

FOOD AND NUTRITION

Paper 0648/11 Theory

Key messages

Candidates should be directed to carefully read the question and note that when asked for different sources of a particular nutrient, focus should be on providing a breadth of different types of foods.

It is important to state the classification of a food source, where possible, such as oily fish rather than just fish or red meat rather than just meat.

Many candidates omitted the correct form of a disease, such as answering diabetes instead of type 2 diabetes.

Candidates should be advised to avoid the use of general terms such as 'good for you', 'makes you stronger' or 'it is healthy'. Candidates should be discouraged from using vague terms such as 'germs'.

General comments

The paper demonstrated a good differentiation amongst candidates with a broad range of the syllabus being covered. There were a few areas that needed a detailed understanding of the science of the subject, and so stretched the more able candidates.

There were some no-response questions for a few candidates, but generally, the paper was attempted by all candidates.

On the whole candidates were able to produce factual answers to direct questions and, in some cases, could justify their responses.

Some candidates scored exceptionally well, demonstrating a good understanding of the subject and an ability to use that knowledge. Other candidates did not always expand upon points and some answers did not include explanations or examples to illustrate points.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) The meaning of RDI on a food label was only known by a small proportion of candidates.
- (b) This question was quite well answered with the majority of candidates able to correctly name at least three items of information found on a food label.

Question 2

Most candidates identified at least one fat-soluble vitamin found in eggs and attempted to demonstrate their knowledge of the functions of the named vitamin. To achieve full marks, candidates needed to be more specific when stating their response e.g. 'help vision in dim light' rather than 'healthy eyesight'.

Question 3

- (a) Only a small number of candidates were able to answer this question, showing there was a lack of knowledge about the emulsification of fats during digestion.
- (b) A high proportion of candidates were able to access both marks indicating a knowledge of the role of lipase.

Question 4

- (a) A good proportion of candidates demonstrated their knowledge of nutrients required for building bones and teeth. The most popular responses were calcium and vitamin D.
- (b) The majority of candidates demonstrated their knowledge of nutrients required for the formation of haemoglobin with most giving iron.
- (c) The majority of candidates demonstrated their knowledge of nutrients required for preventing night blindness by correctly giving vitamin A.
- (d) It was not so well known that iodide is the nutrient required for making thyroxine.
- (e) A good proportion of candidates demonstrated their knowledge of nutrients by stating that protein is required for promoting growth in children.
- (f) It was not so well known that vitamin B group is required to convert carbohydrate to energy.

Question 5

Only the better performing candidates were able to score highly in this question. Many incorrectly named a high value protein food with low fibre content such as eggs, fish, meat, and dairy products. When correctly answered, many candidates gave different types of pulses or different types of cereals, whereas the question asked for different foods rather than types of the same food.

Question 6

The majority of candidates demonstrated their knowledge of foods that can help prevent anaemia. Some candidates named different types of offal or meat or green vegetables when the question required different foods. With certain food groups it is important that candidates give responses that are specific, such as dark or plain chocolate and oily fish not just fish.

Question 7

- (a) Only a small number of candidates had the required knowledge of fortification of food to answer this question. Many answers incorrectly referred to shelf life or adding colour or flavour to the food and there were a high number of candidates who did not respond to the question.
- (b) This question was correctly answered by a small proportion of candidates. Many candidates did not answer the question, some provided vague answers such as cereal rather than fortified breakfast cereal. The most popular correct responses included milk, salt and margarine.

Question 8

- (a) Most candidates correctly stated that folate is needed for normal growth of the baby and some knew it is needed to prevent spina bifida. Candidates needed to be specific with the term megaloblastic anaemia; stating that it 'helps prevent anaemia' was too vague. Popular misconceptions were that it is needed to prevent miscarriage or low birth weight or for breast feeding.
- (b) The majority of candidates demonstrated their knowledge of good sources of folate and were able to give at least two correct responses.

