Cambridge Technicals

Business

Level 3 Cambridge Technicals Certificates in Business **05834, 05835**

Level 3 Cambridge Technicals Diplomas in Business **05836, 05837, 05878**

OCR Report to Centres January 2018

This report on the examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the examination.

OCR will not enter into any discussion or correspondence in connection with this report.

CONTENTS

Cambridge Technicals

Business 05834 - 05878

Level 3 Cambridge Technical Certificate in Business Principles 05834

Level 3 Cambridge Technical Extended Certificate in Business 05835

Level 3 Cambridge Technical Foundation Diploma in Business (VRQ) 05836

Level 3 Cambridge Technical Diploma in Business (VRQ) 05837

Level 3 Cambridge Technical Extended Diploma in Business (VRQ) 05878

OCR REPORT TO CENTRES

Unit 1 - The Business Environment

General Comments:

Examiners have been pleased to see some exceptionally good papers this session. Equally, however, there have been some very weak scripts seen, that seem to show inadequate preparation by candidates.

Candidates who did well demonstrated five particular strengths:

- good knowledge and understanding across the entire unit
- evidence of research of a wide variety of businesses, targeted to the research brief
- the ability to apply understanding to the unseen scenario in Section C
- the ability to analyse and evaluate
- numerical skills of calculation and interpretation.

Section A of the paper was generally well answered by most candidates. Disappointingly, some candidates lost marks by leaving a question blank. In a multiple choice section, this is poor examination technique. Candidates should be encouraged to indicate a response to all 20 questions. A minority of candidates also lost marks because they ticked two responses, for example A and D. Such ‘hedging’ cannot be awarded and candidates should be instructed not to take this approach. Where a candidate indicates an answer and subsequently changes their mind, they should clearly cross out their original tick.

Section B appeared to reveal that those candidates who had studied a wide range of businesses were able to select an appropriate business to answer each of the five questions. Candidates should be encouraged to vary the business they use depending on the question i.e. to choose a specific business for which their understanding is suitable for answering the question. Candidates who chose to answer all five questions based on the same business appeared to do less well. Whilst visits to businesses are of course very valuable, it should be remembered that some other types of business not visited can be adequately studied through desk research.

Section C contained three high-tariff extended response questions. These questions are level-of-response marked. Candidates need to demonstrate the skills of analysis (Level 3) and evaluation (Level 4) to gain the highest marks. An analytical response must contain implications for the business, for example impact on sales revenue, costs, profits, cash flow, break-even, improved decision-making, customer loyalty and reputation. In addition to analysis, an evaluative response must contain a reasoned decision i.e. a judgement. Candidates should be encouraged to reach decisions and give detailed justification to support their argument using contextual information. Whilst an accurate judgement that applies to most businesses would achieve a low Level 4 mark, an answer which argues using the particular circumstances of the business scenario given in Section C will be rewarded more highly.

Areas which caused most problems on this paper were confusion over private/public/third sector (question 1) and confusion over primary/secondary/tertiary organisations (question 11); SWOT analysis ‘Opportunity’ (question 22) and venture capital (question 30). On the other hand, question 23 relating to tall hierarchical structure, question 24 relating to advances in technology and question 32 requiring recommendations on how to improve business performance, were extremely well answered.

The ability of candidates to answer questions requiring numerical skills, both in the multiple choice section (questions 6 and 12) and Section C (question 29b), varied significantly. Centres are advised to give their candidates a great deal of practice at answering both calculation and numerical interpretation questions.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Section A

The questions which appeared to cause most difficulty in this section were 1, 11, 12 and 15.

1 This question tested candidate understanding of public sector organisations. The most common incorrect answer was 'a charity shop'. This indicates confusion over the public and third sectors.

11 Answers to this question were relatively equally split across all four choices. Candidates need to be clear on the business activities undertaken by all three sectors – primary, secondary and tertiary.

