

## **1491 GCSE Applied Business (Double Award)**

**Do students need to have gained all marks at level 1 (e.g. a1) in the grading band before being able to gain level 2 marks (a2) and then a3? I have read the guidance for teachers and asked practising teachers and there seems to be some confusion about 'best fit'.**

Candidates need to have achieved level 1 before progressing onto level 2 and level 3, i.e., candidates need to have achieved c1 before progressing to c2.

**Do candidates have to achieve all the qualitative marks before being able to accrue marks for the next level? For example, in Unit 4864 - People in Business, criteria a1; if the candidate only achieves 2 marks for breadth of coverage but not the third mark for depth of coverage, can they accrue marks for work done at a2 and so on? The same question applies to Unit 4863 - Investigating Business.**

The same principles apply for 4863 and 4864. For example, d3 builds on d2 which builds on d1. Candidates do not need to achieve qualitative judgement marks at d1 before proceeding to d2.

**For Unit 1, a candidate has submitted evidence for one business for a1 but has only looked at location for the second business. The candidate has then submitted evidence for a2 looking at both businesses. There is some supporting a1 evidence for business 2. However, can a student be awarded points for a2 if they have not got full points for a1?**

Refer to the Determining the Mark Grid section in the PM Report. There may be sufficient evidence within a2 for description as well as comparison of location. In that event, the candidate could be awarded a maximum of 5 marks. The advice would be to complete a1 for business 2 before proceeding to a2. If centres are really unsure about the composition of their candidates' work, they should utilise the portfolio consultancy service.

**The Determining the Mark Grid says "Candidate suggests and justifies alternatives in relation to one stated bullet point" which is worth 13 marks. What exactly is meant by alternative? Is it a method the business does NOT currently use? Or is the student required to compare and contrast methods the business uses already that could be used in a particular situation? Or can they do either/both?**

Candidates should be encouraged to suggest methods that the business does not already use.

**f2 and f3 relate to customer service and consumer law. The selected company is a training provider, meaning that the evidence to meet the consumer law is very general. Is it acceptable for the evidence to meet more of the customer service side than the consumer law?**

f1 refers to generic consumer law. f1, f2 and f3 relate to the customer service provision of the business.

**A candidate has done a good a2 on Unit 1 but has missed out ownership and activity for both businesses on a1. Should the candidate be awarded a2 marks or not? It seems a little unfair on those candidates who have done all the work if the marks are awarded.**

a2 can only be awarded for aims and objectives and location.

**Is it true that c2 cannot be gained unless all marks for c1 are reached and c3 cannot be gained unless all c2 are reached (hierarchical marking system)? Is it true that below c1 marks gained in any section i.e. a1 a2 a3 can just be added together?**

Refer to the Determining the Mark Grid in the PM Report. Candidates need to have achieved c1 before progressing to c2. For c2, candidates need to analyse the effectiveness of the communication methods under the 3 bullet points. If a candidate has not achieved bullet point 1 for c2, then they cannot achieve c3 for bullet point 1.

**Two businesses have been chosen for a group of candidates. For Unit 1 Investigating Business: Birmingham International Airport. For Unit 2 People and Business: Marks and Spencer's. There is concern because these businesses are both offering a service and are tertiary businesses.**

**Is there sufficient contrast between them?**

In principle, there is nothing wrong with this selection. However, close attention will need to be paid to the assessment evidence grids of the two units to ensure that the businesses chosen will meet the assessment requirements. Choosing two businesses from the same business sector is acceptable as long as enough of a contrast can be drawn out.

**We would like to teach GCSE Applied Business. However, we only have three 50 minutes sessions per week to deliver it. Is it possible to fit the content into this amount of time?**

The standard is 9 hours per fortnight, which is excellent. The double option time is essential to get through the syllabus in order to achieve high grades. However, if it is a weaker cohort (e.g. not aiming for A\*/A) then potentially it could be done in less time because the time consuming B3 could be missed out in both units. It would depend on the ability of the candidates taking the unit and the expectations from the centre and candidates of the grades achievable.

**With regards to the communication strand in Unit 1 Investigating Business, is the presentation itself acceptable or does it have to be traditional written notes? Or both, or even witness statements?**

A presentation is not a requirement of the unit. The centre should make reference to the PM Report which outlines the requirements.

