



**Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit  
State Examinations Commission**

**LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION 2011**

**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 in 2004. 2011 is the seventh year of examination of the revised syllabus. The syllabus is offered at two levels, Higher Level and Ordinary Level. The revised syllabus replaced the existing courses in Home Economics (Scientific and Social) and Home Economics (General).

The syllabus structure comprises:

- 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 Level and Ordinary Level is comprised of the following components:

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

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

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

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

The written examinations for Higher Level and Ordinary Levels are of 2 hours and 30 minutes duration and take place in June.

Food Studies and Textile, Fashion and Design coursework are both Common Level examinations.

**Food Studies Coursework** – this comprises an account of five practical assignments recorded in a pro-forma journal. This is required to be completed by early November of the year preceding the written examination and is submitted to the State Examinations Commission for examination.

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.

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

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

### 1.3 Candidature

**Table 2: Number and Percentage of Candidates taking Leaving Certificate Home Economics – Scientific and Social 2008 – 2011.**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Leaving Certificate Candidates</b>	<b>Home Economics Candidates</b>	<b>% taking Home Economics</b>	<b>Higher Level</b>	<b>Ordinary Level</b>
				<b>Candidates</b>	<b>Candidates</b>
<b>2008</b>	52,139	12,499	24.0	8754	3745
<b>2009</b>	54,196	12,951	23.9	9016	3935
<b>2010</b>	54,479	12,518	23.0	8962	3556
<b>2011</b>	54,341	12,400	22.8	8724	3676

Leaving Certificate Home Economics candidature as a percentage of Leaving Certificate candidature shown in Table 2 shows the number of candidates opting for Home Economics between 2008 and 2011 has declined by approximately 1%.

## 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 2008 to 2011.

**Table 3: Percentage breakdown of candidates by grade awarded in Ordinary Level Home Economics – Scientific and Social 2008 – 2011.**

Year	Total	A1	A2	B1	B2	B3	C1	C2	C3	D1	D2	D3	E	F	N.G.
2008	3,745	0.2	1.4	4.2	8.1	11.3	13.1	13.9	12.3	10.9	8.9	5.2	3.0	0.4	0.0
2009	3,935	0.6	1.9	5.3	8.1	11.4	11.8	12.8	11.9	9.2	8.9	7.6	7.6	2.6	0.4
2010	3,556	0.1	1.2	4.0	8.2	13.5	13.6	14.6	12.9	9.5	7.4	6.5	5.7	2.4	0.2
2011	3,676	0.2	2.0	5.0	8.9	11.6	13.4	13.4	11.2	9.9	8.4	7.0	6.9	1.8	0.2

- Approximately two thirds of candidates obtained a Grade C or higher in 2011 which is broadly similar to the mean A+B+C grades obtained in 2008-2010.
- The % of A grades obtained in 2011, while relatively low at 2.2%, represents a slight increase when compared with the mean A grade obtained in 2008-2010.

**Table 4: Percentage breakdown of candidates by grade awarded in Higher Level Home Economics – Scientific and Social 2008 – 2011.**

Year	Total	A1	A2	B1	B2	B3	C1	C2	C3	D1	D2	D3	E	F	N.G.
2008	8,754	3.1	5.6	8.7	11.0	11.6	12.5	12.3	10.1	9.4	7.2	5.2	3.0	0.4	0.0
2009	9,016	1.8	5.6	7.3	11.0	12.6	14.0	13.7	11.5	8.8	6.5	4.7	2.3	0.3	0.0
2010	8,982	3.2	6.0	8.1	10.8	12.0	12.5	12.0	10.7	9.2	7.8	4.7	2.6	0.3	0.0
2011	8,724	3.4	6.2	9.7	11.0	12.3	12.5	12.6	10.8	8.7	6.4	3.9	2.4	0.2	0.0

- 78.7% of candidates obtained a grade C or higher in 2011 which represents an increase of approximately 2% when compared with the mean A+B+C grades obtained in 2008-2010.
- The combined E/F/N.G. in 2011 was 2.6% which is broadly similar to the combined mean E/F/N.G grades obtained in 2008-2010.

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](http://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 Level and Ordinary Level as is the assessment criteria and the 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 proforma journal issued annually by the State Examinations Commission to schools.

Completed coursework is submitted to the State Examinations Commission for examination.

### 3.2 Performance of Candidates

12,646 candidates presented Food Studies Coursework in 2011. Table 5 provides details of the grades achieved by candidates for the years 2008 – 2011. 246 candidates presented coursework and did not take the written examination.

**Table 5: Food Studies Practical Coursework Grades 2008 – 2011**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>ABC</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>NG</b>	<b>E/F/NG</b>
<b>2008</b>	12,687	27.3	40.3	20.3	87.9	7.9	2.5	1.3	0.4	4.2
<b>2009</b>	13,114	27.4	39.3	21.2	87.9	7.7	2.7	1.3	0.4	4.4
<b>2010</b>	12,729	26.7	39.8	22.2	88.8	6.9	2.6	1.3	0.4	4.3
<b>2011</b>	12,646	27.4	39.7	22.2	89.3	6.5	2.5	1.2	0.5	4.2

- Results for 2011 are broadly comparable to previous years. In excess of 27% of candidates attained an A grade while the number attaining less than D remains less than 5%.
- More than two thirds (67.1%) of the candidature attained a Grade A or B while almost 90% attained a grade C or higher.

### 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 consisting of 1,160 (9.2%) candidates' coursework. The available mark for each assignment was 80 marks.

**Table 6: Frequency of Attempts per Assignment and Average Mark**

Assignment	Frequency of Attempts %	Popularity Rank Order	Average Mark (%)
1	98.4	4	61 (76%)
2	93.1	5	58 (72%)
3	99.2	1	60 (75%)
4	98.9	2	58 (72%)
5	98.8	3	61 (76%)
6	8.5	6	57 (71%)

As Assignments 3, 4 and 5 were compulsory, it was no surprise that these were the three most popular assignments. Of the optional assignments, assignment 1 was the most popular being attempted by 98.4% of candidates while assignment 6 was the least popular with just 8.5% of candidates attempting it. It is disappointing to note that Assignment 6, which is based in the area of practice - *Comparative Analysis including Sensory Analysis*, was attempted by so few candidates.

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

In analysing candidates' responses it was noted that most comments are common to all assignments. These are set out under the headings used to record each assignment as follows:

- 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.

Good quality investigations

- identified the key aspects of the topic relevant to the assignment
- followed the recording criteria as set out on the inside cover of the coursework journal
- 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 (usually from candidates who achieved lower grades) investigations were direct transcriptions from textbooks. This was particularly evident in the case of Assignments 3 and 6 where candidates made little or no attempt to analyse the information. These candidates were deducted marks and, at most, attained a maximum of half marks.

In a small number of centres it was noted that the work presented was remarkably similar, suggesting that the research may not have been conducted by the individual candidate, as required by the coursework regulations.

Candidates who attained lower grades presented work that

- made little or no attempt to analyse the relevant issues and factors
- comprised generally accurate information but was clearly not derived from a range of sources. Some candidates showed an over reliance on one single source of information – usually their textbook. This was particularly evident in Assignment 5 where some candidates made no attempt to interpret or analyse their research information
- did not follow the recording criteria as set out on the inside cover of the journal. Such investigations lacked the required key requirements and tended to be vague or incomplete
- identified nutritional and meal planning guidelines for Assignments 1 and 2 that were sometimes very general and not specific to the diet being investigated. Meal planning guidelines were often omitted. In some instances the guidelines were just listed or lacked analysis
- included detailed information on minor aspects of the assignment and gave insufficient attention to analysing the main topic being investigated.

Most candidates correctly identified at least two menus/dishes/products relevant to each assignment. Menus were generally nutritionally balanced and fulfilled the requirements of the assignment. Menu format was not used in some answers making it difficult for examiners to decipher the dishes being served together. The order of dishes in some menus was often incorrect.

In Assignments 1 and 2, some of the dishes chosen were not balanced i.e. they did not contain 3 of the 4 food groups, as required. However, dishes generally met the requirements of the assignment. For example in Assignment 2, dishes were generally suitable for an adult who wished to maintain a healthy weight. In some centres the dishes selected demonstrated advanced culinary skills and challenged candidates. The selection of more advanced dishes afforded candidates the opportunity to present and analyse some excellent key factors and evaluative points.

The selection of some very simple dishes demonstrating few basic skills in the use of ingredients and cooking processes was also noted, most notably in Assignment 3. This does not concur with the requirements regarding the selection of dishes as set out in the Food Studies Coursework guidelines, and limits candidates' opportunity to develop their culinary skills.

In a small number of centres the same dishes were chosen, partially modified, and implemented for more than one assignment. Candidates lost significant marks as a result.

Dishes selected for making were not always named in the investigation, resulting in candidates losing marks on reasons for choice. It was noted that in Assignments 4, 5 and 6 more candidates omitted to name dishes and to specify reasons for choice. This error was often centre specific.

