Summary report for candidates on the 2014 WACE examination in Human Biological Science Stage 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number who sat</th>
<th>Number of absentees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2764</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>3986</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>3998</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Examination score distribution

Summary

The mean of this year's examination paper was 55.51%. The section means were Section One: Multiple-choice 66.42%, Section Two: Short answer 52.14% and Section Three: Extended answer 48.15%. The paper was a good discriminator, producing scores ranging from 8.00% to 92.25%. The standard deviation was 14.79%. Correlation of question marks with the total marks was very good, indicating that there was consistency across questions within the paper. The reliability of the examination was 0.85.

General comments

Items in Section One: Multiple-choice worked very well. Questions 4, 7, 9, 13, 17, 18 and 25 were the most difficult, with means of less than 50%. In Section Two: Short answer the means ranged from 35.63% to 69.82%. Questions 33, 38 and 39 had means less than 50%.

In Section Three: Extended answer, candidates performed similarly on questions 40 and 41, but found question 42 more difficult, with a mean score of less than 50%. Most candidates (99%) attempted the last questions, indicating that the paper was of an appropriate length.

The mean of 55.51% for the whole paper was considerably better than the mean in 2013 of only 51.89%. Last year, many candidates had difficulty in constructing satisfactory answers in Section Two: Short answer and Section Three: Extended answer questions. This year, a significant improvement could be seen in the candidates’ performance in these sections. Particularly noticeable was the improvement in Section Three: Extended answer with an increase of 13% in the mean score for that section. However, Section Three: Extended answer still proves to be the most difficult section of the examination paper and the area where candidates could develop further.

Advice for candidates

- Candidates must read questions fully and ensure they understand the meaning of operational verbs used in the question. Candidates need to ensure they know the difference between a question requiring them to ‘state’ or ‘identify’ to one requiring them to ‘outline’, ‘describe’ or ‘explain’.
- It is essential candidates understand the difference between the terms: ‘structure’, ‘function’ and ‘mode of action’, as they relate to the human body.
• Candidates should aim to write answers that address the specific focus of the question and not simply restate all the information they can recall that relates to the topic.
• Candidates are reminded that if information is stated in the question or provided in the data, no points will be awarded for restating the same information in the answer.
• In Section Three: Extended answers the most thorough and complete answers were produced by candidates who had completed a plan. Taking the time to plan the answer and ensure all parts of the question are addressed is an essential examination technique.
• Additional working space is provided at the back of the question/answer booklet. If more writing space is required, candidates should use this space only. Importantly candidates should not use the pages marked for the extended answers.