



Pearson

Lead Monitor Report for Pearson
Edexcel Advanced Level Science
Monitoring

2016 - 2017

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Introduction

The first monitoring cycle begun in February 2016 and completed in May 2017. During that time every centre with candidates taking an advanced level science subject was visited by a monitor to look at the delivery of the Practical Endorsement in at least one science subjects. The subjects to be visited were decided by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) and all the various exam boards followed their allocation.

Purpose of the visit

The purpose of the visit is to look at the centre's delivery of the Practical Endorsement which is awarded by the teachers to individual pupils on the basis of their practical work as observed in the laboratory. In order to be successful the candidate must be deemed routinely and consistently competent against the eleven CPAC statements and must also have satisfied the requirements of Appendix 5c (use of apparatus and techniques) by individually carrying out the techniques and using the apparatus listed. The key aspect of the visit is to agree with the assessing teacher the standard of a 'pass' in the CPAC statements being assessed at the time of the visit. The monitor also makes an appraisal of the provision by the centre for providing sufficient opportunities to access all of Appendix 5c.

Some good centre practice

The vast majority of the centres passed their first visit and nearly all the remainder did so at the second attempt after the initial monitor was able to offer guidance and advice. The more successful centres were those who used the Pearson spreadsheet to maintain centre records of their students' progress and had a scheme of work that showed when each practical was to be assessed and the CPAC statements to be used. Ring binders files became increasingly popular for keeping student work and these should include copies of the CPAC statements and Appendix 5c.

Some centres involved their students in tracking and some in assessing as well. Students would tick off each of the apparatus and techniques on their Appendix 5c sheet when they completed it and sometimes assessed their own competence, although they tend to be very hard on themselves. A better process might be peer assessment, since they work in pairs, and in Year13 this can engender a positive atmosphere and lead to more rapid and secure progress towards competence.

The second cycle visit

The second cycle begins in October 2017 and all schools should be visited by the end of the Autumn term 2018. They will be visited in a subject different to that in the first cycle. The exam board you use for the next subject will be the one to visit you, if you intend to change boards please inform the new board so that a visit can be arranged sufficiently early.

Some useful tips

Standardisation will play a larger part in the next cycle of visits, this is to help centres ensure that the same standard is applied to all students in the same year and will help departments maintain standards over the time. Pen portraits can be very helpful in doing this. At a training session you can select one CPAC statement that you will use for one practical, ask all those involved in assessment to write down what they look for in a passing student, allow about 15 seconds, then ask them what they look for in a failing student, again 15 seconds only. In discussion you move towards a statement for passing and failing for this CPAC statement with which you all agree you can use. This then becomes one of the three or so you will use with this practical and can be copied on to an assessment sheet used by staff. You can repeat this for the other CPAC statements for the chosen practical and then move on to other practicals. It is not too time consuming and you should be able to complete it in a few training sessions and it will help you to maintain standards for the life of the specification. Since it is a guide to observing skills it can be shared with students so that they know what they are expected to demonstrate. This also enables you to ensure that you are covering the different aspects of each statement in at least one practical.

Finally, centres should not feel constrained by the choice of CPAC statements to use with which practical. By all means follow the Pearson mapping but also feel free to use those which your students need most. The sole requirement is that they are observed to be consistently and routinely competent against all eleven CPAC statements.