Section B

Question 9

- (a) Only a small number of candidates knew that the creaming method uses equal quantities of ingredients.
- (b) Most candidates correctly named the creaming method for make the Victoria sandwich cake but very few were also able to name the all-in-one method, sometimes called the one-stage method.
- (c) (i) A minority of candidates were aware that using white flour for making the Victoria sandwich cake gives a lighter texture and makes cake easier to rise. Incorrect responses referenced the colour of the cake being lighter rather than the texture of the cake.
- (ii) A minority of candidates were aware that soft flour is used for making the Victoria sandwich cake as it has a low gluten content which gives a spongy, fluffy texture. A lot of responses repeated the wording of the question and said the cake would be soft.
- (iii) There were a higher number of correct responses to the suitability of wholemeal flour for making the Victoria sandwich cake. Most popular correct answers referred to NSP benefits or improvement of sensory qualities, such as providing a nutty flavour or brown colour.
- (iv) The majority of candidates gained the available mark for stating that using self-raising flour for making the Victoria sandwich cake helps the cake rise as it contains baking powder and gives a light, spongy texture.
- (d) (i) Candidates who gave fuller descriptive answers were able to access the available marks. Generally correct responses referred to the temperature of the egg and the gradual addition with beating in between. Incorrect responses were about addition of non-specific liquids, incorrect measurements of ingredients or under- or over-mixing but with no explanation as to when.
- (ii) Some candidates achieved the available mark for stating that the curdled cake would be heavy or would not rise. A lot of incorrect answers said the cake would be sunken but this is mainly due to too much sugar causing collapse of the structure or too much raising agent resulting in overspreading and collapse of gluten.
- (e) Most candidates were able to demonstrate their knowledge of methods of heat transfer used when baking the cake. Incorrect responses referred to cooking methods.
- (f) The majority of candidates achieved the available mark.
- (g) This question was well answered with a high proportion of candidates achieving full marks. Caramelisation is obviously a well-known and understood process.
- (h) This question was well answered with a diversity of correct responses given.

Question 10

Most candidates were able to name at least one type of kitchen layout design. The most popular known designs were U-shaped and island.

Question 11

- (a) The majority of candidates were able to demonstrate their knowledge of preservation by naming at least one method to preserve fruit. The most popular answers were freezing, pickling and drying.
- (b) Most candidates were able to correctly name at least one gas that may be used for MAP.
- (c) (i) The majority of candidates showed understanding of the use of heat when fruit is canned by correctly stating that heat will destroy or kill bacteria.
- (ii) The majority of candidates showed understanding by correctly stating that a can is sealed to prevent entry of bacteria.

- (d) Only a minority of candidates correctly gave an impact of canning on the sensory properties of fruit. Many candidates referred to nutritional losses rather than fruit losing texture and softening or changes in other sensory qualities such as colour or taste.
- (e) The majority of candidates were able to give at least one correct guideline. Incorrect responses related to information on the can such as ingredients or nutritional information rather than the condition of the can.

Question 12

- (a) Most candidates were knowledgeable regarding names of cereal grains with many candidates able to name three or four other cereal grains.
- (b) A variety of responses were seen to this question. Some candidates repeated the information in the questions with points around carbohydrates and energy. Some good answers were given around other nutrients found in cereals with LBV protein and NSP being popular, however, only a small number of candidates gave wider responses regarding the importance of cereals.
- (c) (i) Only a small number of candidates correctly answered this question, which reflected a lack of knowledge of the structure of a cereal grain.
(ii) Good knowledge was demonstrated by a high proportion of candidates who were able to correctly identify constipation and obesity amongst the health problems caused by people eating mainly refined cereals.
- (d) Most candidates gave knowledgeable responses regarding ways to store white flour in the home. Candidates who scored less well often gave vague responses that did not include sufficient detail.

Section C

Question 13

This question was the most popular choice in Section C. Responses varied in length which is a concern as this is a question where candidates can score highly by demonstrating knowledge and understanding. Those candidates who structured their answer well, used correct terminology and specialist language, included precise, relevant, well discussed points and covered all three areas of the question gained more marks.

Question 14

This question was a less popular choice. Responses varied in completion length and detail. Occasionally bullet pointed lists were given which did not fulfil the requirements of a discussed answer. The information given on microwave cooking was limited. It was known to be a quick method of cooking for which special containers are required. It was often mentioned that washing up can be saved because food can be cooked and served in the same container. A microwave oven can be used for defrosting and reheating as well as for cooking. When discussing safety aspects of a microwave cooker some candidates were aware of the need to use oven gloves to remove containers from a microwave as they may be heated from the food. They also knew that metal containers and some plastics should not be used in a microwave. It is still concerning to note there were many incorrect references to the danger of radiation posed by microwaves and that microwaves could cause cancer and were unsafe. Microwave cooking is not dangerous. The door catch is the switch so microwaves cannot 'escape' from the oven when the door is open.

FOOD AND NUTRITION

Paper 0648/12 Theory

Key messages

It is important that comprehension of technical words related to Food and Nutrition, such as function and source, are reinforced so that candidates are able to clearly understand what is required from questions.

Candidates should be directed to carefully read the question and note that when asked for different sources of a particular nutrient, focus should be on providing a breadth of different types of foods.

It is important to state the classification of a food source, where possible, such as oily fish rather than just fish or red meat rather than just meat.

Many candidates omitted the correct form of a disease, such as answering diabetes instead of type 2 diabetes.

