



**Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit
State Examinations Commission**

LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION 2007

HOME ECONOMICS – SCIENTIFIC AND SOCIAL

ORDINARY LEVEL CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT

HIGHER LEVEL CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT

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1. General Introduction

1.1 The Syllabus

A revised syllabus for Home Economics – Scientific and Social was introduced to the Senior Cycle curriculum in September 2002 and was first examined in the Leaving Certificate 2004. The syllabus is offered at two levels, Higher and Ordinary. The revised syllabus replaced the previous courses in Home Economics (Scientific and Social) and Home Economics (General).

The syllabus structure comprises two elements, as follows:

- a mandatory core (80%)
- an elective, from a choice of three (20%).

The core consists of three areas with the following weightings:

- Food Studies (45%)
- Resource Management and Consumer Studies (25%)
- Social Studies (10%).

The three electives are:

- Home Design and Management (20%)
- Textiles, Fashion and Design (20%)
- Social Studies (20%)

1.2 The Examination

The examination for both Higher and Ordinary levels is comprised of the following components:

(a) Candidates who select the Home Design and Management elective or the Social Studies elective

- Written examination (80%)
- Food Studies Coursework (20%)

In this instance the elective is assessed as part of the written examination.

(b) Candidates who select the Textiles, Fashion and Design Elective

- Written examination (70%)
- Food Studies Coursework (20%)
- Textile, Fashion and Design Elective Coursework (10%)

The written examination at both Higher and Ordinary levels is of 2 hours and 30 minutes duration and takes place in June.

The Food Studies and Textile, Fashion and Design coursework are both common level examinations.

The **Food Studies Coursework** – comprises five practical assignments which are required to be completed by early November of the year preceding the written examination. The practical coursework undertaken is recorded in a pro-forma journal which is issued annually by the State Examinations Commission to schools. The completed coursework journals are submitted to the State Examinations Commission for examination.

The requirements for this component were modified for the 2007 examination following a review by the NCCA Leaving Certificate Home Economics Course Committee which met in December 2004 to review the implementation of the syllabus and its assessment. The review determined that the demands of completing the practical food studies coursework component were too great for students and teachers. The review recommended that the requirements be amended to maintain parity with other subjects that have second assessment components with similar mark weightings and to ensure that students have sufficient time to complete the coursework effectively. This recommendation was approved by the NCCA and the Department of Education and Science.

The **Textiles, Fashion and Design Elective Coursework** is required to be completed by the end of April of the examination year and is examined in the candidate's school by an examiner appointed by the State Examination Commission.

Marks allocated to each component of the Leaving Certificate Home Economics – Scientific and Social Examination are as set out below in Table 1:

Examination Component	Candidates selecting Home Design and Management / Social Studies Electives		Candidates selecting Textiles, Fashion and Design Elective	
	Marks	%	Marks	%
Written Examination	320	80	280	70
Food Studies Coursework	80	20	80	20
Textiles, Fashion & Design Coursework			40	10
Total	400	100	400	100

Table 1: Marks allocated to each component of the Leaving Certificate Home Economics – Social and Scientific Examination

1.3 Candidature

Year	Leaving Certificate Candidates	Home Economics Candidates	% of total candidature taking Home Economics	Higher Level	Ordinary Level
				Candidates	Candidates
2004	55,222	15,508	28.1%	10,537	4,971
2005	54,073	14,459	26.7%	9,724	4,768
2006	50,955	12,305	24.2%	8,202	4,103
2007	50,870	12,250	24.1%	8,348	3,902

Table 2: Number and Percentage of Candidates taking Leaving Certificate Home Economics - Scientific and Social for the four year period 2004 to 2007.

Table 2 shows a decline of 4% in the percentage of Leaving Certificate candidates opting to take Home Economics between 2004 and 2006. Participation rates for 2006 and 2007 are broadly similar.

2. Performance of Candidates

Tables 3 and 4 show the percentages of candidates achieving each grade in Ordinary Level and Higher Level Home Economics – Scientific and Social examinations from 2004 to 2007.

Year	Total	A1	A2	B1	B2	B3	C1	C2	C3	D1	D2	D3	E	F	N.G.
2004	4,971	0.1	0.8	2.6	5.6	9.9	12.7	14.1	13.8	11.8	10.3	8.4	7.4	2.2	0.2
2005	4,768	0.3	1.8	4.2	8.5	11.7	13.1	12.4	11.7	10.1	8.7	8.2	7.1	2.2	0.1
2006	4,103	0.1	0.8	2.4	5.5	11.2	12.9	15.7	14.7	11.8	8.5	7.8	6.6	1.7	0.3
2007	3,902	0.1	1.2	2.9	7.2	11.7	14.4	14.3	13.6	10.7	8.7	7.8	6.1	1.3	0.1

Table 3: Percentage breakdown of candidates by grade awarded in Ordinary Level Home Economics – Scientific and Social, 2004 to 2007

- Approximately 60% of candidates obtained a Grade C or higher in 2007 which is broadly similar to the mean A+B+C grades obtained in 2004-2006.
- The % of A grades obtained in 2007 remains low at 1.3% and represents a slight decrease when compared with the mean A grade obtained in 2004-2006.

Year	Total	A1	A2	B1	B2	B3	C1	C2	C3	D1	D2	D3	E	F	N.G.
2004	10537	1.3	3.8	6.4	10.2	12.7	13.4	14.2	12.9	10.0	6.9	5.2	2.6	0.4	0.0
2005	9724	2.2	5.0	7.3	10.3	12.5	13.6	13.8	11.8	9.4	6.7	4.9	2.3	0.2	0.0
2006	8202	2.3	4.9	6.9	10.0	12.0	13.2	13.1	10.9	9.7	7.6	5.2	3.6	0.4	0.0
2007	8348	2.2	5.9	8.0	10.5	12.2	13.5	13.3	10.3	9.4	7.0	4.8	2.6	0.3	0.0

Table 4: Percentage breakdown of candidates by grade awarded in Higher Level Home Economics – Scientific and Social, 2004 to 2007

- 75.9 % of candidates obtained a grade C or higher in 2007 which represents an increase of just 1% when compared with the mean A+B+C grades obtained in 2004 - 2007.
- The combined E/F/N.G. grades in 2007 was 2.9 %, which is broadly similar to the combined mean E/F/N.G grades obtained in 2004 - 2007.

The following reports for each examination component should be read in conjunction with the relevant published marking scheme which can be accessed on the State Examinations Commission website www.examinations.ie

3. Food Studies Practical Coursework

3.1 Introduction

Food Studies Practical Coursework is a mandatory component of the revised Leaving Certificate Syllabus in Home Economics – Scientific and Social and accounts for 20% of the marks of the examination. The specification of coursework has been designed to support the rationale, aims and objectives of the revised syllabus. The thematic approach, on which the Food Studies Coursework is based, aims to encourage an integrated approach to teaching and learning within the Food Studies, Resource Management and Consumer Studies areas. The coursework does not follow any particular sequence from the syllabus, but has been developed as five different ‘Areas of Practice’ as follows:

- Area A - Application of Nutritional Principles
- Area B - Food Preparation and Cooking Processes
- Area C - Food Technology
- Area D - Properties of a Food
- Area E - Comparative Analysis including Sensory Analysis

A series of six assignments is issued annually by the State Examinations Commission to schools at the commencement of the Leaving Certificate Programme.

Two assignments are from *Area of Practice A* and one assignment from each of the *Areas of Practice B, C, D and E*. Assignments are common to Higher and Ordinary Level as are the assessment criteria and mark allocation.

Each candidate is required to complete and present for examination a record of *five assignments* – *one* assignment from each of the *Areas of Practice A, B, C and D* and *one* other assignment. The fifth assignment may be a second assignment from Area of Practice A or the assignment from Area of Practice E.

The Practical Coursework undertaken is recorded in a pro-forma journal which is issued annually by the State Examinations Commission to schools. The completed coursework journals are submitted to the State Examinations Commission for examination.

3.2 Performance of Candidates

12,464 candidates presented Food Studies Coursework Journals in 2007. Table 5 provides details of the grades awarded to candidates for the years 2004-2007.

Year	Total	A	B	C	ABC	D	E	F	NG	E/F/NG
2004	15,570	17.4	37.1	27.1	81.6	11.3	4.2	2.2	0.8	7.2
2005	14,665	20.7	38.2	23.5	82.4	10.4	4.1	2.3	0.9	7.3
2006	12,479	21.1	37.4	24.1	82.6	10.0	4.2	2.5	0.7	7.4
2007	12,464	27.9	38.6	20.1	86.7	8.3	2.9	1.5	0.5	4.9

Table 5: Percentage of candidates achieving each grade in the Food Studies Practical Coursework examination 2004 - 2007

Note: The grades above are indicative only. The grades awarded to candidates in Home Economics - Scientific and Social are computed from the combined results of the relevant components completed by candidates.

- Results for 2007 show a significant improvement when compared to 2006 and earlier years. Almost 28% of candidates attained an A grade while the number attaining less than D has fallen to less than 5%
- Two thirds (66.5%) of the candidature attained a Grade A or B while more than four fifths (86.7%) attained a grade C or higher in 2007
- It appears most likely that the improved results in 2007 are attributable to the changes in the coursework requirements introduced this year.

3.3 Analysis of Candidate Performance

Table 6 shows the Average Mark and the Frequency of Attempts per Assignment based on an analysis of the results of a Random Sample of 1,060 (8.51%) of candidates journals. The available mark for each assignment was 80 marks.

Assignment	Frequency of Attempts %	Popularity Rank Order	Average Mark	Average Mark Rank Order
1	91%	4	58	1
2	79%	5	55	6
3	99%	1	55	5
4	98%	2	58	2
5	97%	3	57	3
6	31%	6	56	4

Table 6: Frequency of Attempts per Assignment and Average Mark

As Assignments 3, 4 and 5 were compulsory, it is to be expected that these are the three most popular assignments. Of the optional assignments, Assignment 1 was the most popular, being attempted by 91% of candidates, while Assignment 6 was least popular with just 31% of candidates attempting it. Examiners noted that Assignment 6, which is based in the area of practice - *Comparative Analysis including Sensory Analysis*, was attempted by less than one third of candidates.

The average mark attained is remarkably even with just a three mark deviation in respect of all assignments.

