

GENERAL COMMENTS

Many centres submitted the required documents for external moderation.

It was noted that most centres submitted worksheets of high quality. Some centres' worksheets were, however, not of acceptable standard. Marks for some centres were allocated in such a manner that it was beneficial to all candidates. However, for the practical investigation some centres awarded 6 marks per marking criteria instead of 5.

Most centres submitted evidence in the form of pictures/photographs as required. However, some centres failed to submit evidence of the work done especially for the practical investigation. Centres are encouraged to ensure that photographs/pictures submitted as evidence for practical investigations are attached to specific investigation reports. Photographs/pictures submitted as evidence should be clear enough for moderation.

Candidates at most centres selected individual topics as per the syllabus requirement. However, it was noted that some centres had the same topic of investigation for the whole group. Centres are advised to encourage candidates to select individual topics. Teachers need to ensure that topics of practical investigations selected by candidates are researchable.

Candidates who are submitting typed reports are advised to use **Arial / Times New Roman font** and font **size 12** with **1.5 line spacing**.

Appropriateness of Assessment Tasks

Many centres managed to select practical tasks from different themes outlined in the syllabus. However, a few centres selected tasks from the same themes and some selected tasks from Grade 10-11 O-level syllabus i.e. Osmosis, Transpiration, water purification. Centres should take note that selected tasks must address specific objectives in the Agricultural Science AS syllabus.

Some centres selected simple tasks that are not challenging enough for candidates at this level. Centres should not only prepare the seedbeds but also grow some vegetables on the prepared plots and take care of them till harvesting and marking. Similarly, for the task on seed germination, which was selected by most centres, candidates should grow the viable seedlings and take care of them until harvesting time as well.

Interpretation and application of assessment criteria

Most centres were aware of the five assessment criteria that should be assessed in each practical task. However, some generated marking points that were too general. Centres are urged to generate specific marking points per marking criteria for each of the practical tasks. Marks should be awarded based on the five practical assessment criteria and should not come entirely from the written work.

Centres are urged to develop more challenging questions under the written component of the worksheets. Teachers are reminded that written work completed by candidates is an important evidence that they have participated in the carrying out of a specific assessment task.

Suitability and relevance of practical investigations

Selection of relevant question (hypothesis) for the investigation

Many candidates were able to come up with a hypothesis for their investigation. However, some candidates selected topics that were not of investigative nature and some selected topics with more than one variable to be tested. Centres are encouraged to ensure that candidates choose their own investigation topics as well as carry out their investigations individually and not in groups.

Planning of the investigation

It was evident that most centres had done prior planning for their investigations. Centres are, however, reminded that candidates should collect data by direct observation and measurement. This means candidates should set up experiments and then observe/measure, not just by using questionnaires and interviewing other people. See page 26 of the syllabus.

Handling of evidence

Most candidates were able to show understanding of how to handle data collected through completed tables and graphs. However, results presented by some candidates were unrealistic.

Ability to make deductions

Many candidates could interpret and analyse their data. However, deductions (conclusions) made by some candidates were not linked to the data collected or hypothesis.

Limitations

Most candidates were able to identify limitations experienced during their investigations. Centres should encourage candidates to suggest improvements for each identified limitation.

Presentation, layout and originality

Many candidates were able to follow the report layout as outlined in the syllabus. Candidates are urged to use pictures from their own investigations rather than using downloaded pictures from the internet. Candidates are also 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 (hypothesis) 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 when awarding marks for candidates' reports and to provide annotations as to how the marks were awarded.

Administration

It is appreciated that many centres complied with all the administrative procedures that are required for moderation purposes. It was noticed that some centres put in extra effort by providing the required information in well-organised files. This made the moderation exercise much easier. Centres are encouraged to submit evidence of candidates' work. Pictures provided as evidence must show all the main stages of the practical task and not just the end result. It was observed that some centres did not transfer the marks from the Assessment Summary Form to the MSI form (USB). Some centres did not print out the completed MS1 form as instructed. Centres are urged always to follow and adhere to given guidelines regarding the handling of candidates' marks. In addition, centres are reminded that only samples of ten candidates' individual record cards, worksheets and investigation report should be submitted for moderation purposes. The rest of the individual record cards, worksheets and investigation report should be kept safely at the centre until after the release of the results. It is important to verify before sealing the envelope that all the necessary information for external moderation is enclosed in an envelope.

Centres are referred to the reverse side of the individual record cards, coursework assessment summary forms for additional information.

In conclusion, the performance demonstrated by 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. AS level teachers should seek assistance regarding the conducting and administering of school-based assessment in Agricultural Science.