



Rewarding Learning

ADVANCED SUBSIDIARY (AS)
General Certificate of Education
2023

Professional Business Services

Assessment Unit AS 1

assessing

Introduction to Professional Business Services

[SPB11]

WEDNESDAY 31 MAY, AFTERNOON

**MARK
SCHEME**

General Marking Instructions

Introduction

The main purpose of the mark scheme is to ensure that examinations are marked accurately, consistently and fairly. The mark scheme provides examiners with an indication of the nature and range of candidates' responses likely to be worthy of credit. It also sets out the criteria which they should apply in allocating marks to candidates' responses.

Assessment objectives

Below are the assessment objectives for **GCE Professional Business Services**.

Candidates should be able to:

- AO1** Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of terms, concepts, theories, methods and models used by professional business services firms and their client businesses.
- AO2** Apply knowledge and understanding of concepts, theories, methods and models used by professional business services firms and their client businesses.
- AO3** Investigate, analyse and evaluate concepts, theories, methods and models as used by professional business services firms and their client businesses.

Quality of candidates' responses

In marking the examination papers, examiners should be looking for a quality of response reflecting the level of maturity which may reasonably be expected of a 17- or 18-year-old which is the age at which the majority of candidates sit their GCE examinations.

Flexibility in marking

Mark schemes are not intended to be totally prescriptive. No mark scheme can cover all the responses which candidates may produce. In the event of unanticipated answers, examiners are expected to use their professional judgement to assess the validity of answers. If an answer is particularly problematic, then examiners should seek the guidance of the Supervising Examiner.

Positive marking

Examiners are encouraged to be positive in their marking, giving appropriate credit for what candidates know, understand and can do rather than penalising candidates for errors or omissions. Examiners should make use of the whole of the available mark range for any particular question and be prepared to award full marks for a response which is as good as might reasonably be expected of a 17- or 18-year-old GCE candidate.

Awarding zero marks

Marks should only be awarded for valid responses and no marks should be awarded for an answer which is completely incorrect or inappropriate.

Marking calculations

In marking answers involving calculations, examiners should apply the 'own figure rule' so that candidates are not penalised more than once for a computational error. To avoid a candidate being penalised, marks can be awarded where correct conclusions or inferences are made from their incorrect calculations.

Types of mark schemes

Mark schemes for tasks or questions which require candidates to respond in extended written form are marked on the basis of levels of response which take account of the quality of written communication. Other questions which require only short answers are marked on a point for point basis with marks awarded for each valid piece of information provided.

Levels of response

In deciding which level of response to award, examiners should look for the 'best fit' bearing in mind that weakness in one area may be compensated for by strength in another. In deciding which mark within a particular level to award to any response, examiners are expected to use their professional judgement.

The following guidance is provided to assist examiners.

- **Threshold performance:** Response which just merits inclusion in the level and should be awarded a mark at or near the bottom of the range.
- **Intermediate performance:** Response which clearly merits inclusion in the level and should be awarded a mark at or near the middle of the range.
- **High performance:** Response which fully satisfies the level description and should be awarded a mark at or near the top of the range.

Quality of written communication

Quality of written communication is taken into account in assessing candidates' responses to all tasks and questions that require them to respond in extended written form. These tasks and questions are marked on the basis of levels of response. The description for each level of response includes reference to the quality of written communication.

For conciseness, quality of written communication is distinguished within either three or four levels of response.

Where there are three levels of response, quality of written communication is distinguished as follows:

Level 1: Quality of written communication is basic.

Level 2: Quality of written communication is good.

Level 3: Quality of written communication is excellent.

In interpreting these level descriptions, examiners should refer to the more detailed guidance provided below:

Level 1 (Basic): The candidate makes only a limited selection and use of an appropriate form and style of writing. The organisation of material may lack clarity and coherence. There is little use of specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar may be such that intended meaning is not clear.

Level 2 (Good): The candidate makes a reasonable selection and use of an appropriate form and style of writing. Relevant material is organised with some clarity and coherence. There is some use of appropriate specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar are sufficiently competent to make meaning clear.

Level 3 (Excellent): The candidate successfully selects and uses the most appropriate form and style of writing. Relevant material is organised with a high degree of clarity and coherence. There is widespread and accurate use of appropriate specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a sufficiently high standard to make meaning clear.

Where there are four levels of response, quality of written communication is distinguished as follows:

Level 1: Quality of written communication is basic.

Level 2: Quality of written communication is satisfactory.

Level 3: Quality of written communication is good.

Level 4: Quality of written communication is excellent.

In interpreting these level descriptions, examiners should refer to the more detailed guidance provided below.