In analysing candidates' responses some generic points emerged, which were common to all assignments. These are set out below under the relevant heading and are followed by an analysis of each assignment.

Each assignment undertaken was recorded using the following headings:

- Investigation: Analysis/Research
- Preparation and Planning
- Implementation
- Evaluation

Investigation: Analysis/Research

Investigations were generally well carried out, particularly by candidates attaining a Grade A or B overall in coursework.

In general, good quality investigations

- identified the key aspects of the topic relevant to the assignment
- provided an in depth analysis of the aspects identified and presented information in a logical and coherent manner
- used at least two different sources of information
- linked research findings to the development of a range of menus / selection of dishes or products appropriate to the assignment
- were presented as the candidate's individual account of the research undertaken.

In some journals, there was direct transcription from textbooks on the general topic of the assignment with candidates making no attempt to link the information presented to the requirements of the assignment. In many such cases little, if any, attempt was made to analyse the relevant issues and factors. A significant number of candidates did not follow the recording criteria as set out on the inside cover of the journal and lost marks as the investigations presented lacked essential information.

Investigations that were awarded low marks tended to be either vague or incomplete. Meal planning guidelines described in Assignments 1 and 2 were sometimes very general and not specific to the diet being investigated. A number of candidates presented detailed information on minor aspects of the assignment and gave insufficient attention to analysing the main topic being investigated. Candidates who followed the designated recording criteria and addressed the specific requirements of an assignment, generally, presented the better quality answers.

The majority of candidates correctly identified at least two menus/dishes/products relevant to the assignment. Menus were generally nutritionally balanced and fulfilled the requirements of the assignment. Menu format was not used in some answers making it difficult to decipher the dishes being served together. Dishes chosen were not always balanced i.e. containing 3 of the 4 food groups. Some candidates selected very simple dishes demonstrating very basic skills; this does not concur with the requirements for the selection of dishes as set out in the Food Studies Coursework guidelines and limits candidates' opportunity to develop their culinary skills. Reasons attributed to choice of dishes for implementation, included, economic, nutritional and resource factors, with some candidates referring to all such factors. Several candidates omitted to give any reasons for their choice of dishes, a requirement which is clearly specified in the recording criteria.

Most candidates correctly identified two sources of information and provided details of the name and author of the books used. A number of candidates mentioned just one source, usually the class textbook, while some candidates mentioned the class teacher/notes as the only source of information. The internet was also a popular source for many candidates, but a number of candidates failed to identify the specific web site used.

Planning & Preparation

Ingredients – The correct ingredients were listed for the majority of dishes. A number of candidates omitted cost and/or ingredient quantities or gave inaccurate quantities and costs. In a small number of instances, key equipment was omitted. The dishes selected for making must be identified in the assignment investigation. However, in a number of journals this was not done and while some of the dishes selected were appropriate for the assignment, in a number of cases unsuitable dishes were prepared resulting in substantial loss of marks for the candidates concerned.

Work Sequence – Most candidates set out a detailed list of tasks in the correct sequence, which included preparation and evaluation, and thus gained full marks. In some journals the work sequence was incomplete with candidates omitting preparatory work e.g. preparation/sourcing of ingredients, setting up equipment, or not referring to conducting an evaluation of the prepared dish. Some work sequences were far too detailed while others were limited to extracts from the recipe for the dish. Some candidates commenced ‘Implementation’ i.e. the making of the dish, under ‘*Work Sequence*’ (which is part of Preparation and Planning) and thus lost marks for not having the implementation process recorded under the correct heading.

Implementation

Work that attained high marks under this heading was presented as an account, in candidates’ own words, which described all the essential stages, in a logical sequence, relevant to making the dish. These accounts included preparatory work e.g. washing /chopping of vegetables and the key tasks associated with making the dishes. They also stated the cooking time and temperature and referred to serving the dish and conducting the evaluation.

Implementations attaining low marks frequently omitted some of the main food preparation and cooking processes, while some candidates transcribed directly from recipe books. Frequent omissions included a failure to prepare ingredients e.g. fruit/vegetables or to describe the making, where appropriate, of items such as sauces, pastry, etc. that were a key part of the dish being prepared.

In a number of journals, candidates omitted reference to one or more of the following: cooking time and temperature, removing the dish from the oven, serving the dish, conducting the evaluation. Marks were lost in a minority of cases where candidates, having worked in pairs, described only the tasks completed by the individual candidate. The preparation / cooking of the accompaniment e.g. rice which was generally included in the ingredients, and was an essential part of the main course dish being prepared, was often omitted in the implementation section.

Key factors – Most candidates identified and explained at least two relevant key factors. In a minority of cases, candidates did not explain the relevance of the key factor identified and thus lost marks. Other errors noted by examiners included, the identification of key factors that were not critical to the success of the dish cooked, or the key factors identified were too general or were linked to the research/analysis and

not the making of the dish. In the assignments where candidates were required to analyse key factors associated with making dishes/products as part of the investigation, better quality answers were frequently evident. This was particularly evident in Assignment 3 (Roasting), Assignment 4 (Chutney/Relishes) and Assignment 5 (Marinating).

Hygiene and safety – key hygiene and safety points, which were relevant to the dish / product being made, together with a clear explanation of the importance of each were given by most candidates. In some instances, a standard list of general hygiene and safety points was given. However, in many cases the points stated were not always of relevance to the dish being made. A minority of candidates omitted any reference to safety and/or hygiene, while others identified the same two points in each assignment, or, alternatively, gave two points relating to hygiene and none to safety. Fewer errors were noted where candidates set out information for key factors and hygiene and safety under separate headings.

Evaluation

The majority of candidates critically evaluated the issues associated with the making of the dish/product. Specific weaknesses/strengths were identified and analysed. Most evaluations included a detailed descriptive point related to the colour/taste/texture of the dish/product made, and thus gained full marks. Modifications, where suggested, were generally well justified. In some cases, only a general description of the dish was given, with little or no attempt made to analyse the outcome. Points on modification, safety, hygiene and weaknesses in implementation were identified in many instances, but were not always explained or justified. In some cases, evaluations were frequently simple descriptive points which were often repeated, regardless of relevance, for all assignments.

When evaluating the specific requirements of assignments, the majority of candidates presented extensive evaluations relating back to the individual investigations conducted. However, a significant number of candidates did not relate their evaluations to their research/analysis findings, or they did not develop points or form a definite conclusion. Where specific evaluation headings were stated in assignments, and noted by candidates, some more focused evaluations were completed. Examiners noted some evaluations with irrelevant and/or incomplete points of information presented. This part of some candidates' work was frequently the weakest aspect of each assignment and in a few instances, was omitted altogether.

AREA OF PRACTICE A – APPLICATION OF NUTRITIONAL PRINCIPLES

Assignment 1 – Planning and preparing school meals for 12 – 18 year olds

Attempt Frequency: 91%

Average mark: 58

This assignment achieved the highest average mark.

Investigation: Analysis/Research

Dietary/nutritional requirements were generally well explored and points, in relation to school meals for 12 – 18 year olds, were well developed. In relation to meal planning

guidelines, weaker answers did not develop points or the points were too general and did not link to the assignment. Some candidates omitted this part.

Generally, the investigations referred to economic and practical factors but some candidates omitted to analyse these areas and failed to link the factors to a school canteen situation. A significant number of candidates focused on bringing packed lunches to school and did not relate their investigations to the foods suitable for a school canteen. Candidates scoring low marks frequently failed to investigate each heading as specified in the assignment. Most dishes selected were nutritionally balanced containing 3 of the 4 food groups and, in most instances, two-course menus were stated. Weaker answers frequently only identified the dish to be made and, in many cases, the dish was not balanced or was not suitable as a main course. Reasons for choice of dishes were not always explained or were vague. However, the majority of candidates gave a good explanatory statement stating clearly the reasons for selecting the particular dish. The most popular dishes included, Chicken Curry, Shepherds Pie, Spaghetti Bolognese, Lasagne and Chicken Wraps. A few of the dishes selected showed evidence of the over-use of convenience foods e.g. frozen Chicken Kiev.

Implementation

Candidates who selected dishes that included substantial amounts of convenience foods e.g. frozen Chicken Kiev lost substantial marks as few preparatory or culinary skills were undertaken.

Evaluation

Evaluations of implementation were, generally, well done and usually gained high marks. When evaluating the specific requirements of the assignment, many candidates did not relate the evaluation back to their findings in research/analysis and of those who did, many did not always develop it to a high standard. Some candidates evaluated the assignment under nutritional requirements only (included at least two nutritional points) and omitted the practical and economic aspects. This error was particularly evident in answers where candidates failed to investigate these aspects of the assignment. Many answers stated that the dish was suitable as it 'contained protein' or 'was cheap', 'easy to cook', without specifying why.

Assignment 2 – Low sugar or a diabetic diet

Attempt Frequency: 79%

Average Mark: 55

This assignment gained the lowest average mark. It was the assignment that was most usually omitted when Assignment 6 was selected.

Investigation: Analysis/Research

Candidates rarely stated clearly which diet they were researching and it had to be inferred from the research. The diabetic diet was the most popular option chosen.

Candidates scored less well in this investigation when compared to other assignments as they did not undertake an in-depth investigation and analysis of the dietary/nutritional requirements and the management of a diabetic diet. Frequently candidates presented lengthy narrative, directly transcribed from books / web sites, on the types, symptoms, causes and effects of diabetes. This resulted in investigations that were not relevant to

the key requirements specified in the assignment. Many candidates also failed to identify relevant meal planning guidelines, which was mandatory. Selected dishes nearly always met the requirements and were usually low in sugar, or were modified dishes with alternative flavourings/ingredients used e.g. 'Splenda', 'Candrell', sweet fruits etc. Some candidates, while correctly identifying the relevant dietary requirements, contradicted their research by selecting dishes that included large amounts of sugar and thus lost substantial marks. Many candidates, often from the same centre, lost marks as the dishes selected contained a high proportion of sugar, and/or ingredients with a high sugar content, where low sugar varieties are available e.g. jellies, jams.

Some candidates used standard recipes and only referred to modification in their evaluations. In some instances, candidates selected a suitable dish but proceeded to serve the dish with a product high in sugar e.g. ice cream, chocolate sauce etc. Dishes sourced from books/web sites specifically for diabetic diets were always accepted for full marks.

