

**CAMBRIDGE TECHNICALS LEVEL 3 (2016)**

**Examiners' report**

**BUSINESS**

**05834–05837, 05878**

**Unit 9 January 2024 series**

## Contents

Introduction .....	4
Unit 9 series overview .....	5
Question 1 (a) .....	6
Question 1 (b) .....	7
Question 2 (a) .....	8
Question 2 (b) .....	9
Question 3 (a) .....	10
Question 3 (b) .....	11
Question 4 (a) .....	12
Question 4 (b) .....	13
Question 5 (a) .....	14
Question 5 (b) .....	15
Question 6 .....	16
Question 7 (a) .....	17
Question 7 (b) .....	18
Question 8 .....	19

## Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from [Teach Cambridge](#).

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## Unit 9 series overview

Unit 9 is a two-hour examination paper which carries 90 marks. This series the paper comprised 8 questions and 14 part-questions. This series has seen a very wide spread of marks achieved by candidates. This has depended on knowledge/understanding of the specification and each candidate's ability to identify and interpret key words within the question.

Weaker scripts continue to show a lack of knowledge of the specification. This has resulted in questions not being answered at all, or only one out of the two/three required responses being given. Stronger scripts showed a good awareness of the context provided and used this in responses.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of key terminology listed in the specification</li> <li>• focused on key words within the questions</li> <li>• referred to the context of Camberside Fire Brigade when answering questions</li> <li>• understood the differing requirements of the command verbs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrated a lack of knowledge and understanding of key terminology</li> <li>• demonstrated a lack of knowledge and understanding of key topic areas within the specification</li> <li>• did not focus on key words within the questions</li> <li>• did not use context when answering questions.</li> </ul>

## Question 1 (a)

1

(a) Use the table to calculate Reed Fire Station's labour turnover rate for **all** firefighters in 2023.

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.....

..... **[3]**

This question was well-answered. Most candidates achieved marks. Some candidates did not achieve the full 3 marks as they had not included the percentage sign in their response. Candidates must include a percentage sign when relevant to calculations.

Of those candidates who did not achieve marks for this question a common issue was not knowing the correct formula. A second common issue was calculating the labour turnover rate for only the full-time firefighters rather than all firefighters.

### Assessment for learning



Encourage candidates to identify the key words in the question to ensure that the correct calculation is being performed.

## Question 1 (b)

- (b) Use the table to calculate Reed Fire Station's absenteeism rate for **full-time** firefighters in 2023.

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..... [3]

This question was not as well-answered as Question 1 (a). However, it was still high-scoring. Again, if the percentage sign was not included in the response, then full marks were not achieved.

The most common issue for those candidates not achieving any marks was not knowing the correct formula.

## Question 2 (a)

2

- (a) Describe **one** human resource responsibility that Camberside Fire Brigade (CFB) has, in order to ensure the health and safety of its employees.

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..... [2]

Many candidates did not achieve marks on this question. The question required candidates to identify a contextual human resource responsibility that related to the health and safety of employees.

There were two common issues seen. Firstly, responses that were too vague e.g. training, rather than training that specifically related to the health and safety of employees. Not all training provided relates to health and safety and therefore this needed to be made clear.

Secondly, identifying a responsibility that did not relate to the human resources function e.g. making sure the fire station is clean and tidy.

## Question 2 (b)

- (b) Other than in relation to health and safety, explain **two** legal responsibilities the human resources function at CFB has for its employees.

1 .....

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2 .....

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[4]

The full range of marks was achieved by candidates for this question. Responsibilities relating to data protection legislation and equality legislation were the most commonly seen. Those candidates who named legislation with no further detail did not achieve marks, as no clear responsibility was given. To gain full marks the full title of any legislation was not required; the question required two clear, contextual legal responsibilities. For example, CFB must keep the firefighters' personal data safe.

Some candidates did not achieve marks as they gave legal responsibilities relating to health and safety. This was excluded by the question. Candidates must carefully read the question to avoid missing key information such as this.

Some candidates did not achieve marks as they gave more generic responsibilities of the human resource function rather than legal responsibilities e.g. carrying out skills audits.

### Assessment for learning



Encourage candidates to carefully read the question to identify key words e.g. **legal** responsibilities, in this instance, and to identify any exclusions for potential responses.



## Question 3 (a)

- 3**  
**(a)** Explain **two** benefits to CFB of providing on-the-job training rather than off-the-job training.

1 .....

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2 .....

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[6]

Most candidates made a good attempt at this question. Many achieved at least 4 out of the 6 marks available. Candidates should be encouraged to include context in their responses. For this question, 2 out of the 6 marks were for a contextual response.

Candidates who provided drawbacks of off-the-job training rather than benefits of on-the-job training did not score marks. Candidates must make sure that they are answering the question set, rather than providing the opposite argument.