Reasons attributed to choice of dishes were clearly explained by candidates who attained high marks. Weaker examples of journal work often omitted to give reasons for choice of dishes. Where reasons were cited, points given were not always developed, phrases were used rather than explanations of points, or answers were generic. In these instances candidates were awarded half the marks allocated. In some answers the reasons referred to the menu and not to the chosen dish.

Most candidates identified two sources of information and provided details of the name and author of the books, websites and leaflets used. A number of candidates mentioned only one source of information, while other candidates mentioned the class teacher/notes/home economics book as their source of information. A second source of information was sometimes credited from the planning and preparation page. The Internet was a popular source used by many candidates, but a number of candidates failed to identify a website and instead named the search engine used.

### **Planning and Preparation**

Dishes selected for making must be identified in the assignment investigation. However, in a number of journals this was not done and while the dishes selected were appropriate for the assignment, marks were lost in the investigation. Other unsuitable dishes which resulted in loss of marks included dishes that were not balanced; dishes that were not a main course where the assignment required this; dishes that included few skills; and those that comprised too many convenience ingredients.

**Ingredients** – The correct ingredients were correctly listed for the majority of dishes. A number of candidates omitted unit cost, total cost and/or amounts. Some candidates also gave inaccurate amounts and imprecise costs. For example in some instances the costing given was for 1 kg and not for the quantity used. In a number of instances candidates omitted a key ingredient. Another error noted was the omission of an item of essential equipment. In Assignment 4 a significant number of candidates omitted to include appropriate packaging.

**Work Sequence** – The vast majority of candidates set out the tasks in the correct sequence to include preparation and evaluation, and thus gained full marks. In some journals the work sequence was incomplete with candidates omitting preparatory work such as the preparation/sourcing of ingredients and the setting up of equipment. Some candidates did not refer to conducting an evaluation of the prepared dish. With others the sequence was incorrect e.g. the stir-fry being cooked before the rice. Some work sequences were far too detailed while others were limited to extracts from the recipe for the dish.

Fewer candidates than in previous years commenced ‘implementation’ under the ‘work sequence’ heading (which is part of planning and preparation) but those who did, lost marks for not having the implementation process under the correct heading.

Candidates should be encouraged to use bullet points in the work sequence and give an outline only of key stages.

**Implementation** – Work that attained high marks was presented as an account in the candidate’s own words. Such accounts described all of the essential stages relevant to making the dish in a logical sequence. These accounts included preparatory work e.g. food preparation processes, cooking time and temperature, the key tasks associated with making the dish, and also included reference to both serving the dish and conducting the evaluation.

Candidates achieving low marks for implementations 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 or not giving sufficient detail regarding the making, where appropriate, of items such as sauces.

The incorrect sequence of preparing the dish was sometimes evident e.g. the cooking of different vegetables in a stir-fry. The absence of an accurate cooking time and temperature was a common error. In a number of journals candidates did not remove the dish from the oven, serve the dish or conduct the evaluation. A minority of candidates, having worked in pairs, described only the tasks completed by the individual candidate and lost marks. The preparation/cooking of the accompaniment e.g. rice, pasta, noodles, potatoes, salads, 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. There was evidence of similarity between implementations in centres where all candidates made the same dish.

Examiners noted that the dish chosen could have an impact on marks lost or gained. For example in Assignment 3 – use of the microwave – simple dishes with few preparation stages gained high marks whereas more complicated dishes that required a larger number of preparation and assembly stages presented more opportunity for error and, consequently, for loss of marks.

Implementations that were awarded less than eight marks generally omitted many of the essential stages.

**Key Factors** – Most candidates identified and explained at least two relevant key factors using the heading ‘Key Factors’, while other candidates presented key factors as part of implementation. Many candidates did not explain the relevance of the key factor identified and thus lost marks. Some key factors identified were not critical to the success of the dish cooked, while other key factors identified were too general or were linked to the research and analysis aspect of the assignment rather than to the making of the dish. For example in Assignments 1 and 2 some key factors given by candidates related to nutritional points. Key factors must relate directly to the making of the dish and be critical to its success. Some points specified as key factors related to general procedures and suggest that there is a lack of understanding by some candidates as to what constitutes a key factor. Generic key factors, repeated across a number of assignments, were noted on some journals. Such points generally do not attain full marks. Key factors presented under a separate heading were, generally, better analysed and explained.

**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 the majority of candidates. In some instances a standard list of generic hygiene and safety points were listed and not explained or points given were not relevant to the dish being made.

Candidates struggled to find a relevant hygiene point for Assignment 4. Safety points were more likely to be explained correctly, whereas hygiene points were very often too general. 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 on hygiene and safety under a separate heading.

### **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 on the sensory aspects of the dish made, and included reference to colour/taste/texture – thus achieving full marks.

Modifications, where suggested, were generally justified but in some cases the modifications suggested contradicted a previous point on dish description and gained no marks. In some, only a 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 or were a repetition of key factors and hygiene and safety points. However, many were not explained or justified.

Modifications should arise from the candidate's descriptive point on the dish made and should not be a contradiction of this point. Neither should it be related to enhancing the nutritional value of the dish or refer to adaptations made to the recipe prior to the dish being made.

When evaluating the specific requirements of the assignment, the majority of candidates presented extensive evaluations relating back to the specific investigation conducted. For example in Assignments 1 and 2 many candidates identified two correct nutrients, named the food source for each and explained its function in the context of the diet/age group identified in the assignment. However, a significant number of candidates did not relate their evaluations to their research/analysis findings. Some candidates did not develop points or form a definite conclusion, while others omitted this part altogether.

Where evaluation headings were specified in assignments e.g. Assignments 3, 4, 5 and 6, and noted by candidates, some more-focused evaluations were completed. In a number of cases, candidates ignored the specific headings given in the assignments and conducted a general evaluation which was not required and marks were lost accordingly. Examiners noted that a number of evaluation points given by candidates that scored lower marks were only vaguely relevant and/or incomplete. This part of some candidates assignment work was frequently the weakest. In some instances evaluations were omitted altogether or candidates failed to give the required two points when evaluating the specific requirements of assignments. This was particularly evident on Assignment 5. A small number of candidates lost marks as they completed evaluations on the implementation pages.

### 3.4 Conclusions

- The general standard of work presented compared well with the standard for 2010, with 27.4% of candidates achieving an A grade while approximately two thirds of candidates attained an A or B grade
- All candidates completed the required number of assignments (5). A number of centres (less than 10%) attempted all six assignments. There was no evidence to suggest that this was advantageous to candidates, as there was no significant mark variation between the assignments presented
- Candidates who scored high marks followed the prescribed recording criteria and presented assignments that were well researched and based on a range of resource materials. They also ensured that the key aspects of the assignment were identified and that points were analysed in depth
- Almost all candidates preformed to an above average standard in relation to the planning, preparation and implementation aspects of assignments. There were, however, significant variations in candidate performance on the investigation and evaluation sections
- The standard of answers varied between centres and errors were often centre-specific. Examples of this were the selection of incorrect dishes, the omission of reasons for choice, generic hygiene and safety points and incomplete evaluations
- The depth of information required in investigations is at the discretion of the candidate and open to individual interpretation. Consequently there was a significant variation between centres in relation to the level of detail given. In a number of centres research was inadequate and lacked analysis
- The most significant errors that resulted in mark loss included the following
  - (i) information was presented under the incorrect headings
  - (ii) the prescribed recording criteria, as set out on the inside cover of the journal, were not followed
  - (iii) an inadequate range of issues on the assignment topic were identified or there was insufficient analyses of the issues concerned
  - (iv) reasons for choice of dishes, hygiene and safety were generic and/or not explained
  - (v) the range of resources used for the investigations was too limited i.e. direct transcription from class text book and teacher notes with no effort made to extract and analyse the relevant key points
  - (vi) a range of errors was noted in relation to the selection of dishes:
    - dishes selected that did not meet the requirements of the assignment e.g. dishes not suitable to maintain a healthy weight - Assignment 2
    - the property investigated in Assignment 5 was not the property demonstrated in the making of the dish
    - no reasons given for choice of dish
    - some main course dishes prepared were not balanced
    - dish chosen was not identified in the investigation – thus marks were lost for reasons for choice
    - some dishes showed overuse of convenience foods e.g. use of commercial sauces

- practical dish repeated for two assignments with subsequent loss of marks for one attempt
  - (vii) none or only one source of information given, the source of information i.e. book, leaflet, website not named; author of book only without the title
  - (viii) the misinterpretation of what constitutes key factors. Some were linked to the investigation/choice of dish cooked and not relevant to the making of the dish stated
  - (ix) some evaluation of implementations were descriptions, lacking any attempt at analysis; evaluations relating to specific assignment requirements were sometimes either omitted altogether or just summarised or repeated information given elsewhere. Some candidates' evaluation points were contradictions of earlier points
  - (x) evaluations written on the implementation page and implementations written on the evaluation page
  - (xi) candidates not completing the practical aspect of the assignment or omitting sections e.g. evaluations
  - (xii) blank pages: in some journals entire assignment/s omitted
- Candidates who attained less than a Grade D (4.2%) generally demonstrated poor knowledge of the subject matter. Most did not complete five assignments and/or omitted aspects of assignments. These candidates appear to have had difficulty in undertaking the investigation and evaluation aspects of assignments as information given was often brief and transcribed directly from the class textbook and generally was within the basic to competent performance criterion
  - In a number of cases it was noted that the standard of work improved as candidates progressed through the journal. This was often due to improvements in candidates' research and recording skills
  - Some examiners noted direct transcription / significant similarities in the work presented by candidates in a number of centres, particularly in relation to Assignments 3, 4 and 5. This suggests that there may have been an over-reliance on the class textbook or on teacher notes, resulting in all candidates in a centre attaining a broadly similar mark for this component.

