

Moderators' Report/
Principal Moderator Feedback

Summer 2013

TDIP

Level 1 Principal Learning
in Environmental and
Land-Based Studies

**ELBS ES102 1A, ES103 1A, ES104
1A & ES105 1A (Combined
Report/ Coursework)**

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ELBS Level 1 Unit 2 Systems and Services

ELBS Level 1 Unit 3 Introduction to Work in the ELBS Sector

ELBS Level 1 Unit 4 Working with Plants and Animals

ELBS Level 1 Unit 5 Impacts on the Environment

General Comments:

The basic format for these units is valid and secure and it should be possible to create appropriate assignments to assess the units for candidates in the Foundation Level of this Diploma.

In each unit it is important that at the outset of the assignment the programmes of study (descriptions of what is expected from the assignment) are clear and transparent and at a level that caters for the ability of candidates of a Foundation Level character.

Some of the programmes of study were too complicated for Foundation Level candidates and immediately put them at a disadvantage.

It is a very good idea to place the assignment's programme of study at the beginning the candidates' project, coursework, research assignment so that they have every opportunity to understand each aspect of the assignment in order to achieve to the best of their ability. In addition it enables the moderator to comprehend the character of the assignment and to fairly assess as to whether a piece of work is fit for purpose.

At Foundation Level it is very easy to overpower Foundation candidates and assignments should be made as user friendly as possible.

The character of the assignment, and the fact that it is at Foundation Level, necessitates that there will be a degree of teacher led content but it is important that throughout the assignment candidates are aware that the assessment of their work will reflect their ability to display levels of independent, and creative, thinking, analysis and evaluation. All too often candidates were copying excerpts from text books, magazine articles, newspapers, etc. or cutting and pasting lengthy sections from the internet, or using a teacher created handout, without adapting, altering, manipulating or annotating the information. If this is the case then the candidate cannot expect to move out of Mark Band 1.

In a similar manner if a candidate lists observations, or ideas, or displays photographs or attaches flyers, without placing them within the context of the assignment, and/or offering some kind of self-personalisation of the content then they will, again, struggle to get out of Mark Band 1.

In many cases such adaptation of the original information would have been quite simple such as a sketch, mind-map, food-web, a photograph, all of which would have persuaded the moderator that the candidate had given more thought to the exercise rather than lifting it off from source.

Even if it is information or data gathered by a group of candidates it needs to be personalised in some manner with perhaps a commentary on how the workload was shared amongst the group or an evaluation of whether it worked well or poorly. In addition group work always lends itself to candidates reflecting on their Personal Learning and Thinking Skills (PLTS) and this should be made clear, to both assessor and moderator, especially as it may impinge on Mark Band B.

It is quite valid for a teacher, or facilitator, to present a document, power point, spreadsheet etc., as a stimulus in order for candidates to make use of it in their assignment but it is extremely important that the candidate works with that piece of information and adds personal ownership and identity to it.

When candidates integrate sometimes high order IT skills, such as the use of a Power Point presentation or the presentation of graphs from a spreadsheet, to retain its impact for the examiner facilitators should consider sending their samples to the board in a digital form such as a disc or memory stick, remembering that photographs must have the appropriate permission.

Candidates who cut and paste whole sections from the internet and make little or no effort to annotate, comment, alter, integrate photographs etc cannot be awarded marks out of Mark Band 1.

Annotation, by candidates, of diagrams, graphs (especially using figures gleaned from the graphs therefore extending their functional skills) and photographs prove a good source of credit and should be promoted as should sketch drawings, proof of visits into the field, transcripts of interviews with relevant individuals such as park rangers, farmers, environmentalists, conservationists, politicians etc. in fact any players.

To reach Mark Band 2 or 3 candidates need to have touched upon all aspects of the Learning Objectives criteria. To achieve a mark in Mark Band 1 candidates needed to clearly show to the teacher and the moderator valid evidence. To climb out of Mark Band 1 and into 2 and 3, they need to extend and personalise their comments or observations in some manner taking serious notice of the command words in the Learning Objectives.

Where relevant in the Learning Objectives for Mark Band B it would be more consistent, and positive, if schools made use of the PLTS Performance Indicators on Page 303 to 307 of the Specification, which are integral parts of the Diploma.