Selected dishes varied from simple fresh fruit salads to chocolate mousse using diabetic chocolate and Splenda sugar. Modified fruit crumble was a popular choice with candidates who used sugar substitutes, dried fruit, eating apples etc., which indicated a good understanding of the diet being investigated. Reasons for choice were very good with reference to sugar, high fibre and slow release of energy.

It was evident in this assignment that information was sourced from a wider range of sources, e.g. web sites, diabetic cook books and leaflets, other than from the class textbook.

Implementation

The range of dishes prepared varied greatly with some requiring little preparation. However, in such dishes, e.g. fruit salad, the detail regarding the preparation of the different fruits etc. was frequently omitted. A small number of candidates, who modified the ingredients in a recipe in order to meet the requirements of a diabetic diet, recorded that they made the dish using the unmodified list of ingredients and thus lost marks.

Evaluation

When evaluating the specific requirements, many candidates scored well giving two points on the management of (a) a low sugar or (b) a diabetic diet. In these instances, the candidates stated what foods are suitable/unsuitable and why, the special aspects of planning that must be considered, how the dish meets the requirements as identified in investigation etc. A few candidates were not clear as to what was expected in specific requirements. Some failed to link how the selected dish complied with the research and analysis while others only referred to the sugar content of the dish. A few evaluations often had two overlapping points on sugar.

AREA OF PRACTICE B – FOOD PREPARATION AND PROCESSES

Assignment 3 – Roasting

Attempt Frequency: 99%

Average Mark: 55

This was the most popular assignment and was attempted by almost all the cohort.

Investigation: Analysis/Research

Many candidates conducted a very good / excellent investigation of roasting as a method of cooking. Others relied solely on the information in the class textbook which included very little detail or analysis. Most investigations examined the principle and the different methods of roasting and listed dishes suitable for roasting using each method. Other investigations focused on an analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of roasting as a method of cooking. A few investigations briefly listed some general points and did not refer to the principle of roasting or include an analysis of the points to be considered to ensure success when roasting.

While most foods/dishes listed were suitable for roasting, the dishes selected were not always balanced and suitable as a main course and candidates lost marks as a consequence. Examples of dishes selected were roast stuffed chicken breast with roast potato and vegetables, roast stuffed pork steak, roast pork chops etc. Some candidates failed to list two main course dishes. In some dishes selected, roasting was not the main method of cooking or only a part of the dish was roasted e.g. potatoes and marks were lost accordingly.

Planning and Preparation

Candidates frequently did not give a complete list of ingredients / quantities. Some candidates omitted vegetables, ingredients for stuffing and gravy etc. Costing was, in some instances, omitted or inaccurate.

Implementation

Many of the essential preparation stages were omitted, particularly in weaker attempts e.g. the preparation of vegetables, weighing of meat, making stuffing and gravy, heating oil and basting meat etc. Oil or fat was not always used in the cooking of some dishes which would suggest that baking was the main method of cooking rather than roasting.

Evaluation

Evaluations relating to specific requirements were sometimes poorly done with the evaluation of roasting as a method of cooking sometimes omitted. Good quality evaluations related roasting to adding flavour to foods, identified the economic advantages of cooking a complete meal in the oven and elaborated on the points identified.

AREA OF PRACTICE C: FOOD TECHNOLOGY

Assignment 4 – Chutney and Relishes

Attempt Frequency: 98%

Average Mark: 58

This was the second most popular assignment and the assignment that gained the second highest average marks

Investigation: Analysis/Research

Candidates who used the range of sub-headings specified in the assignment brief, generally achieved good to excellent marks for their investigations as each of the relevant key requirements was addressed with no omissions.

Chutney was significantly the most popular method of preservation chosen by candidates to research. This may, perhaps, be due to the limited availability of information on relishes. Good quality answers identified a wide range of fruit and vegetables suitable for chutney/relish making and provided details of making the product, including the principle/s involved and possible related problems that might be encountered. Less successful responses identified few fruits and vegetables, described briefly the method of making the product and usually identified general problems related to preservation in general, rather than those directly associated with chutney / relish making. A minority of candidates focused on problems relating to commercially made chutney. Marks were also lost where there was evidence of direct transcription from the textbook with little analysis and where candidates failed to investigate suitable containers and labelling.

Planning & Preparation

Common errors included the omission of suitable containers/packaging from the key equipment and no reference to the sterilisation of jars in the work plan.

Implementation

Some implementations had all the essential stages outlined, whereas others lacked details such as the preparation of fruit and vegetables, sterilisation of jars, cooking of ingredients to achieve correct consistency, and potting and labelling of the chutney/relish.

Evaluation

Evaluations varied from basic to excellent. The specific headings prescribed in the assignment appeared to make it easier for candidates to evaluate the products. However, a few candidates ignored the headings given in the assignment and instead gave a general evaluation similar to what was required in Assignments 1 and 2. 'Practicability' was well evaluated by some candidates. The issues of time, cost and the use of seasonal produce for economy were well analysed, as were difficulties encountered such as the length of cooking time, the need for constant stirring etc. A number of less successful evaluations briefly referred to the evaluation headings specified or omitted this part of the assignment altogether.

AREA OF PRACTICE D – PROPERTIES OF A FOOD

Assignment 5 – Marinating

Attempt Frequency: 97%

Average Mark: 57

This was the third most popular assignment

Investigation: Analysis/Research

The requirements of this assignment were clearly specified in the brief and this directed candidates when setting out their research findings. Investigations were generally well conducted, with the majority of candidates scoring high marks. In some investigations, candidates tended to concentrate on the reasons why meat is tough (age, activity, cut etc.) rather than reasons for tenderising meat (impart flavour etc.). Occasionally candidates omitted reasons for tenderising meat or gave answers which were very limited in content. The majority of candidates identified a range of methods used to tenderise meat.

Where the different methods of marinating foods were linked to their uses in particular dishes, candidates generally demonstrated a fuller understanding of the principles involved. Beef and chicken stir-fry, chicken tandoori and chicken tikka dishes were popular choices. Common mistakes noted by examiners included the identification of only one dish where a marinade would be used, omitting to state the reasons for selecting particular dishes and/or the selection of a dish that did not include the use of a marinade at all.

Implementation

Implementations ranged from very good to excellent in most journals. Candidates gave detailed descriptions of making the marinade, marinating the meat, timing, cooking and serving the dish. Less successful responses omitted details of the making / using the marinade and the preparation of vegetables in stir-fry dishes, where selected. A number of candidates used commercially prepared marinades and were deducted marks for the over use of convenience foods.

Evaluation

Evaluation of specific requirements was well done where candidates related the tenderness of the meat to the underlying principles identified in the investigation. Many candidates described the action of the acid in tenderising the meat and mentioned the success of other ingredients (garlic, herbs) in adding flavour and (oil) which kept the food moist. Some candidates cooked meat without marinating it and compared it with a similar meat that was marinated. Less successful responses omitted to evaluate their dish under specific requirements or, when they did, they generally referred to flavour and taste but did not explain how the marinade was successful as a method of tenderisation.

AREA E - COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS INCLUDING SENSORY ANALYSIS

Assignment 6 – Sensory Analysis

Attempt Frequency: 31%

Average Mark: 56

This was the least popular assignment, with less than one third of candidates attempting it.

Investigation: Analysis/Research

The standard of investigations ranged from good to excellent. Most candidates understood what was required and covered all the key areas of the assignment. Testing techniques, aims and possible outcomes continued to be based for the most part on resource materials provided at in-service. Candidates who adhered to the specified recording criteria rigidly and showed an understanding of the sensory analysis process did well in this assignment; candidates who did not research the theory relating to sensory analysis presented information that lacked coherence and generally scored lower marks. Types, brands and varieties of juices were well investigated, but some candidates failed to identify the two juices they planned to use for testing and /or failed to give reasons for their choices. The conditions to be controlled during testing were generally identified but were not always analysed.

Sources of information were usually teacher's notes or the DVD on sensory analysis prepared by the Leaving Certificate Home Economics support service. Some well researched investigations identified different shops used to collect data on juices which indicated that active learning methodologies are being employed in the teaching of sensory analysis and that candidates conducted individual research.

Planning & Preparation

Marks were lost when a detailed list of equipment for each test was not clearly identified by candidates. In some cases, candidates failed to specify the number of testers/number of score cards or record sheets. Key steps were often missing from the work sequence.

Implementation

Some descriptions indicated a lack of clarity on the necessity for balanced presentation order, which suggests that some candidates had a limited understanding of this important concept. It was also evident from the implementations in some centres that the candidates were involved in either the setting up of the test or were themselves the testers and therefore had an incomplete understanding of the whole process. Some answers focused on the doing of the test only and omitted details of setting it up. The majority of answers identified two key factors and two different hygiene / safety points but occasionally points lacked clarity and were not always analysed. A failure to record the test results obtained in the implementation resulted in marks being lost by some candidates.

Evaluation

A significant number of candidates' evaluations consisted of evaluating the juices selected for testing and stating the results of the test obtained. Many candidates failed to

include any reference to evaluating the procedure for conducting the test. Evaluations that gained high marks identified one or more of the key requirements of the testing procedure i.e. the importance of silence, work sequence and timing, balanced presentation, no smells in room on the day of test and the need for critical skills like careful coding of samples. These candidates also explained how each key requirement identified impacted on the results obtained. The more successful evaluations also drew conclusions from the results obtained from the triangle test.

