

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2012

PL Business, Admin & Finance
(BA201, BA202, BA204, BA205,
BA206, BA208, BA209)
Paper 01

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January 2012

Publications Code DP030250

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Principal Learning – Business Administration and Finance

Level 2 coursework

General Comments

The standard of learner work appears to have risen which is attributed to the Centre assessor team having worked well with the specifications and where training has been undertaken, assimilated the requirements for the higher achievement levels in the Learning Outcomes.

Administration still continues to be an issue with some centres. Candidate Record Sheets appear to be missing for some candidates and in a small number of cases, the Section A and Section B ephemeral evidence marks have been put together. This causes unnecessary delay during the assessment window when Centres have to be contacted in order to ratify the marks given. Where Centres had annotated the candidate work with mark band and learning outcome, as well as correctly completing the Candidate Record Sheet, a smooth moderation process was able to be undertaken. Centres need to be aware that the requested sample must include work from the highest achieving candidate and the lowest achieving candidate. Again if this work is not included, the Centre causes a delay to the moderation process. Centres must also be vigilant in sending a copy of the proposed marks to be awarded. There were a small number of Centres who incorrectly added up the candidate marks for each section or else the marks on the Candidate Record Sheet did not agree with those on the EDI printout.

Learner Responses Marking Grid A

Unit 1 – Business Enterprise

This unit was better carried out than previously. Most learners could give an understanding of entrepreneurship but did less well in relating this understanding to their contribution to the business as a whole. Again the business plan largely consisted of the use of the skeleton business plan – the weakest part being the financial section whereby some learners either did not include, or weakly included a cash flow forecast. Where pricing had been discussed this aspect was often not backed by rationale. It is important that learners understand the importance of setting goals for their business. These goals provide a strong focus for reflection on the business success in future units.

However, where business plans had provided detail on process and product and strong goals were in place, the learners achieved well and had obviously understood the strength of a sound business planning structure.

Unit 2 – Business Administration

There was significant improvement from the previous series but learners are still disadvantaging themselves by lack of detail in terms of administrative roles and what these involve. Learners tended to give the role and then

resort to broad brush statements in terms of how the roles are carried out. A significant improvement to the work in this unit would be by learners understanding the significance of good administration in an organisation particularly from the organisation's point of view and from the perspective's of other stakeholders. Whilst some sound documents were seen in terms of layout and structure, on many occasions learners produced weak documents with poor structure. This unit seems to be one of the more challenging for learners and yet the solution can clearly be obtained by consistency of display and understanding of good business structure to documentary evidence. It was pleasing to see that many learners understood the need for careful planning of time available when preparing for meetings. There was clear evidence that learners as a whole were considering the amount of time available and the amount of time needed to produce the requirements for meetings.

Unit 4 – Business Finance and Accounting

As in previous series, Centres were using the sample assignment materials for this unit. There is still the tendency for learners to suggest accounting roles that are unsuitable and it is clear that greater understanding of financial roles would help this Unit achievement. Most learners were able to comment on specific aspects of financial performance but they did less well in relating this performance and justifying their statements. Calculations were generally much improved and a high level of accuracy was seen. In terms of methods for processing and storing financial information most learners produced information to support electronic methods. However, their assimilation of positive and negative issues was not as well carried out. Overall the cashbook was well carried out but some headings were missing. Headings also caused some problems with profit and loss statements. However, overall learner work had improved significantly.

Unit 5 – Marketing, Sales and Customer Service in Business

The marketing mix was reasonably carried out with all learners demonstrating some level of understanding of the mix. However, many learners produced work that lacked detail or had been written in the past tense. This could therefore not be a 'plan'. There was an improvement in learner understanding of the need to produce materials as a result of research. This had been a major flaw in previous series. Learners displayed their research results in graphical format and some good analysis was seen. Less well carried out was the section on analysing typical customers in terms of specific criteria. Many learners chose to ignore this section of the tasks set. Learners carried out well the commentary on customer service in their chosen organisation although greater use could have been made of examples to justify their comments. There was a range of learner evidence to support their activity in demonstrating customer service. It was a disappointment that many learners did not carry out this activity and therefore lost a significant amount of marks for this learning outcome. For those learners that did carry out the activity, they sometimes disadvantaged themselves by not giving feedback at various stages of the process.

Unit 6 – Teams and Communication in Business

Overall learners did less well in this unit. Many learners could describe theoretical knowledge such as Belbin, but did less well in applying this knowledge to a real situation they had been involved with. This lack of application therefore limited them in terms of achieving the higher mark bands for understanding the benefits of team working. Most learners could assess the effectiveness of their own team's performance and could give specific examples but did less well on looking at their own contribution. Overall there was a lack of specific examples of sufficient detail to allow clear understanding of the relationship between theory and practice. This then meant that their detail on the importance of teamworking to organisations in terms of meeting objectives, lacked real application. As in previous series, learners disadvantaged themselves by failing to understand the importance of an effective team leader. They could discuss a team leader at a simplistic level but found difficulty in putting the effectiveness of the team leader role into a good explanation.

Unit 8 – Corporate Social Responsibility

It was good to see learners attempting learning outcome 1 and demonstrating clearly their understanding of why organisations have to act responsibly. This is such an improvement from previous series whereby work appeared to be generic in nature. Learners could develop further by giving greater analysis to the examples given. Learners sometimes failed to give a clear understanding of the positives and negatives of business practices. Clear examples need to be used if any weight is to be given to their answers. Learners could develop further in terms of achieving learning outcome 3.2.3 whereby they need to concentrate on a specific issue. This was often poorly attempted with no real display of research or analysis and therefore placed the learner in the lower mark bands.

Unit 9 – Careers and Employment in Business

Some very good work was seen from Centres whereas other Centres produced work that was poorly related to the research carried out. This was mystifying. Where learners had produced clear plans for their careers and then produced short term plans for their work experience and reviewed those achievements following work experience, there was great clarity and purpose to their work. This supported development through the mark bands. This detail of the plan was therefore richly rewarded. Most learners produced sound letters of application and related the application clearly to the position applied for. Learners produced a range of questions but sometimes these were generic questions and lacked thought in terms of the job role. To achieve the higher mark bands for this learning outcome, the learner must ensure that the relationship to the job role is demonstrated in the questions and expected answers. Learners generally gave good responses to statutory and contractual rights and responsibilities but some learners continued to give weak responses to performance management and demonstrated poor understanding of its place in the work environment.

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Order Code DP030250 January 2012

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