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Cambridge Career Award in Business - Modules

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BUSINESS ORGANISATION AND ENVIRONMENT

Paper 5171
Advanced

General comments

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General comments on the examination

Care needs to be taken in selecting and assessing candidates for entry to the examination. Some candidates would be better advised to enter the Standard level first before trying the Advanced level Paper and Centres must pay attention to candidates' progress and potential. The Advanced Level examination expects the demonstration of more knowledge and the ability to discuss issues than the Standard Level Paper.

The Paper has five main task areas which reflect the five assessment objectives so the entire syllabus is covered. Whilst every competence criterion cannot be given a task, candidates must expect to be questioned on the overall breadth of the syllabus.

Tutors should ensure that their candidates are well practiced in examination technique. Preparation for an examination should ideally involve the use of Past Papers and it is just as important to give serious consideration to the Examiner's Instructions as it is to practice responding to tasks.

Candidates must be encouraged to:

- read the Examiner's Instructions very carefully;
- ensure they fully understand what the Examiner wants them to do;
- lay out their responses clearly and in an orderly fashion;
- note the allocation of marks to each task and respond accordingly;
- manage the examination time sensibly;
- respond to each task in context i.e. refer to the case study in their answer.

The above points represent sound advice and a candidate's failure to observe those rules can (and does) cost valuable marks. It is quite surprising just how many candidates will ignore the directions given in a task e.g. 'write a list' means just that, so a long answer is not required. Instead 'Select and describe', (usually part of a 10-mark task), indicates that an in-depth answer is required. Each task will reflect an aspect of the case study. This is why candidates are given 15 minutes in which to read and become acquainted with the contents of the Case and the Paper. Tutors should bear these issues in mind when it comes to revision time.

Comments on specific questions

Task 1

(a) By and large the responses to this task were disappointing simply because candidates were unable to identify the core issue. Advanced Level candidates ought to have appreciated why the business was transformed from a partnership into a private limited company, given the specific circumstances set out in the case study. It was a matter of reasoning and the only answer was limited liability. The economic situation was such that the business could have been threatened with further difficulty resulting in bankruptcy and the owners needed the protection of limited liability. Instead of providing the answer to the task that was actually set, far too many candidates wrote about a comparison of the features of partnership with those of the private company.

(b) Providing five items normally to be found in a business plan proved relatively easy for most candidates. The task was quite well done and very few failed to earn respectable marks. The only problem here was the usual one – the candidates were asked for a *list* but a number still offered their responses in paragraph form. In essence it does not really matter that much so long as the relevant points can be easily recognised within the answer but candidates should, nonetheless, follow the instructions.

(c) This task was not well approached largely because there was little evidence of relating the issue to the case study. The CEO talked of economic survival and candidates were asked to explain what she meant by that. Many of the answers discussed economic survival in general terms but did not identify the specific issues relating to the Happy Reward company. Foregoing profits now in the hope of growth later was a common theme, and quite correct, but not enough emphasis was placed on matters like tight budgets, discriminatory pricing, setting targets for sales and staff. Unfortunately, the plan to extend into China as part of the plan to save the business was mostly ignored.

Task 2

(a) This was a successful task as candidates seemed to relish discussing the quality circle. Weaker responses tended to define the quality circle well but did not relate it to the case study. The focus of the task was how could the quality circle be of help to Happy Reward. Mostly, though, candidates understood it and offered well-written answers.

(b) Equally, the narrowness of the span of control was within the competence of candidates who knew how to define it but, again, the weakness was often in their lack of ability to apply it to the case.

(c) For candidates who understood and applied the text, the creation of an organisational chart posed no problem and earned them good marks. The relevant details were in the case study and candidates needed to produce an appropriate illustration so long as it was realistic, although the safest answer was to use a traditional top-down structure. Not every candidate read the text carefully and some introduced personnel and functions that did not exist. This is yet another example of ignoring instructions and so losing marks.

