

RETAIL OPERATIONS

GCE NORMAL (TECHNICAL) LEVEL SYLLABUS IT04

EXCLUSION CLAUSE

This syllabus must not be offered in the same session
as syllabus 7089 Elements of Business Skills

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I INTRODUCTION

The retail industry is one of the key service industries of Singapore's economy, providing employment to a large segment of the population. There is an increasing drive towards raising the professionalism and productivity of service providers to support the long-term growth of the service industries. Hence, clarity in knowledge and skills progression for career growth and advancement in the retail industry would be necessary.

The syllabus aims to equip students with the basic knowledge, skills and values relevant for employment in small, medium to large retail establishments. It covers the functional skills and knowledge in retail operations such as selling products and services, providing customer service, handling and displaying merchandise, managing stock inventory, performing cashier duties and after-sales service. The roles and responsibilities of a retail associate in a retail establishment are emphasised.

Students will have opportunities to practise retailing skills in simulated retail settings where a service-oriented mindset, effective communication skills and teamwork - qualities valued by today's employers - would be developed. There will be strong emphasis on hands-on learning and practical skills training, and developing professionalism as a retail service provider. Students will also observe and learn from real-world retail practices.

The syllabus provides upper secondary students with the basic foundation for employment in the retail industry and/or a related course of study at post-secondary institutions.

II AIMS OF SYLLABUS

The syllabus aims to:

1. Introduce students to the retail business environment
2. Develop basic functional skills and knowledge in a variety of retail store scenarios
3. Develop in students the ability to perform service-related skills in providing customer service, problem-solving and communicating effectively
4. Develop in students good working attitudes and safe working habits
5. Develop in students an interest in a post-secondary education in retailing and/or a possible career in the services industry

III SYLLABUS FRAMEWORK

The syllabus provides students with a broad understanding of the key activities in a retail business environment. It also creates awareness of the high expectations for providing excellent customer service.

The syllabus framework diagram (Figure 1) shows organisation of content and skills into three separate, yet integrated learning domains: handling retail operations, selling products and services, and interacting with customers. Students will learn to apply knowledge and skills in a simulated retail workplace setting.

a) **Handling Retail Operations**

Students will learn how to handle a range of core retail operation skills such as perform point-of-sales operations, handle sales activities, perform stock control operations, display merchandise, and demonstrate good housekeeping practices.

b) **Selling Products and Services**

Students will learn the selling process and techniques of handling customer objections; and the need to recognize customers' buying behaviour in order to satisfy customer requirements. They will learn the importance of having good product knowledge and maintaining a professional image as they perform these functions.

c) **Interacting with Customers**

Students will learn strategies for communicating effectively with customers, dealing with different customers and performing service recovery.

In achieving professionalism, the key competency to develop in students would be their ability to demonstrate effective integration of the wide range of knowledge, skills and attitudes acquired across the three learning domains. Students would develop this competency through learning experientially in simulated retail workplace settings that provide for application of such skills, knowledge and attitudes concurrently.

Figure 1



IV ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

The assessment objectives are classified into:

1. Knowledge and Understanding

Candidates should be able to:

- 1.1. Explain the different types of retail stores;
- 1.2. Explain the major concepts, techniques and skills used in retail stores setting;
- 1.3. Explain the processes involved in handling core retail operations;
- 1.4. Explain the steps and considerations involved in the selling process; and
- 1.5. Understand the importance of providing good customer service and service recovery.

2. Application

Candidates should be able to:

- 2.1. Apply knowledge of core retail operation skills and processes to make informed decisions and solve problems in a retail setting;
- 2.2. Apply steps in making a sales presentation and selling techniques to successfully close a sale;
- 2.3. Apply principles of effective communication and customer service skills in providing customer service, handling customer objections and service recovery; and
- 2.4. Apply effective communication and presentation skills, including the use of IT, in portraying facts and ideas.

