



**Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit
State Examinations Commission**

JUNIOR CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION 2006

HOME ECONOMICS

ORDINARY LEVEL CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT

HIGHER LEVEL CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Syllabus

The current syllabus for Home Economics was introduced to the Junior Cycle curriculum in 1992 and was first examined in the Junior Certificate 1995. The syllabus is offered at two levels, Higher Level and Ordinary Level.

The syllabus structure comprises:

- a common core of five areas of study
- an optional study, from a choice of three

The core consists of five areas of study with the following weightings:

- Food Studies and Culinary Skills (40%)
- Consumer Studies (15%)
- Social and Health Studies (10%)
- Resource Management and Home Studies (10%)
- Textile Studies (10%)

One optional study with a weighting of 15% is chosen from the following three:

- Childcare
- Design and Craftwork
- Textile Skills

1.2 The Examination

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

- **Written examination** – of two hours and thirty minutes duration at Higher Level and two hours duration at Ordinary Level.
- **Food and Culinary Skills examination** – a practical examination, of one hour and thirty minutes duration, carried out in the presence of an examiner appointed by the State Examinations Commission (SEC).

- **Optional Study Project Work** – chosen from one of three areas of study:
 - (i) Childcare
 - (ii) Design and Craftwork
 - (iii) Textile Skills

Project work is examined in school by examiners appointed by the SEC.

Table 1: Marks allocated to each component of the Junior Certificate Home Economics Examination.

Examination Component	Higher Level		Ordinary Level	
	Marks	%	Marks	%
Written Examination	300	50	240	40
Food and Culinary Skills	210	35	270	45
Optional Study Project work	90	15	90	15
TOTAL	600	100	600	100

1.3 Candidature

Table 2: Number and percentage of candidates taking Junior Certificate Home Economics for the 4 year period 2003 to 2006.

Year	Junior Certificate Candidates	Home Economics Candidates	% taking Home Economics	Higher Level		Ordinary Level	
				Candidates	%	Candidates	%
2003	59,340	20,224	34.1%	15,187	75%	5,037	25%
2004	56,865	19,604	34.5%	14,390	73%	5,214	27%
2005	56,640	19,833	35%	14,619	74%	5,190	26%
2006	57,784	20,416	35.3%	15,412	75%	5,004	25%

15,412 candidates took the examination at Higher Level in 2006 while 5,004 candidates took the Ordinary Level. This shows an increase in the percentage of candidates taking Home Economics at Higher Level as compared with 2004 and 2005.

2. PERFORMANCE OF CANDIDATES

Tables 3 and 4 show the percentages of candidates achieving each grade in the Higher Level and Ordinary Level Home Economics examinations from 2003 to 2006.

Table 3: Percentage breakdown of candidates by grade awarded in Ordinary Level Home Economics, 2003 to 2006.

Year	Total	A	B	C	D	E	F	NG
2003	5,037	2.2%	36.5%	43.1%	13.4%	2.7%	1.4%	0.6%
2004	5,214	2.1%	39%	42%	12.6%	2.4%	1.2%	0.7%
2005	5,190	3.1%	42.2%	40.5%	11.3%	1.8%	0.8%	0.2%
2006	5,004	1.9%	41%	41.5%	10.7%	3.3%	1.0%	0.7%

- Although the % of A grades decreased in 2006, the combined ABC grade is in line with the mean ABC grades obtained in 2003-2005.

Table 4: Percentage breakdown of candidates by grade awarded in Higher Level Home Economics, 2003 to 2006.

Year	Total	A	B	C	D	E	F	NG
2003	15,187	11%	46.9%	34%	7.3%	0.5%	0.1%	0.1%
2004	14,390	13.4%	51.8%	28.9%	5.4%	0.3%	0.1%	0.0%
2005	14,619	12.8%	53.4%	29.2%	4.4%	0.2%	0.1%	0.0%
2006	15,412	13.7%	50.5%	30%	5.4%	0.3%	0.1%	0.0%

- 64.2% of candidates achieved a grade B or higher in 2006, which is broadly similar to the mean A+B grades obtained in 2003-2005.
- The % of A grades has increased since 2003.

3. FOOD AND CULINARY SKILLS EXAMINATION

3.1 Introduction

The Food and Culinary Skills examination accounts for 35% of total marks at Higher Level and 45% of total marks at Ordinary Level. The format and conduct of the examination is common to both levels as is the assessment criteria and mark allocation. Candidates are marked out of 100 and the total marks are adjusted by the SEC at a later stage in line with the respective mark weightings.

The SEC issued the 2006 Food and Culinary Skills Tasks to schools in advance of the examination. Each candidate was required to draw a task from the given list of seven, two weeks prior to the examination, under the supervision of the Home Economics teacher. Each candidate was required to complete a practical examination based on the relevant task in the presence of an examiner appointed by the SEC. Candidates were required to present evidence of preparatory research and planning and to carry out a short written evaluation of the task at the examination

3.2 Performance of Candidates

Table 5: Percentages of candidates achieving each grade in Food and Culinary Skills examination from 2003 to 2006. (These figures are based on returns from Advising Examiners)

	A	B	C	D	E	F	NG	TOTAL
2003	5520	9789	3706	708	51	10	0	19,784
	27.9%	49.5%	18.7%	3.6%	0.3%	0.1%	0%	
2004	5863	9426	3285	614	55	12	1	19,256
	30.4%	49%	17.1%	3.2%	0.3%	0.1%	0%	
2005	6077	9736	3110	570	51	6	1	19,551
	31.1%	49.8%	15.9%	2.9%	0.3%	0%	0%	
2006	6298	9614	3339	659	56	4	0	19,968
	31.5%	48.1%	16.7%	3.3%	0.3%	0%	0%	

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

3.3 Analysis of Candidate Performance

The analysis of candidates' performance in the different aspects of this examination is best read in conjunction with the marking scheme attached in Appendix 1. Candidates are marked out of a total of 100 marks, with marks allocated as follows:

- **Planning and Preparation:** 20 marks
- **Implementation:** 50 marks
- **Presentation and Evaluation:** 30 marks

Planning and Preparation

Under this heading, marks are awarded for Analysis and Planning /Preparation.

The standard of written work presented varied widely from excellent to very poor. However, the majority of candidates scored high marks for their analysis, planning and preparation. In a small number of instances the written work presented by candidates showed remarkable similarity. In some centres, pro-forma templates for the written work were outdated, did not contain all the necessary headings, for example relating to evaluation. A small number of candidates presented no written work at all.

▪ **Analysis**

Identification of factors involved

Many candidates scored full marks having analysed the task carefully and presented evidence of research and investigation into the key factors. Marks were lost when candidates failed to identify factors specific to the task being analysed. The specific requirements of some tasks were sometimes omitted in the analysis, e.g. the cost comparison in Task 4, the table setting in Task 6 and the suitable drink in Task 7. Though material factors were often given, human factors were seldom mentioned.

Investigation of possible solutions / dishes and equipment to meet the brief

The majority of investigations of possible solutions were excellent. Marks were lost where the solutions considered did not meet the key requirements of the brief, e.g. incomplete main courses. In some centres only one possible solution was suggested.

Decision making / solutions

The solution/s chosen by candidates generally satisfied the stated criteria of the task, was written in 'menu' form and included relevant reasons for choice. Sometimes

solutions did not fully meet the given brief, e.g. in some instances the ‘complete main course’ chosen was not nutritionally balanced. In some cases, the reasons for choice did not always extend to all aspects of the task e.g. the ‘suitable drink’ in Task 7.

- **Planning / Preparation**

Time Plans – the standard of time plans varied considerably; some were too detailed while others were simply a rehash of the recipe. Some candidates set out detailed work sequences related to making the dish but did not include reference to other associated tasks such as time for wash up, table setting, tasting and evaluation.

Lists of ingredients and equipment – marks were lost by candidates who presented incomplete lists of ingredients or/and equipment e.g. candidates who omitted the ingredients for one dish or who made no reference to requirements such as freezing packaging, table setting and/or serving.

Costing – marks were lost when candidates failed to give unit costing where required in Task 4.

Advance preparation of ingredients and equipment – generally a good variety of fresh ingredients was used. However, some difficulties were encountered in providing fresh fish. Generally candidates were adequately prepared for examination. However, in a minority of instances there was evidence of over preparation. For example, tins were greased and / or lined beforehand, oven temperatures were pre-set, potatoes were peeled, cheese was grated, and tomatoes were skinned. Some candidates, who had over prepared, did not have sufficient opportunity to demonstrate their skills during the examination. Some evidence of inadequate preparation was also encountered e.g. candidates who did not have the necessary ingredients and equipment, or who did not have ingredients weighed in advance. Others had problems lighting ovens and in some instances ovens were not in good working order.

Organisation of work place – the majority of work tables were tidy and organised with all their requirements. Candidates generally demonstrated good organisational skills in relation to workstations, equipment and ingredients.

An example of good practice was that most work tables were clearly labelled with candidates' examination numbers, task numbers and chosen dish/es.