Task 3

(a) The meaning of a one-year rolling contract defeated almost all candidates. The general view was that at the end of one year, management could take the decision to continue a person's employment or not. Strictly speaking that could be true but such a contract does not work like that at all. A person can be taken on initially for a year and then have 12-month extensions to the contract, say, every two months. The idea is to create some flexibility with employment contracts. People in dynamic target driven jobs might be on 14 day rolling contracts. The rolling contract is in the syllabus and covered by competence criterion 3.1.

(b) This task presented very few difficulties as candidates were only asked to *list* three areas or activities in which Happy Reward staff should be trained. Candidates were given no guidance in the text but, since they knew what type of company they were discussing, they were free to choose relevant activities e.g. sales techniques, credit card handling, packing. Generally this was handled very well.

(c) This is by now a familiar task. Since it carried 10 marks, candidates were expected not only to identify three expectations the employers had of their staff but also to describe them. Selecting the expectations was not difficult for candidates but high marks were often not gained simply because the descriptions were inadequate. The answers were mostly descriptive, when in fact there should be some element of analysis or discussion for a 10-mark task.

Task 4

(a)(i) The planned economy was basically understood by most but the answers were quite limited to suggesting it was run by the Government. The essence here was to point out, for example, that resources were controlled and allocated by Government, or that there was a lack of effective competition and choice, or that there was centralised planning.

(ii) The term business culture offered some confusion. Nearly all the candidates defined it in the context of a company and its mission statement, or its code of ethics, or its relationship with other firms. What was being looked for here was the acknowledgement that it reflected the economic/political/social climate that encourages enterprise, risk taking, and the enlargement of the private sector. Line 42 in the case study says, '*The Chinese Government is supporting the business culture and moving away from the planned economy*'. For those candidates who were unsure, this statement offered a clear clue as to the meaning.

(b) Candidates were asked to indicate how Happy Reward might be affected by consumer demand and economic growth. To respond to this task successfully, candidates needed to appreciate Happy Reward's situation and its planned move into China; that consumer demand and economic growth are interrelated i.e. growth offers employment and earnings which in turn fuel consumer consumption. Whilst there was some understanding of the situation, most responses were fairly limited. Again, the key to a successful answer was reference to the text.

Task 5

(a) The benefits of market planning were discussed but often in general terms. The point that it offered Happy Reward the chance to take stock of its position in the light of economic changes and trading results (lines 50-51) was overlooked although there was reference to such issues as SWOT, targets, human resources and particularly the marketing mix. It was a 10-mark task which tended to attract descriptive responses rather than evaluative ones.

(b)(i) Asking for a description of the company's pricing policy was not an invitation to explain different forms of pricing policy. Candidates had the answer in the text. Happy Reward, faced with economic problems, had been reducing its prices over 7 years in an attempt to put business survival before profit making. It did offer a discriminatory policy as advantageous prices were offered to certain customers. If the business could keep selling then at least there was a cash flow.

(ii) Customer service policy was well tackled in the main. It seemed to be an area that candidates were comfortable with.

EFFECTIVE BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Paper 5172

Advanced

General comments

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General comments on the examination

Candidate performance

In a number of Centres, the performance of candidates for this Paper had improved. However, in some Centres the scripts were disappointing. There were a number of general issues which seemed to re-occur within most Centres.

The candidates had problems with the following points:

- *Misinterpretation of task requirements – not reading carefully the requirements of the task.* This was very evident in a number of tasks. **Task 1 (a)** asked for *three possible causes of poor internal communication* and the answers should have included use of inappropriate language or medium. However, a number of candidates seemed to answer the task from the previous Exam Paper and gave suggestions about structures of communications such as horizontal and other areas which was clearly not required.
- *Reluctance to comply with the task requirements* - many candidates chose to ignore exactly what was required in many tasks and generally wrote about the key subject of the task. This was most evident in **Task 2 (a)** which required the candidates to explain three advantages and three disadvantages of using email to promote the museum. The majority of answers only gave two advantages and disadvantages rather than three and thus lost marks.
- *Format and presentation of material* – candidates should remember that this subject is about effective business communications, therefore, they should ensure that they present their answers using an appropriate format. Many candidates demonstrated very poor writing skills and their work was very difficult to read. A number of candidates in some Centres put their answer pages together in the wrong order, without displaying the numbers of the tasks being answered. This made the Exam Papers very difficult to mark. It also indicates a lack of attention to detail. These comments are especially relevant to an examination which deals with effective communication.

