



**T Level Technical Qualification in  
Agriculture, Environmental and  
Animal Care: Common Core**

**8717-030 Core: Paper 1  
Exam guide**

**Version 1.0**

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## 1. Introduction

This exam guide for the T Level Technical Qualification in Agriculture, Environmental and Animal Care: Paper 1 Common Core provides general tips for candidates taking this assessment, along with examples of different types of questions that will appear. Example candidate responses have also been provided along with examiner commentary and further hints and tips. The example candidate responses should not be considered as the only or best way to answer the question; their aim is to support transparency of the expectations when candidates are responding to different types of questions.

Marks, as indicated by '(1)' in red, have been added to show where marks have been awarded to support transparency of marking; they were not part of the candidate's response. Where questions are marked using banded descriptors, individual marks are not indicated in this guide.

## 2. General Tips

- Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar (SPaG) are not assessed within the core exam; no marks are awarded or deducted based on this. Examiners will make a judgement in relation to phonetic spelling to determine if the candidate has the required knowledge and/or understanding and where there is credit will award the mark(s).
- Handwriting quality: It is essential that candidates provide responses that are clear and legible. Since examination papers are scanned and marked onscreen, ensuring legibility is crucial for accurate marking. Candidates should use a ball-point pen and take care that their handwriting is easy to read. A recommendation would be to use block capitals if handwriting is poor or explore using a scribe.
- It is key that candidates understand the paper is split into two sections (Section A and Section B) and they understand the type of questions they will find in each part of the paper. This can help them with time management ensuring they leave sufficient time to respond to the Extended Response Questions within Section B.
- The order of the paper is modelled in such a way that it gradually increases in level of difficulty. The paper starts with Section A with questions assessing knowledge, before moving onto understanding, then application. Section B then assesses application, analysis and evaluation.
- It is important that candidates carefully read and understand the question, reading it through twice if needed.

### 3. AO1a – Demonstrate Knowledge

#### What this assessment objective means

Recall or recognition of specific elements of knowledge which must be committed to long term memory in order to underpin success in the role.

All Assessment Objectives require the ability to recall knowledge. AO1a refers to instances where the candidate is simply required to demonstrate basic recall. In the exam, this helps to give confidence in sufficiency of coverage of the content, and recognises that not all knowledge requires further understanding eg terminology, number facts etc.

#### A candidate can

- name or recognise technical terms, principles or theories, based on a description/use or vice versa
- distinguish between correct and incorrect definitions/descriptions
- correctly use terminology/terms
- locate a part on a diagram.

#### This is assessed within the examination by

Simple questions that require knowledge that could be learned by rote (facts) with no requirement to go beyond recall and statement of fact:

- Labelling a diagram with names/locations
- Definitions, facts, recall of purpose of something
- Description of physical appearance of something.

### 3.1. Question and Mark Scheme

Q1	Stem	State <b>two</b> ways a business should respond to a data security breach.  <b>(2 marks)</b>				
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<b>Total marks</b>	2 marks					
<b>AO</b>	AO1a					
<b>Specification reference</b>	10.1 Key requirements of legislation relating to the security of information and data.					

## 3.2. Candidate Responses

### Example 1 (Marks 2)

*Timeline of events leading to the breach. (1)*

*Update all passwords (1) to ensure nothing can get taken.*

### Examiner Commentary on application of mark scheme

The candidate was able to correctly recall two ways to respond to a data security breach. The 'timeline of events leading to the breach' was awarded a mark under the 'investigate/identify causes of the security breach' answer in the mark scheme.

### Example 2 (Marks 1)

*Change info (passwords). (1)*

*Email out to everyone.*

### Examiner Commentary on application of mark scheme

The candidate has only identified one correct way to respond to a data security breach. Only 'change info (passwords)' has gained a mark. There was no mark awarded to the candidate's second answer as emailing 'everyone' was too generic. If the candidate had specified 'everyone/ individuals affected by the breach', they would have gained a mark.