### **3.5 Recommendations to Teachers and Students**

- The Food Studies Coursework – Essential Requirements, as set out on page 4 of the Food Studies Assignments issued to schools each year, should be noted carefully by teachers and students
- Teachers should familiarise themselves with the Chief Examiner’s reports and marking schemes for previous years
- It is essential that students read and interpret assignments carefully. All key requirements, as specified in the assignments, must be referred to in the investigations. Students should avoid presenting general information on a topic, as marks are not awarded for irrelevant material
- Students should be directed to continually refer and adhere to the recording criteria in order to ensure that all of the key requirements of assignments are included
- The importance of students researching topics independently, using as wide a range of resources as possible e.g. leaflets, newspapers, magazines, cookery books websites, DVD’s etc. cannot be over emphasised. Research should be analysed and linked to the assignment requirements. Students should avoid transcribing directly from class textbooks
- 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
- In Assignments 1 & 2 the specific diets being investigated should always be linked to the appropriate specific nutritional/dietary guidelines and meal planning guidelines
- Research should be presented under relevant headings so as to prevent the omission of essential aspects of assignments
- A minimum of two sources of information should be used and credited for each assignment. Sources of information should cite the name and author of book/the full correct name of website or information leaflet
- Dishes selected should be suitable for the assignment being undertaken. In Assignments 1 and 2 dishes should be balanced and be modified, where necessary, to suit a specific diet or age group where specified
- Menus, where required, should have a minimum of two courses and should be balanced
- Each assignment conducted should include a different dish. Dishes should not be repeated or modified and repeated
- Accurate costing of ingredients is important; the quantities used in the recipe should be clearly stated and accurately costed

- During practical classes students should be encouraged 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. Students should be reminded 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, where suggested, should be accurate and justified, having regard to the dish made, and should not contradict the information given when evaluating the dish
- The evaluation points relating to an assignment's specific requirements should relate to the research undertaken. Using headings such as 'implementation' and 'specific requirements' might assist students in conducting more focused evaluations
- When selecting dishes it is important that due regard be given to
  - the requirements of the assignment and the findings of the investigation; every effort should be made to include a broad range of applications representative of the research carried out
  - 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
  - the avoidance of the over-use of convenience foods
- When recording assignments students should
  - record research and analysis in the journal before doing the practical application for an assignment in order to avoid mixing up work
  - record each assignment in its entirety before doing the next one to avoid errors
  - ensure all work is presented in the correct section of the journal; marks are not awarded for work presented under the incorrect heading
  - use ballpoint pens and not use pencil as it can be illegible
  - not divide lines as such information is often illegible for the examiner
  - complete work sequence as part of planning; it should be brief and include 'setting up', 'different stages in correct sequence' and 'evaluation' and should be indicative of what you intend doing
  - when describing implementation, include an account of the procedures followed when making the dish; always include preparation of fruit and / or vegetables, cooking time and temperature, serving and evaluation. Students should take notes of procedures followed during practical classes to assist when writing-up this section
  - complete evaluations, particularly points relating to implementation, as proximate as possible to when the dish was made
- Five assignments is the examination requirement. Completing six assignments is generally of little or no advantage to students and, having regard to the weighting for this component (20%), may not be the most appropriate use of teaching / learning time



- As stated in the *Food Studies Coursework Guidelines* and *Food Studies Coursework Essential Requirements* on the assignment briefs (M.47/48A) and the journal cover, 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 Elective 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 (Design Folder 25%, Garment 75%)
- Written Examination

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

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 candidates' schools by an examiner appointed by the State Examinations Commission.

## 4.2 Performance of Candidates

The number presenting Textile Fashion and Design Elective Coursework remains extremely low at 72 (0.56% of candidates).

**Table 8: Summary of grades awarded to candidates in 2008 – 2011.**

Year	Total	A	B	C	ABC	D	E	F	N.G.
2008	125	32.0	57.6	8.8	98.4	0.8	0.0	0.8	0.0
2009	81	44.4	43.2	9.9	97.5	2.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
2010	91	60.4	34.1	2.2	96.7	2.2	1.1	0.0	0.0
2011	72	48.6	45.8	2.8	97.2	2.8	0.0	0.0	0.0

- The overall standard in 2011 was excellent to very good with more than 94% of candidates achieving A or B Grades. Only two candidates achieved a D Grade and no candidate presented work meriting a lower grade.
- The most significant error noted was where a candidate did not present a design folder to accompany the garment and was thus marked from a maximum mark of 75.

The assignment for 2011 required candidates to choose a fashion designer whose work included features that appealed to them and to design an outfit featuring at least one of the main style features associated with their chosen designer. The outfit selected could be knitted, crocheted or machine stitched, functional or fun, suitable for males or females and include two prescribed processes.

Candidates responded well to this assignment and presented a wide variety of high quality coursework. Of the 72 garments presented there were 23 dresses, 46 skirts, 2 jackets and 1 knitted cardigan. Fifty different designers were selected and researched in the support study with Christian Dior, Coco Chanel, Tommy Hilfiger, Valentino, Mary Quant and Karen Millen being the most popular. Of the 72 garments presented, 33 (45.83%) were presented as fun while 39 (54.16%) were presented as functional.

Where candidates in a centre choose to make similar garments e.g. skirts or dresses, individualism and creativity was provided for through the use of a wide variety of fabrics and the selection of a range of different designers. An extensive range of fabrics was selected for the garments – ranging from silk, chiffon, satin, lace, wool, jersey, polyester, cotton and poly-cotton mixes. The colours and textures of the fabrics were most attractive and added to the overall finish and appearance of the garments.

Dress designs included fully lined halter neck, boned bodice, shirt style, raglan sleeve with contrasting lining, dresses with lace overlays and dresses depicting a range of necklines including *Sweet Heart* and *Grecian* style with bow detail/shawl, etc. Candidates who presented dresses identified twenty different designers and included related design features. Features representing thirty different designers were included in the forty-six skirts presented. Some examples were Coco Channel - contrasting colours, lace with black and cream, Chanel logo and netting; Valentino - large bows, lace;

Tommy Hilfiger -navy, red and white or red and white logo, gold buttons; Roberto Cavalli - animal print and Balmain - military style. Skirt styles presented included A-line, gathered and pleated.

Two jackets were presented; one navy jacket with silver buttons and a gold chain based on an Alexander McQueen military style design, the second was a Dior style white lined jacket with large black buttons and a nipped/synched waist.

One item of knitwear presented used Debbie Bliss from the Glen Collection as a design source.

### 4.3 Analysis of Candidate Performance

As evidenced in the results obtained, the standard of garments presented was impressive. Garments were attractive, well made and finished to a very high standard. The general skills demonstrated in relation to sewing and 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:

- Button/s and buttonhole/s
- A pocket
- Darts or shaping (i.e. knitted/crocheted garments).

All garments had the required mandatory processes and in some cases, more than the required number were included. Button/s and buttonhole/s was the most popular process selected followed by pockets, pleats and darts.

#### **Button/s and buttonhole/s:**

Buttonholes were of good to excellent standard and included both hand worked, machine worked and bound examples. The majority were decorative with some functional. The correct size of buttonholes and buttons were used where they were functional.

The most common problems encountered included the following:

- candidates using blanket stitch instead of button hole stitch on hand worked buttonholes – resulting in a looser, less secure finish
- fraying where cutting was not carefully executed
- corners that were not correctly worked showing some uneven stitch lengths
- the use of tailor's carbon paper for marking the position of the buttonhole which left unsightly marks, particularly on pale coloured fabrics.

#### **Pockets**

The types of pocket selected included patch, bound, in-seam, pouch pocket and slanted bound front pockets. The standard varied from very good to excellent.

The main problems encountered when completing patch pockets included

- upper corners not securely finished
- top fold not stitched
- uneven top stitching
- uneven corners and some poor shapes.

In the case of in-seam / slanted pockets, errors noted included poor pressing during construction and some uneven sewing tension leading to puckered seams. Some bound pockets had uneven welts.

#### **Darts or Shaping**

The darts constructed included single pointed darts, contour and vertical. The majority were well executed and gave a good finish and shape to the garment. Darts were even in length, well tapered to a point, appropriately finished, correctly positioned and well pressed.

