

Moderators' Report/
Principal Moderator Feedback

Summer 2014

Pearson Edexcel Entry Level Certificate
in Science 2014 (8938 & 8939)

Administration

Centres are reminded that only the work of the candidates identified with an asterisk on the OPTEMS as being the sample should be sent to moderators. The only exception to this is if the work of the highest and lowest scoring candidates has not been selected in the sample then these should also be included. There were centres that sent the work of all candidates and not just that of the sample identified on the OPTEMS form. This considerably increases the cost of dispatch and return. There were centres that sent a candidate's complete course folder and not just the work required for moderation.

There were yet again this year a significant number of centres that omitted one or more of the following items; OPTEMS forms, record sheets, practical skills sheets (8938 only), authentication forms, especially the latter.

Centres should refer to the booklet 'Guidance / Instructions on Assessment for Entry Level Science' provided by Edexcel. If in any doubt centres must not hesitate to seek clarification over any issues raised in this booklet either from the Assessment Team at Edexcel or from their nominated Moderator.

The OPTEMS form should be completed with the total mark each candidate has achieved. This mark should **not** be converted to a level and then the level inserted on the OPTEMS form. Also no half marks should be entered (please also see Practical Skills below). It would be extremely helpful if centres included information of telephone numbers, together with extension numbers where relevant, and / or email addresses, especially as it is better to communicate directly with examination officers or science departments, with the samples of work.

As both the 'old' (8938) and 'new' (8939) specifications were running alongside each other this year, there were a great number of centres that entered candidates for one specification but submitted coursework for the other. This meant the affected centres had to get their entries reallocated to the relevant specification. As this is the last year of specification 8938 running this should not occur next year.

Additionally there were cases when centres utilised Teacher Support materials in lieu of assignments, and also specimen tests and assignments were used instead of the relevant live ones. Submissions of such materials were not acceptable for moderation.

This year there was an increase in the number of centres that submitted the coursework after the due submission date. This is normally a date in mid May.

Unit Tests and Assignments

The marking of both the tests and the assignments was normally clear and accurate although there were an increasing number of occurrences of errors in the application of the mark schemes and also in the addition of scores within tests and assignments. It must be pointed out that strict adherence to the mark schemes provided is important if consistency is to be maintained across centres. Centres would assist the moderators if they marked the tests in a colour that contrasts with the ink used by candidates in their responses. Also the use of ticks to indicate correct responses and a clear indication, perhaps a cross, to show that other responses had been considered and not awarded any credit rather than just overlooked. There were some centres that simply put a score for a whole page at its foot with no indication of which responses had been given credit. This is inadequate for moderators to be able to confirm the marks awarded. Additionally it must be pointed out that half marks cannot be awarded for partially correct responses under any circumstances.

The majority of Centres did follow the instruction that test marks and assignment marks must be submitted from different units. However this administrative error did occur more frequently this year. It is recognised that this may result in a score being included that does not come from the best five tests or the best three assignments if two of these are from the same unit.

There was more evidence this year of internal moderation of the marking of the tests and assignments which is a practice to be encouraged.

Practical Skills (8938 only)

Centres submitted clearly completed record sheets of practical skills achieved by candidates. The only problem that arose was in a very small number of centres that did not correctly scale the candidate's score by 1.5. It is the convention to round up any residual half marks that are the result of this multiplication and half marks must not be entered on the OPTEMS form.