

GNVQ

Chief Examiner's Reports

**GNVQ
Construction and the Built Environment
Foundation**

June 2004

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CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT

General comments upon the administration of the external tests

Several centres did not follow instructions on how attendance registers should be completed. In some cases the details on the front cover of the scripts were not completed. Centres should ensure that all sheets are correctly identified with the candidate's name and number and that candidates complete the required details and sign the paper.

General comments upon candidate responses

The overall candidate performance has improved once again. The improvements are likely to be the result of improvements in the delivery and formative assessment of the units. This is hopefully due to attendance at CPD events, careful perusal of previous Chief Examiner's reports and increasing familiarity with the format of the external assessments.

Centres should note the following key messages, which originally appeared as part of an Edexcel INSET event.

1. Read and digest all available Chief Examiner's reports for any previous series of papers. These may give hints!
2. Use formative assessment, feedback and mock tests based on old papers as part of the delivery process.
3. Tighten up on simple administrative issues and ensure that all candidates follow the rubric and sign the paper.
4. Develop students' sketching and drawing skills as these may be required in any of the external assessments.
5. Develop students' understanding of appropriate technical terms and discourage the use of 'brand names'.
6. Do not enter students too early or just to 'see the paper' or 'give them practice' or out of misplaced optimism.
7. Revisit the 'About this unit' section of each specification for advice on the best order in which to study the units.
8. Resist the temptation to adapt old teaching materials for use in these qualifications.
9. Get the level right in terms of teaching and learning strategies. Pay close attention to the verbs used in the assessment papers.
10. Study the schedule of marks awarded against each of the assessment criteria for previous papers.

Popularity of particular questions

There are no optional questions on GNVQ papers. The same comments can be made for every one of the six papers. Firstly, sketching questions are unpopular and are done badly. Secondly, distinction level questions are the least likely to be attempted. Also, it seems questions that involve calculations are unpopular.

C102T – Construction Technology & Design

The paper provided excellent differentiation between the three grades and provided sufficient opportunities for the student to produce the evidence needed to access the higher grades. The paper was deemed to be fair, set at the correct level, clear and unambiguous. Candidates performed best in those questions using the 'list/table' format, nearly all of which addressed Pass level assessment criteria. There were no questions that employed the 'short answer' format but the standard of sketching required for the Merit criteria was often not very good, with very few candidates being aware of what is meant by the term 'vertical section'. The more analytical questions used to test the Distinction level assessment criteria were, in general, very poorly answered and the answers often demonstrated poor communication skills on the part of the candidates.

- Q1 Generally very well answered with many competent responses.
- Q2 In general very well answered with standard answers received.
- Q3 A good range of satisfactory responses. Some candidates wanted to put the central heating boiler in the loft. The difference between immersion heater and boiler should be stressed.
- Q4 a Well answered where the candidate had read the question properly. Far too many candidates thought that a 'fitted wardrobe' was not to be found in a newly constructed house.
- Q4 b As above but this time some candidates believed a sideboard to be a 'fixture or fitting'.
- Q5 Very badly answered. Some candidates drew a vertical section but most did not and very few had any real idea how this was done.
- Q6 (i) Generally well answered but most candidates only spotted four of the five non-structural elements.
- Q6 (ii) The more obvious elements were named but those requiring some knowledge of terminology were less well answered. Some candidates simply inserted the numbers they had not used in part (i).
- Q7 Very well answered except by those candidates who answered 'electricity' despite it having been specifically excluded.
- Q8 Disappointingly poor responses. A similar question has been included in every one of the previous papers, and candidates should be familiar with this type of question.

C104T – Construction Operations

- Q1-4 Generally very well answered with some exceptions. The most common mistakes occurred when candidates appeared to be guessing and latched on to a single word or a perceived 'clue'. Such answers included 'burning off woodwork = carpenter', 'applying a scratch coat = painter & decorator', 'splash brush = painter & decorator'.
- Q5 Despite the overall improvement in performance, this question was less well done than in recent series.
- Q6 Generally very well done, as is always the case with this type of question. Candidates seem to be clearer about the 'first-fix or second-fix' issue. The logic is as follows: groundworkers must be first and painters and decorators must be last, roofers cannot start before the brickwork is up and should complete their work before other crafts begin the internal work so they must be third and so on.
- Q7 The 'items of PPE' were generally identified accurately and there was evidence that centres have learned generic answers such as 'gloves' and 'glasses' will be marked incorrect if not specified in more detail. The second part of the question was less well done because candidates often failed to specify a 'construction craft activity' such as 'sawing hardwoods', 'cutting bricks' or whatever and answered 'working on site' or 'bricklayer' or similar.
- Q8 The responses to this question were generally better than in the past. Many candidates confused 'consequences' with 'causes', which caused some problems in their answers.
- Q9 Very similar to the comments made above. In general, much better, but too many candidates described the nature of the problems facing the sub-contractor, when the question quite clearly says 'describe two problems this may cause the main contractor'.
- Q10 Confusion between 'time sheets' and 'programme progress charts' persists but not as widely as was previously the case.
- Q11 The answer required the candidate to multiply three figures together and the use of calculators is allowed. Nevertheless this question was answered well. Centres should note that there will always be a calculation question and that it will always carry five marks.

C108T - Cities and Towns

The number of candidates for this paper has risen considerably as has the mean mark attained. In general candidates displayed good knowledge in completing Pass and Merit criteria questions but Distinction criteria questions were generally completed poorly by most learners. This may be because Pass and Merit questions often require only a tick in a box or a single word answer whereas D questions require the candidate to write sentences.

- Q1 Very well answered by most candidates.
- Q2 Good answers received from most candidates but some could not identify commercial and/or retail developments.
- Q3 Generally poorly answered. Intended factors included over-crowding, poor housing and relocation of housing but candidates identified only a limited number of factors, supported by poor explanations.
- Q4 Most candidates achieved 7 or 8 marks. Generally well understood.
- Q5 Well answered. Some candidates lost marks by not indicating the correct OS symbol or name. Others confused the farm and the allotment gardens. Centres are advised to use past papers to become familiar with this type of question.
- Q6 Very well answered.
- Q7a Good, but brief, responses provided by most candidates.
- Q7b Good. Nearly everyone identified overcrowding, vandalism and noise.
- Q7c Most candidates obtained 3 marks out of 5. The mistake most commonly encountered was in the interpretation of the terms 'greenfield site' and 'green belt'.

- Q8a Most candidates were able to offer solutions to the redevelopment of the industrial area. Those solutions that indicated housing, shops or offices generally scored the highest.
- Q8b A poorly answered Distinction criterion question. Candidates failed to link their answers to how the various aspects affect the development of a town or city.
- Q8c Again, a very poorly answered Distinction criterion question. Few candidates appeared to understand what was required despite the similarity of the question to the criterion in the specification.

Grade Boundaries

C102T Technology and Design

Unit no		Distinction	Merit	Pass	N	U
C102T	Upper	76	62	51	40	29
	Lower	63	52	41	30	
	Cumulative % of candidates	11.4	68.0	96.9	100.0	100.0

C104T Construction Operations

Unit no		Distinction	Merit	Pass	N	U
C104T	Upper	89	69	50	32	14
	Lower	70	51	33	15	
	Cumulative % of candidates	11.5	62.9	93.0	99.4	100.0

C108T Cities and Towns

Unit no		Distinction	Merit	Pass	N	U
C108T	Upper	81	67	54	42	30
	Lower	68	55	43	31	
	Cumulative % of candidates	10.4	54.9	87.2	97.5	100.0

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Registered Office: Stewart House, 32 Russell Square, London WC1B 5DN

