CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

CAPE® FOOD AND NUTRITION

UNIT 1



Subject Report

May–June 2026

REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE CARIBBEAN ADVANCED PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION®

May–June 2026

FOOD AND NUTRITION
UNIT 1

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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION 1
PAPER 01 — MULTIPLE CHOICE 2
PAPER 02 – STRUCTURED ESSAY 3
Question 1 4
Question 2 5
Question 3 6
Recommendations 7
PAPER 030 – SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT 8
OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS 9

INTRODUCTION

This report is based on the CAPE Food and Nutrition Unit 1 examination. This unit — Fundamentals of Food and Nutrition — consists of the following modules.

- Module 1 — Principles of Nutrition and Health
- Module 2 — Food Selection and Meal Planning
- Module 3 — Food Preparation and Service: Principles and Methods

These modules are tested using the following papers.

- Paper 01 — Multiple Choice
- Paper 02 — Structured Essay
- Paper 03 — School-Based Assessment

The percentage of candidates gaining Grades I to V in 2026 was 98.77 per cent, compared with 98.27 per cent in 2025 and 75.25 per cent in 2024.

The percentage of candidates gaining Grades I to III in 2026 was 55.28 per cent, compared with 56.24 per cent in 2025 and 16.15 per cent in 2024.

PAPER 01 — MULTIPLE CHOICE

This paper consists of 45 multiple-choice items, 15 items based on each of the three modules in the unit. The questions are designed to test candidates' knowledge and comprehension, and their application of the knowledge. Questions may be based on diagrams, data, graphs, photographs or prose. The paper contributes 20 per cent to the candidate's final grade.

In 2026, the mean score was 38.11 out of 60 (63.52 per cent). This represents a decline compared with the previous two years, when the mean score was 41.13 out of 60 (68.55 per cent) in 2025 and 40.28 out of 60 (67.13 per cent) in 2024. The highest score achieved by any one candidate was 56 out of 60.

PAPER 02 – STRUCTURED ESSAY

This paper comprises three compulsory essay questions, one question from each module. Candidates are required to answer all questions. Each question is worth 40 marks. The maximum mark available for this paper is 120 marks. The paper contributes 40 per cent to the candidate's final grade.

The intention of the paper is to test candidates' knowledge and understanding across the breadth of the syllabus and their ability to apply this knowledge. Marks are awarded for knowledge and comprehension, and the application of the knowledge.

This year the mean score for Paper 02 was 53.62 out of 120 (44.69 per cent). This represents a decline in candidates' performance compared with 2025 when the mean score was 54.21 out of 120 (45.18 per cent). In 2024, the mean score was 34.10 out of 120 (28.42 per cent).

Question 1

This question was based on Module 1 — Principles of Nutrition and Health.

For Part (a) (i), most candidates were able to accurately identify agencies that provide information and support for the specified digestive problem and were therefore awarded full marks.

Part (a) (ii) was generally well answered. Most candidates were able to correctly identify foods that may trigger adverse reactions in individuals who are lactose intolerant. Such candidates were therefore awarded full marks.

For Part (b) (i), most candidates were able to identify two or three chronic noncommunicable diseases prevalent in the Caribbean and were awarded marks accordingly.

For Part (b) (ii), most candidates were able to correctly identify factors, other than obesity, that contribute to the development of chronic noncommunicable diseases and were awarded marks accordingly.

Most candidates were able to earn marks for Part (b) (iii). However, only a few achieved full marks, as many of them did not provide a sufficiently comprehensive discussion of the food and nutrition strategies required to attain and maintain a healthy body weight.

In their responses to Part (b) (iv), few candidates were able to clearly explain the principle underlying weight loss in an exercise programme. While most candidates demonstrated that they had a basic understanding of the concept and were awarded partial marks, their explanations lacked sufficient detail and scientific accuracy to earn full marks.

For Part (c) (i), few candidates were able to clearly articulate appropriate reasons for the concerns expressed by mothers about maintaining an adequate diet while breastfeeding. Although most candidates demonstrated that they had some understanding of the issue and were awarded partial marks, their explanations lacked the depth and detail required to achieve full marks.

