



Rewarding Learning

**ADVANCED SUBSIDIARY (AS)
General Certificate of Education
2018**

Professional Business Services

Assessment Unit AS 1

assessing

Introduction to Professional Business Services

[SPB11]

WEDNESDAY 23 MAY, AFTERNOON

**MARK
SCHEME**

General Marking Instructions

Introduction

The main purpose of the mark scheme is to ensure that examinations are marked accurately, consistently and fairly. The mark scheme provides examiners with an indication of the nature and range of candidates' responses likely to be worthy of credit. It also sets out the criteria which they should apply in allocating marks to candidates' responses.

Assessment objectives

Below are the assessment objectives for **GCE Professional Business Services**.

Candidates should be able to:

- AO1** Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of terms, concepts, theories, methods and models used by professional business services firms and their client businesses.
- AO2** Apply knowledge and understanding of concepts, theories, methods and models used by professional business services firms and their client businesses.
- AO3** Investigate, analyse and evaluate concepts, theories, methods and models as used by professional business services firms and their client businesses.

Quality of candidates' responses

In marking the examination papers, examiners should be looking for a quality of response reflecting the level of maturity which may reasonably be expected of a 17 or 18-year-old which is the age at which the majority of candidates sit their GCE examinations.

Flexibility in marking

Mark schemes are not intended to be totally prescriptive. No mark scheme can cover all the responses which candidates may produce. In the event of unanticipated answers, examiners are expected to use their professional judgement to assess the validity of answers. If an answer is particularly problematic, then examiners should seek the guidance of the Supervising Examiner.

Positive marking

Examiners are encouraged to be positive in their marking, giving appropriate credit for what candidates know, understand and can do rather than penalising candidates for errors or omissions. Examiners should make use of the whole of the available mark range for any particular question and be prepared to award full marks for a response which is as good as might reasonably be expected of a 17 or 18-year-old GCE candidate.

Awarding zero marks

Marks should only be awarded for valid responses and no marks should be awarded for an answer which is completely incorrect or inappropriate.

Marking calculations

In marking answers involving calculations, examiners should apply the 'own figure rule' so that candidates are not penalised more than once for a computational error. To avoid a candidate being penalised, marks can be awarded where correct conclusions or inferences are made from their incorrect calculations.

Types of mark schemes

Mark schemes for tasks or questions which require candidates to respond in extended written form are marked on the basis of levels of response which take account of the quality of written communication. Other questions which require only short answers are marked on a point for point basis with marks awarded for each valid piece of information provided.

Levels of response

In deciding which level of response to award, examiners should look for the 'best fit' bearing in mind that weakness in one area may be compensated for by strength in another. In deciding which mark within a particular level to award to any response, examiners are expected to use their professional judgement.

The following guidance is provided to assist examiners.

- **Threshold performance:** Response which just merits inclusion in the level and should be awarded a mark at or near the bottom of the range.
- **Intermediate performance:** Response which clearly merits inclusion in the level and should be awarded a mark at or near the middle of the range.
- **High performance:** Response which fully satisfies the level description and should be awarded a mark at or near the top of the range.

Quality of written communication

Quality of written communication is taken into account in assessing candidates' responses to all tasks and questions that require them to respond in extended written form. These tasks and questions are marked on the basis of levels of response. The description for each level of response includes reference to the quality of written communication.

For conciseness, quality of written communication is distinguished within either three or four levels of response.

Where there are three levels of response, quality of written communication is distinguished as follows:

Level 1: Quality of written communication is basic.

Level 2: Quality of written communication is good.

Level 3: Quality of written communication is excellent.

In interpreting these level descriptions, examiners should refer to the more detailed guidance provided below:

Level 1 (Basic): The candidate makes only a limited selection and use of an appropriate form and style of writing. The organisation of material may lack clarity and coherence. There is little use of specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar may be such that intended meaning is not clear.

Level 2 (Good): The candidate makes a reasonable selection and use of an appropriate form and style of writing. Relevant material is organised with some clarity and coherence. There is some use of appropriate specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar are sufficiently competent to make meaning clear.