3.4 Conclusions

Overall comment on general standard of candidates work

- The overall standard of work presented was significantly better this year than previous years. Almost 28% of candidates achieved an A grade while approximately two thirds of candidates attained an A or B grade
- The majority of candidates completed the required number of assignments (5). A small number of centres attempted all six assignments; there was no evidence to suggest that this was advantageous for candidates, as there was no significant mark variation between the assignments presented
- Fewer candidates presented incomplete journals this year; Examiners noted this is most likely attributable to the reduced requirements for the 2007 coursework
- Candidates who scored high marks followed the prescribed recording criteria and presented assignments that were well researched, based on a range of resource materials and ensured that the key aspects of each assignment were analysed in depth
- Almost all candidates performed to an above average standard in relation to the planning, preparation and implementation aspects of the assignments. There was, however, a significant difference in candidate performance on the investigation and the evaluation sections
- The standard of answers varied between centres and errors were occasionally centre-specific. Examples of this included the selection of an incorrect dish for Assignment 3 (dishes where no marinade was used) or where all candidates in a centre omitted to follow the prescribed headings when completing the evaluation
- The similarity of work presented by candidates in some centres would suggest that the range of reference material being used for research is too limited and there may be an over reliance on the class textbook and teacher notes
- The most significant errors reported by examiners included the following:
 - (i) information was presented under the incorrect headings
 - (ii) the prescribed recording criteria, as set out on inside cover of the candidate journal, were not followed
 - (iii) an inadequate range of issues on an assignment topic were identified or there was insufficient analysis of the issues concerned
 - (iv) the range of resources used for investigations was too limited
 - (v) there was an over reliance on direct transcription of information from the class textbook with no effort made to extract and analyse the relevant key points
 - (vi) selection of dishes, a range of errors noted here included:
 - dishes did not meet the requirements of the assignment e.g. in Assignment 3, a dish with high sugar content was selected or in Assignment 4, no marinade was used
 - some main course dishes were not balanced or were incomplete e.g. chicken curry being prepared without rice
 - some dishes showed over-use of convenience foods e.g. commercially prepared pastry, sauces, marinades etc.
 - in Assignment 4, the dish selected was unsuitable for roasting
 - the same dish, or a slightly modified version of a dish, was presented for two assignments
 - some dishes selected were very basic and included few opportunities for the candidate to demonstrate his/her culinary skills

- (vii) evaluations relating to implementation were often just general descriptions and lacked any attempt at analysis; evaluations relating to specific assignment requirements were either omitted or just a summary of information given in the investigation
- Candidates who attained less than a Grade D (5%) generally demonstrated a poor knowledge of the subject matter, many did not complete five assignments and/or left blank pages in the assignments they did complete
 - In general, candidates who attained lower grades (E / D) seemed to have difficulty in completing the investigation and evaluation aspects of the assignments. Information was often brief and transcribed directly from the class textbook and, generally, was within the basic to competent performance criterion
 - The practice of dividing the lines in the proforma journal is not acceptable and should be discouraged.

3.5 Recommendations for Teachers and Students

Advice on particular approaches to teaching and exam preparation

- Encourage students to continually refer and adhere to the recording criteria to ensure that key requirements of assignments are not omitted
- Encourage students to independently research the topic, using as wide a range of resources as possible e.g. Leaflets, newspaper and magazine articles, cookery books, web sites, DVD's etc Students should avoid transcribing information directly from the class textbook. Research information should be analysed and linked to the assignment requirements
- A minimum of two sources of information should be used and credited for each assignment
- Course content relevant to journal work should be studied in advance of commencing assignments as students require a foundation in nutrition in order to investigate the requirements for special diets etc.
- In Assignments 1 & 2, the specific diets being investigated should always be linked to the appropriate specific nutritional/dietary and meal planning guidelines
- Encourage students to use headings so that they know all areas of the assignment are included in their answer
- Advise students to choose dishes which are suitable for the assignment e.g. contain three out of four food groups, are modified if necessary, and are suitable for the assignment being undertaken
- Advise students not to select the same dish, or a variation of a dish, for more than one assignment
- Guide students in the identification of the key requirements of assignments and stress the importance of researching each requirement using the appropriate headings
- Accurate costing of ingredients is important; advise students to cost the quantity used and not the quantity bought
- During practical classes, encourage students to identify and understand (i) the factors that are critical to the success of the dish (key factors) and (ii) the most important hygiene and safety factors. Remind students of the importance of citing reasons in respect of key factors and safety /hygiene considerations
- When conducting evaluations, students should be reminded to critically analyse the outcome and not just describe what they can see and taste. Modifications should be accurate and justified
- Remind students to refer to the assignment research before completing the evaluation of the assignment requirements. Using headings such as 'implementation' 'specific requirements' might assist students in making more focused evaluations
- When selecting dishes it is important that due regard is given to
 - the requirements of the assignment and the findings of the investigation
 - the opportunities presented by the assignment to extend the students learning experiences and skills development beyond what is undertaken for Junior Certificate
 - current healthy eating guidelines
 - avoidance of the over-use of convenience foods
- When recording assignments students should

- write up their journals when doing the related practical work; otherwise sections may be omitted or confused with the work for other assignments
 - avoid leaving blank pages or omitting sections
 - ensure that all relevant material is given under the correct heading; only information given under the appropriate heading is awarded marks
 - not divide the lines as such information is often illegible for the Examiner
- As stated in the *Food Studies Coursework Guidelines*, on the assignment briefs (M.47/48A) and in the proforma journal, completed coursework must be clearly and unambiguously the work of the individual candidate. In assignments where common research resources are used or where candidates work in pairs for practical work, each candidate must present his/her individual report of the assignment.

4. Textiles, Fashion and Design Coursework

4.1 Introduction

Textiles, Fashion and Design is one of three electives on the Home Economics – Scientific and Social syllabus. The assessment format for this elective comprises

- Practical Coursework 10%
- Written Examination 10%

The assessment criteria and mark allocation for the practical coursework are common for Higher and Ordinary Levels.

A Textiles, Fashion and Design assignment brief (common level) is issued annually by the State Examinations Commission to schools at the commencement of the Leaving Certificate programme of study.

Candidates, who select this elective, are required to

- ⇒ conduct an investigation of the assignment following the design process
- ⇒ produce design sketches for an outfit based on the theme of the assignment
- ⇒ construct one garment from the outfit designed
- ⇒ present a design folder with information on analysis and research, implementation and evaluation.

The assessment of the design folders and completed garments is carried out in the candidate's school by an Examiner appointed by the State Examinations Commission.

4.2 Performance of Candidates

79 candidates presented Textile Fashion and Design Coursework.

Year	A	B	C	ABC	D	E	F	N.G.	Total
2004	45.5	37.0	15.0	97.5	2.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	84
2005	60.3	27.6	8.6	96.5	3.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	58
2006	23.1	40.4	23.1	86.6	8.7	2.9	1.9	0.0	104
2007	29.1	62.0	7.3	98.7	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	79

Table 7 - Percentage of candidates achieving each grade in the Textile Fashion and Design Coursework Examination 2004 - 2007

Note: The grades here are indicative only. The grades awarded to candidates in Home Economics - Scientific and Social are computed from the combined results of the relevant components completed by candidates.

- The overall standard was excellent to very good with 91% of candidates achieving A or B Grades. Only one candidate achieved a D Grade and no candidate presented work meriting a lower grade

- The most significant error noted was where one candidate presented work based on an incorrect assignment brief.

The assignment for 2007 required candidates to design an outfit, formal or casual, suitable for wearing to their graduation celebration and to make one garment from the outfit, and include two prescribed processes. The range of items presented by the 79 candidates was extensive and included the following:

- 39 candidates made skirts of various styles, including, straight knee length, gathered, long fish tail, box pleated, A-line layered, perky pleats etc.
- 15 candidates choose dresses which ranged from full length formal gowns to short mini dresses and sun dresses
- 20 candidates made tops and these included strapless boned bodices, bodices with straps, camisoles, halter necks etc.
- 4 candidates made waistcoats and one candidate made a fully lined fitted jacket.

An extensive range of fabric was selected for the garments, ranging from raw silk, chiffon, lace, satins, 100% wool (hounds tooth), leather and polyester-cotton mixes. The colours and textures of the fabrics were most attractive and added to the overall finish and appearance of the items. It was evident from the written research that some candidates sourced their fabric abroad (China). Garments were mainly formal, but some candidates made casual garments that could be worn for an in-school graduation event. Where all candidates in a centre made similar style garments (skirts), there was plenty of individuality and creativity as the decorative embroidery allowed candidates to explore and develop their creative talents.

4.3 Analysis of Candidate Performance

As evidenced in the results obtained, the standard of work presented was excellent. Garments were attractive, well made and finished to a very high standard. The general skills demonstrated in relation to sewing and the handling of fabrics was consistently very good to excellent.

Each candidate was required to include two of the following mandatory processes as prescribed in the assignment:

- Collar
- Gathers / pleats / darts (one to be selected)
- Embroidery

With one exception, all garments had the required mandatory processes and in some cases more than the required number were included. The number of candidates that selected each process is shown below.

Process	No. of Candidates
Collar	2
Gathers /pleats/darts	37/10/35
Embroidery	77

Collar – only two candidates opted for a collar. One collar was attached to a waistcoat and one was an unusual chiffon collar attached to a fitted jacket. Both were completed to an exceptionally high standard.

Gathers/pleats/darts – all garments presented included at least one of these processes and a significant number included two.

- **Gathers** - the standard here ranged from satisfactory to excellent. While the gathers served the function of distributing fullness and draped well generally, in a number of garments a few problems were encountered. The problems included uneven distribution of fullness, pleating and the rucking of fabric within the gathers. Some gathers were more akin to tucks, as the fabric weight was too heavy to gather
- **Pleats** - a range of different style pleats were presented including knife pleats, box pleats, inverted pleats, accordion pleats and perky pleats. The standard of work was excellent, pleats were an appropriate size, even, folded in the correct direction and well pressed. The main problems encountered included the use of heavy/bulky fabric making it difficult for the pleats to drape well and box pleats being irregular in size and not being folded evenly
- **Darts** – the darts constructed included single pointed darts, contour darts and French darts. The standard was generally good to excellent. Darts were generally machined straight, tapering gradually towards a point, even in length, well pressed in the appropriate direction and most were well finished and secure. The main problems encountered were poor finishing off of threads or threads knotted and cut short, in danger of ripping. Some darts were not finished in a point and were not pressed adequately.

Embroidery – this was a very popular process selected by 97% of candidates. There was a wide range of decorative stitches and designs presented. Some embroidery stitching was completed by hand while others completed the embroidery by machine.

The embroidery designs enhanced and improved the overall appearance of the garments and gave an individual finish to some garments. The main hand stitches completed were chain stitch, satin stitch, stem stitch, stab stitching, whip stitching and French knot. The main stitches completed by machine were shell stitch and featherstitch. Beading was not a requirement but some candidates incorporated beading along with the embroidery. The decorative stitching gave great scope for individualism and allowed candidates to develop and show their creative skills.

In a small number of garments, the quantity of work completed for this process was minimal and did not afford the candidates sufficient opportunity to demonstrate an appropriate level of skill. In general, the standard of embroidery presented varied between acceptable and excellent.