Candidates should be advised to avoid the use of general terms such as 'good for you', 'makes you stronger' or 'it is healthy'. Candidates should be discouraged from using vague terms such as 'germs'.

Future teaching areas to focus on are around temperatures related to food spoilage, principles of preservation and special needs of pregnant women.

General comments

Many more candidates than usual across different centres did not attempt questions.

The paper demonstrated a good differentiation amongst candidates with a broad range of the syllabus being covered, resulting in a wide spread of marks. There were a few areas that needed a detailed understanding of the science of the subject, and so stretched the more able candidates.

On the whole candidates were able to produce factual answers to direct questions and, in some cases, could justify their responses.

Some candidates scored well, demonstrating a good understanding of the subject and an ability to use that knowledge. Other candidates did not always expand upon points and some answers did not include explanations or examples to illustrate points.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) The majority of candidates were able to correctly name at least two citrus fruits, the most popular answers being lemon, lime and grapefruit.
- (b) This question was generally well answered with many candidates achieving credit for stating dehydration, constipation, fatigue, dizziness, dry skin and headaches as effects on the body.
- (c) (i) On the whole, this question was well answered with candidates mainly referring to preventing night blindness, seeing in dim light, production of visual purple and healthy skin. Some candidates

mentioned improved eyesight or seeing in the dark, indicating that vitamin A was something to do with eyes but not showing full understanding. Some candidates listed different foods which demonstrated they had misinterpreted the word function.

- (ii) Only a small number of candidates were able to give three different sources. Many candidates gave sources of beta-carotene, repeated responses under the classification of dairy foods or stated fish not oily fish.
- (d) Only a small number of candidates gained full marks for this question. Many candidates did not link the fact that obesity is due to over consumption of fats and sugars and fruits are low in both these nutrients.

Question 2

- (a) A good proportion of candidates demonstrated their knowledge of foods that are animal sources of vitamin B₂. Some candidates named different types of dairy foods, offal or red meat when the question required different sources. Some candidates stated fish rather than oily fish.
- (b) Only a small number of candidates answered this question correctly, showing there is a lack of knowledge about the deficiency disease caused by a lack of vitamin B₁.

Question 3

- (a) (i) A good proportion of candidates demonstrated their knowledge of nutrients by stating that iron is required for the manufacture of haemoglobin and preventing anaemia. There were quite a few candidates who correctly stated that haemoglobin transports oxygen around the body. The most popular misconception about the function of iron is that it produces or forms blood.
- (ii) This question was not as well answered as (a)(i). Many candidates referred to phosphorus strengthening or maintaining bones and teeth rather than forming bones and teeth. Some responses correctly mentioned its use with the functioning of muscles and nerves. Quite a few answers simply confused the function of phosphorus with that of other minerals and there were a lot of candidates who did not give a response.
- (b) This question was quite well answered. Descriptions of coagulation were frequently seen as well as knowledge shown of colour change undergone when eggs are heated.

Question 4

A minority of candidates showed knowledge and understanding of someone who is coeliac. Quite a few responses stated the soup had cream, lots of spices, fat or tomatoes which would not be suitable. When correctly answered frequently only one mark was achieved by indicating that the soup contained wheat flour. Some candidates were able to achieve another mark by indicating the wheat flour had gluten which the person could not eat but did not give a reason why. Many candidates incorrectly referred to the person being allergic to gluten.

Question 5

- (a) Most candidates were not aware of the correct temperature range of a refrigerator. Very few candidates were able to give a correct answer for this question.
- (b) Most candidates were not aware of the correct temperature range of a freezer. Very few candidates were able to give a correct answer for this question.
- (c) Many candidates did not know the core temperature for cooked food, which should have been reinforced during practical lessons. Room temperature was frequently given as an answer.

Question 6

- (a) (i) The most popular correct responses stated that vitamin C is needed to absorb iron, support the immune system and prevent scurvy. Some vague responses were seen about protecting from disease that did not gain a mark.

- (ii) Many candidates did not consider the diet of a 70-year-old male but gave the general functions of calcium such as form bones and teeth or prevent rickets and some gave vague responses such as good for bones or teeth. The most popular correct responses were to help with nerve or muscle function and to prevent osteomalacia or osteoporosis.
 - (iii) Most candidates stated that NSP prevents constipation and occasionally referenced other bowel problems. Some candidates gave vague responses about NSP helping digestion and there were quite a few candidates who did not provide a response.
- (b) (i) It was well known that reducing salt in the diet of a 70-year-old male lowers the risk of hypertension.
- (ii) A small number of candidates gave a correct answer. Many candidates gave diabetes rather than type 2 diabetes.

