OCR
Oxford Cambridge and RSA

CAMBRIDGE TECHNICALS LEVEL 3 (2016)

Examiners' report

BUSINESS

05834–05837, 05878

Unit 9 Summer 2022 series

Contents

Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

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Unit 9 series overview

Unit 9 is a two-hour paper which carries 90 marks. This series the paper comprised of seven questions and 15 part-questions. This series has seen a wide spread of marks achieved by candidates. This has depended on each candidate's ability to interpret the command verbs within the question, their understanding of the relevant parts of the specification for each question and their level of exam preparation.

Weaker scripts continue to show inadequate preparation by candidates. A number of candidates did not attempt some of the questions. To do well on this paper, candidates must have a thorough knowledge of the specification and know key human resources terminology.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally did the following:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally did the following:
• demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the specification • demonstrated knowledge and understanding of key human resources terminology • understood the differing requirements of the command verbs 'describe' and 'explain' • knew the formulae for employee productivity and product wastage rate calculations.	• demonstrated a lack of knowledge and understanding of the specification • demonstrated limited knowledge and understanding of key human resources terminology • did not recognise the differing requirements of the command verbs 'describe' and 'explain' • were unable to accurately perform performance calculations.

Question 1 (a)

1 **(a)** Explain **two** internal factors that may affect human resources planning at *Surecan plc*.

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[6]

This was a low-scoring question. Many candidates were unable to identify internal factors that may affect human resources planning; instead identifying key responsibilities of the human resources function.

Those candidates who correctly identified internal sources of finance as a factor, generally then went on to explain that without this the company would not be able to afford to buy their new machinery, rather than explaining the impact on human resources planning. These candidates did not, therefore, achieve the second or third mark(s).

Assessment for learning

If a question requires internal factors to be identified, candidates must state that finance is **internal** to achieve the mark. Identifying 'finance' without clarification that it is internal finance, is too vague.

Question 1 (b)

(b) One responsibility of the human resources function is to ensure compliance with legislation relating to human resources.

Using an example from the scenario, explain **one** way that *Surecan plc* complies with health and safety legislation.

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.... **[3]**

The full range of marks was achieved by candidates for this question; many gaining 2 marks. Candidates needed to identify an example from the text of how *Surecan plc* complies with health and safety legislation, develop this by stating why they 'do' the example identified and then **either** explain how this complies with health and safety legislation **or** correctly identify the relevant legislation.

Most candidates were able to give a relevant example and many then explained why this was 'done'. However, the third mark for compliance or stating relevant legislation was not achieved by most candidates.

Assessment for learning

Encourage candidates to learn the correct title of health and safety legislation. Health and Safety Act was seen on a number of occasions as was the Personal Protective Equipment Act. Neither of these variants were credited.

Question 2 (a)

2   Performance data for *Surecan plc*'s factory in September 2021 is shown in **Table 1**, below.

Performance data	September 2021
Number of Production Operatives	80
Number of aluminium cans produced	78 000 000
Number of aluminium cans not meeting the required quality standard	1 500 000

Table 1

(a) Using the information in **Table 1**, calculate the productivity per employee of the Production Operatives in September 2021.

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.... **[3]**

The full range of marks was achieved by candidates for this question. Full marks were given for 975,000 **cans**. Many candidates had not included 'cans' and therefore achieved 2 marks.

A number of candidates deducted the number of cans not meeting the required quality standard from the number of cans produced before performing their calculation. This resulted in an incorrect response.

Question 2 (b)

(b) Using the information in **Table 1**, calculate the product wastage rate in September 2021.

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.... **[3]**

As with Question 2(a), the full range of marks was achieved by candidates for this question. To achieve full marks the % sign needed to be included alongside the correct response.

A large number of candidates inverted the formula and therefore provided an incorrect response.

Question 3 (a)

3   All employees are paid a salary. No further monetary or non-monetary rewards are offered.

    (a)   Describe **two monetary** rewards that *Surecan plc* could introduce to improve the motivation of its Production Operatives.

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2 ....

