

Many candidates for Physiology SG were writing in either a second or third language, and this was very apparent in their answers. It also seemed that some candidates were not well versed in the layout of the paper, nor did they recognise questions of a standard type.

- **Question 1**

Multiple-choice (Question 1.1)

If two answers are indicated by candidates, both are marked wrong. Answers left open are missed opportunities.

Questions 1.2 and 1.3.

Many candidates left large gaps. All candidates should be encouraged to attempt an answer. Correct answers earn two marks each and, particularly in Q1.3, candidates should be encouraged to, at least, guess the answer.

Question 1.5

The instruction was to give the letter labelling the structure. If candidates misunderstood this and wrote names, they were not given any marks.

- **Question 2**

2.1 Few candidates could label more than the bladder, urethra, ureter and adrenal. Candidates need to be exposed to various diagrams of the same structure, rather than merely learning the labels for one version. Each question in Section B always begins with a diagram and the labelling of these should be an easy way to earn marks.

2.5 Most knew the substances contained in blood, urine and renal filtrate. The concept of inorganic and organic was well understood.

2.7 Only a small number of candidates were able to attempt the question about buffer systems. This was intended to favour the stronger candidates, and it was certainly the case.

- **Question 3**

A question on the reflex arc has become standard, yet very few candidates were able to identify more than “receptor”. It is really important that candidates practise drawing and labelling diagrams.

Q. 3.2 was well done.

Q 3.3, also a standard question, was poorly done.

Q 3.4. The crista is an area of the syllabus that most centres do not seem to cover. The top candidates were able to draw the correct diagram, but the weaker candidates were not familiar with the most basic drawing rules.

Q 3.5 Virtually every candidate knew the three layers of the eye, as well as their functions.

There continues to be great confusion regarding the pupillary mechanism and accommodation.

- **Question 4**

The skin was not well studied. Most candidates struggled to label the diagram, and few knew the glands of the skin.

Questions on hormones are routinely asked, and candidates need practice in naming them. The adrenal medulla and the cortex must be learnt as two different glands. It is rather surprising that the effects of adrenalin were so poorly known.

Papillae and taste buds were confused.

- **Question 5**

Labelling of the reproductive system was not good, with many candidates able to name little more than “bladder”.

Q 5.2 was the cross section of the seminiferous tubule. This was a more difficult question, but the questions were designed to lead to the answers.

Most candidates misunderstood the question about the pathway of sperm and described spermatogenesis. Little was known about Fertilisation.

Candidates were able to finish the paper.

Overall verdict – if candidates wish to do well in Physiology, they need to learn and understand terminology, practise diagrams and study past papers to become familiar with the types of answers required. Leaving sections out when studying results in a loss of marks.