

Vocational Qualifications (QCF, NVQ, NQF)

Administration (Business Professional)

Level 1

Award Administration (Business Professional) – 03952

Certificate Administration (Business Professional) – 03953

Level 2

Award Administration (Business Professional) – 03955

Certificate Administration (Business Professional) – 03956

Diploma Administration (Business Professional) – 03957

Level 3

Award Administration (Business Professional) – 03958

Certificate Administration (Business Professional) – 03959

Diploma Administration (Business Professional) – 03963

Level 4

Award Administration (Business Professional) – 03966

Certificate Administration (Business Professional) – 03967

Diploma Administration (Business Professional) – 03968

Moderators' report 2021/2022

About this Moderators' report

This report on the 2021/22 assessments aims to highlight:

- areas where students were more successful
- main areas where students may need additional support and some reflection
- points of advice for future assessments.

It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

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Overview

The Administration (Business Professional) has four levels. Level 1 offers an award and a Certificate. Levels 2, 3 and 4 offer an award, a certificate and a diploma. Levels 1 and 2 are open to learners from pre 16 to 19+. Level 3 is offered to learners who are 16+ and Level 4 to learners who are 19+.

The purpose of the overall scheme is to provide learners with the opportunity to learn new skills and knowledge about working in administration. None of the levels require previous experience of working in administration but are aimed at delivering the learning necessary to progress from basic administration tasks and knowledge up to senior administration roles within an organisation. It allows learners with no experience or knowledge to develop skills and experience of carrying out tasks at a level which is appropriate and seek employment using the qualification gained. It also allows returners to work or those seeking promotion to refresh and update their skills and knowledge.

The schemes have a spikey profile which means that the level of a particular scheme is set by the mandatory units but the optional units can be taken from different levels. So, for example, a level 2 Award will consist of the two level 2 mandatory units. The Certificate and Diploma schemes, in addition to the mandatory units will require the learners to achieve a further 8 credits from the two groups of optional units for the Certificate and 27 credits for the Diploma.

There are also restrictions on the minimum number of Group A units which must be taken and this affects the number of credits required from Group B. The data sheets, which can be found in the **Key Document** section of the website provides information on the number of credits required for each scheme and a list of the various units, credit ratings and their position in the mandatory, Group A or Group B sections. The Centre Handbook, which is also found in the **Key Document** section, has a subsection (3.5) on barred combinations but these refer to text production, word processing and audio-transcription units which are no longer offered by OCR but which may be used by learners who achieved them previously.

None of the mandatory units are available as optional units to other levels.

Many of the centres offering these schemes have delivered them for a number of years and ensure that learners practice and demonstrate sound business practices such as accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar which is very important in everyday business but particularly important when dealing with difficult areas such as customers complaints, difficult customers, or managing team.

The majority of assessments are carried out using the model assignments set by OCR but where available centres have taken advantage of real work activities such as working under supervision in the organisation's post room or teams of learners working to manage a charity event or open day. The successful candidates produce evidence which is laid out in a format which would be acceptable to a business, answers the requirements of assessment criteria and which meet the standards for accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar. Where evidence is required for tasks, such as using a printer or scanner, dealing with issues in reception or running meetings, then the assessor can produce witness testimonies which must be personal to each individual learner and have sufficient detail to enable the moderator to have confidence that the learner has demonstrated the skills to a level which would be acceptable in a business environment.

Learners who have claims withdrawn have failed to demonstrate their skills and abilities in the above areas. This can be as a result of an incomplete submission, with work have been missed or the evidence not meeting the requirements given above. Reasons for poorly written evidence are often given as “not the learner’s first language” or “the learner is dyslexic”. It has to be pointed out that these are not acceptable reasons for poor performance. Learners should be taught the coping skills, having someone else read through written evidence and comment on areas where errors have occurred but not actually corrected it directly is acceptable. The current Chief Moderator has dyslexia and finds that putting work aside for perhaps 30 minutes and then rereading the work will result in the identification of missed words or inaccuracies in spelling. Grammar can often be corrected by reading aloud and observing where to pause (a comma needed) or there is a change of direction (a full stop is required).