- *Poor time management* – this is a problem in some Centres. Tutors should try to ensure that their candidates have an opportunity to sit a mock examination prior to the actual examination. In some cases, there were some good answers for **Task 1** and **Task 2** and then very brief ones for **Task 5** and the rest of the Paper, which clearly indicated a lack of time. Candidates should remember that on this Paper, there will always be five compulsory tasks and thus candidates should be able to allocate their time accordingly.

Summary

It seemed that many candidates had specific problems with the following areas:

Paralanguage and metacommunications

Use of databases and desktop publishing

Advantages and disadvantages of internal memos

Performance review interviews

Gantt and flow charts

<u>Comments on specific Tasks</u>

Task 1

(a) This required candidates to explain three possible causes of poor internal communication within the museum. The answers should have included suggestions such as no clear aim, or purpose of communication, or the use of inappropriate language or the use of inappropriate media such as informal chats, irregular communication. Many candidates were able to do this quite well. The best marks awarded were for answers which also applied the points above to the case study, which was required in the task.

(b) This section required the candidates to identify and explain four types of two-way internal communication which could have been used within the museum. The answer could have included team meetings, joint consultations, quality circles, seminars, briefings and telephone communications. Most candidates were able to do this but did not explain each method fully. Some candidates however, identified one-way communications such as a letter or a memo which indicated a lack of knowledge in this area.

(c) This required candidates to explain three specific types of communication and to offer an example for each. The answers should have included the following:

Paralanguage - the intonation used to emphasise what the real meaning of the words are. It is not what is said but the way in which it is said. *Example* - An example would be when the staff tried to engage visitors in conversation and casually asked questions about a part of the exhibitions area, the visitors misinterpreted the purpose of the conversation and thought that they were being quizzed and consequently felt insecure.

Metacommunications - comes from the Greek meaning beyond. The sense that humans have in feeling that there is more to what a person says than just the words – i.e. beyond the words. *Example* - An example would be when the visitors may have stated that they are fine in the exhibition, when in fact they wanted some help.

Non-verbal communications - kinesics, body language, dress, facial expression, posture etc. *Example* - Staff may be standing with folded arms or hands in their pockets which communicates boredom to the visitors and visitors may not feel that the staff are approachable.

Many candidates were unable to write about these types of communication, or some forgot to include an example from the case. Many candidates offered incorrect answers for each – especially non-verbal communication which they had confused with written communication.

Task 2

(a) This task required the candidates to explain three advantages and three disadvantages of using email to promote the museum. There were 12 marks available for this, so candidates should have realised that one or two word answers were not required, there were two marks available for each point so some explanation was required.

The answer could have included the following advantages of using email: speed of delivery of message; cost efficiency; internationally used; adding website hotlink to museum's page; being able to forward it on to a friend; can check if received; ease of response by customer; can be accessed remotely by receiver; 24 hour access available.

Answer should have also included three disadvantages of using email: email may be deleted without reading; there is no tangible presence like a brochure to look at again; not a traditional approach for mailshots – therefore may not be received well with the amount of spam (unwanted or irrelevant emails) currently being generated; target audience may not have access to email.

Many candidates were not able to offer three disadvantages which was very disappointing. Many answers were very brief or bullet points, although, good answers detailed a range of disadvantages and advantages and explained them.

(b) This section of the task required candidates to use databases, desktop publishing software and websites to target potential visitors to the museum. Candidates should have offered explanations for each as follows:

Database of previous visitors addresses - the database should provide contact details which could be used to send out mailshots; the database could be used to build a loyalty scheme; the information on the database could be used to target similar visitors with similar characteristics.

Desktop Publishing Software - can be used for the creation of professional mail shots and flyers; can be used to create professional signs in the Museum.

Website -channel for promotional information; could be used for on-line booking; opportunity to offer virtual presentation of the museum; 24 hour access.

Most candidates seemed to have some problems with this task. Most could not explain desktop publishing software and only a few were able to discuss databases sensibly.