Section B

Question 7

- (a) Only a small number of candidates achieved the full mark allocation for this question as responses referred to the butter being needed for the rubbing-in method but no reason given as to why. When correctly answered the most popular responses were for flavour and colour.
- (b) Some candidates correctly identified the extra nutritional value of the flour with the NSP element popularly noted. Occasionally some candidates provided responses relating to the lack of raising agent or low gluten content of the flour. Answers referring to the addition of flavour and texture did not always have a descriptive word such as nutty flavour or crisp texture. Several candidates answered as if the mixture was a yeast dough so had clearly not read the ingredient list carefully.
- (c) Some candidates seemed to misunderstand the use of cornflour in the shortbread as answers referred to it thickening the mixture, giving it flavour or being used as a raising agent. Some answers given referring to texture omitted a description such as crisp texture or lighter texture.
- (d) Most candidates were able to provide basic steps for a rubbing-in method but there was a lack of detail such as using fingertips for rubbing-in and the mixture looking like breadcrumbs. Many answers incorrectly included water as needed to bind the ingredients together, another indication of not having read the ingredient list carefully.
- (e) On the whole this was well answered with a range of spices given. Quite a few candidates incorrectly included herbs, garlic, essences and salt.
- (f) This question was not well answered as many candidates simply indicated that it could be in 'circles or squares'. The most popular response was using a cutter followed by shaping into balls. Very few answers referenced piping, using a mould or rolling out and cutting into shape with a knife.
- (g) Only a small number of candidates appeared to understand the purpose of piercing the shortbread with a fork before baking to prevent it rising and help to maintain its traditional crisp texture.
- (h) Only a small number of candidates understood that the difference in texture between cakes and shortbread was the reason they should not be stored in the same container. Most incorrect answers referred to transfer of flavours, smell or even cross-contamination.

Question 8

The majority of candidates were able to gain some marks by showing their knowledge of guidelines to follow for the safe storage of kitchen knives. The most popular correct answers were to store knives away from children and to store them in a knife holder.

Many answers referred to knives being washed and dried before storing to avoid rusting, how to carry knives, how to wash them safely and to only use knives on chopping boards, all of which were correct but did not answer the question.

Question 9

The majority of candidates were able to gain some marks. The most popular correct answers being to store chicken in the refrigerator or freezer and keep it covered. A few candidates advised storing on the bottom shelf in the refrigerator, and some vaguely commented on storing away from vegetables and meat or storing so it does not drip on other products.

Question 10

- (a) Most candidates knew at least one way that eggs may be used to make pastry products look attractive. Glazing was the most popular response, some candidates identified garnishing as another way but sometimes this was referred to as decorating.
- (b) Most candidates were able to identify at least one dish that uses eggs as part of a coating with the most popular responses being Scotch eggs, croquettes and fish cakes.
- (c) Very few candidates achieved the available mark as it was not well understood that the coagulation properties of eggs, when heat is applied, is a reason they are used for binding food products.
- (d) Most candidates were able to identify at least one dish that uses eggs for binding with the most popular responses being biscuits, croquettes and fish cakes.
- (e) A good proportion of candidates were able to identify that water could be used to test the freshness of eggs but very few used salted water in their descriptions. Quite a number of candidates indicated that fresh eggs float and stale eggs sink and some candidates showed their understanding of why this happens in relation to the air sac.

Question 11

Very few candidates achieved the full mark allocation for this question as responses referred to pregnant women being advised not to eat foods containing alcohol or too many spices or foods high in fat, salt and sugar. The most popular correct responses were raw fish, sushi, raw or undercooked meat and liver. Quite a number of candidates incorrectly advised avoiding papaya and pineapple.

Question 12

- (a) Very few candidates achieved marks for this question as responses indicated a lack of understanding of the preservation principles involved in freezing.
- (b) Very few candidates achieved marks for this question as responses indicated a lack of understanding of the preservation principles involved in making chutney.

Section C

Question 13

This question was slightly more popular than Question 14. Responses varied in completion length which is a concern as this is a question where candidates can score highly by demonstrating knowledge and understanding. Many candidates could have achieved more marks if they had been a bit more succinct with their responses, for example, instead of providing an extended discussion on the effects of too much oil on the health of a person, a concise sentence would have given the same information. Those candidates who structured their answer well, used correct terminology and specialist language, included precise, relevant, well discussed points and covered both areas of the question gained more marks.

Question 14

This question was slightly less popular. Occasionally bullet pointed lists were given which did not fulfil the requirements of a discussed answer. Some candidates could have achieved more marks if they had been more concise with their responses, for example some candidates gave an extended list of the different types of convenience foods available, the disadvantages of convenience food and the state of health of an elderly person, which did not answer the question. Those candidates who structured their answer well, used correct terminology and specialist language, included precise, relevant and well discussed points achieved better marks.

