Chief Visiting Moderator Annual Report

Cambridge Technicals in *Business*
September 2012 – August 2013

Level 2

At this level there are 3 separate qualifications

Qualification	Scheme code
OCR Level 3 Cambridge Technical Certificate in Business	05320
OCR Level 3 Cambridge Technical Extended Certificate in Business	05322
OCR Level 3 Cambridge Technical Diploma in Business	05325

Introduction

This was the first year of this new post-16 vocationally-related qualification. The number of centres and learners has grown steadily during the year and this growth in entries has been very encouraging. To date over 150 moderation visits have taken place, mainly to centres part-way through a two-year programme.

Centres are reminded of the two main documents that comprise the Cambridge Technicals in Business:
- The Centre Handbook which is the main reference point for course leaders and tutors
- The Admin Guide which is the main reference point for administering entries and maintaining quality assurance structures across the centre

CENTRE PRACTICE – REPORT FOR PUBLICATION

Resources

Centres have used a variety of resources to support their learners. Many have used the Hodder on-line resources for the mandatory units which are available to all registered centres delivering the qualification. A number of centres have adapted existing learner support materials or made use of materials designed for small and new business start-ups. An approach that has worked particularly well has been the use of local employers as case studies, often involving a mixture of visits to the business and/or hosting visiting speakers. Such local organisations are usually an ideal resource for learners when carrying out research for their assessment evidence.

Centres have understandably delivered whole units, typically one at a time. Some centres have been considering adopting a 'project' or 'themed' approach. For example, by combining the interpersonal communication units (such as communication, personal selling and customer service) or using an enterprise activity to support the delivery of the more practical aspects of units such as marketing and financial forecasting.

Evidence

Centres have used a variety of methods of evidencing learners' achievement of the assessment criteria. However, most portfolios have consisted of a mixture of written reports and witness testimonies.

A good range of organisations have been used to support assignments. In general small to medium-sized employers (SMEs) operating on a single site in the local area offer better contexts than large multinational or multi-branch organisations. Supermarket chains or franchise-based restaurants are often a poor choice because learners seem to struggle with identifying exactly what the business is; for example with some fast-food organisations 'is the business I am studying the foreign-owned holding company, the wholly-owned UK-subsidiary or the franchised outlet in the town centre?' The benefit with local SMEs is that it is usually possible to walk through and around the business in under twenty minutes and see several different functional areas operating. Such businesses make it far easier for a Level 2 learner to get a concrete understanding of the whole business and how the various parts (literally and figuratively) fit-together.

Most centres have recognised the importance of separating learning and assessment however a number of issues have arisen which may be explained by these two aspects being confused.

Learner evidence has usually been well structured and organised although there has been a tendency from some centres to include evidence which is either irrelevant or does not fully address the relevant assessment criterion. An example of this is Unit 2

P4 where many learners have provided generalised descriptions of the main functional areas in any organisation rather than offering specific descriptions of the actual functional areas in two named organisations.

Very occasionally learners have provided evidence in their portfolios which has been generated from tasks contained in OCR learner support materials or other similar resources. OCR has published a number of such materials – such as Delivery Guides and Lesson Elements but as is stated in the Delivery Guide for each unit: "The activities suggested in this Delivery Guide MUST NOT be used for assessment purposes."

In general centres have understood that learners are expected to apply their understanding of the teaching content, developed through a teaching/learning phase, to generate their assessment evidence. A good example of this was seen in Unit 4 P2 where a centre spent time teaching their learners the different types of organisational structure before giving learners an assignment containing different organisational charts where learners were expected to identify the type of organisational structured used by each organisation. Learners who gave the correct name for each organisational structure demonstrated their achievement of P4.

Also on rare occasions the extent of guidance and support given to learners during assessment work has been too great. As a rule learners should be taught all that they need to be taught in order to take them to the point where the tutor is confidence that they are ready to complete an assessment tasks; but the task itself should not provide support that would mean that the learner has been unable to demonstrate that they alone are able to use their understanding to meet the assessment criterion. An example of this is Unit 3 P6 where learners are required to show that they can complete an annual cash flow forecast. Part of the Teaching Content specifies that learners should know that Total Cash Outflows are "The sum of all the cash outflows". So learners cannot meet the assessment criterion if, in order to complete the assessment task, they need to be reminded how to calculate total cash outflows. This means that, for example, learners cannot be provided with a template containing formulas for an assessment task for P3 but such a template could have been used during the learning phase to help learners understand how to construct their own cash-flow statements.

Where centres have used Witness Statements the quality and level of detail has been variable. Witness Statements must provide a full description of what the witness observed the learner demonstrate. This should be in sufficient detail to enable a third-party (e.g. the assessor, internal moderator or visiting moderator) to read the statement and be able to form a judgement as to whether or not the observed activities did or did not demonstrate competence. For example Unit 6 P1, when 'demonstrating interpersonal interactions in a business context' the witness testimony should offer a description of what the learner did such that the assessor/moderator can read the statement and make a judgement as to the extent to which the relevant competencies (those listed in the teaching content for P1 are "body language; demonstration; greeting and visual aids") have been met. In general, where an assessment criterion is likely to be evidenced through an ephemeral activity such as a talk or discussion then the teaching content will contain a list of relevant competencies and these should be the focus of the descriptions in

the witness statement.