**It has been suggested that section c is completed by using a PowerPoint presentation. I cannot see this is a requirement in the specification. Is it just one strategy we could use? If we are to supply a 'PPT' do we need witness statements and if so do you have a pro-forma to complete?**

It is not a requirement to use PowerPoint for Strand C. It is preferable that PowerPoint is NOT used for c2 and c3 as the evidence may lack sufficient detail to meet the requirements. If using PowerPoint for c1, a witness statement is required, together with candidate notes/prompt cards. However we do not have a pro-forma for GCSE as a presentation is not a requirement of the specification.

**If a candidate has achieved marks in the coursework units (Units 1 and 2) but did not turn up for the Unit 3 exam can they still obtain an overall grade?**

If a candidate has been entered for all of the units but doesn't take them they will get a grade with a partial absence. If they have not been entered for all of the units they will not get a grade at all.

**We have been unable to get an example of the contracts from the business we are studying for Unit 2 so I have used my own teacher's contract as the example for students to describe and then evaluate its usefulness as well as suggesting any changes. Is this acceptable?**

Yes, the teacher's contract could be used as an example. However, for b2, the content of the contract of employment would need to be explained in the context of one of the job roles described in b1. It would be more straightforward for candidates if the teacher provided a contract of employment which related to one of the job roles in b1.

**We have been working with a company in order to meet the criteria of Unit 2. However, this company has put a stop to any release of other information due to confidentiality reasons on issues such as recruitment and resolving disagreements. There is a concern that the higher level candidates will be penalised in the evaluative part of the specification. Is there any way around this so candidates are not being penalised?**

The centre could produce case study materials based on the company being studied. A range of scenarios could be provided in relation to resolving disagreements.

**Is it possible for students to use one business for both Unit 4863 and Unit 4864?**

Candidates may use the same business for Unit 4863 and Unit 4864, although it is not recommended - some variety in work undertaken is essential! A second business is also required for 4863.

**Is there a word limit in both coursework units?**

There is no word limit for Unit 4863 or Unit 4864.

**At a generic course on delivering coursework (which covered all exam boards) we were told that for Unit 1 it was acceptable for candidates to look at a small sole trader as one of the businesses. However, when looking at the OCR specification it states that it has to be a medium to large business. Can you please clarify if a small business can be used?**

Yes, a small business can be used for the second business i.e. strand a and d.

**I have been teaching and marking c1 with 4 sections - oral, written, ICT (communication), ICT (in operations). This is indicated in the Determining the Mark grid. However, last year I saw that the spec talked about oral, written, video and graphical in 6.2.6. Please could you let me know which is right?**

The correct version is oral, written, ICT to communicate and ICT to operate.

**Who is this specification aimed at?**

The specification is suitable for pre- and post-16 candidates of a wide ability range, studying either full- or part-time. It enables candidates to develop a valuable insight into how businesses operate via investigation and practical classroom activities. It provides a progression route to further education or employment.

**What are the compulsory requirements (units)?**

There are two internally assessed portfolio units (4863, 4864) and one externally examined unit (4865).

**What are the entry codes for the units?**

4863 – Investigating Business  
4864 – People and Business  
4865 – Business Finance

**How are the units assessed, and what are they worth?**

The GCSE Applied Business (Double Award) 1491 is worth two GCSEs. Each of the three mandatory units is equally weighted.

4863 Investigating Business – internally assessed portfolio  
4864 People and Business – internally assessed portfolio  
4865 Business Finance – externally examined

**Will candidates be able to re-sit the units?**

Candidates are permitted to re-sit each assessment unit once only, with the better mark counting towards the final grade.

**What are the recommended text books for the specification?**

There is a range of text books available for this qualification. OCR publisher partners are Heinemann and Hodder Education.

**Is there training available for this specification?**

There will be no further national training events for GCSE Applied Business (Double Award) 1491. However, support is available via in-house training events or the portfolio consultancy service.

Training events are available for OCR GCSE in Applied Business (J213) and OCR GCSE (Double Award) in Applied Business (J226) during from Spring 2009. These qualifications are available for first teaching in September 2009.