## 3.3. Examiner Hints and Tips

- Where candidates struggle to achieve marks in relation to AO1a, this is because they may not have the knowledge the question is targeting, meaning they do not have a secure breadth of knowledge across the syllabus. Candidates may either leave the question blank or will recall an incorrect fact, acronym or name.
- Candidates sometimes pick up on key words and capture knowledge around this. They should be encouraged to read the full question and ensure they are answering this accurately.
- When asked to recall legislation or regulations, examiners will accept industry recognised abbreviations and acronyms, as shown in the marking scheme. Candidates do not need to provide the date of the legislation to be awarded with the mark.
- Examiners will also accept alternative answers and wording, if acceptable within the marking guidance. For example, descriptions of terms.
- Where a candidate does not know the answer, or is unsure, they should be advised to leave these questions and come back to them once they have completed the rest of the paper.
- As per the guidance at the top of the paper, examiners will only accept the first two responses (if two answers are required) for marking. It was common for candidates to list multiple answers with the correct answer at the end of this list. It is important for candidates to understand that only the required number of responses will be marked.

## 4. AO1b – Demonstrate Understanding

### **What this assessment objective means**

The ability to explain principles and concepts beyond recall of definitions in order to be able to transfer these principles and concepts between contexts. Candidates have built connections between related pieces of knowledge.

AO1b focuses on the ability of the candidates to show understanding by summarising or explaining concepts in their own words, exemplifying or comparing and making inferences in general terms that show, for example, cause and effect.

### **A candidate can**

- explain a concept in their own words
- explain what it means in practice
- describe a process
- describe how something has an impact on another
- give relevant examples
- say what the impact/implication may be in general terms

### **This is assessed within the examination by**

Straightforward questions requiring demonstration, beyond recall, of understanding about something. Response is in general terms, or a concrete exemplification.

- Why is...
- What does ... mean?
- Give an example of how ...
- Describe how...
- Explain the use of...
- Explanation of how something works
- Explanation of the benefits/weaknesses of...



#### 4.1. Question and Mark Scheme (Describe)

<b>Q5</b>	<b>Stem</b>	Describe <b>two</b> ways that a workplace can promote diversity and inclusion.  <p style="text-align: right;"><b>(2 marks)</b></p>
	<b>Acceptable answer(s)</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopt an inclusive culture for all by using policies/practices <b>(1)</b>.</li> <li>• Provide equal opportunities to access job roles/progression <b>(1)</b>.</li> <li>• Establish groups (Employee Resource Groups/ERGs) to represent various demographics <b>(1)</b>.</li> <li>• Provide awareness training programmes to address biases/stereotypes <b>(1)</b>.</li> <li>• Provide reasonable adjustments for individuals to create a sense of belonging <b>(1)</b>.</li> </ul>	
	<b>Marking guidance</b>	
	<p>Award <b>1 mark</b> for <b>each full</b> description.</p> <p>Award a maximum of <b>2 marks</b> for <b>two</b> ways that are fully described.</p> <p>Award up to <b>1 mark</b> for answers given in context in place of overarching terms (eg area of worship to accommodate praying vs adopting an inclusive culture for all).</p> <p>Credit any other appropriate response.</p>	
<b>Total marks</b>	2 marks	
<b>AO</b>	AO1b	
<b>Specification reference</b>	6.2 Factors to consider when working with people from diverse backgrounds.	

## 4.2. Candidate Responses

### Example 1 (2 marks)

*One way would be having periodic workshops to raise awareness of differences. (1)*

*Another way would be using posters in places where worker often use (eg toilets, coffee room) to advertise/promote diversity. (1)*

### Examiner Commentary on application of mark scheme

The candidate provided two full descriptions which were realistic ways that a workplace could promote diversity and inclusion to achieve the full 2 marks.

### Example 2 (1 mark)

*Allow a new mother to be flexible about the times they can work so they feel valued. (1)*

*Employ staff from different religions.*

### Examiner Commentary on application of mark scheme

The candidate was awarded 1 mark for their first response as it fully described how a workplace can support a new mother. No mark awarded for 'employing staff from different religions'. This is a statement only with no description provided. This statement is also not technically correct as all new staff should be treated individually and given the same opportunities, regardless of their religion.