Task 3

(a) This part of the task required candidates to write a letter to school teachers explaining the new attractions for the forthcoming year.

The answers should have been set out in full formal letter format, which included:

- Letter heading of the company
- Date
- Reference number
- Appropriate salutation – Dear Mr/Mrs
- Letter Heading – promoting new exhibitions etc
- The body/content of letter
- Promoting the new treatments, etc
- Appropriate closure
- Signature and position
- Response mechanism

The content and tone of the letter should have been persuasive and inviting for teachers.

Most candidates were able to answer this task, however, some letters were very poor in terms of layout and presentation. All addresses should be included and a response mechanism should have been included to try to ensure some sort of response.

(b) Candidates were expected to prepare a memo to internal staff to explain the new attractions. The memo should have included:

- To (Internal Staff)
- From (Marketing Manager)
- Date
- Title – New Visitor Attractions for 2003/4
- Content – explanation of new attractions targeted at school parties

This was generally reasonably well completed, although some answers were very brief and not laid out appropriately. Many candidates included the term ‘yours faithfully’ at the bottom of their memo which was clearly incorrect.

(c) This part of the task required candidates to list two advantages and two disadvantages of both external letters and internal memos. The answer should have included points as follows:

External letters – advantages: evidence of message sent; able to convey complex information to external audiences; can raise awareness about forthcoming events which could be saved and looked at later; can include sales promotions such as badges, stickers etc.

External letters – disadvantage: time it takes to send in post – especially internationally; could get lost in post; expensive for a major mailshot.

Internal memorandums – advantage: could be used as evidence or confirmation of verbal instructions; could be used as an aid memoir; could be used to request information or to convey instructions; can look more important than email.

Internal memorandum – disadvantages: time-consuming to produce; one-way communication, provides no opportunity for immediate exchange of ideas or attitudes, etc.

Most candidates were able to answer the first part about letters but struggled with the advantages and disadvantages of memos. This was worth eight marks and so candidates should have made sure that they wrote enough to obtain the marks available.

Task 4

(a) This task required candidates to explain four types of questions which could have been used in a performance appraisal review interview. The answers should also have included an example of the type of question used.

The answer should have included:

Closed questions – offer a choice of answers only i.e. Do you feel that you want to move jobs?

Leading questions – lead the interviewee into speaking about specific issues i.e. Why do you think that you are unhappy in your role?

Open questions – a question which allows the interviewee the opportunity to give open, frank and in-depth information i.e. what are your future ambitions within the company?

Hypothetical questions – gives a scenario to allow the interviewee to answer in role, i.e. You have just improved the website by including a virtual tour - what would you do to maintain this section of the website?

Most candidates could identify three types of questions but not four. A number of candidates forgot to include an example and thus lost marks. Some misinterpreted the question and gave examples of questions only.

(b) Candidates were required to explain three ways a performance review interview differed from a recruitment interview.

A performance review interview identifies strengths and weaknesses, a review of past performance, consideration of future ambitions etc and should be motivational. However recruitment interviews would aim to assess the ability of the candidate as being suitable for the post – identifying their previous employment history, strengths and weaknesses, identify attitude, appearance, etc. The performance review could be linked to salary or reward and the recruitment interview may be used as a short-listing procedure. Both types of interviews should allow the interviewee to discuss areas which they want to bring out.

Many candidates were not really able to do this well. There was generally some discussion about recruitment interviews but not much about performance review interviews.

(c) The final part of the task required candidates to identify and explain three different types of business interviews which a manager could be expected to undertaken within his or her role.

The answer should have included some discussion about different types of business interviews such as: counselling; discipline; termination; induction; data-gathering. These should have been explained for the six marks available.

Many candidates were able to do this reasonably well, although poorer answers illustrated a lack of knowledge and only offered one or two bullet points.

Task 5

(a) Candidates were required to present data in the most appropriate method. Therefore, a graph such as a bar chart should have been drawn on graph paper, illustrating the figures.

The graph was marked using the following criteria: appropriate method identified and used; correct and accurate graph used; correct values plotted; correct shaded areas to illustrate key; clarity of chart and correct labelling.

