

FOOD AND NUTRITION

Paper 0648/11
Theory 11

Key messages

Candidates should be directed to carefully read the question and note that when asked for different sources of a particular nutrient, focus should be on providing a breadth of foods. By naming all dairy food sources or giving a number of green vegetables, legumes or types of meat, usually only one possible mark can be gained.

Many candidates omitted the correct form of a disease, such as answering diabetes instead of type 2 diabetes.

Centres need to fully prepare candidates by ensuring they have good comprehension of technical words related to Food and Nutrition, such as function, symptom, source and nutritional, so they are able to understand what is required from questions.

In future, it is recommended that candidates are taught more on the topic areas of heat transference and different methods of cooking. Candidates would also benefit from more assistance in the construction of essay-type questions.

General comments

Candidates achieved varying degrees of success with some scripts showing noticeably good levels of knowledge and understanding.

Candidates were often able to produce factual answers to direct questions and could generally justify their responses. Problems were, however, encountered when questions required the selection of relevant information. Many candidates found this difficult, suggesting that facts are learnt without being understood.

Candidates should be discouraged from providing one-word answers, unless specifically asked for, as this approach rarely gains marks as qualification of a point is often needed.

Some candidates repeated information from the question in their answers without further explanation so need to be reminded that they should display their knowledge to achieve credit.

Reading questions carefully is still an area of improvement for many candidates. Misunderstanding and choosing the wrong focus are often reasons why candidates are not able to access higher marks. Candidates need examination technique practice and guidance on interpretation of command words used in questions.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) Some candidates gave a vague explanation linked more to digestion or absorption but many provided a clear and concise definition of metabolism.
- (b) The name of the mineral that helps control the rate of metabolism was not well known by the majority of candidates.

Question 2

- (a) Many candidates gave answers within the expected intake range of at least 1.5–2.5 litres of water required by adults each day.
- (b) This was generally well answered with the majority of candidates showing good understanding of different ways that water is lost from the body.
- (c) Many candidates did not read the question correctly and therefore did not provide different foods with a high water content. It was expected that candidates would provide a wider range of commodities than simply fruits and vegetables, such as beverages, soups, fish or meat.

Question 3

Many candidates gained at least two marks by showing their knowledge of different spices. Some candidates repeated themselves by naming different varieties of pepper such as black, white, cayenne, chilli, or gave spice mixes or even herbs.

Question 4

- (a) Most candidates obtained at least two marks by correctly naming different foods such as cereals, nuts, pulses, root vegetables or tubers as food sources that provide starch in meals. Those candidates who named, for example, four cereals, four products made with flour or four pulses could not achieve all the marks available.
- (b) It was clear that the effects of moist heat on the starch in potatoes was well known and many candidates were able to gain three, and in some cases four, marks by providing a clear description of the process of gelatinisation.

Question 5

- (a) Most candidates could name some health issues that could be caused by obesity. There was a great deal of repetition of issues under the umbrella of the cardiovascular system so some candidates who listed, for example, CHD, heart disease, stroke or heart attack could only attain one mark. Some candidates seemed not to be aware that high blood pressure and hypertension are the same thing so repeated themselves. Marks were not awarded for stating 'diabetes' as type 2 diabetes is the correct term required.
- (b) The majority of candidates were able to name at least two dairy foods that contain a high proportion of saturated fat. Butter, cheese, milk and cream were the more popular sources seen.
- (c) It was not well known that coconut oil and palm oil are among some of the plant-based products that contain a high proportion of saturated fat. Very few correct responses were seen.

Question 6

- (a) A good proportion of candidates correctly named amino acids as the basic building blocks of proteins.
- (b) Most candidates showed good knowledge of foods that are good sources of high biological value (HBV) protein. Where repeats of dairy foods or different names of fish or types of meat were given then it was not possible to award marks as candidates were asked for different foods.
- (c) It was pleasing to note that a good proportion of candidates knew that pepsin is the enzyme in the stomach that helps digest proteins.
- (d) Many candidates gained at least two marks in response to this question. Explanations of why some proteins have a higher biological value than others were not always clear or were repetitious. The more able candidates gave good descriptions of the structure of proteins and so gained more marks.

Section B

Question 7

(a) The proportion of fat to flour for making rough puff pastry was not well known by the majority of candidates.

(b) (i) Most candidates demonstrated knowledge of at least one reason for sieving flour and salt.

(ii) Most candidates gave at least one correct reason. The most popular response was that the edges of rough puff pastry are well sealed after rolling and folding to keep air trapped between the layers, sometimes an extension to that reason was that the pastry would not have the correct flaky texture if the air escaped. Other correct responses stated that sealing the pastry helped prevent the fat in the pastry leaking out which demonstrated a knowledge of the method of making the pastry.

