

Candidate Support Pack
HNC Management



Manage Operational Resources

[DV7X 34]





INTRODUCTION

It is important for you to complete the activities that are provided throughout the workbook. These activities are designed to help you start to apply your learning and prepare you for your final unit assessment.

This section is designed to help you access the activities included within the workbook. It looks at each of the activities and aims to help you generate your answers, by suggesting ways to complete the different activities. The information provided for each activity aims to help you create your answer by recommending a structure and possible approach, linked to the content of the learning programme.

It is recommended that you consider the information provided in this section before undertaking the activities themselves. Discussions with your tutor, regarding the activities, are also recommended before you initiate the work.

SECTION 1

ACTIVITY – CORE FUNCTIONS

<p>Activity</p>	<p>Consider your organisation, or an organisation that you know of. (Your tutor may help you with this). Write a short report outlining the three core functions of the organisation. You should consider:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The processes involved in the production of goods or services 2. The marketing carried out 3. The product/s or service/s developed
<p>Suggested approach</p>	<p>This activity has been designed to help you understand more about the core functions of an organisation.</p> <p>In developing your answer, you should include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evidence to show how you identified the three core functions that occur within the organisation, (this should include a description of the nature of the operation, and the core and support functions involved) 2. A description of the purpose of each core function 3. A description of the activities that each core function carries out for the organisation, so as to fulfil its purpose (referring to the table on page 16 of the workbook should help you with this)

ACTIVITY - WHAT TYPE OF ORGANISATION

Activity	List up to five organisations (businesses) that you know of, some may be in your high street, some may be ones you have used at home or within your workplace. Try to find out as much as you can about the services they offer and how they operate. Decide whether they are primarily service producers, product producers, or somewhere in between. Do any of them provide facilitating products or services?
Suggested approach	<p>This activity has been designed to help you understand more about what the outputs of the transformation process are. By exploring your chosen businesses in this way, you should gain a broader understanding of their output in terms of products or services and the relationship between the two.</p> <p>In developing your answer, you should include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A brief description of each of the businesses chosen • A more detailed description of what these businesses are offering to their customers, in terms of products, services or both • A description of how these products/services are delivered to their customers • A description of any facilitating services offered • Evidence to show how you decided whether the organisation is a service or product provider, or both

ACTIVITY – DIRECT LINE

Activity	List the processes that Direct Line has put into practice in order to give the customer a 'clear, straightforward, good value alternative'.
Suggested approach	<p>This activity has been designed to help you understand how a company can change its operating systems and procedures, using technology, so as to put customer service first. This has enabled it to take the lead in the insurance market.</p> <p>Read through the description on page 27 of the workbook. It would also be useful to review the Direct Line web-site at www.directline.com, to gain a full understanding of the services they offer.</p> <p>As part of your research you should identify the changes that Direct Line has made to its operating systems and company policy.</p> <p>Write a report that lists the processes that Direct Line has put in place to inform customers, and comment on their clarity, straightforwardness and value to the customer.</p>

ACTIVITY – NATURE OF OPERATIONS

<p>Activity</p>	<p>In your organisation, look at the services or products that it offers. Write a brief report to describe where your organisation fits in relation to the nature of its operations, in terms of volume, variety, variation and visibility.</p>
<p>Suggested approach</p>	<p>This activity has been designed to help you understand more about what the nature of operations is all about. By exploring your chosen organisation in this way, you should gain a broader understanding of the nature of its operation and be able to classify it in terms of volume, variety, variation and visibility.</p> <p>In developing your answer, you should include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A brief description of the organisation chosen 2. A more detailed description of what services/products are being offered to customers. Within this you should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of the volume of product/service being offered (low or high) • Evidence of the variety of product/service being offered (low or high) • Evidence of the variation of product/service being offered (low or high) • Evidence of the visibility of the operation and its processes (low or high) 3. A description of the nature of the organisation, based on your evidence as outlined above

SECTION 2

ACTIVITY – COST CENTRE ANALYSIS

Activity	<p>Obtain financial data relating to your organisation and your own area of responsibility. Analyse these documents to identify the different types of costs. Describe how these costs are used to form different cost centres.</p>
Suggested approach	<p>This activity has been designed to help you familiarise yourself with the costs and cost centres associated with your own area of responsibility.</p> <p>Your response should be developed based on research you have completed within your organisation. You should obtain copies of the financial data maintained in respect to your area of responsibility. You may also wish to speak to members of the financial team about costs and cost centres to develop your understanding further.</p> <p>You should analyse the data you have collected to understand the costs and how they are formed. You should determine if the costs are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct • Indirect • Fixed • Variable • Semi-variable <p>Where appropriate, you should also explain how these costs are calculated.</p> <p>Finally, from the data you should identify how the costs are formed into cost centres, in support of the budgeting process.</p>