FOOD AND NUTRITION

Paper 0648/13 Theory

Key messages

Centres should make certain that candidates are fully prepared for the examination by ensuring each topic on the syllabus is covered.

Centres need to prepare candidates by ensuring they have a full understanding of the requirements of different question types: name, state, give, identify, describe, discuss and explain. Often candidates had difficulty in achieving full marks for questions asking for an explanation or discussion because answers were not supported with reasoning or relevant examples.

It is important that comprehension of technical words related to Food and Nutrition, such as function and source, are reinforced so that candidates are able to clearly understand what is required from questions.

Candidates should be advised to avoid the use of general terms such as 'good for you', 'makes you stronger' or 'it is healthy'.

General comments

Many more scripts than expected had no response questions where candidates did not attempt questions.

Candidates who performed less well were often neither able to give basic facts nor support any given statements with additional information.

Where questions ask for different sources of a particular nutrient, it is important candidates understand they need to focus on providing a breadth of different types of foods.

It is important to state the classification of a food source, where possible, such as oily fish rather than just fish or red meat rather than just meat.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) A reasonable number of candidates were unable to define the term *diet*.
- (b)(i) Many candidates were not aware that a coeliac should avoid foods containing gluten.
- (ii) A good proportion of candidates knew that a lactose intolerant person should avoid dairy products.

Question 2

- (a) Most candidates could name at least one element from which carbohydrate is formed.
- (b) Most candidates could correctly name at least one food containing starch. Some candidates named three pulses or three root vegetables, not taking into consideration that the question asked for different foods.

- (c) A small proportion of candidates knew that maltose is the substance produced by the action of the enzyme amylase on carbohydrate.
- (d) Most candidates could name at least one enzyme involved in the digestion of carbohydrate.

Question 3

- (a) Most candidates were aware of at least one effect on the body of vitamin C deficiency and gave varied answers including anaemia, poor wound healing and scurvy.
- (b) The majority of candidates were able to name at least two green leafy vegetables that are a good source of vitamin C.
- (c) The focus of this question was on preparing cabbage to conserve vitamin C. Many candidates wrote about buying, cooking or serving cabbage; the information given in their responses may have been correct but could not be awarded any marks as they did not answer the question.

Question 4

- (a) Most candidates were able to name at least one health benefit of eating foods containing NSP. The most popular correct response given was preventing constipation.
- (b) Most candidates were able to name at least one type of bean that could be added to a curry to increase NSP. The most popular responses were black beans, soya beans and red beans. Some candidates incorrectly named types of legume or lentil.
- (c) Only a few candidates were able to state even one effect on the body of eating too much NSP.

Question 5

- (a) Some candidates were able to identify one or two effects of anaemia on the body. Fatigue and dizziness were the most popular.
- (b) It was generally not well known why an anaemic person needs a daily supply of vitamin C. Candidates did not connect the fact that vitamin C is needed for the absorption of iron and cannot be stored in the body.

Section B

Question 6

- (a) (i) Only a small minority of candidates were able to give even one reason for using why strong plain flour when making rough puff pastry.
- (ii) A few candidates knew that butter helps to form layers when making rough puff pastry. Some were able to gain a mark by stating that butter gives pastry flavour or colour.
- (iii) A minority of candidates understood that lemon juice strengthens the gluten by making it more elastic and this helps the pastry to rise and form the structure of the flaky layers.
- (b) Only a small number of candidates were able to give instructions that would make a recognisable rough puff pastry. It was apparent that the majority of candidates had not made rough puff pastry.
- (c) Some candidates attempted to identify and explain reasons why rough puff pastry may not rise well but, mainly due to the lack of knowledge and experience working with this type of pastry, usually did not gain many marks.
- (d) Most candidates were able to suggest at least one or two reasons why some people use ready-made pastry. The most popular responses included saving time, saving money or that it is good for people who have no skill in making pastry.

Question 7

- (a) The majority of correct responses showed that candidates knew raising agents are used in cake mixtures to help the mixtures rise. Very few candidates were able to provide any other reasons.
- (b) Most candidates were able to name at least two gases that can cause a cake mixture to rise when it is baked.
- (c) The majority of candidates were able to name an ingredient that can be added to cake mixtures as a raising agent.

Question 8

- (a) Most candidates were able to name at least one method for frying fish. Most popular were shallow, deep and stir-frying. Some candidates named different foods that could be fried or oils and fats that could be used for frying, which did not answer the question.
- (b) The majority of candidates were able to name one method of heat transfer.
- (c) Most candidates were able to give at least one advantage of frying as a method of cooking fish. Popular responses related to the process being quick, giving a good colour or texture.
- (d) A few candidates were able to suggest two alternative methods of frying white fish for a convalescent. Correct answers ranged from baking in the oven to steaming or microwaving.

