



Moderator's Assignment Feedback – Debt Prioritisation & Collections Process Advice Principles and Practice assignment

After each series, we ask our moderators to provide a report on each assignment-based unit to identify:

- any questions which were usually answered particularly well, including main points and qualities that characterised good answers.
- any questions which were usually answered badly and main weaknesses in candidates' answers.
- common errors or misconceptions made by candidates.

We hope that this will be of assistance when completing your Debt Prioritisation & Collections Process Advice Principles and Practice assignment.

General feedback to candidates

A generally high standard of assignments, with candidates demonstrating their own experience in both the Principles and Practice sections. Greater variety of examples in the practice section would lead to an improvement of marks in these questions. As would expansion of explanations around the specifics of the advice offered to clients.

Some candidates could have gained higher marks by ensuring their answers gave a little more detail, which would indicate to the examiner their confident understanding of the topic.

The best marks were awarded where candidates were able to reflect on the wider context in their answers and displayed a sound understanding of the subject.

Candidates who relied heavily on sourced text, such as internal training documents, gained few marks for this because they failed to demonstrate their own knowledge of the subject. Candidates are encouraged to reference external sources but to use these to answer the question in their own words.

Feedback for each assignment question

Part A Principles

Q1. With regard to the common types of priority debts:

a) Identify the most common and briefly explain their characteristics

Q1a – Generally well answered, with many candidates including a wide variety of priority debts. Several candidates began to overlap with the next questions. The best marks were awarded to those who concentrated on the specific features of the priority bills covered, and covered basic but key facts.

b) Explain the possible sanctions for non-payment of each

Q1b – Again, reasonably well answered overall. Some candidates could show more context/understanding through a slightly more detailed explanation.

Where there was more than one possible sanction, these were not all always discussed thoroughly. Stronger answers considered all the possible sanctions for each type of priority debt.

c) Within the remit of your job role, explain how you would advise a client in arrears with each priority debt type

Q1c – All candidates were able to provide at least a basic overview, but stronger answers provided much more detail to show candidates' knowledge. The best answers were those that considered technical details such as the recommended timeline to clear the priority arrears for each area. Higher marks were awarded to candidates where there was little repetition and each priority debt type had a tailored answer.

di) List and describe key external organisations able to offer specialist advice on priority arrears

Q1di – Generally well answered and showed wider reading. Stronger answers covered organisations that give specialist advice on priority areas rather than general money and debt advice. And highest marks were awarded to those who detailed a good overview of the organisation itself.

ii) Explain how to evaluate the suitability of another service in meeting a person's needs

Q1dii – A mixture in standard of responses to this question. The strongest answers demonstrated a sound wider awareness of why some organisations may be better suited to certain client's depending on individual circumstance.

iii) Explain the referral process, including how it is reviewed to ensure effectiveness

Q1diii – Answers to this section were often brief. Stronger answers mentioned which area of the candidate's organisation was responsible for reviewing referrals and showed a sound wider understanding of why this is important.

Most candidates were able to explain the methods of referral available to them.

Q2. Using several examples to illustrate explain:

a) The characteristics of key non-priority debts

Q2a – Generally reasonably well answered. Most candidates gave a comprehensive list of examples. Some candidates missed the opportunity to highlight the differentiation between these and priority debts to illustrate their point.

b) General advice that can be given to clients in arrears for each non-priority debt type

Q2b – Stronger answers approached this question in a general manner as to advice that can be given to clients with non-priority debts.

Q3. Explain the typical non-priority creditor's collections process when a customer falls into arrears. Include in your answer:

a) Special reference to any guidelines

b) Advice that you would give any client who alleges harassment by the creditor

Q3 – This was generally answered well. Candidates are clear on the general process followed, but not all were able to concisely outline the individual stages of the process. Stronger answers took each stage in turn with a short explanation around each stage. And higher marks were awarded to those able to cover a wider awareness around each stage in terms of the reality for the client.

Some answers focused too heavily on harassment and gave only brief overview of collections process, and others vice versa.

A better balance would benefit some responses. Stronger answers specifically mentioned FCA guidelines. Candidates should ensure that they refer to the mark scheme where it specifically mentions to cover 'what creditors can and cannot do'. The best answers covered this as well as an outline of what advice to offer to clients in this regard.

Section B Practice

This section of your assignment aims to demonstrate that you can deliver effective advice on debt prioritisation and the collections process, based on reflective practice.

Q4. Default notices and collections letters are often mistaken for legal paperwork.

a) Describe why you think this is the case

Q4a – Strongest part of most answers, with good details regarding the appearance of the letters plus the clients' likely state of mind. The best answers considered the wider context including the impact of the client's likely emotional state and understanding of the collections process.

b) Explain how you check with your client exactly what documents they have received

Q4b – Most candidates did not provide enough detail to gain the highest mark, and some candidates only concentrated on checking for one/two types of document. Candidates often gave a good explanation of how to check for a default notice and a county court claim form. Stronger answers went a step further and explained how they would generally check what paperwork the client had received.

c) Explain why it is important to check this documentation

Q4c – Generally answered well. Strongest answers considered impacts of incorrect identification from different perspectives.

Q5. Produce reference material that could be used when advising a client who has received a default notice. Answer this question within the remit of your job role and present your answer in a format that would be beneficial to you and/or your organisation

Q5 - Several answers gave too much detail on the content of the DN, which was not particularly relevant here, stronger answers considered impact on and advice for the client. The question asks for the answer to be presented for use "when advising a client" – and some answers did not consider relevant advice such as impact on credit file, continued use of the account and the reality of receiving this for the client.

Some candidates relied to heavily on source materials. Answers that attained Level 3 answered in learner's own words to demonstrate their understanding. And were structured in such a way that they would be beneficial for wider use.

Q6. Explain the term 'Social Policy' and outline in what circumstances it may be appropriate to make use of this

Q6 – In the main a well answered question. Candidates were able to define what social policy is within the context of debt advice.

Stronger answers showed candidates understanding by clearly explaining how the policy works within their organisation and how effective implementation has, and can continue to have, a positive wider impact for those in debt. Strongest answers were also able to demonstrate an understanding of how they can individually contribute through their own client contacts.

Q7. Compile evidence of a range of 5 cases where you have delivered advice on debt prioritisation or the collections process and in each case:

- **Justify your general approach to the giving of the advice**
- **Explain approach and reasoning regarding any referrals to other specialist services.**
- **Summarise the content of your records, calls/correspondence and outcomes.**

Q7 - The best answers were specific to the question and showed how their examples related to debt prioritisation/collections, did not give too much lengthy and unnecessary background detail, and focussed on specific advice given. Some candidates included a few general advice calls which were not relevant enough to the topic of the paper.

Q8. a) Evaluate your performance in relation to the calls that you have evidenced in the previous question. Work with your line manager, if appropriate, but answer in your own words.

Include in your answer an assessment of how well you handled any cases which required a referral and how you have helped clients to act on their own

Q8a – Some evaluation evidenced in answers. The best responses were where the candidate took care to relate this back to calls details in question 7.

b) Produce an action plan to address any areas for development. Refer, where relevant, to any organisational or legal requirements

Q8b –Most candidates produced a basic action plan. The stronger answers were where the candidate was able to explain how they planned to further their development in each area in relation to coaching, training courses, wider reading etc, and related to SMART.