The main problems encountered related to pressing. Some bust darts were pressed upwards towards the armhole instead of downwards towards the waist and vertical darts were not pressed towards centre front/back. Contour darts on some garments were not clipped and this caused some puckering on the garment.

### **Pleats**

The main types of pleats made were box, knife and inverted. The skill demonstrated varied from very good to good. Generally, pleats were an appropriate size, even, folded in the correct direction and well pressed. Among the problems noted were uneven pleats, both in relation to size and spacing, and poor pressing.

### **Gathering**

The execution of this process ranged from very good to good, with the main problems being the uneven distribution of fullness, pleating/rucking of fabric within gathers and gathering threads not removed.

One garment used boning for shaping and demonstrated an exceptionally high standard of skill.

Notwithstanding the high standard of general skill evident on the majority of garments, some general common weaknesses were noted in relation to the skills demonstrated.

The principal weaknesses included the following:

- poor quality machine stitching, poor stitch tension
- waistbands uneven, puckered, not layered/trimmed during construction
- garments stained (usually with tailor's carbon)
- hems puckered
- garments not pressed as work progressed, particularly pockets, darts, seams and pleats
- general finishing: threads not finished off, scissor snips on fabric, etc.

### **The Design Folder**

The standard of Design Folders varied from excellent to satisfactory. Candidates related very well to the theme and some of the explorations were excellent. Many candidates carefully analysed and made good use of research undertaken to develop individual ideas around the theme, 'fashion designers', and their respective features. Candidates downloaded information from the Internet and used cut-outs from magazines to make collages representing their chosen designer and the specific feature that appealed to them.

A number of candidates, who were awarded high marks for their garment, lost marks on their design folder, due mainly to sections being omitted despite the requirements for the design folder being clearly specified on page 4 of the Textiles, Fashion and Design examination paper. One candidate did not submit a Design Folder.

Main problems noted during the marking of design folders included the following:

- sketches of garments not sufficient with front and back views not presented
- mandatory processes not labelled or shown on sketches
- omitting a description of chosen garment
- not detailing how mandatory processes were carried out

- evaluations incomplete; insufficient comment relating to the construction of garment and only vague reference to the theme.

#### **4.4 Conclusions**

- The standard of work presented for this elective was excellent. The vast majority of candidates presented work that demonstrated excellent skills in the making of the selected garments
- The choice of garments enabled candidates to demonstrate their creative abilities while also adhering to the requirements of the prescribed assignment brief
- Errors, where noted, were generally of a minor nature and did not detract significantly from the final items presented or the marks awarded.



## 4.5 Recommendations to Teachers and Students

- Each student should engage in individual research, and garment and design folder should be student's own individual work
- When deciding on the garment students should:
  - carefully analyse the assignment brief
  - consider the time available
  - ensure the garment selected is compatible with the mandatory processes
  - select a fabric that is easy to handle and skill appropriate
- When constructing the garment students should:
  - follow the correct procedure for all processes
  - ensure sewing machine tension and stitch length are correct for the chosen fabric
  - press the garment at each stage e.g. darts, seams, facings, to ensure a better overall finish and appearance
  - finish all loose threads and press before presenting
- The design folder should include
  - an analysis and exploration of the theme as specified in the assignment brief
  - a full description of the garment that is being constructed
  - sketches showing front and back views of outfit with mandatory processes clearly labelled on sketches
  - the proposed course of action to be undertaken and the work sequence followed when making up the selected garment including details of how mandatory processes were undertaken
  - an evaluation of the garment made and how it relates to the assignment brief

## **5. Written Examination – Ordinary Level**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The Ordinary Level written examination paper comprises three sections:

#### **Section A (60 marks)**

This section contains twelve 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 ten 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**

In 2011, 3676 candidates sat the Leaving Certificate Home Economics, Ordinary Level written examination; this represents an increase of 120 candidates when compared with 2010.

## 5.2 Performance of Candidates

**Table 8: Home Economics – Scientific and Social, Ordinary Level. Grades obtained in written examination**

Year	Total	A	B	C	ABC	D	E	F	NG	EFNG
2008	3745	4.0	25.7	35.6	65.3	25.2	6.7	2.4	0.3	9.4
2009	3939	4.9	26.4	35.0	66.3	23.1	7.0	3.0	0.7	10.7
2010	3557	3.5	25.6	37.8	66.9	23.6	6.4	2.5	0.6	9.5
2011	3676	4.2	26.6	35.6	66.5	24.0	6.8	2.2	0.4	9.5

## 5.3 Analysis of Candidate Performance

**Table 9: The Average Mark and the Frequency of Attempts per Question/Section A based on an analysis of the results of a Random Sample of 240 scripts.**

Section/ Question	Attempt Frequency %	Average Mark	Average Mark %
Section A	100	43	72
B1	98	50	62
B2	75	33	67
B3	39	29	58
B4	19	16	32
B5	62	30	60
C1	18	42	52
C2	2	10	25
C3	78	43	54

- All candidates attempted the short answer questions in Section A. The standard of answering was very good and elicited a mean mark of 72%.
- A small number (2%) of candidates did not attempt the compulsory question (B1). The average mark attained was quite good at 62%. However, examiners reported that a very varied standard was encountered when marking this question.

- Question B2 was the most popular of the optional questions and was selected by 75% of candidates. The mean mark of 67%, the highest mean mark of the long answer questions, indicates that candidates encountered little difficulty in answering this question.
- Question B4 was the least popular – being attempted by less than 20% of candidates. The average mark of 32%, is evidence of candidates' lack of knowledge and understanding of resource management.
- Question C2 attained the lowest mean mark at 20%. There is evidence that some candidates who selected this elective question may have selected this question in error as no Textiles, Fashion and Design coursework was presented.
- 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: 43*

All candidates attempted the mandatory ten questions with a significant number answering all or part of the twelve questions. The standard of answering, which varied from quite weak to very good, has shown continual improvement over the last three years. Few candidates attained full marks, as 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.** Some candidates were unable to match the classification with the sources of carbohydrates and scored marks for one classification only.

**Question 2.** The majority of candidates answered this question very well with almost all candidates having a good knowledge of how to increase dietary fibre.

**Question 3.** This was a very popular question and the listed answer options were helpful for candidates. Most candidates achieved full marks.

**Question 4.** This *true* or *false* question was also very accessible for candidates. However, many selected the incorrect answer for cholesterol.

**Question 5.** Many candidates had only a vague knowledge of preservation as they could not match pectin, sugar and vinegar with the respective functions. Blanching was well known.

**Question 6.** The majority of candidates could name a correct raising agent for the dishes listed. Self-raising flour was the most common correct answer. The underlying principle of raising agents was not well answered, was considered difficult and was often omitted. Some candidates misinterpreted this question and gave examples of foods e.g. soda bread rather than raising agents.

**Question 7.** The standard of answering here was very good to excellent with the majority of candidates knowing how to store meat and poultry successfully to prevent

cross contamination. Some candidates misunderstood the question and answers given related to personal hygiene e.g. washing hands. Others misread the question and gave answers relating to food preparation.

**Question 8.** Some candidates were unable to name the type of pollution but gave correct examples and were thus awarded some marks. The effect of the type of pollution named usually gained full marks.

**Question 9.** The energy label was well understood and candidates were able to explain its benefit. The graphic was considered helpful to candidates and many used the information from the label when formulating their answers.

**Question 10.** This question was quite popular and the majority of candidates were able to name a shopper loyalty scheme and state one advantage and disadvantage of the scheme. Some candidates were unable to name the type of loyalty scheme. Others did not understand the question and gave examples of how supermarkets encourage people to purchase goods e.g. 'buy one get one free'.

**Question 11.** This was not a popular question and it was often omitted. Very few candidates could name a fire retardant finish or name two different uses of textiles that have such a finish. This proved the most difficult of the short answer questions.

**Question 12.** Essential expenditure and one example of it was well answered. However, many candidates did not appear to understand the term discretionary expenditure. Candidates who got full marks for this question generally attained a high mark in the examination.

## **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:* 98%

*Average Mark:* 50

- (a) It was obvious from answers that candidates had practised this type of question. The majority of answers referred to both types of fish – cod and salmon. Many weaker answers did not include an evaluative point or the function of the nutrient identified. The higher achieving candidates were able to give comprehensive answers, including accurate functions relating to each of the nutrients.
- (b) The classification of lipids was well answered by the majority of candidates who could name at least two classes, e.g. animal and vegetable. Some candidates omitted this part of the question, or misread the question and classified proteins or carbohydrates. Not all candidates gave the required four sources of fats; many could only be credited for three sources as all were from same class, and not from the required two classes. Many candidates stated only one function with the provision of heat and energy being the most popular. A small number of

candidates gave negative health conditions that result from consuming too many fatty foods. A number of candidates omitted part (b) altogether.

- (c) Some candidates clearly understood what was meant by essential fatty acids and gave relevant, well explained answers. Others, however, gave explanations that were vague and inaccurate. This part of the question had a mark allocation of 14 marks with the majority attaining a maximum of 7 marks.