Examiners noted that the main problems encountered included:

- Poor quality uneven stitching; stitching too tight and puckering the fabric
- The thread used was too thick for fabric e.g. using 3 to 6 strands of embroidery thread on silk fabric

- Threads pulled in the fabric surrounding the decorative stitching, perhaps, attributable to the use of an incorrect type of needle
- Threads unfinished
- Insufficient quantity of embroidery with the design too small to be a feature on the garment or to meet the requirement as a mandatory process on the garment.

Notwithstanding the high standard of general skill evident on the majority of garments, some general common weaknesses were noted by Examiners in relation to the skills demonstrated. The principal errors noted included the following:

- Poor quality machine stitching - skipped stitches; poor stitch tension; incorrect stitch size for fabric being sewn
- Zip insertion procedures incorrect and zip tops not correctly finished
- Waistbands uneven, puckered or too bulky due to not being trimmed / layered
- Incorrect procedures used for different processes e.g. pleats, hems etc.
- Pressing: Garments not pressed as work progressed, particularly darts and seams, incorrect iron temperature resulting in scorch marks
- General finishing - threads not finished off; scissors snips/cuts on fabric
- Some of the garments were stained/marked.

The Design Folder

Many candidates carefully analysed and used the research undertaken to develop individual ideas around the theme 'graduation celebration'. Candidates downloaded information from the internet and used cut-outs from magazines to make collages. Some of the material presented had a minimal relevance to the theme and the final design of the outfit. A number of candidates also sketched possible designs. Sketches were very individual and showed good artistic ability. A small number of candidates did little exploration of the possible solutions and just presented the design for one outfit. The majority of candidates evaluated the garment made, having regard to the theme and the brief.

A number of candidates lost marks on their Design Folder where otherwise excellent work was presented. This was mainly due to sections being omitted despite the requirements for inclusion in the design folder being clearly specified. The main errors identified included:

- Poor exploration of the theme
- Omitting the labelling of mandatory processes on sketches
- Omitting any description of the garment
- Omitting work sequence/proposed course of action
- Omitting the general implementation or describing only the implementation of the mandatory processes
- Poor evaluation - evaluation of garment only without mentioning how it related to the chosen theme
- A small number of candidates presented no written folder.

4.4 Conclusions

- The overall standard of work presented was excellent. Garments were attractive, well made and finished to a very high standard. The general skills demonstrated in relation to sewing and the handling of fabrics was consistently very good to excellent
- Embroidery, the most popular of the prescribed mandatory processes, was selected by 97% of candidates. In general, the standard of embroidery presented varied between acceptable and excellent
- The Design Folder presented for assessment varied from adequate to very good
- A number of candidates lost marks on their Design Folder where otherwise excellent work was presented. This was mainly due to sections being omitted
- A small number of candidates presented no folder.

4.5 Recommendations for teachers and students

- Ensure that students are working to the prescribed assignment brief for the particular examination year
- Allow as much individuality and variety as is feasible within the class group; each student should engage in individual research and outfits should be the student's individual design. Students should not work collaboratively when doing this work
- When deciding on the garment to be made students should
 - consider the time available and select a garment that is not too complex
 - select a garment that includes the mandatory processes and where the quantity of work for each process is sufficient to allow the candidate demonstrate appropriate skill
 - select a suitable fabric that is easy to handle.
- When making the garment students should
 - follow the correct procedure for all processes, as described in recognised textile textbooks / pattern deltas
 - if using a sewing machine, ensure the tension and stitch size is correct for the selected fabric
 - press the garment at each stage – darts, seams etc. as this ensures a better finish
 - tidy off loose threads and press well before presenting
- In relation to the Design Folder, students should include *each* of the following
 - analysis and exploration of the theme of the assignment
 - description and sketches of proposed solution
 - plan of action to be followed
 - details of procedure followed when making the garment with specific reference to the mandatory processes
 - an evaluation of the garment made.

5. Ordinary Level – Written Examination

5.1 Introduction

The Ordinary Level written examination paper comprises three sections as follows:

Section A (60 marks)

This section contains 12 short-answer questions based on the Food Studies and the Resource Management and Consumer Studies areas of the syllabus core.

Candidates are required to answer 10 questions in the spaces provided on the examination paper. All questions in this section carry equal marks.

Section B (180 marks)

This section is comprised of five long-answer questions based on the three core areas of the syllabus. Candidates are required to answer Question 1 and any other two questions from this section. Question 1 is worth 80 marks, Question 2, 3, 4 and 5 are worth 50 marks each.

Section C (80 / 40 marks)

This section contains three questions reflective of the three elective areas of the syllabus. Each question has three parts. Candidates are required to answer part (a) and either part (b) or part (c) of the selected question. Questions 1 and 3 are worth 80 marks, while Question 2 (Textiles, Fashion and Design) is worth 40 marks. Candidates who submitted Textiles, Fashion and Design coursework are required to attempt Question 2 from this section.

Candidature

3913 candidates took the Leaving Certificate Home Economics, Ordinary Level written examination in 2007; this represents a decrease of 96 candidates when compared with 2006.

5.2 Performance of Candidates

Year	Total	A	B	C	ABC	D	E	F	NG	EFNG
2004	4974	2.7	23.1	38.1	63.9	26.5	7.4	1.9	0.4	9.7
2005	4776	4.8	27.7	33.9	66.4	24.0	7.2	2.1	0.3	9.6
2006	4109	2.9	23.1	36.6	62.6	28.6	6.5	1.9	0.4	8.8
2007	3913	3.3	25.1	37.4	65.7	26.0	6.9	1.2	0.2	8.3

Table 7: Percentage of candidates achieving each grade in the Ordinary Level written examination – 2004 - 2007

Note: The grades here are indicative only. The grades awarded to candidates in Home Economics - Scientific and Social are computed from the combined results of the relevant components completed by candidates.

5.3 Analysis of Candidate Performance

Table 8 shows the average mark and the frequency of attempts per question/Section A based on an analysis of the results of a Random Sample of 640 scripts.

Section /Question	Attempt Frequency %	Average Mark	Average Mark %
Section A	100	36	60
B1	99.4	42	53
B2	80.2	35	70
B3	11.2	22	40
B4	50.4	31	62
B5	51.2	34	68
C1	20.4	31	39
C2	1.9	8	20
C3	77.1	41	51

Table 8: Average mark and frequency of attempts per Question/Section A

- All candidates attempted the short answer questions in Section A; the standard of answering was good and elicited a mean mark of 60%

- A small number (0.6%) of candidates did not attempt the compulsory question (B1). The average mark attained was 42% which was indicative of the very varied standard encountered
- Question B2 was the most popular of the optional questions, it was selected by over 80% of candidates; its mean mark of 70%, the highest mean mark of the examination, indicated that candidates encountered little difficulty in answering this question
- Question C2 attained the lowest mean mark at 20%. Examiners commented that the evidence suggested that this may be partly attributable to a number of candidates who selected this elective question without having studied the course in sufficient detail
- Almost all candidates attempted the required number of questions in each section of the paper.

Section A – Short answer questions (60 marks)

Attempt Frequency: 100%

Average Mark for Section: 36

The majority of candidates attempted the mandatory ten questions with a significant number answering all or part of the twelve questions. The standard of answering varied from quite weak to very good. Few candidates attained full marks, as in some instances, parts of questions were omitted or answered incorrectly. The questions relating to nutrition and food topics generally presented the greatest challenge for candidates.

Question 1. The majority of candidates knew three sources of H.B.V. protein but many failed to list three sources of L.B.V. protein. Listing sources under the incorrect heading was a common mistake made by candidates.

Question 2. Most candidates were able to name the three elements in carbohydrates. However, few demonstrated any knowledge of the digestion of carbohydrates even when the information sought required a true/false answer.

Question 3. Few candidates knew the function of iron, while almost all could identify dietary sources.

Question 4. Candidates did not appear to know the term ‘lacto-vegetarian’ and those who attempted this question usually gave general rather than specific dietary requirements.

Question 5. Quite a number of candidates did not attempt this question and when attempted generally attained very low marks. ‘Endosperm’ was not known at all; the term ‘germ’ was occasionally correctly explained but more frequently described as bacteria. ‘Bran’ was linked with fibre, but explanations were often inaccurate.

Question 6. With a few exceptions the majority of candidates correctly identified a diet-related condition that affects elderly people. Diabetes, C.H.D. and Osteoporosis were the most popular answers. There was also reference to obesity and anaemia. Causes of the conditions were not always accurate.

Question 7. The standard of responses to this question was mixed. Some very accurate answers were given while others were obviously guessed. Many candidates misinterpreted the question and gave a method of storing/packaging/using the vegetables rather than different methods of preservation.

Question 8. This was a popular question with most candidates scoring full marks. Some candidates gave the same point of information for personal, food and kitchen hygiene.

Question 9. This question was generally not well answered as many candidates did not appear to be familiar with statutory and voluntary organisations that work to protect the consumer. The Ombudsman and the Consumer Association of Ireland were the usual correct answers. The majority of candidates stated, incorrectly, that a guarantee was a contract between the consumer and the retailer.

Question 10. This question was quite popular and generally well answered. Gross income was surprisingly better known than net income. Net income was frequently explained, in weaker answers, as 'after tax'.

Question 11. Most candidates were able to explain 'absorbent', few correctly explained 'colourfast' while 'flammable' was often described inaccurately.

Question 12. This was a popular question and generally elicited full marks. Many candidates linked essential to 'needs' and discretionary to 'wants' and gave correct examples.

Section B – (180 marks)

Candidates were required to answer Question 1 and any other two questions from this section.

Question 1 (80 marks)

Attempt Frequency: 99.4%

Average Mark: 42

- (a) The majority of candidates correctly identified the differences in eating habits using the information given in the chart. However, some candidates misinterpreted the question and stated the percentages of food eaten by males and females and this led to significant loss of marks. While candidates identified that females had the healthier diet, many were unable to give a valid reason.
- (b) Many candidates referred to the presence of calcium as the only reason for including foods from the milk, cheese, and yogurt group in the diet.
- (c) This section of the question on protein had a mark allocation of 26 marks with few candidates attaining more than 12. Only a minority of candidates were able to describe the composition of protein; some candidates drew a diagram of the amino acid and correctly labelled it, while it was omitted altogether by many. A number of candidates only named the elements present and not all included nitrogen. Almost all candidates knew two functions of protein, however, the properties of protein were only known by a few.
- (d) The majority of candidates scored well on this part of the question and, while some answers lacked precise detail, the majority demonstrated a knowledge of the role of the consumer in waste management. Many answers referred to food wastage/shelf life and purchasing food commodities. In some responses, single words, e.g. reduce/reuse/recycle, were given as answers without explaining the importance of each. Many candidates repeated points of information when answering this section of the question.

