edexcel

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2012

PL Retail Business (RB202, RB203,
RB204, RB206, RB207, RB208,
RB209)
Paper 01

PEARSON

Edexcel and BTEC Qualifications

Edexcel and BTEC qualifications come from Pearson, the world's leading learning company. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers. For further information, please call our GCE line on 0844 576 0025, our GCSE team on 0844 576 0027, or visit our qualifications website at www.edexcel.com. For information about our BTEC qualifications, please call 0844 576 0026, or visit our website at www.btec.co.uk.

If you have any subject specific questions about this specification that require the help of a subject specialist, you may find our Ask The Expert email service helpful.

Ask The Expert can be accessed online at the following link:

http://www.edexcel.com/Aboutus/contact-us/

Alternatively, you can speak directly to a subject specialist at Pearson about Edexcel qualifications on our dedicated subject Advisor telephone line: 0844 372 2187

Pearson: helping people progress, everywhere

Our aim is to help everyone progress in their lives through education. We believe in every kind of learning, for all kinds of people, wherever they are in the world. We've been involved in education for over 150 years, and by working across 70 countries, in 100 languages, we have built an international reputation for raising achievement through innovation in education. Find out more about how we can help you and your students at: www.pearson.com/uk

Principal Learning Retail Business

Level 2 Controlled Assessments

General Comments

From an administrative perspective, some centres were not using the Candidate Record Sheet (CRS) and those that did were not always including candidate examination numbers on the CRS. Samples sent to the moderator should always include candidate work with the highest and the lowest scores to avoid delays in the moderation process.

Centres are reminded that the Candidate Record Sheet is split into Marking Grid A and Marking Grid B evidence. Some centres recorded marks for overall learning outcomes rather than according to the mark grids in the unit specification. This makes it difficult for moderators to identify where centres have allocated marks, which is necessary for the moderation process.

Centres are also reminded that candidates must understand that copying work directly from textbooks, the internet or the specifications amounts to plagiarism unless this is suitably acknowledged, referenced and interpreted appropriately by the learner.

Centres are reminded that it is good practice for assignment briefs to be internally verified prior to issue. This includes Edexcel Tutor Support Materials (SAMs).

Marking Grid A

Unit 2 – Exploring Retail

Centre submitting work generally provided appropriate opportunities to provide evidence relevant to the requirements of the Learning Outcomes. In one centre the assignment brief used was sub divided into mini assignments and offered opportunities to access the full range of marks for most learning outcomes. Most candidates were able to access mark band 2 for most of the Learning Outcomes but only a few consistently achieving the top mark band. The scenario enabled candidates to make recommendations to the retailer based on considering the range of issues linked to the Learning Outcomes.

Candidates were able to identify most relevant retail channels and the breadth considered was quite impressive. Outlines of key start up activities and operational functions and how they differ across retail channels was often brief. More attention needs to be paid to functional areas. In addition the work presented would have benefited from comparing how the start-up activities and functions differ within different retail channels.
In general, candidates briefly assessed the trading activities of different retail channels. However, in referring to the key trading activities for different retail channels candidates need to apply this to two different retail

channels. Descriptions of how a specified retail channels gains competitive advantage in a retail sub sector would benefit by giving further examples of a business's competitive advantage and explaining how they help the business. The requirement for a developed assessment of the 4Ps could be improved by offering more detail.

The importance of branding was a focussed on logos and slogans and other aspects of branding were largely ignored. In a number of cases little was offered on the importance of branding. Most candidates were able to create a brand but to develop their ideas further many would benefit from considering different ways to brand and then select the best. This means they are considering or exploring possibilities to access mark band 2 and 3.

Market research was generally basic. The LO asks candidates to use research skills to collate and interpret information to identify target markets. The questionnaire should find out who their target market is and what they want. It rarely did. Candidates did not collate results in tables or graphs or offer interpretation to who their target market will be.

There was some good promotional material produced and an attempt to consider some ethical and cultural considerations. The strongest examples showed justification of promotional material and offered an explanation to how it had ethical and cultural considerations. However, in assessing the effectiveness of promotional material most candidates merely presented a questionnaire. Candidates need to plan ways that they would judge the likely success of their promotions. Considering using interviews, customers surveys, analysis of sales figures and comparing income and costs would all help them measure effectiveness.