Withdrawal is rare, although ideas for future strengthening of evidence are provided on a regular basis even when the work has attended a pass. Overwhelmingly, the learners provide evidence which clearly meets the assessment criteria for clarity of argument, accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar and clear and very detailed witness testimonies.

General comments

Level 1: Award and Certificate (03952 and 03953)

The scheme uses optional model assignments which can be adjusted by Centres, as long as they ensure that all of the assessment criteria are covered. The Centres may opt to use their own assignments and/or real work activities with the same caveat. The Centres have delivered and assessed the qualification for a number of years and level 1 award and certificates usually meet the standard required for accuracy and spelling. Both level 1 schemes require the learner to take two mandatory units at level one and then select optional units from level 1 or level 2. Again, many learners produce good evidence for this but new centres can miss the fact that while the learners overall award will be at level 1, any level 2 units taken must meet the standards of a level 2 scheme. Similarly, text speak is not appropriate in a business setting as a) it is not universally understood and b) it does not provide the clarity required in a business context.

Level 2: Award, Certificate and Diploma (03955, 03956 and 03957)

The Level 2 schemes are, along with Level 3, the most popular qualifications in the suite. It uses optional model assignments which can be adjusted by Centres, as long as they ensure that all of the assessment criteria are covered. The Centres may opt to use their own assignments and/or real work activities with the same caveat.

The two mandatory units for this level are: Unit 6 Working in Administration and Unit 7 Written Business Communication. For the Award these are the only units. For the Certificate, these are supplemented by three Level 1 units, seven Level 2 units and eight Level 3 units from which the learner may select in order to meet the minimum requirements of 18 credits. The Diploma requires a total of 37 units and so the remaining 27 units are drawn from 3 level 1 units, seven level 2 units and 8 level 3 units.

Again, learners normally achieve a pass but poor written communication skills can result in some units being withdrawn. Those who are successful have clearly had the assessment criteria and the requirements of the model assignment clearly explained and the evidence requirements adhered to in producing the required evidence.

Level 3: Award, Certificate and Diploma (03958, 03959 and 03963)

The two mandatory units are: Unit 15 Producing Complex Document and Unit 16 Understanding Functions and Roles within Business Organisations. In addition, for the Award a minimum of a further three credits are required, for the Certificate a further 8 credits and for the Diploma a minimum of 27 credits and these can be drawn from a range of optional units: seven at level 2, eight at level 3 and four at Level 4.

Learners at level 3 predominately present work which is of a good to outstanding quality with the evidence demonstrating not only clear communications but also best practice in delivering the evidence in a coherent and logical manner.

Level 4: Award, Certificate and Diploma (03966, 03967 and 03968)

This level is not as widely used as Level 2 and Level 3 but the work is usually of a very high standard.

There is only one mandatory unit, Unit 25 Working in a Senior Administrative Role. To achieve the Award, the seven additional credits must come from the optional units. For the Certificate, the additional 15 credits must come from the same range of units as for the Award.

The Diploma has all four level 4 units as mandatory units and the remainder of the 17 credits are drawn from the eight level 3 units.

All of the level 4 units this require the learner to undertake a real work task and thus they can only be achieved through activities in the workplace where the learner is

working at a level which provides the depth and range of activities required, they have worked at the required level within an organisation in the past and can draw on this experience, have a work placement or the centre is able to provide a realistic working environment which enables the learner to fulfil a supervisory or senior administrative role. The learners who undertake level 4 are almost always successful. Issues normally occur where there has been a clear misunderstanding of the criteria such as a lack of analysis or evaluation. Detailed analyses which look at the issue from different perspectives and clearly worded evaluations of why a particular approach is or is not appropriate for given circumstances are essential.

Comments on individual units

Level 1: Award and Certificate (03952 and 03953)

The Two mandatory units for Level 1 are, Unit 1: Working in Business and Administration and Unit 2: Creating Business Documents. For the Award, these are the only two units that learners are required to complete. For the Certificate a further three Level 1 and 7 Level 2 units are available.

On the whole these units are well presented, with clear strong witness testimonies providing evidence of the learner's approach, ability and success in carrying out a range of tasks, adhering to dress codes, etc which cannot be captured through written statements. The temptation for learners to see leaflets as a way to demonstrate their expertise with Clip art rather than providing written guidance and demonstrating their knowledge and understanding all but disappeared from the evidence although the need to cite the source of their artwork still remains a challenge for some centres. All assessors now understand that Unit 2 requires the written documents to be accurately laid out and all spelling, grammar and punctuation corrected prior to submission. There can be no allowance for English being a second language or other issues.

