

Vocational Qualifications (QCF, NVQ, NQF)

Personal Life Skills

Personal Life Skills Entry Level 3 Award - **10273**

Personal Life Skills Entry Level 3 Certificate - **10274**

Personal Life Skills Level 1 Award - **10275**

Personal Life Skills Level 1 Certificate - **10276**

Personal Life Skills Level 2 Award - **10277**

Personal Life Skills Level 2 Certificate - **10278**

OCR Report to Centres 2014 – 2015

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA) is a leading UK awarding body, providing a wide range of qualifications to meet the needs of candidates of all ages and abilities. OCR qualifications include AS/A Levels, Diplomas, GCSEs, Cambridge Nationals, Cambridge Technicals, Functional Skills, Key Skills, Entry Level qualifications, NVQs and vocational qualifications in areas such as IT, business, languages, teaching/training, administration and secretarial skills.

It is also responsible for developing new specifications to meet national requirements and the needs of students and teachers. OCR is a not-for-profit organisation; any surplus made is invested back into the establishment to help towards the development of qualifications and support, which keep pace with the changing needs of today's society.

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.

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Overview

The centre assessor(s) must mark all responses contained in the evidence booklets prior to submission. There is marking guidance for each unit to assist the assessor in this process. The assessor's signature on the front of the evidence booklet confirms that the candidate has reached the required standard. Any work that has not been marked should not be submitted. It will not be moderated and will be returned to the centre for marking.

Learner work should not be submitted if any evidence is incomplete as this will lead to the unit to be withdrawn for that learner.

Where there is a team of assessors within a centre, it is advisable to carry out internal moderation before evidence is submitted. Any points raised by the internal moderator must be actioned before submitting for moderation. This will ensure that all assessors are marking consistently across units. Learners' work will be sampled across units and assessors.

When submitting work to the OCR examiner-moderator centres must use a Submission Cover Sheet for each candidate. This can be found in the forms section in the All Documents pages. Failure to do this will slow down the moderation process, as these forms then have to be requested from the centre.

When re-submitting a unit, OCR requires the whole unit to be submitted, along with a Candidate Re-submission Sheet and a front cover sheet that has been re-signed and dated by the candidate and the assessor. The new task(s) should show clear evidence of assessment. A copy of the original report should also be included.

Centres are not permitted to downgrade an evidence booklet. For example, if a booklet is at Level 2 then the Level 2 unit must be claimed. It is not permissible to complete half of a Level 2 booklet and enter the candidate for Level 1.

Most centres used the OCR evidence booklets to collect and record candidate responses. Centres may present evidence in other formats, providing, of course, that the assessment criteria are fully met. Booklets prepared by the centre can be submitted to OCR for checking before handing out to learners. Evidence also needs to be mapped on the Candidate Evidence Sheet and work ordered so the examiner-moderator can be clear where the evidence can be found.

Learners at all levels can have their work scribed or they can use a word processor to complete the evidence booklets.

The role of a scribe is to write down exactly what the learner has said. The scribe then needs to sign and date the front of the evidence booklet.

It is much better for the moderator if either of these options is taken, rather than having to try to interpret very poor hand-writing.

General Comments

Entry Level

The quality and appropriateness of Entry Level responses has been high. Learners have worked hard to produce accurate responses and to provide appropriate evidence.

The command word for the majority of assessment criteria at Entry Level is 'identify'. This means that short answers are appropriate as long as all elements from the marking guidance are covered. Where the command word is 'outline', learners are expected to use short sentences/phrases in their answers.

Level 1

Where units have been withdrawn, in most cases, this is because there is a lack of detail in the learner's answers. By using the marking guidance, assessors can see what level of answer is required. It is acceptable to mark the work and annotate that a more detailed answer is needed by the learner. This can be fed back to the learner who can then add the extra required and resubmit the work for marking before sending off for moderating.

The command words for the Level 1 assessment criteria are 'identify', 'outline' and 'describe'. Where an assessment criterion asks learners to 'identify' this means that short answers are appropriate as long as all elements from the marking guidance are covered. However, where the command word is 'outline', learners are expected to use sentences in their answers. If the task asks learners to 'outline' a consequence then a one word answer is not sufficient. A description is required in some of the assessment criteria. This will be clear in marking guidance. Short phrases are not sufficiently detailed for a description.

Please ensure that learners are entered at the appropriate level, as some learners who have attempted Level 1 units would have been more successful had they completed the qualification at Entry Level instead. Remember that these qualifications have a 'spiky' profile so not all units need to be achieved at Level 1 to gain a Level 1 qualification. It might be opportune to start some learners on an Entry Level unit and then progress to Level 1 for other units if that is felt to be appropriate.

Level 2

There has been an improvement in the quality of work submitted at Level 2 this year. It should be noted that short answers and lack of depth are not acceptable at Level 2. The exemplar materials give a good idea of the depth of response that is needed for success at this level. Experience has shown that many learners do not achieve this depth of response, even though their work has been accepted by the centre assessor(s).

The command words for Level 2 units are 'explain', 'assess', 'compare', 'describe'. For each task it is made clear in the marking guidance what the learner is required to do. Learners should be writing in paragraphs, exhibiting a good level of spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Comments on Individual Units

Units 1, 2, and 3 Risks and Making Personal Decisions

A good variety of feelings and emotions should be used as examples throughout these units. Any references to laws need to be specific and accurate. Positive and negative ways that peers influence decision-making need to be 'ways' and not advantages and disadvantages. The potential outcomes of the situation are not correct answers. An example has been included in Unit 1 task 5.

Units 4, 5 and 6 Personal Health and Well-being

Any references to websites as sources of help need to give the specific web address.

Understanding the difference between physical, mental and emotional health is important.

Units 7, 8 and 9 Financial Capability

It is important that all references to state benefits are accurate and up to date. All calculations need to be correct. Witness statements need to be completed before the learner and the assessor have signed off the unit.

Units 10, 11 and 12 Relationships and Understanding Diversity

Using a range of different relationships gives breadth to the learner's understanding. Being able to offer a range of advice in given scenarios is important.

Units 13, 14 and 15 Assessing Myself for Work

The difference between skills and attributes continues to cause a problem in some claims.

There is a resource sheet available on the OCR website to assist in differentiating between these. In general thinking of a skill as 'I can.....' and an attribute as 'I am.....' is a useful tip.

Sector Update

There is a new suite of Employability Skills qualifications. These sit alongside the Personal Life Skills qualifications.

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