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[4]

Most candidates were able to identify at least one monetary reward, although a number of candidates did leave this question unanswered. Incorrect responses, such as holiday pay, were often seen.

The majority of candidates who did identify a correct monetary reward then went on to explain why this would motivate the operatives rather than describing the reward itself. Very few candidates therefore achieved the full 4 marks available for this question.

Assessment for learning
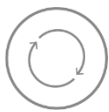
Candidates should understand the requirements of each command verb used within this specification.

OCR support

Further guidance on the command verbs can be found on the OCR website.

Misconception

Some candidates identified promotion as a monetary reward. This is incorrect. LO2.2 of the specification lists promotion opportunities as being a non-monetary reward.

Question 3 (b)

(b) Describe **two non-monetary** rewards that *Surecan plc* could introduce to improve the motivation of the Production Operatives.

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[4]

Most candidates were able to identify at least one non-monetary reward. However, as with Question 3(a), most then went on to explain how this would impact motivation rather than describing the reward itself.

Some candidates identified team working as a reward. The scenario shows that this is already used by *Surecan plc* and therefore is not something that they would introduce in the future.

Fringe benefits were also identified by some students. In LO2.2 of the specification, these are listed as monetary rewards.

Misconception

? As seen in previous series, candidates are still confusing praise and appraisal as a non-monetary reward.

Question 4 (a)

4   (a)   *Surecan plc* has recently introduced a works council.

Explain why having a works council might encourage better employee engagement at *Surecan plc*.

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.... **[3]**

This question clearly differentiated between those candidates who knew what a works council is/does and those who did not. Knowledge needed to be shown for the first mark therefore limiting any marks for those candidates who did not do this.

Question 4 (b)

(b) Explain **three** reasons why *Surecan plc*'s Production Operatives may have chosen to join a trade union.

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[6]

This question was very poorly answered by all candidates. Responses were generic and did not clearly relate to how a trade union would benefit their members or the services that they would offer to them. As this is a human resources unit, candidates needed to use terms such as 'negotiate with employers regarding pay' rather than 'help with pay', etc.

Question 4 (c)

(c) *Surecan plc* sets SMART targets for all managers.

Explain **one** benefit and **one** drawback to *Surecan plc* of using SMART targets as a performance management tool.

Benefit ....

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Drawback ....

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[6]

This question was poorly answered by candidates. Many were unable to identify either a benefit or a drawback of setting SMART targets. Many incorrect responses were seen, particularly for drawbacks, e.g., they might be unrealistic, or they might be unachievable. The aim of SMART targets is that they are each of these things and therefore these responses were incorrect.

Some candidates also considered benefits and drawbacks of setting targets in general, rather than SMART targets, therefore responses were too vague.

Question 5

5   Evaluate possible causes of conflict at *Surecan plc*.

[16]

Overall, this question was well-answered. The full range of marks on offer were given; from zero to 16.

To achieve Level 1 candidates needed to either identify a cause of conflict (as listed in LO6.1 of the specification) or give a specific example from the scenario, e.g., operatives are unable to change their shifts.

Level 2 was given for any development of the cause identified.

Level 3 was given for a negative impact on *Surecan plc* resulting from either the Level 1 cause or the Level 2 development. Many candidates achieved at least one Level 3.

To achieve Level 4, candidates needed to choose which cause they believed to be the most significant/likely/important and justify this choice. A pleasing number of candidates achieved Level 4. However, most did not include context within their reasoning. Doing so would help candidates to achieve higher Level 4 marks, as would also be giving a reason why they believe that this cause was more significant/important/likely than one of the other causes identified.

Assessment for learning
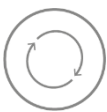
When writing a conclusion, encourage candidates to include specific context from the scenario within their reasoning.

Question 6 (a)

6   **(a)**   Before the new, state-of-the-art machine is installed *Surecan plc* needs to recruit a Maintenance Engineer.

Explain why it is important to seek management authorisation to recruit for a role, before beginning the recruitment process.

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.... **[2]**

Very few candidates scored any marks on this question. The question required candidates to show understanding of why authorisation from a manager would be required. Most candidates did not appear to realise that this was the focus of the question.