Level 1 (Basic): The candidate makes only a basic selection and use of an appropriate form and style of writing. The organisation of material may lack clarity and coherence. There is little use of specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar may be such that intended meaning is not clear.

Level 2 (Satisfactory): The candidate makes a satisfactory selection and use of an appropriate form and style of writing. Relevant material is organised with some degree of clarity and coherence. There is some use of appropriate specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a satisfactory standard to make meaning evident.

Level 3 (Good): The candidate makes a good selection and use of an appropriate form and style of writing. Relevant material is organised with good clarity and coherence. There is good use of appropriate specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a good standard to make meaning clear.

Level 4 (Excellent): The candidate successfully selects and uses the most appropriate form and style of writing. Relevant material is organised with a high degree of clarity and coherence. There is widespread and accurate use of appropriate specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar are of the highest standard to make meaning absolutely clear.

1 (a) AO1

Responses may include:

Professional Business Services include a range of different occupations, which provide support to businesses of all sizes in all sectors. People working in professional business services provide specialist advice to their clients.

All valid responses will be given credit

[1] basic description of the term Professional Business Services

[2] good description of the term Professional Business Services

(1 × [2])

An example of a service may include:

Human Resources, Financial, Business Technology, Leadership and Management and Project Management

[1] example given

[3]

(b) AO1

Responses may include:

Secondary production is the manufacturing and assembly process. It involves converting raw materials from primary industries into finished or part-finished goods, through manufacturing and construction.

All valid responses will be given credit

[1] basic definition of the term secondary production

[2] good definition of the term secondary production

(1 × [2])

An example of secondary production may include:

building houses, bridges and roads; steel manufacture, bread making and food processing.

[1] example given

[3]

6

Responses may include:

Ownership

- A partnership has more than one owner Pretty Crafts could have a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 20 partners under UK law.
- Any decision made by one partner on behalf of Pretty Crafts is legally binding on all partners. The partners share the responsibilities of running Pretty Crafts.
- A deed of partnership is a legal document which states Pretty Crafts partners rights in the event of a dispute.

Source of Finance

- Partnerships often find it easier to raise finance than a sole trader as each partner within Pretty Crafts can contribute capital. A partnership can have up to 20 partners which is a significant increase in capital contribution for Pretty Crafts.
- Partnerships are often regarded as less risky than a sole trader and can find it easier to get loans and mortgages from financial institutions, such as banks and building societies. This could be helpful if Pretty Crafts was going to expand.

Degree of Control

- Partners share the control of running Pretty Crafts.
- Partners can specialise in one area of expertise within Pretty Crafts e.g. accounts, marketing leading to more effectively run the business.
- Any decisions made by one partner on behalf of Pretty Crafts is legally binding on all other partners. Partners must therefore consult one another before making business decisions. This can lead to more effective decision making as there is increased knowledge, input and expertise.

Liability Status

- All partners have unlimited liability.
- If Pretty Crafts has debts the partners are personally liable. The partners may be forced to sell personal possessions such as their car or house or use personal savings to meet these debts.

Distribution or Use of Profits

- The profits are shared among all Pretty Crafts partners depending on the amount of capital they have invested.
- It is recommended that Pretty Crafts draws up a deed of partnership which will set out how much capital each partner will contribute and how the profits will be shared among partners without a deed profit/losses will be split equally.

All valid responses will be given credit

[1] feature identified

[2] feature identified and explained for Pretty Crafts

(4 × [2])

[8]

8

Responses may include:

- Public relationships – if Wright Solicitors have an ethical code, it conducts and regulates their behaviour. Many organisations will adhere to these principles thereby promoting an environment of respect based on integrity. Following a code also produces certainty and consistency of conduct both to the employees and customers. Trust and confidentiality are at the centre of Wright Solicitors. If Wright Solicitors does not adhere to its ethical code, then the legal profession will fall into disrepute and lead to a rise in public discontent. Wright Solicitors as professionals conveys the notion of ethical responsibility and duty that are an inherent part of their trade. If Wright Solicitors adhere to their ethical code, then it will instil confidence in their business and the wider legal profession. When Wright Solicitors have a clear policy on conflicts of interest, exercising competence, care and confidentiality, it will assist in benefiting the business and the client.
- Corporate image – Wright Solicitors work hard to gain a competitive advantage. This may be achieved from the positive reputation and good corporate image gained from having an ethical code, enabling them to secure and maintain their market share from competitors. However, if they do not adhere to the code then their image and that of the legal profession will be affected.
- Protection for the professional business services firm – Wright Solicitors will benefit from having a code which ensures the business abides by a set of standards. The client's best interest is served when Wright Solicitors adhere to their ethical code ensuring integrity in their dealings. The code ensures that Wright Solicitors are less likely to breach legislation ensuring the good reputation of the profession. If Wright Solicitors fail by not protecting the business, then this will have a negative effect on future business.
- Strategic decision-making – Wright Solicitors make decisions at the executive level of their business. A code of ethics for Wright Solicitors can provide a foundation on which to base all decisions that affect internal and external stakeholders, such as employees, clients, and dealings with Government Agencies. Failure to follow a code of ethics will result in decision making being conducted in a manner which is least favourable to Wright Solicitors.