ACTIVITY – BUDGET DEVELOPMENT

<p>Activity</p>	<p>Investigate the processes that are used to create budgets within your own organisation. Write a report that describes the processes and illustrates your role in the development. Detail any problems you have experienced as part of the development process and how these were overcome.</p>
<p>Suggested approach</p>	<p>This activity has been designed to help you familiarise yourself with the budgeting process operated by your organisation.</p> <p>Your response should be based on research completed within your organisation. You should speak to members of the financial team, who are currently involved in budgeting, to determine the full range of activities that are completed. You should obtain copies of the budgets which relate to your area of responsibility.</p> <p>You should analyse the data collected to describe the budgeting process detailing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is involved with the budget development • How the purpose of the budget is established • The form the budget takes • The method used to create the budget (zero based or incremental) • The order of the budget production • How the different stages of budget development are implemented • How the budget is communicated • How the budget is approved • How the budget is agreed <p>You should clearly identify your role, or your anticipated role, within the budgeting process.</p> <p>As part of your report, you should identify any problems that can occur during the budgeting process and how these problems are overcome.</p>

ACTIVITY – BUDGET ANALYSIS

<p>Activity</p>	<p>For your organisation, identify the systems used to monitor and analyse budgetary data. Describe the systems used, detailing the type of information that is collected and how it is used.</p>
<p>Suggested approach</p>	<p>This activity has been designed to help you understand the value of budgeting in respect to the management of operational resources.</p> <p>Your response should be based on research completed within your organisation. You should speak to members of the financial team who are currently involved in creating the budget, so as to determine how budgets are monitored and analysed, as part of the on-going financial controls operated by your organisation. You should obtain copies of the budgets which relate to your area of responsibility.</p> <p>You should describe the monitoring processes used, for example, horizontal and/or trend analysis. You should explain how the information collected is used within the management of operational resources in your area of responsibility.</p> <p>As part of your report you should provide evidence which links the outcomes of monitoring activities to actual management decisions taken in the workplace, for example, identify any variations within budgets and the corrective actions taken to resolve the variation.</p>

SECTION 3

ACTIVITY – QUALITY SPECIFICATIONS

Activity	List the products or services that your organisation supplies and for each, identify the criteria that are used to define and measure quality.
Suggested approach	<p>This activity has been designed to help understand the concept of quality in the context of your own organisation.</p> <p>Your response should be based on research completed within your organisation. To complete this activity you should review both your organisation’s quality documentation and speak to other members of staff. This will ensure that you gain the perspective of the organisation and staff involved.</p> <p>You should list the products and services offered and record the criteria that are used to define and measure quality.</p>

ACTIVITY – APPLYING QUALITY THEORY

<p>Activity</p>	<p>Describe how quality is implemented within your organisation's quality system, making reference to which of the quality theories, if any, have been applied in support of its development.</p>
<p>Suggested approach</p>	<p>This activity has been designed to help understand the quality system operated by your own organisation.</p> <p>Your response should be based on research completed within your organisation. You should describe the quality system, highlighting the roles of all those involved in its implementation.</p> <p>To support your description you should also provide an analysis of the system explaining the link to the different quality management theories i.e. Deming, Juran, Crosby etc.</p> <p>Please note that it is possible that quality systems can be based on a variety of different quality theories, so do not be surprised if you identify links to a number of theories. Links can relate to either the total quality system or to just part of the quality system.</p>

ACTIVITY – THE IMPACT OF QUALITY

<p>Activity</p>	<p>Review how quality impacts on a range of different public and private organisations and review the impact of quality system implementation on operational resources.</p>
<p>Suggested approach</p>	<p>This activity has been designed to help you understand why quality is becoming increasingly important in relation to the provision of products and services.</p> <p>Your response should be based on research you have completed looking at a range of different public and private organisations. When reviewing these organisations you should identify the quality systems being used and the impact of these systems on the organisation itself. Within your research you should identify at least one organisation for each of the following quality systems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality circles • TQM • ISO9001 • EFQM <p>For each organisation, you should determine the impact of the quality system used on the management of operational resources. It is important to try to identify both positive and negative impacts on the organisation.</p> <p><i>N.B. You can access appropriate case studies on the internet via any major search engine, by typing into the search criteria - case studies followed by the term you are researching, given in speech marks.</i></p> <p><i>For example type: case studies in ‘quality circles’ into the search engine</i></p>