Question 2 (50 Marks)

Attempt Frequency 80.21%

Average Mark: 35

This was the most popular of the optional questions in this section. Candidates scored well here due, perhaps, to the topicality of the issue of obesity.

- (a) The comment on the statistics relating to obesity was frequently omitted or was just a restatement of the facts as stated. Most candidates were able to describe three causes of obesity.
- (b) Most candidates were able to name two health risks but some responses lacked detail. Diabetes, C.H.D., High Blood Pressure and High Cholesterol were the most frequent answers. A few candidates mentioned breathing problems due to weight gain, while others mentioned depression and low self esteem.
- (c) The majority of candidates presented menus which were well laid out, with at least two courses given for each meal. Marks were lost for incomplete courses or where only one course was given for lunch/dinner. Some candidates misread

the question and gave three courses for one meal instead of a day's menu, i.e. three meals, as required. A small number of candidates did not attempt this part of the question and consequently lost 18 marks.

- (d) Some very mixed quality answers were given here; a number of candidates misinterpreted the question and gave the reasons why we need energy foods in our diet rather than stating the factors that determine a person's energy requirements. Some candidates identified the factors, but failed to elaborate on them.

Question 3 (50 marks)

Attempt Frequency: 11.25%

Average Mark: 22

This was the least popular question in this section.

- (a) Many candidates did not refer to the different types of microwaves available and listed brand names only. The factors to be considered when selecting a microwave was well answered, and the majority of candidates attained full marks. Some candidates gave 'one word' answers, e.g. budget. 'Guidelines for use' was occasionally misinterpreted with some candidates giving general guidelines for care/cleaning instead. Modern features were not known by many candidates and many answers referred only to standard functional parts of a microwave e.g. controls, safety lock, etc.
- (b) The majority of candidates described the provisions of the Sale of Goods and Supply of Services Act (1980), but did not specify how the act protects the interests of the consumer and thus merited only half marks, at most. This part of the question was often omitted resulting in the loss of 12 marks for candidates.

Question 4 (50 marks)

Attempt Frequency: 50.42%

Average Mark: 31

This was not a very popular question and it proved challenging as candidates were required to apply their knowledge of issues to a stated situation.

- (a) **Advertising** – the majority of candidates gave only one point here and answers on how consumers' decision making is affected by advertising were frequently vague.

Household Income – This was the best answered section of the question with most candidates giving two good points.

Discount Offers – Answers varied here. Some candidates gave two well developed points, while others just explained 'discount offers'.

Shopper Loyalty Schemes – While some candidates were familiar with club cards, vouchers, etc., many omitted this part of the question or gave a vague answer, e.g. explaining how consumers become loyal to a shop or the importance of shopper loyalty for the retailer.

Easy Pay Schemes – This was the section of the question most frequently omitted. A number of candidates did not appear to understand the term and confused *easy pay* with the using a credit card.

- (b) Mail order shopping was a less popular option than internet shopping but both were well known and almost all candidates attained full marks here. Even candidates who attained low grades in the examination gave precise accurate answers.

Question 5 (50 marks)

Attempt Frequency: 51.25%

Average Mark: 34

- (a) This section of the question was well answered. The majority of candidates scored full marks by correctly identifying two factors that influence teenagers' behaviour. The influence of the peer group was the most frequent correct answer.
- (b) The majority of candidates were able to discuss three aspects of adolescent behaviour which may lead to conflict between parents/other adults and teenagers. Reference was made to the use of alcohol, staying out late, bullying etc. Some candidates related their answers to their own personal experiences and to school situations. Good communication was the most common means suggested for dealing with conflict. Counselling was also frequently mentioned as was the importance of keeping a 'cool head' on both sides. There was a lot of repetition within answers to this question.
- (c) While some answers to this part showed some evidence of guess work, the majority of candidates gave three well developed accurate points on the role and responsibilities of teenagers.

Section C (80 marks)

Candidates are required to answer one question from this section.

Elective 1 – Home Design and Management (80 marks)

Attempt Frequency: 20.42%

Average Mark: 31

Just one fifth of candidates selected this elective. Part (a) is compulsory. Of the optional areas, part (c) was more popular than part (b). A number of candidates attempted both parts (b) and (c).

1(a) (i) Central heating systems did not appear to be well known by many candidates. Few answers provided adequate descriptions and there was little use of diagrams. Many answers referred to fuels used for heating systems with some mention of pipes/boilers. Reasons for recommendations were given, but were not always sufficient for full marks.

(ii) The attic, windows and water cylinder were the areas of the house usually selected for insulation, while some candidates failed to identify any specific area. The majority of candidates named a suitable type of insulation but many were unable to provide any further details.

(iii) Most answers provided the required information on the factors to be considered when selecting furniture. However, a number of candidates incorrectly referred to types of furniture.

1(b) (i) Answers for this section of the question were frequently short on detail; many candidates failed to identify three factors while others listed factors and did not elaborate in any way.

(ii) This part of the question was often omitted. While candidates were able to name examples of smooth and rough textures, many did not gain full marks as they were unable to give specific uses of each.

1(c) (i) The importance of good ventilation was well known. The majority of candidates gave at least two good points but some candidates struggled to identify a third point.

(ii) Candidates had no problem naming a natural method of ventilation but some confused artificial ventilation with air conditioning. A number of candidates gave poor descriptive detail and were thus credited for one point only.

Elective 2 – Textiles, Fashion and Design (40 marks)

Comparatively, few candidates attempted this question. However, the number of candidates who did attempt it far exceeded the number who submitted Textile, Fashion and Design coursework. This disadvantaged candidates as the mark allocation for this elective question is 40, while the other elective questions are worth 80 marks each. Many candidates who attempted this question attempted two questions from Section C.

Attempt Frequency: 1.88%

Average Mark: 8

- 2(a)** (i) Sketches varied in quality; some were clear and well labelled while others were very basic and lacking in detail. Descriptions varied also, showing a lack of knowledge of the question topic and little reference was made to suitability for purpose.
- (ii) Candidates scored poorly here as they commented mainly on ‘comfort’ with little, if any, reference to current fashion trends. Examiners noted that responses suggested that candidates did not understand ‘aesthetic appeal’ although ‘appearance’ was given as an explanation in brackets on the question paper. Many candidates omitted this part of the question.
- (iii) All candidates identified a suitable fabric but many failed to give reasons for choice.
- 2 (b)** (i) Only a minority of candidates attempted this part of the question and, where attempted, answers showed a distinct lack of knowledge of the reasons fabric finishes are used. Answers were inadequately presented with most candidates attaining approximately one third of the available marks.
- (ii) Candidates usually correctly named one fabric finish (colourfast) but were unable to provide any further detail.
- 2(c)** (i) Candidates who attempted this question were not able to describe the role of small businesses adequately to gain any significant number of marks. This question was not a popular choice among candidates.
- (ii) Answers presented here were of varying quality. Some answers included reference to the influx of migrant workers, which was incorrect, while others correctly identified the cheaper production costs of clothing and textiles in Eastern Europe etc.

Elective 3 – Social Studies (80 marks)

Attempt Frequency: 77.1%

Average Mark: 41

The Social Studies elective question was selected by more than three quarters of candidates. In relation to the optional parts of this question, section (c) was significantly more popular than section (b). However, a number of candidates attempted all or parts of both (b) and (c).

- 3(a)** (i) A common error noted in the answering of this question was the failure by candidates to explain how each of the social / economic changes mentioned had affected family life. The majority of candidates were only able to identify and discuss one relevant point in relation to changing attitudes to marriage. However, most candidates were able to identify and discuss at least two different points relevant to traditional roles within the family.

Many candidates referred to the increased availability of work and equality in the workplace when responding to how employment opportunities have affected family life.

Answers detailing the effects on family life of improvements in the provision of education varied. Some better responses referred to free education, a wider range of school programmes, homework clubs etc.

(ii) Almost all candidates named three different types of payments paid by the Department of Social and Family Affairs. However, some candidates listed general social welfare payments rather than payments specifically for families with children, as was required. Lone Parent Allowance, Child Benefit and Back to School Allowance were the payments most often identified. A number of candidates just named the payments and provided no further detail.

3(b) (i) The unemployed, the homeless, and the elderly were the three groups most often identified as being at risk of poverty. Most candidates gave adequate explanations as to why these groups are at risk of poverty.

(ii) Many responses showed an inaccurate knowledge of the role of the Combat Poverty Agency and a number of candidates omitted this part of the question altogether.

3(c) (i) This was a very popular part of this elective question and most candidates gave good, clear, answers describing the benefits of voluntary work to the individual and the community.

(ii) Almost all candidates were able to distinguish between paid and unpaid work.

5.4 Conclusions

- The majority of candidates achieved well in the examination. The examination paper was considered to be candidate friendly, clearly laid out, with sections and parts of questions well spaced, key words highlighted and directions to candidates clearly stated
- Candidates responded particularly well to topical subject matter, such as, for example, obesity
- In Section A, almost all candidates attempted the required ten questions with a significant number attempting all, or parts, of the twelve questions. Most candidates gave short factual answers. The standard of answering varied from quite weak to very good. Questions relating to Food Studies tended to be the least well done
- In Section B, most candidates attempted the compulsory question and two other questions, as required. Question 2 was the most popular optional question and the question that attained the highest mean mark
- The part of Question 1, (Section B) which related to food nutrients was, generally, very poorly answered or was omitted altogether. This is a cause of concern since the food nutrients are a central aspect of the Food Studies section of the course
- A small number of candidates did not attempt any question from Section C of the paper, while others attempted questions or parts of questions from two elective areas
- Some candidates omitted parts of questions in each of the Sections A, B, and C. These were generally the more challenging parts, e.g. nutrition
- The terminology commonly used in questions posed difficulties for some candidates
- Some inaccurate answering would suggest that some candidates did not read the questions carefully
- The general layout of a number of candidates' scripts was poor and some writing was difficult to read.

