

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2010

Principal Learning

Principal Learning - Business, Administration & Finance - Controlled Assessments Level 3

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General Comments

A number of the internally assessed units require learners to work collaboratively for example when producing a Business Plan for Unit 1 or for the planning of an event for Unit 2. Centres are reminded that even though activities may have been carried out collectively, the write up and comment on these activities needs to be the individual learners own work. In a number of cases this series, collaborative work has been presented as an individuals own work and centres have authenticated this.

Centres are also reminded that they need to provide a detailed witness statement to justify the award of marks from mark grid B.

BA301 - Business Enterprise

Introduction

This was the first time the unit had been assessed and the majority of learners made a reasonable attempt at every activity, and produced work for every learning outcome. Centres are reminded that when group work is carried out each learner must produce their own evidence, and where necessary the centre should clearly identify each activity carried out by the relevant learner.

Learning Outcomes

Learners achieved good marks where they were able to provide strong evidence of running a business over a period of time. The evidence was based on both primary and secondary research and this research was then integrated into their own business. Learners arguments provided both analytical and evaluative development all of which was underpinned by sound business theory. Learners provided a convincing explanation of problems they faced and a similarly supportive business plan.

High marks were achieved when the organisational structure was applied clearly to the business with clear links between the person specification and job description. Finally, high marks were also achieved where learners were able to provide a full evaluation of their running of a business.

At the lower end of achievement learners all displayed a good ability to produce business plans and account for key activities. However, they tended to provide less clear evaluations and in most cases did not show sufficient development of business theories and analytical skills.

BA302 - Business, Administration and Events

Introduction

This was the second time the unit had been assessed and the majority of learners made a reasonable attempt at the event planning activity. Learners produced work for every learning outcome.

General

The majority of work submitted for assessment followed the sample assignment given in the tutor support material. Learners started by describing the purpose administration and the activities undertaken. This LO saw a wide range of responses, with some candidates performing well and others producing very superficial responses. LO 2 was reasonably well attempted with all learners producing some form of event plan. The weakest responses were linked to LO4. Here learners tended to produce a suitable risk assessment but in some cases this was not well applied to the event being planned and the health and safety legislation element was poorly attempted. Teachers need to provide more guidance in this area to ensure learners can achieve the higher grades.

Learning Outcomes

For this unit, learners are required to demonstrate an understanding of what effective administration and information management entails and why it is important to organisations. Learners are then expected to plan an event having first carried out research and set specific outcomes. The planning needs to show outcomes, times and interdependencies of activities. Higher band learners will fully justify these decisions. A final activity for this unit involves learners producing a detailed risk assessment which should be linked to appropriate Health and Safety legislation.

LO1 scored low in many cases because learners were not showing what effective admin was or why it was required. Some consequences were discussed but work tended to be limited and covered very little from the what you need to learn content.

LO2 All learners presented a planning chart or description of the planning needed for the event. Very few however presented detailed explanations of the features or the outcomes/expectations of attendees.

LO3 In many cases the self-assessment of learner performance was superficial and unjustified.

LO4 Most centres produced detailed risk assessment but a few were generic in nature rather than being linked to the event planned. Some learners managed to link H&S legislation to the risk assessment but in too many cases this was not done well if at all.

BA305 - Marketing & Sales

Introduction

Generally learners were able to address all learning outcomes, but the lack of use of marketing theory limited the marks awarded.

A number of centres chose to design their own brief for this unit rather than use the sample material provided. In all cases the assignment was suitable and with sufficient guidance to enable learners to achieve at all the learning outcomes. Many centres chose to link this unit to the business planning unit 1. However the small

number of centres that guided learners to investigate other areas of personal interest produced work of a higher level.

Learning Outcomes

LO.1

The lack of detail in many learners work restricted marks to MB1 or 2. Learners performed well where they provided clear evidence of research they had carried out into the market competition they faced. Other analytical tools were chosen well, however learners must discuss why these are suitable to their task.

LO.2

Most learners performed well on this learning outcome as they were able to understand the key principles of the Marketing Mix. Learners must ensure that they link their proposals for the Marketing Mix to their research, a simple assertion is not deemed to be suitable.

LO3(1)

Learners performed well on this learning outcome where they provided substantial evidence of Primary research. Learners should ensure that this research is clearly thought out and realistic to their task. In most cases secondary research was not sufficient and limited learners to MB2.

LO3(2.3)

Learners achieved good marks where they were able to provide research supported by graphical visuals of their results. These were accompanied by conclusions, both on what the data was showing but also its relevance in assisting in the decision making process as to what product to choose.

LO4

Learners performed well where they were able to consider each of the requirements of this LO in turn i.e. content, design, security features and maintenance. Learners tended to provide relevant and appropriate ideas regarding content and design but only provided limited recommendations on security features and maintenance.

LO5(4)

Most learners had a basic understanding of AIDA. Learners performed well where they were able to identify how they addressed each part of AIDA. Higher marks were achieved where learners applied their performance to the achievement of a particular outcome or where the audience were able to give them feedback on which they could comment.

BA306 - Customer Service

Introduction

The learners have provided a reasonable standard of work demonstrating an interest in the subject. Learning outcomes have been met through the setting of appropriate tasks and activities around the context of local businesses.