## 4.3. Examiner Hints and Tips

- In questions such as this, candidates should take the approach of stating their first point before developing these points to demonstrate knowledge and understanding.
- Candidates must provide more than an outline or list of facts.
- It is important to note that candidates are not required to provide an explanation in these types of questions.

#### 4.4. Question and Mark Scheme (Explain)

Q6	Stem	Explain <b>one</b> impact that trade unions can have on a business.  <b>(2 marks)</b>				
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<b>Total marks</b>	2 marks					
<b>AO</b>	AO1b					
<b>Specification reference</b>	8.2 Roles of different stakeholders					

## 4.5. Candidate Responses

### Example 1 (2 marks)

*Staff having time off for going on strike (1), making the production of products less. (1)*

### Examiner Commentary on application of mark scheme

The candidate was able to provide a full explanation of how trade unions can impact a business. They used the structure of statement ('staff having time off') and basic explanation ('for going on strike') (1) followed by further explanation ('making the production of products less') (1) to achieve the full 2 marks.

### Example 2 (1 mark)

*Trade unions can impact a business as they have negotiation power over the company so they can demand higher wages etc. (1)*

### Examiner Commentary on application of mark scheme

The candidate provided a statement ('negotiation power over the company') and a basic explanation ('so they can demand higher wages etc') in order to achieve 1 mark. There was no further explanation provided, meaning the candidate was unable to achieve the second mark.

## 4.6. Examiner Hints and Tips

- In questions such as this, candidates should take the approach of stating their point, then expanding on why this is important in the context of the question posed, using connects such as 'which' or 'so' to show cause and effect.
- Candidates need to provide both a knowledge statement and basic explanation to be awarded the first mark, with the second mark being awarded for the further/developed explanation, ie statement + basic explanation (1) further explanation (1). (*Staff having time off + to go on strike (1) leads to the production of products less (1).*)
- Candidates must ensure they have also considered the context given within the question. Candidates will only achieve marks when they identify impacts relevant to the context given.
- By just listing out impacts with no further explanation, candidates will not be able to achieve full marks as they have not demonstrated they understand what the impact is.

## 5. AO2 – Apply Knowledge and Understanding to Different Situations and Contexts

### What this assessment objective means

Using and applying knowledge and understanding of processes, procedures, generalisations principles and theories to specified, concrete scenarios. AO2 is about being able to take the understanding of generalities (AO1b) and apply them to specific novel scenarios. It is more granular than the more extended synthesis/creation that may respond to an analysis (AO3a) of a more holistic complex scenario/brief.

### A candidate can

- differentiate relevant from irrelevant information in a given, new scenario
- select appropriate procedures/principles from memory
- implement these procedures and principles appropriately for the given scenario.

### This is assessed within the examination by

Given a clear, straightforward/narrow scenario, the question requires selection and application of relevant principles and procedures in a way that is specific to the scenario (rather than in general terms).

- What is the best approach to... in this scenario?
- Explain the process/ procedure to take when...
- What are the implications of... (specific rather than general scenario).

## 5.1. Question and Mark Scheme

Q13	Stem	<p>Employees have been unable to use hand washing and toilet facilities at work because they are broken. The business has refused to repair them.</p> <p>Explain <b>two</b> consequences of this situation.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>(4 marks)</b></p>				
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Total marks	4 marks					
AO	AO2					
Specification reference	<p>1.1 Key requirements of health and safety legislation</p> <p>1.2 Consequences of poor standards of health and safety practice</p>					

## 5.2. Candidate Responses

### Example 1 (4 marks)

*Viruses and illness will go around the workplace leading to staff having time off (1), decreasing the sales in the company (1).*

*If staff are in unions, they could strike leading to bad PR on the company (1), therefore having less customers (1).*

### Examiner Commentary on application of mark scheme

The candidate's first response focuses on the health and wellbeing of their staff. 'Viruses and illness will go around the workplace' is the statement followed by 'leading to staff having time off' as the basic explanation for 1 mark. The further explanation is then provided, 'decreasing the sales in the company', which was awarded another 1 mark.

