

Examiners' Report/  
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2012

PL Business, Admin and Finance  
(BA101, BA102, BA104 & BA105)  
Paper 1A

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## **PL Business, Admin & Finance BA101/1A June 2012**

### Standard of Assessment

Overall, most centres topics were useful and relevant. This allowed candidates to access the full range of marks. Many candidates took part in an enterprise exercise and this allowed them to provide a good review of the activities. Other centres had carried out group work and it proved very difficult to differentiate between the candidates marks.

LO1 – Candidates tended to describe the product in detail, but were unable to take it a step further by explaining why it could be successful. The stronger candidates linked success to a similar small business which provided good feedback. Candidates should try to compare their company with a similar size, otherwise their evaluation can be quite harsh.

LO2 – Most candidates produced a brainstorming activity to generate ideas, this was a very useful activity. However, this was not developed and candidates didn't go on to explain fully their chosen product or service. The justification on why they had chosen this product was not developed.

LO3 – Most candidates produced standard questionnaires that weren't specific to their chosen product. This hampered their interpretation as comments tended to be generalised to gender, age and ethnicity. Candidates require further guidance from centres on how to tailor the questionnaire design.

LO5.2 – As expected from Level 1 candidates, planning and decision making tended to be weak. The information was well presented, but why decisions had been made lacked detail and judgement.

LO5.3 - Some centres has carried out an actual enterprise task so candidates were able to provide some good feedback but lacked full justification of the assignment. Centres who hadn't carried out an enterprise activity penalised their students.

Sometimes it was difficult to moderate LO5.2 and LO5.3 as marks had been submitted together and it was awkward to differentiate the marks

## **PL Business, Admin & Finance BA102/1A June 2012**

### Administration

Most of the work arrived on time. Some centres still included in their sample multiple copies of the same mail merged letter; only one letter needs to be included and the list of companies to send the letters to serves as the evidence it has been sent to multiple businesses.

Centres are reminded of the necessity of entering candidate numbers on the candidate record forms.

### Standard of Assessment

Overall this unit was delivered to a reasonable standard and some of students were able to access the higher level marks because of the nature of the tasks; candidates were taught how to produce standard documentation and were able to replicate this. Work was generally well presented but again, there were samples which included a lot of extra paperwork; only 1 copy of a letter is needed.

LO2(1) The candidates were all able to show where they had stored the documentation by including screen dumps; again students are reminded of the necessity to explain how the documents will be accessed to achieve a mark in MB3. This was done well last series but not so well this series.

LO2(2) Candidates were able to produce documentation which mainly complied with standard conventions.

LO2(3) The content of the letters and memos was clear and, although there were a few grammatical and spelling errors, these were not intrusive and some candidates were able to enter MB3. Some centres did not show how these marks have been broken down; this would be beneficial in future.

LO3(1) Again, this is still the weakest LO; candidates showed a limited ability to plan; most did not enter MB3 as they did not think about how they were going to approach the task; there was no evidence of dating the plan, allocating responsibility or of monitoring progress. Centres should concentrate on providing input on how to plan and monitor the progress of a task.

Overall the standard of this unit was good; this can be attributed to the nature of the unit and its accessibility as well as the fact that many centres delivered this in a standard format.

## **PL Business, Admin & Finance BA104/1A June 2012**

### Administration

Most of the work for this unit arrived on time and the organisation of the work was good. Centres are reminded of the need to complete the candidate record forms correctly and fully, many centres missed off candidate numbers; this makes the moderation process more time consuming.

### Standard of Assessment

The delivery of this unit was variable; few centres arranged for candidates to visit places of work and observe customer service in action. One centre used their college and their customer service as a model and this made the unit easier to understand for the candidates.

LO1 Performance for this learning objective was variable. The candidates were able to outline customer service roles but not always in enough detail and not always in relation to the business they were studying. Candidates need to be aware that it is not just the customer service department who are responsible for customer service but many other employees too. The better candidates were able to report clearly on the different customer service roles and explain the tasks they performed.

LO2 (1) Candidates were able to identify types of customers but, in many cases, this was very brief. The types of customers will vary from business to business and they will have specific characteristics. It is not enough in this LO to say customers are families; their specific characteristics need to be identified i.e. in a hotel there may be a need for a children's menu and a babysitting service. The ones who had studied a real organisation, such as their college, were able to explain clearly who the customers were and explain their needs, other candidates just made a general list and were unable to access MB3.

LO2 (2, 3) Again, those who visited businesses were able to give specific examples of good and bad customer service and explain why it was good or and the effect it would have on the business and the customer. Those who were writing a general report based on their own experience only gave a brief example. Better candidates were able to relate the good and bad customer service examples back to the customer needs mentioned previously.

LO3 This learning objective provided better differentiation and there was a marked difference between the better candidates and those who had made only made a cursory attempt at this task. The answers ranged from a couple of lines to a detailed explanation relating to the benefits of good customer service showing real insight and depth. Good candidates were able to refer and relate their explanation back to their chosen business and pick out particular features of their customer service policy. Some even went as far as to suggest ways of improving their customer service.

## Overall

Candidates are still being disadvantaged if they do not observe customer service in action; if they are left to arrange the visits themselves the outcomes will be variable. The centres exhibiting better practice arranged for whole classes to visit specific organisation and hence all had access to the same information; the differentiation came when they had to interpret this and then write it up. An interesting approach, and one which did not take too much organising, was to look at the customer service provided by the College. Customer service is fairly meaningless unless it is observed in practice so visits are a must to avoid work becoming theoretical and meaningless.

## **PL Business, Admin & Finance BA105/1A June 2012**

### Administration

Centres are reminded that there is no necessity to include numerous additional documents such as health and safety policies and other work related documents.

### Standard of Assessment

Overall this unit was delivered to a high standard and the majority of students were able to access the higher level marks because of the nature of the tasks; candidates were required to research jobs and assess how well they were equipped to perform these jobs. The work produced was well researched and candidates achieved high marks.

LO1 The candidates were all able to show where they had researched two jobs; there was evidence from the internet and from local newspapers. They were able to compare these jobs well and state which one they would prefer; they did not always relate their preference to their own skills and experience and this prevented them from entering MB3.

LO2(1)/ LO3(1) Candidates were able to produce a standard CV and a letter of application and this was completed to a high standard; the format was appropriate and there were few errors in most of the candidates work. The better candidates were able to relate their own skills and experience to the skills and experiences required by the advertised job.

LO3 (2) The preparation for the interview was done less well this time than in the last series. Candidates were able to produce general, very brief questions but most did not produce sample answers to their questions. Very few candidates made any attempt to relate the questions to the job they were applying for. The preparation for most candidates stopped here; a few showed examples of good practice by printing maps and planning a route and considered what would be appropriate to wear to an interview with a specific explanation why.

LO4 Centres are reminded that the goals the candidates set must be related to their work experience placement and should be set before they embark on the placement. The goals set tended to be very general. Most candidates only focused on a couple of goals and MB3 required them to relate to a wide range of goals.

LO5 The first part of this task was completed to a high standard especially by those who were encouraged to complete a work experience diary. There were a number of candidates from a variety of centres who did not receive feedback from their employers and hence they were not able to comment on what they did and did not agree with. Candidates are disadvantaged if this is the case and centres should ensure all candidates receive written feedback on their work experience so they can make comments.

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