

Unit F240 (Unit 1) Creating a marketing proposal

Q: For AO1 on unit F240 - is it expected that when the candidates are discussing the various forms of media they include the advantages and disadvantages of each method or are they just required to have a description of each of the methods?

A: This depends on where the evidence is being placed. If this refers to AO1, the Marketing Mix stating the advantages and disadvantages does in fact demonstrate depth and breadth for mark band 3. However, if this is part of the justification for AO2 choice, the candidate should be stating why they selected each type of promotion and this would probably include the advantages and disadvantages.

Q: Are we correct in our understanding that the presentation, cue card evidence and completed Witness Statement are all that is required for submission of the candidates' AO2 and AO4 evidence?

A: It is the witness statement, cue cards that demonstrate to the moderator how and when the candidate related their presentation back to their research.

Within the analysis of their research (AO3) it should be clear the conclusions they are drawing. These will ultimately be the ideas presented within their marketing proposal.

Although candidates can produce their AO4 evidence within their presentations it is strongly recommend to also write this up. It is very difficult to locate this evidence from a witness statement/cue cards etc. It is suggested that candidates include it in their presentation if they wish but also provide us with a written summary.

Unit F241 (Unit 2) Recruitment in the workplace

Q: I have read the specification and nowhere does it specify that candidates must study different businesses for unit F241 Recruitment in the workplace. Please can you confirm that this is allowed by the examination board?

A: It is acceptable for candidates to all use the same business but the write up must be individual and authentic to the candidate.

Unit F244 (Unit 5) ICT provision in a business

Q: I am currently looking at undertaking unit 5 with a year 12 group and was wondering whether a school would count as a business, particularly as the school is renting out its ICT facilities to the local community?

It also offers, from the administration side, a wide range of opportunities and ideas that students can investigate and get their teeth into.

A: A school can count as a business BUT candidates must focus on the administration, finance, management side of it and not the teachers.

It is very unlikely that a school will be a suitable choice for this unit. They are supposed to look at a business that is just starting up or who has limited ICT provision.

There is a case study available, please contact OCR for more details.

Q: Please could you let us know if we can use our school as the business focus for Unit 5 F244 ICT provision in a business? It does not indicate anywhere in the spec that this would not be allowed.

A: The unit specification states that it is a business with no or very little ICT, therefore, not sure if the school will apply. If the centre insists on using the school they must only focus on the business side of the school as the unit specification focuses on functional areas.

Unit F249 (Unit 10) A business plan for the entrepreneur

Q: We only have a small cohort of 4 candidates. The candidates are working as a group and want to continue doing so. At the moment, they are completing this but the 4 pieces of coursework are going to be from one group working on one business. The final reports will be done independently. My query is whether this will be allowed?

A: This is acceptable as long as the centre can authenticate that the work of the candidate is their own. Although group work is acceptable during elements of this unit, the writing up/business plan etc must be completed independently and it is the centre's responsibility to show this.

Q: Can assessment objective 2 on unit 10, the Business Plan be done as a group or does it have to be independent? The candidates have done assessment objectives 1, 3 and 4 independently.

A: There is no problem with the candidates all using the same research as a basis. However, all plans must be written up independently. We would not expect to see all the documents the same, for example, different financial conclusions should have been drawn and, therefore, cash-flows etc should all be different. Break-even might be the same if they have all used the same figures.

All ideas within the business plan must be original to the candidate. The basis for their analysis is the same but nothing else should be identical.

Q: I have a query regarding A2 unit 'Business Plan for the Entrepreneur' on the GCE Applied Business course. I have a group of four candidates wanting to produce a plan for the same enterprise – a mini juice bar in the Sixth Form area at school. They would produce individual projects but would share ideas and research. Is this permissible?

A: The issue that you raised is an interesting one and revolves around the submission of individual evidence or group work. Ultimately, what the candidate produces must be individual and authentic.

Group work is of course permissible, however from the point of view of moderation, the individual contribution from the candidate must be very clear. For example, it may be possible for the group to carry out some group research as long as the individual candidate then carries out their own analysis of the data collected. This principle must be applied throughout the portfolio.

