

# G. Exemplar 1

## Completed task writing template

|                  |                               |            |
|------------------|-------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Section 1</b> | Candidate ID                  |            |
|                  | Date of submission            |            |
|                  | Core Activity (A to G)        | A          |
|                  | Objective                     |            |
|                  | Supporting portfolio evidence |            |
|                  | Section 2 - Total word count  | 1095 words |

### Section 2

All four sections below must be completed independently by the apprentice for each task. Minimum limit 800 words, maximum limit 1200 words for each task.

#### 1. Situation:

**Describe the context within which you performed a significant task or faced a challenge at work relating to one of the core Activities A to G.**

*I was part of the finance team assigned to produce the 2018/2019 budget. The team included three accounting apprentices (including me) two assistant accountants and the planning manager who had ultimate responsibility for the budget process. The process started in April 2018 and was to be completed by mid-June.*

*The company produces budgets annually using incremental budgeting and a participative budget approach.*

#### 2. Task:

**Describe your role or responsibility in that situation.**

*I was tasked to work with three of the support service managers to assist them in producing their departmental budgets. I had to issue the budget instructions, co-ordinate the production of the budgets and review the proposed budgets for next year against the current year's budget and actuals. Following the review, I needed to discuss the budget with the department manager and suggest possible changes. The final part of the process was to produce a report incorporating a recommendation as to whether the budgets should be accepted and to present this at a team meeting.*

#### 3. Action:

**Describe how you completed the task and the steps you took to meet the challenge.**

- ▶ Which skills and behaviours did you use to complete the task?
- ▶ You must provide an evidence-based justification for competence against EACH skill(s) and behaviour(s)

*My first step was to prepare the budget instruction including a timetable for completion (EVIDENCE: budget instructions and timetable – P1, P2, SP1).*

*I then emailed each of the managers with the details and also advised them that I would be available to discuss any issue that arise during the process (EVIDENCE: copy of email – C3). I immediately received an email from the marketing manager who said he would not be able to complete the budget on time as he was out of the office for the month prior to the submission date - on holiday for two weeks and then at an overseas conference for two weeks. I knew that this would cause an issue as it would hold up completion of the master budget. I therefore made an appointment to meet the marketing manager and offered to provide assistance to his deputy to enable completion of the budget. I suggested that he could give final approval to the figures by email. (EVIDENCE: record of conversation signed by marketing manager – C3, AD2, AD3, SD2, P3, T2, PR4, PR5).*

*During the time period, I answered a number of email queries raised by the individual managers about different aspects of the process. I thought some of the questions were fairly straight forward and was surprised the managers had raised them but I replied in a courteous manner and gave them the information they required. (EVIDENCE: copy of emails – C3, E2).*

### 3. Action: (continued)

The date for submission of the budgets arrived and I was keen to see what the managers had produced. I prepared a spreadsheet analysis of the proposed budget compared to the current year's budget and this year's actuals. I included a column converting the 9 month actual results for this year to 12 months and another two columns, one showing the percentage increases from current year budget to proposed budget and another comparing the 12 months actual to the proposed budget. Where they were high percentage increases or decreases, I contacted the managers to get explanations and added notes explaining the reasons for the change. (EVIDENCE: copy of spreadsheet – Q2, SP2, A1, A3, AV2).

After my conversations with the department managers and some minor changes (both increases and decreases) to two of the budgets, I was satisfied that all the budgets with the exception of the maintenance budget were reasonable (EVIDENCE: copy of original and amended budgets – Q2, A3, T2, AD1). I arranged a meeting with the maintenance manager to discuss his budget in more detail. The conversation with the maintenance manager was very difficult. He wanted increases to his budget which I didn't feel was justified and whilst I gave him evidence as to why it wasn't justified he still insisted that the increases were required and claimed he wouldn't be able to operate effectively without the increase. I informed him that I would report back to the finance team but that I would be recommending a reduction in the proposed budget. (EVIDENCE: record of conversation signed by maintenance manager – C3, T2, PS3, E2, E3).

I presented my spreadsheet and power point slides at the team meeting and gave my recommendation for each of the budgets (EVIDENCE: power-point slides and spreadsheet – C1, C2, T1). I recommended that the budget for the maintenance department be reduced. This approach was supported by the other team members including the Planning Manager. I was really glad that I had stuck to my original position and not been persuaded by the maintenance department manager to change it. (EVIDENCE: Minutes of the meeting – SD2, T1, T2, AD1, E2).

After the meeting, I contacted the maintenance department manager and informed him that it was going to be necessary to change the budget he had submitted and explained the reason. He responded that he was not surprised by the decision and

### 4. Result:

**Explain the outcomes achieved as a result of your actions.**

- ▶ What did you learn from the situation?
- ▶ What would you do differently if you completed the task again or had to complete a similar task?

The outcome of my actions was that the budgets for the three support service departments were approved within the deadline.

During this process, I learned a number of things some of which I had read about during my studies but had never actually experienced in practice. I learned that, whilst I still believe that a participative budget approach is preferable, individuals will have their own objectives which they are likely to be more concerned about achieving rather than the company objectives. I also learnt that there is a tendency for managers to try to build budgetary slack into their budgets to make them easier to achieve.

I learned that I can work under pressure and take initiative. When I received the email from the marketing manager about his unavailability, my first reaction was to pass the problem over to the Planning Manager but I decided that I needed to show that I was capable of sorting things out for myself.

I also learned that it is important to listen to what the managers had to say about any changes in their department since an analysis of the figures does not tell the full story. However, there will also be situations where you have to have faith in your own judgement.

I think it would have been better if I had started the process earlier than I did which would have allowed me more time to work with the individual managers. I also think that I should have arranged face to face meetings with the managers prior to the budget submission rather than just answering email queries as they arose. The meetings would have allowed me to explain the budget approach and to deal with any issues at an earlier stage.