Personal hygiene, appropriate dress

Candidates were generally well groomed and conscious of hygiene and safety requirements. However, some candidates wore high heels, and long hair was not always tied back or covered.

Implementation

Under this heading marks are awarded for Culinary Skills, Application of Cooking Principles, Resource Management, and Hygiene and Safety

- **Culinary Skills**

There was a wide variation in the standard of culinary skills from centre to centre and, in some instances, within centres. Many competent candidates achieved high marks in this area, demonstrating a high level of dexterity in the use of food preparation equipment, and excellent manipulative skills such as peeling, dicing, kneading and rolling. It was evident that these candidates were well practised in practical work and they selected dishes that were appropriate to their level of skill. A minority of candidates chose to cook very simple recipes requiring few skills. A small percentage of candidates demonstrated little knowledge of how to make the dish they had selected and examples of very poor cleaning, peeling, dicing of vegetables and assembly of dishes were evident. In some cases, pastry and bread making skills – rubbing in, kneading and rolling, were also poorly executed. It was noted that some simple dishes provided little opportunity for demonstrating skills and the skill factor was particularly low where a lot of the work had been carried out in advance of the examination. In other instances candidates chose very elaborate dishes, which were beyond the scope of the candidate and the requirements of the brief. Marks were therefore lost in the area of skills. Examiners commented favourably on the wide selection of dishes presented this year. Many candidates

demonstrated good research and decision making skills in the selection of dishes and a high level of individual flair and creativity in their cooking and presentation.

- **Application of Cooking Principles**

In general, appropriate cooking methods were used and food was well cooked. However, some candidates demonstrated poor skills and judgement in the application of cooking principles e.g. not adequately heating or overheating oil for sautéing or frying, not using lids on saucepans when simmering, boiling rather than simmering or poaching, using the incorrect method for stir-frying etc. The perennial problem of undercooked minced meat dishes was also encountered. The lack of practical class work was evident in some centres and marks were lost for poor temperature control, timing and judgement.

- **Resource Management**

The economical use of ingredients and resources was generally evident this year. Many centres had facilities for separating waste, and candidates were well practiced in this aspect of resource management. However, some candidates lost marks where there was wastage of ingredients and resources e.g. over peeling of fruit and vegetables, discarding left over fruit, vegetables or pastry, and washing under a running tap. Some candidates forget to turn off ovens and rings after use. Time management was an issue for candidates who chose very simple recipes and thus did not have enough work to do for the duration of the examination. Equally, candidates who selected complex time-consuming dishes lost some marks as they had difficulty finishing on time. However, the majority of candidates finished the examination on time with wash up and evaluation completed.

- **Hygiene and Safety**

The majority of candidates demonstrated safe and hygienic work practices thus scoring very good to excellent marks here.

Presentation and Evaluation

Under this heading marks are awarded for Appearance, Flavour and Taste, and Evaluation.

- **Appearance**

There was a wide variation in the standard of presentation of dishes. Some dishes were garnished simply yet appropriately and creatively, others were not garnished at all and as a result candidates lost marks. In some cases 'oven-to-table' serving dishes were not cleaned prior to presentation. Candidates would benefit from more practice in the preparation of simple, appropriate garnishes and food presentation skills. Most candidates correctly presented the entire dish along with all the food they prepared and cooked. Most dishes were adequately cooked, few were either under-cooked or over-cooked.

- **Flavour and Taste**

The majority of dishes presented were adequately cooked and well flavoured. There were some examples of fish dishes that were not fully cooked. In cases where flavour was poor, either candidates did not allow sufficient cooking time, or they did not taste the food and adjust seasoning before serving. The consistency and texture of foods served were correct in most cases with the exception of some soups. Cutlery for tasting was supplied at most units or organised by the housekeeper. The importance of hygienic tasting practices by candidates should be constantly reinforced in practical classes.

- **Evaluation**

There continues to be room for improvement in the standard of skills demonstrated by candidates in the area of evaluation. Evaluations ranged from very weak to very good – there were few excellent evaluations. Some candidates were obviously well practiced and scored well by writing concise evaluations which referred to their skills and performance and to all aspects of the task undertaken e.g. table setting was mentioned for Task 6. However, in general, candidates only evaluated the finished dish/es and did not refer to the other requirements of the brief. Obvious problems

were not always identified and/or modifications proposed. Some candidates did not evaluate their second dish or the table setting. Many evaluations consisted of brief one or two word comments under headings (e.g. taste – nice, colour – brown), and these were completed hurriedly in the final minutes of the examination. Some pre-designed evaluation sheets were of assistance to weaker candidates but these may disadvantage candidates where headings relevant to the key aspects of the task are omitted. A small number of candidates did not present an evaluation, mainly due to poor time management. A few evaluations were found to be completed, or partially completed, beforehand.

Good Practice Identified

- Having hair tied back, jewellery removed and hands washed at the commencement of the examination
- Having examination numbers, task numbers and name/s of selected dishes displayed at units
- Selecting appropriate and varied dishes for each task
- Using suitable equipment correctly e.g. chopping knife for chopping, peelers for peeling etc.
- Using fresh ingredients and keeping convenience foods to a minimum
- Skilful ‘rubbing in’ method when making scones
- Good pastry making technique
- Safe and efficient use of modern food preparation appliances
- Close observation of items being cooked on hobs or in ovens, accurate temperature control of hob and oven
- Safe work practices e.g. saucepan handles safely turned in
- Good organisation of tables and hygienic procedures
- Table settings completed to a very high standard
- Economical work practices e.g. leftover food wrapped and stored for future use, correct separation/disposal of waste
- Care taken to serve dishes in clean tableware, with simple attractive garnishes and decorations

- Good time management

Common Weaknesses

- Over preparation e.g. tins greased/lined, cheese grated
- Wasteful work practices e.g., when peeling vegetables and fruit, and trimming meat and fish
- Overuse of convenience products e.g. ready grated cheese and sauce mixes
- Over heating and under heating of oil when sautéing meat or vegetables
- Using excessive amounts of water when boiling vegetables
- Poor temperature control when simmering food. Saucepan lids not used where appropriate
- Overcooking vegetables, pasta and stir fry and undercooking potatoes
- Poor seasoning of dishes
- Poor consistency of soups
- Not allowing sufficient time for evaluations
- Incomplete evaluations -describing the dish rather than critically evaluating the whole task

FOOD AND CULINARY SKILLS TASKS 2006

Task 1 - 'Bread and Scones'

This task was generally well carried out by candidates, however in a small number of instances kneading and rolling skills were of a poor standard. A good variety of breads were produced including white and brown 'wet' mixes, multi seed, ginger bread, banana bread and tomato breads. A range of both sweet and savoury scones was also produced e.g. brown/white tea scones, berry and fruit scones, and cheese and herb scones. In a small number of instances rock buns and coconut buns were also presented.

Task 2 - 'Fresh Fruit and Vegetables'

Responses to this task were excellent where candidates made appropriate and careful choices of dishes. The task afforded candidates an opportunity to demonstrate a range of skills e.g. chopping, dicing, and slicing and to prepare and present a great variety of hot and cold dishes. Generally, an adequate variety of fresh fruit and vegetables was used, however, the quantity used was excessive in a minority of instances and consequently candidates spent far too much time chopping and dicing etc. The range of soups presented included: vegetable, leek and potato, carrot and coriander, mushroom, and tomato. Soup flavour was generally good but the consistency was not always correct. The fruit dishes were many and varied, hot and cold e.g. fruit salads, fruit crumbles and tarts.

Task 3 - 'Fish'

Examiners reported that candidates' performance in carrying out this task had improved somewhat, with more interesting dishes attempted this year compared with previous years. Good skills were observed and excellent marks were earned in the production of creamy fish pies, chowders, fish cakes, Thai fish cakes, crunchy pasta fish bakes, fish kebabs and quiches. However, some candidates presented tomato fish bake, where convenience food was overused and few skills were shown. It was noted that few candidates attempted to cut, bone or skin fish.

Task 4 - 'Pastry'

This task received a positive response because of the wide range of dishes which could meet the brief. Solutions included apple tart, mince pies, apple cobs, bakewell tart, and a variety of quiche and sausage rolls. Skills were much improved this year in general but the rules for making pastry were not always followed. Pastry was sometimes too wet and kneading and rolling was often very poorly done. Evaluations did not always include a comparison of cost, as required.

Task 5 - 'Freezer'

The chosen dishes for this task were generally successfully executed by the majority of candidates. Complete meals chosen included lasagne, shepherd's pie, chicken curry and rice, chicken tikkas and rice, minced meat casserole and pasta bakes.

Candidates often omitted reference to freezer packaging / labelling or to suitability of foods for freezing. Some candidates demonstrated poor skill when sautéing meat or onions. Presentation was not always good or well planned.

Task 6 - 'Traditional Irish'

There was mixed feedback in relation to this task. Some felt that it provided little opportunity for flair or imaginative dishes while others enjoyed presenting dishes such as Irish stew, Gaelic chicken, Dublin or Wicklow Coddle, cottage pie, Dingle quiche, Kinsale kebabs, colcannon with sausage and rasher. Skills were generally very good. However, stews were not always cooked sufficiently, particularly when too large a quantity was prepared. In general, table settings were well done but not always mentioned in analysis, planning or evaluation. Examiners noted that this task was not attempted in certain centres.