Q: In the A2 unit - Business Plan do the candidates need a worst case scenario profit and loss statement and cash-flow forecast?

A: The most important focus for the financial section of the business plan is ensuring that all figures are supported by primary and secondary research. Candidates must be able to justify their sales and purchase figures. Through the production of worst and best case scenarios candidates are demonstrating depth and breadth of understanding. This aspect enables them to consider the validity of their research – is it in fact accurate or over ambitious?

Unit F250 (Unit 11) Managerial and supervisory roles

Q: Task 4 (AO3) says...

"Having completed your research you need to write up an analysis of your findings, drawing out the key information that can be included within your report."

What exactly does this require candidates to do?

A: This unit is very much like the Production Unit in AS. As the candidates write up their interviews they will be analysing their research. Therefore both AO's can be covered together. It is also good practice to have the research notes as back up.

When the candidates write up their AO2 evidence, they must ensure they cover all of the points found under the sections using examples of how their manager/supervisor deals with each situation.

Unit F252 (Unit 13) Promotion in Action

Q: I have a small cohort of 2 candidates for unit 13 Promotion in Action and they have come up with the following idea: To open a café/coffee shop aimed predominately at teenagers in a music shop. It will sell soft drinks (smoothies, juices, etc) and light snacks in an area where they can listen to music, which possibly would be built into every table (headphones provided). Also, there is a possibility to watch previews of DVD's and/or have a facility for customers to recharge ipods/mp3/mobiles. It's a take on the coffee shops built in to bookshops. However, the spec says it must be a medium to large business. The only local stores which are medium/large range are the big chain music shops. Is it possible to use one of these companies or are they too big? Can we focus on a branch rather than the whole company? Or have you any other ideas?

A: Your idea seems fine. It does not really matter what size firm that they concentrate on. Focusing on just the local store is the best idea. This avoids candidates getting hung up with the demand for the product in their questionnaire. They need to focus on the best way to promote this to their target audience. You can focus on just one shop - that would be much better. Do not focus too much on the need for the new product but how they will promote its opening - what will be effective in terms of the target market and possible budget available. The teacher might like to consider giving the candidates a budget to work to. This will help them with their final evaluation of potential - likely success.

Please refer to the relevant section in the Principal Moderator's report.

Q: Our moderation report for F252 from last year said that for AO3 the candidates need to include a written plan for their research. I covered this in theory with them, but no where on the assessment grid does it refer back to this. It is in the specification which is why I covered it in theory, but again it does not say that they have to carry one out. Can you please advise me on this?

A: Candidates are required to do a plan - it usually comes under 'Producing a plan of action' and is part of their research. Candidates should create a plan explaining how they are going to tackle their research. It can help them focus their research.

Unit F253 (Unit 14) Constructing a financial strategy

Q: I need advice regarding the A2 Finance Unit. Could you clarify if the 'Bank Interest Paid' instruction relates to Bank charges and is therefore a debit entry and an expense?

A: Yes, it is interest the business has paid on overdrafts; loans etc and therefore are a credit out of the bank account and debit in the bank interest account.

Unit F255 (Unit 16) Training and development

Q: We are currently working on Unit 16: Training and development with a group of three students, would it be okay to focus on training in two departments within the school.

A: The school can be used BUT the Principal Moderator has advised not to use teaching staff. The two departments have to be business connected, e.g. Finance, HR, Catering, Cleaning.

General

Q: In the Specification, it refers to the Equal Opportunities Act, this has now been superseded by the Equality Act 2010. What should candidates/teachers be following?

A: With immediate effect the Equality Act 2010 super cedes all of the equal opportunities legislation listed in the current specification – The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations, Disability Discrimination Act, Race Relations Act, Sex Discrimination Act and the Equal Pay Act. This change in legislation affects all units on this qualification which contain references to specific equal opportunity legislature or general anti-discrimination policy, be they examined or moderated units. From January 2013 candidates need to know, and be able to apply, the principles and provisions contained in the new Equality Act 2010 in relation to equal opportunities in employment.