5.5 Recommendations to Teachers and Students

- It is essential that the entire syllabus is studied in order that students can answer the required number of questions; this is of particular importance in relation to mandatory questions
- Emphasise to students the importance of being familiar with the format of the examination paper and the importance of reading the instructions at the beginning of each section and taking particular note of compulsory elements
- Ensure students are familiar with question cues, such as ‘list’, ‘outline’, ‘explain’, ‘discuss’, and that they appreciate the depth of answer required in response to each
- Time management is essential if the required number of questions is to be answered. It is useful to use past examination papers in classroom for revision work as this will enable students to become familiar with paper layout and gain practice in answering questions within a defined time frame
- The structuring of answers is important. Students should avoid lengthy descriptive paragraphs. They should structure their responses in point forms under headings. This is especially important for social studies questions and should assist in preventing candidates from repeating points and giving irrelevant information
- Encourage students to attempt the required number of questions and all parts of questions
- Students should be fully familiar with the title of the elective they have studied and attempt the question for this elective only
- When taking the examination students should:
 - read through the examination paper in full before attempting any question and draw a line through the two electives not studied
 - give Section A due consideration – these questions require thought and details for full marks. Re-read answers before moving on to section B
 - answer compulsory questions first, followed by the optional questions
 - present answers in point form, under headings
 - record the examination number on the Section A answer book, as well as the main answer book, and secure with tag
 - complete as fully as possible the required number of questions from each section and attempt each part of the questions - as candidates can only be credited with the required number of questions.

6. Higher Level – Written Examination

6.1 Introduction

The Higher Level written examination paper comprises three sections as follows:

Section A (60 marks)

This section contains 12 short-answer questions based on the Food Studies and the Resource Management and Consumer Studies areas of the syllabus core.

Candidates are required to answer 10 questions in the spaces provided on the examination paper. All questions in this section carry equal marks.

Section B (180 marks)

This section is comprised of five long-answer questions based on the three core areas of the syllabus. Candidates are required to answer Question 1 and any other two questions from this section. Question 1 is worth 80 marks. Questions 2, 3, 4 and 5 are worth 50 marks each.

Section C (80 / 40 marks)

This section contains three questions reflective of the three elective areas of the syllabus. Each question has three parts. Candidates are required to answer part (a) and either part (b) or part (c) of the selected question. Questions 1 and 3 are worth 80 marks, while Question 2 (Textiles, Fashion and Design) is worth 40 marks. Candidates who submitted Textiles, Fashion and Design coursework are required to attempt Question 2 from this section.

Candidature

8,349 candidates took the Leaving Certificate Home Economics, Higher Level written examination; this represents an increase in candidature of 146 candidates when compared with 2006.

6.2 Performance of Candidates

Year	Total	A	B	C	ABC	D	E	F	NG	EFNG
2002	13188	6.4	25.1	34.7	66.2	25.9	6.5	1.2	0.2	7.9
2003	12733	6.2	26.9	37.0	70.1	23.8	5.3	0.7	0.1	6.1
2004	10538	5.9	25.3	36.8	68.0	25.2	6.0	0.7	0.1	6.8
2005	9724	8.5	25.6	36.1	70.1	24.2	5.1	0.5	0.1	5.7
2006	8203	8.2	25.1	34.3	67.6	24.9	6.3	1.2	0.0	7.5
2007	8349	8.9	27.0	34.0	69.9	23.6	5.5	1.0	0.0	6.5

Table 9: Percentage of candidates achieving each grade in the Higher Level written examination – 2004 - 2007

Note: The grades here are indicative only. The grades awarded to candidates in Home Economics - Scientific and Social are computed from the combined results of the relevant components completed by candidates

6.3 Analysis of Candidate Performance

Table 10 shows the average mark and the frequency of attempts per question/Section A, based on an analysis of the results of a Random Sample of 800 scripts.

Section / Question	Attempt Frequency %	Average Mark	Average mark %
A	100	37	61.8
B1	99.7	47	58.6
B2	47.7	36	72.4
B3	39.8	30	60.9
B4	55.6	33	64.8
B5	56.8	31	61.8
C1	36.0	50	62.2
C2	0.8	25	63.5
C3	63.2	51	63.5

Table 10: Average Mark and Frequency of Attempts per Question/Section A

- All candidates attempted the short answer questions in Section A
- One candidate did not attempt the compulsory Question B1
- All candidates attempted a compulsory question from Section C
- Question B5 was the most popular of the optional questions in Section B, followed by B4, while B3 was the least popular. Question B2 had the highest average mark 72% in Section B
- Question C3 (*Elective 3- Social Studies*) was significantly the most popular question in Section C, and was attempted by more than 60% of candidates. 36% of candidates opted for C1 (*Elective 1 - Home Design and Management*) while less than 1% of candidates took C2 (*Elective 2- Textiles, Fashion and Design*).
- The average % mark for each of the three questions in Section C was remarkable similar, varying by just over 1%.

Section A – Short answer questions (60 marks)

Attempt Frequency: 100%

Average Mark for Section: 37

Question 1. This question was poorly answered with few candidates achieving full marks. Many candidates did not appear to understand the term ‘denatured’.

Question 2. This was not a popular question and was most often omitted by candidates who attempted the other eleven questions in the section. When attempted, it was poorly answered with many candidates not appearing to recognise the terms ‘substrate’ and ‘product’ in relation to digestion. Some candidates misread the question and referred to the digestion of protein or lipids in their answers.

Question 3. This question was well answered and almost all candidates correctly identified four sources of calcium. However, some candidates listed all dairy sources. In relation to the factors that inhibit the absorption of calcium, many candidates failed to identify the specific factor e.g. ‘protein’ was given instead of ‘excess protein’.

Question 4. Most candidates identified albumen as a protein, but some incorrectly named the egg yolk as its source. While many candidates recognised lecithin as an emulsifying agent, many did not elaborate on the part of the egg where it is found or its use.

Question 5. This was a well answered question with ‘ribosome’ / ‘food vacuoles’ usually correctly identified. ‘Flagella’ was frequently referred to as hairs and ‘cytoplasm’ was sometimes confused with chlorophyll.

Question 6. Methods of cooking were not well known. Poaching was confused with boiling while pot roasting was frequently described as roasting in a pot. Many candidates gave examples of foods that could be cooked using the different methods but were unable to explain the cooking method.

Question 7. This was not a very popular question. Responses frequently did not relate to An Bord Bia. Many candidates incorrectly gave the functions of the Food Safety Authority or made reference to HACCP, farm inspections etc.

Question 8. The majority of candidates knew the function of Omega 3 fatty acids. However, a number of responses referred to structure rather than function and some of the sources listed were not fully accurate e.g. fish was named when ‘oily fish’ was required.

Question 9. This question was answered by the majority of candidates and almost all candidates were awarded at least four of the six available marks. A number of candidates incorrectly stated recyclable as an advantage of flexible films. The ‘plastic bag levy’ was the initiative most frequently identified.

Question 10. This was generally a poorly answered question with only a minority of candidates correctly identifying the specific information included on the Fire Safety (Domestic Furniture) Order. A number of candidates misread the question and referred to fire safety in the home and public places.

Question 11. This question was attempted by most candidates. The most common error was defining fixed rate and variable rate interest rates without stating the advantage of

each as required. This suggested that candidates may not have read the question carefully.

Question 12. The more successful candidates gave well developed answers on the benefits of the Small Claims Court and referred to fees payable, value limits, no solicitor required etc. However, some candidates gave very brief answers, such as ‘quick’ or ‘cheap’, when more detail was required for full marks.

SECTION B (180 marks)

Question 1 (80 marks)

Attempt frequency: 99.7%

Average mark: 47

- (a) A significant number of candidates got full marks for this part of the question. However, many candidates who gave lengthy answers and transcribed a lot of information from the chart did not gain full marks as the answers lacked coherence and accuracy.

Candidates who only stated the quantity of two nutrients found in each bread, which was given on the table of information in the question, got one third of the available marks. Answers that included two points of comparison in relation to each bread were awarded two thirds of the available marks, while candidates who extended their answers and referred to the contribution that each of two nutrients in each bread makes to the diet, got full marks. The most frequent error noted was where candidates did not appear to read the question carefully and made no reference to the contribution of bread to the diet and thus lost 8 marks. Many candidates dealt well with the first three breads listed on the table, but failed to identify the key differences for ‘flour tortillas’.

- (b) ‘Gelatinisation’ and ‘dextrinisation’ were known by most candidates. Good explanations were, almost always, accompanied by examples. A number of candidates did, however, confuse the property gelatinisation with the use of gelatine and, therefore, lost marks.
- (c) In general answers on ‘Folic Acid’ were of a good to excellent standard. Many excellent answers were presented in a tabular format. Candidates generally gave at least one source, with ‘dietary supplements’ frequently mentioned. The ‘properties of folic acid’ presented most difficulties and a number of candidates did not attempt this part at all. However, most candidates correctly identified ‘water soluble’ as a property. In relation to biological functions almost all candidates correctly mentioned the prevention of spina bifida with better quality answers also referring to formation of red blood cells, protein metabolism etc. The ‘RDA’ proved difficult with many candidates gaining just half marks for stating either the correct quantity or the unit of measurement.
- (d) This was very well answered with candidates demonstrating a good understanding of ‘food fortification’. Many candidates correctly related specific benefits to each of the two headings specified and the majority achieved full marks. A minority of candidates confused fortification with the general use of additives such as colourings / preservatives.

Question 2 (50 marks)

Attempt frequency: 47.7%

Average mark: 36

This was the most popular of the optional questions in Section B and was generally well answered with a number of candidates gaining full marks.

- (a) Candidates had no difficulty in identifying dietary changes and setting out guidelines to help reduce the incidence of CHD. However, some did not elaborate on their points, as was required, and consequently some lost up to half marks in this section.
- (b) The standard of menus given by candidates varied. However, many gave clear, well laid out menus using the traditional menu format. A large number of candidates gave extra information/reasons for their selection of foods for each meal. Marks were lost by some candidates as they gave only one or two meals for the day, or they gave all one-course meals. Marks were also lost by candidates who gave meals which were not balanced. The majority of candidates correctly explained 'functional food' and popular examples given included 'Flora pro active' and oily fish.
- (c) Most candidates gave detailed answers explaining what cholesterol is and its role in the body. Candidates, who did not get full marks here, did not give adequate explanatory points of information or confused their explanations of HDL and LDL cholesterol.