(iii) Many candidates stated that pastry is left to relax in the refrigerator after rolling and folding to keep fats from melting. Very few mentioned it helped to relax the stretched gluten or prevented the pastry from shrinking when baking.

(iv) Very few candidates gave correct reasons why pastry should be covered in the refrigerator. Vague answers, such as to not absorb odour or moisture, were not given credit. A small proportion of candidates recognised the risk of cross contamination or a skin being formed on the uncovered pastry.

(c) It was pleasing to note that many candidates had a good knowledge and understanding of what happens to rough puff pastry when cooked in a hot oven. Some answers were very well described and used correct technical language.

(d) It was expected that candidates would state a person with coeliac disease should not eat rough puff pastry as it is made using wheat flour and wheat contains the protein gluten to which coeliacs have a sensitivity or intolerance. Many candidates simply stated flour contained gluten but did not acknowledge the link between the flour and wheat. Many candidates stated that coeliacs were unable to digest gluten or did not have the enzymes to digest gluten which is incorrect. Coeliac disease is an auto-immune reaction.

(e) (i) Only a small proportion of candidates stated the beef in the pie should be slaughtered according to laws of halal so as to make it suitable for a Muslim. A high proportion suggested replacing the beef with a different meat, using soya, pulses or vegetables, which did not answer the question as it would change the type of pie.

(ii) Most candidates showed their knowledge of different foods containing NSP / dietary fibre and gave a variety of acceptable answers including the use of wholemeal flour, the inclusion of different vegetables, pulses or seeds. Some candidates gave the names of three types of pulses or three vegetables which only demonstrated knowledge of one way to increase NSP / dietary fibre in the pie.

Question 8

(a) It was clear that the principles of heat transference by radiation when grilling was not a well-known area of the syllabus. The majority of candidates achieved less than half the available marks.

(b) Almost all candidates were able to suggest one or two guidelines to follow when storing fresh meat in the refrigerator. The most popular answers were to do with wrapping or covering meat or storing meat on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator.

(c) The most popular responses were kidney or liver.

(d) Those candidates who named a cut of beef suitable for grilling such as T-bone steak, sirloin steak or rump steak were credited with the available mark. The answer 'steak' was too vague.

(e) Those candidates who named a cut of lamb suitable for grilling such as cutlet, loin, chump chop or rib chop were credited with the available mark. The answer 'chop' was too vague.

(f) Most candidates were able to correctly name two vegetables suitable for grilling. The most popular answers were mushroom, tomato, pepper and onion.

Question 9

The use of antioxidants when manufacturing a food product was not a well-known area of the syllabus. Some candidates were able to gain one or two marks but very few high scores were seen.

Question 10

(a) The majority of candidates were able to correctly name at least one piece of kitchen equipment that can save fuel energy. The most popular choices were microwave, air fryer and rice cooker.

(b) (i) Many candidates correctly suggested that when buying a new stovetop pressure cooker the weight should not be too heavy.

(ii) Correct responses to choosing the size of a stovetop pressure cooker varied from choosing one to accommodate the size of the family, where the pressure cooker is going to be stored or that it should suit size of hob.

(iii) The most popular responses to selecting a stovetop pressure cooker were that it should be bought from a well-known manufacturer or be a trusted reliable brand with a few mentioning the ability to obtain spare parts.

Section C

Question 11

This was the more popular choice in Section C. In the first part of the question, many candidates demonstrated their knowledge and understanding of the basics of nutrition by providing the specific nutrients the convalescent would require and what function those nutrients would serve in helping recovery. A few included nutrients that were not specific to a convalescent or wrote irrelevant statements giving general reasons for nutrient function e.g. mentioning protein being good for the growth of children or iron helping women during menstruation.

The second part of the question was not covered as well with many general and unqualified points being given. Some candidates included the need to serve small, easily digested, well garnished portions of food but did not elaborate on the reasons for their suggestions. It was expected that awareness of the importance of cooking and serving meals to assist recovery and prevent infection of a convalescent would be discussed but this was rarely seen. Little mention was made of the necessity for high standards of hygiene of both the person preparing the food and the kitchen and utensils used. Very few mentioned the importance of taking care when cooking high risk foods to prevent possibility of food poisoning bacteria passing to a person who already has a weakened immune system.

Question 12

In this question candidates were asked to compare and contrast stir-frying and stewing as methods of cooking. Many of those that answered the question simply gave lists of advantages and disadvantages of the different methods with no direct comparison or contrast. The best answers avoided individual, unconnected comments about the two methods and correctly linked statements about the two methods, such as 'stir-frying is a dry method of cooking whereas stewing is a moist method of cooking' and 'stir-frying is a quick method of cooking but stewing is long, slow process'. Those candidates that did follow the directions of the question gained higher marks.

