

CAMBRIDGE TECHNICALS LEVEL 3 (2016)

Examiners' report

BUSINESS



05834–05837, 05878

Unit 9 January 2020 series

Version 1

Contents

Introduction3

Paper Unit 9 series overview4

 Question 1 (a)6

 Question 1 (b) (i)7

 Question 1 (b) (ii)7

 Question 2 (a)8

 Question 2 (b)8

 Question 2 (c)9

 Question 3 (a)9

 Question 3 (b)10

 Question 3 (c) (i)10

 Question 3 (c) (ii)11

 Question 4 (a)11

 Question 4 (b)12

 Question 4 (c)12

 Question 4 (d)13

 Question 5 (a) (i)13

 Question 5 (a) (ii)14

 Question 5 (b)14

 Question 6 (a)15

 Question 6 (b)16

Copyright information16

Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates. The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report. A full copy of the question paper can be downloaded from OCR.

You can now find the results awarded in 2018/19 for your Cambridge Technical subject area

As a centre approved to offer our Cambridge Technicals qualifications, we wanted to let you know we have now published the [results awarded](#) for 2018/19 Level 2 and 3 Cambridge Technicals (2016 suite). This information is helpful in allowing you to compare your centre achievements alongside national outcomes.

To browse to the document, log in to [Interchange](#), click on 'Resources and materials>Past papers and mark schemes' in the left-hand menu and select 'Cambridge Technicals (2016) Results Awarded 2018/2019' from the drop down list.

ExamBuilder

Remember to keep your eye on ExamBuilder as we continue to update the bank of questions post exam series in line with our past paper policy. Therefore, you can be assured that new assessment material will continually be fed into ExamBuilder on an annual basis.

Online post series external feedback

Keep an eye out for updates on our post series feedback on Exams for Cambridge Technicals Webinars available in the autumn term.

Paper Unit 9 series overview

This series has seen a wide spread of marks being achieved by candidates. This has depended on knowledge/understanding of the candidates and the level of exam preparation.

Some scripts continue to show inadequate preparation by candidates. Lower ability candidates omitted to answer some of the questions or provided answers with limited detail. Question 1(bi) saw many candidates achieve the full 3 marks available. Achievement on all other questions ranged from zero to the full marks allocated for that question.

Candidate performance overview

Candidates who did well on this paper:

- demonstrated knowledge and understanding of terms listed in the specification
- had the ability to apply understanding to the unseen scenario
- focused in on the key requirements of the question.

Candidates who did less well on this paper:

- demonstrated a lack of knowledge and understanding of key terminology
- lost focus on key terms within the questions
- left answer spaces blank.

Text 1: La Scarpa

La Scarpa is a shoe shop, based in a small town in Cheshire. It sells luxury brands of footwear. The business has an excellent reputation in the local area for selling good quality shoes at reasonable prices and for providing outstanding customer service. The shoe shop is owned and managed by Sara Sterling, a sole trader. Sara employs five staff to help her run the shop. She encourages her employees to work as a team. Sara uses a democratic management style.

Employees – An assistant manager is employed to help Sara manage the shop. This allows Sara the time to visit suppliers and carry out the administrative duties associated with running her own shoe shop. In addition, two full-time sales assistants and two part-time sales assistants are employed. The sales assistants are responsible for helping and advising the customers, taking payments and ensuring that the shop is clean and tidy. The staff work well as a team and enjoy their work. The full-time sales assistants work 38 hours a week. The part-time staff work a minimum of 10 hours a week. These hours can be over any of the 6 days a week that the shop is open. The part-time staff may also be asked to provide holiday or sickness cover for the full-time staff.

Pay – Sara pays all of the sales assistants £10.00 per hour. The assistant manager is paid an annual salary of £28 000.

Training and development – All employees receive induction training when they join the business. Sara also mentors new employees to ensure that they know about the products sold and can provide the excellent service that customers expect to receive.

Future plans – Sara is planning to expand the business. She wants to open a second branch in a town 25 miles away. She has carried out research and believes that there is sufficient demand for a second shop. Sara's plan to expand the business will have a significant impact on the organisational structure of *La Scarpa*. New employees will be needed and there will be the potential for promotion for some of the existing employees.