Question 9

Only a small number of candidates gave a detailed response to this question. Many candidates who did provide a suitable guideline for choosing kitchen knives omitted to give a reason for their suggestion. Many responses were simply not relevant to the question as candidates gave advice on caring for knives, storing knives or using knives.

Section C

Question 10

This question was the most popular choice in Section C. Responses varied in completion length which is a concern as this is a question where candidates can score highly by demonstrating knowledge and understanding. Those candidates who structured their answer well and included precise, relevant, well discussed answers gained more marks.

Question 11

This was the least popular of the questions in Section C and was attempted by only a few candidates. Responses varied in completion length; some candidates favoured one section of the question over the other which affected their potential mark. To achieve full marks all areas of the question should be covered.

FOOD AND NUTRITION

Paper 0648/02 Practical Test

Key messages

- All centres must use the Confidential Instructions for the specific series being examined as these may vary from year to year. Additionally, centres should ensure they follow the guidance that the published tests are to be allocated to candidates in strict alphabetical order (by surname). Test numbers (not syllabus number) along with full candidate and centre details are to be included on planning sheets and mark sheets.
- The inclusion of photographs as supporting evidence is now being received routinely. Centres should ensure that all dishes are not obscured by table decorations, labels or coverings so that they are clearly visible and that candidates do not appear in the picture. Only one clear, hard copy showing all of the final dishes is required.
- All centres must complete and include the Practical Examiner's Report and checklist with the candidates' work. This can be found in the Confidential Instructions document. It includes a record of the dates when the planning and practical tests were carried out, a seating plan and the opportunity for the teacher to report any difficulties that may have occurred during the Test.
- For each examination series, centres should download and use the most recent forms. These are available as interactive summary mark sheets and working mark sheets that will automatically total the marks and scale correctly. Many centres are using this system effectively now.
- Examiners should refer to the Practical Test Handbook, available from the School Support Hub, to ensure that the mark scheme is accurately, rigorously and consistently applied across the cohort. All Examiners should refresh their knowledge of the instructions and mark scheme regularly. Marks awarded must reflect the comments given on the Examiner marksheets and the annotations on candidates' planning sheets.

General comments

Many candidates tried hard to plan appropriate menus in response to the test questions and many centres were working in difficult circumstances again this year.

Overall, the administration for this series was completed correctly, and it was good to see that centres have generally stopped using half marks. Some centres incorrectly transferred marks from the summary marksheet to the MS1 and these had to be adjusted at moderation. All centres must check that marks have been accurately awarded, correctly added up and scaled and that the mark submitted to Cambridge International matches the mark awarded to the candidate.

Most Examiners provided detailed annotation on the front sheets and within the work. There were several examples of good practice when Examiners commented on a) how dishes met the test requirements b) how well the work was planned with reference to dovetailing skills, sequencing skills, use of appropriate methods and accurate detail in the special points column c) the practical and organisational skills demonstrated during the practical test d) the taste/texture and appearance of the final results with reference to the word bank in the Practical Test Handbook. Good practice was also seen when Examiners indicated on the work where and how they were allocating marks. For example, on the recipe sheet Examiners recorded a mark out of four for each dish chosen as well as a mark out of five for the ingredients listed. Also, time plans were marked using the recommended abbreviations (DT, W, M, SQ etc.). This enables Moderators to give more accurate and consistent advice in the report to centres. It is a requirement that all candidates' work must show evidence of marking, with annotation clearly written on the work to evidence how and where marks have been awarded.

Candidates need careful preparation for the practical test and they would benefit from some practice with cooking more than one dish at a time so the skill of dovetailing their work is developed prior to the test.

The most successful centres presented work of a good standard where candidates have been very well supported through well-directed teaching enabling them to show their achievement and submit interesting and varied work which met the assessment criteria.

Some candidates need more guidance and practice with menu planning and meeting nutritional needs so that they can accurately answer the demands of the test allocated whilst demonstrating sufficient skills in using a wide range of ingredients, manipulation of various mixtures and different cooking methods that make full and sensible use of the oven, grill and the top of the cooker. This does rely on the expertise of their teachers. Candidates should show regard for the 'theme' of the test when planning their final displays; for example, food for a party needs a party table setting, whereas food for a main meal needs a different but appropriate setting, food for a packed meal needs to be served as such and so on. Candidates need to write their choices in order of the test and clearly indicate which dish is for which part of the test. These should then be annotated by the Examiner with marks awarded for each choice of dish. All of the planning should be clearly and concisely annotated using the key provided in the Practical Test Handbook. Examiner annotation should be in a different coloured pen so that it stands out from the candidates' work.

