

# Examiners' Report/ Lead Examiner Feedback

June 2015

NQF BTEC Level 1/Level 2 Firsts in  
Public Services

Unit 1: The Role and Work of the  
Public Services (21484F)

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## Introduction

This report has been written by the lead examiner for the BTEC unit entitled The Role and Work of the Public Services. It is designed to help you understand how students performed overall in the exam. For each question there is a brief analysis of student responses. You will also find example student responses from Level 2 Pass, Merit and Distinction students. We hope this will help you to prepare your students for future examination series.

## General Comments

This was the first examination series for Unit 1 entitled The Role and Work of the Public Services. It was pleasing to see how many candidates attempted the majority of questions. In particular, examiners were pleased with the range and application of responses in some of the more challenging questions. These items tested both the higher order command words and Merit and Distinction grade descriptors.

Generally, students were able to show an understanding of the role and work of the public services. However, it should be noted that their examination technique was not as effective as it could have been. Appropriate practice and preparation for external examinations should be a priority for tutors and centres using all of the information available.

The paper was wide ranging in terms of grades to be awarded. Often questions asked students to explain **two** ways, or state **two** examples, but many students limited the number of marks they could be awarded by only providing one example or limited explanations. Students found some difficulty with the terminology used within the examination although the same terminology is used within the specification. Centres are encouraged to give students copies of the specifications to support them in becoming familiar with the terminology that will be used during teaching, learning and assessment.

Overall an encouraging first examination series.

## Feedback on specific questions

### Q1

This was a groupings question. Most students were able to draw a line and match the public service to their grouping from the specification.

### Q2 (a) (ii)

Many students were able to name one other service which is part of the voluntary sector. Marks were also awarded to students who named specific charitable organisations for example students named services such as 'Samaritans' or 'Child-line' as these are clearly linked to the specification under the 'supporting social services' element of the voluntary/third sector services section of A1 (bullet point 5). Where individual charitable organisations are mentioned, these needed to be nationally recognised in order to achieve marks.

### Q2 (b)

Many students were able to name one service for which central government is responsible. Popular answers for this included 'emergency services' 'armed services' and 'prison service'. The marks scheme was more directed towards the services listed under A1 (bullet point 4) which few students identified. Students are encouraged to be specific in their responses as naming a group is not naming a service and marks were lost here.

### Q2(d)

An explanation of one purpose of the probation service was required here. Students either repeated the purpose given in the stem of the question or confused the role of the Probation Service with the Courts and/or Prison Service.

### Q3 (a)

A significant majority of students were able to gain the full marks available here. Students could easily state two sources of voluntary sector funding. A range of answers were seen including donations and the public. It should be noted that students must be clear in their answers what they mean for example a student's response was 'public'. Whilst this was awarded a mark a better response would have been 'general public'.

### Q3 (c) (i)

Most students gained one out of the two marks available. Students generally only referred to the fact that the NHS know they will get some money with answers such as:

always have a bit of money (1 mark) they can plan ahead as they have money (1 mark) might get more money for extra equipment (1 mark)
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These did not enable students to achieve full marks as there was no expansion as to why this was an advantage.

### Q3 (c) (ii)

Most students only gained one out of the two marks available. Students generally only referred to the fact that they might not get enough money with answers such as:

not enough money to fund for new equipment for hospitals (1 mark)  
they provide funding for health care (1 mark)

This did not enable students to achieve full marks as there was no expansion as to why this was a disadvantage.

### Q3 (d)

This question was taken directly from the specification A2 (bullet point 14). Student responses needed to be specific when naming the government department (DEFRA). Centres are reminded of the importance of ensuring students are familiar with the specialist terminology within the unit specification.

### Q3 (e)

Most students were able to gain one of the marks available for this question. Student's answers were wide ranging responses included:

it helps as it gives the public knowledge of how to prevent crime (1 mark)  
to see the way the community would prevent crime (1 mark)  
the surveys may bring new ideas on stopping crime which helps to make the public  
feel safe (2 mark)

Students were required to explain the point they made.

### Q4 (a)

Students did not attain two marks for this question as many were not able to give two ways in which public services are allocated to individuals. This question was taken directly from the specification B3 (bullet point 4). Many students were able to achieve one mark giving answers that could be awarded under 'universal access'. Some examples are listed below:

they are called via 999 (1 mark)  
if you are hurt an ambulance will come and help you (1 mark)  
when a crime happens and the police speak to the victim (1 mark)

Students did not attain two marks for this question as many were only able to give one reason limiting their availability to gain more than one mark for this question. In some instances students response included 'child protection' or 'social services'. These are actual public services and not ways that public services are allocated hence why no marks were awarded. The specification at B3 (bullet point 4) is very clear on this '*why public services are allocated in different ways including universal access, means testing, charging*'.