For Part (c) (ii), few candidates were able to clearly articulate appropriate reasons for the concerns expressed by mothers about weaning baby a baby off breast milk when a breast-feeding mother returns to work. Although most candidates demonstrated that they had some understanding of the issue and were awarded partial marks, their explanations lacked the depth and detail required to achieve full marks.

In responding to Part (c) (iii), most candidates were able to provide partial explanations of how a baby's immunity is acquired through breast milk. However, many responses lacked sufficient detail and scientific explanation to merit full marks.

Question 2

This question was based on Module 2 — Food Selection and Meal Planning.

Part (a) (i) required candidates to define the term *nutraceutical* which was printed on a food label. Most candidates were able to provide a partial definition. Very few candidates provided a full definition. A suitable definition is *a food (such as a fortified food or dietary supplement) that provides health benefits in addition to its basic nutritional value.*

Part (a) (ii) was well done. Most candidates were able to identify six pieces of information on a food label and therefore secured total marks.

Part (b) (i) proved challenging for most candidates. Candidates accurately stated that supper and dinner were evening meals, noting that supper is a light meal; however, they failed to contrast the two meals by defining dinner as the heavier, main evening meal if the midday meal was light.

For Part (b) (ii), most candidates were able to provide a partial explanation of the importance of breakfast in the diet of a school-aged child; few candidates provided a full explanation. Almost all candidates knew that breakfast supplies energy but very few candidates accurately stated that breakfast must supply one-third of an individual's daily nutrient requirements.

For Part (b) (iii), many candidates were able to plan menus that were generally nutritionally balanced and aesthetically pleasing. However, some candidates failed to supply a fourth course, defaulting to a standard three-course structure (appetizer, main, dessert). Several candidates lost marks for incorrect menu layout and formatting

For Part (c) (i), many candidates were able to explain the health benefits of consuming a vegan diet; however, many of them failed to provide explanations of how plant-based diets physiologically reduce NCD risks (for example, role of fibre, absence of saturated animal fats and cholesterol) and therefore only obtained some of the available marks.

For Part (c) (ii), many candidates were able to identify sources of protein and iron in the vegan teenager's diet, however only few candidates were able to identify sources of Vitamin B_{12}.

Question 3

This question was based on Module 3 — Food Preparation and Service: Principles and Methods.

Part (a) (i) was well done. Most candidates were able to identify the types of knives illustrated.

For Part (a) (ii), most candidates were able to state the correct functions of the knives and therefore scored full marks.

For Part (b), most candidates were able to provide reasons for at least six of the steps involved in preparing a white stock and were awarded marks accordingly. However, many candidates were not sufficiently familiar with the correct sequence and purpose of the steps in the preparation process.

Part (c) was well done by most candidates as they were able to suggest appropriate modifications to the recipe for the hypertensive male, the obese secretary on a weight loss programme and the elderly diabetic.

For Part (d) (i), most candidates identified reasons related to assessing the quality of the bread rather than explaining the broader purposes of sensory evaluation after a product has been developed. Few candidates recognized that sensory evaluation is also used to compare differences and similarities between products, to assess consumer acceptability, to support product improvement and to contribute to cost reduction.

For Part (d) (ii), most candidates were able to accurately identify the organoleptic factors used to evaluate bread. However, many candidates were unable to explain how these factors are applied in assessing the quality and the acceptability of the bread.

Recommendations

Most candidates performed well on questions that assessed their knowledge-level competencies. This indicated that candidates were generally well-prepared in terms of recall and basic understanding. However, many candidates struggled to provide acceptable responses to questions that required higher-order thinking, such as application, analysis and evaluation.

Candidates demonstrated strong foundational knowledge in areas related to the principles of nutrition and health, as well as meal planning and preparation, suggesting that these topics were well taught and clearly understood. Teachers must move beyond teaching list-based benefits of diets to teaching biological mechanisms. For example, when teaching topics such as noncommunicable diseases, require students to write an explanation that is a full paragraph in which they detail why soluble fibre lowers blood cholesterol or how high saturated fat clogs arteries. Cause-and-effect graphic organizers can also be used.

PAPER 030 – SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT

This paper is a portfolio comprising two assignments, which test objectives in one or more of the modules. Students, in consultation with the teacher and following the guidelines provided by the Council, must select two activities for each unit. Objectives on which assignments will be based may be drawn from any of the modules in the syllabus. The portfolio is assessed by the teacher and externally moderated by CXC.