Centres should note that for the purposes of the practical test, a balanced main meal consists of two skilful dishes and at least two suitable accompaniments. The two skilful dishes can either be a starter and a main course, a main course and a dessert, or two complementary main dishes. Some candidates mistakenly planned two main course dishes that were not complementary and this resulted in menus that were too heavy in carbohydrate and/or protein.

Most candidates had made a good effort to display their final dishes attractively. The main issues lie in the interpretation of the test requirements and ensuring the planning is more accurate. Candidates should be encouraged to make more suitable choices which fulfil the test requirements and which demonstrate the use of a range of ingredients, skills and a variety of cooking methods. They need to make skilled and complex dishes which demonstrate their knowledge of consistencies and cooking methods and which require a range of manipulative skills. Candidates who are aiming for high grades should be making their dishes from scratch and keeping the use of convenience foods to a minimum unless the test asks for them. Centres are again reminded that drinks should not be made, unless specifically required and cannot be awarded any marks in the test.

From the photographs included, it was pleasing to see many wonderful examples of colourful arrays of food with appropriately dressed tables and place setting for meals or other events. All candidates do need to consider what the final overall presentation would look like and plan to make colourful dishes or use suitable and imaginative garnishes to enhance their tests. Each dish should be clearly labelled so that the name of the dish can be seen in the photograph, without obscuring the food.

Good practice was seen in centres where candidates listed their dishes clearly for **(a)** and **(b)** and indicated which dishes include particular ingredients, equipment or methods required by the question. Examiners are reminded to indicate on the choices sheet how many marks have been awarded for each individual dish with justification given on the mark sheet. In the main, marks for choices were awarded accurately and fairly, with some exceptions. If a dish is awarded four marks for Choices, it should be marked out of seven for Results; conversely any dish with marks reduced to a maximum of three marks in Choices for low skill level should then be marked out of a maximum of five for Results.

Planning should include brief but accurate details of preparation and cooking methods, cooking times and oven temperatures. Candidates should indicate in the Special Points column how they will test that each item of food or recipe is cooked – for example they should state that a sponge cake would be baked until 'golden brown and springy to touch', pasta 'cooked until al dente'. There were many good examples of 'dovetailing'. This is a complex skill that allows candidates to show how, while one dish is cooking, another is being prepared or decorated. Candidates should use dovetailing to demonstrate the efficient use of time and to allow them to make dishes of a higher skill level within the time allowed; and where dovetailing is not evident, the maximum mark available for the Time Plan is five marks. Time left at the end of a plan indicates a lack of skill in the dishes chosen or errors in timing for other processes. Some of the plans were written over too many pages. The maximum should be two and any extras should mean that marks are adjusted as it is an indication of too much detail being put into the time plans. Time plans should indicate sufficient work to fill 150 minutes.

The marks for the method of working and the final results sections were often a little generous considering the number of incorrect or low skill dishes, or dishes that were not produced at all. Where this is the case the total number of marks in each section should be reduced. As a general rule, if a candidate chooses five

dishes but only makes three in the practical test they can only be marked out of 33 within method of working (11 marks per dish or per two accompaniments). Where dishes chosen are simple and do not require a lot of manipulative skills or knowledge of consistencies, marks should be reduced in the method section. In results, incorrect dishes should be awarded a maximum of three and a half marks and for low skill dishes four or five maximum should be awarded, depending on the dish.

Where candidates fail to make or serve a planned dish, marks for method of working as well as serving and appearance must also be reduced – marks cannot be transferred to other dishes.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

For this test, five skilful dishes from different cultures were required for a school event. The best candidates clearly identified the chosen dish, stating the culture it originated from. There were some excellent menus, demonstrating good planning with a range of hot and cold dishes that provided a balance of sweet and savoury food. For this type of test, food that is easy to eat, such as finger-food, is ideal as guests may need to eat standing up or moving around.

Question 2

For (a), a balanced meal rich in vitamin D and calcium was required. Ideal choices for this included oily fish, especially those with edible bones, dishes containing dairy products, tofu and plant oils. There was evidence of understanding of the components that make up a balanced meal, with a range of textures, flavours and colours as well as nutrients.

For (b), a savoury dish using a herb and a sweet dish using chocolate were required. Good practice was seen when candidates clearly identified the herb used for the savoury dish and that it was a key feature of the flavour of the dish, such as vegetable curry with coriander rice. For the sweet dish, cocoa was acceptable as chocolate and there were many well-chosen dishes, demonstrating a good level of skill; examples included chocolate sponge cakes with ganache icing and chocolate biscuits.

