

Examiners' report

CAMBRIDGE TECHNICALS LEVEL 3 (2016)

BUSINESS

**OCR Level 3 Cambridge Technical
in Business**

Certificate: 05834

Extended Certificate: 05835

Foundation Diploma: 05836

Diploma: 05837

Extended Diploma: 05878

Unit 15 Summer 2025 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. 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 15 series overview

This series saw most candidates continue to perform well in this question paper. Many candidates seemed to find the contextual material in the resource booklet accessible, and it tended to be used well to support responses. Unit content was largely applied accurately to the full range of questions in the paper and many candidates demonstrated good exam technique, with clear evidence of most candidates at least attempting to write analytically and to form judgements.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
- demonstrated a secure knowledge of change management theory from the specification - used material from the Resource Booklet selectively to support their responses - read questions carefully and ensured that their responses focused on the impact of business activity on the correct party - contextualised their evaluations by referring to the type of products sold by the business or to the type of market the business sells to.	- were less able to distinguish between related concepts, for example confusing the drivers of a change with factors that will influence the management of the change - used evidence from the wrong section of the Resource Booklet with the wrong questions, for example attempting to use unresolved issues from Resource 2 to respond to parts of Question 1.

Reading questions carefully is essential

While many candidates were able to demonstrate good subject knowledge and good exam technique, in some cases, they may not have properly read the questions, as their responses did not fully respond to what was asked.

Question 1 (c) asked candidates to analyse four barriers to change. Some responses only analysed two or three barriers. Question 1 (d) asked candidates to analyse the impact of the closure on employees. Many responses analysed the impact of the closure on the business, limiting the number of marks the response could be given.

Question 1 (a)

1 Use Resource 1.

(a) An increase in competition has recently driven change at Good Yolk Ltd.

Describe **two other** drivers of change at Good Yolk Ltd.

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[4]

In keeping with previous papers, Questions 1 (a), (b), (c) and (d) all related to Resource 1. While most candidates did use the correct resource when responding to each part of Question 1, a few used Resource 2, which often resulted in them getting significantly fewer marks than they might have, or no marks at all.

Question 1 was generally successfully responded to. Most candidates correctly identified the change in the rate of inflation and the impact of the change in animal welfare standards on costs as drivers of change. Most candidates were able to contextualise their response with a relevant quote from Resource 1, gaining either 3 or 4 marks as a result. Some candidates wrote detailed responses to this question which went far beyond the demands of the 'Describe' command verb. This may have used up time that would have been better spent on the longer questions.

Exemplar 1

- 1 Changes in legislation. New legislation was introduced to support higher standards of animal welfare. They will have to either lower operating costs or raise prices in order to make up for the increased costs & maintain profit levels. They lowered costs by closing ~~down~~ East & West farms.
- 2 Changes in Economy. Inflation rose by 3%, so operational costs increase & people have less spending money. They closed East & West farms to lower costs.

In this exemplar, the candidate has written a very detailed response explaining the impact of the drivers of change, going some way above and beyond what is needed for full marks in this question.

Misconception



A question asking for a description does not require an extensive explanation of the impacts of a driver or of its consequences for a business. Many candidates spent a lot of time writing detailed responses to this question, losing valuable time that could have been better used to respond to the extended response questions.

Question 1 (b)

- (b) Beth would like Good Yolk Ltd to consult with local residents of East Farm and West Farm before making the closures.

Explain **one** way this consultation could take place.

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..... [2]

This question focused on a topic that has not been assessed for some time. Responses needed to contain two elements – a method of consultation and a contextual reference to those being consulted. While many candidates were able to correctly name a method of consultation, describing how it could be used, few were able to contextualise their response. Many candidates simply repeated the name of the business from the question – unfortunately, this cannot be given as contextualisation. Reference was needed to something not included in the question, such as, the type of business (farms) the products produced (eggs) the type of jobs lost (farm labourers/farm managers) or the industry (agriculture) to gain the second contextualisation mark.

Context



Context is vital when responding to every question on this paper. On a shorter response, candidates should still look to contextualise their response using data from the resource booklet. They should make sure that they do not rely on repeating information from the question as this cannot be given any marks.

Question 1 (c)

(c) Good Yolk Ltd will close East Farm and West Farm within the next 3 months.

Analyse **four** barriers to this change.