Many candidates confused essential fatty acids with essential amino acids indicating, perhaps, that candidates did not read the question carefully. The benefit of including Omega-3 fatty acids in the diet was either well known or omitted. Some candidates referred to helping young children to concentrate in class; others referred to it as 'brain food'. Examiners reported that part (c) of this question presented difficulties for many candidates.

- (d) The advantages and disadvantages of online shopping were generally well answered with many candidates awarded full marks. Some candidates had valid points but answers were just one/two words and lacked sufficient elaboration or explanation to gain full marks. This question was considered to be most relevant as online shopping is growing in popularity particularly among young consumers.

### **Question 2 (50 Marks)**

*Attempt Frequency:* 75%  
*Average Mark:* 33

This was the most popular of the optional questions.

- (a) Some candidates found this part of the question difficult as they were unable to interpret the chart. Many answers provided comment on the portions of fruit and vegetables consumed by parents and children, but did not elaborate on comments given. In well-developed answers candidates compared and contrasted the percentages of fruit and vegetables eaten by each group and cited reasons or provided an explanation. Some candidates did not comment on the chart at all or relate any point to it. Instead they outlined what parents should do to encourage children to eat more fruit and vegetables, or why people in general should eat more fruit and vegetables.
- (b) Menus generally were well designed and included a menu for breakfast, packed lunch and dinner. Marks were lost for incomplete courses and for giving only one course for the main meal of the day. Some candidates did not include a beverage in their menus. A small number of candidates misinterpreted or misread the question and gave a menu for a packed lunch only, thus losing 12 marks.
- (c) Some very mixed quality answers were given here. A number of candidates misread the question and referred to buying, storing and methods of cooking for fruit and vegetables instead of guidelines relating to preparing and cooking. Some answers had only one correct point.

**Question 3 (50 marks)**

*Attempt Frequency:* 39%

*Average Mark:* 29

This was the third most popular question in Section B.

- (a) The majority of candidates could identify four nutrients in eggs but many were unable to explain the function or give any other information relating to the nutrient.
- (b) The uses of eggs in food preparation proved challenging with some candidates omitting it completely and thus losing 18 marks. Many candidates appeared to be unclear as to what was required and did not realise that it was simply ‘culinary uses’ that was required. Examples of uses were often inaccurate or omitted. Candidates who scored well in the examination could clearly identify the uses of eggs and gave correct examples.
- (c) Almost all candidates described the food labelling information found on eggs and egg cartons but did not always explain how this information is beneficial to the consumer.

**Question 4 (50 marks)**

*Attempt Frequency:* 19%

*Average Mark:* 16

This was the least popular question in Section B and it also attained the lowest mark.

- (a) Many candidates seemed to misunderstand the question or could not identify resources, other than money. Some candidates’ answers referred to bank loans, job seekers benefit etc., even though the question clearly asked for resources ‘other than money’. Where candidates interpreted the question correctly many did not identify three resources that contribute to a good management system or gave inadequate or no explanations. Many answers given were irrelevant and showed a very poor knowledge of the related subject matter.
- (b) The majority of candidates could name at least one social welfare payment with rent allowance – family income supplement and back to school allowances being the most popular payments mentioned. Some candidates mentioned a medical card and some omitted this part of the question altogether.
- (c) This section was poorly answered and most candidates gave only one point of information under each heading – stage in life cycle, employment patterns and sex/gender roles – thus receiving a maximum of 9 marks. There was an amount of repetition of answers given under the different headings. Many candidates did not appear to understand the concept of home management or how it can be affected by different situations. Answers were not always related back to managing the home. Some candidates erroneously related answers back to the earlier part of the question.

### **Question 5 (50 marks)**

*Attempt Frequency:* 62%

*Average Mark:* 30

This was the second most popular question in Section B.

- (a) Candidates had no difficulty in explaining marriage counselling; they could identify and discuss the role of the counsellor. Many candidates achieved full marks for this point.

Legal separation was poorly answered with candidates referring to couples separating for a period of time only, with no reference made to the legal implications.

Divorce was generally well explained with most answers achieving full marks.

Some candidates could clearly identify an advantage and a disadvantage for each option but others could not and omitted this part of the question. Some answers confused legal separation with divorce and gave incorrect advantages and disadvantages.

- (b) Answers were, generally, good with candidates able to explain why it is particularly important for divorced parents to make a will. The majority cited the importance of providing for children. Some candidates did not avert to the word '*divorced*' and answered in general terms.

Candidates who were awarded full marks here could clearly identify as least the required three *important features of a valid will*. Weaker answers often did not include any *essential* feature and thus only scored 4 marks for a general point. Some candidates misread the question and outlined the advantages of making a will.

### **Section C (80 marks)**

There are three questions in this section. Candidates are required to answer one question. Part (a) of the selected question is compulsory and candidates can select from either part (b) or part (c).

#### **Elective 1 – Home Design and Management (80 marks)**

*Attempt Frequency:* 18%

*Average Mark:* 42

Just under one fifth (18%) of candidates selected this elective. Of the optional areas, part (b) was more popular than part (c).

A number of candidates attempted parts (b) and (c) or sections of each part. This approach disadvantages candidates as marks can only be awarded for either (b) or (c).



- 1(a)** (i) This part of the question was not well answered and many candidates did not appear to understand the term '*housing style*', despite the provision of graphics on the examination paper showing three different housing styles. Many answers omitted to make reference to housing styles and just gave general points relating to housing choice / location. Better quality answers referred to each of the headings in the question (social, economic and environmental factors) but some candidates made little attempt to elaborate on the factor identified.
- (ii) Nearly all candidates could identify two specific housing requirements for an elderly person with limited mobility, e.g. ramps, stair lifts, hand rails in the bathroom, etc. Explanations of terms used in the question proved helpful to candidates in understanding exactly what was being asked. The majority of candidates were awarded full marks for this part of the question.
- (iii) Many answers included two advantages and two disadvantages for a family of living in rented accommodation but some answers lacked any discussion or detail. A number of candidates misinterpreted the question and gave answers that focussed on types and quality of rented accommodation.
- 1(b)** (i) Many candidates could not name accurately a type of heating system but some gave good descriptions and thus were awarded marks. Central heating was a popular choice. A few candidates mentioned geothermal heating. All candidates could name a fuel/energy source while the method of heat transfer was either poorly answered or omitted.
- (ii) Some good answers were given here describing the different types of thermostats and timers and their function in relation to energy efficiency. A number of candidates did not appear to understand the question.
- 1(c)** (i) Of the candidates attempting this part of the question most could not give the required three points on why artificial ventilation may be required in the modern home. A number of answers correctly referred to carbon monoxide. A frequent error was where candidates confused ventilation with insulation.
- (ii) This part of the question was not well answered as many candidates could not name one method of artificial ventilation. Marks were consequently lost for both the description and the underlying principle. Where candidate could identify a method, answers were often vague and lacking the required detail. A number of incorrect answers referred to natural methods of ventilation.

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

As the number of candidates taking this elective, as determined by the number presenting the mandatory practical coursework, is just 0.6% it is to be expected that few candidates would attempt this question. However, the number of candidates who did far exceeded the number who submitted Textile, Fashion and Design coursework. This seriously disadvantages candidates as the available marks for this elective is 40, while the other elective questions are worth 80 marks each. Many candidates who attempted this question attempted two questions from Section C. For the reasons outlined above it

was the least popular elective and the question that scored the lowest mark in Section C and in the examination.

*Attempt Frequency:* 2%  
*Average Mark:* 10

- 2(a)** (i) Sketches were very poor with little or no detail. Many were poorly drawn and not labelled. No sketch was awarded more than half the available marks.
- (ii) Cotton and silk were the most popular fabrics suggested, with appropriate reasons for choice suggested. Accordingly, candidates obtained full marks.
- (iii) Answers for this part of the question were mostly incorrect and suggested that candidates did not understand the term '*principle of design*'. Others omitted it altogether.
- 2 (b)** (i) 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. This was not a popular part of the question and was often omitted.
- (ii) This question was poorly answered and was frequently omitted.
- 2(c)** (i) This question was well answered with candidates able to explain the factors that influence a person's clothing requirements. Available money and climate presented no difficulties, while responses on cultural influences proved challenging for some candidates.
- (ii) Answers given here indicated that candidates were familiar with the impact of media on fashion trends. Reference was made to the role of T.V., celebrities, fashion magazines etc.

### **Elective 3 – Social Studies (80 marks)**

*Attempt Frequency:* 78%  
*Average Mark:* 43

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

Part (a) of this question, which focussed on the topic of poverty, was considered to be particularly relevant to many people's lives today. A number of candidates did not read the questions carefully and gave general points of information relating to poverty rather than answers specific to the questions asked.

It is important when answering social questions for candidates to use the headings given in the question and to structure answers using bullet points in order to avoid repetition.