The 'striking of staff' (second statement) 'which leads to poor PR' (basic explanation) is awarded 1 mark. The 'reduction in customers' (further explanation) allows for the final 1 mark to be awarded.

### Example 2 (3 marks)

*One consequence would be that the employees could pursue legal action for unsatisfactory work conditions (1). Furthermore, employees may leave the business and join competitors (1), this leads to a smaller workforce for the business (1).*

### Examiner Commentary on application of mark scheme

'Pursuing legal action' (statement) 'for unsatisfactory work conditions' (basic explanation) is awarded 1 mark. There is no further explanation linked to this sentence for 1 mark to be allocated.

'Employees may leave the business' (statement) 'to join competitors' (basic explanation) is awarded 1 mark. 'This will lead to a smaller workforce for the business' (further explanation) is linked to allow another mark to be awarded.

### Example 3 (2 marks)

*Firstly, the company are not providing the legal requirements of the toilets so they could be sued (1). This could result in them being closed down (1) if they cant pay their fines.*

### Examiner Commentary on application of mark scheme

Only one fully explained response was given therefore a maximum of 2 marks could be awarded for this candidate. The candidate is able to provide understanding that 'the company are not providing the legal requirements of the toilets' (statement) 'so they could be sued' (basic explanation).

### 5.3. Examiner Hints and Tips

- In questions such as this, candidates should take the approach of stating their point, then expanding on why this is important in the context of the question posed, using connects such as 'which' or 'so' to show cause and effect.
- Candidates need to provide both a knowledge statement and basic explanation to be awarded the first mark, with the second mark being awarded for the further/developed explanation, ie statement + basic explanation (1) further explanation (1).
- Using this model and understanding of the mark scheme, candidates can understand how to structure their answer.
- Any context given to the candidates is needed to answer the question in full. It is crucial candidates acknowledge this context in their response and tailor their knowledge to this context.
- Candidates should be encouraged to highlight or underline the context given within the question. They should consider how this context impacts on the question they are being asked. They will only be given context and information which is relevant and needed for them to answer the question.
- Candidates should link their responses against the question context and requirements specifically.



## 6. Section B – Extended Response and AO3 (Analysis and Evaluation)

### AO3a Analysis

#### What this assessment objective means

Complex thinking that distinguishes patterns and relationships, breaking material into constituent parts, and determining how the parts are related to one another and holistically, inferring underlying assumptions / conditions / relevance / causation.

It can be seen an extension of understanding (AO1b), or a prelude to evaluation (AO3b) and to the creation of a response to, for example, a complex brief or situation (more fully assessed in the project).

#### A candidate can

- break down a complex problem into parts
- consider the relationships between the parts
- manipulate knowledge and experience to determine a range of solutions/proposals
- balance competing priorities to suggest the best outcome.

#### This is assessed within the examination by

Given a relatively complex, realistic occupationally relevant scenario, stating a situation that implies (but does not directly state) the need for application of a number of different (possibly competing) principles / approaches / procedures; a requirement to respond / propose solutions

- Analyse the situation recommending an approach to be taken to...
- Analyse how the situation can be managed in order to...
- Analyse the consequences of...

### AO3b Evaluation/justification

#### What this assessment objective means

Ability to make judgements about the value, for some purpose, of own or other's work / ideas / solutions / methods using internal or external criteria or standards relevant for the occupational area. These criteria may include, for example, quality, accuracy, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, consistency, and may be quantitative or qualitative.

#### A candidate can

- judge the quality of actions proposals, outcomes
- using their own internal quality standards
- using external standards / criteria
- can justify their judgements of quality.

#### This is assessed within the examination by

Must have something either given or supplied by the candidate to be evaluated; often following / as part of analysis and the proposal of, for example, an approach (AO3a above).

- ...justify your decisions/approach
- Evaluate how well ... meets ...standards
- Evaluate how effective/efficient...