This year, the highest score by any one student was 117.14 out of 120 compared with 114.55 in 2025 and 111.43 in 2024. The mean score was 90.52 out of 120 (75.44 per cent) compared with 86.11 out of 120 (71.76 per cent) last year and 66.88 out of 120 (55.74 per cent) in 2024.

Moderation of the 2026 CAPE Food and Nutrition School-Based Assessments (SBAs) revealed that students generally demonstrated a sound understanding of the key requirements of the Unit 1 Research Paper. While many students produced work of a satisfactory standard, several recurring weaknesses continue to limit their overall performance.

Students generally selected relevant and meaningful research topics that addressed contemporary issues affecting Caribbean communities. Most students were able to identify the research problem, develop an appropriate methodology and present data using suitable charts and tables. Recommendations were often practical and reflected an understanding of community health concerns.

Despite these strengths, a number of areas require improvement. Many students failed to explicitly state the research problem and they relied heavily on non-scholarly internet sources in their literature reviews. They also demonstrated limited understanding of qualitative and quantitative research approaches. The most significant weakness continued to be data analysis, where students frequently described results without interpreting their significance or drawing meaningful conclusions. Similarly, many discussions of findings were not effectively linked to the literature reviewed, resulting in the loss of valuable marks. In addition, greater attention is needed in the consistent application of APA referencing conventions.

Overall, candidatesstudents displayed commendable creativity, sound presentation skills and an understanding of the fundamental requirements of the assessments. Nevertheless, greater emphasis should be placed on developing higher-order analytical skills, strengthening research methodology, integrating scholarly literature into discussions, providing evidence-based justifications for decisions and applying appropriate academic referencing conventions. Teachers should continue to encourage students to move beyond descriptive responses by critically analysing findings, drawing meaningful conclusions and demonstrating a stronger application of scientific principles throughout their investigations

OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Strengthen students' higher-order thinking skills.
  Teachers should provide more opportunities for students to analyse, evaluate, justify and apply food and nutrition concepts to authentic Caribbean contexts rather than relying primarily on recall. Greater emphasis should be placed on interpreting scenarios, explaining scientific principles and providing reasoned responses.

- Improve the teaching of food science concepts.
  The persistent misconceptions observed in areas such as food preservation, biotechnology, food processing and the scientific principles underpinning food preparation suggest the need for more practical investigations and inquiry-based learning experiences to reinforce theoretical knowledge.

- Increase opportunities for practical application.
  Schools should integrate more laboratory activities, food preparation exercises, demonstrations and experimental investigations that allow students to connect theory with practice.

- Provide targeted support using item analysis.
  Teachers should analyse students' performance on individual examination questions to identify recurring weaknesses and design targeted interventions before subsequent examination sittings.

- Strengthen research methodology instruction.
  Teachers should place greater emphasis on the explicit teaching of research design, including the formulation of clear research problems, the selection of appropriate qualitative and quantitative research methods, and the collection and analysis of valid and reliable data.

- Develop candidates' analytical and evaluative skills.
  Classroom instruction should provide more opportunities for students to interpret data, analyse trends, justify conclusions using evidence and relate findings to existing literature rather than merely describing results.

- Promote the use of scholarly sources.
  Students should be encouraged to utilize credible academic sources, including textbooks, peer-reviewed journals, government publications and reputable research databases, to strengthen literature reviews and support evidence-based discussions.

- Strengthen the discussion of findings.
  Teachers should guide students in synthesizing research findings with the literature reviewed, enabling them to provide meaningful interpretations, identify relationships, and draw well-supported conclusions.

- Enhance scientific investigation in product development.
  Students should be encouraged to incorporate a wider range of scientific assessments during product development, including nutrient analysis, shelf-life studies, microbiological considerations where appropriate and the application of HACCP principles, in addition to sensory evaluations.

- Encourage regular internal quality assurance of SBA projects.
  Schools should implement structured review processes before submitting SBAs to verify compliance with syllabus requirements, to ensure completeness of documentation, to improve referencing accuracy and to identify weaknesses that can be addressed prior to moderation.