

CAMBRIDGE TECHNICALS LEVEL 3 (2016)

Examiners' report

BUSINESS

05834–05837, 05878

Unit 9 Summer 2024 series

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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. A selection of candidate answers is also provided. 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.

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Unit 9 series overview

Unit 9 is a two-hour examination paper which carries 90 marks. This series the paper comprised of seven questions and 15 part-questions. This series has seen a wide spread of marks achieved by candidates. This has depended on knowledge and understanding of the specification and the level of exam preparation. There were many NR (no response) answers in this series.

Weaker scripts continue to show a lack of knowledge of the specification and key HR terminology. This has resulted in questions not being answered at all, or only one out of three responses being given (Q3a and Q3b). Stronger scripts showed good knowledge and understanding of most parts of the specification and used context well within responses. These candidates appeared to connect well with the context of this paper.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrated knowledge and understanding of topics across the specification • focused on key words within the questions • were able to use key HR terminology • answered questions in context • showed understanding of the difference between employee engagement and employee motivation • showed understanding of the different methods of on-the-job training and off-the-job training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrated a lack of knowledge of key topic areas within the specification • did not focus on key words within the questions • did not know key HR terminology • did not answer questions in context.

Question 1

- 1 In 1965 Murworth Castle was opened to the general public for the first time. In 2008 the services offered to visitors were expanded.

Explain **two** ways that diversification into new sectors may have affected human resources planning at Murworth Castle.

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2

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[6]

This question was well-answered by many candidates. Higher scoring candidates showed good use of context in their responses.

The responses most often seen were the need to recruit additional staff and/or to train additional staff. Candidates who provided examples of the new roles, e.g. people to work in the gift shop, also gained the context mark(s).

Weaker candidates often identified non-HR activities, e.g. building the new gift shop or focused on the financial impact of setting up the new activities.

To be awarded the explanation mark, in each instance, candidates needed to explain why their identified impact on HR planning resulted from the diversification into new sectors. Some candidates instead identified a subsequent consequence to the business, e.g. costs will increase due to having to train new staff, therefore not achieving the explanation mark.

Exemplar 1

1 One way that diversification into new sectors affected human resource planning is it required more staff recruitment. This is because new areas and facilities were opened up for visitors. Warwick castle opened up a new gift shop, cafe and childrens play area which require staff; human resources has to plan for the needed increase in staff
2 by recruiting more.

This candidate has identified an impact i.e. more staff will need to be recruited. They have then explained why more staff were required and this is a contextual explanation. The full three marks have therefore been achieved for this response.

Question 2 (a)

2

- (a) In 2023 Murworth Castle was the 12th most visited tourist attraction in the UK, with 45% of visitors being repeat customers.

Explain what this suggests about employee motivation at Murworth Castle.

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..... [3]

Many candidates made a good attempt at this question. Candidates needed to identify what the information provided suggests about employee motivation. Awardable responses included: high, good, positive, employees are motivated. One mark was then awardable for a reason why this level of motivation was suggested and one mark for reference to the data provided.

Many candidates scored at least two out of the three marks available; recognising that good customer service/satisfaction is likely to stem from having motivated employees.

Some candidates identified that employee motivation is very poor and therefore did not achieve marks.

Exemplar 2

This suggests that employee motivation is high as employees have provided ~~staff~~^{visitors} with a good experience causing them to want to come back. ~~which~~ There are many tourist attractions in the UK so being 12th indicates that staff are keeping the grounds well maintained and providing good customer service meaning they are likely highly motivated. [3]

This candidate has achieved the full three marks for this question. Motivation has been identified as high, a reason has been given (lines 2-3) and then there is clear reference to the information provided (line 4).

Question 2 (b)

- (b) Explain, using **one** motivational theory, how providing training can improve employee motivation at Murworth Castle.

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..... [3]

Many candidates were unable to provide a reason why training is likely to improve motivation. Of those candidates who did provide a reason, many were unable to provide the full name/title of a motivational theory. Responses seen included: Maslow's pyramid, Maslow's theory of needs and McClelland's motivation theory.

The third mark was awarded for context. There were very few candidates who provided a contextual response to this question.

Assessment for learning



If the name of the organisation in the scenario (in this instance Murworth Castle) is in the question, then candidates must provide a contextual response to achieve full marks.

Question 2 (c)

- (c) Explain how **one** internal factor might influence the relationship between Murworth Castle and its employees.

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..... [3]

This was a very low-scoring question, with many candidates not providing a response. The question tested LO3.1.

The most often seen correct response was the level of communication between Murworth Castle/managers and the employees. However, some candidates gave responses that were too vague, e.g. communication with employees and having meetings. Incorrect responses often seen related to higher pay or paying bonuses.

For candidates who correctly identified a factor, explanation needed to be about why the factor would affect the relationship between Murworth Castle and the employees. A further mark was awardable if this was a contextual explanation.