Question 6 (b)

(b) The proposed recruitment and selection process for the Maintenance Engineer job role is outlined below.

1   Complete a skills audit

2   Advertise the job in a trade magazine aimed at the food production industry

3   Request applicants to send a CV

4   Shortlist candidates for interview

5   Face-to-face interview with the Managing Director

6   Take up references of the chosen candidate

7   Telephone the chosen candidate to offer them the job role

Evaluate whether the proposed recruitment and selection process would enable *Surecan plc* to recruit the best person for the Maintenance Engineer role.

[16]

Candidates achieved at all levels for this question. There were a number of candidates who provided no response.

To achieve Level 1, candidates needed to either identify a feature of the proposed process or identify a missing feature/improvement. Most candidates who provided a response achieved Level 1. Key factors that were missing included a job description and a person specification; very few candidates identified this. Adding tests/tasks and a probationary period into the process were popular responses.

Level 2 was given for any development or understanding shown of the L1 feature. A number of candidates did not know what a skills audit is or what it is used for by a business, therefore not providing accurate development of this feature.

Level 3 was given for a benefit or drawback to the business resulting from the Level 1 feature identified (whether this was an included feature or a missing feature or an improvement). Many candidates provided responses which were too vague, e.g., having a CV makes it easier to shortlist. The candidate needed to state <u>why</u> it would make it easier.

Very few candidates achieved Level 4 for this question. Most candidates concluded whether the recruitment and selection process would help the best person to be recruited, but no, or very limited, reasoning was given as to why this conclusion had been reached. Candidates could have chosen either option i.e., yes it was or no it was not, as long as it was a reasoned choice.

Question 7 (a)

7   (a)   All Production Operatives will need to learn how to operate the new, state-of-the-art, machine effectively.

Describe **two** methods of off-the-job training that could be used.

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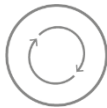
[4]

Many candidates were unable to identify a method of off-the-job training. Responses including teamwork, shadowing, job rotation, textbooks and newsletters were all seen. Similarly, 'visiting another factory' was often seen; but this is not a method of off-the-job training. It is where the training will take place. The content of the training was also identified by a number of candidates rather than the method.

Many candidates who did identify an appropriate method of off-the-job-training then went on to explain why it would be useful rather than <u>describing</u> the actual method itself, therefore limiting the marks given.

Assessment for learning

Make sure that candidates know which methods of training are on-the-job and which are off-the-job as per LO8.1 of the specification.

Question 7 (b)

(b) Evaluate methods that *Surecan plc* could use to measure the effectiveness of the training provided to the Production Operatives.

[8]

In most instances candidates struggled to achieve beyond Level 2 for this question. Level 1 was given for identification of a relevant method (LO8.2). Level 2 was then given for either description of the method or clear explanation of how the method would show the effectiveness of the training.

Level 3 was given for a benefit or drawback to *Surecan plc* of using that specific method to measure the effectiveness of the training provided. Instead of considering this impact on *Surecan plc*, most candidates gave a benefit or drawback of measuring the effectiveness of training. This therefore limited access to Level 3 marks as this was the incorrect focus for the question.

To achieve Level 4, candidates needed to choose which they thought was the best/most appropriate method to use, with reasoning.

Assessment for learning

Candidates should be encouraged to take time to reflect on what the question is actually wanting/asking. This may help them to more clearly identify the focus of the question.

Misconception

Most candidates interpret an employee survey as asking an employee to complete a survey/questionnaire. On this specification that would be included within the employee feedback bullet in LO8.2. An employee survey is where a manager, for example, would observe an employee within the working environment to see how well they are performing their role. In other words, the manager is surveying the employee at work.

Question 7 (c)

(c) Analyse **two** benefits to *Surecan plc* of training its Production Operatives to use the new, state-of-the-art, machine effectively.

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[6]

Most candidates, who provided a response for this question, achieved marks. Candidates needed to identify a <u>benefit</u> of providing the training **not** a <u>drawback</u> of not providing the training, to achieve marks. As a result, some candidates limited the marks given as they considered the negative perspective.

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