## 6.1. Question and Mark Scheme

<b>Q16</b>	<b>Stem</b>	<p>A land-based company is struggling with staff retention and its profits have declined steadily over the last six months. As a result, a review has been carried out which showed that staff at all levels lack knowledge of current products and the latest business practices. It was clear that Continuous Professional Development (CPD) has been limited within the company.</p> <p>Analyse how this company would benefit from increased CPD opportunities and justify actions to be taken to improve employee performance.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>(12 marks)</b></p>
<b>Levels of Response</b>		
<b>Band</b>	<b>Marks</b>	<b>Descriptor</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>10-12</b>	<p>Demonstrates comprehensive application of knowledge and understanding of Continuous Professional Development (CPD), in relation to the increased opportunities provided to employees from CPD.</p> <p>Demonstrates comprehensive use of analysis of the benefits of appropriate CPD to the employee's performance and impact on the company.</p> <p>Demonstrates comprehensive evaluative skills by justifying an excellent range of actions that could be taken to improve employee performance. Justifications are supported with highly detailed and relevant reasoning.</p>
<b>3</b>	<b>7-9</b>	<p>Demonstrates thorough application of knowledge and understanding of Continuous Professional Development (CPD), in relation to the increased opportunities provided to employees from CPD.</p> <p>Demonstrates thorough use of analysis of the benefits of appropriate CPD to the employee's performance and impact on the company.</p> <p>Demonstrates thorough evaluative skills by justifying a good range of actions that could be taken to improve employee performance. Justifications are supported with mostly detailed and relevant reasoning.</p>
<b>2</b>	<b>4-6</b>	<p>Demonstrates good application of knowledge and understanding of Continuous Professional Development (CPD), in relation to the increased opportunities provided to employees from CPD.</p> <p>Demonstrates good use of analysis of the benefits of appropriate CPD to the employee's performance and impact on the company.</p> <p>Demonstrates good evaluative skills by justifying a moderate range of actions that could be taken to improve employee performance. Justifications are supported with some detailed and relevant reasoning.</p>

<b>1</b>	<b>1-3</b>	<p>Demonstrates basic application of knowledge and understanding of Continuous Professional Development (CPD), in relation to the increased opportunities provided to employees from CPD.</p> <p>Demonstrates basic use of analysis of the benefits of appropriate CPD to the employee's performance and impact on the company.</p> <p>Demonstrates basic evaluative skills by justifying a limited range of actions that could be taken to improve employee performance. Justifications are supported with minimal detailed and relevant reasoning.</p>
	<b>0</b>	<b>No relevant material</b>

**Indicative Content**

**Analysis**

- Keeping up to date with CPD will result in increased job satisfaction, reducing turnover of staff, updated knowledge and skills resulting in improved efficiency, effectiveness, and competitiveness in the business.
- Bridging the gaps in employees' current knowledge will result in an increase in confidence/motivation, improved staff performance and therefore progression/skill development.
- Increase in profits/income with access to CPD opportunities, employees will enhance their skills and knowledge, leading to an increase in productivity and quality of work produced. This can ultimately improve the company's reputation/staff retention/staff satisfaction and customer satisfaction, putting the company at an advantage resulting in increased sales.
- Employees will gain a stronger skill set and a better understanding of the industry's evolving landscape, meaning that customers are more likely to gain confidence in the company and are less likely to look elsewhere.

**Justifications**

- Conduct a comprehensive assessment to identify the specific areas in which employees need CPD. This could be carried out through appraisals, surveys or consultations with employees and industry experts.
- Listen to the employees to gain ideas regarding new products, etc to motivate staff and increase morale.
- Provide CPD opportunities to meet the individual need of employee/employer. This can include both internal training initiatives/peer to peer training and external collaborations with industry experts, educational institutions and professional bodies.
- Foster a supportive environment where employees feel comfortable sharing knowledge and learning from each other. Implement mentoring/coaching programmes to share knowledge between experienced and less experienced employees.
- Create a culture that values continuous learning and growth. Encourage employees to pursue CPD opportunities by offering incentives such as career advancement prospects, recognition, bonuses.

