasks should be set at an appropriate level for all candidates and be linked to the practical at hand. It is also important for the centres to ensure that the marks awarded to candidates are always objective and realistic.

The written work generated from practical tasks should be based on the practical task assessed and should be set at an appropriate level to encourage the application of practical knowledge and relevant theoretical concepts. Teachers are reminded that written work completed by candidates is important evidence that they have participated in the carrying out of a specific assessment task.

Suitability and relevance of practical investigations

Hypothesis/question

There was an improvement in the formulation of relevant hypothesis/question for the candidates' selected investigative topics.

Planning of the investigation

Most candidates were able to outline the methodology used in their investigations by indicating when and how the data was collected. Few candidates were able to provide evidence of prior planning for their investigations. Prior planning on how the investigation will be carried out should be clearly outlined e.g. a trial outline, data collection sheets or questionnaires that will be used and should be attached as annexures.

Handling of evidence

Most candidates were able to show understanding of how to handle data collected through completed tables and graphs. Some candidates failed to collect and record evidence from their investigations. Candidates are encouraged to label their tables and graphs clearly.

Ability to make deductions

There was an improvement in the ability of candidates to make deductions from the data collected as many candidates were able to collect and present data in tables and graphs.

Limitations

Most candidates were able to identify limitations experienced during their investigations. Centres should encourage candidates to identify major limitations of their studies and suggest ways to improve them. Examples of limitations for investigations can be sample size, sample bias, access to data, as well as lack of sufficient time, lack of financial resources, data collection, methods (techniques used to collect data) and lack of previous study on the title.

Presentation, layout and originality

In most cases candidates were able to follow the report layout as outlined in the syllabus. However, centres are encouraged to ensure candidates choose their own investigation topic and carry out their investigation individually and not in groups. Candidates are encouraged to acknowledge the work of other researchers (mentioned in the literature review) through referencing.

Interpretation and application of assessment criteria for practical investigations

Most centres were able to interpret and apply the assessment criteria for practical investigation with regards to:

- The selection of relevant questions (hypotheses) for the investigation
- The planning of the investigation and the principles on which it is based
- The handling of evidence
- The ability to make deductions from the evidence or the data acquired
- The ability to recognise limitations of the investigation
- Description of practical, presentation, layout and originality of candidate's work

Centres are advised to use the assessment criteria for practical investigations as stipulated in the syllabus when awarding marks for candidates' reports.

Administration

It is appreciated that many centres complied with all the administrative procedures that are required for moderation purposes. It was noticed that most centres put in extra effort by providing this information in well-organised files. This made the moderation exercise much easier. In addition, centres are encouraged to submit evidence of candidates' work in terms of written work done on each practical task. It is strongly recommended that centres should establish a verification system where teachers other than those involved in entering marks on the MS1 forms (supervised by the HODs or Head of Centre or Principal), need to check thoroughly that marks are transferred on the MS1 form. Absentees should also be clearly marked e.g. 999. It is observed that some centres do not follow these guidelines. Furthermore, centres are advised to make use of the latest version of forms supplied by the Directorate of National Examinations and Assessment (DNEA) where raw marks need to be entered. Marks should not be scaled down.

Centres are advised that only **ten samples** of candidates' individual record cards, worksheets and investigation reports should be submitted for moderation purposes. The rest of the individual record cards, worksheets and investigation reports should be kept safely at the centre until after the release of the results. This recommendation was not adhered to by a few centres as the office received a large number of record cards of individual candidates which is not required, while other centres did not submit any forms at all. It is important to verify before sealing the envelope that all the necessary information for external moderation is enclosed in an envelope. Centres are advised to follow the instructions about the completion of the MS1 form provided by DNEA strictly.

In general, the completion of the MS1, mark sheets, coursework assessment summary forms and the individual candidate record cards were satisfactorily completed by most centres. However, it is observed that some centres transferred some marks incorrectly.

In conclusion, the performance demonstrated by all candidates was satisfactory. However, there were a few signs of negligence at a few centres. We recommend that training be arranged by regional offices for centres. New centres and newly appointed teachers to the subject should be assisted regarding the conducting and administering of school-based assessment in Agricultural Science.