

Examiners' Report

January 2010

Principal Learning

Business, Administration and Finance
BA308 Responding to Change in Business

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Principal Examiners' Report

Principal Learning - Business, Administration & Finance

Level 3 Unit 8 - Responding to Change in Business

General Comments

Given this was the first assessment window and candidates had only a short space of time to develop the core knowledge for this relatively difficult unit, on the whole the quality of the responses from a great many learners was pleasing to see. Most learners were able to demonstrate an understanding of both the causes of change and the impact on employees and organisations. A number of candidates were also able to demonstrate basic understanding of the different change concepts such as the Kubler- Ross change curve, and the better ones were able to apply this core knowledge to the questions set. Some candidates did fail to demonstrate clear understanding of the impact and causes of change, and their responses could be taken to indicate they were perhaps entered on the wrong level and that they may have been more suited to a level 2 course of study.

For future series, centres need to ensure they teach all of the theorists listed in the specification. It is intended that all of these will be sampled over a number of examination series and learners will need to use the correct theorist to achieve the marks. An example of this in January was Q10. Here candidates were asked to specifically use the Kubler-Ross change curve in their answer, but could then use other theories to develop their response and gain higher marks. Candidates who failed to use the K-R curve did not answer the question as set and so failed to score in this question.

Centres should also ensure candidates understand the command words from the specification so they know what is expected in their answer. Clearly in January, the kind of development needed to the command words "Assess" and "Examine" were not understood by some candidates.

Centres/consortia may wish to focus on the application, as well as the acquisition, of knowledge, when delivering the unit, in order to assist learners in attaining a higher grade. The more challenging questions on this paper require a competent understanding of the topic which has to be linked to the stimulus material provided.

Responses to questions

In this series, candidates attaining a grade E were expected to be able to answer, correctly, questions 1, 2, 6a, 6c, 7a, 7b, 8a, 8b 9a, 9b, 10. This means that an average candidate at this level could fail to score some knowledge marks but pick up lower level development marks and still achieve a sound grade. Learners around this boundary were not expected to be able to answer questions 3, 4, 6b with any great success. They were also expected to achieve lower level marks in Q10.

At the A*/A boundary, questions 3, 8b, 10 provided evidence of good understanding

Questions

Questions 1 - 5

Q's 1-5 were the multiple choice questions and most candidates were able to pick up the marks for Q's 1, 2 & 5. Question 3 required learners to show complex analytical understanding and was less well answered by weaker candidates.

Question 6

Q6 - Most E grade candidates were able to pick up knowledge marks on 6a and c, but very few of the development marks. Responses tended to be weak or superficial, failing to go beyond simply implying demand would fall or profits would be reduced. A small number of candidates however failed to read or understand the question fully and so scored one mark or less from the three available. Examples of this in 6b were the interpretation of Air passenger duty as adding to the profits of BA. In 6c, many candidates failed to link the question to BA. Instead, some simply stated BA costs would increase if the pound fell in value without saying why.

Question 7

Q7a, b allowed most candidates to show some knowledge but again there was little evidence of development from weaker learners. Only a minority of learners failed to demonstrate understanding of what a business plan is, but a number were unable to say how it would benefit or disadvantage BA.

Question 8

Q8a was about resistance to change, and this question again allowed weaker candidates to pick up content marks for demonstrating knowledge but a number failed to show development. This question was aimed at learning outcome 2 and in particular at the four main reasons for resistance as shown in the specification.

Q8b was targeted at how individuals can manage their own responses to change. It allowed A* candidates the opportunity to show good exam technique and meet the Level 2 descriptor. Some candidates failed to read or understand the question and discussed how BA could overcome resistance to change. This was not the question asked here and these candidates scored no marks. Other candidates used different models such as the Kubler-Ross change curve to answer this question, and this limited them to level 1 marks. Finally, the command word used was "Assess". This question required learners to make a judgement about the way BA staff would respond and perhaps comment on the likely outcomes.

Question 9

Q9a, b was not answered well by a number of candidates. The command word used was "Examine" which required candidates to consider both sides of the argument. For example in 9a comments were required on the advantages and disadvantages of using customer satisfaction data e.g. advantage of measuring satisfaction levels is BA can see if changes are working, whilst a disadvantage would be the time, cost or training to collect the data. Failure to do this limited marks to level 1. Most candidates were able to show knowledge but little development. Some again

misunderstood the question or the theory. Very few candidates achieved level 2 on this question.

Question 10

Q10 proved to be a good discriminator. Whilst E grade candidates were able to show some knowledge but with little development, A* candidates were able to demonstrate the judgement needed by the command word and it gave them the opportunity to show analytical and evaluative skills and meet the standard for award of Level 3 marks. There were a number of very good answers where the K-R change curve theory was explained and then used to answer the question. Sadly, a number of candidates either did not know this theory or simply chose to discuss another theory instead. The use of alternate theorist was acceptable provided it built on and developed the candidate's knowledge of K-R. Without this foundation, marks could not be awarded to otherwise sound work.

Statistics

| Grade | Max. Mark | A* | A | B | C | D | E |
|-------------------|-----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Raw Boundary Mark | 50 | 42 | 37 | 32 | 27 | 22 | 17 |
| Points Score | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

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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