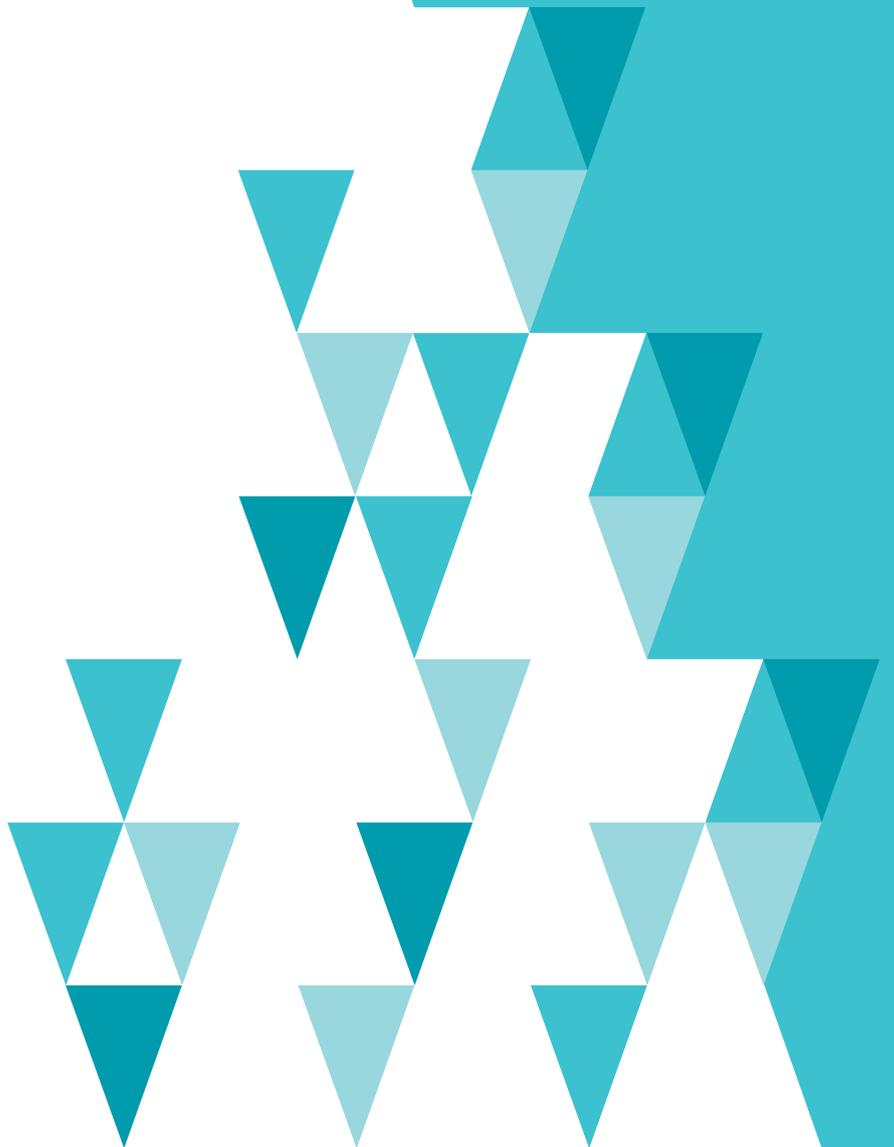


GCSE



**Chief Examiner's and
Principal Moderator's Report**
**Agriculture and
Land Use**

Summer Series 2019



Foreword

This booklet outlines the performance of candidates in all aspects of this specification for the Summer 2019 series.

CCEA hopes that the Chief Examiner's and/or Principal Moderator's report(s) will be viewed as a helpful and constructive medium to further support teachers and the learning process.

This booklet forms part of the suite of support materials for the specification. Further materials are available from the specification's microsite on our website at www.ccea.org.uk.

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GCSE AGRICULTURE AND LAND USE

Chief Examiner's Report

Subject Overview

The number of candidates completing the course is still increasing particularly in the grammar sector where both the number of centres and candidates completing the course has increased greatly.

It is pleasing to report that the papers in the Summer 2019 series provided further evidence of good quality learning and teaching of the CCEA GCSE Agriculture and Land Use course. The level of knowledge and thinking skills shown in answers, particularly the extended writing questions, was commendable throughout and highlights the enthusiasm for the specification.

The A*–C achievement levels are slightly higher than 2018 possibly due to the increased amount of grammar school candidates. However, due to the inclusion of the C* the number of candidates obtaining the B grade has decreased.

Both papers were answered well, however marks were slightly lower in Unit 1 compared to Unit 2 particularly the extended writing questions. With the extended writing questions, as in previous years, the candidates who highlighted the key words in the question and planned their extended writing question in the space, before attempting to answer it, did very well. The language used in the questions was deemed to be appropriate as most candidates attempted all questions and all candidates seemed to have enough time to complete the papers.

Unit 3 showed some great work by candidates and teachers alike, however several centres did have their marks adjusted and this reaffirms the importance of marking strictly to the provided mark scheme, particularly as it has been changed for the amended specification (first teaching 2019).