Task 7 - 'Pre-school Children or Teenagers'

Candidates enjoyed carrying out this task and it was generally well executed with a good range of dishes and drinks presented. Candidates did not always mention in their written material which group they were cooking for, or the dietary needs of the particular individual. A two course 'menu' was not always given in the analysis nor was a 'nourishing drink' mentioned in some instances. Pizza 'faces', spaghetti Bolognese, cheese and potato pie, cheese and pasta bake, shepherd's pie, cottage pie and chicken curries were often presented. 'Smoothies' were by far the most popular drinks; however, candidates did not always refer to the drink in the evaluation.

3.4 Conclusions

- Candidates generally demonstrated satisfactory levels of culinary skills.
- Many competent candidates demonstrated a high level of dexterity in the use of food preparation equipment and excellent manipulative skills such as peeling, dicing, kneading and rolling.
- Some candidates demonstrated poor levels of skills in the areas of pastry and bread making and in the assembly and presentation of dishes.
- The dishes selected by some candidates did not give them sufficient opportunity to demonstrate their level of skill and did not allow them to make effective use of the time available for the examination.
- Over preparation in advance of the examination resulted in some candidates having too little to do during the examination.
- Temperature control (especially with gas cookers), timing and accurate judgement posed difficulties for some candidates.
- High standards of safety and hygiene were generally in evidence.
- Evaluations were often poor and incomplete. This is an area requiring particular attention.

3.5 Recommendations to Teachers and Students

- Teachers should continue to emphasise the importance of safe and hygienic work practices in practical classes.
- Students should learn how to control temperature in ovens and hobs, in both electric and gas cookers.
- Students should practice food presentation skills and the preparation of simple garnishes.
- Students should select dishes/solutions for the tasks which allow them sufficient opportunity to demonstrate their skills and make good use of the time available for the examination.
- Students should avoid over preparing materials in advance of the practical examination.
- Schools should ensure that cookers and other equipment are in good working order for the examination.
- Students should be guided in the area of evaluation. They should practise evaluating their work as an integral part of practical classes
- Students should allow sufficient time in their work plans for completing the evaluation of the task. Evaluations should be a critical evaluation of the complete task including second dishes and table setting where applicable.

4. OPTIONAL STUDY PROJECT WORK

4.1 Introduction

Each candidate is required to complete a project chosen from one of the three following areas:

- (i) Childcare
- (ii) Design and Craftwork
- (iii) Textile Skills

The optional study project work, which represents 15% of the total examination at both Higher Level and Ordinary Level, is examined in school by examiners appointed by the SEC. There is no level differentiation in the assessment of the project work. All candidates are marked out of a total of 100 marks and the marks of candidates are adjusted in line with the 15% weighting at a later stage.

Table 6: Number and percentages of candidates presenting project work in each option in 2006.

Optional Study Project Work			
Year	Option	No. of Candidates	%
2006	Childcare	5265	26.6
	Design and Craft	14158	71.0
	Textile Skills	489	2.4
TOTAL		19909	100

4.2 CHILDCARE

4.2.1 Performance of Candidates

Table 7: Percentages of candidates achieving each grade in the Childcare option from 2003 to 2006. (These figures are based on returns from Advising Examiners)

Childcare								
Grade								
	A	B	C	D	E	F	NG	TOTAL
2003	1841	2239	1705	966	199	34	3	6987
	23.2%	31.0%	25.9%	16.0%	3.4%	0.6%	0.0%	
2004	1649	1946	1545	846	203	23	4	6216
	26.5%	31.3%	24.9%	13.6%	3.3%	0.4%	0.1%	
2005	1585	1845	1335	685	170	26	3	5649
	26.2%	33.3%	24.7%	12.3%	3.0%	0.4%	0.0%	
2006	1529	1591	1230	677	194	41	3	5265
	29.0%	30.2%	23.4%	12.9%	3.7%	0.8%	0.1%	

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

The wide range of Childcare projects presented for examination in 2006 focused on the following topics and related themes:

- The role of music in child development.
- The role of play / toys / books in a child's development
- Factors that shape a child's behaviour and how behaviour shapes development
- Child development 0 to 24 months
- Case studies on individual children
- Development of a child with autism / diabetes / obesity
- Physical, social and emotional development of a baby
- Development of language
- The role of Montessori School / playschool
- Food / nutrition / diet and physical development in children
- Childhood illnesses and development
- Fostering
- Pre-school childcare
- Children with special needs
- Stages of intellectual development
- Designing a nursery to promote early development
- Children's toys that aid child development
- Development of teeth
- Role of children's television programmes in child development

4.2.2 Analysis of Candidate Performance

The detailed analysis of candidates' performance in the different aspects of this examination is best read in conjunction with the marking scheme and marking criteria attached in Appendix 2.

General

The standard of project work varied from centre to centre and within centres. The majority of projects ranged from very good to excellent and were clearly focused on an aspect of child development, as required. Candidates, who achieved high grades, chose suitable topics and presented project work which met the requirements of the marking scheme. The majority of projects were well organised with index, aims, good research methods, content, conclusions and bibliography. Some projects were far too long, and clearly exceeded the recommended 15% time allocation for this component. Some candidates submitted unnecessary supplementary material.

In a small number of cases, projects were transcribed from leaflets, books or the Internet with little by way of analysis or personal interpretation. Some centres presented almost identical projects and in some instances it was evident that the work presented was not the candidate's own individual work.

Aim of Project

Aims were generally relevant and clearly expressed. Some of the best projects had aims that focused on a particular time span e.g. the development of a baby from 0-6 months. This gave the candidates concerned a definite focus and very often the work that followed was to the point, relevant, interesting and original. Some projects had aims that did not relate to any aspect of child development e.g. child safety products, car seats, while others focussed on the mother only e.g. breast feeding and bottle feeding. In some instances the aims were too broad and unfocussed.

Research Methodology / Problem Analysis

There was evidence of some excellent research in much of the work submitted. Many candidates used a variety of appropriate research methods e.g. Internet sites were named,

book titles and authors named, magazines /leaflets and brochures sourced and researched, interviews prepared and recorded, and information gathered from visits to various places. Some questionnaires and interviews were very well planned, designed and analysed. In these instances, candidates displayed exceptional analytical skills for their age. Some marks were lost when candidates did not give sources or when only one research method was used.

Content

The depth of treatment of the chosen topic was generally very good, and excellent in some instances. Generally the information presented was accurate. In some instances marks were lost when the content was not totally relevant to the aim e.g. projects where child development was mentioned in the aims but went on to deal with topics such as 'travel systems' or 'safety in the home' with no effort made to relate these topics to child development. There was a lack of depth of treatment in some projects where content was concentrated on book/leaflet research, with a tendency to transcribe information directly from these sources without analysis.

Conclusions

Conclusions were often vague and inconclusive. This continues to be an area for improvement. Many candidates gave three points, but the points were not always well developed or drawn from the information gathered or related to the stated aims. Candidates scored well when they used information gained through their research to good advantage in their conclusions.

Originality

Originality was at its best in projects based on case studies of a particular child or group of children. The lowest marks went to projects comprising information which was cut out of leaflets and books and stuck into a folder with little or no commentary on the part of the candidate. There was generally little evidence of originality where class groups worked on the same topic, used the same resources, and undertook the same research.

Presentation

The standard of presentation was generally very good. Whether projects were hand-written or prepared on a word processor, they were well laid out, colourful and easy to read. Many candidates made good use of photographs to illustrate the subject of their projects.

4.3 DESIGN AND CRAFTWORK

4.3.1 Performance of Candidates

Table 8: Percentages of candidates achieving each grade in the Design and Craftwork option from 2003 to 2006. (These figures are based on returns from Advising Examiners))

Design and Craftwork								
Grade								
	A	B	C	D	E	F	NG	TOTAL
2003	3590	4563	2475	869	202	60	12	11861
	30.6%	39%	21%	7.2%	1.7%	0.5%	0.1%	
2004	3888	4662	2422	940	239	101	30	12282
	31.7%	38%	19.7%	7.7%	1.9%	0.8%	0.2%	
2005	4113	5110	2723	1005	249	101	14	13315
	30.9%	38.4%	20.5%	7.5%	1.9%	0.8%	0.1%	
2006	4608	5164	2821	1140	270	125	30	14158
	32.5%	36.5%	19.9%	8.1%	1.9%	0.9%	0.2%	

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

The wide range of Design and Craftwork projects presented for examination in 2006 included the following crafts and products:

Crafts		Products / Items	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross stitch • Patchwork • Appliqué • Knitting • Hand embroidery • Machine embroidery • Macramé 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rug work • Toy making • Doll making • Crochet • Tapestry • Trapunto • Quilting • Lace making • Smocking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pictures • Cushion covers • Wall hangings • Soft toys • Blankets • Activity mats • Table runners • Table cloths • Quilts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand bags • Mobiles • Rugs • Oven gloves • Lamp shades • Laundry bags • Aprons • Scarves, hats • Jumpers

4.3.2 Analysis of Candidate Performance

The detailed analysis of candidates' performance in the different aspects of this examination is best read in conjunction with the detailed marking scheme and marking criteria attached in Appendix 3.

