**AQA’s Level 3 Certificates in Applied Business**

**Giving useful and appropriate learner feedback**

What the specification says in section 14.5:

*Once learner work has been submitted for marking, then tutors must give clear and constructive feedback on the criteria successfully achieved by the learner. Tutors should also provide justification and explanation of their assessment decisions. Where a learner has not achieved the performance criteria targeted by an assignment, then feedback should* ***not*** *provide explicit instructions on how the learner can improve their work to achieve the outstanding criteria. This is to ensure that the learner is not assisted in the event that their work is considered for re-submission.*

**Question: how can a tutor feedback meaningfully to the learner without compromising the independence of the learner’s re-submitted work?**

**Key feedback principles:**

Essential/Permissible (√)

* PCs achieved/not achieved (essential)
* Reason/justification for assessment decision (essential)
* Where achieved, feedback can be explicit (ie can include reference to the actual elements of the response which were successful and how they were successful)
* Where not achieved, feedback can identify the skill that is lacking, eg ‘your explanations were not sufficiently strong’, ‘you need to ensure that to achieve M6 there is more analysis on the second page’.
* You can explain what is meant by the terms ‘explain’, ‘apply’, ‘analyse’ and ‘evaluate’, eg ‘when we evaluate we weigh up the parts of a response that are most or least important and identify the reasons for this’.
* You can reference those areas of the response which need more work, eg ‘your understanding of the power of Merlin’s customers is inaccurate and this needs attention.’

Not permissible (X)

* Identifying the actual ways in which to ‘fix’ a response, eg ‘you’ve misunderstood what the power of Merlin’s suppliers means. Legoland is not a supplier but a part of the Merlin Entertainments business. The suppliers are the businesses that supply things like the rides themselves, the maintenance of the rides, security services, grounds maintenance, catering etc. You now need to focus on this in your re-submission.’

**Some examples of these principles at work …**

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| **Examples of tutor feedback** | **Commentary** |
| **Candidate A - P7, M6, D3**  P7 - You have demonstrated some understanding of Merlin’s Competitive Position particularly for Competitive Rivalry and new entrants, however, insufficient understanding has been shown for all the other aspects. To gain P7 you need to demonstrate an accurate understanding of suppliers, the power of Merlin’s customers and substitutes with correct examples.  Once the above is achieved, for M6 you need to analyse your points (developed points) – at the moment you describe rather than analyse. Finally, your evaluation needs to build on P7 and M6 – making clear judgements based on your understanding and analysis and weighing up “the extent to which” Merlin holds a competitive advantage. | This is permissible feedback.  PCs and reasons are referenced. There is some reference to the skill that is lacking (‘insufficient understanding’) and there is direction in relation to the areas of the response that needs looking at again. There is no attempt, however, to take this further – ie to inform the student of the actual shortcomings of the response.  Again, the skill is the focus with some good points about the ‘analysis’ and ‘evaluation’ and what each of these mean. Again, there is no attempt to take this further. |
| **Candidate A - P7, M6, D3**  I would tell the candidate that the responses are very descriptive and sometimes wrong. Before anything else, they need to understand some of the key ideas of the CPA, ie Legoland is not a supplier, but a part of Merlin Entertainments; improving customer satisfaction does not address customer power (ie the power that customers actually have to influence Merlin’s decisions), and the power of Disney’s rivalry has to be compared with Merlin’s strength in its own domestic market.  They need more evidence to back up their analysis and give them a structure such as SEAI. Statement, Evidence, Analysis, Impact. I would say the answer lacks some depth and breadth to be able to get the merit or the distinction. I may suggest they undertake more research and start making some judgements about which may be more successful and competitive and why. How can they explore these concepts in more detail to make their answer insightful and informative? | This is **not** permissible feedback.  The feedback concentrates on the learner’s misunderstanding of terms and concepts (which is okay), but gives specific examples of the errors and indicates possible corrections, which is problematic.  The feedback now focuses on the way the learner should possibly focus on the cognitive structure of their possible future second attempt. There is some attempt to unpack what a better response might look like (both skills and re the areas where most improvement is needed), but there is no attempt to characterise the details of such a response. The feedback leads the learner towards making these decisions independently. The second part of this feedback is okay. |
| **Candidate D - P7, M6, D3**  P7 - You successfully achieve P7 – on the first page by giving specific pieces of evidence of the different aspects of Merlin’s competitive position, however, importantly demonstrating your understanding by outlining at least one example of each aspect on page two.  M6 - In the evaluation you give developed (chained) arguments of how each aspect has helped Merlin hold a competitive advantage, showing analysis. This is a marginal decision – more detailed arguments are needed.  D2 - Insufficient evidence is present of evaluation – judging and weighing up “the extent to which” the business holds a competitive advantage. | This is permissible feedback.  PCs and reasons are used appropriately. M6 is confirmed as marginal; improvement is expressed cognitively in terms of ‘more detailed arguments’. D2 is confirmed as not met and a definition is reprised to explain what needs to be done to achieve this. No actual egs of ‘chained arguments’ and/or how evidence is ‘weighed’ are presented. |
| **Candidate D - P7, M6, D3**  Your first page is too fragmented, and you do not explain each of the required elements re Merlin’s competitive position. You do achieve P7 through your responses on the second page, but here you lack the required chains of argument necessary for M6. There is no real analysis of each of the factors, ie you don’t really tell us what they mean for Merlin.  On the final page, there is some analysis and M6 is achieved here. However, D3 is not achieved as there is no evaluation of Merlin’s position, ie does it have a favourable competitive position, which are the most important elements of this? For eg, a significant part of Merlin’s competitive advantage stems from its dominant market position and the lack of choice that customers have when they visit a UK attraction. Have you considered this? | This is **not** permissible feedback.  There are good reasons and PCs referenced. There are also good explanations of the skills that are lacking on each of the PCs. The feedback, however, is problematic because of its use of an example which attempts to specifically illustrate the way in which the learner could argue an evaluation. Without this eg, the feedback is sound. |