FOOD AND NUTRITION

Paper 0648/12

Theory 12

Key messages

Future teaching areas to focus on include sources and functions of B-group vitamins, terminology describing recommended dietary intakes, digestion especially function of different enzymes, food labelling and clarification of fuel energy.

Demonstrating good knowledge of the syllabus topics and producing well developed answers to the extended response questions is an area where some candidates need more assistance.

It is important that comprehension of technical words related to Food and Nutrition, such as function, symptom, source and nutritional, are reinforced so that candidates are able to understand what is required from questions.

General comments

Candidates should be encouraged to write clearly and legibly in their answers as sometimes scripts were difficult to decipher. The paper demonstrated a good differentiation amongst candidates with a broad range of the syllabus being covered, resulting in a wide spread of marks. There were a few areas that needed a detailed understanding of the science of the subject and so stretched the more able candidates.

Some responses provided information on a topic that was not relevant to what had been asked in the question. Candidates need to carefully read the questions in order to produce relevant answers.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) A high proportion of candidates correctly named night blindness as the deficiency disease. Common incorrect answers were poor vision in dim light, poor eyesight or blindness.
- (b) A high proportion of candidates were able to correctly name at least two deficiency diseases. Strong candidates were also able to identify the nutrients in poor supply. Some candidates did not read the question carefully and wrote named foods under the headings 'deficiency disease' or 'nutrient in poor supply'. In some instances, candidates did not know the name of the deficiency disease and described an issue e.g. weak bones, or they repeated night blindness. Some responses included other conditions such as obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure or tooth decay.

Question 2

A high proportion of candidates were able to correctly identify a plant source of HBV protein. The most common response was soya beans. Incorrect responses included variations of green leafy vegetables and sometimes items that were not plant based.

Question 3

- (a) Most candidates were able to correctly identify at least one possible effect of eating too little carbohydrate but very few candidates achieved the full three marks. The most popular correct

responses were lack of energy, fatigue, constipation and weight loss. Candidates often repeated the effect in different words e.g. lack of energy, tiredness, fatigue. Some candidates seemed to have misread the question and included responses that referred to the effect of eating too much carbohydrate or mentioned the effects of eating too much fat.

- (b) Very few candidates were able to give a correct reason, possibly indicating a lack of knowledge of the role of B-group vitamins. Candidates often stated B-group vitamins should be eaten to achieve a balanced diet, used as a secondary source of energy, so that carbohydrates can be used for other things or they were water-soluble so needed in the body. When energy was included in the response, it often referred to vitamin B providing energy not releasing energy from carbohydrates.
- (c) Most candidates were able to correctly identify one plant food that provides vitamin B₁. Incorrect responses were often non-plant foods or the general term 'leafy vegetables' followed by two examples of leafy vegetables.

Question 4

The topic of Dietary Reference Values (DRVs) appeared to be unfamiliar to many candidates as a high proportion did not provide a response to this question. Candidates who achieved marks were able to provide only one or two correct responses, the most common being to help plan a balanced meal. Many referred to information found on labels and commented on checking for suitability for different diets or how dietary fibre / NSP is relevant to the diet.

Question 5

- (a) The majority of candidates achieved at least one of the two available marks. Most popular correct responses were calcium and phosphorus. Incorrect responses included different foods or other nutrients suggesting either the question had not been read carefully or candidates had a lack of awareness as to what constitutes a mineral.
- (b) This question was generally well answered with most candidates able to show good knowledge of food sources of vitamins. Common errors were confusing vitamins for other nutrients.
- (c) Some candidates did not read the question carefully and incorrectly named nutrients that are found in cheese. The main error was naming carbohydrate. Although lactose may be very low in hard cheese it is present in soft cheese.
- (d) Many candidates did not respond to this question and few candidates achieved the available mark. Incorrect responses ranged from lactose, vinegar, lemon juice or a variety of different digestive enzymes found in the body.

Question 6

Many candidates were able to give at least two correct responses. The most popular responses were hypertension and references to heart disease. Some candidates repeated answers, such as hypertension and high blood pressure, or heart disease and another one from the same marking point. A few candidates listed how one could consume too much salt indicating they had not read the question carefully.

Question 7

A number of candidates did not provide a response to this question and only very few of those that did answer achieved the available marks. Maltase was the most common correct response. Some candidates gave maltose instead of maltase, which suggests an error in spelling or lack of knowledge. Incorrect responses included a variety of other enzymes.