12 Pleasingly most candidates were able to calculate '300'. However, too many of these candidates opted for the Answer (a) £300 rather than Answer (b) 300 caravans. This reveals a lack of understanding of the concept of the break-even point. It may be helpful for centres to reinforce not only how to calculate the break-even point, but also its meaning i.e. the level of output at which total revenue equals total cost.

15 The phrase 'reporting status' is clearly stated in the guidance column of the Specification. Reporting status refers to communication travelling upwards from the bottom of the organisation chart. Several candidates confused 'reporting status' (upwards communication) with 'command status' (downwards communication) and incorrectly selected Answer C. Many others appeared to have no knowledge of the phrase at all, and opted for Answer B with its link to a company's need to report its annual financial performance.

Section B

21 Generally well answered, most candidates were able to suggest two political factors. By far the most common correct answers were 'change in government' and 'government instability'. Those who failed to score full marks on this question, more often than not, confused political factors with economic factors. Answers such as inflation, unemployment, exchange rates are economic factors and could not be awarded for this question.

22 Once again candidates had difficulty with 'Opportunity'. It would be helpful if Centres reinforced to candidates that in a SWOT analysis 'Opportunity' does not refer to a firm's internal decision to do something (i.e. the common parlance meaning of the word 'opportunity'). Instead it refers to a change in the firm's external environment which opens up an opportunity. Any PESTLE factor e.g. political, economic, social, technological, legal or environmental would have been awardable. Answers such as 'to expand into foreign countries' or 'to sell online' were not awardable as these relate to internal business decisions. The same logic applies to 'Threat'; however this was generally well answered - the most common correct answer being 'competition'.

23 Some very pleasing answers to this question which showed that candidates had used the research brief and had studied business organisation structure in considerable detail. Impacts could be positive or negative. The most common correct answers were 'many layers', 'slowing down communication'; 'narrow span of control', 'improving management oversight', 'greater promotion opportunities' and 'improving motivation'.

Those who did not score highly tended to confuse a tall hierarchical structure with a centralised organisational structure. Whilst the most common organisational structure in the UK is tall and decentralised, the question explicitly required impacts of being 'tall'. Therefore, answers such as 'all the decisions are made at the top of the organisation' could not be awarded.

24 The vast majority of candidates were able to score at least 4 of the available 6 marks. Most candidates named a specific type of technology, pleasingly showing detailed research into the organisations that they had studied. Those who gained 4 marks, rather than 6 marks, invariably raised points of an explanatory, rather than analytical, nature. To gain the third mark, in both cases, the candidate needed to give the impact to the business e.g. greater output, higher quality, improved productivity etc. The most common error was to give benefits/drawbacks to the customer or employee rather than to the business e.g. shorter queues or order from comfort of own home. Evidence of good exam technique was seen by candidates at some centres – candidates had highlighted the words 'affected a business' in the question wording.

25 This question required description rather than explanation. Answers were disappointing. To score full marks we were looking for a 'practical how' with context. A relatively straight forward answer of 'purchasing searches the internet for stationery' or 'goes to a wholesaler to buy food and cleaning fluids' would have scored the full four marks. Many answers lacked the 'practical how', stating what was being looked for e.g. low prices, rather than 'how' these are found. Other answers were generic and therefore lacked context e.g. used the term 'product' rather than referring to a specific type of item purchased. Sadly, even more lacked both of these i.e. no 'practical how' and no context, such answers scored a maximum of one mark.

Section C

26 This question revealed a basic lack of understanding by many candidates. Many were aware of 'shareholders' and 'directors' but put the answers the other way round i.e. they erroneously believed that directors own and shareholders control. This is an area of the specification that may warrant further consideration.

27 Most candidates scored two of the available four marks on this question by suggesting an advantage and a disadvantage. It should be noted that the question clearly says 'to *Lushcereal Ltd*', therefore, a contextual answer was required. Many generic answers e.g. 'improve the reputation of the products' could so easily have been contextualised e.g. 'improve the reputation of the breakfast cereal'.