Question 3 (a)

3

- (a) All permanent staff at Murworth Castle have a probationary period of six months when they start work.

Explain **three** advantages for Murworth Castle of using a probationary period.

[6]

Many candidates were unable to provide more than two responses. Some candidates were unable to provide more than one response. There were a number of candidates who provided no response (NR).

One mark, in each instance, was awarded for identifying a non-contextual advantage or two marks for a contextual advantage. Very few candidates provided context in their response(s).

Candidates should be encouraged to use HR terminology in their responses; 'fire them' and 'kick them out' were often seen.

Assessment for learning



Candidates should have an in-depth understanding of topics within the specification, therefore enabling them to provide a range of advantages, disadvantages, etc.

Question 3 (b)

(b) Most of the permanent staff at Murworth Castle belong to a trade union.

Outline **three** advantages for the permanent staff of belonging to a trade union.

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2

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3

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[6]

As with Q3a, many candidates were unable to provide more than two responses. Some candidates were unable to provide more than one response. There were a number of candidates who provided no response (NR).

Many candidates provided responses that were too vague, e.g. the trade union will help resolve problems or the trade union will provide advice. Candidates need to be able to identify the type of problem and the type of advice.

Question 3 (c)

- (c) Evaluate methods that Murworth Castle could use to improve the level of employee engagement for the permanent staff.

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..... [8]

This was a low-scoring question; some candidates scored zero marks. Many candidates failed to achieve beyond Level 2.

For those candidates failing to score or achieving Level 1 marks, a common error was identifying methods of improving employee motivation (LO2.2) rather than methods of improving employee engagement (LO4.1). This has also been a common error in previous series.

For those candidates who achieved Level 2, they then needed to provide an impact on Murworth Castle of using their identified method, e.g. increased costs associated with additional training, or potential improvement in productivity by introducing teamworking. However, most gave an impact of increased employee engagement, therefore not achieving Level 3.

For example, 'more training will increase engagement which will lead to lower labour turnover'. Here the lower labour turnover stems from the increase in engagement and therefore would not achieve Level 3. However, 'more training will increase the employees' confidence in their roles which is likely to lead to lower labour turnover' would achieve Level 3 as the impact of lower labour turnover clearly stems from the additional training.

Question 4 (a)

4

- (a) Applicants for the Tour Guide roles at Murworth Castle are required to complete an application form.

Explain **one** advantage and **one** disadvantage for Murworth Castle of using this application method.

Advantage

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Disadvantage

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[4]

This was a low-scoring question. Many candidates referred to the likely content of the form rather than the advantages and disadvantages of the use of an application form.

Some candidates assumed that the application form was instead of an interview, rather than it being the method of application.

Most of the candidates who did accurately provide an advantage/disadvantage did not provide a contextual response, therefore not achieving the full two marks available in each instance.

Question 4 (b)

- (b) Identify **one** type of interview that Murworth Castle could use as part of the selection process for a new Tour Guide.

..... [1]

Most candidates were able to identify a type of interview. Some candidates identified 'exit interview' which is incorrect as it is not part of the selection process.

Question 4 (c)

(c) James has interviewed two candidates for a Tour Guide vacancy.

Recommend which of the two candidates shown above James should select for the role of Tour Guide. Justify your recommendation.

[16]

Most candidates made a good attempt at this question, with the full 16 marks being achieved by some candidates.

The majority of candidates were able to identify points relating to both candidates from the information provided (Level 1). Many were able to develop this to achieve Level 2. The most often seen development was why the identified point was useful/an issue.

Stronger candidates were able to provide an impact on Murworth Castle of the point identified, therefore achieving Level 3. Weaker candidates did not go beyond Level 2 explanation. The weakest candidates listed numerous points from the information with no further development. This limited these candidates to a maximum of 4 marks.

Most candidates concluded which of the two candidates they believed should be chosen for the role. However, Level 3 needed to have been achieved in order for Level 4 to be awarded.

Of those candidates who had achieved Level 3, some did not achieve Level 4 because the reasoning for their choice was too vague. Vague responses included 'because they have the most experience' and 'they have better skills'.

Candidates should be encouraged to provide specific reasons when they are justifying a decision to achieve Level 4. For example, 'Candidate two should be chosen because they have worked with all age groups. This means they will be able to interact well with both children and adults on the tours'.

To achieve the full 16 marks, candidates needed to provide a contextual conclusion which also provided a reason why the alternate candidate had not been chosen.

Question 5

- 5** Evaluate methods of on-the-job training and off-the-job training that could be provided for the seasonal employees at Murworth Castle.

[16]

This question was not as high-scoring as Q4c. Some candidates did not attempt a response.

Candidates needed to identify a method of on-the-job or off-the-job training to achieve Level 1. This then needed to be developed to achieve Level 2. This could be a description of the method, an explanation of why the method could be beneficial/not beneficial, or a contextual example. As in previous series, many candidates were unable to clearly describe methods of on-the-job training.