Question 8

- (a) Candidates did not always achieve marks as responses related to protein requirements in general and were not linked specifically to active teenage boys, as was asked for in the question. When a correct response was given, it referred to building muscles, sometimes repairing tissues and replacing worn out cells. Incorrect responses concentrated on growth with no reference to rapid growth or a growth spurt.

(b) The majority of candidates were able to achieve some marks though few achieved the full three marks available. Many referenced water being needed to prevent dehydration or to remain hydrated but a lot of repetition of these points was seen. Occasionally responses referring to either replacing water that is lost due to perspiration, to lubricate joints or to cool the body were seen.

(c) This part of the question was not answered as well as expected. Many candidates achieved one mark for stating that calcium helps with bone development or growth; many used the term 'formation' which was not credited as by the time teenage years have been reached bones have already been formed. Some candidates correctly included muscle or nerve function or blood clotting, all pertinent to active teenage boys. Many candidates included reference to strong teeth or prevention of rickets, which are functions of calcium but the question specifically referred to teenage boys so these type of responses were not credited. Another common incorrect response was that calcium gives energy; calcium is not an energy source and candidates should have stated that calcium can help to produce energy from fat stores to access the mark.

Section B

Question 9

(a) The majority of candidates gave four responses. This question required candidates to apply their knowledge to cake making using the melting method and very often incorrect responses were given as the sugar did not relate to the method. Common correct responses were brown or caster sugar, common incorrect responses included icing sugar. There were also repeats of types of sugar e.g. granulated sugar and white sugar, also liquid forms of sugar like honey.

(b) Very few candidates achieved the five marks available for this question. Many candidates repeated an answer such as 'adds sweetness' and 'adds flavour'. Other answers were too vague, often one-word, mentioning colour or texture with no extension or clarification to explain how colour or texture were changed due to sugar.

(c) Many candidates were able to achieve the mark available.

(d) Many candidates stated that diabetes is a health problem, not type 2 diabetes which is the correct term for the condition.

(e) Only the more able candidates were able to achieve marks for this question. Responses suggest that candidates were unfamiliar with the melting method of cake making as many referred to the whisking or creaming method.

Question 10

(a) The majority of candidates were able to complete some of the ingredients list. The main error was an incorrect quantity of butter given for a coating sauce.

(b) Few candidates correctly identified flour as the ingredient in the sauce that is unsuitable for a coeliac. This indicates candidates were lacking knowledge of the condition. Some candidates provided ingredients that were not in the recipe e.g. cheese, onion and even sugar were seen.

(c) Very few candidates were able to give four qualities of a successful roux sauce. The most common correct responses indicated the sauce needed to have a good flavour and be free from lumps. When consistency was mentioned, some candidates were vague and repeated themselves e.g. referring to the sauce needing to be thick and in another point not runny. Occasionally there was a comment about the sauce coating the back of the spoon but sometimes this was termed as being able to stick to the spoon. Many candidates misunderstood the question or had not read it carefully and wrote the method of making the sauce.

(d) Many candidates described how to make a sauce rather than the scientific process behind how a sauce thickens. Some candidates confused the role of proteins mentioning coagulation as the reason the sauce thickened rather than the starch in the flour causing gelatinisation.

(e) (i) The majority of candidates were able to state that the taste of the sauce is enhanced, or the taste is improved, due to the addition of flavours. Many candidates then went on to repeat the first point using different wording, or just saying it gave the sauce flavour. Very few commented that the product range could be increased by using different flavours or that during processing some flavour may be lost so needs to be replaced. Sometimes candidates referred to textures and colours which is not the purpose of flavouring.

(ii) The majority of candidates were able to state that the appearance of the sauce is enhanced or improved due to the addition of colour. Many candidates then went on to repeat the first point using different wording or just saying it gave the sauce colour. Very few commented that adding colour ensured the visual quality of the product was maintained during storage. Sometimes candidates referred to texture and flavour which are unrelated to colour.

Question 11

Most candidates were able to give one example with stronger candidates able to give two or three clearly explained different examples. The main issue was that candidates wrote about contamination rather than cross-contamination.

Answers were often too vague, for example 'same equipment used for meat and vegetables'. The inclusion of the word raw with reference to the meat, or stating that the equipment was not cleaned in between preparation of each food, would have shown clear knowledge of how cross-contamination between food and equipment can occur.

Many candidates provided general comments about how food poisoning could occur e.g. dirty kitchen, food not covered, eating expired food, incorrect storage of food. Some even gave symptoms of food poisoning or listed different types of microorganisms which was not asked for in the question.

Question 12

(a) Very few candidates could identify the correct methods of cooking to minimise loss of nutrients. The majority incorrectly stated boiling, grilling or frying. When correct, the most popular response was steaming.