Learners have generally tried successfully to provide original and authentic evidence. Malpractice in the form of plagiarism or collusion (whether intentional or unintentional) is much less likely to occur when:

1. Learners produce their evidence on their own and not, for example, as part of a group. If learners are collaborating with others, for example in Unit 6 P4 "Demonstrate speaking and listening skills in a business group context" the evidence provided for each learner must demonstrate the contribution of each individual learner (for example a separate Witness Testimony for each learner describing what that learner did).
2. Learners clearly reference all sources used, especially if directly quoting from a published source.
3. Learners demonstrate their understanding of sources quoted, for example by paraphrasing or showing how the quote can help to illustrate the point being made.
4. Learners do not include classroom-based learning materials, which are likely to have been produced under close guidance from the tutor and are therefore likely to be very similar to materials produced by other learners.

Learner evidence has generally been sound at Pass (where assessment criteria generally ask for descriptions or explanations) but progressively less secure at Merit (where the main command verb is analyse) and Distinction (where the main command verb is evaluate). As a general rule, learners whose knowledge and understanding of relevant concepts was weak tended to struggle to produce accurate and valid analysis. If the analysis itself is weak then it hard to argue that the evaluative judgements made are based on valid and sufficiently wide-ranging analysis. The solution for many such learners was not so much to work on the quality of their analysis or their decision-making techniques, but to greatly improve their underpinning knowledge and understanding. OCR is publishing further guidance on these command verbs and subject-specific guidance will be a feature of professional development events in 2013-2014.

Assessment Practice

It is a deliberate feature of this qualification that centres are entrusted with the prerogative to devise suitable assessments for their learners. The specification for each unit offers the criteria by which learners should be assessed, the relevant knowledge and understanding they should have in order to meet those criteria and the qualification as a whole offers a quality assurance framework, including visits from an external moderator, to ensure comparability across and within each centre.

Centres have generally welcomed the freedom that this approach has given them to devise both learning programmes and assessment activities that match the needs of their learners and their progression into further education or local employment. Centres have naturally wished to clarify exactly how this approach is to work in practice and this has resulted in much discussion with their Visiting Moderator. It is a good reason why new centres are encouraged to organise their first moderation visit

as early as possible in the first year, as soon as some assessed work is available to be moderated.

Most centres have shown a secure grasp of the required standards and have made accurate assessment decisions. Where not, it has often been because of a misreading of the assessment criteria; a failure to provide valid evidence or a misunderstanding over the requirements of the command verbs. Most of these issues have been addressed in the evidence section above.

Centres are entitled to two paid-for moderation visits each year (covering both Levels 2 and 3 if both programmes are being delivered). Most centres have taken advantage of this, whether they are delivering a one-year or a two-year learning programme. All centres are encouraged to make full use of their entitlement as any unused visits in one academic year cannot be carried over into the next.

Internal standardisation

Centres are required to have in place suitable systems to ensure that all evidence in the centre is assessed to the same standard. Such systems are required regardless of the number of assessors in the centre. However, a centre which only has one assessor is not expected to use the same internal standardisation methods as a centre with several assessors.

Where there was only one assessor it was usually the case that a colleague (typically with relevant vocational-assessment experience if not relevant subject experience) sampled the portfolios. In most centres where there was more than one assessors then it was usual practice for one assessor to take the lead in standardising assessment however it was not always clear from the documentation provided how the various assessors were brought into agreement in the event of any disagreements between them.

Records

All centre claims are made on OCR Interchange and this system is then used by the Visiting Moderator to submit details of the sample required at moderation and then to process the moderation outcomes. This system has worked well; however, to reduce the chances of administrative issues centres are reminded to:

1. Ensure that each assessor is declared on Interchange and then matched to each learner when building the claim. Moderation cannot take place as planned if the relevant centre assessors for each learner cannot be identified on the claim.
2. Check that the claim is free from error before submitting it. All claims can be saved, edited and re-saved before finally submitting it to the moderator, at which point it cannot be edited and may have to be withdrawn in case of errors.
3. Check the Centre Handbook and Admin Guide for full details of the processes and deadlines involved with submitting claims for moderation and for the visits.

Centres are reminded that from 2013-2014 onwards it is an OCR requirement that all learner work has an OCR Unit Recording Sheet (URS) on the front. This sheet

includes spaces to record whether the portfolio was used as part on an internal standardisation exercise. In addition to the URS all portfolios should have a Candidate Authentication Statement completed by the learner. Centre authentication of the work submitted for moderation is given on Interchange before submitting the claim.

Other findings