### Assessment for learning



Encourage candidates to identify key contextual words, facts and figures in the scenario and then use these in their responses.

For example, in Question 3 (a) most candidates referred to generic 'employees' rather than firefighters.

### Misconception



Some candidates believe off-the-job training is done in the employee's own time and that they do not get paid for this training.

### Question 3 (b)

**(b)** Describe **three** methods of on-the-job training that could be used to train on-call firefighters.

Method 1 .....

Description .....

.....

Method 2 .....

Description .....

.....

Method 3 .....

Description .....

.....

**[6]**

This question was a good differentiator between those candidates who know and understand methods of on-the-job training and those who do not.

Many candidates were able to identify at least two methods, but a number gave no response or left blanks for methods 2 and/or 3. Some candidates gave methods relating to off-the-job training and some gave vague responses, therefore not achieving any marks. Vague responses included, asking questions, practice putting out fires and go out on the fire engine. This question assessed knowledge and understanding of LO8.1 which states the methods of on-the-job training that candidates must know.

The second mark in each instance was for a description of the method. Candidates must give a clear description of the identified method. Often, the description provided for coaching, shadowing and mentoring did not explicitly relate to the identified method. The description could have related to any of these three methods.

Some description was too vague as it used the method to explain the method e.g. observation is when employees observe ....., job rotation is when employees rotate between jobs. Candidates must avoid repeating words/terms in this way as it does not show clear understanding.

## Question 4 (a)

4

(a) Analyse **three** monetary rewards that CFB could use to motivate its full-time firefighters.

Which **one** of these monetary rewards would be most appropriate for CFB to use?  
Give reasons for your answer.

[16]

The majority of candidates were able to correctly identify at least one monetary reward. Many developed at least one of these to achieve Level 2. However, many candidates did not achieve Level 3. Candidates gave business-facing impacts of an increase in motivation rather than business-facing impacts of the monetary reward that had been identified. In questions about motivational methods, candidates must consider the method itself not the impact of increased/decreased motivation on the business/organisation.

Some candidates identified promotion, flexible working, extra holiday and employee of the month. None of these were awardable. Promotion opportunities and flexible working are identified as non-monetary methods of motivation in LO2.2 of this specification. This adversely impacted the overall mark achieved for some candidates, particularly if the method they decided was the most appropriate for CFB was one of these, as Level 4 could not be achieved.

Some candidates chose profit-sharing as the most appropriate monetary reward, not recognising that this was a public sector organisation. Level 4 was not awarded to candidates who made this choice.

### Assessment for learning



Encourage candidates to consider the type of organisation when making recommendations. Being a public sector organisation or a charity, for example, is likely to impact any decisions or recommendations made.

## Question 4 (b)

(b) Analyse **two** ways that disengaged employees may hinder effective employee relations at CFB.

1 .....

.....

.....

2 .....

.....

.....

[6]

This question was well-answered by many candidates. Most were able to identify at least one way that disengaged employees may hinder effective employee relations. There were a number of candidates who only provided one response rather than two.

Some candidates did not achieve marks as responses were too vague e.g. it will affect productivity. Candidates must make it clear what the effect is i.e. increase or decrease.

The question required candidates to identify a business-facing impact of the way that they had identified. Some candidates, although developing their response, did not go as far as identifying the business-facing impact. This limited the marks achieved.

Candidates also needed to provide a contextual response to achieve full marks; many provided generic responses and therefore did not achieve the marks available for context. In this instance, replacing employees with firefighters or referring to their shift patterns rather than working hours would have provided the necessary context.

### Assessment for learning



Encourage candidates to always state the 'movement' if they are using words such as impact or affect e.g. positive, negative, increase, decrease, etc.

## Question 5 (a)

5 CFB needs to recruit a full-time firefighter.

An application form designed by CFB is shown below.

<b>Applicant name:</b>		
<b>Date of birth:</b>	<b>Email:</b>	<b>Telephone:</b>
<b>Previous work experience:</b>		
<b>Give an example of when you have worked as part of a team.</b>		
<b>Give an example of when you have worked under pressure.</b>		
<b>Do you play sport and/or keep fit?</b>		
<b>Personal statement:</b>		

(a) Identify **four** improvements to the application form to make it fit for its intended purpose.

- 1 .....
- 2 .....
- 3 .....
- 4 .....

**[4]**

This question was not well-answered by many candidates. Some confused the application form with a person specification or job description. Others stated that the application form should be replaced with a CV. The most common error was identifying what was wrong with the application form, rather than identifying improvements, which is what the question is asking for.

Candidates needed to clearly state information or questions that needed adding or amendments to the layout such as making the answer boxes larger. Vague responses such as 'company logo' or 'more space' were not awardable.