#### Q4 (b) (i)

Many students only achieving one of the two marks available. Most students identified an advantage and did not explain it with answers such as:

they have everything you need to deal with the fire (1 mark) if they do a job well they get respect (1 mark) can train the officers (1 mark)
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#### Q4 (b) (ii)

This question was well answered. But again, where they did score marks, students only gained one out of the two marks available. Students generally referred to the fact that the reputation of the Fire & Rescue service could be affected with answers such as:

doing a bad job and they can get into trouble (1 mark) everyone will blame them (1 mark) if it the fire is not possible to put out they may get the blame for it (1 mark )
--

These did not allow students to achieve full marks as there was no expansion as to why this was a disadvantage.

#### Q5 (a)

Many students were able to gain the mark here. It should be noted that some students were not awarded a mark for answers such as 'army' as they are not an emergency service.

#### Q5 (b)

Some students were able to gain the mark here. It should be noted that students were not awarded a mark for RNLI. Whilst they do support the management of incidents at sea they are not an emergency service as per the groupings in A1. The RNLI is grouped as within the voluntary sector A1 (bullet point 5) where it states '*acting or providing support for the emergency services*'

## Q6

The majority of students engaged with the scenario and although this was a challenging question where able to gain two of the four marks. Students were able to clearly identify ways in which the individual services in the question (police and health services) work to manage major incidents but they could not link the services clearly in how they would work together.

Examples of students not linking the services and only achieving two marks included responses such as:

the police can block the roads off so the people who are doing the riots cannot get into the city (1 mark) and the health service can deal with all the injured people (1 mark) = 2 marks

the police service can help to stop cars getting down the roads so they don't get damaged (1 mark) and the health service can help the injured people affected by the riots (1 mark) = 2 marks

Whereas students who linked the service in their responses were able to access all the available marks:

the police would take injured people to the hospital and tell the nurse /doctor what has happened so they can help the injured person and if someone went to the hospital with suspicious injuries e/g glass cut or stab would or injured knuckles the would inform the police and they could question the suspect (2 marks) and if an officer as injured while at the incident the health services would be able to heal the officer so he is able to maintain his role at the incident (2 marks) = 4 marks

the police secure areas and prevent distractions so the health services were able to aid the injured without interruption (2 marks) and the police would protect the health services and block roads so the health service could be treating the injured civilian (2 marks) = 4 marks

### Q7 (a)

Students were able to gain full marks with correct responses such as 'Council Tax' and 'Business Rates' are taken directly from the specification B2 (bullet point 4) *where it states 'local authorities: Council Tax charged to households, business rates charged to businesses in the area'*.

Students were not awarded full marks with responses such as 'VAT' and 'Car Tax'. Whilst these are taxes they are central government taxes see B2 (bullet point 3) *where it states 'central government: taxation of individuals and organisations, goods and services (VAT)'*.

### Q7 (b)

The majority of students engaged with the scenario and, although this was quite a challenging question, gained 1-2 marks. Although students demonstrated that they have knowledge of two impacts of cutting leisure and heritage services they should be providing the correct type of response for the command verb. This should be highlighted when teaching students as well as when supporting students with exam techniques.

Examples of responses that gained two marks are:

people might need to travel further to do leisure (1 mark) and the heritage services (like a museum) will close down (1 mark) = 2 marks

there will be a decrease in youth services (1 mark) and tourism might reduce (1 mark) = 2 marks

Compare to responses that gained four marks are;

a lot of the people who was working in the department would be made redundant to save costs and also the facilities wouldn't be up to standards and they wont have the money to replace it (2marks) less people do sport in leisure services and people will become fat which can make the more ill and need extra treatment (2 marks) = 4 marks

if services are lost people could loose their jobs the service will loose money and not be able to fix things that get broke (2 marks) and young people have nowhere to go as the leisure is closed so they hang on the streets and litter cause damage and pollution (2 marks) = 4 marks

### Q8

This question required students to give reasons why public services apply direct charges and expected answers were around 'continuation of service' and 'service improvements'. In many cases students listed examples of charges made for the use of services such as 'car parking' and 'prescriptions'.