Many candidates completed this well and picked up easy marks. Some candidates did not present the graph well, and thus lost marks for accuracy. Candidates should remember that graph paper is available and that this should be used for this type of task. Some candidates forgot to add the labels, headings or legend and thus lost marks here. Some candidates completed three graphs rather than one and so again lost marks as this was not the most appropriate method.

(b) This part of the task required candidates to explain three types of visual charts.

(i) The answer should have included an explanation of Gantt Chart and explanation of its uses – to plan projects etc

(ii) The answer should have included an explanation of flow charts and explanation of uses – to identify relationships, links

(iii) The answer should have included an explanation of pie charts and explanation of uses - useful for only certain types of data.

Most candidates seemed to have run out of time in this stage of their answer and thus missed out most of these sections. Others seemed to offer a guess about Gantt and flow charts, which was disappointing. Good answers explained each type of visual aid well and then gave an example.

(c) The final part of this task required candidates to explain two ways that computer software could be used to enhance the presentation of complex information.

Answers should have included a discussion about how models could be produced – 3D to visualise more effectively; the use of full colour; the possible integration with other IT packages for an effective presentation such as PowerPoint; the possible integration with other multimedia aids such as talking heads etc; and the fact that information could be reproduced as progressive information.

Although this was only worth four marks, many candidates missed out this section and thus lost easy marks. Good answers did discuss the issues covered above, however, many seemed to have run out of time and gave one or two word answers.

BUSINESS FINANCE

Paper 5173

Advanced

General comments

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General comments on the examination

It is pleasing to report that the overall performance of the candidates who completed the May 2003 examination showed an improvement in comparison to previous examinations.

However there are still a minority of Centres who are clearly not preparing their candidates adequately for the examination. In particular, these Centres are not emphasising the need for precision when candidates are defining terms and/or the need to provide a formula or explanation as to *how* calculations have been carried out. Candidates should be encouraged to show all workings. These shortcomings have been referred to in previous Reports and Centres are recommended to implement the necessary changes in the interests of their candidates.

Once again there was evidence of the candidates not managing their time effectively and Centres are urged to impress on candidates the need to study carefully the mark allocations in order to gain the maximum benefits from their efforts.

Comments on specific questions

Task 1

Overall the answers to this task (**(a) – (e)**) were satisfactory, although the answers provided for **(b)** were rather weak. However, many candidates could have achieved a much better result if their answers had been more precise and focused on the financial aspects of the terms under consideration.

Task 2

(a) The responses to this task were rather disappointing as many candidates confused the *methods* of 'going public' (prospectus, private placing etc.) with the offering of the different *types* of share.

(b) Many candidates produced satisfactory responses to this task, although the effects that the selected sources of finance were likely to have on the future profitability of the firm were not always well explained.

Task 3

Overall the responses to this task were satisfactory but a sizeable minority of the candidates lost some marks simply because they did not produce a balance sheet in a *vertical* format as required.

Task 4

Again many candidates produced satisfactory answers to this task, although some did not refer to the PEST factors that were included in the case study. Often the explanations provided as to how the factors could affect the firm lacked detail in terms of the possible effects on revenue, costs and profits. Candidates should be encouraged to provide more detailed information in their answers and to apply their knowledge in the context of the case study.

Task 5

This was often the task where candidates scored their highest individual marks and it is evident that Centres are preparing candidates well in this topic area.

Task 6

Again many candidates produced satisfactory responses to this task, both parts **(a)** and **(b)**. This appears to be another topic area where the teaching and examination preparation has been effective.

Task 7

Part **(a)** of this task was answered well by most candidates but the answers to part **(b)** were much less convincing. Many candidates were more concerned with the various methods that could be employed to raise additional capital rather than providing answers that discussed the relationship between current assets and current liabilities as required by the task.

MARKETING

Paper 5174
Advanced

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General comments on the Examination

Some Centres demonstrated good overall performance in this session, and it was very pleasing to see a few candidates showing a very clear understanding of marketing at this level. Unfortunately, other Centres still suffered from poor exam technique and/or lack of depth of answers as reported in previous sessions. Specific syllabus content areas are covered in the section on tasks below.