## Question 5 (b)

Extracts from two application forms received by CFB for the role of full-time firefighter are shown below.

### Applicant 1

#### Personal statement:

I have worked for Kingston Gym for five years as a full-time gym instructor. I can show that I can be punctual and reliable in the workplace. I have excellent communication skills as I deal with a lot of clients one-to-one and in groups. I am self-motivated and enjoy working on my own.

### Applicant 2

#### Personal statement:

I am a practical person who thrives on pressure and likes a challenge. I have no previous work experience as I have only just left college but I am willing to work hard and to complete the training necessary to be an excellent firefighter. I studied for a Cambridge Technical qualification which meant working a lot as a team to organise events and deliver projects.

- (b) CFB has received a high number of applications for this role. A decision needs to be made about who to shortlist for interview. Only one of the two applicants above can be shortlisted.

Analyse the strengths of each applicant.

Which **one** of the applicants should be shortlisted for interview? Give reasons for your choice.

[16]

The majority of candidates were able to identify strengths of both applicants from the information provided. Many were able to develop this, either explaining how the strength was gained or why it would be a strength working for CFB.

Fewer candidates then went on to provide an impact on CFB or the other firefighters of the identified strength to achieve Level 3. Some candidates achieved Level 3 in their conclusion as it was only here that they considered a business-facing impact. As such they were unable to reach Level 4.

Many candidates also provided weaknesses or drawbacks of the two applicants. This was not required as the question only asked for strengths to be analysed. Although candidates were not penalised from a marks perspective for this, it will have taken more time for them to write the additional paragraphs.

## Question 6

- 6** Describe **three** appropriate appraisal techniques to formally monitor the performance of the full-time firefighters.

Technique 1 .....

Description .....

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Technique 2 .....

Description .....

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.....

Technique 3 .....

Description .....

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.....

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[6]

Many candidates were able to identify at least one appraisal technique. There were a number of 'no responses' and some where only one or two techniques had been identified.

Vague answers included end of year appraisal, 1-1 meeting, employee survey, performance appraisal and external appraisal. Common incorrect answers included probationary period, training and mentoring.

Candidates who performed well were able to clearly describe their chosen appraisal techniques.

If a candidate identifies results-based appraisal then the description must make it clear that this relates to statistical or quantitative data. In many instances the description was unclear e.g. appraisal based on results or appraisal based on targets.

As in previous series, candidates were not awarded a description mark for peer appraisal if it was not clear that the person providing the feedback was on the same level as the appraisee. In this exam clarity would have been provided by e.g. a firefighter's performance being evaluated by another firefighter. Vague words such as colleague, another employee, co-worker, peer, etc are not awardable.

## Question 7 (a)

7

(a) Explain **two** benefits to CFB of avoiding employee conflict in the workplace.

1 .....

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2 .....

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[6]

This question was well-answered by many candidates. Most candidates were able to identify at least one benefit to CFB of avoiding conflict. A common error for those candidates not achieving marks was to give the reserve argument i.e. if conflict did happen then ..... However, the question explicitly asks for benefits and therefore this approach was not awardable.

Of the 6 marks available, 2 marks were awarded for context. Many candidates answered in generic terms and therefore did not achieve these marks.



## Question 7 (b)

- (b)** CFB has identified three full-time firefighters who do not work well alongside the on-call firefighters.

Evaluate ways that CFB could resolve conflict between the three full-time firefighters and the on-call firefighters.

**[8]**

This was a low-scoring question. Candidates needed to identify ways of resolving conflict (LO6.3) rather than avoiding the problem e.g. stop them working together. An incorrect way often seen was teambuilding activities, but this could have made the situation worse rather than resolve it.

Vague responses included, have a meeting, punish the firefighters, fire the culprits. Awardable interpretations of these responses could be, use negotiation and use CFB's disciplinary procedure.

Candidates who accurately identified a way that conflict could be resolved appeared to struggle to achieve Level 3. Business-facing impacts tended to stem from the conflict being resolved rather than being a business-facing impact of the 'way' itself. For example, an awardable business-facing impact of mediation could be an increase in costs if a mediator has to be paid.

## Question 8

- 8 Outline **two** possible changes within the workplace that the firefighters' trade union could discuss with CFB on behalf of its members.

1 .....

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2 .....

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[4]

This question required candidates to identify a change that the firefighters' trade union could discuss with CFB on behalf of its members. The key word here being 'change'.

Many candidates provided responses about the union negotiating pay deals or accompanying members to disciplinary meetings, but these were not awardable. An explicit change needed to be identified e.g. better pay, improved working environment.

Some candidates identified from the scenario that Reed Fire Station was the oldest in the area. They therefore provided a contextual change of discussing an upgrade to the workplace facilities at this station; this achieved 2 marks as context was also included.

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