

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

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PL Business, Admin & Finance
(BA308)
Paper 01

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Principal Learning – Business Administration and Finance

Unit 8 – Corporate Social Responsibility

Introduction

This is the fifth time this externally assessed unit has been examined. The majority of learners completed the paper. In general, learners have shown at least reasonable knowledge of the appropriate theorists listed on the specification. It is essential that centres teach to the specification for this exam as a number of the questions are linked to specific theorists. Lack of understanding of business theory has meant that some learners have not been able to access higher marks on evaluative questions, therefore restricting their overall marks.

Centres and learners need to ensure that they use the appropriate part of the specification when answering questions. This is apparent in the wording of the questions. Those learners that use the correct theory clearly achieve higher grades.

Responses to questions

In this series, candidates attaining a grade E were expected to be able to answer, questions 7 and 8a. With some of the other questions, particularly question 6, candidates at this level could still expect to pick up knowledge marks. Learners around this boundary were not expected to do well on questions 8b and 10. At the A*/A boundary, questions 8b and 10 looked for evidence of good understanding, analysis and evaluation.

Q6a A number of good answers. Most learners were able to develop an argument as to why an ageing population would impact on Nokia. Many learners discussed how the technology used within the product would impact on the Nokia's designs. Answers must show the development of a line of argument. This might entail one relevant point developed analytically through two steps.

Q6b A clear understanding of the impact of increased competition on Nokia has been shown by most learners, with references made to Apple, Google and RIM.

Q6c This question was accessible to most learners but centres must ensure that learners understand all terminology within the specification. The lack of understanding of the terms consumer technology and nanotechnology meant that some learners failed to attain marks on this question.

Q7 In the main, a well answered question. However, a sizeable minority of learners lost marks as they discussed the impact on Nokia, rather than the impact on the individual, as asked in the question. Clearly, learners must spend time looking at key words in the question. It is advisable to keep referring back to the question to help focus when writing an answer.

Q8a A fairly well answered question with most learners using the distinction between numerical for an advantage and non-numerical e.g. morale for a disadvantage.

Learners that used the correct part of the specification to answer this question achieved a good mark. A number of learners did not use the correct theory to underpin their answers.

Q8b It is apparent that some centres are looking to develop exam technique with learner's answers. A number of learners were able to develop a strong analytical line of argument in looking at the advantages and disadvantages of developing skills and experience to respond to job losses at Nokia. However, the majority of learners only looked at one side of the argument and only looked at benefits. Very few look to produce a two-sided argument and then conclude with a judgement as to how beneficial this approach is overall.

Q9 Generally well answered with some good explanation of ways that can be used to overcome employee resistance to change in organisations such as Nokia. Again, this should focus on the specific area of the specification. Those learners that do not understand this are losing marks unnecessarily.

Q10 A number of learners had some understanding of the Kubler-Ross Change Curve. Of these, some discussed the curve without reference to Nokia, whilst others were able to look at each stage of the curve and reference Nokia within their answer. The minority that did not know the theory could not answer the question. Again, learners must have a full understanding of the specification. If they do not know what is on the specification they cannot answer the question. As guidance, it should be noted that there will be an evaluative question on one of Gleicher, Lewin or Kubler-Ross in each exam.

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