

CAMBRIDGE TECHNICALS LEVEL 3 (2016)

Examiners' report

BUSINESS

05834–05837, 05878

Unit 9 Summer 2023 series

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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. For this series, the paper comprised of six questions and 17 part questions. This series has seen a wide spread of marks achieved by candidates and wider than the January 2023 series. This has depended on each candidate's ability to interpret the command verbs within the question and their understanding of the relevant parts of the specification for each question.

Less successful responses indicate inadequate preparation by candidates, particularly knowledge of key terms within the specification. Some candidates did not attempt some of the questions, including the two 16-mark Level of Response marked questions.

To do well on this paper, candidates needed a thorough knowledge of the specification and know key human resources terminology. Candidates also needed to use information within the scenario in their responses.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the specification • demonstrated knowledge and understanding of key human resources terminology, e.g. the difference between employee motivation and employee engagement • understood the differing requirements of the command verbs 'describe' and 'explain' • knew the formulae for labour productivity and employee retention calculations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • did not apply theory to the business context.

Question 1 (a) (i)

1 (a) (i) Describe **three** likely responsibilities of the Human Resources function at Follie plc.

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3

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[6]

Most candidates were able to identify three likely responsibilities of the Human Resources function and achieved 3 marks. However, fewer candidates then went on to describe each of those responsibilities. Many candidates instead explained why the responsibility should be carried out.

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 [Teach Cambridge](#).

Question 1 (a) (ii)

- (ii) Explain how business growth might affect Human Resources planning at Follie plc.

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..... **[3]**

The full range of marks was achieved by candidates for this question.

Candidates needed to identify a task or process that the Human Resources function would need to plan and then explain why business growth meant that this was necessary, e.g. more employees or greater workload. The third mark was given for context. Very few candidates applied their response to the scenario.

Question 2 (a)

2 Follie plc's HR Director understands the importance of employee motivation.

(a) Analyse **one** monetary reward that Follie plc could introduce to motivate its Sales Assistants.

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..... [3]

Most candidates were able to identify a monetary reward, however incorrect responses such as holiday pay and promotions were seen. 'Benefits' was also seen, but this was too vague to be recognised as a monetary reward. Candidates need to state 'fringe benefits' to be given the mark.

One mark was then given for development (description of the method, a stakeholder facing impact or a 2nd business-facing impact) and one mark for a business-facing impact.

Misconception



Some candidates identified promotion as a monetary reward, but this is incorrect. Learning Outcome 2.2 of the specification lists promotion opportunities as being a non-monetary reward.

Similarly, holiday pay is also incorrect as this is a legal requirement.

Question 2 (b) (i)

(b) (i) Follie plc offers job rotation to sales assistants in all of its 168 stores.

Using **one** motivational theory, explain why job rotation helps to motivate employees.

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..... [3]

Overall this was a low-scoring question, although the full range of marks was seen.

Many candidates were unable to identify a motivational theory and therefore did not score marks. To achieve the full 3 marks, candidates needed to use context within their response. Few candidates did this.

Assessment for learning



Encourage candidates to identify key terms/pieces of information within the scenario and then to use this within their responses.

In this instance, sales assistant, store, medicines, beauty, etc were all awardable as context.

Question 2 (b) (ii)

- (ii) On 1 January 2022 flexible working was introduced at Follie plc as a method of motivation for all Sales Assistants.

Using the information in **Table 2**, assess whether the introduction of flexible working was successful.

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..... **[8]**

Overall this question was well-answered, with most candidates achieving at least Level 2.

Candidates recognised the changes that had happened between 2021 and 2022, based on figures within the table. Many candidates were also able to expand on this to give either a consequence to the business or a business-facing impact, therefore achieving Level 3.

Many candidates made a statement as to whether the introduction of flexible working was successful but this needed to be a reasoned judgement to achieve Level 4.

Question 3 (b)

(b) Analyse **two** methods that Follie plc could introduce to increase employee engagement in all of its stores.

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2

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[6]

Many candidates were not given marks for this question as they identified methods of motivation rather than methods of employee engagement.

Candidates must know the difference between motivation and engagement, and therefore the different methods that can be introduced to encourage each within the workplace, to achieve on questions such as this.

Assessment for learning



Employee motivation (LO2), e.g. how driven employees are and how hard they are willing work.