- Introduce a system where staff appraisal documents are more regularly monitored by managers and prompt action is taken if appropriate where employees raised concerns.
- Consider engaging consultants to help with improving staff CPD and evaluate and introduce more modern business systems.
- Implement a staff CPD programme to increase product knowledge. Staff to see the products working in action and be briefed on the technical detail, and strengths and weaknesses of the products.
- Establish clear expectations for employees to engage in regular CPD.
- Once the additional CPD/research has been completed, employer to implement gradual changes to update techniques/products/services to engage customers.

<b>Total Marks</b>	12
<b>AO</b>	AO2 = 4 marks AO3a = 4 marks AO3b = 4 marks
<b>Specification reference</b>	3.1 Employment rights and responsibilities of the employer and employee. 3.3 Purpose of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) opportunities.

**What do we mean by:**

	<b>AO2</b> Application	<b>AO3a</b> Analysis	<b>AO3b</b> Evaluation
<b>Comprehensive</b>	A range of detailed and accurate understanding that is fully relevant to the context or question.  Detailed and accurate interpretation through the application of relevant knowledge and understanding,	Detailed and accurate analysis through the application of relevant knowledge and understanding.	Detailed and substantiated evaluation through the application of relevant knowledge and understanding.  Detailed and substantiated judgement through the application of relevant knowledge and understanding.
<b>Thorough</b>	A range of accurate understanding that is relevant to the context or question.  Accurate interpretation through the application of relevant knowledge and understanding.	Accurate analysis through the application of relevant knowledge and understanding.	Supported evaluation through the application of relevant knowledge and understanding.  Supported judgement through the application of relevant knowledge and understanding.
<b>Good</b>	Some understanding that is relevant to the context or question.  Some accuracy in interpretation through the application of some relevant knowledge and understanding.	Some accuracy in analysis through the application of some relevant knowledge and understanding.	Partially supported evaluation through the application of some relevant knowledge and understanding.  Partially supported judgement through the application of some relevant knowledge and understanding.
<b>Basic</b>	Limited understanding that is relevant to the context or question.  Limited accuracy in interpretation through lack of application of relevant knowledge and understanding.	Limited accuracy in analysis through lack of application of relevant knowledge and understanding.	Un-supported evaluation through lack of knowledge and understanding.  Un-supported judgement through lack of application of knowledge and understanding.

## 6.2. Candidate Responses

### 6.2.1. Band 4

#### Top of band 4 response (12 marks)

*The company's decline in profits and staff retention issues can be directly linked to the lack of current product knowledge and outdated business practices, highlighting the critical role that CPD can play in reversing these challenges. CPD involves the ongoing improvement of professional skills and knowledge, helping employees remain competent and confident in their roles. By offering increased CPD opportunities, the company can address several underlying problems.*

*Regular CPD ensures employees stay updated with the latest products and services, enabling them to better serve customers and enhance sales. Improved product knowledge would lead to great confidence in customer interactions, directly benefiting the business through higher revenue and customer satisfaction. This also allows employees to perform tasks with higher accuracy, efficiency and confidence. CPD also enables staff to learn and implement the latest industry standards and innovations. This keeps the company competitive as employees will be equipped with modern skills for an evolving market. Offering CPD shows employees that the company values their growth, which improves employee retention. Individuals are more likely to stay with an employer who invest in their future, reducing recruitment and training costs. Staff can also bring new ideas and innovations into the business, potentially leading to cost savings and operational improvements. A company that offers CPD becomes more attractive to both current employees and future recruits. A skilled, well-trained team enhances the company's reputation, not just with customers, but within the industry.*

*The company could develop a tailored CPD programme that provides specific training on product knowledge, modern business practices to meet the company's goals. This would address the current skills gap which would enable employees to improve their performance in line with the company's needs. This training would allow the company to streamline processes and reduce costs. The company could also introduce SMART goals for employees as part of their reviews/appraisals. These will provide clear and achievable targets that help employees to focus on areas for improvement. These goals can be monitored for progress and adjusted accordingly. Another action the company could do is to pair employees with mentors to offer guidance, support and to transfer their knowledge. This gives a more hands on approach and allows employees to gain insights from experienced staff and is directly applicable to their roles.*