General

The popularity of the Design and Craftwork option continues to grow from year to year. The standard of work presented and the level of creativity demonstrated by candidates also continue to improve. The standard of skill in the work presented ranged from good to outstanding with ample craft processes warranting high marks. Many candidates combined two or three crafts in one product. However, it was clear from the quantity of the work produced, that many candidates are spending more than the recommended 15% time allocation on this option. The majority of centres concentrated on one craft e.g. patchwork or hand stitched appliqué and many produced the same item e.g. a cushion cover or wall hanging. A simple craft, well chosen and executed by the candidate is far more beneficial than attempting a complex craft with limited skills.

The overall standard of design folders was generally excellent. However, there continues to be a lot of similarity in the written work presented by candidates from within the some centres and this is not satisfactory. In some instances candidates presented identical designs, work plans and evaluations. Examiners also noted that there was a lot of unnecessary detail in some folders e.g. sewing tips, rules for buying fabric, diagrams of the sewing machine etc. In some cases, the design folders and craft item did not correspond in standard e.g. a high standard in the design folder and a low standard of craft, or vice versa.

DESIGN FOLDER

Problem and Analysis

The design process was followed by the majority of candidates. Examiners commented that some briefs were not clear and others did not allow sufficient scope for investigation. For example, where the brief stated the craft to be undertaken, e.g.

appliqué, this limits the potential for investigating other solutions/crafts. In the majority of cases, however, the standard of analysis was excellent with alternative crafts and solutions fully researched and investigated. It was noted that the brief, the analysis and the key requirements were often very similar within a centre. In some instances, solutions and designs/drawings were not always fully developed – For example, a page from a child’s colouring book was presented as the design with no alternatives or modifications suggested. Marks were lost by candidates who did not work to a stated brief, whose ideas were not well-analysed, researched or investigated, and where alternative solutions were either omitted or inadequate.

Solution

When traditional Irish crafts were presented by candidates, the history of the craft was generally included. Some candidates relied on commercial designs without any personal input or proposed modifications. Some candidates presented excellent diagrams of patterns, although, in many instances, drawings could have been more detailed. Lists of materials and equipment were usually complete. However, the standard of work plans and diagrams of techniques could be improved.

Evaluation

Some candidates did not refer to the craft or to the brief in their evaluation and thus lost marks. Other evaluations were only a sentence or two e.g. “I liked my project because...” These evaluations were descriptive rather than a critical appraisal of the chosen craft or the finished product. Proposed modifications were often omitted. Where the design brief given was inadequate or inappropriate, candidates found it difficult to evaluate the finished item in terms of meeting the brief.

PRODUCT

Meeting the Brief / Suitability

The solutions selected by candidates were generally appropriate to the stated briefs. The majority of candidates used materials which were suitable for the function of the items. However, in a small number of instances candidates made some unsuitable choices of

material for the craftwork concerned e.g. felt appliquéd onto lightweight polyester fabric.

Application of Skills

Skills ranged from satisfactory to consistently excellent. Some work was presented with insufficient craft skills e.g. transfer dyeing using crayons with only a little embroidery. Some embroidered pictures were made mainly using one stitch with only the occasional backstitch or French knot used as the second stitch. Some work was difficult to mark because the candidates used a variety of crafts on the one item without identifying which craft/s they had chosen. In these cases, the standard was described by examiners as mediocre. It was also obvious that some candidates who undertook machine appliqué used sewing machines which were not suited to this work.

Design Features

Most items presented were aesthetically pleasing with good use of colour and design. Many demonstrated a high level of individual flair and creativity. However, work that had been completed directly from commercial kits was often presented without the required design or creative input on the part of the candidate. Some work showed little creativity and flair in terms of design, texture, craft or colour.

Quality of Product

The standard of finish varied from excellent to very poor. The latter standard was characterised by poor finishing of threads, pencil marks used for the design still visible, messy and untidy work. Some unfinished work was also presented. Complicated craftwork does not always get the highest marks as the candidates may not be able to achieve a high standard in the work and may not have sufficient time to finish the product. This was particularly evident with lace work and with complicated patchwork.

4.4 TEXTILE SKILLS

4.4.1 Performance of Candidates

Table 9: Percentages of candidates achieving each grade in the Textile Skills option from 2003 to 2006. (These figures are based on returns from Advising Examiners)

Textile Skills								
Grade								
	A	B	C	D	E	F	NG	TOTAL
2003	76	317	154	40	14	9	2	812
	37.6%	35.0%	20.6%	3.0%	2.8%	0.8%	0.2%	
2004	253	254	78	28	0	6	0	619
	40.9%	41%	12.6%	4.5%	0%	1%	0%	
2005	195	189	70	16	1	0	0	471
	41.4%	40.1%	14.9%	3.4%	0.2%	0	0	
2006	229	185	55	14	5	1	0	489
	46.8%	37.8%	11.2%	2.9%	1%	0.2%	0%	

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

The range of Textile Skills projects presented for examination in 2006 included the following products and processes:

Products	Processes
• Denim skirts with zip opening	• Buttonholes
• Dresses for young children	• Darts
• Children's jumpsuits	• Waistbands
• Toddler's 2 piece outfits	• Facings
• Trousers	• Zips
• Tops and shorts	• Pockets
• Evening dresses	• Bias binding
• Dressing gowns	
• Shirts	

4.4.2 Analysis of Candidate Performance

The detailed analysis of candidates' performance in the different aspects of this examination is best read in conjunction with the detailed marking scheme and marking criteria attached in Appendix 4.

General

Some excellent garments were presented with the required number of processes and with good support study folders. The standard of skills ranged from good to excellent.

ITEM/S OF CLOTHING

Suitability

There was a variety of suitable patterns used. There was also evidence of a lot of personal input on the part of the candidates who added features such as pockets or trimmings to their selected garments. Many candidates made excellent use of the sewing machine and the sewing processes chosen were suitable in most cases. Some garments involved insufficient processes and candidates lost marks as a result. Materials and fabric chosen were not always appropriate for the function of the garment. In some instances the materials and fabrics were difficult for candidates to work with, given their level of skill. In a minority of instances whole class groups used the same pattern and material, with only minimal variation on the part of individual candidates

Application of Skills

A standard of skills demonstrated by candidates was generally very high. Many garments were completed to an exceptionally high standard and it was clear that some demanded more than the recommended 15% time allocation. In a minority of cases the garments presented did not involve the minimum requirement of two processes, in addition to those required as part of basic garment construction.

Design / Fashion Features

Examiners commented favourably on candidates' application of design principles and attention to fashion appeal. Garments made for either teenagers or children were in keeping with current fashion trends, and were colourful, practical and hardwearing.

Quality of Product/s

Garments were generally clean, well pressed, finished to a high standard and wearable. In a minority of instances, unfinished items were presented, threads were not finished off and parts of the garments were somewhat grubby.

SUPPORT STUDY FOLDER

Support study folders were generally presented to a very high standard and included all the necessary information. Factors determining choice of garment, pattern details, fabric choice, cost and composition, equipment used and procedures followed were all well detailed. In a few cases, the factors determining choice of garment was omitted.

Some garments were made and finished to a very good standard but had no support study folders resulting in a loss of marks for the candidates concerned. The standards of evaluations varied with reference to garment finish and fit were often omitted.

4.5 Conclusions

- Projects presented were generally of a high standard.
- Many candidates demonstrated excellence in the areas of Design and Craftwork and Textile Skills.
- It was evident from some of the projects presented in all three optional areas, that candidates had exceeded the recommended 15% time allocation for this examination component.
- It was evident that some candidates were not aware of the examination requirements. For example, some candidates undertook only one method of research in the Childcare projects while only one process was undertaken by some candidates in the case of Textile Skills.
- In Design and Craftwork, some candidates chose products which did not allow them demonstrate sufficient skill in the craft area.
- There was evidence of transcription from leaflets, books and the Internet in the case of some of the written work presented. In some instances the sources of these materials were not credited.
- In a small number of cases whole centres presented almost identical projects and in some instances it was evident that the work presented was not the candidate's own individual work.

4.6 Recommendations to Teachers and Students

- Examination documentation, including the guidelines, marking schemes etc. should be carefully read by teachers and students.
- Students should select project work that can be completed within the 15% time allocation. Childcare projects should generally be kept within the 1500 word limit. In Design and Craftwork, simpler designs completed to a high standard are more beneficial than attempting large pieces of complicated craftwork.
- Students should be encouraged to use their own initiative in selecting and carrying out project work with the appropriate level of teacher guidance and support.
- The practice of transcribing large volumes of information from leaflets and books should be strongly discouraged by teachers.
- Students undertaking the Design and Craftwork option should be encouraged to use the design process.
- In Design and Craftwork and in Textile Skills, the practice of writing up support study folders after the item is made should be discouraged.
- Teachers should encourage creativity and originality in the selection of projects and in their execution.
- Students should learn how to draw conclusions from the results of investigations undertaken as part of their project work
- Students should learn how to critically evaluate their own work

5. ORDINARY LEVEL WRITTEN EXAMINATION

5.1 Introduction

The examination paper has two sections:

SECTION A (80 marks)

This section contains 20 short answer questions based on the five areas of study of the syllabus core. Candidates are required to answer 16 questions in the spaces provided on the examination paper. All questions in this section carry equal marks.