- 3(a)** (i) A significant number of candidates did not give an accurate explanation of the term '*at risk of poverty*' and many only gained 3 marks maximum.
- (ii) Candidates could identify the main reasons why 14.4% of people in Ireland in 2008 were reported as being at risk of poverty, but most did not expand or elaborate, despite being asked in the question to discuss the reasons. Many candidates focused only on the current recession and unemployment and wrote long descriptive points that were often repetitive.
- (iii) Many candidates either did not understand the term '*social groups*' or else did not read the question carefully. Correct answers identified groups such as the elderly, the homeless, travellers and unemployed persons, while some incorrect social groups identified included public sector workers, MABS, etc. Only the better answers stated three effects on the groups identified, while some answers had no effects stated. A number of candidates, selecting this elective, omitted this section of the compulsory part of the question.
- 3(b)** (i) This question was generally well answered by the majority of candidates who obtained close to or maximum marks. Candidates were familiar with the function of leisure and the role of leisure in children's physical development. However, some candidates did not develop the points identified and lost marks.
- (ii) Some excellent answers describing the factors that may influence the choice of leisure activities engaged in by a family were given by candidates. A common mistake was a failure by candidates to elaborate in anyway on the factors named.
- 3(c)** (i) This question was well answered by most candidates but some points given, for example '*girls study better*', '*girls are more mature*', '*boys play more sport*', lacked sufficient expansion or detail and thus marks were lost. There was evidence of repetition in many candidates' answers.
- (ii) Candidates could identify the benefits to students of undertaking work experience. However, many neglected to elaborate on the benefits cited and lost marks.

## 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/underlined, explanations of some terms included and directions to candidates clearly stated. The examination afforded the higher achieving candidate the opportunity to perform well, but was also considered accessible to candidates who attained lower grades.
- In Section A (short answer questions) almost all candidates attempted the required 10 questions, with a significant number attempting all or parts of 12 questions. The latter scored better than those attempting the mandatory 10 questions. Most candidates gave short factual answers.
- The compulsory question and the two required optional questions were generally attempted in Section B. Question 2 was the most popular optional question and the question that attained the highest mean mark.
- In Section B, Question 1, some answers lacked structure, detail and analysis, with some parts of the question omitted altogether. This is a cause of concern since Food Nutrients are a central aspect of the Food Studies section of the course
- A small number of candidates omitted to answer any Section C elective question, while others attempted questions / parts of questions from two elective areas. A few candidates attempted parts of the three electives
- Within Section C, the general standard of answers given to the textile question was poor. Each year a number of candidates not entered for this elective attempt this question and attain low marks
- Some candidates omitted parts of questions in each of the Sections A, B, and C. This reflected adversely on candidates' final grades
- The terminology commonly used in questions posed difficulties for some candidates. The term 'give an account', for instance, was frequently interpreted as a requirement to give just one point of information
- Some inaccurate answering would suggest that not all candidates read the questions carefully. In such instances answers did not address exactly what was asked in the question nor include the required detail
- General layout of answers on many scripts was poor and some writing was difficult to read. Some candidates did not use question numbers or headings, presented answers without adequate spacing between different parts, and wrote outside the page margins.

## 5.5 Recommendations to Teachers and Students

- It is essential that the entire syllabus be studied in order that students can answer the required number of questions. This is of particular importance in relation to mandatory questions in Section B and Section C
- Teachers should 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. Students should in particular note compulsory elements
- Students should be familiar with key question cue words e.g. list, outline, explain, discuss, etc., and 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 the 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 answer in point under relevant headings and should avoid lengthy descriptive paragraphs. This is especially important for social studies questions as it prevents candidates from giving irrelevant information
- Teachers should encourage students to answer the required number of questions and all parts of questions, even if they have limited knowledge of the topic
- Students should use a new page to begin each question as this helps to avoid omitting sections of questions and affords the candidate the opportunity to add additional information, if necessary, when checking answers at the end of the examination
- Students should be fully familiar with the name and the question number of the elective they have studied and attempt this question only
- When sitting the examination it is recommended that students:
  - read through the examination paper in full before attempting any question and draw a line through the two electives not studied
  - do not rush through Section A – these questions require thought and details for full marks. Re-read answers before moving on to section B
  - answer compulsory questions first and then followed by optional questions
  - complete as fully as possible the required number of questions from each section and attempt each part of the questions selected as candidates can only be credited with the required number of questions.
  - present answers in point form, under headings

- Teachers should familiarise themselves with the published marking schemes and Chief Examiner's Report to assist them in preparing candidates for examinations

## 6. Written Examination – Higher Level

### 6.1 Introduction

The Higher Level written examination paper comprises three sections.

#### Section A (60 marks).

This section contains twelve 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 ten 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, 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

8,724 candidates took the Leaving Certificate Home Economics, Higher Level written examination. This represents a decrease in candidature of 258 candidates when compared with 2010.

### 6.2 Performance of Candidates

**Table 10: Home Economics – Scientific and Social, Higher Level grades (%) obtained in written examination 2008-2011.**

Year	Total	A	B	C	ABC	D	E	F	NG	EFNG
2008	8753	8.8	27.2	32.4	68.4	24.3	6.2	1.1	0.1	7.3
2009	9012	8.6	25.8	35.4	69.8	23.5	6.0	0.7	0.0	6.7
2010	8983	9.0	27.1	32.6	68.7	24.1	5.8	0.9	0.1	6.7
2011	8724	9.0	27.1	32.9	69.1	24.9	5.3	0.6	.03	5.9

### 6.3 Analysis of Candidate Performance

**Table 11: The Average Mark and the Frequency of Attempts per Question / Section A based on an analysis of the results of a Random Sample of 580 scripts.**

Section / Question	Attempt Frequency %	Average Mark	Average mark %
A	100	34.3	57.1
B1	100	51	63.8
B2	51.4	34.4	68.8
B3	18.3	27.8	55.6
B4	50.3	29.2	58.4
B5	77.0	34.0	68.0
C1	15.6	51.6	64.5
C2	0.9	34.4	86.0
C3	83.5	52.6	65.8

- All candidates attempted Section A
- All candidates attempted the compulsory Question B1
- 5 candidates did not attempt a compulsory question from Section C
- Question B5 was the most popular optional question in Section B followed by B2, while B3 was the least popular. Question B2 gained the highest average marks (68.8%), while B3 had the lowest mark (55.6%) for the optional questions in this section
- Question C3 (Elective 3 – Social Studies) was the most popular choice of the three elective questions being attempted by almost 84% of candidates. Less than 16% of candidates attempted C1 while C2 was attempted by less than 1% of candidates
- The average mark % is broadly similar for Questions C1 and C3 while the average marks for C2 is significantly higher at 86%.

#### **Section A - Short answer questions (60 marks)**

*Attempt frequency:* 100%

*Average mark:* 34

Overall, the standard of answering in Section A this year was good with few candidates attaining less than 20 marks while most attained between 30 and 40 marks. Candidates who attained high marks in the examination all attained in excess of 50 marks with many attaining the full 60. Most candidates attempted all twelve questions. However, candidates who attained lower grades frequently omitted 4 or 5 questions.



**Question 1:** This question was poorly answered. Many candidates confused the classifications of carbohydrates and did not give correct examples. Some answers listed all monosaccharides or just gave formulas. Candidates who knew carbohydrates in detail presented accurate answers and gained full marks.

**Question 2:** This question rarely gained full marks as many candidates identified two properties linked to solubility. Some poorer quality answers referred to sources or functions and not to properties as required.

**Question 3:** Most candidates had a good knowledge of calcium and could identify three effects of deficiency. Bone diseases were the most common answers while some better quality answers identified points relating to poor blood clotting and/or muscle contractions.

**Question 4:** Candidates with a detailed knowledge of nutrients scored well on this question and could name the different proteins, while others confused types with HBV and LBV.

**Question 5:** Most answers referred to the effects of thawing but some omitted any reference to slow freezing. Candidates attaining full marks identified the effect of the formation of large ice-crystals or the effect of blanching on water-soluble vitamins.

**Question 6:** This question was not well answered and attained lowest marks of all short answer questions. Many candidates did not know what an antioxidant was and some of those who did gave inaccurate answers. Some candidates correctly named Vitamin A/C/E, but went on to give general functions and examples of the vitamin named and made no link to antioxidants.

**Question 7:** This question was answered well overall. Most candidates could name a method used to tenderise meat. However, explanations of the principle involved were often omitted or not explained accurately.

**Question 8:** Candidates answered this question very well. Most could identify at least two food poisoning bacteria, with e-coli and salmonella being the most common correct examples named. However, a minority of candidates could not identify a third example. Common incorrect answers were moulds and yeast.

**Question 9:** Most candidates scored full marks here and correctly identified the components of management. The most common error was where candidates gave examples of resources such as time / money etc. An example of when the management process may be used was known by most. Candidates who attained a low grade frequently omitted this part of the question.

**Question 10:** This specific question on Family Income Supplement (FIS) was generally not well answered. Many candidates described it as an additional payment to families who were in receipt of social welfare payments. Some answers gave an indication that the payment was for families in low paid employment but lacked any specific detail. Despite poor attempts at explaining FIS, many candidates were able to identify the qualifying conditions and gave up-to-date figures for the threshold of income for various family sizes etc.