Employee engagement (LO4), e.g. an employee's enthusiasm for their work/workplace.

Question 3 (c)

- (c) Evaluate formal appraisal techniques that Follie plc could use to monitor the performance of Store Managers.

[16]

This question assessed knowledge and understanding of LO5.1.

Many candidates were able to identify at least one formal appraisal technique.

As in the January 2023 series, for those candidates who were able to correctly identify a technique, many did not achieve Level 2 for correct description of the technique as description was too vague about who would be involved in the appraisal. Words such as 'colleague', 'other employees' or 'co-workers' are too vague as candidates needed to identify specific people/roles. Terms such as 'Peer appraisal', 'Store Managers', 'employees on the same level of the hierarchy, or similar' could be given marks. Self-appraisal was the one technique where most candidates correctly identified that this would be carried out by the employee themselves, therefore achieving Level 2.

To achieve Level 3 candidates needed to provide a business-facing impact of using a specific appraisal technique rather than an impact of introducing an appraisal process in general.

Incorrect responses such as employee feedback and customer surveys were often seen. Employee feedback is too vague as this could relate to peer appraisal or upward appraisal. Correct Human Resources terminology must be used (as per the specification).

Assessment for learning



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

Assessment for learning



Candidates should be discouraged from using 'professional'/'unprofessional' in any response. Candidates should also be discouraged from using the phrase 'waste of time', or similar.

Question 4 (a)

- 4 (a) Fifty-seven employees will need to be recruited before the new store in Shenbrook opens. The recruitment and selection process will be overseen by the HR Manager at Head Office.

Explain how the HR Manager's recruitment choices may be a barrier to effective employee relations at the new store.

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..... [3]

This question was a good differentiator. Some candidates did not attempt this question (NR – no response).

Candidates needed to identify how the choice of applicant/new employee could be a barrier to effective employee relations and then explain **either** how this might impact employee relations **or** how it might make other employees feel. The third mark was given for the use of context.

Few candidates used context within their response. Context could have included '57 (employees)', 'store', 'Shenbrook' or 'sales assistant', etc.

Question 4 (b)

(b) Follie plc requires applicants for all job roles to provide a curriculum vitae (CV).

Explain **one** advantage and **one** disadvantage to Follie plc of using this method of application.

Advantage

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Disadvantage

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[4]

This question assessed knowledge and understanding of LO7.1 (formal methods of application).

Most candidates were able to state either an advantage or a disadvantage, but many of these did not achieve the second mark for a consequence to the business. For example, a consequence of providing information about the applicant's work experience would be that it is easier to shortlist.

Some candidates approached this as a comparison question, however the question solely relates to the use of a CV as a method of application.

Question 5

- 5 Evaluate methods of on-the-job training that could be used to train the Sales Assistants at the new store.

[16]

This question assessed knowledge and understanding of on-the-job methods of training. Some candidates confused on-the-job, off-the-job and induction training.

Many candidates were able to identify at least one method of on-the-job training, therefore achieving Level 1. However, many were then unable to clearly describe each method and did not progress to Level 2. Shadowing and observation were often confused, as were coaching and mentoring. Candidates who suggested job rotation as a method generally achieved Level 2 and often Level 3.

The content of the training was identified by some candidates rather than the method, e.g. 'train them in customer service'.

Some candidates did not attempt to answer this question (NR).

Assessment for learning



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

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.

Assessment for learning



Make sure that candidates can clearly define shadowing, observation, mentoring and coaching.

Question 6 (a)

6 (a) Explain **two** reasons why Follie plc will want to avoid conflict between Sales Assistants employed at the new store.

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2

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[4]

This question was well answered by many candidates. A reason why Follie plc would want to avoid conflict was identified followed by explanation.

Question 6 (b)

(b) Describe **one** method that Follie plc could use to resolve any conflict that occurred between Sales Assistants at the new store.

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[2]

This question was a good differentiator between candidates who knew methods of resolution and those who did not.

Mediation, negotiation, and disciplinary action were common responses for those candidates who showed good knowledge of LO6.3. Common responses which were not awardable, were 'have a meeting' and 'fire staff'.

The question required candidates to describe the method identified. However, many candidates explained why it would be used rather than describing what the method entails. This limited some candidates to 1 out of the 2 marks available.

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