SECTION B (160 marks)

This section comprises 6 long answer questions based on the five areas of study of the syllabus core. Candidates are required to answer 4 questions in the spaces provided on the examination paper. All questions in this section carry equal marks.

The following detailed analysis of candidates' performance in the different sections of the examination, is best read in conjunction with the published marking schemes, which can be downloaded from www.examinations.ie

5.2 Performance of Candidates

Table 10: Summary of the results (%) obtained in the Ordinary Level, Written Examination 2006.

Year	Total	A	B	C	ABC	D	E	F	NG	EFNG
2006	4800	9.7	39.2	34.1	83	13.6	2.4	0.8	0.2	3.4

Note: *The grades here are indicative only. The grades awarded to candidates in Junior Certificate Home Economics are computed from the combined results of the relevant components completed by candidates.*

5.3 Analysis of Candidate Performance

Section A – Short Answer Questions (80 marks)

The majority of candidates answered all 20 questions. The average mark gained was 59. Questions 4, 13, 14, 19 were the least popular. Generally, sufficient detail was given in answering except where an explanation of a word or term was required.

Questions that were well answered in Section A

- Q.3** A good range of correct answers was generally given, including ‘low fat’, ‘soya’ and goat’s milk. However, brand names were sometimes given rather than types of milk.
- Q.7** There were very few mistakes made in answering this question.
- Q.12** This question was well interpreted by the majority with a good variety of appropriate guidelines given.
- Q.14** Candidates demonstrated a correct understanding of which type of waste was ‘organic’ and ‘inorganic’ and scored well in this question.
- Q.16** Candidates answered this question very well giving sufficient detail on both the cleaning and covering of the cut. The term ‘minor cut’ was well understood.

Questions that were poorly answered in Section A

- Q.1** Some candidates had difficulty naming two ‘sources’ of fat and many misinterpreted the term ‘source’ and instead gave the ‘classification’ of fats.
- Q.4** Candidates did not quite grasp what was being asked and many incorrectly listed items of equipment or types of containers that leftover food could be stored in.
- Q.5** Part (i) presented more of a problem than part (ii) as the term ‘rub-in’ was not widely understood. Candidates did not give sufficient information to explain the term.

Q.6 Candidates had difficulty with the term ‘credit’; however, the majority of candidates got one form of credit correct. Some candidates gave methods of payment rather than types of credit. Incorrect answers included cash, guarantee, deposit and receipt.

Q.9 The majority of candidates correctly named the symbol but did not give a detailed explanation thus losing marks.

Q.13 Most candidates misinterpreted this question. Most candidates confused ‘effects’ with ‘causes’.

Q.18 This was attempted by most candidates but few scored well. ‘Chain stitch’ was generally well known but ‘satin stitch’ was often confused with ‘stem stitch’.

Section B – Long Answer Questions (160 marks)

There was a variation in the standard of answering in Section B with candidates who read the questions carefully and gave focused and detailed answers scoring well. The majority of candidates attempted the required 4 questions, however many candidates continue to answer all 6 questions. The latter practice does not guarantee a better result as candidates tend to ‘cherry pick’ parts within questions, frequently omitting parts and thus lowering their overall marks.

Table 11: Response rate and Average mark per Question in Section B (Based on an analysis of the results of a Random Sample of 520 scripts).

Question	Response Rate %	Average Mark
1	88%	21
2	94%	21
3	99%	34
4	83%	24
5	78%	20
6	86%	23

Q.1

- (a) Answers given to this part were often just one word and lacking in explanation e.g. 'protein'. There was no depth of information given and candidates generally failed to provide three distinctly different reasons.
- (b) This part was very well answered – most candidates scored full marks here. The lunch menu given was generally nutritionally balanced with most candidates suggesting wholemeal bread, cheese and salad sandwiches. In a small number of instances marks were lost where the menu was not balanced or the drink was not named. A small number misread question and gave a dinner menu.
- (c) There was some weak answering here. Many candidates failed to give practical reasons and often gave examples of marketing ploys which are used to sell cheese.
- (d) This part was poorly answered – many gave brand names instead of cheese types.
- (e) The majority of candidates correctly interpreted this part and gave two well developed points.

Q.2

- (a) Parts (i) and (ii) were well answered showing that candidates read the label and correctly applied the information. Some candidates confused nutrients with ingredients in part (iii).
- (b) Part (i) was well answered though some omitted the 'gram'. Some vague answers were given in part (ii) indicating a poor understanding of fibre and ways to increase it. The most popular correct answers included: serving the soup with wholemeal bread or adding more fibre rich vegetables to it.
- (c) 'Garnishes' was often mistaken for seasonings or accompaniments to soup. Most were successful in naming one correct garnish.
- (d) This was the most poorly answered part of the question with insufficient detail given in most answers. Many confused advantages with disadvantages. There was a lot of repetition of points and evidence that candidates did not read the question carefully.

Q.3

- (a) This part was very well answered with a majority scoring full marks here.

- (b) Some good points of information given here but, equally, a tendency for candidates to give one word answers which were lacking explanation and sometimes repetitious e.g. 'image' and 'peer pressure'.
- (c) This part was very well answered by the vast majority. In a few cases the 'advantages' of smoking were given.
- (d) Candidates had an excellent understanding of this term.
- (e) Candidates recognised the symbol and demonstrated a very good awareness of the variety of places it would be displayed.

Q.4

- (a) The same reason was often repeated in a different way - 'protection' was most commonly mentioned.
- (b) Few candidates gave a correct 'advantage' but most gave a correct 'disadvantage'
- (c) There was a lot of repetition in many of the answers to this part of the question as well as some guess work. Candidates did not always give four different 'items of information'.
- (d) This part was excellently answered.

Q.5

- (a) Overall this question had the lowest standard of answering and was the least popular in Section B. Candidates often misinterpreted 'guidelines' and stated 'how to decorate a bedroom' as opposed to listing four appropriate guidelines.
- (b) Few got full marks here. Answers were poor quality especially when it came to giving a reason for each choice. Many had difficulty with the term 'wall finish'.
- (c) This part was very well answered generally, though 'beanbags' were often incorrectly listed.
- (d) Some original suggestions were given by the majority of candidates and many achieved maximum marks. The term 'personalise' was not understood by all candidates.

Q.6

- (a) Many of the answers to this part were repetitious and information was generally in the form of one word answers.

- (b) Candidates again did themselves a disservice here by not developing their answers.
- (c) Descriptions were generally poor. Reference was rarely made to colour and design resulting in a loss of marks. Sketches lacked creativity.
- (d) The term 'fashion trend' was often confused with 'fashion fad'.
- (e) This was generally poorly answered. The most popular answer was 'celebrities' with very few candidates giving two influences.

5.4 Conclusions

- This year the standard of answering overall showed an improvement on previous years. The number of candidates achieving less than a D grade was lower and there was a slight increase in the number achieving the combined ABC grade.
- In Section A the average mark attained was 58.95%. Examiners commented that questions were clear and precise and well spread across all areas of the syllabus. A high mark attainment in Section A contributes to a higher grade overall. Most candidates answered all twenty questions in this section.
- The examination paper was thought by examiners to be fair and well balanced with clear language appropriate to the level for this cohort of candidates.
- In Section B the majority of candidates attempted all six questions. The standard of answering across all questions varied from average to very good with the exception of Question 3 where candidates' answering was reported as excellent.
- Candidates neglected to read all questions carefully, did not fully comprehend them or misinterpreted them. This was apparent in the following questions – Section A Q's 1, 3, 6, 10, 13, 15; Section B Q's 1 and 5. Examiners reported that candidates who read the questions carefully generally presented well focused and developed answers.
- There was less evidence of candidates omitting questions, or parts thereof, than in previous years.
- Terminology posed difficulties for some candidates. Terms such as 'sources' 'effects' 'functions' 'guidelines' appeared to be misunderstood.
- Candidates continue to lose marks for answers which are not sufficiently developed. Candidates require further guidance and practice in giving more detailed answers and developing points of information when answering questions, particularly in Section B.

5.5 Recommendations to Teachers and Students

- Students should choose the level of examination with care so as to ensure that it is appropriate to their level of achievement.
- A detailed knowledge of all areas of the syllabus core is essential in order to score well in Section A. Candidates who achieve high marks in Section A tend to attain a high grade overall.
- An integrated approach to teaching and learning topics is essential as cross linkage is a feature of examination questions.
- Students should practise answering questions from past examination papers so as to ensure that the key aspects of the questions are understood and that their answers are well developed and focused.
- Teachers should emphasise to students the importance of reading questions carefully in order to answer accurately and relevantly. The practice of reading over answers before proceeding to the next question should also be encouraged.
- The terminology used on examination papers needs to be fully understood. All students need to be able to distinguish between commonly used question cues e.g. list, evaluate, describe, outline, etc.
- Time management is essential if the required number of questions is to be well answered. Candidates can only be credited with marks for the required number of questions. It is better to complete as fully as possible the required number of questions from each section, than to waste time doing parts of excess questions which are then disallowed.