Level 3 (Excellent): The candidate successfully selects and uses the most appropriate form and style of writing. Relevant material is organised with a high degree of clarity and coherence. There is widespread and accurate use of appropriate specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a sufficiently high standard to make meaning clear.

Where there are four levels of response, quality of written communication is distinguished as follows:

Level 1: Quality of written communication is basic.

Level 2: Quality of written communication is satisfactory.

Level 3: Quality of written communication is good.

Level 4: Quality of written communication is excellent.

In interpreting these level descriptions, examiners should refer to the more detailed guidance provided below.

Level 1 (Basic): The candidate makes only a basic selection and use of an appropriate form and style of writing. The organisation of material may lack clarity and coherence. There is little use of specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar may be such that intended meaning is not clear.

Level 2 (Satisfactory): The candidate makes a satisfactory selection and use of an appropriate form and style of writing. Relevant material is organised with some degree of clarity and coherence. There is some use of appropriate specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a satisfactory standard to make meaning evident.

Level 3 (Good): The candidate makes a good selection and use of an appropriate form and style of writing. Relevant material is organised with good clarity and coherence. There is good use of appropriate specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a good standard to make meaning clear.

Level 4 (Excellent): The candidate successfully selects and used the most appropriate form and style of writing. Relevant material is organised with a high degree of clarity and coherence. There is widespread and accurate use of appropriate specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar are of the highest standard to make meaning absolutely clear.

1 (a) AO1

Responses may include:

Professional services include a range of different occupations, which provide support to businesses of all sizes and in all sectors. People working in professional services provide specialist advice to their clients.

[1] basic definition of the term Professional Business Services

[2] good definition of the term Professional Business Services

(1 × [2])

An example of a service may include:

Human Resources, Financial, Business Technology, Leadership and Management and Project Management

[1] example given

(1 × [1])

All valid responses will be given credit [3]

(b) AO1

Responses may include:

A tangible good or service is an asset that can be seen and has a physical presence, such as cash, property, plant and machinery or investments. On the other hand, intangible goods or services are assets that cannot be seen, such as goodwill of a business, a trademark, and intellectual property rights.

All valid responses will be given credit

[1] explanation of tangible or intangible goods and services

[2] explanation of tangible and intangible goods and services

[3] basic explanation of the difference between tangible and intangible goods and services

[4] good explanation of the difference between tangible and intangible goods and services

(2 × [2]) [4]

AVAILABLE
MARKS

7

2 AO1, AO2

Responses may include:

A professional business services consultant might advise Technology Software to become a public limited company, for the following reasons;

- Technology Software will be able to raise a lot more finance through the increased sale of shares. Being listed on the stock market could attract the attention of potential investors.
- Technology Software will benefit from increased security – as they become a larger business they could spread the risk of failure through a range of business strategies, e.g. diversification.
- It is likely that movement from a private limited company to a public limited company will enable Technology Software to achieve their strategic goals, one of which could be growth.
- Technology Software will have their shares publicly listed on the stock market. Their reputation and corporate image will help them to become better known.
- Technology Software may be in a position to benefit from increased security though the acquisition of other companies, as part of their growth strategy.
- Moving from a private limited company to a public limited company will enable Technology Software to benefit from increased brand awareness and credibility in the eyes of customers and businesses.

All valid responses will be given credit

[1] reason identified

[2] reason identified with basic explanation

[3] reason identified with good explanation

(3 × [3])

[9]

9

AVAILABLE
MARKS

3 AO1, AO2, AO3

AVAILABLE
MARKS

Responses may include:

- **Public Relationships** – if Bradley and Clay have an ethical code they will adhere to certain principles, for example fairness and integrity is a standard of the code of ethics, which promotes an environment of respect based on integrity within Bradley and Clay Accountants. When staff follow the code of ethics it creates an atmosphere of trust, respect and confidence in the actions of each person involved in Bradley and Clay Accountants. Trust and confidentiality are the principles within Bradley and Clay Accountants, which they should follow consistently. This leads to Bradley and Clay Accountants establishing and maintaining effective public relations.
- **Corporate image** – Bradley and Clay Accountants work hard to gain competitive advantage. This may be achieved from the positive reputation and good corporate image gained from having an ethical code, enabling them to secure market share from their competitors.
- **Protection for the Professional Business Services firm** – the legal benefits to Bradley and Clay Accountants of having a code ensures the business abides by a set of standards, for example, they will do this honestly and act in the clients best interest. This means that they are less likely to breach legislation.
- **Strategic decision-making** – Bradley and Clay Accountants make decisions at the executive level of their business. A code of ethics in Bradley and Clay Accountants can provide a foundation on which to base all decisions that affect internal and external stakeholders, such as employees.