Question 3

This popular test required five skilful dishes, each to show the use of a different named ingredient. The named ingredient needed to be a main feature or flavour of the chosen dish. Choices generally demonstrated high levels of skills and accurate use of the ingredients listed. Most candidates identified the ingredient for each chosen dish on their recipe sheet. This is good practice and essential for moderation to be accurate and consistent. Good choices for 'cereal' included rice or oat dishes; cakes and quiches for 'eggs'; pizza for 'yeast'; curry and chilli for 'pulses'; some interesting fish dishes and appealing desserts made with fresh fruit. Please note that 'smoothies' to show use of fruit are not acceptable, as they are not a skilled dish.

Question 4

For (a), a balanced meal for two lacto-vegetarians was required. Dairy foods and eggs were permitted for this diet. Most candidates demonstrated their knowledge of a vegetarian diet, although there were a few instances of gelatine being used for desserts and occasionally chicken was used incorrectly here. Mistakes such as these were generally recognised by the Examiners. Many candidates chose two suitable accompaniments and created a well-balanced meal.

For (b), a dish using a coating batter and a batch of scones were required. Scones were generally well-made with a variety of sweet and savoury additions to the basic recipes. Some beautiful examples of well-risen, golden-brown scones were seen. Results for 'coating batter' were mixed, with a good number of candidates using a bread-crumbs coating instead, which was a wrong choice. A few made pancakes, which is a dish using a pouring batter.

Question 5

This was a popular question.

For **(a)**, three different skilful savoury dishes were required, each to show the use of a different method of **cooking**. Several candidates misunderstood the question and chose dishes that demonstrated different **preparation** methods instead, which often resulted in a repeat of a cooking method, such as baking. Often, this was recognised by Examiners. However, many candidates were able to choose skilful dishes that used different methods, including boiling, baking, steaming, pressure cooking, shallow frying or grilling.

For **(b)**, a sweet dish using the whisking method and a batch of biscuits were required. To be successful, candidates must be able to recognise the specified method for the sweet dish. Whisking method refers to a sponge mixture made by whisking eggs and sugar until thick and creamy followed by careful folding-in of flour. The mixture is usually fatless (except for Genoese, when a small amount of melted butter is added after the flour). Dishes such as sponge cakes or sponge drops, Swiss rolls, fruit flans and gateaux are suitable for this method. Some candidates mistakenly chose the wrong type of dish that may have used a whisk to make but was not the correct method as specified in the syllabus.

For the biscuits, any method could be used, and good examples were seen of ginger biscuits using the melting method, which enabled candidates to demonstrate skills in a different method to those used elsewhere in the test. However, it must be noted that flapjack is not suitable for this test.

Question 6

For **(a)**, three skilful packed meal dishes for construction workers were required. The dishes needed to be suitable for serving cold and eaten with fingers. This was not a popular question; however, candidates with this test were able to demonstrate good understanding of the dietary needs of manual workers and the types of food that can be taken as a packed meal. Popular dishes included meat and vegetable pasties, sausage rolls, pizza and scotch eggs.

For **(b)**, a savoury and a sweet dish, both to be served hot, were required. Hot savoury dishes were well-chosen with pasta dishes being very popular. Hot sweet dishes included steamed sponge puddings or fruit tarts with custard.

Question 7

A popular question, where four party dishes for young children and a decorated birthday cake were required. Candidates needed to be aware of the small appetites of young children and be able to produce food that would be appealing to five-year olds. The question did not stipulate that dishes had to be eaten with fingers, therefore hot or cold dishes that used cutlery were also acceptable. The best menus had food served in suitably small portion sizes, with tastes and textures that demonstrated 'child-appeal'. Some candidates had not considered this and served food with portions sizes more appropriate to teenagers or adults. A few candidates were able to demonstrate their skills in producing skilfully decorated cakes that would appeal to children. Cake decoration is an area that could be improved; many examples of undecorated cakes were seen, or those that were simply dusted with icing sugar. Some candidates attempted decoration, but the result was not neat or attractive, spoiling the overall appearance. There were some well-arranged and thoughtfully presented tables suitable for the theme of a party.

Question 8

This was the least used test question. For **(a)**, a balanced meal suitable for two convalescents was required. Few candidates with this question demonstrated any real understanding of the meal requirements, often planning dishes that were heavy in carbohydrates. A small number showed understanding of the term 'convalescence' and good awareness that choices needed to be appetising, light, easy to digest and nutritious.

For **(b)**, a savoury dish using flaky pastry and a batch of small cakes or a tray bake were required. Sausage rolls were popular to demonstrate the pastry, although a good number of candidates did not use the correct recipe. Knowledge of this basic recipe is listed in the syllabus and candidates should have experienced making this during their practical lessons. Small cakes were mainly chosen well and decorated appropriately.