- When approaching the examination, students should consider the following:
 - Have a general time plan for the examination. Do not spend too much time on Section A at the expense of the more heavily weighted long answer questions in Section B
 - read questions carefully, highlight key words to ensure answers are well focused
 - give detailed points of information where required – avoid one word answers particularly in Section B
 - use the information given in questions to maximum advantage e.g. labels, diagrams, etc.
 - refer back to the question continually in order to make sure the answer is relevant to the question
 - avoid repeating points of information within answers.

6. HIGHER LEVEL WRITTEN EXAMINATION

6.1 Introduction

The examination paper has two sections:

SECTION A (80 marks)

This section contains 24 short answer questions based on the five areas of study of the syllabus core. Candidates are required to answer 20 questions in the spaces provided on the examination paper. All questions in this section carry equal marks.

SECTION B (220 marks)

This section comprises of 6 long answer questions based on the five areas of study of the syllabus core. Candidates are required to answer 4 questions. All questions in this section carry equal marks.

The detailed analysis of candidates' performance in the different sections of the examination which follows, is best read in conjunction with the published marking scheme, which can be downloaded from www.examinations.ie

6.2 Performance of Candidates

Table 12: Summary of the results (%) obtained in the Higher Level, Written Examination 2006.

Year	Total	A	B	C	ABC	D	E	F	NG	EFNG
2006	15408	13.5	34.8	31.0	79.3	16.4	3.6	0.6	0.1	4.3

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

6.3 Analysis of Candidate Performance

Section A – Short Answer Questions (80 marks)

The majority of candidates answered all 24 questions. The average mark gained was 55. Questions 20 to 24 were the least popular and the most frequently disallowed.

Table 13: The Average Mark scored by candidates in Section A since 2000.

2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
58	62	54	57	64	59	55

Questions that were well answered in Section A

Q.12 Very few mistakes were made in answering this question. The most common incorrect answer was for ‘D’ where “cervix” was incorrectly given.

Q.14 The rights of the child were generally well known.

Q.18 A good range of correct answers were given to this question. The most common correct answers were: cost, location and adequate space.

Q.24 Waist and hip measurements were suggestions given though, in some cases, the words “length” and “height” were given and were awarded half marks.

Questions that were badly answered in Section A

Q.6 (i) An incomplete answer e.g. “mixture of fat and flour” or an incorrect answer e.g. “flour and water” was often given to this question.

Q.6 (ii) The term “sauté” was not clearly understood by many candidates. It was incorrectly thought to refer only to frying onions.

Q.11 (i) The function of arteries was often incorrectly explained as “pumping blood around the body.” Reference to oxygen in the blood was not made in a large percentage of answers.

- Q.11(ii)** The function of haemoglobin was poorly attempted. Many gave their interpretation of the word haemoglobin.
- Q.15** The purpose of a fuse was not well known and answers were generally vague.
- Q.21** The stitch illustrated in the diagram was not well known. Many confused the stitch with tacking and went on to explain that the stitch would be used to hold two pieces of material together.
- Q.22** A large percentage of candidates did not understand that this question related to the textile section of the course. For example, answers such as ‘a piece of long wheat’ was given as an explanation for ‘straight grain’. It was the least popular question in Section A.

Section B – Long Answer Questions (220 marks)

There was generally a high standard of answering in Section B and most candidates attempted the required four questions. However, 0.2% of candidates attempted less than four questions. This contributed to the number of candidates who achieved less than a D grade as many of these candidates attempted less than four questions. 49% of candidates attempted more than four questions.

Table 15: Response rate and Average mark per Question in Section B (based on an analysis of the results of a Random Sample of 920 scripts).

Question	Response Rate %	Average Mark
1	70%	44
2	69%	41
3	87%	42
4	83%	40
5	62%	35
6	28%	38

Q.1

- (a) The standard of evaluations given by candidates varied. A significant number of answers gained half marks or less as only a list of nutrients was given or the nutritional information was simply transcribed from the label without further comment or analysis. Candidates who gave a good comprehensive evaluation tended to gain a high mark overall.
- (b) (i) Most candidates correctly choose ‘fortified milk’ for a pregnant woman and ‘whole milk’ for an energetic child. Some incorrectly chose low fat or fortified milk for an energetic child.
(ii) Candidates generally made good use of the information on the label in order to give reasons for the choice of milk. Calcium and folic acid were cited for a pregnant woman but without sufficient explanation given in most cases. Milk high in calories or energy was the most common reason given for the choice of whole milk for an energetic child.
- (c) This part was very well attempted with the majority of candidates gaining full marks. The most common answer referred to ‘killing’ or ‘eliminating’ bacteria. Some candidates gave detailed answers on pasteurisation.
- (d) (i) Three dairy products were generally very well known. Some incorrectly listed chocolate and eggs.

- (ii) Attempts at suggesting ways to introduce more dairy products in the diet were disappointing.
- (e) An explanation of the term ‘fortified’ was the most common given by candidates and was generally well done. The small number of candidates who chose to explain the term ‘homogenised’ did so correctly.

Q.2

- (a) Almost all candidates gave three correct reasons why people may choose a vegetarian diet, thus gaining full marks.
- (b) (i) Many mentioned that a vegan diet is “strict” but did not clearly explain what foods are included in/excluded from a vegan diet.
(ii) There was confusion among many candidates as to what constitutes a lacto-vegetarian diet. Many incorrectly explained that this diet does not contain meat but does contain fish and chicken.
- (c) This proved to be the most difficult part of the question. Though the question asked for meal planning guidelines for a vegetarian, many candidates listed only general guidelines for meal planning and thus lost marks.
- (d) A three-course dinner menu was generally well done though marks were lost when the correct menu format was not used. In some instances, instead of giving a starter, main course and dessert, candidates gave a menu for breakfast, lunch and dinner for one day. A small percentage of candidates mistakenly included a meat dish or a fish dish in the main course of the dinner menu. Vegetarian Lasagne and Vegetable Stir Fry were the most popular correct main course dishes given. In quite a few cases, candidates neglected to give an accompaniment with the main course.
- (e) (i) There were excellent answers given to this part. However, some who correctly stated Textured Vegetable Protein, did not give any further detail. TVP was often incorrectly explained as Textured Value Protein or Total Value Protein.
(ii) Suggested dishes were generally correct

Q.3

- (a) (i) Descriptions of supermarkets were very well attempted. The most popular examples given were ‘Dunnes Stores’ and ‘Tesco’.

- (ii) Department stores were frequently confused with shopping centres. An example of a department store was omitted in most cases.
 - (iii) Correct descriptions and examples of specialist shops were given by the majority of candidates. Shoe shops and jewellery shops were popular answers.
 - (iv) Good attempts were made to describe an independent shop, with some candidates giving an example of a corner shop in their own area. However, many candidates gave an incorrect example such as 'Spar' or 'Londis'.
- (b)** Guidelines for shopping were very well attempted with the majority of candidates giving more than the required four guidelines. Some candidates listed the terms of The Sale of Goods and Supply of Services Act. Very few candidates made reference to shopping for services. Some gave single word answers e.g. "value" and "cost" thus losing marks. There were a few incorrect answers given such as "do I need it?"
- (c)** (i) This part was excellently attempted with full marks gained by nearly all candidates.
- (ii) The advantages and disadvantages were generally correct and were specific to the relevant method of payment. A small number of candidates confused a debit card and a credit card in their answers.
- (d)** (i) Most candidates correctly defined 'unit pricing' but the benefit to the consumer was generally not explained.
- (ii) The benefit of keeping a receipt was very well explained especially with regard to seeking redress.
- (iii) The benefit to the consumer of 'own-brand' goods was very well known with examples frequently given to explain the benefit.

Q.4

- (a)** Most candidates were able to name the four types of teeth, with the majority gaining a full 12 marks. Marks were lost if wisdom teeth and molars were mentioned as two of the four types of permanent teeth.
- (b)** (i) Many candidates did not give a full description of the function of 'enamel'. Most candidates stated that it protects the tooth; they did not mention that it covers the tooth.

- (ii) This part was generally not very well answered. Many candidates stated that the 'pulp cavity' contains the nerve or blood vessels but did not mention the function of the pulp cavity.
- (iii) Some candidates confused 'cementum' with the enamel, stating that it is the hardest part of the tooth and that it protects the tooth. Some candidates stated that it held teeth in place but did not state that it connected teeth to the jaw-bone.
- (c) The guidelines for maintaining healthy teeth were generally answered very well. However, some did not include any reference to diet or stated that a diet should be high in calcium without mentioning that calcium strengthens the teeth.
- (d) This was the least well answered part of this question, with many candidates gaining only half marks.
 - (i) Marks were lost for the description of 'plaque', as answers were vague or incomplete e.g. "it is a sticky coating on teeth."
 - (ii) Explanations of how plaque affects teeth generally lacked detail. Candidates mainly mentioned tooth decay with no reference to the formation of acid. "Wearing away the enamel" and "causing tooth decay" were the most popular answers.
- (e) Fluoride/fluorine was correctly named by many candidates as the mineral that is added to the public water supply to strengthen teeth. Incorrect minerals given included chlorine and calcium.