Those responses which gained marks included:

more money for the service (1 mark)  
so they can get new things (1mark)  
so people do not use the service when they don't need to (1 mark)



## Q9

This question provided an opportunity for the student to demonstrate their ability to discuss the implications of an inspection report on HMP Ranby.

The examiners remind students that marks will not be awarded where responses

- simply restate the findings of the report
- look at one aspect of the report but fail to consider other issues
- only discussed consequences for prisoners

Students are reminded that the use of offensive and derogatory terms is unacceptable. Tutors must ensure that this does not happen in future series.

The response below gained four marks. The response looks at the implications on the fire service briefly. Most points are relevant:

due to the high levels of violence the prison should **hire more staff** to keep the place in order and prevent violence and maybe **give them more training**. Another thing is they could provide **hygiene lessons to the prisoners** to make it a bit cleaner and make people feel safe. **More cameras could be put in the prison** to make it safer. (4 marks)

The response below gained six marks. The student has planned their answer and identified a range of points. The points raised are relevant to the situation and there is some limited explanation:

it would give HMP Ranby **a bad reputation**. It could mean they need more **money to make the prison safer/cleaner**. It could stop prisoners being sent there **causing other prisons to be too full and they could get bad too**. It could mean **a decrease of staff or effect the possibility of new staff wanting to work at the prison** they would also need lots of **new training to make the staff better**. It could also mean the prison is shut down and prisoners need to be re-located which will cost more money. (6 marks)

Centres are reminded of the importance of ensure students aware of the verbs used in the question as well as the fact it was asking for the **implications** of this type of report rather than just a description of what the HM Inspectorate found when they visited HMP Ranby.

## Summary of performance on the paper

Based on their performance on this paper, in future students should:

- Be aware that there is an hour to complete this paper and plan time accordingly. The lengthier questions come towards the end of the paper so more time could be allocated for later questions.
- Spend time reading each question thoroughly to ensure the question asked is the question answered.
- Be aware that all parts of the specification will be tested during the life of the qualification.
- Study the specification to ensure key aspects that could be tested are known.
- Look at the command word in the question – outline, describe, explain, discuss. These words provide information on the type of response required and how the answer should be phrased. For example, 'outline' requires a basic response, whereas 'explain' will require an initial idea or way to be identified followed by expansion and/or examples to apply and illustrate why this idea or way is suitable.
- If two explanations are required half the marks will be awarded for the first response and the other half will be awarded for the second response. So if only one explanation is made then half the marks allocated for the question will be lost.
- Plan the response to the last question which will require a number of different aspects to be addressed, with reasoning, for higher marks to be awarded. Use all of the information supplied, such as statistics.
- Exam techniques are important and appropriate preparation will ensure that students approach the exam more confidently and with knowledge of how to respond to different types of questions.

## Grade Boundaries

Unit	Max Mark	D	M	P	L1	U
21484F – Unit 1: The Role and Work of the Public Services	50	38	30	22	14	0

### External assessment

The suite of 'next generation' NQF BTECs include an element of external assessment. This external assessment may be through a timetabled paper-based examination, an onscreen, on demand test or a set-task conducted under controlled conditions.

### What is a grade boundary?

A grade boundary is where we 'set' the level of achievement required to obtain a certain grade for the externally assessed unit. We set grade boundaries for each grade (Distinction, Merit, Pass and Level 1 fallback).

### Setting grade boundaries

When we set grade boundaries, we look at the performance of every student who took the assessment. When we can see the full picture of performance, our experts are then able to decide where best to place the grade boundaries - this means that they decide what the lowest possible mark should be for a particular grade.

When our experts set the grade boundaries, they make sure that students receive grades which reflect their ability. Awarding grade boundaries ensures that a student who receives a 'Distinction' grade next year, will have similar ability to a student who has received an 'Distinction' grade this year. Awarding grade boundaries is conducted to make sure students achieve the grade they deserve to achieve, irrespective of variation in the external assessment.

### Variations in externally assessed question papers

Each exam we set asks different questions and may assess different parts of the unit content outlined in the specification. It would be unfair to students if we set the same grade boundaries year on year because then it wouldn't take into account that a paper may be slightly easier or more difficult than the year before.

Grade boundaries for all papers can be found here:

<http://pastpapers.edexcel.com/content/edexcel/grade-boundaries.html>

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