All valid responses will be given credit

[1] identification of benefit

[2] identification of benefit with explanation

[3] identification of benefit with explanation and application to Wright Solicitors

[4] identification of benefit with explanation, application and basic analysis to Wright Solicitors

[5] identification of benefit with explanation, application and good analysis to Wright Solicitors

[6] identification of benefit with explanation, application and excellent analysis to Wright Solicitors

(2 × [6])

[12]

12

4 (a) AO1

Responses may include:

Market growth is an increase in the demand for a particular product or service over time. Market growth is the percentage growth in the size of the market, over a specified period of time.

[1] basic definition of the term market growth

[2] good definition of the term market growth

[2]

(b) AO1, AO2, AO3

Responses may include:

AVAILABLE
MARKS

Random Sampling	
Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costs less money due to the fact that respondents are selected randomly by Blooms Garden Centre. Random sampling is particularly useful when there is a large sample. Everyone has an equal chance of being chosen as part of the sample by Blooms Garden Centre. It is free from researcher bias and prejudice which will suit Blooms Garden Centre. Can be conducted in shorter time duration. It takes less time to complete and time saved can be used for analysis and interpretation by the consultant. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Results may not be representative unless a very large sample is used by Blooms Garden Centre. This sampling method may introduce random bias, whereby the sample selected could be made up of people who share the same characteristics just by chance. If a large sample is to be used this would be costly and time consuming and may not give Blooms Garden Centre the information they require.
Quota Sampling	
Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When Blooms Garden Centre have reached the target number of respondents in each segment (e.g. 50 males and 50 females between the ages of 25–50), they would not question any more. This would be useful for Blooms Garden Centre as they could e.g. select a specific number of adults, females/males who are likely to purchase gardening items and who live in Limavady. Results are more accurate than in random sampling as they reflect the breakdown of customers by market segment. The application of quota sampling can be more cost-effective to use than other sampling methods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be time consuming as it involves several steps to establish the sample, making it a lengthy process. There is always the possibility of a sampling error, leading to the wrong sample being calculated. Sample size is key in ensuring a fully representative sample. Potential for researcher bias, this may affect the quality of the data collected.

Stratified Sampling		AVAILABLE MARKS
Advantages	Disadvantages	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is the best way to obtain results that reflect the diversity of the population in question for Blooms Garden Centre. • A stratified sample can also be smaller than a random sample, which can save time, money and effort. This is because this type of sampling technique has a high statistical precision. • It is likely to produce results that are largely unbiased and accurate for Blooms Garden Centre. • Stratified sampling will always achieve greater precision than a simple random sample, provided that the strata are similar in terms of characteristics. • Stratified sampling often produces data that is more representative of the entire population, because of the special attention it pays to smaller subgroups within the population that use Blooms Garden Centre. • It is much more effective than other methods of sampling for large and diverse populations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is always the possibility of a sampling error, leading to the wrong sample being calculated. • Can be time consuming, as it involves several steps to establish the sample, making it a lengthy process. 	
<p>All valid responses will be given credit</p>		
<p>[0] is awarded for a response not worthy of credit</p>		
<p>Level 1 [1]–[4] Basic</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic knowledge and understanding of up to three methods of sampling. • Limited or no relevant application to Blooms Garden Centre. • Analysis and evaluation is basic. • Recommendation of an appropriate sampling method with limited supporting knowledge. • The quality of the candidate’s written communication is basic. 		
<p>Level 2 [5]–[8] Satisfactory</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfactory knowledge and understanding of at least two methods of sampling. • Reasonable application to Blooms Garden Centre. • Analysis and evaluation is satisfactory. • Recommendation of an appropriate sampling method with partially reasoned supporting argument. • The quality of the candidate’s written communication is satisfactory. 		

Level 3 [9]–[12] Good

- Good knowledge and understanding of two or three methods of sampling.
- Good application to Blooms Garden Centre.
- Analysis and evaluation is good.
- Recommendation of an appropriate sampling method is justified with a supporting argument.
- The quality of the candidate’s written communication is good.

