

Vocational Qualifications (QCF, NVQ, NQF)

Business and Administration (NVQ)

- Level 1 Award Business and Administration (NVQ) – **04702**
- Level 1 Certificate Business and Administration (NVQ) – **04703**
- Level 2 Award Business and Administration (NVQ) – **04704**
- Level 2 Certificate Business and Administration (NVQ) – **04705**
- Level 2 Diploma Business and Administration (NVQ) – **4706**
- Level 3 Certificate Business and Administration (NVQ) – **04707**
- Level 3 Diploma Business and Administration (NVQ) – **04708**
- Level 4 Certificate Business and Administration (NVQ) – **04709**
- Level 4 Diploma Business and Administration (NVQ) – **04710**

Business and Administration

- OCR Level 1 Certificate in Business Administration – **10382**
- OCR Level 2 Diploma in Business Administration – **10383**
- OCR Level 3 Diploma in Business Administration – **10384**
- OCR Level 4 NVQ Diploma in Business Administration – **10385**

Professional Services

- OCR Level 4 NVQ Diploma in Business Administration – **10362**

OCR Report to Centres 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 Business and Administration qualifications now have old and new versions that are live. In September 2014 new qualifications were launched that were aimed at apprenticeships and at level 2 and 3, combined the previous competence and knowledge qualifications into one. A new level 1 qualification was launched which also combined knowledge and competence suitable for traineeships. A replacement Level 4 competence qualification was additionally brought in for the Higher Apprenticeship but this was not combined and the previous knowledge qualification remains in place. OCR decided to continue to offer the previous qualifications as standalone options for learners who did not wish to undertake an apprenticeship. The old Level 4 Diploma competence qualification was not extended as the new version is also suitable for non apprentices however the old level 4 Certificate was extended. OCR has stated that they intend to develop replacement qualifications that meet the standalone requirements but are likely to be based on the new units. The old level 4 technical certificate has been extended as it continues to fulfil the knowledge element of the higher apprenticeship framework. All new apprentices from September 2014 have to be registered on the new qualifications.

Assessment of the old qualifications has continued to be of a generally good standard with no issues of note coming to light. Centres do not report any problems with the content of the qualifications and many have welcomed the decision to extend them; enabling them to offer qualifications as development opportunities to experienced learners already in work.

Registrations and therefore some assessment of the new qualifications started from the beginning of the year and have grown steadily during the year but assessment was not that extensive until the last few months of the year. With the qualifications mainly for apprenticeships the focus in the early days, after registration and enrolment, is often on the other elements of the framework as well as developing their competence and knowledge.

One issue that has become apparent in both old and new qualifications, but especially those enrolled on apprenticeship frameworks, concerns initial assessment. Learners do need to be in a position to produce evidence from their workplace to demonstrate their competence of the learning outcomes and assessment criteria. There have been instances where it is clear that the learner is not taking the level that is commensurate with the role they perform or that the workplace is not providing the required opportunities. Consequently assessors cannot identify suitable assessments or those that have been conducted do not meet the level of the qualification. This creates extra work for all involved and potential disappointment for learners. Robust initial assessment, to establish the correct level for the learner as well as explaining the outcome to learners is crucial. Careful and effective planning of assessments will also help progress through the qualification to be as smooth as possible. Additionally Centres and assessors do need to work with employers to ensure that learners have the opportunities to develop and produce evidence that demonstrates their competence against the required learning outcomes and assessment criteria.

General Comments

The new qualification brought a subtle but significant change in the title from Business and Administration to Business Administration. This has changed the focus slightly. A further change is that there is now only one qualification at each level, Certificate at level 1 and Diploma for all others. The old provision continues to provide variety in the size of qualifications with awards, certificates and diplomas.

Level 1: The qualifications at this level are frequently offered in specialist areas for development or those returning to work. In these circumstances they fulfil a very important function. Assessment is generally of good quality.

Level 2: Along with level 3, where the main funding is available for apprenticeships, level 2 forms the bulk of registrations for this suite of qualifications. Assessment has, in the main, been of good quality. The old standards have been available for a number of years and experience in the assessment teams has resulted in no issues prevailing. Assessment of the knowledge is generally meeting the standards of the new qualifications.

Level 3: As stated these form a large part of registrations. Assessment is generally of good quality. The knowledge units can provide some challenges to ensure they meet the requirements of the level. This is dealt with further in the next section.

Level 4: This level has fewer registrations and those Centres that do will often only have one or two learners on programme. It forms the qualifications of the Higher Apprenticeship framework and learners do have to hold quite a senior position with significant responsibility for the delivery of administration functions to be able to generate the evidence required.

For all levels, EQAs report that appropriate records have been maintained and internal quality assurance has generally been appropriate and effective. The increase in the use of e portfolios, which tend to require IQA to be based on pieces of evidence rather than units, can lead to insufficient sampling being undertaken. IQAs in Centres do need to ensure that they conduct sufficient sampling of units and follow a plan to do so, in order to be confident that all assessment is to the required standard.

Comments on Individual Units

Reports and activity on verified visits for these qualifications do not focus on individual units so no specific information is available.

The new qualifications, especially the combined diplomas at levels 2 & 3, contain some detailed knowledge only units that in effect replace the previous technical certificate knowledge based qualification in the apprenticeship framework. The assessment of these units provided some concerns in Centres but these concerns have generally not materialised. The units provide opportunities for a range of assessment methods to be adopted that will meet the differing needs of learners. They also provide the ability to link the knowledge more closely with the learner's workplace and experience which aids their development as well as providing greater links with employers in the assessment process.

It is imperative that assessment of the units reflects the level of the qualification and so the level of knowledge that the learner must possess. The assessment criteria contain command verbs such as discuss, explain, analyse and evaluate and the evidence from the learners must address these requirements. Early indications show that this is being achieved at level 2 but at level 3 the same cannot always be assured. Learners at level 3 will probably need to conduct research into the topics and often link theory to practice in the answers they provide. Good practice has been seen where written answers have been supported by linking the theory to the

learner's actual workplace and environment. Additionally written answers have been supported by professional discussion where the assessor has been able to further explore the knowledge of the learner. Another example of good practice are where Centres have developed workbooks which guide the learners to produce evidence which is more than just an answer to a question and also links to their own workplace or, if suitable, examples of other work environments.

Sector Update

The most significant change in the past year has been the introduction of the new qualifications which have largely affected the apprentices. The Government's Implementation Plan for Apprenticeships is currently underway with Trailblazer activity ongoing and transition to full implementation during 2015-17. This is likely to lead to further changes in the way the qualifications are undertaken. Funding also focuses on apprenticeships which is likely to drive provision.

Generally, as a cross sector suite, there is no direct legislation that affects the qualifications. One unit that has been added is on Employee Rights and Responsibilities. Legislation changes can affect this unit but these can be reflected in the evidence that is provided and assessed.

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

OCR Customer Contact Centre

Skills and Employment

Telephone: 02476 851509

Fax: 02476 421944

Email: vocational.qualifications@ocr.org.uk

www.ocr.org.uk

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OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)
Head office
Telephone: 01223 552552
Facsimile: 01223 552553

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