Assessment Unit 1 Soils, Crops and Habitats

Average marks and A*–C outcomes were up from 2018. Question 9 was the more demanding extended writing question which was less accessible to some candidates as they misunderstood 'abiotic'. With the extended writing questions, as in previous years, the candidates who did well highlighted the key words in the question and planned their answer in the space before completing the question. Candidates should be encouraged to write down more than the required number of answers (in extended writing questions only) as many candidates gave similar answers which were not deemed different enough to be awarded separate marks. The language used in the questions was deemed to be appropriate as most candidates attempted all questions and all candidates seemed to have enough time to complete the papers.

- Q1** Part (a) was answered correctly with only a handful of candidates dropping one or two marks. In Part (b)(i) several candidates did not fully 'explain' why weeds are controlled and so only achieved one mark; the rest of the question was answered well by most candidates.
- Q2** The whole question was answered well apart from Part (b) where many candidates struggled to give three complete answers. Marks were not given for weak answers such as 'cheaper', 'saves money' or 'good for the environment' unless they were qualified or described fully.

- Q3** This question was answered very well by most candidates with many achieving full marks.
- Q4** This question was answered very well by most candidates with many achieving full marks. In Part (b)(i) candidates should be reminded storing grass 'underground' will not make silage.
- Q5** This question was answered well, however several candidates are still confusing the very similar 'percentage organic matter test' with the 'percentage moisture content' and so could not obtain full marks in Part (b)(iii).
- Q6** This was the easier of the extended writing questions with most candidates getting into at least the middle marking band for the 9 mark question. Several candidates gave great detail and specific knowledge into growing their chosen crop. Potatoes were the most commonly referenced crop and teachers should be commended as the candidates answered this question with great enthusiasm.
- Q7** This question wasn't answered well by the majority of candidates, perhaps as GM crops haven't been asked much on previous papers.
- Q8** This was answered well by most candidates.
- Q9** This question showed the widest range of marks with several candidates not attempting the question, this was maybe because of the lack of understanding of what an abiotic factor is. However, those candidates who attempted the question did do well. Candidates should be reminded that they will only receive marks for different points, so 'repeating the test' for each factor is only worth one mark unless they describe different ways of repeating the test as mentioned in the mark scheme.

Assessment Unit 2 Animals on the Land

Like Unit 1 the average mark and A*–C outcomes were up from 2018. The extended writing questions were mostly answered well and as in previous years the candidates who highlighted the key words in the question and planned their extended writing question in the space before attempting an answer did the best. Candidates should be encouraged to write down more than the required number of answers (in extended writing questions only) as many candidates gave similar answers which were not deemed different enough to be awarded separate marks. The language used in the questions was deemed to be appropriate as most candidates attempted all questions and all candidates seemed to have enough time to complete the papers.

- Q1** Was mostly answered well, however in Part (b)(iii) some candidates confused 'biosecurity' with security and talked about 'CCTV' or another security method.
- Q2** Part (a) was answered well and it shows the level of knowledge that candidates have. In Part (c) some candidates are still confusing the words 'hazard' and 'risk', although candidates were not penalised as the examiners were instructed to allow the 3 marks to be awarded anywhere in the space provided.
- Q3** This question was answered very well by most candidates with many achieving nearly full marks. The mark that most candidates lost was for not correctly defining 'DMI' in Part (b)(i). The maths calculation in (b)(iii) was answered correctly by most candidates which was encouraging to see.
- Q4** Part (a) seemed at first glance a very hard question but a lot of candidates figured out that meal would be the most expensive part of an intensive dairy cow's diet and received full marks. Part (b) wasn't answered well and candidates should be encouraged to know the production levels of animals.
- Q5** In Part (a)(i) answers which are very non descriptive and general such as 'reliable', 'easier', 'cheaper', 'better for the environment' did not receive credit unless they were qualified. In Part (ii) 'spread with a splash plate' was not allowed and in (iii) the definition for 'BOD' was not well described by the majority of candidates.
- Q6** This question was answered well by many candidates, however many others struggled with this question which was mostly recall.
- Q7** This was the easier of the extended writing questions with most candidates getting into at least the middle marking band for the 9 mark question. The marking bands rarely limited candidates as 'differences' could be interpreted as 'disadvantages' and vice versa so as to give the candidate the best possible chance of achieving the highest mark possible.
- Q8** This was answered well by most candidates.
- Q9** This question was generally answered well although some confused 'diversification' with a modern 'technology' and so limited themselves to the marks they could achieve. Candidates should be commended for their creativity in answering the last part of the question, 'ways the new business could expand in the future'.

Principal Moderator's Report

Assessment Unit 3 Contemporary Issues in Agriculture and Land Use

This year saw the fifth submission of the controlled assessment element of the GCSE Agriculture and Land Use specification from centres. As in previous years it was again evident that many centres had prepared their candidates very well prior to submitting the controlled assessment tasks and this accounted for the majority of the task submissions being within tolerance. Teachers are again to be commended for their accuracy and consistency in marking with the vast majority of centres accurately applying the marking criteria.