Q.5

- (a) Many candidates correctly named two methods of heat transfer but did not explain the methods in any detail. The most common incorrect methods named were "radiators" and "lighting a fire."
- (b)
 - (i) Most candidates gained full marks for correctly naming three fuels used in home heating. Oil, gas and solid fuel were popular fuels named.
 - (ii) A significant number of candidates lost marks because they gave only one advantage and one disadvantage of two of the fuels. Marks were also lost because answers were incorrect e.g. "oil is cheap" or "gas smells."
- (c) This section of the question was frequently omitted. Those who attempted it generally gained full marks. "Heating the whole house" and "useful for heating water" were two of the most popular benefits outlined.

- (d) Candidates frequently repeated the same point a number of times when listing ways of saving energy. e.g. “turn off in the summer”, “turn off when the house is hot”, “turn off when you are going out”. Quite a few also had repetitious points on insulation e.g. “insulate the doors”, “insulate the attic”.
- (e) Only a small minority of candidates were awarded full marks for outlining the function of a thermostat. There were some excellent answers where candidates gave details of a bimetallic strip and how it makes a thermostat work. The most common mistakes were where candidates confused the thermostat with a thermometer or a timer.

Q.6

- (a) Naming the parts of the sewing machine posed problems for the majority of candidates. The ‘spool pin’ and ‘foot pedal’ were well known. Many had difficulty identifying the ‘hand wheel’ and ‘stitch length regulator’.
- (b) This section of the question was well attempted with the majority of candidates scoring between 16 and 24 marks. Most used the headings provided.
 - (i) In listing the guidelines for choosing a sewing machine a minority of candidates lost marks for giving only one word answers only e.g. cost, guarantee. Otherwise, clear, well-structured guidelines were listed.
 - (ii) This part was the least well answered. The guidelines given for using a sewing machine were more relevant to the general care of the machine.
 - (iii) Guidelines for caring for a sewing machine were well attempted. Most candidates referred to keeping it covered when not in use and lifting it carefully.
- (c)
 - (i) Full marks were gained by the majority who attempted this part. Poor “quality needle”, “needle bent” “needle too fine” were the most common answers.
 - (ii) This part was well answered. “Tension too loose” and “incorrect threading” were the most common correct answers.
 - (iii) This part was well answered. “Poor quality thread” and “incorrect threading” were among the most popular answers.
- (d) Many answers were incorrect because hand stitches were suggested instead of machine stitches.
 - (i) “Blanket stitch” or “back stitch” were frequently suggested, so marks were lost. “Straight stitch” was a common correct answer.

(ii) A few candidates suggested “zigzag stitch”. “Hem stitch” and “slip hemming” were common incorrect answers.

6.4 Conclusions

- In general the majority of candidates scored well in the written examination answering the required number of questions in each section. It was evident that there is much good teaching and successful learning taking place in Home Economics classes.
- The examination paper covered a wide range of topics and examiners were of the view that the paper was fair, well structured and with language appropriate to the level of the candidates.
- The general standard of answering varied significantly. While some candidates showed a high level of competence, there was also evidence of a decline in the standard of answering among the weaker candidates. There are still candidates taking the Higher Level who would be better suited to the Ordinary Level, and visa versa.
- Most candidates attempted all 24 questions in Section A of the paper. The standard of answering of these questions was very varied with few candidates attaining full marks for the section. Many answers lacked accuracy, particularly the answers given to questions 6, 11, 15, 21, 22.
- Answers to questions in Section B were frequently not sufficiently developed by candidates with many giving only one or two word answers. In these cases, candidates showed a vague understanding of the subject matter and thus were not awarded high marks.
- Candidates who answer more than the required number of questions generally do not manage time wisely and, therefore do not score well overall. There is a tendency for these candidates to omit parts of questions thus losing valuable marks throughout the paper.
- There continues to be evidence of a lack of care when reading questions resulting in candidates not answering the key elements of questions.

6.5 Recommendations to Teachers and Students

- Students should choose the level of examination with care to ensure that it is appropriate to their level of achievement.
- A detailed knowledge of all areas of the syllabus core is essential in order to score well in Section A. Candidates who achieve high marks in Section A tend to attain a high grade overall.
- An integrated approach to teaching and learning topics is essential as cross linkage is a feature of examination questions.
- Students should practise answering questions from past examination papers so as to ensure that the key aspects of the questions are understood and that their answers are well developed and focused.
- Teachers should emphasise to students the importance of reading questions carefully in order to answer accurately and relevantly. The practice of reading over answers before proceeding to the next question should also be emphasised.
- The terminology used on examination papers needs to be fully understood. All students need to be able to distinguish between commonly used question cues e.g. list, evaluate, describe, outline, etc.
- Time management is essential if the required number of questions is to be well answered. Candidates can only be credited with marks for the required number of questions. It is better to complete as fully as possible the required number of questions from each section than to waste time doing parts of excess questions which are then disallowed.

- When approaching the examination students should consider the following
 - have a general time plan for the examination. Do not spend too much time on Section A at the expense of the more heavily weighted long answer questions in Section B.
 - start each question on a new page
 - read questions carefully, highlight key words to ensure answers are well focused
 - elaborate on each point of information as appropriate, supporting answers with examples where relevant
 - ensure that information is set out under the correct heading
 - use information given in questions to maximum advantage e.g. labels, diagrams, etc.
 - refer back to the question continually in order to make sure the answer is relevant to the question
 - avoid repeating points of information within answers.

APPENDIX 1

Cookery Practical 2006 Total mark: 100

Use 'Key' on assessment sheet for degree of efficiency or error and **Performance Criteria** sheet.
(**Full sentences** required not just words. If work is **excellent** do not be tied to breakdown of marks)
Bullet points are a guide only, all are not always necessary.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION: 20

Analysis - 10 Marks

- Identification 3 - expect **three** factors **two** of which should be specific to key aspects of task. Stating task in own words is acceptable as a factor. Comparisons should be included where specified.
- Investigation 3 - expect investigation of **two** solutions for each aspect of task.
- Decision/Solutions 2 - appropriate solution/s/menu/etc. Menu must be 'boxed in', in menu form, or on card.
2 - **two** good reasons for choice/s.
Accept 'main course' dish if it has 3 of 4 food groups included = *balanced*.
'Complete main course' must include protein, starchy carbs, veg/fruit = *balanced*.

Plan/Prep – 10 Marks

- 4 - **Written**: work plan/sequence to include evaluation, list of equipment, list of ingredients (cost, if applicable).
- 6 - **Visual**: organisation of work place and ingredients, personal hygiene and dress.
Over preparation deduct here use **Key**. No unit costing where required, deduct -2 under **Plan/Prep**.

IMPLEMENTATION: 50

- Skills** 20 - **Marks for skills must be earned** - expect proper chopping, dicing, mixing, kneading, rolling
use of processor etc. *Deduct here for 'over use of convenience foods' *D**
- Cook Prin.** 10 - methods-sauté, frying etc. temp. (boiling H₂O for pasta, veg, oven temp.), timing, judgement.
Allocate this mark for skills if no cooking is required in task.
- Res Man.** 10 - economy, waste, correct timing, etc. *Deduct -2 if wasteful. Deduct here if not finished on time.*
- Hyg/Safe.** 10 - hygienic working, mark wash-up here. Safe work practices - no fatal error.

PRESENTATION AND EVALUATION: 30

- Appear.** 10 - simple garnish, clean, neat, edible, not over-cooked, not under-cooked.
- Taste/Flav.** 10 - palatable, correct consistency/texture, adequately cooked.
- Eval.** 10 - refer to whole task not just dish - critical appraisal (time, skills, finished dish, flav/taste).

Must say why it meets the brief. A description of dish is not an Eval. Problems must be identified. Substitute specific evaluations where they apply. Unit costing and nutritive value can be done beforehand if required. No marks if Evaluation is completed beforehand.

Scenario

- *A*** If dish/es **does not 'quite' meet the brief (where a minor part of the brief is not met)** deduct: **-8 at end**
E.g. Fruit or vegetables not fresh or in variety. Unsuitable dish Task 6 or 7. Unsuitable drink Task 7.
- *B*** If dish/es does **not 'fully' meet brief (where a major part of the brief is not met)** deduct **-16 at end**.
E.g. .If complete main course not produced Task 3. Fish not main ingredient Task 3.
- *C*** If **one dish is omitted** where **two are specified**, mark out of **max half marks** where appropriate.
E.g. .one batch bread/scones where two are specified.
- *D*** **Over-use of convenience foods** – **minor** over-use deduct **-8**, **major** over-use deduct **-16**, e.g. Dolmio, Donegal catch.
If 'pre made' products are used e.g. pastry (even when a sample is made during the exam) deduct **-8** at end.
- *E*** If dish is **burned or undercooked** deduct under:- Cook Principles, Appearance and Taste/Flav.
Use **Key**.
- *F*** If dish **not a 'cooked'** dish deduct: **-20**. **Only exception is Task 2**.
- *G*** If solution (or Task) completed is **totally incorrect** deduct: **-30 at end**.
E.g. incorrect task attempted. E.g. task from previous year. If fish or meat not used where specified.