## Examiner Commentary on application of mark scheme

The candidate demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of the benefits of CPD and considered how this would impact both employees and the company itself. The discussions were detailed with a range of valid examples provided, showing obvious depth and breadth to the subject area. Core knowledge and understanding was demonstrated to a very high level throughout the candidate's response. The candidate was able to comprehensively evaluate a range of actions that the company could implement, each of which were justified in high levels of detail covering an excellent range of the indicative content. This response confidently meets the top of Band 4 in each of the three elements.

### 6.2.2. Band 3

#### Top of band 3 response (9 marks)

*Plan – staff would sell products better and with knowledge. Personal pride would increase if better educated (would stay). Staff would want to work for a thriving company. More educational goals.*

*Firstly, the company would benefit from more stock being sold so profits can increase. To do that, further educating staff with CPD would allow them to talk to customers and help them find the right product. This would improve customer care as staff would become useful to customers causing them to return and repurchase products. By allowing staff to gain new skills through CPD, it would increase their abilities to move up the levels of the company which is beneficial to the business as it avoids them having to employ more staff. By having perks to the job, such as further development in their profession, would make staff want to stay and work hard for the company to these so profits would increase and staff retention would not be an issue.*

*Actions taken to improve employee performance may be allowing them to gain more knowledge in a subject in part of the job they are struggling with or most enjoy. This could be regularly reviewed at the staff appraisals and guided into how individuals can improve. Giving customer service training would also be a good option as it would cause more sales to be made if customer interaction was improved. Also, giving the employees goals and incentives to work for would increase their performance and increase sales in the company so these actions benefit both the employer and the employees. If the employees are able to share their knowledge with the rest of the team, then this could also increase the skills of the team overall. The employees would need to feel confident and valued in order to do this so it would be important for employers to nurture their staff to allow them to share and potential coach staff.*

## **Examiner Commentary on application of mark scheme**

The candidate provided a thorough application of knowledge and understanding in all areas of their response. The candidate demonstrated a thorough awareness of CPD and how this would benefit the business as well as individuals. The candidate was able to thoroughly analyse various benefits of appropriate CPD and how this could impact the company. The candidate was able to justify a good range of realistic actions that could be carried out by the workplace to improve performance. Their evaluative skills were thorough and their justifications were mostly detailed. Further detail would have allowed the candidate to access Band 4.

### **6.2.3. Band 2**

#### **Top of band 2 response (6 marks)**

*If the company offered CPD opportunities then the staff could choose what ones they would prefer. This means that more staff will want to stay, which will improve staff retention, as they are doing something that they like.*

*Another way the business would benefit from the training is that profits will increase. This is because the staff knowledge of products, and practices will be better so they can help the customers get the right products and they will have better customer care. This will lead to an increase in profits for the business.*

*Another way that CPD will benefit the business is that it will increase staff morale. This is because they can gain qualifications that they can keep for their future. The impact of this is that the staff will try harder at their job and be more motivated, therefore increasing staff retention which will save the business money as they will not have to keep recruiting for staff or putting new staff through induction training.*

*One way to improve employee performance is to train them about the products. This is because they lack knowledge. If they knew about the products, they would be able to sell them better, therefore increasing employee performance.*

*Another way to increase employee performance is to do team building exercises. This is so that the employees will get on better and be able to work together more efficiently which will improve employee performance.*

*Another way that employee performance can be improved is through boosting employee morale. The impact of this is that the employees will want to come into work and therefore do better work or sell more products which will improve performance.*



## **Examiner Commentary on application of mark scheme**

The candidate demonstrated a good application of core knowledge and understanding of CPD and provided some detailed benefits which were analysed to a good standard. There was some repetition within the response, eg discussing morale and staff retention, however the candidate did attempt to provide good depth and breadth of CPD. At times, the benefits were discussed at a higher level than required for Band 2, however the candidate could not move into Band 3 due to level of justification provided. The candidate provided a partially supported evaluation with a moderate range of actions. Further detail and judgement on these actions would have resulted in this candidate moving into Band 3.