As in previous years, there is still a tendency for candidates to ignore the word limit suggested for each task, and while candidates are not penalised for being in excess of the word guidelines, they should be encouraged to adhere closely to it, with an excess of 10% suggested. Nevertheless, while word counts still tend to be on the high side, it was encouraging to see that an increasing proportion of candidates are making appropriate use of an appendices section to include additional material they wished to submit and this material is not included in the word count. This practice is to be further encouraged.

General Administration

It is encouraging to see, as requested last year, that more candidates included a contents page of their Task submissions and submitted their controlled assessment tasks in the suggested formats outlined in the Specification Booklet. This greatly improves the structure of the submissions and assists with the marking and moderation of each section. Unfortunately, as per previous years, a minority of candidates continue to present their submissions in a power point format. These candidates, while not penalised in their marks, should be instructed to present their submissions in an appropriate written report format following the suggested structure. It is encouraging to see further improvement in the labelling of tables and graphs. Unfortunately some candidates still omit titles and labels from tables and graphs and hence needlessly lost marks.

Centre administration in the main is excellent with marker annotations clearly justifying the mark that was awarded to each section of each task. All centres are encouraged to adopt this process. In some instances however it was difficult to ascertain the mark that had been awarded to a particular section of the Task, or the total mark awarded to the Task. The teacher assessed mark for each section of each task should be clearly indicated on the candidate submissions as this greatly helps in the internal standardisation and moderation process.

As requested last year, an increased number of teachers provided a Summary Sheet of marks for each Task, with a breakdown for each section of each Task provided, along with the combined Tasks total and evidence of internal standardisation. This good practice is to be commended and all centres are further encouraged to adopt this approach. Centres are reminded to provide evidence of internal standardisation. This is a CCEA requirement.

In general, the assessment criteria continue to be appropriately applied by the majority of centres and the candidates continue to engage well with the Tasks.

Task 1: Practical Investigation

While all topics were attempted for the Practical Investigation (Task 1), 'The effect of light on plant growth' was particularly popular. The principles of a controlled experiment were generally well identified with a clear understanding of independent and dependent variables which is very encouraging. Candidates tended to overlook the need to justify the methods used and needlessly lost marks. Unfortunately some candidates only produced results using one method which limits the marks that can be awarded. Some candidates still continue to omit titles and labels from graphs and tables and hence needlessly lost marks. Some candidates only conducted one mathematical technique in the manipulation of data and thus limited their score in this section. Mark Band 4 in the analysis and conclusions section of Task 1 requires more than one mathematical technique to be used by the candidates. This can generally be achieved by averaging appropriate data and conducting a percentage calculation on appropriate data. It was encouraging to see that more candidates made a simple statement of result trends in this section of the report compared with previous years. Candidates should be encouraged to state their results and relate them to their hypothesis e.g. 'As the light intensity increased plant growth rate increases and this is because...' etc.

While generally these tasks were well developed, in some cases candidates collected a lot of experimental data but then struggled to draw appropriate conclusions, from the data collected, linked back to their initial hypothesis and therefore could not achieve top marks in this section. In the evaluation section of Task 1 it is important that suggestions for further research are directly linked to the primary topic of the investigation and not merely something an agricultural student would like to investigate, albeit remotely related.

Task 2: Research Project

While all three Topics for the Research Project (Task 2) were attempted, both the 'Livestock Technology' and the 'Grassland Management' topics proved particularly popular with the 'Livestock Technology' title proving most popular. It was evident that the candidates enjoyed and engaged well with these topics. The Planning section however tended to lack focus in many instances. Often candidates got lost in a wealth of data collected and were unable to draw solid conclusions from their research. It is important that reference sources cited in this section are specific to the topic and not of a general nature.

As in previous years there still tends to be some cut and paste in the planning sections and while sources were generally listed, candidates need to focus on a specific topic and present information succinctly and in their own words. Candidates should be encouraged to do independent and relevant research, with secondary sources referenced and correctly used. This would allow for greater individuality of work. As on previous occasions, some candidates failed to provide any justification for their research methods or an explanation of the procedures used and this reduced the marks that could be awarded in this section.

Candidates generally gathered primary data from two appropriate sources. Where an interview is conducted candidates should present the questions asked and the responses given. This will allow for some quantitative information to be produced and subsequently presented.

Yet again, the quality of some of the questionnaires for farmers were excellent as indeed was the presentation of the quantitative data. It was again encouraging to see the effort that many candidates went to in order to obtain primary data. It is important that questionnaires contain sufficient focused questions to allow 'detailed' information to be gathered on the topic. Attention to detail in the presentation of tables and graphs is required as marks are needlessly lost due to the absence of titles, labels and units. It is important that the graphical forms used are appropriate. Mark band 4 requires the use of more than one graphical form.

As in previous years linking findings to the secondary data still proves difficult for many candidates in the conclusion section. Similarly, in the evaluation section, it is important that suggestions for further research are directly linked to the primary topic with some logical details of how they would do this. The conclusion and evaluation sections are generally still the sections that cause problems for the candidates. As noted last year there was a tendency for the conclusion and evaluation sections to be generously marked in some centres.

Contact details

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