Level 4 [13]–[16] Excellent

- Excellent knowledge and understanding of three methods of sampling.
- Thorough application to Blooms Garden Centre.
- Analysis and evaluation is excellent.
- Recommendation of an appropriate sampling method is fully justified with a supporting argument.
- The quality of the candidate’s written communication is excellent. [16]

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

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Responses may include:

STRENGTHS

- Well-Worth-It always locate in prime locations.
- Well-Worth-It's brand is identified with locally produced goods in Northern Ireland only. Customers "buy-in" to shopping locally.
- Well-Worth-It provide their brand products 'purple brand' at a competitive price and these products are associated with their store.
- Creation of jobs in the locality will benefit the community.
- Strong emphasis by Well-Worth-It on corporate social responsibility and links with the community.
- Well-Worth-It is expanding within Northern Ireland, widening their presence.
- Well-Worth-It has a dedicated staff training team.
- The Graduate programme run by Well-Worth-It offers employees/local people the opportunity to progress to management positions.
- Cross-border shoppers.
- Well-Worth-It's aims to reduce their carbon footprint, this may attract customers who care about the environment.

WEAKNESSES

- Well-Worth-It may not have the same finances to sustain competitive pricing for the same length of time as larger competitors.
- Shoppers may not get the personal touch i.e. the care and attention which they may receive from local shops.
- Well-Worth-It may not provide the same range of products as their competitors.
- The shops may not succeed in attracting cross-border shoppers as the exchange rate may be poor, making goods more expensive for customers outside of Northern Ireland.
- The investment by Well-Worth-It may not yield a good return for them and they may be committed to local projects which they have to complete.
- Goods in the purple brand may be hard to source locally, and this could lead to gaps in the supply chain weakening consumer confidence. This could also allow competitors to exploit and fill the gap in the market.
- Sustaining a low carbon footprint may not always be possible.
- Purple brands may be confined to certain products whereas larger stores may offer more of a variety of their own branded products.
- Dual pricing and exchange rate transactions may result in extra expense for Well-Worth-It.
- Well-Worth-It is unique to Northern Ireland thereby limiting its impact on competitors by having no global presence (UK).

OPPORTUNITIES

- New locations appealing to cross-border shoppers may test the market for expansion into other markets, namely the Republic of Ireland.
- Opportunity to cater for all types of customers: Well-Worth-It has offerings for all types of customers. While their value products cater for lower socio-economic or lower income groups there are a number of branded and expensive products which the higher income segment may choose to buy.
- Well-Worth-It may be in a better position to expand into smaller market areas than its competitors.

- The business is considering buying up local pharmacies to provide additional services for customers.

THREATS

- Risk from competitors.
- Some customers and communities may be sceptical of business motives in getting involved in the community.
- Dual Pricing may be confusing for customers, e.g. the elderly
- Competitors may be in a stronger financial position to sustain a price-war.
- Government policies on taxation or exchange rates may influence Well-Worth-It's decision to expand or contract their business operations.

All valid responses will be given credit

[0] is awarded for a response not worthy of credit

Level 1 [1]–[4] Basic

- Basic knowledge and understanding of up to four elements of a SWOT analysis.
- Limited or no relevant application to Well-Worth-It.
- Basic SWOT analysis carried out.
- Candidate makes up to three recommendations which are limited and may or may not be supported by own knowledge and analysis given.
- The quality of the candidate's written communication is basic.

Level 2 [5]–[8] Satisfactory

- Satisfactory knowledge and understanding of at least two elements of a SWOT analysis.
- Application is satisfactory with some reference to Well-Worth-It.
- Satisfactory SWOT analysis carried out.
- Candidate makes at least two recommendations which are partially reasoned and supported by own knowledge and the analysis given.
- The quality of the candidate's written communication is satisfactory.

Level 3 [9]–[12] Good

- Good knowledge and understanding of at least two or three elements of a SWOT analysis.
- Coherent and clear application to Well-Worth-It.
- Good SWOT analysis carried out.
- Candidate makes two or three recommendations which are well supported by own knowledge and the analysis given.
- The quality of the candidate's written communication is good.