Examination techniques could still be improved in the following areas:

- *Reading the question carefully*. In some cases, although the task required an explanation, many candidates simply listed the items requested. Centres are encouraged to give candidates practice in answering tasks from previous Papers to help them to understand the requirements of the tasks set.
- *Poor time management.* This continues to be a common mistake. Candidates who fall into this category often spend too much time on a task, or part of a task, with which they are comfortable, leaving insufficient time to complete all remaining tasks. Candidates should note the allocation of marks to each task.

Comments on specific tasks

Task 1

This task required candidates to demonstrate both an understanding of the marketing concept and, in the second part, *actions* that the company in the Case Study might take to achieve a customer focused approach. The second section of this task allowed candidates to be creative about identifying appropriate actions for the Green Company.

(a) Most candidates answered this section with few problems. The key elements required were 'whole of the organisation', 'customer needs', 'co-ordination of activities' and 'organisation's goals'. However, some candidates confused the marketing concept with marketing orientation, or simply gave a definition of marketing which did not encompass all four of the aspects mentioned.

(b) There were several acceptable answers to this part of the question, and most candidates managed to identify four appropriate actions. Many candidates did not, however, recognise that there were four marks available for each of the four actions they suggested, and simply listed the actions. Full marks were only available when actions were linked to the scenario described in the Case Study. Examples that were appropriate to the Case Study included:

- Carrying out research to identify customer requirements
- Re-structuring the organisation to achieve a greater customer orientation
- Setting up a customer care programme
- Measuring customer satisfaction

Task 2

This task was completed well by most candidates that attempted it. It is pleasing to see an understanding of the research planning process, as all stages need to be undertaken in order to obtain valuable information. Several candidates made the mistake of picking up 'five' in the question, and explained the five stages of the product life cycle, or Porter's Five Forces. This was wasted time.

Task 3

This task required an explanation of the organisational buyer decision making *process* – and some candidates described the decision making *unit*, thus limiting the marks they were able to gain. Some also described the *consumer* buyer decision making process, rather than the *organisational* process.

The second part of this task was generally done well.

Task 4

This task was generally done quite well, although while candidates were able to identify two segmentation methods, very few of them linked these methods to the details in the Case Study. The most appropriate segmentation methods for the Green Company were:

- Geographical
- Size of company
- Type of business
- Number of employees

The most common answers to the task were 'geographical', and 'size of company'. Candidates could have highlighted that the company covers Singapore and Malaysia, and could enter other similar countries. They could also have identified that an analysis of existing customers might have helped to identify suitable segments in terms of type of business or size of company.

Task 5

The first part of this task was generally done well, and was marked holistically, allowing marks for identifying the stages, explaining each, and linking them to the Case Study. Candidates over-complicated the second part of the task, which simply required a SMART objective for the Green Company. Many candidates explained what a SMART objective is, instead of writing an objective.

Task 6

It was pleasing to see this task performed particularly well. Most candidates were able to correctly identify the seven 'Ps' of the extended marketing mix, and give examples linked to the Case for most of the elements. One important factor was missed, and that was the need to balance and link recommendations made across the mix. Very few candidates attracted the two marks available for recognising the importance of this factor.

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Paper 5175

Advanced

General comments

Centres are advised to ensure that the written work submitted by candidates is legible and well presented. The first page should be clearly labelled with the Candidate's name, number and the Centre number. The module title, number and level should also be written down on the first page. Candidates should be encouraged to use answer paper which has margins on the right and left hand side of the page, or to draw margins onto their answer papers. Candidates can then use the left-hand margin to clearly identify the task number. Examiners use the right hand margin to put in marks gained and to total the overall marks. If there is not enough space to do this the Examiner will still put marks on the script, but the marks could easily be overlooked if they are surrounded by words. Candidates should leave enough space at the top of the first sheet of paper for the Examiner to write in the total marks awarded.