All valid responses will be given credit

[0] is awarded for a response not worthy of credit.

Level 1 [1]–[3] Basic

- Basic knowledge and understanding of up to three benefits of having an ethical code.
- Limited or no relevant application to Bradley and Clay Accountants.
- Analysis is basic.
- The quality of the candidate's written communication is basic.

Level 2 [4]–[6] Good

- Good knowledge and understanding of at least two benefits of having an ethical code.
- Good application to Bradley and Clay Accountants.
- Analysis is good.
- The quality of the candidate's written communication is good.

Level 3 [7]–[10] Excellent

- Excellent knowledge and understanding of the three benefits of having an ethical code.
- Thorough application to Bradley and Clay Accountants
- Analysis is excellent.
- The quality of the candidate's written communication is excellent. [10]

10

4 (a) AO1, AO2

Responses may include:

Primary research involves the consultant gathering new data that has not been collected before. Super Jacks are going out and collecting it themselves. Examples of primary research: surveys, questionnaires and interviews.

Secondary research involves the consultant gathering existing data that has already been produced. Examples of secondary research: government statistics, Mintel reports, internet, text books, sales data and data from previous branch openings.

[1] method identified

[2] method identified with clear explanation

[3] method identified with clear explanation and example of method

(2 × [3])

[6]

(b) AO1, AO2, AO3

Candidates should evaluate the three sampling methods available to Super Jacks, which are:

Random Sampling	
Advantages	Disadvantages
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Everyone has an equal chance of being chosen as part of the sample by Super Jacks. 2. It is free from researcher bias and prejudice which will suit Super Jacks. 3. Random sampling is particularly useful when there is a large sample. 4. Can be concluded in shorter time duration. It takes less time to complete and saved time can be used for analysis and interpretation by the consultant. 5. Costs less money due to the fact that respondents are selected randomly. 6. Can be carried out by a non-technical consultant as this does not involve any lengthy, complex and crucial process. This reduces training requirements and overall cost of research. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If a large sample is to be used this would be costly and time consuming and may not give Super Jacks the information. 2. Results may not be representative unless a very large sample is used by Super Jacks. 3. This sampling method may introduce random bias, whereby the sample selected could be made up of people who share the same characteristics, just by chance.

AVAILABLE
MARKS

Quota Sampling	
Advantages	Disadvantages
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This would be useful for Super Jacks as they could select a specific number of teenagers, young adults for example, who are likely to purchase fast food and who live in Strabane. 2. When they have reached the target number of respondents in each segment, they would not question any more. 3. This would be less expensive to use than other sampling methods. 4. Results are more accurate than in Random Sampling as they reflect the breakdown of customers by market segment. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Super Jacks would need to be careful when deciding on the number of people in the sample to ensure the information is fully representative of their market segment. 2. The composition of the population must be known in order for the correct proportions to be sampled. 3. Quota sampling makes it impossible to detect a potential sampling error, since the sample is not chosen via random selection. 4. There is great potential for researcher bias and the quality of work may suffer because of this.

Stratified Sampling	
Advantages	Disadvantages
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It produces results that are largely unbiased and accurate for Super Jacks. 2. They often produce data that is more representative of the entire population because of the special attention it pays to smaller sub groups within the population that use Super Jacks. 3. It is the best way to obtain results that reflect the diversity of the population in question for Super Jacks. 4. It is much more effective than other methods of sampling for large and diverse populations. 5. Stratified sampling will always achieve greater precision than a simple random sample, provided that the strata are similar in terms of characteristics. 6. A stratified sample can also be smaller than random samples, which can save time, money and effort. This is because this type of sampling technique has a high statistical precision. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can be time consuming. It involves several steps to establish the sample, making it a lengthy process. 2. There is always the possibility of a sampling error. 3. It may not be appropriate for every survey situation.