Although it is not necessary to organise the assignments so that they follow a linear progression through the Unit's Learning Objectives, it is important that both the institution's assessor and the Edexcel moderator are clear as to where each Learning Objective is being covered. The more transparent the Learning Objective coverage the better the chance the candidate will receive the grade that they are entitled to.

Double coverage, is where a section of the assignment is perceived as covering two Learning Objectives and as such may struggle to be credited twice unless it is made very clear in some way that the candidate is aware that they are covering two Learning Objectives.

A clear but concise conclusion saves the assignment from coming to an abrupt end and will bring together the most prominent aspects of the assignment. In addition a short bibliography and appendices are anticipated.

Administration

Although relatively onerous it is vital that the administration of the assignment needs to be clear and complete for each candidate including the Record Sheet and the Diploma Learner Observation Record.

If candidates ensure that their name, candidate number, consortium etc. is clear and that the pages are numbered correctly the assignment is a lot easier to both mark and moderate.

Detailed annotation by the teacher/facilitator also makes the moderation exercise far easier which has to be to the benefit of the candidate. Samples that reflect the spectrum of abilities always prove extremely useful for the moderating process.

The standard of assignments showed improvement during this series and bodes well for the future growth and development of the Environmental and Land Based Diploma at Foundation Level. Nevertheless there was evidence of centres who gave little attention to correct administration procedures which was really quite unacceptable.

ELBS Level 1 Unit 2 Systems and Services

Candidates are required to produce a report (in any applicable form) responding to the demands of the assessment criteria exemplified by the Learning Outcomes for the unit.

There are no word limits and the assignment should be designed to fit the criteria. Centres are free to use Edexcel's exemplar, adapt it or design their own.

Range and suitability of topics/tasks/titles

The assignments were valid and an appropriate vehicles to assess the unit.

The programmes of study were in the main, clearly set out for the candidates and by placing them at the beginning the candidates had an opportunity to understand as to what was expected of them, and to refer to, as they progressed through the assignment.

In the assignment most candidates had the chance to reflect upon each of the Learning Objectives inherent in the Unit.

It is very important that throughout the assignments candidates are aware that the assessment of their work should be linked with the assessment table in the specification but also reflects their ability to display levels of independent, and creative, thinking, analysis and evaluation.

If a candidate copies extracts from text books, magazine articles, newspapers, etc. or cut and pastes lengthy sections from the internet, or complete a teacher pre-prepared template, without adapting such information, then they cannot expect to move out of Mark Band 1. There was a lot of evidence where candidates had not moved out of Mark Band 1 because they had settled at a copy and paste level of study such as listing observations, or ideas, or displaying photographs or attaching flyers, without placing them within the context of the assignment.

Even if it is information or data gathered by a group of candidates it needs to be personalised in some manner if it is to move out of Mark Band 1.

Individual or group work always lends itself to candidates reflecting on their PLTS which is an integral part of the Diploma's philosophy.

It is quite valid for a teacher, or facilitator, to present a document, power point, spreadsheet etc., as a stimulus in order for candidates to make use of it in their assignment but it is extremely important that the candidate works with that piece of information and adds personal ownership and identity to it.

To reach Mark Band 2 or 3 candidates need to have touched upon all aspects of the criteria found within specific Learning Objectives which necessitates deliberate reference to the key control words such as describe, suggest, evaluate, explain etc.

On specific Learning Objectives (usually those in Marking Grid B but sometimes in Marking Grid A) the moderators are dependent upon the information forwarded by the teachers or facilitators and the more transparent this information the simpler, and therefore more accurate the moderation will be.

Where relevant in the Learning Objectives for Mark Band B it would be more consistent, and positive, if schools made use of the PLTS Performance Indicators on Page 303 to 307 of the Specification, which are integral parts of the Diploma.

Although it is not necessary to organise the assignment so that it follows a linear progression through the Unit's Learning Objectives, it is important that both the institution's assessor and the Edexcel moderator are clear as to where each Learning Objective is being covered. The more transparent the Learning Objective coverage the better the chance that the candidate will receive the grade they are entitled to.

Sometimes the programmes of study for this module was a little overpowering for Level Foundation candidates and could be made more user friendly for the next cycle.

In the majority of cases annotation of the assignments by the teacher/facilitator was good throughout and proved very helpful although the more annotation the easier to moderate.