### **6.2.4. Band 1**

#### **Top of band 1 response (3 marks)**

*If this company increased its CPD, it would allow a better service of customer care. This is because if all staff members were trained about all products manufactured/sold by the company, it would allow the employees to give detailed and accurate responses to client questions. This can result in a good relationship between the customer and business. This will be shown as the business will provide more ethical principles and will give a trustworthy overview. An example of an ethical principle that would be provided from CPD would be transparency as the employees can provide truthful and honest reviews about the product, meaning the customer will receive the best possible product.*

*On the other hand, CPD will provide a large cost to the company due to product education and training of employees. This CPD training might not be financially viable for certain businesses to accumulate a profit at the end of the financial year. A result in paying for the CPD training and the company not increasing sales or profit could result in the company downsize or bankruptcy.*

*Overall, I think that the company should invest in the CPD training as it means all staff will have a good knowledge of the business. Furthermore, it can result in a better customer care service which can create a positive reputation and business overview. This could lead to an increase in customers due to positive reviews and business ideas which could finally result in an increase in sales and profit.*

## **Examiner Commentary on application of mark scheme**

The candidate demonstrated a good analysis of the benefits of CPD to the employees and the business as a whole. Some key analysis was made, such as the link between being financially viable and the possibility that company may have to downsize if CPD was not introduced. This candidate only provided a very limited justification into the actions that could be taken to improve employee performance. The focus was on generic training with very little reference to other methods to improve the performance of staff. Although the analysis

section was strong in places, this response was limited to Band 1 due to its basic evaluative skills that justified a very small range of actions.

### 6.3. Examiner Hints and Tips

- These questions are designed to differentiate candidates' performance; they assess higher order thinking skills and as such they do stretch and challenge candidates.
- It is key that candidates give themselves sufficient time to respond to these lengthier questions.
- Although these questions appear in Section B, candidates can choose to tackle the extended response questions first before returning to Section A if they are concerned about their time management.
- Before writing out in full their answer to extended questions, candidates may find it helpful to identify the key requirements of the question and note down a brief plan or outline of how they will answer it. This will help clarify their thinking and make sure that they do not spend too much time on or provide too much detail for one part of the question at the expense of others.
- By planning, candidates can ensure they provide a structure to their response and that they have covered off the major points they wish to make in their response. By considering the structure of the response, and how one point may link to another, they will be able to demonstrate both their ability to analyse and evaluate sufficiently to access the higher mark bands.
- There are always two elements to each ERQ and it is important that candidates focus on both elements equally to be able to move up into the higher bands. If candidates were asked to 'Analyse X and Justify Y', they need to attempt both of these elements. If a candidate provided a very comprehensive analysis of X, and did not provide any justification for Y, then the candidate may not be able to move out of Band 1 as they have not demonstrated understanding in both of the key areas.
- Candidates will not receive more marks if they make the same point multiple times.
- Candidates need to ensure their answers balance the ability to demonstrate a breadth of knowledge, ie making multiple points, against ensuring they demonstrate their depth of understanding on the subject matter. If candidates recall lots of points but fail to demonstrate the ability to evaluate and analyse these points, they will be marked into the lower bands. Likewise, if they only explore one point in extensive detail, they will not demonstrate they have sufficient breadth of knowledge of the subject area and will not be able to access higher bands.
- Candidates should be encouraged to write in continuous prose. A bullet point list will demonstrate some knowledge, but it will not demonstrate to the examiner that the candidate is able to analyse or evaluate, therefore limiting them to the bottom of the lowest band.
- When making a point in response to the question the candidate needs to explain why they think this point is relevant to the question; this demonstrates their ability to make judgements and is therefore evidence of evaluation.
- Similarly to the AO2 questions, candidates will be given context within the question and it is important that their answers are tailored to the context/scenario given. It is important that they give examples which support the given scenario to demonstrate the application of their understanding.

## Get in touch

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