**Question 11:** The majority of candidates did well on this question and could name three conditions required to qualify for a mortgage. A number of candidates lost marks for citing inaccurate or vague points e.g. *have a deposit* – with no reference to amount or percentage.

**Question 12:** Most candidates knew that the CE symbol was a European symbol but many did not refer to safety. The double insulated symbol was frequently confused with a textiles symbol and many stated the item was suitable for tumble-drying. Even when candidates knew double insulation, many answers incorrectly related it to double glazed windows and thus lost marks.

## **Section B: (180 marks)**

### **Question B1 (80 marks)**

*Attempt Frequency:* 100%

*Average Mark:* 51

All candidates attempted this mandatory question, and the majority scored well. Candidates did best on parts (a), (b) and (c) while part (d), which required application of knowledge, posed the greatest challenge for some candidates.

- (a) Most candidates interpreted the chart on consumer consumption of milk and dairy products in Ireland correctly. Answers attaining high marks discussed each of the four products identified on the chart in detail and referred to the relative consumption rates. Some candidates did not rank the four products while others did not give adequate information for full marks. It was a requirement that all four products be discussed in equal detail and it was noted that a number of candidates gave extensive information on one or two products and neglected to give sufficient information on the others, thus losing marks. A number of candidates misinterpreted the information on the chart and referred to 39% of consumers drinking milk instead of recognising that milk accounted for 39% of sales of dairy products.

The quality of the comment varied, some candidates gave an immense amount of detail whereas others gave brief general points. In some answers comments on all four products were merged and it was difficult to decipher the relevance of the comments to the different products. In such answers few gained full marks.

- (b) The structure of an amino acid was well known, as was the formation of a peptide bond. However, a small number of candidates did not appear to fully understand what was required and gave a variety of answers ranging from the primary, secondary & tertiary structure of proteins to the difference between low and high biological value protein and the different essential and non-essential amino acids.

The majority of candidates used labelled diagrams to present their answers on the amino acid and the formation of a peptide bond. Most showed the link between the COOH and the NH<sub>2</sub> but did not show the OH leaving the COOH and the H leaving the NH<sub>2</sub>. Condensation reaction was almost always discussed. Generally, diagrams with some written descriptions scored higher than answers that were solely written descriptions. Some candidates confused

the functions of protein with properties and thus lost twelve marks. Most answers referred to the Maillard reaction and denaturation and elaborated on these. A number of candidates mixed up the explanation of gel formation with gelatinisation. It is essential that students fully understand the different headings relating to topics and the related content, otherwise substantial marks can be lost.

- (c) All candidates could name a process used by manufacturers to prolong the shelf life of milk, with the majority identifying pasteurisation. Sterilisation or UHT of milk were less popular answers. In relation to how the process is carried out, the majority gave full correct answers. Most candidates stated accurately the time and temperature. Two errors noted related to candidates omitting the °C for the temperature or not referring to the cooling process. The effect of the process on the nutritive value of milk was well known in general. A small number of candidates lost marks as answers did not specifically mention Vitamin B or C or the water-soluble vitamins. The most significant error noted on this question was where candidates referred to homogenisation and outlined the process and its effects on milk. This misinterpretation of the question resulted in a significant mark loss for the candidates concerned.
- (d) As in previous years, this question – asking candidates to comment and elaborate on the growing popularity of foods produced by small businesses and home enterprises – elicited a wide range of answers and distinguished well between candidates who attained higher and lower grades. Candidates attaining high grades presented some excellent answers demonstrating their ability to analyse and apply the information they had studied relevant to the Irish food industry. Evidence of planning and structuring of answers was sometimes shown with key points of information identified and then elaborated on. Bullet point format was used to avoid repetition.

A number of candidates gave topical points such as relating the popularity of Irish produce to consumers' concerns regarding the importation of foods from other countries following the e-coli scare in Germany in June 2011. Quality, price, supporting local enterprises and creating employment were the most frequently discussed points. Most answers gave the five required points. However, some candidates lost marks for repetition or for lack of elaboration.

### **Question B2 (50 marks)**

*Attempt Frequency:* 51%

*Average Mark:* 34

A greater number of candidates attempted a second food studies question in this section than in previous years. The topicality of diabetes and the increasing incidence of this condition were considered to be possible reasons for the popularity of this question.

- (a) The majority of candidates were knowledgeable on the two main types of diabetes and most scored full marks here. However, a small number of candidates could not distinguish between the types. The symptoms of diabetes generally scored 4/6 with tiredness and thirst being the most common symptoms identified. Nausea and vomiting were incorrectly given as symptoms by some. Most candidates could identify three dietary requirements that should be

followed when managing the condition but many struggled to identify a fourth. The majority of candidates averted to the requirement for a balanced diet, no sugar, low fat and low GI. The most common error noted was where points given related to general healthy eating guidelines e.g. follow a low-salt diet, and were not specific to diabetes.

- (b) This section of the question was very poorly answered. While candidates could identify examples of artificial sweeteners e.g. Canderol and Splenda, few were able to name the relevant classifications.
- (c) Candidates knowledge of the use of sweeteners in food manufacture was limited. Most referred to its use as a sweetener or to improve the flavour of food. A number of candidates' knowledge of the uses was vague, but by identifying examples they clarified their understanding of the question and attained some marks.

### **Question B3 (50 marks)**

*Attempt Frequency:* 18%

*Average Mark:* 28

- (a) The factors that affect a consumer's choice of food were very well known and most candidates scored full marks. A wide range of relevant points were identified and elaborated on with issues such as cost, likes/dislikes, special dietary needs and nutritional considerations being the most common answers. Some answers lacked sufficient detail to ensure full marks.
- (b) The production of flour and the manufacture of cheese were the two foods most commonly profiled. Both were well known. Candidates scored poorly on the packaging section as many merely mentioned plastic for cheese or paper for flour but did not refer to sealing or weighing. Labelling was well known by all candidates.
- (c) Answers on the protection provided to the consumer by the Sale of Food and Drugs Acts (1875, 1879, 1899 and 1936) were often vague and lacked specific information. Many answers included a statement on food safety with few references to the use of food dyes etc. Some candidates confused this act with consumer acts e.g. the Sale of Goods & Supply of Services Act, and answered accordingly. A small number of candidates presented concise, factually accurate information demonstrating a comprehensive understanding of the protection provided by the act.

### **Question B 4 (50 marks)**

*Attempt Frequency:* 50%

*Average Mark:* 29

- (a) The role of the household/family as a financial unit within the economy was well understood and most candidates scored full marks here. However, some candidates' answers indicated a lack of understanding of the question being asked although most did specify the payment of taxes as one point.

- (b) This part of the question was misinterpreted by a number of candidates who discussed how age, gender, social class and culture impacted on expenditure rather than income. Candidates who interpreted the question correctly generally scored full marks and presented well-developed points for each area. Some points relating to culture were inaccurate and lacked any elaboration.
- (c) The candidates who misinterpreted part (b) frequently did not answer this section of this question correctly either. The question was well answered by others. The factors most commonly identified by candidates as contributing to varying patterns of household expenditure were family size, stage in life cycle and family income. However, not all candidates gave the required four points and some answers did not elaborate sufficiently to gain full marks

Examiners noted that answers for this question required careful forward planning in order to avoid repetition and to maximise marks. Candidates who planned their answers (oftentimes evident on examination scripts) scored much better than those who did not.

**Question B 5 (50 marks)**

*Attempt Frequency:* 77%

*Average Mark:* 34

- (a) The definition of the family was very well known by all candidates and scored full marks. However, many candidates struggled to explain what was meant by the universality of the family and many were awarded zero marks for this. Frequently, incorrect answers were explanations of the different family types, suggesting a lack of understanding of the terminology used.
- (b) Most candidates' answers demonstrated a good knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of family members but some merely identified the points rather than elaborating on them as required. Many candidates were awarded half marks due to the brevity of the answers given. It is imperative, where a question requires discussion that a detailed point is given in order to attain full marks. Most candidates identified three of the groups - children/adolescents/adults/grandparents and linked the changes that occur in roles through the life cycle. In some answers the changes through the lifestyle were implied rather than clearly identified while other less accurate answers were presented as '*rights and responsibilities*' as opposed to '*roles and responsibilities*' as specified in the question.
- (c) The factors that enable older people to maintain their independence elicited excellent answers. Candidates showed an extensive knowledge of the supports and assistance required by older people and how these supports are made available.

## Section C (80/40 marks)

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

Attempt Frequency: 15.6%

Average Mark: 52

The percentage (15.6) of candidates opting for this elective has been declining gradually since the revised syllabus was first examined in 2004 when approximately 30% of the examination cohort selected it. Part (b) of the question was more popular than part (c).