Unit 3: Welcoming Visitors. Relies very much on the quality of the witness testimony to confirm that learners demonstrate the knowledge, understanding and skills required of anyone working in an organisation. The witness testimonies must be personalised to the individual learner and generic witness testimonies are not acceptable. This is now well understood by experienced assessors who now provide a very good written image of what they have observed.

Level 2: Award, Certificate and Diploma (03955, 03956 and 03957)

The two mandatory units for this level are: Unit 6 Working in Administration and Unit 7 Written Business Communication. For the Award these are the only units. For the Certificate, these are supplemented by three Level 1 units, seven Level 2 units and eight Level 3 units from which the learner may select in order to meet the minimum requirements of 18 credits. The Diploma requires a total of 37 units and so the remaining 27 units are drawn from 3 level 1 units, seven level 2 units and 8 level 3 units.

Unit 6: The set assignment requires learners to produce a range of information sheets which cover the knowledge and understanding elements i.e. the role of the administrator, how the role of administrator relates to others in the business organisation, the importance of legislation which relates to the work of the administrator, Health and Safety issues, the importance of organising the work area. These are then used to cover other practical activities such as photocopying as outlined in the Knowledge, understanding and Skills area of the unit specification, shredding, laminating, etc.

This unit is normally well presented but some centres still send multiple copies of single page photocopies when they could produce a witness testimony confirming that the single copy is an example, and that the learner has successfully produced multiple copies. Issues tend to arise when the work contains copies of uncited information from the Internet, although this is a much rarer occurrence in recent submissions.

Unit 7: Requires the learner to read and review a detailed complaint, analyse it and provide a holding letter and a report on the content, the latter requiring recommendations. Again, assessors now grasp the need for accuracy in layout, spelling, grammar and punctuation. The occasions when work has to be withdrawn due to poorly written documents is rare. The written explanation of different forms of written communication and how these vary depending on whether the customer is internal or external are of a standard expected at level 2, although the referencing of sources of their information is not always provided. The holding letter can sometimes lean towards effusive apologies which could be construed as an admission of error by the firm and assessors should ensure that learners recognise the importance of tone and content while trying to calm customers but avoid taking responsibility for everything that happens.

One of the optional units available is the Level 2 Unit 8, Career Planning, this is one of the units which provides excellent evidence, or the learner falls as they do not understand what is meant by a career path. Rather than recognising that it is like a set of steppingstones from a junior to a very senior role in administration, they merely identify one or two roles in administration and believe that this will be sufficient. It is required that learners identify two possible career paths including their intermediate steps and identify what transferable both paths provide.

Level 3: Award, Certificate and Diploma (03958, 03959 and 03963)

The two mandatory units are: Unit 15 Producing Complex Document and Unit 16 Understanding Functions and Roles within Business Organisations. In addition, for the Award a minimum of a further three credits are required, for the Certificate a further 8 credits and for the Diploma a minimum of 27 credits and these can be drawn from a range of optional units: seven at level 2, eight at level 3 and four at Level 4.

The model assignment is used almost exclusively for unit 15 and it requires the learners to read a range of documents and provide detailed reports, a press release and questionnaires. The analysis of the documents is usually well presented with a report providing the evidence. At this level all work must demonstrate a detailed understanding of the issue before going on to offer solutions or ways to mitigate the issue and this is usually achieved to a high standard.

Unit 16 is a unit which can cause issues if the assessor and learner do not understand the depth of detail and analysis required for a level 3 scheme. At level three, a critical comparison requires the learner to identify all of the strengths and weaknesses, identify where and when these are particularly important. The learner is expected to provide a conclusion which identifies when and where these similarities and differences between the business objectives of different types of organisations are relevant. The successful candidates have very different organisations to compare and also recognise the importance of citing the source of various images e.g., organisational charts.

One of the optional units for this level is Unit 17, the model assignment is normally used to gather the evidence. The explanation of a Job Analysis almost invariably refers to all the relevant elements of the evidence is normally of a high standard with good clear explanations of what a Job Analysis is and the application of the analysis is used to design the new job description.