28 In general candidates showed good knowledge of how to manage external stakeholder conflict and were able to explain their suggestions e.g. hold a public meeting (Level 1) to allow the public to express their opinions (Level 2). Those who scored more highly were able to analyse their suggestions. Disappointingly few candidates attempted to justify their suggestion despite the clear instruction to do so. For a Level 4 mark, examiners were looking for a justification as to what was the best method for *Lushcereal Ltd* to use, and why.

Those candidates who scored poorly on this question tended to confuse managing stakeholder conflict with avoiding stakeholder conflict. Arguments suggesting that the business should relocate elsewhere were not awarded.

29(a) The main difference between a cashflow forecast and a cashflow statement does not concern content, rather it concerns the former being a future prediction whilst the later actual and historic. The vast majority of candidates were able to clearly express this difference and scored full marks on this question

29(b) This question is a data response question which required the candidate to consider the data given in the cash flow statement. The question did not require candidates to suggest the causes of any issues identified or, indeed, any solutions to any issues identified. The most common error was to confuse cash flow with profit and loss. Statements about the business making profits or losses in various months could not be awarded. Another concern was the number of candidates who appear to overlook, or confuse, the brackets. Whilst some candidates appeared to overlook the brackets entirely, others erroneously believed the brackets to indicate positive figures and assumed that all other figures were negative.

30 Candidate knowledge of bank loans and venture capital appeared basic at best. Many were able to go no further than suggest a bank loan charged interest and a venture capitalist would provide advice. Even more worrying was the all too common premise that venture capitalists have to be paid back i.e. a source of debt funding rather than equity funding.

Those candidates who did show good knowledge and understanding were usually able to analyse the benefits and drawbacks and were well rewarded. Having achieved Level 3 for analysis, to gain Level 4 marks all the candidate needed to do was recommend one of the funding methods and give a valid reason for their choice. Due to a fundamental lack of knowledge, especially relating to venture capital, this justification was frequently flawed.

31This question dichotomised candidates. Those with a clear understanding of the role of marketing and the role of R&D gained full marks. Those without this knowledge tended to score zero. Of the few who scored one of the available two marks, the marketing function proved to be the most accessible with answers such as ‘advertising’, ‘finding out what customers want’ and ‘customer surveys’ being the most common correct, albeit partial, answers. The greatest point of confusion appeared to be a widespread misunderstanding that R&D carries out consumer research. This is a marketing function and, as such, was not awardable.

32 Most candidates were able to put the data to good use and make several relevant suggestions to improve *Lushcereal Ltd*’s business performance. The vast majority of candidates made numerous suggestions and were able to explain why these would be beneficial to the business. Answers were not limited to those taken from Figs. 1 & 2, as any valid method of improving the company’s business performance was awardable. Only suggestions which were explicitly out of context e.g. suggestions that would apply to retail organisations only (*Lushcereal Ltd* is a manufacturer) were deemed unawardable.

Unfortunately some good and detailed answers stop short of achieving the highest of marks because they did not attempt a conclusion. A conclusion would allow the candidate to justify their recommendations, allowing them to gain Level 4 marks. Those who did attempt to justify their suggestions tended to do so in context (usually using the data provided) and gained a minimum mark of 11 out of 12.

Unit 2 - Working in Business

General Comments:

Candidates' performance on the paper was generally good across all four questions. This shows that candidates were well-prepared for the exam.

It was pleasing to see a high level of engagement with the case study; perhaps this is to be expected as the business scenario is one which candidates are familiar with. This was evident in most responses throughout the paper where candidates were able to demonstrate sound understanding of how a school operates and the implications of failure to fulfil some of its responsibilities.

The two in-tray questions were generally well performed, especially 3a in which most candidates demonstrated their ability to complete a credit note correctly and accurately from given information. Question 4a was not as well answered due to inaccurate interpretation of the rubric. This was a pity as most candidates showed sound understanding of the information that should be included in a good job advertisement.

