

CAMBRIDGE TECHNICALS LEVEL 3 (2016)

Examiners' report

BUSINESS



Unit 2 January 2019 series

Version 1

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Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates. The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report. A full copy of the question paper can be downloaded from OCR.

Unit 2 series overview

The scenario is based on a public sector organisation which some candidates seemed unfamiliar with as suggested by their performance in some questions, especially 1b and 3c. Given that these questions require sound understanding of Unit 1 LO1, a good number of candidates appeared under-prepared for synoptic knowledge. Candidates are reminded that this paper contains 10% of synoptic knowledge; it is therefore imperative that they prepare themselves for questions that draw on knowledge they acquired on Unit 1.

The level of response question was generally well answered with an increased number of candidates attempting evaluation compared to last session. This is very encouraging and it is hoped that candidates will continue to build on developing higher level skills in order to access higher grades.

The well-attempted question was 4b, calculation of minimum and maximum spend for the leisure centre chosen. Most candidates interpreted the question accurately and demonstrated the ability to select complex combinations of menu items in their calculations.

The composition question was also well answered, most candidates were evidently familiar with the layout of an email.

Question 1(a)(i)

- 1 (a) (i) Using an example from the *Department of Health & Wellbeing*, explain what is meant by the term 'levels of authority'.

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.....[2]

This question requires candidates to demonstrate their understanding of the term 'levels of authority' through the use of an example from the case study. Whilst most candidates were able to identify correctly that the Secretary, being at the top of the hierarchy has the highest level of authority; a good number struggled to explain the meaning of the term. Answers that refer to ranking or status on the hierarchy do not demonstrate sufficient understanding of the term. A list of acceptable meanings of the term has been provided in the mark scheme. A full mark answer explains the meaning of the term by way of an example from the case study. If an example is not used, the maximum of 1 mark can be given if the explanation is sufficiently clear.

Question 1(a)(ii)

- (ii) Identify the organisational structure type of the *Department of Health & Wellbeing*.

.....[1]

A notably large number of candidates identified the organisation structure as flat. This could be due to the organisation chart presented in Text 1 and candidates did not read the text under the diagram. A good number of candidates identified the structure as 'wide', suggesting a lack of preparation for synoptic assessment for this unit.

Question 1(b)

- (b) The *Department of Health & Wellbeing* is in the public sector.

Explain **one** way the aims and objectives of organisations in the public sector differ from those in the private sector.

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.....[2]

As in 1(a)(ii), a need for improved preparation for synoptic assessment is evident. Some candidates appeared to be confused between public sector organisations and public limited companies. Others referred to public sector organisations as being open to the public whilst private sector organisations are only for friends and family. Better preparation a straightforward question like this testing basic subject knowledge should enable candidates to be credited the available marks.

Question 2

- 2 Evaluate possible reasons why the *Department of Health & Wellbeing* uses electronic bank transfer rather than cheques to pay its employees.

[12]

Most candidates demonstrated sound understanding of the advantages of using electronic bank transfers and also the disadvantages of using cheques as a payment method. A good number of candidates were able to use the information provided in Text 2 to enhance their answers by contextualising them. This allowed some candidates to achieve the higher level of evaluation.

Lower ability responses tended to give vague answers such as 'it is quicker and easier' without linking them to any knowledge of the methods of payment in question. For example, a distinct feature of using cheques is the fact that they have to be authorised and signed by designated personnel. Candidates have to demonstrate that they have knowledge of this feature before any marks can be given. Therefore, vague comments such as 'cheques are very time-consuming' without a link to a feature of the method of payment cannot be credited.

Level 3, analysis, is awarded for any business-facing consequences of using a method of payment such as 'it saves business time', 'it increases business costs'. However, this level cannot be awarded without knowledge of features of payment methods. Equally, candidates who analysed possible impacts on employees did not answer the question. As such, these answers were held at Level 2.

Level 4, evaluation, is awarded for a reasoned argument for why the organisation has chosen to use electronic bank transfers to pay its employees. It was pleasing to see that a good number of candidates were able to contextualise their arguments by quoting from the case study i.e. the organisation employs over 2000 employees. This allowed top marks to be given.

An important point to note about evaluation is that it must answer the question. In this case the question asks for possible reasons why the organisation uses electronic bank transfers. As such, a conclusion that focuses on why cheques are not used does not answer the question. The focus should be on why electronic bank transfers are preferred.

Question 3(a)

- 3 (a) Explain **two** employment protocols that an organisation such as the *Department of Health & Wellbeing* could incorporate to comply with equal opportunity legislation.

1.....

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2.....

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[4]

Most candidates' knowledge of equal opportunity legislation is sound on the whole and a good number achieved full marks. The mark scheme requires candidates to identify a type of discrimination first before any marks can be given i.e. the organisation must not discriminate on grounds of age. The second mark is then given for an employment issue such as 'during interviews', 'when advertising the vacancy' or 'offering promotion opportunities'.

Some candidates tended to misinterpret the question and offered answers pertaining to confidentiality protocols and minimum standards of professional behaviour. It is imperative that candidates fully understand the question before attempting it.

Question 3(b)

- (b) Using the information given in **Text 3** about the duties and responsibilities of a Personal Assistant, complete the person specification below by providing **two** criteria for each of the attributes. An example for 'Skills' has been done for you.

[6]

PERSON SPECIFICATION	
Post Title:	Personal Assistant to the Chief Medical Officer
ATTRIBUTES	ESSENTIAL CRITERIA
Skills	<i>E.g. Ability to prioritise and manage own and others' workloads.</i> 1 2
Qualifications	1 2
Experience	1 2

Candidates who made good use of the information in Text 3 were able to achieve good marks in this question, particularly for the skills attributes. Most candidates were able to identify two appropriate qualifications such as GCSE or A Level Maths or English. The mark scheme allows any relevant qualifications at various levels to be awarded.