A clear conclusion saves the assignment from coming to an abrupt end.

There were centres where the assignments appeared to have no logical order about them and came across as random and disjointed. One question as to how useful the procedure had been to the students who were involved in those assignments.

Brief overall impression of interpretation of assessment criteria

The centres supplied relevant evidence and generally the moderation process agreed with the centre's assessment of the assignments.

The moderators are dependent upon the information forwarded by the teachers or facilitators and the more transparent this information the simpler, therefore more accurate, the moderation will be.

One speculates that there are aspects of the assignments that the teachers, facilitators and candidates haven't fully understood and it is essential that they read the E9 reports which raise these issues.

Performance descriptions

LO 1.1

To achieve a mark in Mark Band 1 candidates needed to show evidence of the role of plants and animals within the food chain, society and the environment. To climb out of Mark Band 1 and into 2 and 3, they had to personalise their comments or observations in some manner. Many of your students did personalise their responses and as a result attained higher marks. This principle applies to all the Learning Objectives.

LO 1.2

It does say potential hazards and the candidates must be aware of this. Often candidates were losing sight of this Learning objective. One conjectures that the centres need to highlight the wording of the assessment criteria in order that candidates know exactly where and why they will be awarding marks.

LO 2.1

The Key words in each Mark Band. Mark Band 1 "Adequately identifies"; Mark Band 2, " Identifies in detail"; and Mark Band 3 " Comprehensively identifies" they must be adhered to. Candidates tended to follow their own route, as in a formal examination, and as a result they lost marks.

LO 3.1

Must cover both "natural" and "human influenced" land. The human aspect of the ELBS Diploma is a vital constituent of the specification and candidates must recognise the link between physical and human interaction in whichever scenario they choose.

LO 3.2

The key word in this Learning Objective is "location". An annotated Ordnance Survey Map (or any kind of map) early on in the project would have been very useful. Location, distribution, spatial awareness are all vital aspects of the practical study of natural environment.

LO 4.4

Not only are the skills associated with the surveying of the environment a running theme throughout this diploma but so is the land use associated with the surveys.

Mark Grid B

These skills link very well with the PLTS Performance Indicator (suggested recording sheet) on Page 306 of the Specification, an integral part of the Diploma. Mark Grid B

This aspect of the assignment depends upon the professional approach of the teacher, lecturer or facilitator. It is essential that the moderator is fully aware of the aspects that have contributed to the marks awarded in this area of the assignment.

Performance descriptions

To be successful at this level it is necessary for candidates to assimilate the assessment criteria and although the content of the assignment should have allowed them to achieve to this level often they failed to "hit the nail on the head" and scored lower than anticipated.

ELBS Level 1 Unit 3 Introduction to Work in the ELBS Sector

Brief outline of unit requirements

Candidates are required to produce a report (in any form) responding to the demands of the assessment criteria exemplified by the Learning Outcomes for the unit.

There are no word limits and the assignment should be designed to fit the Learning Objective criteria and centres are free to use Edexcel's exemplar, adapt it or design their own.

Range and suitability of topics/tasks/titles

The majority of the assignments were valid and an appropriate vehicle to assess the unit.

The programmes of study were in the main, clearly set out for the candidates and by placing them at the beginning the candidates had an opportunity to understand what was expected of them, and to refer to, as they progressed through the assignment.

In the assignment most candidates had the chance to reflect upon each of the Learning Objectives inherent in the Unit.

It is very important that throughout the assignments candidates are aware that the assessment of their work should be linked with the assessment table in the specification but also reflects their ability to display levels of independent and creative thinking, analysis and evaluation.

If a candidate copies extracts from textbooks, magazine articles, newspapers etc, copy and pastes lengthy sections from the internet, or completes a teacher prepared template, without adapting such information, then they cannot expect to move out of Mark Band 1. There was a lot of evidence where candidates had not moved out of Mark Band 1 because they had settled at a copy and paste level of study such as listing observations or ideas, displaying photographs or attaching flyers, without placing them within the context of the assignment.

Even if it is information or data gathered by a group of candidates, it needs to be personalised in some manner if it is to move out of Mark Band 1.

Individual or group work always lends itself to candidates reflecting on their PLTS which is an integral part of the Diploma's philosophy.