- 1.(a)** (i) Most candidates did quite well on this question and cited detached housing, one-off bungalows in rural areas and different period styles (Georgian etc.) as examples of housing styles commonly found in Ireland today. The reasons for the popularity of the different styles were generally well explained.
- (ii) For the most part, the procedures involved in obtaining full planning permission were quite well known. However, many candidates' answers lacked the required detail and, while giving long descriptive answers, some did not include one or more of the essential requirements. It was also noted that some points were too vague to merit full marks. For example, some candidates did not use the phrase *site notice* but could identify that a notice was required.
- (iii) The Homebond Scheme was identified by the majority of candidates as the legislation which protects house-building standards. Concise and accurate answers were given by most candidates and were awarded full marks.
- 1.(b)** (i) Candidates knowledge of non-renewable energy sources used in the home was good. Almost all could name a correct source and identify relevant advantages and disadvantages. A small number wrote about wood, which is not a non-renewable energy source, while some advantages/disadvantages were not explained. Candidates' answers on sustainability were poor, many stated that it was not sustainable but did not elaborate and thus were awarded few if any marks.
- (ii) The ways in which the design and construction of a house can help reduce energy consumption was well answered for the most part, with candidates giving more than the three points required. This was advantageous to candidates as some points were too vague or lacked sufficient explanation to warrant full marks. Candidates were knowledgeable on solar panels, insulation and house aspect and quite a high number gained full marks. The most common error noted was where candidates' answers referred to interior design points. These did not address the question, which clearly specified '*the design and construction of a house*'.
- 1.(c)** (i) The principles that should be considered when planning a lighting system for a family home were well known and most candidates scored highly. Information was accurate and well explained in the majority of answers.
- (ii) The majority of candidates had an excellent knowledge of the properties of light and many drew diagrams to illustrate their answers. A small number of

candidates did not identify any properties and just gave examples of the use of light and lost marks accordingly.

Many who attempted part (c) of this question gained the full 30 marks.

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

*Attempt Frequency:* .9%

*Average Mark:* 34

The number of candidates selecting this elective, less than 1%, remains very small. Almost all Higher Level candidates who selected this question had submitted the required practical coursework.

**2.(a)** (i) Candidates presented some excellent sketches of outfits suitable for school uniforms that were clearly labelled and were accompanied by very detailed descriptions.

(ii) A small number of candidates' knowledge of the principles of design was poor and thus they could not elaborate on how the principles had been applied to the outfit sketched. Answers assessing the outfit's suitability for purpose were very good and showed an excellent understanding of the concept.

**2.(b)** This textile science question, which required candidates to write a profile of one fabric manufactured from natural fibres, was not attempted by any candidate.

**2.(c)** (i) All candidates could name two of the major sectors in the Irish clothing and textile industry but only the better answers could identify a third.

(ii) Candidates answers on the impact of fashion trends, lifestyle and cost on the design and construction of clothing demonstrated a comprehensive knowledge of the fashion industry and candidates scored high marks for this part of the question.

## **Elective 3 Social Studies (80marks)**

*Attempt Frequency:* 83.5%

*Average Mark:* 53

The number of candidates opting for this elective continues to grow – with in excess of four fifths selecting it this year. Of the optional parts, part (b) was more popular than part (c).

**3.(a)** (i) The factors that influence educational achievement were generally well known by all candidates. Those that planned their answers by firstly identifying the key relevant points for later discussion gained most marks. Most candidates used bullet points and clearly distinguished the points. The required four points were almost always given but a number of candidates did not develop points sufficiently to merit the full mark. In their discussion, candidates were required

to clearly explain how the factors identified affect educational achievement and many did not do this.

(ii) This question was considered to be particularly relevant in the current economic climate and all candidates engaged in relevant discussion on the factors that contribute to the increasing demand for adult and second chance education in Ireland. A wide range of reasons was cited and elaborated on, with many gaining full marks. A number of candidates who presented long discussion answers struggled to specify four discreet points and overlap between points was frequently evident.

It is imperative where a number of points are specified in a question that candidates present the required number and that each point is completely separate and different. Some answers presented reflected personal viewpoints and were reflective of candidates' ability to apply knowledge gained in and outside of the classroom in a coherent manner in an examination situation.

(iii) Candidates were very knowledgeable on the initiatives that have improved access for candidates to third level education. Most wrote about PLCs and the HEAR or DARE initiatives. Details on the different initiatives were accurate and comprehensive. Some candidates wrote about LCVP, Leaving Cert Applied and Youthreach and, unfortunately, lost substantial marks as answers related to second level education.

**3.(b)** (i) The impact of social change on family life was well known and answers were, generally, well structured. Most candidates gained full or almost full marks here. Most candidates identified areas of social change but sometimes failed to link it to how it impacted on family life, thereby losing some marks. A small number of candidates presented their answers in tabular format and clearly identified the change and its impact in adjacent columns, thus gaining full marks where information was correct and adequate.

(ii) Most candidates were able to present and assess two effects of decreasing employment opportunities in Ireland today. Many referred to emigration and discussed the effects of unemployment on the individual. An error noted was where candidates wrote about the *causes* of decreasing employment opportunities as opposed to the *effects* of it.

**3.(c)** (i) Most candidates could identify sufficient relevant factors that have lead to the increased participation of women in the workforce, but many did not go on to fully analyse the points identified, thus leading to a loss of marks.

(ii) Legislation relating to employment was fairly well known with the majority of candidates that attempted this question giving information on the employment of young people and how their rights are protected by the Protection of Young Persons (Employment) Act. The Unfair Dismissals Act was also a popular answer as was legislation relating to protection against discrimination in the work place.



## 6.4 Conclusions

- The overall standard of answering this year was quite good. Examiners considered the examination paper to be fair and reflective of the syllabus content and assessment objectives. Questions ranged over the entire syllabus and rewarded candidates who had knowledge of the entire course content.
- Notwithstanding the overall satisfactory standard of answering, some poor quality answers were presented. In that regard, a small cohort of candidates who sat the Higher Level performed poorly and would have been better advised to have taken the Ordinary Level paper.
- Most candidates appeared mindful of the mark allocation for different parts of questions and presented the required number of points to be eligible for the award of full marks.
- The presentation of answers was good in general. Candidates numbered questions carefully and used appropriate headings. Bullet point format was increasingly popular and was useful when structuring responses. Candidates who planned their responses by identifying the key themes, around which they structured their answers, generally attained higher marks than those who wrote long descriptive responses that addressed fewer key points.
- Candidates' knowledge of the Food Studies section of the syllabus was particularly commendable. This was particularly evident in the answering of Section A and the mandatory question in Section B. It was also noted that more candidates are now selecting at least two Food Studies questions in Section B.
- In Section C, an increasing majority, approximately 84 %, are opting for Elective 3, Social Studies. The small number of candidates selecting Elective 2, Textiles, Fashion and Design, in general presented excellent answers, while the standard of answering on the Electives 1 and 3 was broadly similar to other sections of the examination.
- Two main areas of weakness noted this year include careless reading/misinterpreting of examination questions and candidates identifying correct points of information but not elaborating on the points as specified in the question. Candidates need to ensure that they give the "how" or the "why" for each point to merit full marks.

## 6.5 Recommendations to Teachers and Students

- Students should be encouraged to read the question carefully and pay particular attention to the wording of the question. Some students find it useful to underline the key words in questions.
- The benefit of planning responses cannot be overstated. Students should note the key points to be addressed and then formulate answers around the key points identified. Have regard to the mark allocation; a twenty mark allocation generally requires answers to have four /five distinctive points with no overlap evident.
- Students should avoid essay-style answers but also be mindful of the importance of giving an expanded answer where required – particularly when the following question cues are used: ‘give and account’, ‘discuss’, ‘analyse’, ‘elaborate’. One of the main reasons for loss of marks is not that students do not know the answer but that many answers are incomplete and do not include adequate discussion, elaboration or explanation.
- When studying the course students should pay particular attention to the main headings under which content is presented and ensure that they fully understand what information is relevant under each heading.
- Students should practise answering the different question types. In Section A, answers should be factually accurate and clearly explained where required. In Section B, Question 1, students should be familiar with the different types of charts and tables of information that are generally used. Information given must be accurately interpreted and all aspects of the question responded to in a coherent and concise manner. The last part of Question B1 examines candidates’ ability to apply their knowledge of Food and Consumer Studies. Students should carefully analyse what is being asked and responses should be formulated and elaborated on using at least five key headings.
- When selecting optional questions it is important to read the entire question. It was noted this year that some who attempted Question B3 were unable to answer the second part, resulting in those candidates having to attempt an additional question.
- It is essential that students are familiar with the name and question number of the elective that has been studied. Each year a number of candidates select parts of different elective questions and lose substantial marks as a consequence.
- From a practical viewpoint students should be reminded of the following:
  - to write their candidate numbers on the examination paper (as it includes Section A), on the answer book and on any supplementary answer book used, and ensure that all are securely attached together with a treasury tag supplied by the centre superintendent
  - to start each question on a new page
  - to check that all parts of relevant questions have been attempted

- to allow for ten minutes at the end to read over paper and amend as necessary
- Teachers and students should familiarise themselves with the published marking schemes and the Chief Examiner's Report to assist them in preparing for examinations. These are available on the State Examinations Commission website. [www.examinations.ie](http://www.examinations.ie)