Candidates' knowledge of experience appeared limited. Candidates need to be able to distinguish between skills and experience and not be tempted to discuss experience of skills. Any experience relevant to the role of Personal Assistant is acceptable, including previous employment in a medical institution. The mark scheme is designed to credit candidates' knowledge of the difference between skills, qualifications and experience rather than what attributes an applicant needs when applying for the job role of Personal Assistant. As such, the answers allowed tended to be generous on the whole.

Question 3(c)

- (c) The ability to prioritise and manage own and others' workloads is an essential skill that a Personal Assistant should have so that deadlines are not missed.

Analyse **two** possible impacts on the *Department of Health & Wellbeing* of missing deadlines.

1.....

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2.....

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[6]

Building on the essential skill that a Personal Assistant should possess, this question tests candidates' ability in assessing the importance of meeting deadlines LO4. This question was not well answered on the whole. Some candidates evidently did not understand the main purpose of a public sector organisation and identified impacts such as lower profits, losing customer base, etc. Impacts on employees and customers could not be credited as the question clearly states possible impacts on the *Department of Health & Wellbeing*. Candidates are advised to read the question carefully before attempting it.

For each impact identified, candidates must analyse two subsequent consequences to achieve full marks i.e. Impact ➔ Impact ➔ Impact. However, these impacts must be business-facing and relevant to a public sector organisation. Any impacts which are not business-facing i.e. impacts on customers or employees, or impacts which are not relevant to a public sector organisation i.e. decrease profits, would 'break the chain' and no further marks would be given.

Candidates should also avoid giving vague answers such as 'the organisation would appear unprofessional' or 'it would affect/impact on (too vague) the organisation's reputation'.

Question 4(a)(i)

- 4 (a) (i) Using information in **Text 4** and **Tables 1 and 2**, identify the most suitable leisure centre for the training exercise.

.....[1]

A relatively well answered question where most candidates demonstrated the ability to apply practical considerations when booking accommodation based on given constraints. Candidates who did not identify the most suitable leisure centre did not read Text 4 carefully enough. The amount of information given is considerable and candidates are advised to underline the factors they must take into account when reading through the text so that they do not miss out anything important.

Question 4(a)(ii)

(ii) Explain **two** reasons for your choice in **part (a)(i)**.

1.....

 2.....

[4]

This question is marked according to candidates' answers given in 4(a)(i) as 'own figure rule'. This rule prevents candidates from being penalised twice based on a single mistake. However, the reasons given must pertain to the leisure centre chosen. The first mark is given for a reason and the second mark is given for context i.e. Fox Meadow Leisure Centre has a capacity (1) of 75 (1). Context includes capacity, costs, menu items, etc.

Question 4(b)

(b) Calculate the minimum and maximum spend for the event at the leisure centre you chose in **part (a)(i)**.

[8]

This was a well answered question in which a large number of candidates achieved full marks. Most candidates were able to understand the requirements of the question and demonstrated good numeracy skills. As in 4(a)(ii), candidates must calculate the minimum and maximum spend based on the leisure centre they have chosen. This involves a rather complex thought process of working out the most expensive and the cheapest combinations of menu items and adding these to the total cost of the four activities.

Due to the number of different calculations that candidates have to perform, most have written out their working in detail which is a practice to be encouraged. For candidates who have made a careless mistake and ended up with a wrong total spend, marks could be given in the working for the correct subtotals if seen.

Question 4(c)

- (c) Compose an email to be sent to each of the 50 training exercise participants to notify them of the chosen venue and activities. Present the chosen menu in a format that makes it easy for participants to indicate which main course and dessert they prefer. Also request participants to state any special dietary requirements. The email should include all the details for attending the event and request a response with regards to food menu choices.

You will be assessed on the tone, content and layout of your email.

Use the proforma provided on the opposite page to write your email.

You **may** use the space below to draft your email. You will **not** receive any marks for your draft.

[12]

The secret to achieving high marks in this question is to make sure that the email contains all the details participants need to attend the event. To accomplish this, candidates must read the question carefully before composing the email. After drafting the email, use the question again as a checklist to ensure everything is included. It was pleasing to see that the majority of candidates were able to achieve this. Accuracy is important in a question like this, it is important to ensure the name of the leisure centre is spelt correctly, the address is accurately stated, the date is complete and accurate, etc. Proof reading is therefore vital to avoid loss of marks.

Two marks were allocated for the tone of the email i.e. enthusiastic about the benefits of attending the event and encouraging when asking participants to reply. These 2 marks proved to be inaccessible for the majority of candidates unfortunately.

The key to preparing for this type of question is practice and studying some real examples from candidates' own educational establishments, utility suppliers, government agencies, etc, so that candidates can see and learn the different tones used to achieve different purposes. Candidates also need to make sure that the different types of communication listed in LO5.3 are covered in terms of tone and layout before the exam.

Question 4(d)

- (d) Identify **two** benefits to the *Department of Health & Wellbeing* of using email, rather than a letter, to communicate to employees about this training exercise.

1.....

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2.....

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[2]

This is a relatively straightforward question for the majority of candidates who were able to identify two benefits of using an email rather than the conventional postal method e.g. multiple recipients at the click of a button, cost saving, higher response rate, etc. Candidates must avoid writing vague answers such as 'it is faster', 'it is easier'; these responses must be qualified for marks to be given. Again, the question asks for benefits to the organisation and not the recipient which some candidates did not notice.

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