

Cambridge Technicals

Business

Level 2 Cambridge Technical Business Certificate/Extended Certificate/Diploma - **05320, 05322, 05325**

OCR Report to Centres: 2016 – 2017

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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.

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OCR REPORT TO CENTRES

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Cambridge Technical Business Level 2 - 05320-05325

1. Overview:

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 – previously a pdf document, this is now a set of webpages on the Exams Officer section of the OCR website.

The Centre Handbook was updated in January 2017 – centres should check that they are using the current version.

In addition, a guide to the Command Verbs has been published by OCR. It is strongly recommended that both tutors and learners familiarise themselves with the contents of this document.

A number of centres have made use of the support services provided by OCR. These include subject expert visits (usually telephone calls) for new centres and an assignment checking service for new and existing centres (available via the CPD Hub)

It is a concern that some centres did not access the moderator visits last year and waited until they had delivered the entire qualification before requesting a moderation visit. Centres are encouraged to access the two moderation visits per year. Whilst the moderator is not permitted to look at partially completed units, they can provide feedback on the completed units allowing learners to address any weaknesses or even improve their grades at a later date. Moderators can also provide generic guidance on the units that the centre is intending to offer.

Centre assessors are also reminded that they are required to complete a unit recording sheet for every unit for every individual learner and provide comments as to why they are accepting the evidence, ie feedback. The majority of assessors are using the forms correctly and providing some excellent feedback to their learners.

Assessors are now growing in confidence with the delivery of these qualifications and look for opportunities to be creative and innovative with respect to how the learners present their evidence as well as considering a more holistic approach. The moderators have stated that they have seen some excellent evidence put forward by learners.

Centres are reminded to refer to Page 19 Section 4.3 of the Centre Handbook which lays out the mandatory requirements for internal standardisation. Regardless of the size of the centre and/or number of assessors, internal standardisation must be carried out and documented accordingly. The OCR moderators will ask to see evidence of internal standardisation having taken place.

The purpose of internal standardisation is to:

- ensure all assessors are assessing to the required standard
- ensure all assessment decisions are fair, valid and reliable
- arrange regular standardisation meetings
- ensure cross-moderation of work between assessors
- ensure all units have been covered across the full range of grades
- ensure feedback has been provided to assessors and documented, eg minutes of meetings, records of feedback, etc

- maintain records of the outcome of cross-moderation activities
- advise centre assessors of any discrepancies in assessment
- suggest ways in which assessment may be brought into line to meet the required standard.

The vast majority of centres are conducting internal standardisation and this has resulted in successful moderation taking place.

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. It is important that centres ensure that any claims entered onto OCR Interchange are accurate. To help ensure this centres are reminded to:

1. Ensure that each assessor is declared on Interchange and then matched to each candidate when building the claim. Moderation cannot take place as planned if the relevant centre assessors for each candidate 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 Administration Guide for full details of the processes and deadlines involved with submitting claims for moderation and for the visits themselves.

There have been a number of issues this year where learners have been missed off (and only noted after the moderation has taken place) and/or the incorrect grade uploaded. A moderator cannot withdraw individual learners and in some instances this has resulted in entire claims being withdrawn and having to be re-entered. In some instances, it has also had an effect on the sampling strategy of the moderator who may have only been informed on the day of the visit that there were errors in the claims.

Claims must also be uploaded at least four weeks prior to the moderation visit (refer to page 6 section 3.3 of the Administration Guide). There have been instances this year where moderators have spent a lot of time chasing centres to upload their claims.

Other issues have arisen from the process of topping up and/or dropping down. In some instances the person making the registrations/claims are not using the top or drop down codes but using the scheme code instead. This will result in a learner receiving unit certification only instead of the full qualification.

Centres are further reminded that for each learner submitting units for moderation, an authentication form should be completed and signed. It is not a requirement to provide a centre authentication form, just the individual ones for the learners.

Centres are reminded that it is an OCR requirement that all candidate work has an OCR Unit Recording Sheet (URS) on the front. This sheet includes spaces to record whether the portfolio was used as part of an internal standardisation exercise. In addition to the URS all portfolios should have a Candidate Authentication Statement completed by the candidate. Centre authentication of the work submitted for moderation is given on Interchange before submitting the claim.