ACTIVITY – QUALITY SYSTEM REVIEW

<p>Activity</p>	<p>Throughout this section we have looked at the requirements of quality and its relationship with the management of operational resources. It is important to consider this in your own context to show that you have a full understanding of the concepts and how they should be applied in practical terms.</p> <p>Complete an analysis of the quality management system operated by your own organisation. You should detail the underpinning principles, how it is documented, controlled, monitored and maintained as a system. Your responsibilities and the responsibilities of others should be explained.</p> <p>Comment on the effectiveness of the system, detailing its strengths and weaknesses. For any identified weaknesses, recommend improvements that you feel will further strengthen the system.</p>
<p>Suggested approach</p>	<p>This activity has been designed to help you understand the quality system operated by your organisation.</p> <p>Your response should be based on research completed within your organisation. You should describe the quality system as a whole, highlighting the roles of all those involved in the implementation of the system.</p> <p>To complete this activity you should both review quality documentation and speak to other members of staff who are involved in the implementation of the quality system. The information that you have collected to support the other activities in this section should help you with the implementation of this activity.</p> <p>You response should describe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The underpinning principles of the system • How it is documented, controlled, monitored and maintained • Your responsibilities and the responsibilities of others • The effectiveness of the system • The systems strengths and weaknesses <p>Finally, based on your learning and the quality theory that you have been introduced to as part of this section, you should recommend ways in which weaknesses within the system can be addressed, to further strengthen the system.</p>

SECTION 4

ACTIVITY – TECHNOLOGY AND PLANNING CONTROL

Activity	<p>It may be useful for you to do some research into how technology has impacted planning control systems used within your organisation, or within an organisation you are familiar with. You may like to look at the area of planning and control systems. Focus on the technology used in these systems. Some questions to ask are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the technology enhanced the process and in what way? • Have there been any drawbacks to using such technology?
Suggested approach	<p>This activity has been designed to help you understand how technology has impacted planning and control systems.</p> <p>Your response should be based on research completed within your organisation.</p> <p>To complete this activity you should speak to other members of staff who are involved with the use of the technology and ideally they should have experience of working within the system prior to the implementation of technology. Use questions that aim to determine the true impact of the new technology. For example:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How has the technology enhanced the process? 2. What benefits has the technology provided? 3. What drawbacks have been experienced since using the technology? <p>Once you have completed your research you should produce a report which specifies the pros and cons associated with the implementation of the technology. This report may be used to influence any further technological development within the organisation.</p>

ACTIVITY – INFORMATION PROCESSING TECHNOLOGY

<p>Activity</p>	<p>Within your organisation, find out how information processing technology is used and which processes it supports. Give a brief account of the technology used and the benefits that it has to the organisation.</p> <p>List any disadvantages to the systems and any improvements that could be made.</p>
<p>Suggested approach</p>	<p>This activity has been designed to help you understand how information processing technology (IT) has impacted the management of operations.</p> <p>In preparing your response you should spend time reviewing where information technology is used within your organisation and its application as part of the transformation process. You should try to develop an understanding of the processes supported by IT, together with an understanding of the IT system itself.</p> <p>To complete this activity you should speak to other members of staff involved in both the design and implementation of IT. Ideally speak to those who have experience of the process being supported, pre implementation.</p> <p>Once you have completed your research you should produce a report which specifies the advantages that IT offers, together with any disadvantages that have been identified.</p> <p>Finally, having reviewed the system overall, you should suggest possible improvements that could be made to the way in which IT is used and applied.</p>

ACTIVITY – CUSTOMER PROCESSING TECHNOLOGIES

<p>Activity</p>	<p>List any other customer processing technologies that we interact with in our every day lives. Identify how they have benefited the customer. Identify and assess any drawbacks to these technologies.</p>
<p>Suggested approach</p>	<p>This activity has been designed to help you appreciate how technology has impacted the way in which customers are handled and processed.</p> <p>In preparing your response you should spend time researching the different ways that technology has impacted the handling of customers. You should start by thinking about yourself as a consumer, identifying where and how you deal with technology as a customer. For example: on-line shopping, telephone support services, interactive television etc.</p> <p>You should develop your response based on two examples. Investigate the application of these services and aim to identify the perceived benefits that they provide to customers. As part of your investigations identify and explain the potential drawbacks that you see with the services.</p>

