

Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2012

Principal Learning

Manufacturing & Product Design
MP101 Paper 01

Introduction to Manufacturing

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Unit MP101_01

Introduction to Manufacturing

General Comments

In this series, candidates attaining a grade B were expected to be able to correctly answer questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 10, 12, 15, 16, 17, 25 and 26. Candidates were not expected to be able to answer the remaining questions in order to achieve a pass grade. The required questions and answers cover all learning outcomes.

Candidates attaining a grade A* were expected to be able to correctly answer all of the questions on the paper except 13, 22, 23, 24, 27, 28, 29, 30. The A* questions required candidates to have a greater depth of knowledge and to be able to filter stronger distracter answers. Proficiency in performing mathematical calculations is also an important skill for A* candidates.

Possible techniques to improve candidate performance in specific questions are suggested below.

Questions 1- 5 relating to main business processes tended to be answered correctly by the majority of candidates.

Questions 6, 9 and 11 focused on of wealth creation. Q6 is an example where candidates may have been able to apply logic to determine the correct response. The question starts with a positive statement, the creation of wealth. Three of the possible answers have negative associations, such as an increase in unemployment. Candidates could be taught to rule out incorrect answers until only the correct one remains. Where candidates do not have the specific knowledge required to answer a question, this technique of matching positive to positive may be helpful.

Question 7 related to social issues, in particular demographics. This is a term that candidates may not be familiar with, therefore they would benefit from an explanation of the meaning.

Question 8 related to economic issues and was also linked to business processes. Candidates need the ability to link the meanings of the word such as finance and economic.

Question 10 related to environmental issues. Emission control is a topic that candidates may not be as familiar with as reducing energy usage or recycling. Teacher analysis of the specification content will help in identifying those areas where candidates are unlikely to acquire the knowledge required from other curriculum areas. This could then help target taught lessons to those topics where most impact can be made in a candidate's performance.

Questions 12 to 17 tested candidate knowledge of sub-sectors and products. This learning outcome has an extensive list of sectors and products associated with it. Candidates are likely to be familiar with some sub-sectors such as bakery, due to everyday experience. Other sectors, such as those that produce technical textiles, may be less well known. It might be appropriate to identify those sectors and products that candidates are not knowledgeable about and focus teaching sessions to address these.

Questions 18 to 21 were about the linked concepts of prices and cost. The specification makes the explicit link between "increased costs = increased selling price = potential loss of business; decreased costs = larger profit margin / increased production etc". Candidates should be taught to realise they probably need no knowledge of the specific manufacturing sub-sector these questions relate to be able to apply the principle.

Question 22 focused on costs to consider. The specification details five specific categories of costs the candidates should be taught about.

Questions 23 and 24 related to the general effects of world trading. This is an area where use of newspaper articles and television news programs may help increase candidate awareness. Changes to local employment opportunities, caused by worldwide competition, may give the topic a focus that increases candidate involvement and appreciation.

Questions 25 to 30 required candidates to perform simple calculations about the costs of manufacturing products. Examples from previous exams series are a good indicator of the level of complexity candidates are expected to process. Centres could keep the wording of previous questions and simply change the figures involved. It is likely that candidates will benefit from practising the use of a calculator to solve these types of problems. Where the calculations include several stages candidates may benefit from making written notes to record the result of each stage. This learning outcome will account for between 10 and 20 percent of the examination proficiency in performing costing calculations.

The comments above are not intended to be definitive, they are suggestions about possible methods and resources to help teachers deliver the externally assessed unit of the specification.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

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