3. Analysis and Planning

Candidates should be able to:

- 3.1. Demonstrate analytical skills in deepening product knowledge and retail operations; and
- 3.2. Demonstrate skills in planning for a product study.

4. Performance Skills

Candidates should be able to:

- 4.1. Perform housekeeping duties in a retail setting;
- 4.2. Handle routine retail operations;
- 4.3. Display and sell merchandise; and
- 4.4. Offer recommendations and solutions in service recovery situations.

V SCHEME OF ASSESSMENT

Number of Examination Papers

- Candidates will be required to attempt all four compulsory papers:
 - Written Examination Paper 1
 - Practical Examinations Paper 2
 - Paper 21: Handling Retail Operations
 - Paper 22: Selling and Interacting with Customers
 - Coursework Examination Paper 3: Product Research and Sales Presentation

Assessment Weighting

- The assessment weighting for each paper is as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Assessment Modes and Weightings

Paper	Mode		Duration	Marks	Weighting
1	Written Exam		1 ½ hrs	60	45%
21	Practical Exam- Handling Retail Operations		30 mins	102	15%
22	Practical Exam- Selling and Interacting with Customers		35 mins	110	25%
3	Coursework Exam	Part A: Product Research	8 hrs over 4 – 5 wks	10	15%
		Part B: Sales Presentation	15 mins	30	

Written Examination

- The assessment grid for Paper 1 is shown in Table 2. The assessment objectives are weighted to give an indication of their relative importance. They are not intended to provide a precise statement of the marks allocated to each assessment objective. The format of Paper 1 is shown in Table 3.

Table 2: Assessment Grid

Paper 1	Assessment Objectives			Marks
	Knowledge and Understanding AO1	Application AO2	Analysis AO3	
	35%	50%	15%	60m

Table 3: Format of Paper 1

Duration: 1½ hours		Marks
Section A	Three compulsory short-response questions Each question comprises 2 - 4 sub-questions	30
Section B	Two compulsory structured questions Each question comprises 3 – 5 sub-questions	30
Total		60

Assessment Timeline

4. The timeline showing the recommended schedule for the conduct of the assessments is shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Assessment Timeline

Paper	Date
Practical Paper 21 - Handling Retail Operations	End May of Year 2
Practical Paper 22 - Selling and Interacting with Customers	Sep of Year 2
Coursework Paper 3 - Product Research and Sales Presentation	Jul/Aug of Year 2
Written Examination Paper 1	Sep/Oct of Year 2

Practical Examination Tasks

5. Candidates will be tested on their ability to perform a series of tasks by applying the appropriate skills and knowledge.

Paper	Tasks
21	• Receive merchandise
	• Tag merchandise
	• Store merchandise
	• Replenish and display merchandise
	• Demonstrate safe working habits
22	• Maintain professional image
	• Identify customer needs
	• Perform selling process
	• Wrap and pack merchandise
	• Perform POS Transaction
	• Perform service recovery

Coursework Examination Tasks

6. Candidates will research on a product from a given category and make a 15 minutes sales presentation of the product.

Paper		Tasks
3	Part A	• Product Research
	Part B	• Sales Presentation (Oral)

Practical Examination Details

7. Details on how candidates will be tested in each practical paper and the coursework paper are shown below:

Practical Paper 21	Duration: 30 minutes
Handling Retail Operations	
<p>Candidates will play the role of a Retail Assistant.</p> <p>Candidates will be presented with a simulated problem-situation on the retail floor, and be assessed on their ability to perform the following retail operations within a stipulated time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Receive merchandise <input type="checkbox"/> Tag merchandise <input type="checkbox"/> Store merchandise <input type="checkbox"/> Replenish merchandise <input type="checkbox"/> Display merchandise <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrate safe working habits <p>A list of fixtures, equipment and materials will be provided for use by the candidates during the examination.</p> <p>Candidates will carry out the practical examination in the presence of a Marker.</p> <p>A generic mark scheme will be used to assess candidates.</p>	

