

Examiner's Report

Unit Title:	Operations Management
Unit Code:	5UOM
RQF Level:	5
Session:	November 2022

Comments on Learning Outcome and Assessment Criteria Performance

	Comments
Question 1	Both tasks were highly accessible. Candidates could demonstrate adequate knowledge but analysis and evaluation were not up to the standard expected.
Question 2	Both tasks were highly accessible. Candidates mainly demonstrated basic knowledge, especially in Part A.
Question 3	Both tasks were highly accessible. The responses were of reasonably good quality.
Question 4	Both tasks were highly accessible. Core theory was missing and there was lack of depth, especially in the relatively easy Part B of the task.

Question 1

1. Comments on learners' performance

Task 1(a): This subtly articulated task required candidates to briefly discuss the ways in which the product and/or service offered by their chosen organisation might influence the operations in terms of production, sourcing, distribution and logistics. There was a mix of strong and weak responses.

Task 1(b): A majority of candidates gave evidence of learning and produced valid points relevant to the discussion on TQM.

2. Recommendations for learners

Topics that are covered briefly in the study guide should be explored in tandem with external academic sources and recommended texts. Many academic resources are available online.

3. Quick Tips

Avoid wasting words on discussing knowledge points that are NOT relevant.

Question 2

1. Comments on learners' performance

The key word was '**how**' such a focus might enable the chosen organisation to realise its strategic objectives. A majority of candidates demonstrated knowledge of ethics and environmental sustainability, but the key points were generic and development was not too focussed. This task expected candidates to link the finer nuances of theory on supply chain risks with the impact on business performance of the chosen organisation. Absence of core SCRM theory confined most candidates to basic LEVEL 2.

2. Recommendations for learners

Learn to understand what is the assignment asking and identify the key focus area(s).

3. Quick Tips

Pick one key theory point on supply chain risk management and examine its implications in the context by writing 250-300 words. A good concept would be supply chain mapping.

Question 3

1. Comments on learners' performance

Task A did NOT require any discussion on various approaches to sourcing (single sourcing, multi-sourcing etc.). It simply required the candidate to analyse the strategic importance of Kraljic's matrix in the purchasing function.

Task B was well understood by most and relevant points were presented, i.e. three of the five alternative interventions.

2. Recommendations for learners

Ideally choose an organisation that is global, well known and well covered in press. This would create an opportunity for research, and facts can then be integrated with theory to produce meaningful arguments.

3. Quick Tips

Be aware that maximum marks can only be gained when relevant points are developed in depth. Concluding the response meaningfully is a good practice.

Question 4

1. Comments on learners' performance

Task A was well designed and therefore very accessible. The requirement was simple: link the three factors with logistics and demonstrate the understanding of how this helps in creating a sound logistics strategy for the chosen organisation. These included: the role of logistics strategy in '*preserving the economic value of goods*'; whether the chosen organisation could exploit a TPL led logistics strategy to achieve its cost and flexibility objectives; whether adoption just-in-time (JIT) led logistics strategy could help the organisation to increase efficiency etc.

Similar to the other long questions, a large number of candidates could demonstrate very basic understanding. However, at the same time, a number of candidates identified elements of logistics strategy such as 'the use of technology', 'location of supply points' etc. but development, at best remained basic and disjointed.

Task A was direct and very accessible. It required to demonstrate linkages between strategic decision to outsource logistics to TPL service providers and achievement of operations objectives. However, most candidates could either demonstrate basic development or produced generic points.

2. Recommendations for learners

Practice assignment writing by building small but sharply developed 300-500 words pieces. The habit of inserting good quality academic sources at appropriate places must be cultivated.

3. Quick Tips

A useful resource for preparing for this topic is the article '**Logistics – Taking the road to success**' published in the '**FOCUS**' magazine, *issue 62, May-Oct. 2019*.

Some practices to consider and adopt in assignment-based assessment:

- Select an organisation which operates on an international scale. Such context increases the opportunity for research on the focal firm, its competitive landscape and the industry in which it operates. It also makes the assessor's task much easier as facts can be checked easily.
- The purpose of references is to underpin/support arguments with theory. The list of references at the end need not run into multiple pages. For a task of 1000 words, 8-10 distinct and good quality academic citations and other sources (news articles / corporate websites / financial reports) – relevant to the chosen organisation – may be enough to give evidence of research. Some sources may be common across tasks. The reference list in the end should comprise of these citations. The background reading material that is not cited in the responses, need not exceed 5-6 in number. This implies that a bibliography of 20-25 good quality reading material would be considered sufficient.
- There is no need for a holistic conclusion at the end of the assignment. Ideally each task – and particularly those for which the requirement is 'assess', 'analyse' 'recommend' 'justify' or 'evaluate' – should end with a conclusion or judgement.