However, there are two major weaknesses that are prevalent amongst some candidates. The first one is failure to interpret the questions accurately, in this case especially questions 1b and 4a. Candidates are strongly advised to read the questions carefully before attempting them. It is also good practice to read through a response after it has been written to ensure that it actually answers what the question is asking for.

Secondly, in 4b, even though the majority of candidates were able to analyse possible impacts on the school of failing to recruit a teacher in time, few attempted to reach a conclusion. There is only one levels-of-response question on this paper; as such this is the only opportunity for candidates to demonstrate their ability to identify, explain, analyse and evaluate a given business scenario.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Question No. 1a
A good proportion of candidates were able to identify the internal and external stakeholders of Sir Harry's School in context, scoring full marks. However, there was some confusion amongst some candidates who incorrectly identified students as internal stakeholders. Other common mistakes include vague answers such as 'government' and 'community' as external stakeholders. Candidates are advised to give more specific answers such as 'central government', 'local council' or 'local community'.

Question No. 1b
This is perhaps one of the more challenging questions on the paper in which candidates were required to explain the objectives of the stakeholders they identified in part (a). This question tests candidates' understanding of the differing objectives of different stakeholders. Whilst most candidates appeared to understand the different needs, most struggled to explain them adequately. A common mistake that candidates made was to explain how the stakeholders identified achieve their objectives rather than what their objectives were and why they have these objectives. The question requires candidates to explain stakeholder objectives, not how they can be achieved, therefore answers such as 'teachers ensure they teach to the best of their ability …..' does not answer the question.

Question No. 1c
This question requires candidates to explain why face-to-face is a more appropriate method of meeting between teachers and parents than video conferencing. Whilst most candidates appeared to have good understanding of how video conferencing works, some found it difficult to explain why it is not as appropriate as a face-to-face meeting. Candidates who focused on the disadvantages of using video conferencing such as connection issues, equipment/knowledge required performed much better than those who tried to explain why a face-to-face meeting is more advantageous. For example, 'a face-to-face meeting is more professional' does not really indicate why it is better. Video conferencing can be just as 'professionally' carried out as any meeting. The mark scheme requires candidates to show specific understanding of how the two methods differ in terms of resources required and the practical implications. Context is required for full marks to be awarded and most candidates managed to answer in context which was pleasing.

Question No. 1d
Another question that was well-performed by the majority of candidates in terms of content and the layout of the reply slip, scoring at least 10 marks. This is not surprising given candidates must have received such a letter from their schools regularly. It was pleasing to see that most candidates were able to use an 'encouraging' tone in their letters.

However, it was only very occasionally that candidates managed to provide matching salutation and complimentary close. This is a formal letter and as such must follow this standard layout. The other piece of information that candidates tended to miss was the venue, the school hall. The mark scheme has allowed various versions of this but the tendency was for candidates to leave out this vital piece of information. The advice is therefore to check the response carefully after it has been written to ensure that every detail has been included as required by the question.

Question No. 2a
This question tests candidates' knowledge of the Data Protection Act. The command words are 'identify' and 'explain' so the legislation must be stated clearly before any marks are awarded. It was pleasing to see that most candidates were able to state the legislation fairly accurately scoring one mark, but the second mark proved more challenging for some. The mark scheme requires some understanding of the legislation such as data must be accurate, kept secure/safe/confidential, etc.

Question No. 2b
The mark scheme requires responses to be in context for full marks to be awarded and this was achieved by most candidates. Most candidates' understanding of why pupils' sensitive information must be kept confidential was sound, reflecting their experiences in a school environment. Most responses were in context which was a pleasure to see.

Question No. 3a
This is the first in-tray question on the paper and most candidates demonstrated the skills required in completing the credit note accurately. Whilst most candidates were able to calculate the VAT accurately, however, some proceeded to take it away from the subtotal to give the wrong total. This indicates a weakness in candidates' knowledge of VAT which could be improved if they understood the purpose of this particular form of taxation.