Overall, the administration and documentation from centres has been very good and moderators have been able to access the evidence with very little trouble. It is important that the evidence is well referenced and made fully available for the moderator. A moderator does not have the time to look through evidence in the hope that they may find what they are looking for. If the presentation of the evidence is too difficult to navigate, a moderator could stop the visit and arrange to come back at a later date.

2. General Comments

Centres have used a variety of resources to support their learners. 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.

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 candidates 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-subsi-diary 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.

Candidate 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 candidates 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 candidates 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 candidates 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 structure used by each organisation. Candidates who gave the correct name for each organisational structure demonstrated their achievement of P2.

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 confident that they are ready to complete an assessment task; but the task itself should not provide support that would mean that the candidate 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 P6 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 do. This should be in sufficient detail to enable a third-party (eg 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 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 candidate must demonstrate the contribution of each individual candidate (for example a separate Witness Testimony for each candidate describing what that candidate 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.

Candidate 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 candidates 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 has published further guidance on these command verbs.

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. In addition, OCR has introduced an Assignment Checking service where centres can submit assignments to OCR to have them checked by a Subject Expert.

Most centres have shown a secure grasp of the required standards and have made accurate assessment decisions. Where this is not the case, 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.

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 assessor 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.

3. Comments on Individual Units

Unit 3

For P1-P3: Candidates need to identify the components listed in the Assessment Criteria - one way could be to give them summary financial data and ask them to identify within it the required items but published accounts are unlikely to provide specific examples of, say, start-up costs. A better idea would be to give learners a long list of items which might be purchased by a business and then ask them to prepare a short guide defining all the terms in P1-P3 using examples from the provided list - if they correctly pick items from the list and categorize them correctly then they have identified them.

For P4-P6: All that is required is data sufficient to enable candidates to calculate (P4) and construct (P5) break-even, and then create a cash-flow forecast (P6) - published accounts are not needed for this.

The summary financial accounts of a real organisation are a good idea but do not have to be used. However at the very least, realistic data should be provided to learners to enable them to select from it (P1-P3) and use it to create financial information (P4-P6). This can be a case study but should hopefully be realistic as far as the scenario is concerned.

Unit 9

Selling involves a salesperson negotiating with a customer with the aim that the customer purchases a product or a service. Closing the sale means attempting to ensure that the customer decides to make a purchase. Some centres have devised scenarios that do not enable learners to either sell a product or service or to close a sale and hence cannot meet the requirements of this unit.

Unit 11

Learners are required to produce webpages. Note that the requirement is to produce webpages rather than a website (although it is likely that they will be linked together to form a mini-website). There is no requirement that the pages be hosted on a real website. Typically candidates will create the pages using a web editor and then save as a webpage (html) - this would then enable the pages to be viewed in a web browser such as Internet Explorer or Chrome. The task is equivalent to creating a couple of one or two page flyers - except that the flyers are designed to be viewed on screen.

To meet P3 learners must “create web-pages to meet a user need”. The possible needs of the user (the business or its customers) are listed in the teaching content where the scope of the web-pages is also listed. An appropriate context for the webpages would be an ‘information-driven’ website introducing a local business and its services; for example a new hairdresser or restaurant.

In order to meet the P3 criterion webpages must be created, not just designed. However, the specification refers to ‘webpages’ and not ‘website’ so there is no requirement to publish or host a website. It is sufficient that the webpages are hyper-linked together and can be viewed on a browser on the centre’s own network or on a standalone computer.

The Teaching Content for “Webpages” does not mention payment systems so the created webpages do not necessarily have to include a secure payment facility. However in order to meet M2 the strengths and weaknesses must be analysed and payment systems are listed as a possible user need, hence learners ought to consider this issue in their analysis.

Unit 13

The evidence for P2 should cover all the documents listed in the Teaching Content under the headings "Financial Documents" and "Recording Transactions". Two separate sequences one for each would be sufficient.

4. Sector Update

Finally, centres should note that this 2012 version of the qualification no longer attracts KS5 performance points. This existing 2012 qualification will however continue to be available to centres – the qualification has a last entry date of 30/04/2020 and a final certification date of 31/08/2022. OCR is developing a successor qualification for first teaching in September 2018.

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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