Level 4 [13]–[16] Excellent

- Excellent knowledge and understanding of the four elements of a SWOT analysis.
- Excellent and clear application to Well-Worth-It.
- Excellent SWOT analysis carried out.
- Candidate makes three recommendations which are fully justified and informed by own knowledge and the analysis given.
- The quality of the candidate's written communication is excellent. [16]

16

Responses may include:

Phase 1 – Entry

- Key phase – lays foundations for future phases. Professional business services firm works closely with Logan’s (NI) Ltd to establish a relationship.
- Professional business services firm starts work with Logan’s (NI) Ltd. This includes: first contacts, details of what the business want, how the professional business services firm might help, clarification of roles, preparation of an assignment plan, negotiation and agreement of the consulting contract.
- In this phase, the professional business services firm will try to identify unique solutions or other attractive ideas to set their proposal apart from other competitors in order to win the contract from Logan’s (NI) Ltd.

Phase 2 – Diagnosis

- In-depth diagnosis – the professional business services firm consultant and Ms Rose Browne, the Director from Logan’s (NI) Ltd identify changes required e.g. reduced level of absenteeism.
- Detailed definition of the purposes to be achieved and assessment of Logan’s (NI) Ltd performance, resources, needs and perspectives.
- Provide clarity on the change required to address the problem of absence within Logan’s (NI) Ltd. For example, current work practices could be considered.
- The professional business services firm should be aware of the attitude to change in Logan’s (NI) Ltd and if change will be welcomed, or will employees resist change in helping to reduce employee absence.
- The results of the diagnostic phase will inform action proposals so that the real problems are resolved, and the desired purposes achieved for Logan’s (NI) Ltd.
- Some possible solutions for Logan’s (NI) Ltd may start emerging during this phase.
- Fact finding and fact diagnosis will predetermine the relevance and quality of the solutions for Logan’s (NI) Ltd that will be proposed, but the professional business services firm should remain aware that these are often neglected.

Phase 3 – Action planning

- Aimed at solving the problem for Logan’s (NI) Ltd of increased employee absence.
- Includes work on one or several alternative solutions, evaluation of alternatives, elaboration of a plan for implementing changes for Logan’s (NI) Ltd.
- Action planning requires imagination and creativity, as well as a rigorous and systematic approach to identify and explore feasible alternatives, eliminate proposals that could lead to unnecessary changes, and propose a solution to adopt for Logan’s (NI) Ltd.
- Develop strategy and tactics to implement changes for Logan’s (NI) Ltd.
- Anticipate human resource issues to overcome resistance to, and gain support for change within Logan’s (NI) Ltd.

Phase 4 – Implementation

- In this phase, the proposals developed by the professional business services firm and Logan’s (NI) Ltd are implemented, testing their relevance and feasibility.
- Unforeseen new problems and obstacles may arise and false assumptions or planning errors may be uncovered in Logan’s (NI) Ltd.

- The original design and action plan may need correction, monitoring and managing the implementation is key as it is not possible to predict the effects of planned changes in Logan’s (NI) Ltd.
- The professional business services firm may prefer to be associated with the implementation of the changes which they have helped to identify and plan for Logan’s (NI) Ltd. For example, a reviewed incentive scheme.
- If Logan’s (NI) Ltd is capable of handling any phase of the change process alone, they may choose not to use the professional business services firm, this can happen as early as the diagnostic phase.
- It is important that Logan’s (NI) Ltd appreciates that an excellent report does not always guarantee that a new scheme will have the desired results.

Phase 5 – Termination

- This is the final phase.
- An evaluation will be carried out by the professional business services firm and Logan’s (NI) Ltd. This may include the professional business services firm’s performance, approach taken, any changes made and results achieved for Logan’s (NI) Ltd.
- Final reports will be presented and discussed.
- Any follow-up required between the professional business services firm and Logan’s (NI) Ltd will be agreed.
- The consulting project is terminated by mutual agreement.

All valid responses will be given credit

[0] is awarded for a response not worthy of credit

Level 1 [1]–[5] Basic

- Basic knowledge and understanding of the consultancy process.
- Limited or no relevant application to Logan’s (NI) Ltd.
- Basic analysis.
- The quality of the candidate’s written communication is basic.

Level 2 [6]–[10] Satisfactory

- Satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the consultancy process.
- Application is satisfactory with reasonable reference to Logan’s (NI) Ltd.
- Analysis is satisfactory.
- The quality of the candidate’s written communication is satisfactory.

Level 3 [11]–[15] Good

- Good knowledge and understanding of the consultancy process.
- Application is good with appropriate reference to Logan’s (NI) Ltd.
- Analysis is good.
- The quality of the candidate’s written communication is good.

Level 4 [16]–[20] Excellent

- Excellent knowledge and understanding of the consultancy process.
- Application is excellent with clear reference to Logan’s (NI) Ltd.
- Analysis is excellent.
- The quality of the candidate’s written communication is excellent. [20]

Total

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

20

80