Sara plans to recruit a full-time manager for the new store as well as a full-time manager for the existing store. This means that she can then oversee both stores rather than being hands-on in just one of them. The new store will also require an assistant manager, two full-time sales assistants and two part-time sales assistants. Sara knows that the new store must offer the same level of customer service as the existing store, otherwise the reputation of the whole business may be affected.

Table 1: Performance data for *La Scarpa*

Performance Data	2017	2018	2019
Full-time sales assistants employed	2	2	2
Part-time sales assistants employed	1	1	2
Sales assistants leaving during the year	1	0	1
Customer complaints received	15	20	7

Question 1 (a)

- 1 (a) Analyse **one** internal factor and **one** external factor that may affect human resources planning at *La Scarpa*.

Internal factor.....

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External factor

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[6]

This question tests knowledge and understanding of the internal and external factors affecting human resource planning (LO1.2/3). Many candidates were able to identify relevant factors but did not then relate these to human resource planning in their explanation. Some candidates confused which were internal factors and which were external.


Question 2 (a)

- 2 (a) Evaluate non-monetary methods that Sara could introduce to increase the motivation of sales assistants at *La Scarpa*.

[16]

The majority of candidates were able to identify non-monetary methods of motivation. Most were also able to explain these methods and/or their uses. Many candidates did not achieve Level 3 for this question as their analysis considered the benefits of motivating employees (as a result of introducing a method) rather than the benefit/drawback of the method being discussed.

Some candidates focused their answers on motivational theorists and did not identify specific non-monetary methods. The question did not require them to consider motivational theories.

	Misconception	A common misconception was to identify bonuses and/or commission as a method of non-monetary motivation. A minority focused solely on bonuses and/or commission and therefore did not achieve any marks for this question.
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Question 2 (b)

- (b) There is no formal appraisal process currently in place for any of *La Scarpa's* employees.

Explain **two** different appraisal techniques; one that is suitable for appraising the assistant manager and one that is suitable for appraising the part-time sales assistants.

- appraisal technique suitable for appraising the assistant manager;

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- appraisal technique suitable for appraising the part-time sales assistants.

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[4]

The majority of candidates did not score marks on this question as they did not have knowledge of appraisal techniques that could be introduced by *La Scarpa* (LO5.1). Many candidates did not attempt the question.

	Misconception	A common misconception among those candidates who provided an answer was to recommend ways that the business could praise their employees.
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Question 2 (c)

- (c) Once the new store opens, Sara plans to introduce a two-month probationary period for all new employees.

Outline **one** advantage to *La Scarpa* of introducing a probationary period for all new employees.

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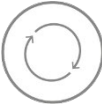
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[2]

Most candidates showed knowledge of what a probationary period is. Many were also able to explain an advantage of introducing this.

	AfL	Candidates could practice identifying the key requirements/words/terms within a question. This question asks for an advantage to <i>La Scarpa</i> . Some candidates answered from the point of view of the employee and therefore no marks were given.
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Question 3 (a)


- 3 (a)** Sara is considering recruiting full-time managers who have never worked in a shoe shop before.

Evaluate to what extent recruiting inexperienced managers might cause conflict at *La Scarpa*.

[16]

Many candidates were able to identify causes of conflict that may result from the recruitment of inexperienced managers. Of these candidates many did not achieve Level 3 as their analysis did not focus on conflict within *La Scarpa* i.e. how the factor identified/explained impacts employee behaviour and therefore causes conflict. Analysis tended to focus on the impact on customer service, productivity, etc.

Few candidates achieved Level 4 as the question required them to evaluate to what extent recruiting inexperienced managers might cause conflict. Most candidates who did write a conclusion discussed whether *La Scarpa* should or should not employ inexperienced managers. This did not answer the question.

	AfL	Candidates should practice identifying the key aspects of a question and ensuring that their answers remain focused on these throughout.
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Question 3 (b)

(b) Explain **two** procedures that Sara could introduce to minimise the risk of conflict in the workplace after the new store is opened.

1.....

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2.....

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[4]

This question focuses on methods of minimising conflict in the workplace rather than resolving conflict once it occurs. Many candidates suggested methods of resolution and therefore marks were not given.

