

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2012

PL Retail Business (RB302, RB303,
RB304, RB306, RB307, RB308)
Paper 01

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Principal Learning Retail Business

Level 3 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. During this series of controlled assessments, some centres were again appending all marks to Grid A instead of ensuring that the ephemeral evidence marks were clearly allocated to Grid B and that a detailed observation sheet was included to justify the Grid B marks awarded. 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 – Developing Retail Channels

This unit gave candidates the opportunity to consider different activities in setting up a retail channel. One centre presented the work in an interesting way as they had the scenarios of writing an article for Retail Week. Candidates explained the procedure for setting up and operating retail channels in some detail. Some candidates presented an interesting piece of work which went through procedures when setting up and operating a business. This work had good breadth and to improve to through they need to offer more depth. Evidence presented was through a written report and included a cash flow forecast which was supplemented by making numerous changes to the cash flow.

Once again, some candidates presented their work on PowerPoint slides and this restricted the amount of depth and detail they were able to offer. The PowerPoint versions were able to demonstrate knowledge but are not a suitable vehicle to demonstrate great detail or depth of understanding, preventing candidates moving to the higher mark bands. This brevity was apparent in most of the learning outcomes in the unit and candidates'

opportunities to move into higher marks bands were adversely affected. Many of the higher mark bands ask for 'developed, detailed, thorough, or extensive' explanations.

Understanding branding and brand image has been a recurring theme across the qualification. It is clear that many candidates still do not understand the concept of branding. It is often presented in terms of a logo, posters and straplines. There is a need to ensure that branding is understood as the complete package of image, service and culture of a retail business. This would have been improved by offering a detailed plan about how they will maintain their brands consistency.

Financial information was presented in greater depth than previous series. All of the learning outcomes cannot be achieved by the presentation of a cash flow forecast which is all that most candidates provided in previous series. However, some candidates performed extensive calculations as they created profit and loss accounts for the first few years of their retail business. They were able to judge the profitability of the retailer using this.

Unit 3 – Buying Practices of Retail Businesses

There were no entries for Unit 3 during this series

Unit 4 – Retail Supply Chain Management and Logistics

There were no entries for Unit 4 during this series

Unit 6 – Merchandising in Retail Business

There were no entries for Unit 6 during this series

Unit 7 – Management of Sales in Retail

There were no entries for Unit 7 during this series

Unit 8 – Visual Merchandising in Retail Business

The role of visual merchandising was described in some detail. The work would benefit from giving some examples of the role in a named retail organisation. Most candidates briefly analysed the importance of visual merchandising principles in retail businesses. Candidates need to explicitly explain the importance of each of the principles analysed.

Some candidates produced detailed and annotated drawings to the meet the design brief. However, it is important that the annotations describe how they meet the needs of the brief and customer.

In general candidates did not respond to changing circumstances. Candidates were given credit for changes in circumstances within their own groups. Higher mark bands would have been accessed if candidates were given a change in circumstance of their client needs and then adapted their designs to meet that changed need.

Most candidates identified methods to measure quantitative and qualitative effects of visual merchandising installations on customers in theory.

Candidates rarely considered quantitative and qualitative methods they would use with their own installation design.

Candidates tended to offer brief assessments of the impact of a visual merchandising installation on customers. This would have benefited from using quantitative and qualitative methods to judge its impact.

Candidates described their leadership skills in general terms and did little on how this helped or hindered the motivation of their team. Candidates identified success criteria and looked at how successful they were at achieving them. It would be helpful if they do not only judge their own success but the success of their team members.

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