



Pearson
Edexcel

GCSE (9-1) Citizenship

Citizenship Action in a
socially distanced
context.

Guidelines for centres
and candidates.





Theme E

Taking Citizenship Action.

Advice to Centres and Candidates following the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The outbreak of Covid-19 in the early part of 2020 has had a huge impact on society and how we conduct our daily lives. In education it has closed schools and colleges and stopped the entire examination process. It has moved teaching and learning out of the classroom and channelled how we work to other mediums such as on-line platforms and types of social media.

As we seek to return to a 'new normal' with the return of classroom teaching, this guide seeks to offer guidance on the conduct of the Citizenship Action work carried out in Centres before the examination is taken.

What this guide aims to achieve

- Identify good practice to adopt in the conduct of the Citizenship Action which abides by Public Health guidelines as candidates pass through the stages listed in the specification.
- Give clear guidance on how to approach the Citizenship Action task from Theme E of the specification which is examined in question 1 on Paper 2 and precautions to take in the light of Covid-19.
- Stress the need for candidates to seek advice from teachers to ensure all Public Health concerns are reviewed before embarking on information-gathering and research.
- Remind centres and candidates about the core elements in preparing and choosing the topics for the Citizenship Action.
- Encourage centres and candidates to eliminate face-to-face contact and replace information-gathering 'in person' with other non-personal means of collecting information and sharing the outcomes of research safely and securely.



What this guide does not seek to achieve

- Replace or remove any Safeguarding advice currently in place in Centres.
- Replace or amend any of the content or stages which are listed in the specification.
- Instruct Centres and candidates what topic they should choose for their Citizenship Action.
- Offer any indication of the nature of the examination questions or process.
- Be a complete guide as to how to deal with all aspects of secure social distancing for teaching and learning in a rapidly changing educational context where government advice and guidance may be amended in the light of new scientific findings relating to the pandemic.

Theme E: Individual Stages and the related tasks

1. Identify an issue, form a team and carry out initial research

Advice: Ensure that the team formation and its subsequent meetings are held with respect for the need to social distance among members. Suggest where possible to set up secure on-line means of communication with the team and teacher

2. Undertake primary research

Advice: This covers a core area where methods of collecting primary research need to be considered. Prior to the Covid-19 outbreak the collection of primary research was signposted by discussions with members of the community – it is advised that this and other direct contact with others (including other members of the school/college community) is reviewed by the centre. The suggestion is to obtain primary research by means such as through paper questionnaires and secure on-line forums or recordings of telephone conversations/interviews. Primary research remains important but how it is obtained must be reviewed.

3. Represent their own views and different points of view

Advice: Here this is a team activity and team meetings and discussions should be held with respect and concern for social distancing. Teams must recognise that their chosen topic must relate explicitly to the specification topics and therefore not include environmental matters such as recycling or litter collections which no longer feature on the specification. Similarly, PSHE topics are not appropriate.



4. Plan the action

Advice: Here the core concern is that planning must take account of the constant need to be vigilant and to follow current health advice. A suggestion would be that once roles have been allocated, these are overseen by the teacher to ensure all relevant precautions are taken.

5. Apply skills of collaboration, negotiation and influence as they deliver the activity

Advice: Here teamwork remains important however it must be conducted being mindful of the need to socially distance. It is unlikely that it will be possible to organise and deliver an event as is suggested in the specification. For instance, full school assemblies may no longer be taking place. In these circumstances, **awareness-raising activities** are probably the most practicable actions for teams to adopt. Such awareness-raising activities concerning an issue closely related to the specification would thus need to be organised for smaller groups of students or a presentation made online. Centres may if they wish allow teams to adopt actions involving a **social action project** as an alternative, but it seems unlikely that it will be possible to retain necessary social distance and to organise and deliver such a social action project.

6. Critically evaluate their learning and the impact of the action

Advice: This is a vital element of the citizenship action to reflect on the impact and success or otherwise of the work. Personal reflection on progress is fine – however garnering information on the views of others must be done with respect for social distancing. As such the collection of information must be done remotely via feedback forms as opposed to personal interviews; one suggestion would be web links with other classes in the school not only to deliver ideas but to collect feedback.

If, as we recommend, it is decided to undertake awareness raising activities this year, it will be important to ensure that those to whom they make their presentation, fill in questionnaires before and after the presentation to establish the extent of base-line knowledge and the effect of the presentation in improving this.

7. Submit the Authentication of Citizenship Action Form in the normal way (see Appendix 1 of the Specification for details)



Overview of task activities

The key message which arises from the above guidance is that we are now teaching and learning in a new environment. How the citizenship action was carried out in the past needs to be reconsidered and amended in light of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Continued monitoring which incorporates continued government advice on measures to take in the pandemic is necessary.

No advice and guidance is 'future proof' and centres and candidates are urged to monitor and abide by government guidelines and instructions. This can and does change and may do so again as GCSE programmes progress.

Guidance on how to choose the right topic

The following advice has been made available on Inset activity, but it remains pertinent for centres and candidates to refresh their awareness of it.

Remember the key specification criteria concerning Citizenship Action:

- This section is worth 15% of the total mark – so no more than 15% of the time should be devoted to this the Citizenship Action.
- Questions on the Citizenship Action are marked out of 24 marks.
- The questions are based on the process and conduct of the candidates' Citizenship Action.
- It is not the responsibility now for the Examination body to approve or disapprove of topics prior to the exam.
- It is the task of the centre to engage and prepare their students based on the specification.

The easiest way to be sure a possible Citizenship Action meets all the requirements is to test it against the following six questions and to be confident that the answer to all the questions is an unmistakeable YES. Even if there is a single NO, it would be best to amend the proposed action and eliminate the NO.

The six questions are:

1. Does the proposed action have a clear goal (whether in terms of awareness raising or social/community action)?
2. Is the topic listed in one of the four themes on the specification or very closely related to such a theme?
3. Is the proposed action likely to make an impact or difference locally, nationally or globally?
4. Does the team have sufficient time or other resources to carry out such an action?



5. Will the proposed topic link closely to the concepts and terms which apply to the theme on which the proposed action will be based?
6. Will it be possible to measure in a precise and reliable way how successful or unsuccessful the action has been in terms of achieving its goal?

Centres and candidates should ensure that they do:

- Closely link to an explicit Citizenship theme.
- Choose a small, manageable local topic within school or the local community.
- Choose a topic where you can plan to make a difference either in people's opinions about the topic or in terms of changing what actually happens (e.g. are we a football or rugby school?)
- Make sure every action team (minimum 2 students) addresses all the stages of Theme E in detail (pp16-17 specification) and can demonstrate how their action met each of them.

Centres and candidates should ensure that they do not:

- Base it on a theme which is more PSHE rather than Citizenship.
- Do not allow students to do the action individually - collaborating with others is a requirement.
- Do not allow students to adopt a topic where no serious difference is likely to be achieved even among a small group of school students or community members.
- Do not let students spend too long on the action. It is 15% of marks at most. Time may be better spent becoming more familiar with key topics elsewhere in the specification.

Vigilance and the need to constantly stay safe

As noted, how we respond and react to the challenges posed by the pandemic means our tactics will change. Please be aware of the status of the pandemic and follow the government and Public Health guidelines for your area.