AVAILABLE
MARKS

All valid responses will be given credit

[0] is awarded for a response not worthy of credit.

Level 1 [1]–[4] Basic

- Basic knowledge and understanding of up to three methods of sampling.
- Limited or no relevant application to Super Jacks.
- Analysis and evaluation is basic.
- Recommendation of an appropriate sampling method with limited supporting knowledge.
- The quality of the candidate's written communication is basic.

Level 2 [5]–[8] Satisfactory

- Satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the purpose of sampling, reasons why it is used in market research and at least two methods of sampling evaluated.
- Reasonable application to Super Jacks.
- Analysis and evaluation is satisfactory.
- Recommendation of an appropriate sampling method with a partially reasoned supporting argument.
- The quality of the candidate's written communication is satisfactory.

Level 3 [9]–[12] Good

- Good knowledge and understanding of the purpose of sampling, reasons why it is used in market research and two or three methods of sampling evaluated.
- Good application to Super Jacks.
- Analysis and evaluation is clear and coherent.
- Recommendation of an appropriate sampling method is justified with a supporting argument.
- The quality of the candidate's written communication is good.

Level 4 [13]–[16] Excellent

- Excellent knowledge and understanding of the purpose of sampling, reasons why it is used in market research and three methods of sampling.
- Thorough application to Super Jacks.
- Analysis and evaluation is appropriate, clear and logical.
- Recommendation of an appropriate sampling method is fully justified with a supporting argument.
- The quality of the candidate's written communication is excellent. [16]

AVAILABLE
MARKS

22

5 AO1, AO2, AO3

AVAILABLE
MARKS

Responses may include:

Good communication

- It has the ability to enhance the relationship of the Professional Business Services firm with its client.
- To establish an effective working relationship.
- The PBS firm must clearly understand the client needs.
- The PBS consultant must be able to clearly articulate their understanding of the client's needs, without the use of overly technical jargon.
- The PBS consultant needs to maintain timely and appropriate communication, throughout the duration of the project.
- This could be achieved using a variety of methods of communication, which may include: face-to-face, written, non-verbal, electronic.
- If effective communication is not in place it means that there could be misunderstandings between the Professional Business Services firm and its client.

Personal contact

- The Professional Business Services firm can convey more information with personal contact. This may be initially face-to-face.
- Personal contact from the Professional Business Services firm has a great impact on their clients. They can get a better feel of what the client wants. They can recommend courses of action.
- Personal contact can lead to the establishing of personal relationships enabling the maintenance of effective relationships and retain clients.
- If personal contact is not maintained it could lead to the loss of a client to a competitor.

Responding to client needs

- A Professional Business Services firm has the core purpose of responding to individual client needs therefore they must do this effectively.
- A Professional Business Services firm which responds effectively to their clients needs will build a loyal customer base.
- The more loyal the clients are to the Professional Business Services firm the more likely they are to refer their services to other business associates. Referrals are advantageous to the Professional Business Services firm as they cut down on advertising expenses.
- Customer service becomes a part of the Professional Business Services firm services when they run a customer-focused business. When clients/potential clients hear the name of the Professional Business Services firm they automatically associate it with knowledgeable and friendly professionals, who can meet client needs effectively.

Trust

- The Professional Business Services firm and the client must establish a trust relationship. This involves both credibility and reliability. Credibility refers to how believable the Professional Business Services firm is and reliability refers to the extent to which the Professional Business Services firm and its client can count on one another to come through on agreements.
- The clients can trust the opinions and advice of the Professional Business Services firm.
- The clients and the Professional Business Services firm can trust each other with ideas.
- The Professional Business Services firm trust their clients that they will get paid on time.

- The Professional Business Services firm trust their clients that they will not go to another Professional Business Services firm before the arrangement is completed.

All valid responses will be given credit

[0] is awarded for a response not worthy of credit.