It is quite valid for a teacher, or facilitator, to present a document, PowerPoint presentation, spreadsheet etc, as a stimulus in order for candidates to make use of it in their assignment but it is extremely important that the candidate works with that piece of information and adds personal ownership and identity to it.

To reach Mark Band 2 or 3 candidates need to have touched upon all aspects of the criteria found within specific Learning Objectives which necessitates deliberate reference to the key control words such as describe, suggest, evaluate, explain etc.

On specific Learning Objectives (usually those in Marking Grid B but sometimes in Marking Grid A) the moderators are dependent upon the information forwarded by the teachers or facilitators and the more transparent this information the simpler and therefore more accurate the moderation will be.

Where relevant in the Learning Objectives for Mark Band B it would be more consistent, and positive, if schools made use of the PLTS Performance Indicators on Page 303 to 307 of the Specification, which are integral parts of the Diploma.

Although it is not necessary to organise the assignment so that it follows a linear progression through the Unit's Learning Objectives, it is important that both the institution's assessor and the Edexcel moderator are clear as to where each Learning Objective is being covered. The more transparent the Learning Objective coverage, the better the chance that the candidate will receive the grade they are entitled to.

Sometimes the programmes of study for this module were a little overpowering for Level 1 Foundation candidates and could be made more user friendly for the next cycle.

In the majority of cases, annotation of the assignments by the teacher/facilitator was good throughout and proved very helpful although the more annotation, the easier to moderate.

A clear conclusion saves the assignment from coming to an abrupt end.

Although there were excellent examples of assignments, there were a number of centres where the assignments appeared to have no logical order about them and came across as random and disjointed. One question was how useful the procedure had been to the students who were involved in those assignments.

Brief overall impression of interpretation of assessment criteria

Most centres supplied relevant evidence and generally the moderation process agreed with the centre's assessment of the assignments.

The administration was often clear and complete, including the Record Sheet and the Diploma Learner Observation Record. Annotation of the assignments by the teacher/facilitator was good throughout and proved very helpful although, as mentioned earlier, the more annotation the easier to moderate. The moderators are dependent upon the information forwarded by the teachers or facilitators and the more transparent this information, the simpler and therefore more accurate the moderation will be.

One speculates that there are aspects of the assignments that the teachers, facilitators and candidates haven't fully understood and it is essential that they read the E9 reports which raise these issues.

Examples of borderline performance

Examples of borderline level 1 grade B performance against assessment criteria/performance descriptions

LO.1 Know about environmental and land-based jobs

Whilst some centres covered the ideas in this Learning Objective such as: the range of jobs; job types (voluntary, part-time, seasonal, full time, temporary, permanent); advantages and disadvantages of each type of job etc, in a creative manner, at the other end of the spectrum centres were listing and cutting and pasting from the internet which is not really in the spirit of the Diploma.

(This applies to all the Learning Objectives in this Unit)

LO.2 Be able to complete an environmental and land-based job application

There were few issues here other than that there are opportunities to score highly through the mark bands if the forms are completed in full. Sometimes it is necessary to elicit from the students their personal strengths which they often under-estimate.

LO.3 Know safe working practices in the environmental and land-based sector

A valuable Learning Objective which has so much practical relevance outside of the academic relevance. In the main this was covered extremely well regarding work risk assessments, hazards and risks.

LO.4 Be able to work safely

A quite straightforward section of the unit with direct practical applications. The better assignments ensured that the student has real, practical experience in a working environment in order to establish important aspects such as responsible behaviour, respect for colleagues and effective teamwork.

Mark Grid B

These skills link very well with the PLTS Performance Indicator (suggested recording sheet) on Page 306 of the Specification, an integral part of the Diploma.

This aspect of the assignment depends upon the professional approach of the teacher, lecturer or facilitator. It is essential that the moderator is fully aware of the aspects that have contributed to the marks awarded in this area of the assignment.

Examples of borderline level 1 grade A* performance against assessment criteria/ performance descriptions

More candidates moved into this band than in previous cycles but there were some who failed to assimilate the assessment criteria and although the content of the assignment should have allowed them to achieve to this level they failed to 'hit the nail on the head' and scored lower than I anticipate they will do in the future.

Lessons learned

The ELBS Diploma is gradually improving as the centres develop and accommodate the philosophy of the Diploma but some centres have been far more successful than others and the weaker centres require guidance to send them in the right direction.