Overall, these are carried out to a good standard. New centre assessors can fail to appreciate the amount of detail required at level 3. For example, using brief bullet points rather than

detailed explanations of each element of a job analysis and supporting notes or other evidence to support the application of the findings to the creation of a new job description

Level 4: Award, Certificate and Diploma (03966, 03967 and 03968)

This level is not as widely used as Level 3 and Level 4 but the work is usually of a very high standard.

There is only one mandatory unit, Unit 25 Working in a Senior Administrative Role. To achieve the Award, the seven additional credits must come from the optional units. For the Certificate, the additional 15 credits must come from the same range of units as for the Award.

The Diploma has all four level 4 units as mandatory units and the remainder of the 17 credits are drawn from the eight level 3 units.

In addition to Unit 25, the learner must complete: Unit 26 The Analyse Financial Information, Unit 27 Chair Business Meetings, Unit 28 Present Complex Business Information and 29 Train and Develop Staff.

All of the level 4 units require the learner to undertake real work and thus they can only be achieved through activities being:

- in the workplace where the learner is working at a level which provides the depth and range of activities required,
- they have worked at the required level within an organisation in the past and can draw on this experience,
- have a work placement
- the centre is able to provide a realistic working environment which enables the learner to fulfil a supervisory or senior administrative role.

Unit 25. The learner is required to plan and prioritise workload for themselves and their staff and as such the learner must have the opportunity to manage a team in a substantial task, in order to achieve the assessment criteria. The centres who offer this level of qualification are adept in providing either a placement or a realistic working environment. In the latter case, the learner needs to take a lead for a significant period of time in order to have the necessary experience to carry out the requirements of the units.

Unit 26: The analyse of financial information requires the learner to have a strong grasp of financial analysis and be able to carry this out over a period of time. The Knowledge, Understanding and Skills column show that the learner understand technical financial languages, the various tools such as statistical analyses, the function and content of balance sheets and how to apply them. The successful candidates have the opportunity to gather and interpret the necessary evidence and apply the resulting knowledge effectively and efficiently. Additionally, they are able to interpret their finding and use a range of software tools to produce financial forecasts. The assessor must have a good knowledge of finance and accounting in order to ensure learners have an appropriate role and fully understand the processes required to produce accurate financial forecasts and carryout appropriate research.

Unit 27: Chair Meetings. Most centres use the model assignment but some have learners who are already engaged in chairing meetings. The successful learners have been provided with a realistic working environment and have a clerk or secretary to carry out the instructions of the

Chair, which may be one of the learners from the class. All stages are carried out and the witness testimony by the assessor or an experienced chair, is very important in highlighting the behaviours and verbal interactions of the Chair with the clerk and those attending the meetings. It is also possible for this unit to be linked to Unit 19 (Support Business Meetings) so that the Level 4 learner is the Chair and the Level 3 learner takes the role of clerk. The important point is that the meeting is chaired and supported in a professional manner with correct language, dress code and environment. Additionally, the learn is required to carry out an evaluation of their performance as Chair, which must consider positive and negative aspects of their performance against good practice identified from experience or research and a final conclusion as the importance of their findings, what they have learned from the experience and how they improve their future chairing activities.

Unit 28: Present Complex Business Information. This requires learners to demonstrate their understanding of how prepare a presentation for an audience where the content is detailed and complex. The analyses which are successful include the best layout, the format of the presentation, associated speaker notes as well as the purpose and objectives of the presentation. The learner also demonstrates a clear understanding of their audience and how this will affect the language, timing and content of the presentation. The learner also includes copies of their notes and research as well as copies of the presentation, speaker notes and their questions for the audience to elicit feedback at the end of the presentation covering both oral questions and a short questionnaire. The assessor should provide a detailed witness testimony to provide evidence on the learner's presentation skills. There is a model assignment for this unit and overall, it is completed to a good standard. Weakness usually lies in the evaluation of their presentation. This may be due to a failure to provide a detailed discussion of the feedback and their own feelings on the good and poor aspects of the presentation, but it is usually due to the failure to come to a conclusion, which is a requirement of evaluations.

Sector update

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