Question No. 3b
This question seems easy at first glance but it tests specific knowledge on a statement of account. So unless candidates know what a statement of account should contain, which the majority did not seem to know, they are unable to answer this question satisfactorily. Some evidently confused it with a bank statement. There were also a lot of vague answers such as 'it shows money transactions, goods purchased'. The mark scheme requires specific detail such as credit note issued, payments made, balance outstanding.

Question No. 3c
It was pleasing to see fewer vague answers this session such as 'card'. However, candidates who stated 'cash' failed to read the scenario carefully. The school orders stationery online so therefore excludes 'cash' as a method of payment. Some candidates stated 'standing orders' which showed a lack of understanding of this method of payment. The mark scheme accepts any kind of online payment as long as the answers are specific and clear.

Question No. 4a
This was the second in-tray exercise on the paper, where candidates are asked to identify improvements that could be made to the job advertisement. Whilst most candidates appeared to be able to identify appropriate improvements, some failed to interpret the rubric accurately. Instead of making suggestions for how the job advertisement could be improved, some candidates stated the weaknesses in the document such as 'it does not state the starting date of the job'. This is a criticism, not an improvement, so therefore not awardable. There were also a number of vague answers such as 'there are spelling and grammatical mistakes' which again do not answer the question. This, once again, shows how important it is for candidates to read the question carefully first and checking afterwards to ensure the answers match the requirements of the question.

Question No. 4b
This was the only levels-of-response question which tests candidates' ability to analyse a given scenario to reach a conclusion. It was pleasing to see good, accurate analyses of possible impacts, perhaps because candidates have in-depth understanding of the responsibilities of a school. However, the fact that very few candidates reached a conclusion about the biggest impact is disappointing. Few attempted even to write a conclusion which indicates that candidates either did not understand the meaning of 'evaluate' or they did not read the question carefully enough.

Ten marks were awarded for a generic judgement of the biggest or most serious/short-term/long-term impact. To achieve eleven marks the conclusion must be contextual whilst for twelve marks candidates were required to make a comparative judgement of the biggest or most serious impact or a detailed short-term/long-term impact. As the question was asking for possible implications on the school, a conclusion that evaluates the impacts on teachers, pupils, or parents was not awardable.

Unit 3 – Business decisions

General Comments:

This is unit is a mandatory paper for the Foundation Diploma, Diploma and Extended Diploma. It may also be taken by students entered for the Certificate and Extended Certificate.

Candidates who did well in this unit demonstrated the following strengths:

- ability to perform accurate calculations applying business concepts
- good knowledge and understanding across the entire unit, in particular of how businesses use information to help them make decisions
- the ability to apply this knowledge to the context in the Pre-release material when answering questions
- the ability to apply content from Unit 1
- the ability to analyse and to evaluate

Sadly, some candidates exhibited a significant lack of knowledge of the subject and/or limited ability to either apply or analyse it; possibly indicating that they have been entered for the examination too early in their course of study. Given that candidates have limited resit opportunities, Centres should ensure that candidates are fully prepared before taking this assessment.

Centres should note that all questions in this paper are based on the context in the pre-release material. Questions are drawn from all five sections of the specification.

Two questions on this paper are high-tariff extended-response questions worth 12 and 16 marks respectively. Candidates need to demonstrate the skills of analysis (Level 3) and evaluation (Level 4) to gain the highest marks. An analytical response must contain implications for the business, for example impact on sales, costs, profits, cash flow, customer loyalty, reputation and future performance. In addition to analysis an evaluative response must contain a reasoned judgement. Candidates should be encouraged to reach decisions and give detailed justification to support their argument using contextual information. Whilst an accurate judgement that applies to most businesses would achieve a low Level 4 mark, an answer which argues using the particular circumstances of the business scenario in the pre-release scenario will be rewarded more highly.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Q1a Most candidates demonstrated some understanding of the differences between strategic, operational and tactical decisions although relatively few responses achieved full marks.

Q1b Some candidates had an understanding of both opportunity cost and core competencies but few were able to apply them to the context.

