

Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2010

GCE

GCE Applied Business (6920) Paper 01

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PM Report on coursework paper 6920/01 - Investigating Customer Service - January 2010

Moderation Process

External moderation process for the series was deemed to be straightforward. Overall, centres forwarded samples on time and an accurate number of sample portfolios were provided i.e. ten portfolios with the highest and lowest grade included. However there were some centres that included all three copies of the OPTEMS with the evidence requested.

Statements of authentication were present in the samples moderated for this series. However, these were some times not signed by either the student or the assessor. Centres should ensure authentication statements are fully completed when submitting evidence for external moderation.

Assessment Objectives and Mark Band Evidence

In comparison to the last series, the standard of student performance has increased. Centres are much more aware of the requirements for each strand of the unit through the Principle Moderator's report and training events.

Candidates appear to be better at working with contrasting organisations as Centres appear to have taken on board this advice. Some are using the actual institution where they are studying; this has often limited students in generating evidence in depth. There was much better coverage of the internal needs, wants and expectations in this series. Previously these internal customer needs had been addressed more as the organisations' needs from them rather than the other way around. There is still a tendency for Centres to assess work of external customers as good when there has been more of an 'over-view' approach rather than those of individual groups such as 'special needs groups' or families with young children. Therefore there has been slightly lenient assessment.

Fewer Centres made the mistake of candidates continuing to use two organisations across all the strands and not just Strand A which, meant candidates completed unnecessary work. It was particularly pleasing to see that there was much more understanding about the aspects of internal customer needs and wants and less emphasis on what was supplied.

Some Centre's had involved their candidates in doing customer service surveys and observations and so there was some very good work coming through for strands B and C. It was pleasing to see the use of bench marking as well as the usual 'mystery shopper'. Candidates were also making better use of application of the research gathered from the chosen organisation commenting on materials such as 'complaint forms and procedures' and codes of practice.

Evidence for strand D has been stronger in this series, learners are now picking up more on the employment relations side and how the EU has brought about influence such as the Working Time Directive and shift working patterns and how this works on customer relations in some of the bigger organisations.

Assessment

There was better annotation of achievement against the assessment objectives and mark bands this series.

Unit Guidance

Centres should ensure candidates select contrasting businesses as per unit specification; this will enable candidates to generate evidence requirements for the higher mark bands. It is recommended that centres do not select Shopping Malls, Retail Parks or School/ College as this may limit scope for developing evidence for higher mark bands.

Centres need to encourage candidates to research fully (Primary and secondary) in order to support the evidence requirements for the higher mark bands for each strand. Analysis of primary research should be included as evidence, together with secondary research.

It is recommended that centres encourage candidates to produce written work and then extract the presentation from the written work; this will enable candidates to submit detailed evidence towards the assessment objectives and higher mark bands. Candidates should submit both elements of evidence for this unit. A presentation supported by a detailed witness statement and a written report as this is a requirement of the unit specification.

It is recommended that Centres should encourage candidates to investigate the same organisation for strand B, C, and D where possible.

Evidence for UK and EU legislation should reflect the changes in Consumer Protection Legislation.

Grade boundaries

At the E/U boundary candidates demonstrated basic knowledge and understanding of key customer service concepts. At this grade boundary, candidates presented limited evidence of application, analysis and evaluation.

For strand A , candidates showed a basic understanding of different types of customers and their needs and expectations for two organisations. Research for this strand was limited or implied. For strand B basic/limited application of knowledge and understanding was demonstrated for strengths, weaknesses and recommendations of customer service activities. Strand C Evidence of research was implied/limited at this grade boundary. Strand D For strand D at this grade boundary, evidence of Legislation was limited in particular, EU legislation. Legislation links to the organisation's product/service was limited.

At the A/B boundary candidates were able to demonstrate in depth knowledge and understanding of key customer service concepts. Evidence was supported by good research, clear application, analysis and evaluation. For strand A candidates

demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of different types of customers and their needs and expectations for two organisations. Analysis and evaluation was effective for this strand. For Strand B strengths and weaknesses of customer service activities were analysed and evidenced, suggestions for improvements were recommended based on research. For Strand C candidates evidenced relevant up to date research to demonstrate how customer service is monitored and maintained within the organisation. For Strand D at this grade boundary, candidates were able to apply and evaluate UK , EU and working practices of customer service legislation effectively.

Grade Boundaries - January 2010

6920	Total	A	B	C	D	E
Raw Mark	60	48	42	36	30	24
UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40

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