(b) Only a few candidates were able to achieve more than one or two marks in this question. It was evident that the principles involved in pressure cooking were not understood. Many responses referred to how pressure cooking reduced the loss of nutrients or was good for cooking meat. There were indications in responses that candidates were familiar with how to use a pressure cooker but not the principles involved. Sometimes irrelevant points for purchasing a pressure cooker or care of a pressure cooker were seen.

Question 13

(a) Many candidates indicated that the consumer would know the name of the product but did not provide a benefit for this. It was expected that candidates would explain that a description would help consumers be aware of the contents of the product and not be misled into buying something that they preferred not to eat. A product name would allow consumers to identify a particular brand they knew and favoured. Quite a lot of candidates included incorrect statements on knowing if it would be suitable for allergies or religious reasons and that the consumer would know about the nutrients and the sell-by date.

(b) Weaker candidates often repeated wording in the question or gave one response which was repeated in the second answer using different words. The most popular response was to know how to cook the food with a mention of this being helpful to someone who could not cook. Some candidates referred to cooking the product successfully or for the food to be safe to eat.

(c) Weaker candidates indicated that the consumer would know where the product came from and did not provide a benefit for this. The most popular responses were because a certain country may have better quality products or consumers could choose whether to purchase from a country or not. Frequently candidates incorrectly referred to consumers knowing if the product was halal.

Section C

Question 14

This question was an equally popular choice with Question 15. Stronger candidates were able to provide specifics of the chemical composition of fats, giving details of the elements, fat molecule structure, describing the bond structure of different classifications of fats and oils and there were also some labelled structure diagrams included. Many candidates were aware of some of the functions of fats and oils in the body; some candidates did not explain their points in sufficient detail which limited the marks that could be awarded.

Many candidates gave the uses of fats and oils in cooking, named different types of fats and oils and wrote in depth about the results of eating too much fat on the body or how they could be reduced in the diet. None of these responses could be credited as they were not required by the question. In some instances, there appeared to be confusion between fats, sugars and proteins with many candidates referencing monosaccharide and polysaccharides and others linking high and low biological aspects of fats.

Question 15

In this question, candidates were required to discuss methods to reduce or conserve fuel energy when cooking family meals. Fuel energy in this context referred to the use of gas or electricity as fuels used in cooking. It appeared there was misunderstanding by some candidates who referred to saving fuel in the car when going shopping, saving personal fuel energy by using labour-saving equipment, reusing cooking oil after cooking, suggesting the use of wood or charcoal as an alternative for cooking, thinking that gas was a fuel and electricity was not.

When candidates were able to identify correct points for reducing fuel energy, they often did not provide the required explanation to achieve the full mark. Sometimes responses were very brief and included suggestions to eat out in restaurants, purchase takeaway food or get family members to cook a dish in their house and bring it over to share with everyone to save fuel.

Stronger candidates were able to apply their knowledge of different methods of cooking and gave explanations as to how their use could be best managed to conserve energy.

FOOD AND NUTRITION

Paper 0648/02
Practical Test

Key messages

- The inclusion of clear photographs is essential for moderation. Centres should ensure that all dishes are unobscured by table decorations, labels or coverings so that they are clearly visible. Candidates should not appear in the photograph. One small table decoration only is required and dishes should be grouped closely together so that a clear, close-up photograph can be taken. Only one clear, hard copy photograph of the final dishes is required. Centres should not send CDs, as these cannot be viewed by Moderators.
- All centres must complete and include the Practical examiner's report with the candidates' work. This can be found in the Confidential Instructions document. It includes a record of the dates when the planning and practical tests were carried out, a seating plan and the opportunity for the teacher to report any difficulties that may have occurred during the Practical Test.
- For each examination series, centres should download and use the most recent forms. These are available on the Cambridge website with interactive summary mark sheets and working mark sheets that will automatically total the marks and scale correctly. Many centres are using this system effectively now, however centres in some countries are still using the old-style forms and have even sent the carbonised planning sheets, which have been obsolete for a long time now.
- Examiners should refer to the Practical Test Handbook and the Guidance for skill levels document available online from the School Support hub to ensure that the mark scheme is accurately and consistently applied across the cohort. All examiners should refresh their knowledge of the instructions and mark scheme annually. Marks awarded must reflect the comments given on the Examiner marksheets and the annotations on candidates' planning sheets.
- Half marks should not be awarded in the test as this can lead to over-marking. Where marking results in a decimal point, these must be rounded down, not up.

General comments

Some centres incorrectly transferred marks from the summary marksheets to the MS1 and these had to be adjusted at moderation. All centres must check that marks have been accurately awarded, correctly added up and scaled, and that the mark submitted to Cambridge matches the mark awarded to the candidate. Many centres incorrectly awarded half marks, which were then adjusted during moderation.