Level 1 [1]–[4] Basic

- Basic knowledge and understanding of up to four of the key elements identified which are required for effective relationships.
- Limited or no relevant application to a Professional Business Services firm.
- Analysis is basic.
- The quality of the candidate's written communication is basic.

Level 2 [5]–[8] Satisfactory

- Satisfactory knowledge and understanding of at least two of the key elements identified which are required for effective relationships.
- Reasonable application to the key elements to a Professional Business Services firm.
- Analysis is satisfactory.
- The quality of the candidate's written communication is satisfactory.

Level 3 [9]–[12] Good

- Good knowledge and understanding of two or three key of the elements identified which are required for effective relationships.
- Reasonable application to the key elements to a Professional Business Services firm.
- Analysis is good.
- The quality of the candidate's written communication is good.

Level 4 [13]–[16] Excellent

- Excellent knowledge and understanding the four key elements identified which are required for effective relationships.
- Thorough application to the key elements to a Professional Business Services firm.
- Analysis is excellent.
- The quality of the candidate's written communication is excellent.

[16]

16

AVAILABLE
MARKS

6 AO1, AO2, AO3

AVAILABLE
MARKS

Responses may include:

Strengths

- Specsavers located in the main 'High Streets' in Northern Ireland – always in prime locations.
- Specsavers pride themselves on high levels of staff training both in product knowledge and sales – customers approached quickly during busy periods.
- Specsavers is a powerful retail brand. It has a reputation for value for money, convenience and a wide range of products all in one store.
- Specsavers place a strong emphasis on 'eye-catching' window displays.
- Specsavers has grown substantially over recent years, and has experienced expansion within Northern Ireland.
- Created 22 jobs.
- Homogenous products/services.

Weaknesses

- Large firms may not give the same customer care as traditionally established firms.
- No presence of eye laser technology/services.
- Stores should have one dedicated person greeting customers even during busy periods.
- If store perceived as busy then customers may go to competitors.
- Very little information regarding hearing centre.

Opportunities

- Provision of 'meet and greet' person in each store to ensure 100% customer engagement.
- Better use for selling hearing aids.
- New locations and store types offer Specsavers opportunities to exploit market development. For example, relocating Belfast store to treble capacity.
- Target local businesses with exclusive offers to increase sales revenue.
- Specsavers could offer exclusive deals to specific businesses to encourage their staff to use Specsavers and not use competitors.
- Provision of eye laser surgery.

Threats

- Specsavers are the target of competition, locally and globally.
- Local competitors – traditional family run optician versus Boots and Vision Express.
- No laser eye surgery.
- Customers may go to competitors if they feel that the store is busy.

All valid responses will be given credit

[0] is awarded for a response not worthy of credit.

Level 1 [1]–[4] Basic

- Basic knowledge and understanding of up to four elements of a SWOT analysis.
- Limited or no relevant application to Specsavers.
- Basic SWOT analysis carried out.
- Candidate makes up to three recommendations which are limited and may or may not be supported by own knowledge and analysis given.
- The quality of the candidate's written communication is basic.

Level 2 [5]–[8] Satisfactory

- Satisfactory knowledge and understanding of at least two elements of a SWOT analysis.
- Application is satisfactory with some reference to Specsavers.
- Satisfactory SWOT analysis carried out.

- Candidate makes at least two recommendations which are partially reasoned and supported by own knowledge and the analysis given.
- The quality of the candidate's written communication is satisfactory.

Level 3 [9]–[12] Good

- Good knowledge and understanding of at least two or three key elements of a SWOT analysis.
- Coherent and clear application to Specsavers.
- Good SWOT analysis carried out.
- Candidate makes two recommendations which are well supported by own knowledge and the analysis given.
- The quality of the candidate's written communication is good.

Level 4 [13]–[16] Excellent

- Excellent knowledge and understanding of the four elements of a SWOT analysis.
- Excellent with clear application to Specsavers.
- Excellent SWOT analysis carried out.
- Candidate makes three recommendations which are fully justified and informed by own knowledge and the analysis given.
- The quality of the candidate's written communication is excellent. [16]

Total

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MARKS**

16

80