There is a requirement for more depth in the written explanations to ensure MB3 can be accessed

Unit 3 – Exploring Retail Channels

Centres submitting provided appropriate opportunities to provide evidence relevant to the requirements of the Learning Outcomes. However some tasks completed were not focussed enough on the Learning Outcome. Most candidates achieved mark band 1 with some able to access mark band 2. Most of candidate described the role of the buyer and the merchandiser in some detail. Generally candidates considered changes in technology and legislation but cultural customs and ethical issues were often ignored. Those achieving higher mark bands were giving examples and considered the problems caused by merchandisers not fulfilling the role and benefits of them fulfilling their role.

Candidates generally produced basic primary and secondary research to obtain current information on customers. There is a need to actually conduct questionnaires, and should have included completed questionnaires in an appendix. A second form of primary research would be beneficial. Only one source of secondary research was usually presented. Not all sources were referenced.

Candidates produced basic customer profiles in their explanations as to what customer profiles were. This work would be improved if candidates identified a number of customer profiles for a specific business. This will help ensure they are presenting relevant and useful information. It would make sense for the particular business to be the same as the one studied when they add the products to the product range.

Work produced in general, briefly explained the factors to be considered in product range building. Aspects like legislation and ethical issues were largely ignored. There was usually a brief assessment of how existing product ranges meet customer needs. Candidates would benefit from considering the current product range for a specific retailer to add a new product into a product range in LO4.1. Looking at products already provided and showing how they meet their customer needs will help to extract useful relevant information to be used in supporting candidates to select a suitable product.

The majority of candidates only showed basic research skills to interpret relevant information to source a suitable product to add to a product range to meet customer needs. More detailed research in LO2.1 may help in improving this. The ideas created for new products were imaginative but candidates need to source a new product not create a completely new product.

Some candidates were able to show how cultural customs will affect a retailer if they started trading in a number of countries. However this is not a requirement of the Learning Objective which asks for an analysis of how cultural customs affect the sourcing and buying process. Considering how buying from these countries to sell in the UK would enable the candidates achievement in this learning objective to improve substantially.

Candidates were able to briefly outline the role of networks and some were able to outline the role in some detail.

Unit 4 – Exploring the Retail Supply Chain

Most candidates described the roles, responsibilities and interrelationships of members of the supply chain. However, candidates need to also produce more thorough work of the constituent parts of the supply chain and describe how each works with other members of the supply chain.

Candidates described in some detail the difference that might appear in supply chains in different retail sub sectors. Candidates would have benefited from identifying the sub sector and then discussing each constituent part in detail.

Evidence provided tended to briefly explain how the supply chain is influenced by internal factors. Whilst there was a good discussion of a few internal factors, some were omitted. Candidates produced brief assessments of how the supply chain can be influenced by external factors. Whilst the relevant external factors were discussed it is important to consider in more detail how these factors will affect the supply chain.

It was pleasing that candidates could identify problems in the supply chain but it is important to consider the impact on the supply chain not just the retailer generically.

Candidates were able to briefly explain the quality systems used to ensure productivity and efficiency in the retail supply chain. Although the vast majority of this work was independent there was some work that was taken directly from the internet and was unreferenced.

There was some variation with the quality of some work which ranged from generating basic to realistic and developed ideas for solutions to supply chain problems. It would be helpful for candidates to have a specific problem that they can work through a manageable step by step solution.

All candidates designed a basic delivery schedule, normally made up of the delivery items, the number of deliveries and how frequent. It would be beneficial to advise candidates to produce a weekly delivery schedule that identifies day by day what is delivered when. It was then difficult for candidates to offer more than a basic assessment of the effectiveness of a delivery schedule as the schedules they had were not specific enough. Remedying this problem should enable candidates to access higher mark bands.

Unit 6 Stock Control in Retail Business

Candidates are required to produce a piece of work which considers the role of stock control in retail business. A range of practice was evident from centres in terms of the submission of the assignment brief with some assignments providing more accurate coverage of learning objectives than others.

