

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2013

TDIP

Level 2 in Principal Learning
Environmental and
Land-Based Studies
Plants and Animals and their Role
in Society
ES205 01

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Introduction

This is a work-related subject with a strong applied approach, and the external examination will seek to assess candidates in similar situations. It is therefore important that centres stress the need for candidates to read the stimulus information carefully before they answer questions and then be prepared to use the information within their responses. In order to ensure that the 'applied' part of the assessment has prominence, 'generic' material will only gain limited credit compared to specific, detailed, case study material.

Deliverers should ensure that candidates are aware of the requirements of the full range of command words that might be used at this level. The paper will tend to have simpler command words at the beginning with an incline of difficulty to more challenging requirements towards the end of the paper.

In most cases the questions that require shorter responses will be 'point marked' and the longer ones will be 'levels marked'. For the latter, centres need to fully and critically use all the information in the exam paper, including the resources and details within the question stem. Levels marking rewards candidates who can show their ability to use higher level skills in their responses – not just offer more points at the same level. It will be the ability to both apply their responses and offer a correct interpretation of the command words that will allow them to rise to the top levels of the mark scheme. This will require candidates to plan their answers before writing. Candidates who produce material that is of a generic nature will usually be limited to Level 1 as a key requirement of Level 2 will be to apply their learning.

Deliverers should ensure that all the parts of the 'What you need to learn' has been covered before candidates are entered for the external assessment.

Report on individual questions

The whole paper appeared to be accessible to the candidates and they were able to complete the paper in the time available. The incline of difficulty through the exam worked well except for q.1b and 1c where candidate knowledge of biomass and trophic level was poor. The statistics show a consistent trend from high scoring at the start, an even distribution in the middle questions, and greater discrimination towards the end. The levels marked questions worked well – nearly all candidates made a decent attempt at answering and it was clear how to discriminate between candidates, and as a result the mark scheme had little open to interpretation. The statistics showed that there was some score on the highest marks and few 0's at the lowest reflecting a good level of accessibility.

Question 1(a)i, ii

This question was intended as a simple introduction to the exam paper that was accessible to all by means of comprehension of the resource. It only partly met its objective with an average 70% of candidates scoring.

Question 1(b)(c)

This question was poorly answered. Candidates simply did not have the required knowledge of pyramids of biomass and trophic levels though clearly part of the specification.

Question 2

This was a straightforward question with clear resources that candidates responded to well with 80-85% scoring.

Question 3

This was a good response from candidates who explained well and developed points with their knowledge. Over 33% scored full marks.

Question 4 (a)

Superficially a rather simple question but the great majority of candidates identified reptiles correctly.

Question 4 (b)

This was a good response from candidates who explained well and developed points with their knowledge. 56% scoring 2 or 3 out of 3.

Question 5(a)

This was a good question in that although quite demanding candidates were able to use the source productively and produced a variety of credit worthy answers. It was a good discriminator between abilities reflected in a normal distribution curve of marks.

Question 5(b)

This question was disappointingly done as a quite straightforward descriptive question with ample number of options to show knowledge. However like 1(b)(c) candidates poor on pur knowledge this year.

Question 5(c)

This question worked very well. It was a good discriminator producing the full range of marks with little bunching. It was straightforward to mark with little ambiguity and areas of interpretation. It was a step up in difficulty compared to 5(a) and that is reflected in the distribution of marks.

Question 6(a)

This was a straightforward question that few candidates had problems with. This year candidates have identified the explain command words well and responded appropriately.

Question 6(b)

There was a concern with the format of this question in that it was quite a departure from the traditional. However responses show that it does fit the incline of difficulty well and it was a very good discriminator of ability. Candidates did, pleasingly, use experience they had gained in other units of this course where this LO has had a practical application.

Question 6(b)

In one way a good question in that it produced thoughtful, good quality answers, on the other hand 15% scored 0. This was disappointing as it is the most focused and smallest area LO and therefore one would have thought would be targeted by centres. Also it is a task that is often used in the coursework modules – so candidates should have had experience of this.

Summary

The responses to this paper were encouraging. Centres had correctly entered candidates. Candidates had improved in understanding-based questions through better preparation by centres, and by identifying and responding appropriately to the command words. Accessibility to all levels of candidate throughout the paper was also pleasing as well as a few decent discriminators that provided a challenge to the best candidates. However knowledge and case study details were poorer than in the past.

Centres can improve preparation of candidates with greater knowledge of production methods.

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