APPENDIX 2

CHILDCARE – PROJECT ASSESSMENT 2006 Total mark: 100

- Requirements – Guidelines pages 5, 6 and 7
- Candidates must present **a written/** typed project c. 1500 words
- Marks not to be deducted for longer projects or typed presentation
- Expect **two forms of research** – of a good standard and correctly documented

Aim of Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Clear statement. ● Relevance. (<i>Relevant to syllabus see pages 5, 6, 7 Guidelines, if not see (i))</i> (<i>expect 1 relevant well-developed point</i>). <p style="text-align: right;"><i>No aim give (1) mark for relevant title and/or (1) mark for table of contents –see (ii) below.</i></p>	10
Research methodology/ Problem analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Information gathering – techniques used, and /or ● Investigation of task (<i>expect 2 different forms of research/investigation</i>) <p>a) Books x 2 and / or mags etc x 2 name =3 and author =2 (5). <i>Use of books and relevance to aim (5) (for unidentified source max (3) marks.)</i></p> <p>b) Web sites x 2 must be clearly identified (5). <i>Use made and relevance to Aim (5) marks.</i></p> <p>c) Letters x2 where to and why (5) Evidence of use (5) <i>Any of methods a) b) or c) above may be combined e.g. 1 book and 1web site = 1 method</i></p> <p>d) Questionnaire Sample with adequate questions (5), relevance to Aim and use (5) marks.</p> <p>e) Interview Who and why (5), questions relevant to Aim and use (5)</p> <p>f) Visit Where and why identified (5), report or use of information (5)</p>	20
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <u>Relevance to aim.</u> ● <u>Depth of treatment.</u> (<i>this will get the greater weighting of marks, use key</i>) ● *Testing information Practical work, models etc.(<i>questionnaires, surveys etc</i>) ● <u>Accurate information</u> ● <u>Organisation of materials</u> <p><i>* Practical work, models, product is seen as further explanation or demonstration of point or testing and is marked here to a max of (20) marks.</i></p>	40
Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conclusion drawn from <u>results of investigation</u> to include a critical evaluation of any product produced against stated aims. (<i>2 well-developed points minimum must be relevant to aims, and related to content.</i>) 	10
Originality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Indication of original input by way of analysis, interpretation or/and development of topic by the candidate. ● (<i>Creativity - reward own work</i>) 	10
Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Layout (<i>sequence, table of contents, neatness in general, don't penalise own handwriting</i>) Use key/performance criteria. ● Quality of graphics etc. (<i>reward own work</i>) ● Finish of product* see above. 	10

Notes:

- i. **Project content to relate to Childcare syllabus with Child Development (from conception to 12 years) clearly identified as a key focus: if not allow a maximum of half marks for aim (5), content (20) and conclusion (5). (Max 70)**
- ii. **If no Aim is given in project allow a maximum of 1 mark for title, 1 mark for table of content.**
- iii. **If a product is presented as part of the project allow up to half of content mark for same.**
- iv. **If a product is presented e.g. matinee coat, soft toys etc. and little written support material related to Childcare content, examiner should consider marking project as Design and Craftwork.**

APPENDIX 3

DESIGN AND CRAFTWORK - PROJECT ASSESSMENT 2006 (Requirements - Guidelines pages 7, 8) Total mark: 100

Design Folder 30

Problem and Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement of Brief (simple statement, no brief deduct (2) marks) • Identification of key requirements • Investigation, alternative solutions – (expect 2 solutions) (2 different crafts / 2 designs for one craft, assess degree of design) 	10
Solution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design, drawings and diagrams, pattern (for product or craft aspect) (Solution for chosen craft / if commercial pattern used two modifications required, for traditional craft expect history) • Materials, equipment and techniques, work plan 	10
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical appraisal of craft item • Proposed modifications (3 points, one must refer to brief and any 2 others) 	10

Product 70

Meeting the Brief/ Suitability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the solution meet the brief (5) (if no brief deduct(5) marks) • Choice of craft and materials related to the function of the item (5) (e.g. loose stitching on a baby quilt) 	10
Application of Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of materials, equipment and skills appropriate to the task • Skill factor (use performance criteria, take care where poor skills evident not to deduct under 'skills' and 'quality of product') 	40
Design Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aesthetic considerations (5) • Creativity (5) (in the absence of evidence deduct (5) marks) (e.g. using an unmodified comm. pattern / no folder / no design given under solution) 	10
Quality of Product	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finish of product (unfinished threads, poor pressing, poor shape, grubby, no marks for framing) 	10

Notes:

- (i) Item should be Textile based, if no textiles used e.g. ceramics, jewellery – allow no marks
- (ii) Item has some textile process / skill e.g. weaving of sugán chair – allow a max. of half marks under each criterion for folder and product. (Max 50 marks)
- (iii) Product has insufficient craft process/ skills - allow a max. of half marks under each criterion for product only (mark folder pro rata) (Max 65 marks)
- (iv) Item with **no craft element** e.g. Bean bag / Cushion allow a **maximum of half marks** under **each criterion for product only** (mark folder pro rata) (**Max 65marks**)
Item made using fabric that has undergone a craft process such as Tie dyeing / batik / fabric painting but with **no evidence of either functional stitching** (i.e. constructional stitching) **or decorative stitching** allow a **maximum of half marks** under **each criterion for product only** (mark folder pro rata) (**Max 65 marks**)
- (v) Kits – use performance key and deduct marks if appropriate under Solution / Meeting the Brief/ Choice of Craft and materials / Design Features. If products are all the same, treat as for Kit and use key

- (vi) Commercial Pattern used – allow full marks where candidate introduces two elements of design; if no design introduced deduct 2 marks under solution and 10 marks under Design features (Max 88)
- (vii) Where traditional craft selected, mark research/ history of craft under Solution
- (viii) Soft Toy making – accept
- (ix) If no Design Folder presented allow a maximum of 5 marks for Meeting the Brief and a maximum of (5) marks for Design Features when marking the product
- (x) Where Embroidery is craft – expect a minimum of two stitches
- (xi) Cartoon Character, copied using colours shape etc. allow design marks if a range of stitches investigated and selection made
- (xii) Commercial Crest, appliquéd on – see (iii) above
- (xiv) Appliqué - method of application should be appropriate to function of item

All types of textile craft including creative embroidery and modern textile craftwork is acceptable

APPENDIX 4

TEXTILE SKILLS - PROJECT ASSESSMENT 2006 (Requirements - Guidelines pages 8) Total mark: 100

Item/s of Clothing	= 80	
Suitability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Choice of materials, fabric, pattern and sewing processes - see iii below. 	10
Application of skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use of materials, equipment and skills appropriate to the item/s ▪ Skill factor. (Use key / performance criteria, do not deduct for poor skills under both 'skill' and 'quality of product') 	40
Design/Fashion Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Application of design principles ▪ Fashion appeal ▪ Aesthetic considerations 	10
Quality of product/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Finish of item/s (must be wearable) ▪ Presentation of item/s 	20
Support Study Folder	= 20	

Support Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Factors determining choice of garment (own skills, availability of fabric, body shape, budget, fashionable etc. ▪ Details of pattern used, modifications etc. ▪ Details of fabric – amount, cost composition etc.(fabric test) ▪ Details of sewing accessories / notions. ▪ Details of equipment used. <p style="margin-left: 20px;">(Step by step procedure followed, detail of seaming, Care labelling)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluation of items of clothing – must include finish and fit. (Expect reference to five factors to include factors determining choice and evaluation plus any three other areas). 	20
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Notes:

- i.* Look at garment and folder first before marking. If two garments presented mark as a unit.
- ii.* Establish simple/complex garment, allow for degree of difficulty on complex garment use upper end under Key / performance criteria.
- iii.* Garment should have a minimum of two processes e.g. sleeve/ pocket/collar/zip/buttonholes etc. (Seams, hems etc are part of the basic garment construction)
- iv.* Garment with one process - allow a maximum of (7) marks for Suitability and (30) marks for Application of Skills (Max 87 marks).
- v.* Garment with no process -allow a maximum of (5) marks for Suitability, (20) marks for Application of Skills and (5) marks for Quality of Product/s. (Max 60)
- vi.* Unfinished garment/s – using performance criteria, deduct marks under Suitability, Skills, Design / Fashion Features and Quality of Products.
- vii.* Quality - must be wearable – use Key
 - not pressed –1 mark
 - unfinished threads – 1 mark
- viii.* Do not deduct marks twice particularly under Skills and Quality.