Q2a Most candidates correctly calculated the gross profit ratio.

Q2b Most candidates correctly identified the changes in both the gross profit and net profit ratios. Some were able to identify other relevant data from the information given, e.g. that sales revenue had fallen. Relatively few offered an analysis that linked changes in the ratios to changes in particular business costs (e.g. cost of sales or overheads).

Q3a and Q3b Most candidates had relevant knowledge of a skills audit and on-the-job training. Relatively few were able to explain how these would support the activities of the business in the case study.

Q4a Most candidates were able to correctly calculate a three-month moving average for August. Most candidates calculated a lagged moving average, using the values for June, July and August. A small minority of candidates used a centred moving average using the values for July, August and September. Both methods were rewarded. Centres should note that although the specification does not name a method, centres should ensure that learners are able to calculate either a lagged or a centred moving average. No other method is required.

Q4b Most candidates were able to recognise that there was insufficient data given to calculate February's moving average (using a lagged moving average). Relatively few explained that this was because of the absence of data for December 2016.

Q4c This question was disappointingly answered by most candidates. Very few made reference to the ability of a moving average to 'smooth out' peaks and troughs in seasonal data.

Q5 This question required candidates to discuss the benefits and drawbacks of using quantitative and qualitative data to help decide whether or not to enter an overseas market. Responses that identified benefits or drawbacks of either method gained Level 1 marks. Responses which then explained how these benefits/drawbacks might affect the decision or the information obtained gained Level 2 marks. To achieve Level 3 responses needed to link this to the impact on the business; for example in terms of how obtaining detailed opinions of customers in the South African market could help the business identify gaps in the market and so gain competitive advantage or increased sales revenue. Those who were able to build on their analysis by making an overall judgement as to which of the two methods would be preferable and basing this on a sound rationale achieved a Level 4 mark.

Weaker responses either showed a lack of understanding of quantitative and qualitative data (for example by confusing them with primary and secondary data) or an inability to develop basic ideas (e.g. qualitative data being time consuming to collect or difficult to analyse). These responses scored very low marks and rarely gained more than Level 1 marks for identifying relevant knowledge.

Unit 15 – Change management

General Comments:

This is unit is a mandatory paper for the Diploma where it is taken by both of the pathways available and the Extended Diploma.

Where candidates did well within this unit, they were able to demonstrate the following in their responses:

- able to make good use of the context provided within the case study provided
- good knowledge of the unit content as it applied to the case study provided
- apply knowledge effectively within the context of the case study in all answers
- the ability to analyse and evaluate within the context provided
- clear ability to structure points within answers to demonstrate skills within the mark scheme

Overall, many candidates seemed to be well prepared for the unit, which may be due to the fact that it is a mandatory unit for those studying Diploma or Extended Diploma sized qualifications. Knowledge on the whole was generally very sound and the ability to apply this to the case study was generally good. As this was the first sitting of this paper, it was pleasing to see that candidates seemed well prepared for the demands of the paper as a whole.

The majority of the marks on the paper come from three high tariff extended response questions. In order to gain the highest of marks, candidates are expected to show some level of analysis and evaluation within their answer. Candidates tended to be better at the analysis element of their responses in terms of being able to comment on implications, impacts or consequences of actions or effects on the organisation provided within the case study. This analysis is important to allow the candidates to access the evaluation marks for the question set. Whilst simple non-contextual evaluations did achieve a mark at the bottom of Level 4, the ability to make accurate judgements in the context of the case study provided is required to achieve a higher reward.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Q1a
This question looked at outlining two external drivers for change for the charity in the case study. This question was not generally well answered as few candidates were able to achieve all of the marks on offer. Some of the main reasons were that the centre coverage of the topic seemed to be patchy with whole centres' candidates not knowing what a driver for change was. Other candidates were only able to provide vague examples of drivers which could not always be linked to the charity in the case study. Where correct drivers were given, a significant number of candidates were then not able to develop their answer in the context given.