The quality of paper in some answer books or the type of ink in the pens used made some scripts very difficult to read. The words showed through on to the other side of the page and were then obliterated by the writing of other answers. Sometimes the ink was so faded that it was very difficult to decipher what had been written. In some other scripts the writing was so illegible as to be indecipherable. Examiners can only give credit to answers that they are able to read. Candidates could lose marks if the Examiner is unable to read the script or if the candidate fails to state that part of the answer is on a different page. It is very difficult to mark scripts where the answers are not separated by lines or spaces or where the task and pages are not numbered. There is no doubt that a clearly written script (preferably using black ink or ballpoint pen) helps the Examiner. It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure that the Examiner is able to read the script and find the relevant answers, otherwise marks could be lost.

General comments on the examination

There was a definite improvement this year in the performance of the majority of the candidates. However there is still room for further improvement especially in the candidate's approach to using case study materials and in their examination skills.

Candidates performed particularly well on those questions that required short answers or lists, but these were usually the low mark questions. In contrast candidates performed badly on those questions that demanded a greater depth of analysis or some discussion. This was particularly apparent when they were asked to demonstrate their ability and understanding of HR principles and concepts.

Very few candidates failed to attempt all of the questions and they are to be congratulated on their time management skills. However, there is still a great deal of work to be done with candidates on their use and understanding of case study materials and the way in which they answer the more in depth essay-type question. Centres can help their candidates by encouraging them to show their understanding of HR issues by applying their knowledge to the context of the case study. Candidates who show that they have thought about the company in the case study, and can explain how the company or its workforce will be effected, can usually gain marks for the practical application of business knowledge.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

(a) This was well answered

(b) This was poorly answered with candidates writing everything about the role of HRM without reference to DEVA or the questions set. Candidates who wrote about the particular circumstances at DEVA were able to pick up more of the marks available.

Question 2

(a) This part of the question was poorly answered with evidence of incomplete knowledge and a failure to use the information provided to answer the question. A lack of exam technique was in evidence here. Many candidates gave a definition of the core and periphery model but then failed to link this to the question or the case study.

(b) This part of the question was answered well but there was an emphasis on the topic of wages.

(c) This part of the question highlighted a lack of examination technique and awareness. The majority of candidates simply repeated their answer to part **(b)** and in many cases word for word. Candidates lost marks as an answer can only be credited once. They should be made aware that although the topic may be similar, each question will look at a different aspect of the particular HR issue which is being covered. Candidates are expected to write different answers for each question.

Question 3

This question produced a number of long and detailed answers from many candidates but the majority were unclear about the differences between selection and recruitment and so these answers were very general and did not answer the question directly. Quite clearly many candidates had only read part of the question before they produced their answer. Candidates need to be encouraged to read questions clearly and to identify the key words in the task and in the information given in the case study. Some candidates find it useful to underline the relevant words in the case study and the task, as they find that this helps them to remain focused on the requirements of the task.

Question 4

(a) This part of the question was well answered with some very detailed accounts. Candidates should be congratulated on their knowledge of homeworkers.

(b) This part of the question was in contrast poorly answered with candidates totally misunderstanding the question. It was taken as "Identify two advantages of homeworking to the workers" and not "two advantages to *DEVA* of using homeworkers". Again this highlights a lack of examination technique that needs to be addressed. Careful reading and highlighting of the requirements of the task was essential in order to obtain the marks.

(c) Many candidates were confused when answering this question. Monitoring was linked to incentives and motivation rather than control methods. Those that did understand the difference often produced totally impractical suggestions such a CCTV in each homeworker's home.

Question 5

(a) This part of the question produced a variety of answers but highlighted the need for tuition in the skills of extracting information from a case study. The tasks which are set often require the application of business knowledge to the situation given in the case study.

(b) The same problem occurred in this part of the question with many candidates having absolutely no idea of what the question required despite writing at length. The best candidates did extract some information from the case and produced reasonable answers.

(c) Money seemed to be the main idea for many of the candidate's answers to this question, a continuing theme throughout the Paper for many candidates. Other ideas included being watched on CCTV and no holiday or sick pay.

Few except the very best candidates seemed to grasp the concept of motivation that did not include financial rewards. A few candidates simply produced notes on one or two motivational theories without reference to the question or case study. It is important that candidates are aware that they should refer to the situation given in the case study as part of their answer to the task set.