



Level 1 and Level 2 Certificate

Preparation for Working Life 4800

Report on the Examination

2009 examination – June series

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Level 1 / 2 Certificate in Preparation for Working Life

Written Paper (4800/W)

Candidates' performance on this paper was broadly similar to that of previous years in terms of general strengths and weaknesses. It is pleasing to report that many candidates had been well prepared for the examination and very few low scoring scripts were seen. There was also little, if any, evidence of candidates having insufficient time to complete the paper. All questions were accessible to the vast majority of the candidates.

Section A

Candidates generally scored well on the questions dealing with employees, breathing as part of DRABC, the meaning of a bonus, the warning sign for high voltage electricity, happiness as an emotion and starting work as an expected life event. Candidates were less secure in their understanding of the role of proteins for growth and repair, mentoring and computer aided design. Candidates were most challenged by the question on superannuation with many confusing this with National Insurance or Income Tax.

Section B

Question 11

The majority of candidates successfully gained one of the two marks available by suggesting 'cutting' dangers. Microbial risks from the cracked plates, cups and saucers were rarely suggested.

Question 12

Most candidates gained marks here by successfully identifying a symptom of stress and suggesting how stress may be treated.

Question 13

As might be expected, the most common error that appeared was £716 which resulted from subtraction rather than addition of the relevant amounts when attempting to calculate gross pay.

Question 14

This question proved challenging for many candidates especially regarding the letters Y and E in PAYE.

Question 15

It is pleasing to report that good body language is well known by the majority of candidates. Common scoring points included good body posture, eye contact and not fidgeting. Some weaker candidates introduced verbal as well as non verbal skills and consequently failed to gain all three marks available.

Question 16

Many candidates suggested physical and/or mental-intellectual answers rather than the correct emotional and social aspects.

Question 17

Most candidates were able to gain one of the two marks available by showing some understanding of the unfair nature of prejudice.

Question 18

The vast majority of candidates scored well on both parts of this question generally recognising the benefits of new jobs the factory would bring. The possible increase in pollution or traffic was identified as a disadvantage.

Question 19

The role of Human Resources departments beyond the recruitment of new staff was generally not well known.

Question 20

Many candidates were unable to supply sufficient detail in their responses to gain full marks on this question. Many referred to 'tax' rather than 'income tax' and therefore did not gain the mark available here. The annual nature of a P60 was better understood although weaker candidates confused the form with a P45.

Section C

Question 21

Candidates generally scored well on this hazard and risk question but as in previous series a lack of accurate description of the hazard prevented access to the risk marks for some candidates e.g. referring to the fork-lift truck as a hazard rather than its overloaded nature or obstruction of the driver's view. Candidates were most secure on the hazard and risk presented by the blocked fire exit, smoking, trailing cable and the spillage of the liquid. They tended to be less detailed in their responses when describing the overloaded fork-lift truck and the chisel overhanging the table edge.

Question 22

The candidates who scored well on part (a) of this question produced suitable planning aspects of the trip. They were generally less secure in part (b) with their understanding of different skills, attitudes or qualities required to organise the trip successfully. In part (c) candidates often gained one mark for suggestions relating to gaining feedback from the elderly people on the trip either verbally or by the use of a questionnaire.

Question 23

Candidates' understanding of the stages of the job application process were often imprecise but most managed to access the mark for the interview stage. In part (b) the vast majority of candidates gained both marks by successfully suggesting different methods for advertising jobs.

Question 24

This question proved challenging for many candidates. The weaker candidates tended to lack detailed understanding in all three sections. Generally more able candidates gained most marks on the negative aspects of binge drinking alcohol while the benefits of an interesting job were least well known.

Question 25

Many candidates gained one mark by suggesting appearance as a factor which affects a person's self-concept, but then repeated different aspects of this factor e.g. height or weight, rather than offer different factors in order to gain more marks. Part (b) proved very challenging for many candidates who tended to describe features associated with different ages and life stages and did not relate these to self-concept.

Question 26

Many candidates were restricted to lower band marks on this question by only covering everyday spending or longer term financial planning rather than both areas. Higher ability candidates tended to produce more detailed responses on both aspects using a variety of different examples and showing understanding of how Wayne and Beth's circumstances may change over time.

Coursework (4800/C)

General

This is the second year in which the coursework component has been examined and it was again successful in terms of accessibility for and differentiation of candidates. Although there has been noticeable progress since 2008, it is still possible to identify strengths and weaknesses that centres need to be aware of and, in particular, areas for further development both for students and centre-assessment.