Some candidates were unable to identify methods of training, instead providing vague or incorrect responses such as assessments, tests, promotion and appraisals.

A common misconception was that shadowing involves the new employee carrying out the role and an experienced employee shadowing them. Candidates tended to show better knowledge and understanding of methods of off-the-job-training. Some candidates discussed induction training which was not relevant to this question.

Candidates should be encouraged not to use words in the method's title to describe that method, e.g. shadowing is where employees shadow an experienced member of staff. This is too vague.

To achieve Level 3 candidates needed to provide a benefit, drawback or impact on Murworth Castle of using the identified method. Many candidates failed to achieve Level 3 as they considered benefits, drawbacks or impacts of training in general rather than the identified method.

To achieve Level 4 candidates could either choose one specific method of training, e.g. shadowing, or choose a combination of specific methods, or choose either on-the-job or off-the-job training. To achieve full marks, candidates needed to provide a clear reason for their choice plus why an alternative had been rejected, in context. Few candidates achieved Level 4 for this question, often due to not achieving Level 3.

Exemplar 3

Conferences are another type of off-the-job training methods. This requires the seasonal employees to go to different locations such as universities where professionals can help them gain a better understanding of their roles. The downsides of this is that the professionals would teach general knowledge which could not apply to Mucworth Castle. In addition to this, this will increase costs as the seasonal employees will need to travel.

Mentoring will be another on-the-job training technique that can be used. This will require the management to ~~show to the~~ ~~to share the responsibilities~~ to tell the employees the tasks they will have to do, what is expected from them and show them how they will carry out their tasks. This can include showing them ~~gardening~~ how the gardening is done or how to tidy up the castle. This will give employees the opportunity to observe and ~~also~~ increase their knowledge.

Overall, I think that practical training is the best training technique as the employees will both observe ~~how~~ what they have to do but also they will be able to practice what they have been taught. Therefore I believe that employees will be trained more effectively with practical training.

This candidate has achieved Level 3.

Conferences have been identified as a method of off-the-job training (Level 1). Recognition that this means travelling to different locations where professionals carry out the training achieves Level 2. Level 3 is then awarded for the impact of an increase in costs because the employees will have to travel to these different locations. This Level 3 is therefore specific to the method i.e. conferences, rather than being an impact of training in general.

The candidate has also identified mentoring as a method of on-the-job training. However, the description of mentoring is too vague. It is unclear whether this candidate understands what mentoring is. This could be a description of coaching. Mentoring is more likely to be longer-term help, guidance and support (relating to career progression).

The candidate has not achieved Level 4 as they have chosen 'practical training' as the most appropriate method. This is too vague and therefore not awardable.

Question 6 (a)

6

- (a) Using information from the performance data, calculate the absenteeism rate for seasonal employees for 2023.

Show your workings.

[3]

Many candidates achieved the full three marks for this question.

Some candidates achieved zero marks as they did not know the formula to calculate the absenteeism rate. Some candidates achieved two out of the three marks available as they did not include the percentage sign.

Question 6 (b)

- (b) Analyse **two** advantages to Murworth Castle of Sundip grading the performance of seasonal employees according to their attendance and absenteeism.

[6]

This was a low scoring question. Many responses were too generic i.e. would apply to any method of monitoring employee performance. Responses needed to relate specifically to the use of grading based on attendance and absenteeism.

Some candidates also made assumptions in their responses, e.g. you can see if employees are happy at work. In reality, it would only be further investigation that may provide this information. Responses needed to relate to the method rather than any assumptions about what the results may show.

Question 7 (a)

7

- (a) Explain how differing working environments could cause conflict between the garden staff and the cleaning staff at Murworth Castle.

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[3]

Many candidates did not consider how differing working environments could cause conflict. Responses were often more focused on how their differing job roles might cause conflict.

Assessment for learning



Encourage candidates to focus on key words within the question to ensure that their response meets the requirements of the question.

Question 7 (b)

(b) Explain **two** advantages to Murworth Castle of avoiding conflict between staff.

.....

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[6]

The full range of marks was achieved by candidates for this question. Many candidates achieved full marks.

Candidates needed to identify an advantage to Murworth Castle of avoiding conflict between staff. Candidates then needed to provide a contextual explanation for two further marks or a non-contextual explanation for a further one mark, in each instance. Explanation was awarded for a reason why avoiding conflict would result in the identified advantage or a consequence to the business of the identified advantage.

The advantage and the explanation had to relate to avoiding conflict. Some candidates did not achieve marks as they considered what would happen if conflict was not avoided.

Few candidates provided a contextual response.

Assessment for learning



Some candidates provided a list of advantages rather than explaining one advantage. Encourage candidates to develop one point rather than list many.

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