

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2012

GCE Applied Business (6922)
Paper 01

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Administration:

This series most samples of the work were again received on time together with the appropriate forms and were signed to indicate authenticity. In general, marks on the work conformed to those on the OPTEMS with occasional discrepancies.

Annotation of Portfolio Work

It is worth noting again that the minimum requirement for annotation of portfolios is laid down in the Ofqual 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).

General Issues with the Specification:

Similar issues to those found in the previous series were again found in this series, detail is given below.

Many centres have developed approaches to this unit learnt from previous submissions, reports and training. Many centres sent questions into the Ask the Expert service and by doing so avoided some common pitfalls such as group size, allocation of roles, appropriateness of choice of enterprise, etc.

Many centres did not include appropriate witness statements for strand C.

Quality of Written Communication 'QWC'

Few assessors appear to specifically record the marks available for the level achieved. Up to 3 marks for 'QWC' can be given in (b) and these are part of the total mark available for the strand which remains at 18. In general,

where such marks had been given, these appear to have been beneficial to candidates.

Areas of the Specification:

Again this unit had one of the smallest entries. This is probably due to the need to run an enterprise over time which requires substantial work commitment outside lesson time.

Strand A: Those centres that used Young Enterprise as a vehicle for this unit tended to achieve higher marks than those who organised a 'one-off' event.

Some kept detailed records in diaries/journals and these were the centres that did best on this unit. Much of the evidence for candidate involvement comes from the diaries. Diaries also show timelines and make activities clear. They support the other three strands. Some candidates found it difficult to discuss what they did and tended to use the collective person, i.e. "we". Evidence needed witness statements to support diaries/commentaries, these were not always present. It is suggested that candidates be encouraged to demonstrate their contribution through their diaries clearly.

Photographic evidence was included in a small number of entries. This proved useful and supported the group presentation, however, the use of photographs must be in line with the centre's policy on photographs and parental consent.

The centre has to ensure that the product/service of the company involves sufficient activity to enable all candidates to have an active input to enable them to move out of mark band 1.

A substantive business activity is required. Centres must also ensure that the group size is appropriate.

Candidates are required to undertake a self evaluation in this strand. These were often unsubstantiated or, in many cases, were simply a description of what they did and did not evaluate performance.

Strand B: Some centres produced excellent work for this strand with clear descriptions of roles and responsibilities as well as supported evaluations of team members in these roles. Other centres failed to produce either the descriptions or the evaluations. There was little detail or underlying theory presented in the work from a number of centres making it difficult to move out of mark band 1. There were few fully supported evaluations seen.

Strand C: The witness statements for the presentation were often brief and needed much greater detail. Where clear and detailed witness statements showing substantive contribution were present, centres could move candidates into mark band 3. This does need supporting evidence from candidates showing originality of thought and outstanding contribution to the group report and presentation. In most portfolios, where there is a

strong witness statement identifying strong and sustained contribution to the running of the company, the group activity and the group presentation by the candidate there was usually sufficient candidate evidence to support the allocation of higher marks.

Where roles or contribution was minor it was extremely difficult for candidates to move outside mark band 1.

Candidates also should include their own PowerPoint printouts, cue cards, etc. The centre must also ensure that a full copy of the group presentation is sent for moderation to enable individual input to be gauged. The centres should not restrict themselves to the one side of the exemplar witness statement proforma found in the qualification guidance and on the Edexcel website. This is only a guide and centres must ensure that they make full and clear statements about candidate input into the company and the presentation. Where the activity/event was too small candidates could not generate sufficient evidence.

Where a company report is produced as well as the individual portfolios, this must be sent with the sample.

Centre assessors must ensure that they tie their witness statements to the descriptions used in the mark bands. There were occasions where assessors noted strong contribution to the group presentation but the candidate evidence and the marks awarded did not reflect higher mark bands.

Strand D: This strand needs the financial outcomes of the company to be used to enable effective evaluations. This did not always happen. Some centres did not direct candidates to cover this strand as a separate task and relied upon descriptions of activities and the personal evaluations and the evaluations of the other team members to be the evaluation of the company. Evaluation was often limited to making a profit. Therefore marks were often restricted to mark band 1.

Grade Boundaries

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