Candidate Portfolios

The Letter of Application

Many students scored well in this element but marks could be improved if careful attention was paid to the following points:

- Ensure that all letters end with a signature, including those that have been word processed
- Ensure that an appropriate and compatible salutation and valediction are used.
- Ensure that a date is recorded

The majority of candidates scored well for content and reference to the position for which they were applying.

It is worth mentioning that some candidates wrote too much in their letter and this often resulted in them being penalised for poor communication. If they had kept their letter short and to the point then they may well have not incurred this penalty.

Some centres marked their candidates' letters as though all of the content marks were for spelling, punctuation and grammar. This is not the case and credit is given for the nature of the content and not just its technical accuracy.

The Curriculum Vitae

Once again many students scored well in this element and followed an appropriate format that they could use and build upon in the years ahead. However some common errors were identifiable and centres should emphasise these to future cohorts:

- In the 'Personal details' section, students should not be penalised for failing to put a date of birth. In fact it is fair to say that **name and address** are sufficient to gain the mark here.
- In the 'Qualifications' section, students should record the subjects they have taken/ are going to take **plus** either the level (e.g. GCSE) or a grade/predicted grade.
- In the 'Work Experience' section, candidates should **indicate what they did** rather than just the name of an employer, which may well mean very little to an external assessor.
- In the 'Referees' section, students should name **two referees** and their position **plus** their contact details (any one of address, telephone number or email address).

Interview Preparation Notes

This element was by far the most problematic for candidates and centres to deal with effectively. It was also the most effective differentiator between Level 1 and Level 2 candidates once external moderation had taken place. The following points are worthy of note for those centres that wish to improve their students' performance next year:

- The work submitted must be the written work of the candidates. It is not acceptable to send witness statements from mock interviews, photographic records of mock interviews or any material produced by third parties. The specification makes this very clear (p.11) and a number of centres' marks were substantially reduced for failing to satisfy this criterion.
- The work submitted must be the candidate's own work. There was some evidence of Internet downloads and over-direction by teachers resulting in identical or near identical submissions by candidates.
- Candidates would find it easier to access more marks and, in particular, the marks awarded for "specific interview preparation", if they related their work to an employment/college advertisement – either real or simulated. If the latter is the case (i.e. simulated) then candidates will benefit from the provision of greater levels of detail in the advertisement. The inclusion of this advertisement with the portfolios would also make the moderation process more meaningful even though, at present, such inclusion is not required by the specification.

As mentioned above, this element ultimately proved to be the most effective differentiator once moderation had taken place. It was clear, however, that a few centres did not appreciate the standard of work required to gain the highest marks. This qualification and, therefore, the coursework component must be able to demonstrate its ability to differentiate between candidates at different levels of attainment. **The highest marks within this element can only be gained by those candidates who can identify what and justify why certain attitudes and approaches should be adopted at interviews. In addition the highest attaining candidates must demonstrate this for both generic and specific interview preparation.**

Centres are to be congratulated on their hard work in providing what were, in the vast majority of cases, well organised and accurately assessed samples of work. Those centres who actioned the lessons learned last year will have benefited by having their candidates' coursework marks confirmed this year.

Administration and Assessment

Whilst most centres demonstrated efficient administration and assessment procedures, there were a number of areas where centres could ensure more thorough checks are made. It would be appreciated if the following could be ensured:

- The meeting of the deadline for submission of coursework portfolios (7th May) unless AQA have granted permission for the deadline to be exceeded.
- Full and accurate completion of Centre Mark Sheets, Centre Declaration Sheets and Candidate Record Forms.
- The submission of coursework portfolios in the format requested in the specification, not in plastic wallets but tagged together using a treasury tag in the top left hand corner.
- The submission of only the work requested in the specification, not notes, draft work and other non-essential material.
- **Marking must be related to the criteria in the specification.** On a number of occasions full marks were awarded for the letter and the CV even though there were obvious errors. This was the case even when centre assessors had annotated the work with comments such as 'No signature'.
- Where several teachers have been involved in marking the centre's work, **a process of internal standardisation must be undertaken.** This is an area that causes serious problems and inconvenience for both centres and moderators if effective internal standardisation has not been carried out.
- Work must be submitted in the format indicated in the specification, i.e. in written form. Whilst this can include illustrated material, mind maps timetables and maps, moderators will assess what has been written by the student and nothing else. Witness statements to mock interviews are not acceptable.
- Centres must do everything possible to prevent plagiarism from published sources (including the Internet) and between candidates.

The **use of annotation** in the portfolios is to be encouraged. If centre assessors can indicate how and where the candidates have been awarded marks then the moderation process is much more effective and much more likely to lead to the acceptance of the centre's marks.

Mark Ranges and Award of Levels

Level boundaries and cumulative percentage levels are available on the www.aqa.org.uk/over/stat.html page of the AQA website.