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# LEVEL 3 Certificate/Extended Certificate

## **APPLIED BUSINESS**

ABS4: Managing and Leading People  
Report on the Examination

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## General Comments

The overall standard of performance on this paper was good. Despite it being likely that students have only had one term's worth of study before taking the examination, many had sound subject knowledge. There were some very insightful and thoughtful answers. There was little evidence that time was an issue in answering the paper.

Those students who performed well had thorough subject knowledge and, where required, were able to select and use relevant theories. They carefully read the question and used this as the focus for their answers.

In contrast, those students who performed less well often displayed weak subject knowledge and poor examination technique.

Poor examination technique was demonstrated in several ways.

- Not reading the question carefully enough; for example, in question 9 students lost sight of the focus on outlet-based employees. The stem of each question has sections that are emboldened to direct students to the required part of subject knowledge required. In the case of question 8 "flat organisational structure" and "where decisions are made".
- A determination to offer theory which did not relate to the question set.
- Detailed description of theories, for example, question 11 ADKAR, but with little reference to the context of the question.
- Many students quoted sections of the information provided in the longer questions but with little use made of the quote. Marks are awarded for use of the information, not quoting from it.

## Multiple Choice Questions

Question 1 and 2 were based on traditional 1 from 4 multiple choice items. Question 1 was answered correctly by over 67% and question 2 by over 78% of students.

Questions 3 and 4 were based around pairs of statements which were expected to be more challenging and this proved to be the case. Question 3 was disappointing with only 50% of students choosing the correct option C. Question 4 was better at over 65% choosing the correct option D.

## Question 5

A majority of students understood force field analysis. However a disappointing number were able to answer in the context of this being an important or big decision. The mention of 750 employees was on its own not enough for the third mark. In this respect it was the lowest percentage of students gaining all 3 marks.

### **Question 6**

A difficult question, but more students gained full marks than in question 5. Most students were able to explain that organising involved bringing resources together but less sure why this was important in the context of the scale involved in opening 25 shops.

### **Question 7**

This was the highest scoring of the 3 mark questions with over 20% gaining full marks. Students were comfortable with what an external change was. The difficulty arose with an unexpected change and why this was more difficult to respond to than just an external change. Few took the approach that an external change could be planned for but not if it was unexpected.

### **Question 8**

It was pleasing to see in this and all three of the 3 mark questions that students had good generic understanding. In this case of flat organisation structures and were able to apply this in the context of Mirpur Ltd. This meant that more than 65% of students scored L2 marks and whilst over a third of students gained L3 it was disappointing that more did not, mainly for two reasons.

Firstly, whilst students were comfortable with the effect of introducing a flat organisation structure to Mirpur Ltd they did not focus on the emboldened "where decisions are made".

Secondly, the overuse of quotations. It may be that students thought that merely quoting the opinions of employees was sufficient to gain marks.

### **Question 9**

Whilst there was a similar breakdown of marks as in question 8, the percentage gaining L3 marks was higher. Students showed a sound contextual understanding of the problems of using empowerment and factors that motivated employees at DC Ltd. Successful students were able to argue that empowerment would be unlikely to work for the outlet-based employees.

Maslow was often offered and used effectively.

There were issues regarding quoting. The entire paragraph relating to Alistair was frequently quoted.

### **Question 10**

Successful students used the performance data provided to link the causes and effects of poor performance, although not always using all the causes in their analysis. Less successful students got slightly lost in their interpretation of the performance data, sometimes just quoting data without linking it to the causes of poor performance.

### **Question 11**

The marks for this question were a little disappointing with just under 25% gaining L4 or above marks. Successful students analysed ADKAR and legitimate power in relation to implementing this

organisational change. The change plan had 3 elements and importantly the forecast to reduce the number of employees by 15%. Successful students recognised that neither ADKAR nor legitimate power would be particularly helpful against a backdrop of so many redundancies.

Less successful students tended to:

- write several paragraphs of generic understanding, particularly of ADKAR.
- offer explanations of ADKAR as to how ADKAR could help Anya make the change decision rather than a technique to help employees.
- sometimes refer to force field analysis rather than to ADKAR
- discuss the merits of the plan, being a good idea with comments relating to delayering, empowerment and changing suppliers which were not asked for.
- once again quote from the item.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.