Which of these barriers is likely to pose the greatest risk to Good Yolk Ltd? Give reasons for your answer. **[16]**

This question required candidates to analyse four barriers to the planned closure of East and West Farm. Most candidates were able to correctly identify two or more barriers to change, and many could explain and analyse these barriers to change. In some cases, analytical statements were somewhat generic, for example commenting on the fact that a lack of leadership skills would lead to a poorly executed change, thus leading to a worse reputation for the business. Nonetheless, such standard elements were still a valid route to achieving a mark in Level 3. Most candidates seemed to understand the challenges involved in closing part of a business, recognising that costs may rise in the short term and that there may be bad publicity due to issues such as making workers redundant.

A few candidates used evidence from Resource 2 to support their response, highlighting issues such as poor quality products. Such responses were usually not clearly related to a relevant barrier to change, and so generally did not achieve any marks.

Some responses were less successful in identifying what constitutes a barrier to change. Several highlighted issues such as increasing inflation, showing some confusion about the difference between drivers of change and barriers to change. It is important that candidates are clear about the difference between these concepts and they should be given opportunities to practise identifying examples of each from unseen data.

Overall, the quality of responses to this question was good. Most correctly identified more than one example of a relevant barrier to change, analysing one or more. Answers such as a lack of agreement to the change or poor leadership skills were particularly popular. Many correctly noted the risk of a work group being set up but often tended to confuse the concept of a workgroup with the concept of a trade union. Some incorrectly suggested that a workgroup could instigate industrial action such as strikes.

Exemplar 2

One barrier to change is that Beth doesn't have very good leadership skills according to the Head of Human Resources, Heidi. She said in the last change Beth didn't display the right leadership skills making her not very confident about the change. Therefore the farm business employees like Heidi may not want the change to happen as they don't trust Beth to manage it. As a result employees may ~~like~~ ^{lack} motivation and become ~~unproductive~~ when working at the farm.

Another barrier to the change could be that other farms in different areas like North farm and South farm are worried that they will get shut down too. This will create worry and concern for the farm employees about their jobs. As a result they could also lose confidence and trust in the farming business as they don't know if they will be shut next. Therefore ~~production levels~~ for the rest of the farm business employees ^{they} ~~which~~ may lack motivation and ~~trust~~ which could affect their production rate when working on the farm too.

A third barrier to change could be that many farm employees will be upset that they are going to lose almost half of the farming employees. Beth thought was also thinking this during the meeting. Therefore other employees may find this upsetting and feel that all these farming employees have to leave to try and find new jobs. As a result they could fall out with the managers and even Beth for allowing this to happen and therefore not like their job.

The last barrier to change could be that many managers like Sundip who is the manager at West Farm disagree with the closures. This could lead to fall outs within the farming business between fellow farming employees and managers. As a result this will affect communication ~~between~~ in the business so important news and information may not get passed on. Therefore mistakes and errors could be made in the farming business because of this.

In conclusion I feel the barrier with the greatest risk is that the remaining farms worry they will be shut down too. This is because they could feel their job is insecure. Therefore creating worry and concern throughout the farm.

In this exemplar, the candidate has gained 15 marks for giving a contextualised justification of the barrier to change that they consider most significant. Had they made a judgement about why another barrier to change was less important they would have achieved full marks.

Assessment for learning



Where a question asks for a justification of why a factor is more important/significant than others, and for other similar questions, adding large amounts of detail to the justification of the point selected does not allow candidates to access more marks. A concise, well focused justification in context is more likely to yield higher marks. This should be combined with a judgement about why another factor is less important, as this tends to lead to the achievement of higher marks.

Question 1 (d)

(d) Evaluate likely impacts of the closure of the two farms on the current employees of Good Yolk Ltd. **[16]**

This question required candidates to analyse the impact of the change on the current employees of the business. Candidates were generally able to accurately identify impacts on current employees, most commonly noting that staff at East and West Farm would become unemployed and that staff at North and South Farms would worry about their own job security. In many cases, candidates were able to explain these points, discussing why staff might worry or why they might be let go by the business. It was less common for candidates to gain analysis marks on this question.

