

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2013

PL Business, Admin & Finance (BA308)

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Introduction

This is the eighth time this externally assessed unit has been examined. The cohort for this session was the smallest entered. Nearly all students managed to complete the paper. Students have shown good knowledge of the appropriate theorists listed on the specification and there is evidence of an improvement in exam technique. However, higher mark questions still lack the evaluative skills required to access top marks.

There is evidence that students are making use of the appropriate part of the specification when answering questions. Those students that use the correct theory underpin their answers with a good understanding of change management. This provides a foundation from which students can go on to analyse and evaluate higher mark questions.

Responses to questions

In this series, students attaining a grade E were expected to be able to answer questions 6a and 8. With some of the other questions, particularly question 6b and c, students at this level could still expect to pick up knowledge marks. Students around this boundary were not expected to do well on questions 7 and 10. At the A*/A boundary, questions 7 and 10 looked for evidence of good understanding, analysis and evaluation.

Q6a Most students were able to develop an argument as to how Health and Safety legislation affected BP. Many students discussed how the legislation would increase costs and impact on profit whilst some looked at an increase in training that would increase skills leading to a motivated workforce. Answers must show the development of a line of argument. This might entail one relevant point developed analytically through two steps.

Q6b A good understanding of how pressure from governments to reduce the environmental impact of BP's operations would affect the business. Most students applied their answers to BP.

Q6c Some good answers showing how competition from cleaner fuels and energy would impact on BP.

Q7 In general, a well answered question. A number of students discussed how financial penalties would stop BP from investing into cleaner energy in the future, directly focussing on the time frame of the question. However, many students found it difficult to fully develop their answers and therefore failed to access high marks.

Q8 Most students were able to provide at least reasonable answers to this question, mainly based on meeting targets. Short questions such as these require relevant points only partially developed.

Q9a It is apparent that some centres are looking to develop exam technique with student's answers. A number of students were able to develop a good analytical line of argument in looking at why BP employees might be resistant to change. Students that used the correct part of the specification to answer this question achieved a good mark. It is important that students regularly practice developing a line of argument in order to access the higher analytical marks.

Q9b Generally well answered with some good explanation of ways that can be used to overcome employee resistance to change at BP. Again, this should focus on the specific area of the specification. Answers must be based on Kotter and Schlesinger, an integral part of BA308, who are regularly examined. Those students that do not understand this are losing marks unnecessarily.

Q10 A number of students had some understanding of Gleicher's Formula for Change. Of these, some discussed the theory without reference to Robert Dudley and BP. A minority did not know the theory and could not answer the question. Again, students must have a full understanding of the specification. If they do not know what is on the specification they cannot answer the question. As guidance, it should be noted that there is always an evaluative question on one of Gleicher, Lewin or Kubler-Ross in each exam. Many students were unable to access top marks due to a lack of analytical or evaluative commentary.

Grade Boundaries

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

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

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