Question 3 (50 marks)

Attempt frequency: 39.8 %

Average mark: 30

This question, which was attempted by less than one fifth of candidates, was the least popular optional question in this section. A significant number of candidates who attempted this question had little detailed knowledge of sensory analysis.

- (a) Almost all candidates who attempted this question used the names of the senses as mentioned in the question – *sight, smell, taste, touch and hearing* - in their answers. Some answers provided a very brief explanation of how the senses can affect persons when choosing, buying or eating food. *Sight, smell* and *taste* were the three most popular senses referred to.
- (b) This part of the question was very poorly attempted by the majority of candidates with very few getting full marks. A minority of candidates identified only one correct category of test, while the majority identified two categories of tests. Only a few candidates correctly named three sensory analysis test categories with corresponding test examples. A small number of candidates gave completely incorrect answers with no reference to any of the recognised sensory analysis tests.
- (c) Most candidates who attempted this part of the question gained some marks for correctly identifying the conditions necessary for conducting sensory analysis testing. However, marks were lost where the conditions were identified but not elaborated on, or because an insufficient number of conditions were identified.

Question 4 (50 marks)

Attempt frequency: 55.6%

Average mark 33

- (a) (i) Most candidates got full marks for correctly identifying a type of refrigeration appliance.
- (ii) In general, most candidates were familiar with the working principle and gave the required information in their answers. A number of candidates confused the component parts of the refrigerator with the respective function.
- (iii) Most candidates were awarded full marks for the guidelines for use of the refrigeration appliance. Marks were lost where an inadequate range of points were identified or where points were repeated, particularly in relation to care and cleaning.
- (iv) Modern features were correctly given by most candidates. The most popular features mentioned included ice machines and drink dispensers.
- (v) Most candidates knew that 'A' was the most efficient energy rating, but did not refer to 'G' rating, or if they did, did not explain its significance. A number of candidates incorrectly referred to 'star rating'.
- (b) This part of the question proved difficult for most candidates with few gaining full marks. 'Star rating' was often misinterpreted as energy efficiency and/or the quality of the appliance. Some candidates had a precise knowledge of the star rating system and identified the different star ratings with the corresponding recommended storage times.

Question 5 (50 marks)

Attempt frequency: 56.8%

Average mark: 31

- (a) Most candidates answered this section of the question well and correctly identified and described a range of difficulties that may be experienced when a family member has special needs. Some candidates did not appear to read the question carefully and confused it with part (b) on how the family might respond to such needs.
- (b) In general, answers on this section of the question were of a good standard. However, some candidates listed one or more points but did not discuss or elaborate on how a family might respond to the needs of a member with a disability.
- (c) Very few correct answers were given relating to the role of the 'Rehab Group'. A number of candidates referred to drug / alcohol treatment centres while others referred to rehabilitation for an individual following an accident.

Section C - (80/40 marks)

Elective 1 – Home, Design and Management (80 marks)

Attempt frequency: 36%

Average mark: 50

This was the second most popular elective option in Section C and was attempted by more than one third of candidates. In relation to the choice between 1(b) and 1(c), the majority favoured 1(c).

1(a) (i) This question required candidates to discuss and comment on the provision of housing in Ireland having regard to the information provided in a bar chart on the examination paper. Few candidates got full marks for this part of the question, as many referred to the statistics given in the table but did not discuss or comment on the adequacy of provision. Many answers were poorly laid out and lacked coherence.

(ii) The standard of answers given here was quite varied; generally *Local Authority Housing* was well explained but few could adequately explain *Co-operative Housing*.

(iii) Candidates who understood *amenities and services* generally presented good quality answers, while those who did not gained few marks. A number of answers were vague discussions on the desirability of having adequate services with little reference to the value of specific amenities or services. Other answers were merely lists of *amenities / services* with no reference made to their importance.

1(b) (i) Most candidates gave a comprehensive list of the factors to be considered when choosing a floor covering. However, some failed to elaborate on the factors identified.

(ii) Generally, candidates gained high marks in this part of the question and most identified a suitable type of flooring and listed appropriate properties. In some cases, marks were lost for stating ‘tiles’ or ‘wood’ without being more specific in relation to the particular type.

1(c) (i) Most candidates correctly identified a source of renewable energy. Solar energy was the most common correct answer. Many candidates did not appear to understand the term ‘sustainability’ and omitted this part of the question. Most candidates gave at least one correct point on the efficiency / effectiveness of renewable energy. Candidates were required to present answers on renewable energy under three defined headings. Those who presented their answers in a paragraph format tended to lose marks as one or more of the required question headings were frequently omitted.

(ii) It seemed that many candidates did not read this question carefully as they named, rather than described, different methods of reducing harmful emissions and thus lost up to half the available marks.

Elective 2 – Textiles, Fashion and Design (40 marks)

Attempt frequency: 0.8 %

Average mark: 25

This question was attempted less than 1% of candidates making it the least popular elective question in this section. A small number of candidates who attempted this question did not present Textiles, Fashion and Design coursework.

2(a) (i) The standard of answers varied here. Candidates were generally able to evaluate the tracksuit with regard to functional use and comfort. However, many candidates displayed a limited knowledge of the principles of design.

(ii) This part was usually omitted or poorly attempted. Most candidates appeared to have limited knowledge of fabric construction techniques.

2(b) This was the least popular option and where attempted was generally poorly answered. Some candidates confused natural and manmade fabrics, indicating a poor knowledge of textile science.

2(c) The candidates who attempted this part of the question generally displayed a good knowledge of Irish fashion designers. The difficulties affecting the Irish textile industry were well described, with most candidates giving at least two well developed points.

Elective 3 – Social Studies (80 marks)

Attempt frequency: 63.2%

Average mark: 51

3(a) (i) This part of the question was well answered. The majority of candidates used the headings specified and discussed, in the required detail, how patterns of work and work availability have been affected by technology, changes in the types of industries and increased educational requirements. Marks were lost by some candidates who focused their answers primarily on patterns of work and only vaguely addressed work availability. A minority of candidates did not appear to be familiar with the term ‘service industry’. In a small number of instances, candidates misinterpreted the question and failed to link the headings specified to the actual question being asked.

(ii) The standard of answering for this part of the question varied from excellent to very poor. Many candidates referred to equality but gave little other information relating to improved working conditions. Health and safety in the work place was the main focus of some answers.

(iii) This part of the question on the Protection of Young Person Employment Act was very well answered, with most candidates identifying at least three requirements of the Act.

3(b) (i) Most candidates successfully identified two groups of people who have difficulty in securing employment; however, marks were lost by some candidates who could only cite one reason for these difficulties. A number of

candidates made reference to the elderly but in most cases the reasons cited related to older people.

(ii) This part was generally well answered with candidates identifying and explaining the effects of unemployment on society. However, it appeared that many candidates did not read the question carefully and outlined the effects of unemployment on the individual/ family, rather than on society, as was required. In a number of instances, marks were lost due to repetition of points or lack of sufficient detail.

3(c) (i) Most candidates identified an adequate range of points relating to the functions and value of leisure but some candidates did not elaborate sufficiently on the points identified, to gain full marks.

(ii) Most candidates did quite well on this part of the question and gave well developed points on the social and cultural influences that impact on our choice of leisure activities. A number of candidates seemed unsure of what was meant by social and cultural influences and consequently did not give the required information.

6.4 Conclusions

- In general, the majority of candidates achieved well in the written examination and answered the required number of questions in each section. The paper contained a wide range of topics and Examiners considered that there was a good choice available to candidates
- In Section A, most candidates attempted all twelve questions. The standard of answering was, however, varied and few candidates attained full marks for the section. Particular difficulty was noted in relation to Questions 1, 2, 4, 6 and 10
- While the general standard of answering in Section B was satisfactory there were aspects of questions which were not well answered by many candidates. These included 1(c), 2(b), 3(a), (b) and (c) and 4(b). Questions in which factual or technical information was required caused the greatest difficulty
- In Section C, Examiners noted that an increasing proportion of candidates, (approximately 63%) are opting for *Elective 3 – Social Studies* while the number selecting *Elective 2 – Textiles, Fashion and Design* remains disappointingly small, at less than 1% of candidates. The standard of answering across the three electives is remarkably consistent and varies by just 1.3%
- Examiners noted that it appeared that some candidates had not read some questions carefully or did not appear to be familiar with the technical terms and language of the subject
- Time management appeared to be an issue for some candidates; comments from examiners suggest that some candidates spent too much time on Question B1 (a)
- Some 6.5% of candidates did not attain a Grade D or higher. Examiners suggested that many of these candidates would have been more suited to the Ordinary Level examination.

6.5 Recommendations to Teachers and Students

- Students should have a detailed knowledge of all the syllabus topics relating to Food Studies in order to attain good marks in Section A and in the compulsory question in Section B
- Current trends and developments should be taken into account when teaching / studying subject matter that is topical
- The ability to analyse and interpret information given in questions is essential. Case-studies, introductory statements and tables of information must be read and analysed carefully and the information then used as appropriate when answering questions
- Students need to be able to apply the knowledge that they have learned during their course of study. Students should practise answering examination questions in order to learn how to apply what they have learned to a given situation
- In relation to examination technique, the following is suggested for students:
 - make and follow a time plan for the examination, allocate time to questions appropriately having regard to the weighting of marks for the question.
 - be familiar with the common question cues such as ‘identify’ ‘analyse’ ‘discuss’ ‘outline’ ‘give an account’ and know the significance of each
 - give the specific number of points asked for in a question and ensure that points do not overlap
 - read questions carefully, highlight key words and ensure that answers relate directly to the question asked
 - know which elective question you intend to answer and ignore the other two questions; it is not recommended that you attempt a second elective question
 - check that you have answered all parts of each question
 - present answers in point form using clear sub-headings; it is easier to check answers at the end of the examination if you use this format
 - the following order of answering questions is offered as a suggestion:
Section A – answer all 12 if possible (60 marks)
Section B – question 1 (80 marks)
Section C – one question (80 marks)
Section B – two optional questions. (50 marks each).