Centres should ensure that this area of the specification is focused upon in their delivery to ensure a concrete understanding of the theory. In addition to this, focus should be given to an understanding of the requirements of an 'outline' question in terms of the need to develop the point given in the context of the organisation highlighted within the case study.

Q1b
This question focused upon barriers to the successful opening of the charity's food bank. The answers which tended to score most highly tended to be presented in an ordered format in terms of identifying the barrier (Level 1), then explaining the identified barrier (Level 2) and finally analysing the barrier in terms of the impact/consequence that it would have on the charity (Level 3). This approach is something which centres may consider adopting to allow candidates to tackle this form of question effectively. Answers which were not as successful tended to be based on generic barriers which could not always be clearly linked to the case material or that a barrier was identified as the most significant but lacked the level of analysis required to move the answer to Level 4.

Another area for development was in terms of the evaluations provided when identifying what candidates considered as being the most significant barrier. Many answers were seen where a decision was made, however the justification tended to be generic and not linked to the case material provided. Centres should encourage their candidates to provide greater contextual links in their evaluations as well as providing contrasts as to why other barriers in this case were not selected as being most significant, again within context.

Q1c
This question asked candidates to produce a plan of action of how the opening of the food bank should be managed. They should then have provided a justification of the plan through reference to change management theories. Many candidates misread this question and, whilst it was pleasing to see them use the change management theories to create the plan, very few were able to justify their plan through the change management theory used.

Most candidates were able to suggest a plan of action with an explanation of the stages of their plan, however some failed to provide any analysis in terms of the impact or consequence of the action to be taken on the charity and the food bank proposal. This limited their marks to Level 2 as a consequence, and centres should develop analytical skills in their candidates for this form of question.

A number of candidates, for their justifications, tended to re-write components of the plan of action that they had already provided as this had been done in the context of change management theories. Centres should ensure that when justifying plans of action through reference to change management theories, that candidates should indicate why a plan of action might work by using the theory to justify this, not as the vehicle for the plan itself.

Q2a
This question related to looking at outlining different training needs that the charity would have at the food bank. Many candidates answered this question well through identifying a training need and then contextualising the answer either with the training need itself (for example, food hygiene training) or developing the training need in the context of the case study.

Candidates who did not score well on this question tended to do so because they provided generic training methods or commented on actions rather than training needs. This tended to manifest itself in terms of identifying the needs of the charity generally, such as "need a phone" or "need a van" rather than on the training need itself.

Q2b
This question focused upon analysing the data provided within the case study in order to advise the most important issues that need to be addressed by the charity. This should be supported by a justification of the choice. Most candidates were able to point out issues from the data provided which needed addressing although they were not always analysed to the same degree of success as was evident in earlier questions on the paper. The skills required are very similar and centres should develop these approaches with their candidates for future sessions.

It is important to highlight the use of the data from the case study, and in particular the use of the quantitative data. Restating the data would not gain credit as identifying an issue, as candidates would be expected to identify that a change in the data is the issue. For example, identifying that food parcel requests were predicted at 450 parcels but that there were actually 900 parcels requested is not the issue. The issue is that the number had doubled, or had increased between the prediction and actual outcomes, which should have been focused upon.

Candidates that scored better on this question were able to identify the issue from the data (Level 1) and then explain the issue identified (Level 2) with an analysis of the impact or consequences of the data to achieve Level 3. In many answers this logical approach was not evident, making it difficult to build the arguments required. Few candidates were then able to achieve Level 4 as they either did not make a judgement as to which issues were most significant, or their judgement had no supportive comment. As with other justifications, candidates would be expected to provide depth and contextualisation in their responses to score at the highest of levels for this aspect of the mark scheme.

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)
1 Hills Road
Cambridge
CB1 2EU

OCR Customer Contact Centre

Education and Learning
Telephone: 01223 553998
Facsimile: 01223 552627
Email: general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk

www.ocr.org.uk

For staff training purposes and as part of our quality assurance programme your call may be recorded or monitored