Most examiners provided detailed annotation on the front sheets and within the work. There were several examples of good practice when examiners commented on a) how choice of dishes met the test requirements b) how well the work was planned with reference to dovetailing skills, sequencing skills, use of appropriate methods and accurate detail in the special points column c) the practical and organisational skills demonstrated during the practical test d) the taste/texture and appearance of the final results with reference to the sensory word bank in the Practical Test Handbook. Good practice was also seen when examiners indicated on the work where and how they were allocating marks. For example, on the recipe sheet examiners recorded a mark out of four for each dish chosen as well as a mark out of five for the ingredients listed. Also, time plans were marked using the recommended abbreviations (DT, W, M, SQ etc.). This enables Moderators to give more accurate and consistent advice in the report to centres. It is a requirement that all candidates' work must show evidence of marking, with annotation clearly written on the work to evidence how and where marks have been awarded.

Candidates need careful preparation for the practical test and they would benefit from some practice with cooking more than one dish at a time so the skill of dovetailing their work is developed prior to the test.

The most successful centres presented work of a good standard where candidates have been very well supported with well-directed teaching enabling them to show their achievement and submit interesting and varied work which met the assessment criteria.

Some candidates need more guidance and practice with menu planning and meeting nutritional needs so that they can accurately answer the demands of the test allocated whilst demonstrating sufficient skills in using a wide range of ingredients, manipulation of various mixtures and different cooking methods that make full and sensible use of the oven, grill and the top of the cooker. This does rely on the expertise of their teachers. Candidates need to be able to apply their theoretical knowledge of nutritional requirements for specific groups and should also ensure they understand of the requirements of a 'balanced meal'. They should be taught how to select suitable dishes for a range of nutritional requirements so that during the planning session, they instinctively know how to plan a suitable balanced meal.

Candidates should also show regard for the 'theme' of the test when planning their final displays; for example, food for a party needs a party table setting, whereas food for a main meal needs a different but appropriate setting, food for a packed meal needs to be served as such and so on. Candidates need to write their choices in order of the test and clearly indicate which dish is for which part of the test. These should then be annotated by the Examiner with marks awarded for each choice of dish. All of the planning should be clearly and concisely annotated using the key provided in the Practical Test Handbook. Examiner annotation should be in a different coloured pen so that it stands out from the candidates' work.

Centres should note that for the purposes of the practical test, a balanced main meal consists of two skilful dishes and at least two suitable accompaniments. The two skilful dishes can either be a starter and a main course, a main course and a dessert, or two complementary main dishes that would typically be eaten together in the same meal. Some candidates mistakenly planned two main course dishes that were not complementary to a specific meal and this resulted in menus that were too heavy in carbohydrate and/or protein.

Most candidates had made a good effort to display their final dishes attractively. The main issues lie in the interpretation of the test requirements and ensuring the planning is more accurate. Candidates should be encouraged to make more suitable choices which fulfil the test requirements and which demonstrate the use of a range of ingredients, skills and a variety of cooking methods. They need to make skilled and complex dishes which demonstrate their knowledge of consistencies and cooking methods and which require a range of manipulative skills. Candidates who are aiming for high grades should be making their dishes from scratch and keeping the use of convenience foods to a minimum unless the test asks for them. Centres are again reminded that drinks should not be made, unless specifically required and cannot be awarded any marks in the test.

From the photographs included, it was pleasing to see many wonderful examples of colourful arrays of food with appropriately dressed tables and place setting for meals or other events. All candidates need to consider what the final overall presentation would look like and plan to make colourful dishes or use suitable and imaginative garnishes to enhance their tests. Each dish should be clearly labelled so that the name of the dish can be seen in the photograph, without obscuring the food. One small table decoration only is required, and dishes should be grouped together so that they, along with their labels, can be seen clearly. Moderators do not need to see candidates, their food room or great expanses of table area.

Good practice was seen in centres where candidates listed their dishes clearly for all parts of the question and indicated which dishes include particular ingredients, equipment or methods required by the question. Examiners are reminded to indicate on the choices sheet how many marks have been awarded for each individual dish with justification given on the mark sheet. In the main, marks for choices were awarded accurately and fairly, with some exceptions. If a dish is awarded four marks for choices, it should be marked out of seven for results; conversely any dish with marks reduced to a maximum of three in choices for low skill level should then be marked out of maximum five for results.