Most candidates were able to identify in the main features of a stock control system in detail. Some candidates gave a description of stock control systems but this was often not clearly linked with a relevant business. A lack of clarity prevented many candidates accessing higher mark bands.

Candidates in too many cases focussed on the roles of buyers and merchandisers without considering the link to the stock control systems. There was an unfortunate tendency for this to be covered implicitly without directly addressing the learning outcomes.

Many candidates were able to provide some detail about relevant laws but there appeared to be a superficial understanding of key content.

The quality of work for this unit was highly variable with some centres using a work place context to discuss a range of relevant issues. However, other centres chose to focus on issues that are not part of the specification which often led to work of which could not always be credited with marks.

Many candidates were able to generate some basic design ideas for a simple stock control system. In many cases the lack of an appropriate context limited candidates' ability to access higher mark bands. Candidates that produced good design ideas generally went on to provide a reasonable plan. In some cases work was not adequately detailed or realistic to access higher mark bands.

Candidates need to understand that an evaluation requires a judgement based on a balanced argument in order to access higher mark bands. Work tended to be descriptive, rather than an evaluation of how their stock control system solves common stock control issues

There was a tendency for some candidates to make heavy use of internet source material of which, the evidence suggests, they did not necessarily have a secure understanding.

Unit 7 – Customer Service in Retail Business

Assignment briefs were in the form of individual tasks which matched the learning outcomes and offered candidates the opportunity to access the full range of marks for most learning outcomes.

Most candidates were able to identify the key principles and describe the importance of customer service standards to the retail business. Some candidates used powerpoint presentations or a Staff Newsletter. Generally depth of analysis was missing in many cases.

Candidates were given examples of named retail channels in the brief, and most compared the different demands of customer service in each channel to achieve marks in the lower band. The choice of channel in the brief could have been wider to contrast the demands better.

Most candidates demonstrated understanding of how individual customers needs vary and can be influenced by circumstances. The influence of feelings and beliefs was less well explored. Generally candidates were accessing the lower level of the middle band in their work.

Candidates generally explained the techniques to deliver customer service to different types of customers in terms of the individual sales assistant's activity at the outlet, rather than focusing on company procedures and policies, which would secure compliance to techniques and a common approach by each colleague.

Most candidates understood the need to communicate with different customers in different ways, using different language and manners. The answers lacked depth in some cases, but generally, candidates produced work in the middle band for this assignment.

Candidates described the methods the named retailers used to monitor customer service but many answers lacked depth of understanding how these methods contributed to the delivery of improvements. Some candidates did achieve his and were awarded marks in the higher bands as a result.

Unit 8 – Selling in Retail Business

Centres entering this unit used the SAM assignments. There was enough guidance to facilitate the production of some good work. The unit was focussed on selling and mark grid A was about theoretical knowledge whilst marking grid A assessed sales skills.

The description of the sales process was detailed. To improve candidates need to describe in more detail what will happen at each stage giving examples to illustrate.

The explanation of the role of the sales person was detailed for face to face and on the phone. The section looking at online did not really focus on the role of the salesperson. Rather than discussing issues such as marketing the site it is important they look at the role of the salesperson in an online business.

Most candidates discussed the importance of sales targets to a retail business. Some candidates were talking about other targets and they should focus on sales targets. It might be useful for the candidate to look at

how the sales target will be useful to the shop floor staff, managers and retail business overall. It might be worth considering the issues of not having such sales targets.

Candidates demonstrated understanding of legislation and many related to retailers. Where candidates need to improve is by explaining the relevance to consumers in sales situations.

Candidates had an awareness of open and closed questioning. It may be worth getting candidates to also look at exploration questions as listed in the specification. The specification asks them to evaluate of the effectiveness of questioning techniques in different sales situations to inform future progress. It would be worth presenting some sales situations and then getting the candidates to look at the pros and cons of each type of questioning in each situation. They then need to look at how that would help the business progress.

The evidence provided showed some detail on the measures retailers take to minimise the risk of fraud. More detail could be added here in describing how it would work in practice.

Unit 9 Retail Theatre
There were no entries for this unit