

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2012

GCE Applied Business (6920)
Paper 01

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Administration:

Centres mainly forwarded samples on time and the correct number of sample portfolios were usually provided i.e. ten portfolios with the highest and lowest grades included. Statements of authentication were again present in the samples moderated for this series.

Annotation of Portfolio Work

It is worth noting again that the minimum requirement for annotation of portfolios is laid down in the Code of Practice to be identification of where a candidate's evidence of criteria coverage may be found in the work. There were again a few examples where little or no annotation was evident and moderators were left trying to identify where and how marks had been awarded.

The recommendation to annotate by reference to 'Mark Band' achieved and 'Strand', 'Theme' or 'Area' covered e.g. MB1a, MB2b etc is still not being followed by some Centres but, however this is done, it is worth emphasising again the importance of clear annotation and internal standardisation for the benefit of candidates as well as for external moderation purposes.

Presentation of Portfolio Work

The preferred format remains loose-leaf or treasury-tagged sheets that can be easily opened and read. Although less in evidence, there still remains the issue of inaccessibility and unsuitable presentation of some of the portfolios with work either tightly packed into plastic wallets (that split on opening), left in ring binders or clipped into plastic folders (this simply makes the process of extracting the work more laborious than should be the case).

Assessment Objectives and Mark Band Evidence

Assessment objectives for this unit were evidenced adequately through written reports, presentations and detailed witness statements. However, where centres submitted a power point style presentation and witness statement, learners only accessed marks in Mark Band one due to a lack of detail in the presentation and the witness statements. Centres are reminded to encourage learners to submit all three elements – written report, presentation and detailed witness statement in order to access the depth required for marks in the higher mark bands.

Strand (a): Learners presented clear evidence of internal and external customers and their needs and expectations. Needs and expectations of customers were identified however, in some cases customer needs and expectations were very similar or generic as a result of selecting similar organisations. Evidence of how organisations meet the needs and expectations of customers was better evidence this series.

Strand (b): Evidence of research for this strand was again limited this series. Centres should encourage learners to include supporting research of the evidence requirement. Where evidence was included the strengths and weaknesses of customer service activities were well evidenced. However, learners could further improve this by elaborating on the strengths and weakness, stating why they felt it was a strength or weakness for each activity. This evidence should then be developed further by making suggestions for improvements for identified weaknesses.

Strand (c): Learners submitted clear evidence of how the organisation monitors and improves customer service. However, in some cases a lack of research of how the organisation maintains customer service meant that this was somewhat limited. Centres should encourage learners to research the latter aspect fully in order to generate the full evidence required for this strand.

Strand (d): Overall, learners identified and described UK and EU legislation reasonably well this series. Application of UK and EU legislation to the chosen business was often better evidenced as were 'working procedures' although there were instances where the focus was on UK legislation with limited reference to the effects of EU laws or directives.

Unit Guidance

Centres are reminded to encourage learners to carry out both primary and secondary in order to generate the depth of evidence required for each strand. Learners select contrasting businesses as per unit specification; this will enable Learners to generate evidence requirements for the higher mark bands. Centres need to encourage learners to carry out research as fully as possible. In order to access marks in the higher mark bands it is recommended that centres encourage learners to produce written work and then extract the presentation from the written work; this will enable learners to submit better and more detailed evidence. Learners should submit both elements of evidence for this unit. A presentation supported by a detailed witness statement as well as a written report is a requirement of the unit specification.

It is recommended that the school or college is used only as the chosen organisation to provide evidence for strand (a). The choice of the learner's own school or college often proves problematic for the other aspects of this Unit and centres should encourage learners to investigate the same organisation for strands (b), (c), and (d) where possible.

Grade boundaries

For the E/U boundary learners demonstrated basic knowledge and understanding of key customer service concepts. At this grade boundary, learners presented limited evidence of application, analysis and evaluation, and only submitted a brief presentation supported by a witness statement. For strand (a), Learners 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 or limited application of knowledge and understanding was demonstrated for strengths, weaknesses and recommendations of customer service activities.

Strand (c) evidence of research was implied and/or limited at this grade boundary.

For strand (d) at this grade boundary, evidence of EU legislation in particular was limited. The way in which the legislation links to the organisation's product or service was also limited.

At the A/B boundary learners 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) learners 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) learners evidenced relevant up to date research to demonstrate how customer service is monitored and maintained within the organisation.

For strand (d) learners were able to apply and evaluate UK customer service legislation effectively. Evaluation of EU legislation was again rather limited in the evidence seen this series, particularly in its relation to the chosen UK business.

Grade Boundaries

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

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

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