It is absolutely vital that centres read their E9s and it would be good if there was a system in place which confirmed that they had done so.

More detailed linkage with centres would be advisable as is exemplified by certain creative strategies implemented by the Edexcel A Level support machinery.

ELBS Level 1 Unit 4 Working with Plants and Animals

Candidates are required to produce a report (in any form) responding to the demands of the assessment criteria exemplified by the Learning outcomes for the unit.

There are no word limits and the assignment should be designed to fit the criteria and centres are free to use Edexcel's exemplar, adapt it or design their own.

Range and suitability of topics/tasks/titles

The assignments were valid and appropriate vehicles to assess the unit.

The programme of study was clearly set out for the candidates and by placing it at the beginning the candidates had an opportunity to understand as to what was expected of them, and to refer to, as they progressed through the assignment.

In the assignment candidates had the chance to reflect upon each of the Learning Objectives inherent in this Unit.

It is very important that throughout the assignment candidates are aware that the assessment of their work should be linked with the Assessment table in the specification but also reflect their ability to display levels of independent, and creative, thinking, analysis and evaluation.

If a candidate copies extracts from text books, magazine articles, newspapers, etc. or cut and pastes lengthy sections from the internet, without adapting such information, then they cannot expect to move out of Mark Band 1. There was a lot of evidence where candidates had not moved out of Mark Band 1 because they had settled at a copy and paste level of study such as listing observations, or ideas, or displaying photographs or attaching flyers, without placing them within the context of the assignment.

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teachers or facilitators and the more transparent this information the simpler, and therefore more accurate the moderation will be.

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The programme of study for the assignment were a little overpowering for Foundation candidates and could, perhaps, be made more user friendly for the next cycle.

Annotation of the assignments by the teacher/facilitator was satisfactory throughout and proved very helpful although the more annotation the easier to moderate.

A clear conclusion saves the assignment from coming to an abrupt end

Brief overall impression of interpretation of assessment criteria

The centres supplied relevant evidence and generally, the moderation process agreed with the college's assessment of the assignments.

The administration was satisfactory for each candidate including the Record Sheet and the Diploma Learner Observation Record Annotation of the assignments by the teacher/facilitator was good throughout and proved very helpful although the more annotation the easier to moderate.

As stated earlier the moderators are dependent upon the information forwarded by the teachers or facilitators and the more transparent this information the simpler, therefore more accurate the moderation will be. There could have been clearer annotation here.

Examples of borderline level 1 grade B performance against assessment criteria/performance descriptions

LO.1 Understand basic plant and animal requirements

- 1 explain the reasons why plants and animals need water, food and housing
- 2 explain the reasons for providing the correct environmental conditions for plants and animals

There were many ways this LO could be achieved and the City Farm experience used by one centre worked well.

LO.2 Know care and welfare needs of plants and animals

- 1 identify common wild and domesticated animals, and common wild and cultivated plants
- 2 describe the water, food, handling and housing needs of animals

3 describe the water, food and protection needs of plants

4 describe the environmental conditions required to grow and breed plants and animals

Useful research of the internet was valuable and rewarding but practical hands on also worked successfully.

LO.3 Be able to work with plants and animals in a work related environment to meet specified objectives

1 plan work to meet specified objectives, organising time and resources [IE2, CT1, SM3]

2 care for animals to meet common goals

[TW1]

3 grow plants to meet common goals

4 follow health and safety guidelines when using tools, machinery and equipment when

working with plants and animals

5 review plant and animal care carried out using feedback to make recommendations for improvement [EP4, RL3, RL4]

Detailed records over a period of time were very useful when moving through the Mark Bands.

Examples of borderline level 1 grade A* performance against assessment criteria/ performance descriptions

Few candidates moved into this band in that they failed to assimilate the assessment criteria and although the content of the assignment should have allowed them to achieve to this level they failed to "hit the nail on the head" and scored lower than anticipated.

The centres produced assignments that were fit for purpose and reflected the assessment criteria but there were numerous aspects that could be revisited and refined in order to ensure candidates are given the opportunity to achieve to the best of their ability.

ELBS Level 1 Unit 5 Impacts on the Environment

Due to insufficient entries for this paper, it has not been possible to provide detailed feedback to centres to benefit their candidates.

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