

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2013

PL Retail Business (RB201)

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General Comments

This report comments on the performance of students in the externally assessed unit RB201.

The difficulty of the paper seemed consistent with previous series. Although it was again clear that some students struggle to answer questions at this level, overall students performed slightly better with a marginally larger number being able to access the higher marks. This is more to do with the better performance on some of the larger questions towards the end of the paper.

Exam questions were designed to cover all four Learning Outcomes (LO) and the majority of associated assessment criteria. More able students applied their answers to Retail Business but some students failed to grasp basic concepts or were unable to apply these to Retail Business.

It was pleasing to see that 100% of students were able to answer the question on suitable retail channels correctly.

In terms of business ownership there was a good level of understanding with 71% able to answer correctly on both what the term partnerships meant and the benefits of this type of business ownership. However, only 57% were able to answer a question on the disadvantages of being a sole trader correctly.

In a later set of questions only one student was able to correctly answer a one mark question on the definition of company size which, as a basic business concept, was extremely disappointing.

There was an overall weakness in the understanding of economic issues with most students scoring zero in this question. However, one student did score full marks.

When asked to state two different forms of discrimination most students could correctly state one form and only two students were able to score full marks on this.

Measurable criteria that could be used to analyse the performance of staff was not well answered although most students were able to achieve one (from two) marks. There was more success in the questions on how employees might use the skills of problem solving and organisation. All students picked up between 2-4 marks in this four mark question. Most students were able to give a stronger answer to the description of organisational skills.

It was especially pleasing to see that most students scored well on being asked to describe two methods of obtaining customer feedback with 43% achieving full marks.

All students bar one were able to recognise data presented in a scatter graph but the analysis of the results was less robust. None of the students were able to fully describe the relationship between the hours spent watching television and the amount of money children spent on sweets. However, 71% were able to achieve one mark (from two).

The question on sampling led to some confusion as students referred to product sampling (of sweets) in their answer rather than marketing research sample. This question was correctly and fully answered by only one student although most were able to access between 1-3 marks.

In a six mark question to analyse the importance of risk most students were able access between 3-5 marks. No one scored full marks but overall there was a good level of knowledge demonstrated in this topic area.

In the section on selecting a location for a new store and a potential overseas site most students answered the reasons for an out of town location really well. There was also a good standard of answer in evaluating the importance of understanding the tastes of local customers when opening a store in a different country. One particularly strong student was able to achieve the full eight marks for this question and most of the others scored between 3-6 marks.

Some students still need to read the questions more thoroughly to ensure they answer the question correctly. This was especially true in the questions about the importance of risk and sampling as an element of marketing research.

Students would certainly benefit from work on exam techniques to recognise the different requirements from the command words in the questions. There are different expectations from 'identify, outline, discuss or explain' questions and students should be able to ascertain the level of answer required from the question itself. This was often the reason why many students could not access the full marks allocated.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

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