Planning should include brief but accurate details of preparation and cooking methods, cooking times and oven temperatures. Candidates should indicate in the special points column how they will test that each item of food or recipe is cooked – for example they should state that a sponge cake would be baked until 'golden brown and springy to touch', pasta 'cooked until al dente'. There were many good examples of 'dovetailing', which is a complex skill that allows candidates to show how, while one dish is cooking, another is being prepared or decorated. Candidates should use dovetailing to demonstrate the efficient use of time and to allow them to make dishes of a higher skill level within the time allowed. Where dovetailing is not evident, the maximum marks available for the time plan is five marks. Time left at the end of a plan indicates a lack of skill in the dishes chosen or errors in timing for other processes. Some of the plans were written over too

many pages. The maximum should be two and any extras should mean that marks are adjusted as it is an indication of too much detail being put into the time plans. Time plans should indicate sufficient work to fill 150 minutes.

The marks for the method of working and the final results sections were often a little generous considering the number of incorrect or low skill dishes, or dishes that were not produced at all. Where this is the case the total number of marks in each section should be reduced. As a general rule, if a candidate chooses five dishes but only makes three in the practical test they can only be marked out of 33 within method of working (11 marks per dish or per two accompaniments). Where dishes chosen are simple and do not require a lot of manipulative skills or knowledge of consistencies, marks should be reduced in the method section. In results, incorrect dishes should be awarded a maximum of three and a half marks and for low skill dishes a maximum of four or five marks should be awarded, depending on the dish.

Where candidates fail to make or serve a planned dish, marks for method of working as well as serving and appearance must also be reduced – marks cannot be transferred to other dishes.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

For **(a)**, a balanced meal for two people with type 2 diabetes was required. Dishes needed to be low in fat, starch and sugar as well as containing plenty of NSP dietary fibre. Many candidates with this question were able to demonstrate their understanding of the dietary needs of individuals who have type 2 diabetes. The dishes chosen were starch based which in some cases used wholegrains such as brown rice. Popular dishes were vegetable curry, stir-fried rice with chicken and fish pie. Many candidates chose two suitable accompaniments and created a well-balanced meal. Most candidates avoided sweet dishes such as puddings and chose to make starters such as vegetable soup instead.

For **(b)**, a cake using the melting method and a batch of scones were required. Good examples of melting method cakes were seen where fat, sugar and syrup are gently warmed to melt and combine, followed by the addition of dry ingredients. Ginger cakes were a popular and successful choice. Some good examples of both sweet and savoury scones were seen.

Question 2

This was a popular question which required five party dishes for elderly relatives. Candidates needed to prepare at least three dishes suitable for serving cold. As with all menus, a balance of sweet and savoury dishes was required.

Dishes for a party theme test should complement each other. Hot dishes can be served unless the test specifies cold dishes. Candidates need to consider the final collection of dishes otherwise all they are doing is making a random selection of their favourite dishes.

Candidates needed to consider the scenario of a party where guests would usually take a small portion of several different dishes onto their plate at once. It is a very social occasion, so they may be moving around and chatting while they eat and may want to visit the buffet table more than once. This means that food should be easy to serve in small portions and easy to eat. 'Finger foods' are ideal, but not essential unless the test specifies this.

Some candidates produced a skilfully decorated cake to show their understanding of the party theme. There was also evidence of some well-arranged and thoughtfully presented tables suitable for the theme of a party. Good practice was seen when candidates clearly stated which of the three dishes would be served cold (a requirement of the test).

Marks should have been reduced where candidates chose more than two dishes that had to be served hot and where they chose three or more sweet dishes. Very few candidates showed their awareness of the need for the dishes to be balanced (both nutritionally and in appearance/texture) as there were very few salads chosen.

Question 3

This question was also popular. For **(a)**, a balanced meal high in NSP/dietary fibre was required. The best candidates took the opportunity to plan main dishes that included wholemeal flour or pasta, oats, brown rice, pulses, nuts and seeds. Some menus did not have a high NSP content and were not accurately planned. Many candidates relied on producing dishes involving a lot of vegetable preparation, which would make the meal very bulky as well as repeating skills, instead of introducing different skills.

For **(b)**, a dish made using an electric whisk and a batch of biscuits using the creaming method were required. Sponge cakes or Swiss rolls were often correctly chosen to demonstrate an electric whisk, or the electric whisk was sometimes correctly used for whisking cream to fill and decorate cakes. Creaming method cakes are not correct for this equipment as the sugar and fat may be creamed using an electric mixer but not the whisk attachment. Additionally, the creaming method was specified for the biscuits, so some candidates repeated the method in this section. Biscuits made by the creaming method were usually correct and there were some appealing examples of beautifully baked and presented biscuits shown in photographs.