ACTIVITY – TECHNOLOGY IN ACTION

<p>Activity</p>	<p>Look at your own organisation or an organisation you are familiar with. Describe the technologies it uses to process materials, information and lastly customers.</p> <p>Detail how the technology is applied and the advantages and disadvantages, as you see them. Describe how you would recommend the system could be improved.</p>
<p>Suggested approach</p>	<p>This activity has been designed to help you understand how technology is used within your own organisation.</p> <p>In preparing your response you should spend time reviewing your organisation and identifying where technology is being utilised. You should develop an understanding of the processes which involve the use of technology to process materials, information and customers.</p> <p>To complete this activity, you should speak to those responsible for implementing and using the technology, to determine its features and the benefits it provides to the organisation.</p> <p>Once you have completed your research you should produce a report which specifies the advantages and disadvantages associated with the technology and its usage.</p> <p>As part of your report you should recommend improvements that could be made to the way in which the technology is used and applied.</p>

SECTION 5

ACTIVITY – LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Activity	Investigate how the different Health and Safety Acts and Regulations have been implemented within your organisation.
Suggested approach	<p>This activity has been designed to help you understand how health and safety legislation controls the work activities completed within your organisation.</p> <p>Your response should be based on research completed within your organisation. You should identify the full range of health and safety legislation which impacts your organisation, by reviewing your organisation's health and safety policy and other associated health and safety documentation. You may also want to verify your findings by discussing your observations with those responsible for health and safety.</p> <p>When completing your review, start by determining which of the general Acts and Regulations specified in Section 5.1.1 and 5.1.2 have been dealt with. In addition you should identify any industry specific legislation that has been included, for example, legislation that controls the use of equipment, information, materials, processes or the general work environment.</p> <p>Your response should explain how each piece of legislation has been incorporated within the safety documentation, including how it is applied in practical terms to help maintain safety.</p>

ACTIVITY – RISK ASSESSMENT

<p>Activity</p>	<p>Access your organisation’s risk assessment documentation. Comment on: The main hazards identified</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the risk assessment was completed • The level of risk • The control measures that are in place • Your role in the maintenance of the risk assessment • Compliance with current health and safety legislation
<p>Suggested approach</p>	<p>This activity has been designed to help you understand risk assessment and the risk assessment procedures used within your own organisation.</p> <p>Your response should be based on research completed within your organisation. You should take account of the risk assessment documentation which is used in your organisation.</p> <p>To complete this activity you should review the risk assessments and write a report which describes the following key components.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The main hazards which are identified within the documentation, illustrated with descriptions of the main types of hazard. 2. How the risk assessment was completed, explaining the processes and illustrated by worked examples 3. The general level of risk which applies to the workplace and the work completed 4. The control measures that are in place, illustrated with descriptions of the control measures that are used to remove or reduce the risk to an acceptable level. 5. Your role in the maintenance of the risk assessment, explaining how you have been involved in the risk assessment process. This should include your involvement in the maintenance of control measures. 6. Compliance with current health and safety legislation, providing an opinion on how well the current risk assessment measures meet the requirements of the legislation. 7. Make recommendations for improvement if appropriate.

ACTIVITY – MAINTAINING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

<p>Activity</p>	<p>Assess the ways that you help to maintain a safe work environment. Comment on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your level of responsibility • How you help train your staff • How you monitor safety improvements • How you investigate incidents • How you implement improvements
<p>Suggested approach</p>	<p>This activity has been designed to help you understand your role as a manager in maintaining health and safety.</p> <p>Your response should be based on research completed within your organisation using the safety documentation which controls safety for your own area of responsibility.</p> <p>To complete this activity you should write a report which describes the following key components.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Your level of responsibility – as described within your job description 2. How you help train your staff – you should detail both direct and indirect involvement 3. How you monitor safety improvements – you should detail the practical ways you monitor safety in your area of responsibility 4. How you investigate incidents – you should detail the procedures you follow in respect to investigating any incidents. If possible you should base your response on actual incidents that you have had to deal with 5. How you implement improvements - you should detail the procedures you follow in respect to implementing improvements to health and safety. If possible you should illustrate your response with actual improvements you have implemented