Learning Outcomes

LO.1 (A)

The learners have demonstrated their understanding of Customer Service in Business however the reports are descriptive pieces of work rather than analytical. There is some confusion about the difference between internal and external customers and greater effort should be made to clearly differentiate the needs of these client groups. Learners have made unsubstantiated assertions but have not inserted citations or references to back them up.

LO.2 (A)

Learners have demonstrated an understanding of the factors that impact on customer service. Once again the difference between internal and external is not clearly demonstrated. The concept of 'outsourcing' clearly proved a challenge to the learners with only limited consideration of the benefits and disadvantages of outsourcing operations. Similarly providing customer service online was not well completed by the learners, which indicated a lack of understanding by a number of learners.

LO.3 (A)

The learners have shown a limited understanding of how customer standards are maintained focussing on the practices of the organisations they are most familiar with but not enquiring further. The learners' reports do not have supporting citations or references to add depth and value to their own assertions.

LO.4 (A)

Learners have demonstrated a limited understanding of the factors that impact on on-line customer service. This learning outcome indicated a lack of understanding by a number of learners. Often the learners' evaluation was weak and lacked basic understanding.

LO.5 (A)

The learners provided a response to a customer complaint about a faulty product as an answer for this activity. The responses were, in the main, adequate but lacked a supporting document that would explain why the learner had responded and taken a particular stance when answering. A good answer would have indicated the organisations policy and procedure for dealing with customer complaints and how the learner had followed that policy when responding. The letters provided by the learners suffered from grammatical errors and spelling mistakes, which should be highlighted by the assessor.

LO.5 (B)

The observation record has been completed by the assessor but comments lack focus and are not linked clearly to the Mark Band descriptors making it impossible to identify whether the assessors mark is representative of the learners level of achievement.

BA310 - Careers & Employment

General

The structure of the assignments was appropriate to meet the criteria for this unit and most centres followed the sample assignment brief. Some centres had included work on Belbin's team roles as part of this assignment which did not add to their marks.

More students may have found this unit more accessible if centres focused on only one business as a potential employer or allowed learners to focus all of their evidence on the career of their own choice. This may enable students to set more realistic and convincing goals as well as interview questions. It would also be good to see learners experience a work placement related to their chosen career path which would enable them to link together the whole unit effectively and more convincingly.

Learning Outcomes

LO.1 and LO.2 (.1, .2) were awarded together. For this section, learners were asked to produce a career plan which showed a good awareness of what they need to do to achieve their chosen career as well as set specific SMART targets for their work experience. Most candidates completed LO.1 well making specific reference to the career choice. For LO2.1, 2 the work for this section did not make specific reference to the work experience that the candidates were to undertake. This restricted the overall level to MB1.

For LO2.3 there were some good attempts made of learners assessing their progress and their ability to achieve their goals. Learners struggled to develop their ideas of how to build on their work experience to achieve the higher marks.

LO3.1 required learners to complete documentation for being an interviewee and interviewer. Generally the work was set appropriately and centres had encouraged the use of standard proformas or used set templates which reduced errors and inconsistencies. This enables learners to achieve the higher mark bands.

LO3.2 asked learners to prepare questions for both roles as interviewer and interviewee. A range of work was seen for this LO. Some learners were more perceptive than others at considering specific questions for the jobs that they were focusing on and higher marks were awarded where more consideration had been taken for the specific roles.

LO3.3, 4 This learning outcome requires learners to have made clear and accurate records of the interviews they carried out. The notes were quite brief overall but generally clear so most learners scored at least MB2 for this area.

LO.4 focuses on both employment legislation and performance management. Generally the employment legislation part of this LO was handled well although centres would benefit from encouraging the use of more citation or referencing to ensure candidates are describing the impact of employment legislation in their own words. A range of performance management methods has been used in centres, some more complex than others. Many candidates seemed to struggle to show a thorough understanding of performance management and where the example they were using was too complex, the analysis was very weak.

Statistics

BA301

Grade	Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U
Raw mark boundary	60	53	47	41	35	30	25	0
Uniform mark scale boundary	21	18	15	12	9	6	3	0

BA302

Grade	Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U
Raw mark boundary	60	54	48	42	36	31	26	0
Uniform mark scale boundary	14	12	10	8	6	4	2	0

BA305

Grade	Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U
Raw mark boundary	60	54	48	42	36	30	25	0
Uniform mark scale boundary	14	12	10	8	6	4	2	0

BA306

Grade	Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U
Raw mark boundary	60	54	48	42	36	30	25	0
Uniform mark scale boundary	14	12	10	8	6	4	2	0

BA307

Grade	Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U
Raw mark boundary	60	54	48	42	36	30	24	0
Uniform mark scale boundary	14	12	10	8	6	4	2	0

BA310

Grade	Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U
Raw mark boundary	60	56	49	43	37	31	25	0
Uniform mark scale boundary	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0

Notes

Maximum Mark (raw): the mark corresponding to the sum total of the marks shown on the Mark Scheme or Marking Grids.

Raw boundary mark: the minimum mark required by a learner to qualify for a given grade.

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