Some candidates suggested ways that the business could build better employee relationships e.g. team-building. Although something to be encouraged, this is not a procedure. Similarly some candidates suggested legal factors e.g. introducing the Equality Act. These must be met by law rather than being a procedure that *La Scarpa* could choose to introduce.

Question 3 (c) (i)

(c) (i) Explain **one** reason why empowering employees may improve employee engagement at *La Scarpa*.

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[2]

Very few candidates achieved marks for this question as no explicit knowledge of empowerment was shown. The majority of answers were generic/vague.

	AfL	Candidates must know all terms in the specification and be able to use these explicitly within their answers.
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Question 3 (c) (ii)

(ii) Explain **one** reason why introducing a work council may improve employee engagement at *La Scarpa*.

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.....[2]

Overall this question was better answered than Question 3 (c)(i) as candidates showed knowledge of what a works council is/does. Some candidates were then able to explain how the introduction of a works council could improve employee engagement.


Some candidates solely explained what a works council is/does without any reference to employee engagement. The second mark available was therefore not given.

Question 4 (a)

4 (a) Outline **one** benefit to Sara of completing a skills audit prior to advertising the sales assistant vacancies.

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.....[2]

This question clearly differentiated between those candidates who know what a skills audit is and those who do not.

	Misconception	Some candidates confused a skills audit with the person specification.
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Question 4 (b)

(b) Explain **one** reason why Sara should maintain the confidentiality of all information collected during the recruitment and selection process.

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[2]

The majority of candidates were able to achieve at least 1 mark for this question. To achieve the full 2 marks candidates needed to explicitly relate their answer to the recruitment and selection process. Few candidates did this.

Question 4 (c)

Sara has produced an application form that will be used as part of the recruitment and selection process for the new sales assistants. See **Fig. 1** below.


Position applied for	
Name	
Address	
Qualifications	
Previous work experience	
Date available to start work	

Fig. 1: Application form designed by Sara

(c) Recommend and justify improvements to the application form shown in **Fig. 1**.

[8]

Most candidates identified at least one appropriate improvement and many of these were then explained. Few candidates attempted analysis or a justified conclusion.

	Misconception	<p>Many candidates (incorrectly) recommended adding a box for the applicant's age or date of birth. This cannot be asked for on an application form unless the applicant needs to be a certain age to perform the role e.g. selling alcohol. This does not apply in this scenario. An applicant can be asked to complete a separate equality monitoring form but this is not part of the actual application form. As such no marks were given for this recommendation.</p>
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Question 4 (d)

(d) Explain **two** interview protocols that Sara should consider when interviewing for the new managerial roles.

1.....

 2.....

[4]

Few candidates showed knowledge of interview protocols as per LO7.6 (exemplification) of the teaching content. Instead, many candidates identified tasks involved with planning interviews e.g. preparing questions. Many also identified legislation that must be met rather than interview protocols i.e. good practice.

Question 5 (a) (i)


5 (a) Sara mentors new sales assistants when they start working for *La Scarpa*.

(i) Explain **one** reason why the use of mentoring is an effective method of training and development.

.....

[2]

Few candidates showed explicit knowledge of mentoring. Answers were more generic i.e. relating to on-the-job-training rather than mentoring specifically.

	AfL	Candidates must be able to distinguish between the different methods of on-the-job training.
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Question 6 (a)

6 (a) Identify **three** barriers to effective employee relations.

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2.....
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3.....
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[3]

Few candidates achieved the full 3 marks available for this question. The question tests LO3.2 of the teaching content. Some candidates had clearly learnt the barriers but others gave vague answers that did not show explicit knowledge of human resources e.g. employees aren't treated well, organisational structure.

	AfL	Some candidates misread the question and tried to identify three ways of encouraging effective employee relations. Candidates should be encouraged to read the question carefully.
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Question 6 (b)

(b) When the new branch opens, the organisational structure of the business will change.

Explain **two** ways that this change might influence the relationship between Sara and the **existing** employees.

1.....
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.....

2.....
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[4]

Candidates who recognised the likely changes to the organisational structure e.g. an additional layer of management, generally scored well on this question. Most candidates, however, commented solely on whether the relationship was likely to improve or worsen without explanation. No marks were therefore given.

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