Question 4

For **(a)**, three different skilful dishes were required, each to show the use of a different type of cheese. Several candidates answered this question well, making two savoury and one sweet dish to provide balance and variety. A few candidates made different dishes, but used the same cheese throughout, which meant two of the planned dishes were wrong choices. Candidates often showcased their favourites: pizza using mozzarella, macaroni cheese using Cheddar and a cheesecake using cream cheese.

For the first part of **(b)**, a dish using pulses, bean or lentil curries and chillis were chosen and some more ambitious lentil patties or beanburgers were occasionally seen. For the second part, a hot dessert using fresh fruit, the best candidates made dishes such as steamed fruit sponges or crumbles with custard.

Question 5

This popular test required five skilful dishes, each to show the use of a different piece of equipment from the list provided. The best candidates identified the equipment used for each chosen dish on their recipe sheet and then went on to use it skilfully. This is good practice and essential for moderation to be accurate and consistent.

Often neither candidates or examiners identified which piece of equipment was being used, so Moderators had to make their own judgments. In some cases, candidates specified a piece of equipment to be used, but then did not actually use it in their test.

Please note that drinks or smoothies to show use of a blender are not acceptable, as they are not a skilled dish. A balloon whisk was often correctly chosen to make a whisking method cake or to make a pouring or coating batter. In some instances, a balloon whisk was chosen incorrectly to make a creaming method cake or piping bag was planned to be used to decorate a dish but then no piping was done in the test.

For this type of question, examiners must check carefully that the planned use of any specified equipment is appropriate. They also need to check that the piece of equipment is actually used in the time plan and in the practical test itself, as this is where the challenge of the question lies.

Question 6

This was a very popular test and the dishes chosen were often appealing to teenagers but few candidates acknowledged that teenage girls need good sources of iron in their diet. Many examiners overlooked this, or noted that the menus lacked iron, but still awarded high marks. The best candidates included red meat, liver, clams, pulses and dark green leafy vegetables or eggs in savoury dishes, with a cocoa or dark chocolate-based dessert. There was evidence of some awareness of the need for good sources of vitamin C in the meal (necessary for the absorption of iron) when candidates chose to make, for example, a tomato salad to go with a spinach lasagne. Chocolate orange mousse based on eggs was another suitable choice of dish. The chicken and cheese-based dishes (such as chicken with pasta or macaroni cheese) were popular as main courses but were not good sources of iron, therefore unsuitable choices.

Part (b) was answered more successfully. Popular dishes that used shortcrust pastry were Quiche, Apple Tart, Banana Tart, and Sausage Rolls. Most candidates made small or large sponge cakes to show the use of the creaming method. For full marks within Choice it was expected that cakes should be decorated with

buttercream, glace icing, ganache or frosting for example. Dusting with icing sugar or popping on a strawberry here and there, is not demonstrating skilful decoration.

Test 7

Another popular test, in which many successful candidates clearly identified the named herb or spice to be used in the dish. Clever candidates balanced **part (a)** by choosing one sweet dish and two savoury dishes, with a savoury pastry dish for **part (b)**. There were generally well-chosen dishes demonstrating high levels of skills and accurate use of different herbs or spices. Dishes that worked well were examples such as pizza, lasagne, a protein requiring a parsley or tarragon sauce, herbed quiches or scones; along with spicy dishes such as curries or chilli. A few candidates failed to identify the chosen herb or spice, and instead used 'mixed herbs' or 'curry powder', and sometimes repeated these in different dishes. Good examples of sweet dishes were ginger biscuits, nutmeg and sultana steamed sponge, egg custard tart or cinnamon scones.

For **(b)**, most candidates used a correct rough puff pastry recipe, with $\frac{3}{4}$ fat to flour proportions in their recipe and identifying the folding method in the time plan. Apple turnovers, tuna pasties and sausage rolls were successful, skilled dishes for this section. Good examples of small cakes and tray bakes were seen, including chocolate brownies. Please remember that all cakes must have a suitable decoration or sauce to be considered for full marks.

Test 8

This was not often used, and few candidates with this question were able to recognise the difference between the dietary requirements of a vegan and a vegetarian. Many candidates were awarded low marks overall because of their lack of knowledge of appropriate ingredients. Examiners should remember to check for 'hidden' animal-based ingredients as well as obvious ones. Where candidates use margarine, they must specify the type so it can be checked for suitability; oyster, fish and Worcestershire sauces cannot be used. Chicken stock, eggs and cheese were common obvious incorrect choices.

For **(b)**, the dishes were not required to be vegan and candidates who did this test, produced some good quality yeast and chocolate dishes. Please note that a simple bread roll is an accompaniment, not a fully-skilled dish. The yeast dough needs to be made into a savoury or sweet dish. Cocoa is acceptable when the test requires chocolate.