Achieving an analysis mark usually requires candidates to link their chosen point to an impact. Many questions on this question paper relate to impacts on the case study business, but in previous series, candidates have had to analyse impacts on staff, customers and other stakeholders. This type of question will not always relate to business impacts, and candidates should be prepared to identify and respond to that. Many less successful responses to this question included attempts at analytical points that would have been valid if they were analysing the impact on the business. Points such as reductions in profit and increases in costs were common responses, but were incorrect, as these impacts affect the business, not employees.

The most successful responses gave an analysis of how the closure would impact staff, making points such as redundancy leading to a loss of income, making it difficult for workers to support their families. Such responses were given a mark in Level 3.

As few candidates were able to successfully analyse the issues raised in this question, few were able to achieve evaluation marks. Even in responses that did successfully analyse one or more impacts on workers, a few were not able to achieve marks in the highest level due to suggesting that the biggest impact would be something business facing such as lost profits.

Misconception



Generic analysis points that relate to business impacts such as lost profit or damaged reputation will not work for every question. Some question papers will focus on not-for-profit or public sector firms and some questions will relate to other stakeholders such as customers or staff, so candidates should be prepared to consider other analytical points to develop their responses.

Question 2 (a)

2 Use Resource 2.

- (a) Analyse the unresolved issues that need to be addressed so that the change at Good Yolk Ltd is successful.

Recommend which **one** of these issues is the most significant. Give reasons for your answer.

[16]

This question required candidates to analyse the unresolved issues following the change and then make a justified suggestion of which one might be most important. Candidates were generally able to identify relevant issues easily, making good use of the data in Resource 2. The most common responses tended to relate to the lack of awareness that the East and West Farms had closed, the poor quality of the products being delivered and the health and safety issues arising from staff not knowing how to use equipment in their new job roles after redeployment.

A few candidates gave entirely or partially incorrect responses where they discussed external issues that drove the change from Resource 2, or they picked positive issues from Resource 1. Many candidates used quotes from the resource material to support their responses, but not all were then able to analyse these points by giving a business impact, such as noting that poor quality, cracked eggs would lead to waste which would lead to an increase in business costs.

Overall, while many candidates gained analysis marks by giving business impacts of the issues they identified, not all attempted to evaluate their response. Simply stating which factor was most important, with a relevant justification would elevate a well analysed response from 9 or 10 marks to 13 or 14 marks.

Using numerical data



While many candidates quoted numerical data from the resource booklet, few used it for calculations. Manipulating data, such as calculating a rate of change or a variance would instantly move a response into Level 2. Few candidates currently achieve marks for this.

Question 2 (b)

- (b) Some of the business customers in the North and the South have stopped ordering from Good Yolk Ltd. This is because the customers are concerned about the reliability of supply from Good Yolk Ltd and whether there will be further closures.

For each of the following steps from 'Kotter's 8 Step process for leading change', identify **one** action that could be taken and explain how this could help Good Yolk Ltd rebuild its relationship with its business customers in the North and the South.

Step: **Remove obstacles**

Action

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Step: **Create short-term wins**

Action

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[6]

This question required candidates to demonstrate their knowledge of how Kotter's 8 Step Process could be applied to a specific issue facing Good Yolk Ltd. In this case, they needed to show that they understood what steps had to be taken to remove obstacles and to create short term wins. In general, responses to this question were less successful, with many candidates failing to show a clear understanding of what these stages of the model involve. Many responses talked about why the business should use the model or carry out the steps, rather than giving concrete examples of how they could be carried out.

The most successful responses gave clear, practical actions that managers could take, using the case study to contextualise their response with reference to the products being sold or the customers being targeted.

Exemplar 3

Action Good Yolk could remove any obstacles such as addressing the issue with delivery driver to ensure that good customer service is given in order for Good Yolk Ltd to rebuild their relationship with their customers.

Step: Create short-term wins

Action One action that could be taken is that they could create a short-term goal such as making a target goal e.g. a profit of £2k. This ensures that everyone will be motivated to meet the goal and feel motivated and maintain the change.

In this exemplar, the candidate achieved the maximum of 3 marks for the first part of the response, giving a valid way to remove obstacles, putting it into context and then further explaining how it might work. The second half of the response is too vague, talking in generic terms about goal setting without giving a valid example of how Good Yolk could give their customers a short term win.

Assessment for learning



Candidates should be familiar with each of the stages of the different models of change management in the specification. They should be able to describe these stages and they should be able to apply each to different scenarios. Practising doing this using unseen case studies would be valuable preparation for this exam.

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