Practical Paper 22	Duration: 35 minutes
Selling and Interacting with Customers	[includes 15 minutes reading time]
<p>Candidates will play the role of a Sales Assistant.</p> <p>Candidates will be presented with a scenario to demonstrate their ability to perform the following tasks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Greet and present a professional image <input type="checkbox"/> Identify customer needs <input type="checkbox"/> Perform selling process <input type="checkbox"/> Wrap and pack merchandise <input type="checkbox"/> Perform POS transaction <input type="checkbox"/> Perform service recovery <p>A list of fixtures, equipment and materials will be provided for use by the candidates during the examination.</p> <p>Candidates will carry out the practical examination in the presence of a Marker who also plays the role of the customer. The Marker will use a list of standard comments/questions for interacting with the candidates.</p> <p>A generic mark scheme will be used to assess candidates.</p>	

Coursework Paper 3

Product Research and Sales Presentation

Duration

Part A: Product Research – **8 hrs over 4 - 5 weeks**

Part B: Sales Presentation – **15 minutes**

Candidates will be given one of the following categories of retail products:

- Food – e.g. bottled drink, health food, snack, frozen ready-to-eat meal
- Apparel and accessories – e.g. wallet, watch, sportswear
- Electronic gadgets / appliances – e.g. calculator, mobile phone, vacuum cleaner
- Sports and recreation products – e.g. board-game, games racket, skateboard

Candidates will select one product from the given category to conduct a research on the product features and the product benefits to identified end-users. Candidates are required to produce hard-copy evidence of their research. Templates will be provided for scaffolding the candidates' research work. Candidates may use visual aids during the sales presentation. Visual aids for use during the sales presentation can be in any form of soft-copy or hard-copy document, artifact or the real physical product itself.

Candidates will conduct both their research work and preparation for the sales presentation within 8 curriculum hours over 4 - 5 weeks under the close supervision of their teacher. Research work must be submitted for assessment at the end of this duration.

Candidates will make a 15-minute oral sales presentation of the physical product(s) (candidates are encouraged to bring the physical product) in the presence of a Marker on a separate day. Candidates are expected to respond to questions posed by the Marker within the 15 minutes

A generic performance rubric will be used to assess candidates.

Coursework Paper 3 - Performance Rubric

Focus of Assessment	Evidence	No mark	Descriptors		
			Low	Medium	High
Product Research [10]	Documentation Candidate submits documentation of research on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Product features Product benefits End-user/Customer Profile 	Criterion has not been met	Produces inadequate documentation of research work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Few product features identified Few benefits listed Poor description of end-user/customer profile 	Produces sufficient documentation of research work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some product features identified Some benefits listed Adequate description of end-user/customer profile 	Produces detailed documentation of research work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive description of product features Comprehensive benefits listed Detailed description of end-user/customer profile
Sales Presentation [30]	Organisation of presentation Candidate demonstrates a coherent presentation	No mark	Low	Medium	High
	Knowledge Candidate demonstrates a strong understanding of the product	Criterion has not been met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation is not coherent and is difficult to follow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation has some degree of coherence and is generally easy to follow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation is coherent and is easy to follow throughout
	Fluency and Clarity of Speech Candidate speaks audibly and clearly		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Few product features are mentioned Does not link product benefits to the needs of the end-user(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some product features are mentioned Weak link between product benefits and the needs of the end-user(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Product features are well covered Clear link between product benefits and the needs of the end-user(s)
	Persuasiveness Candidate demonstrates ability to persuade customers		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Often mumbles or cannot be understood Speaks hesitantly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speaks audibly and clearly generally Smooth delivery generally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speaks audibly and clearly most of the time Smooth delivery throughout with appropriate pauses
	Response to questions Candidate demonstrates ability to answer questions		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lacks persuasive language or other sales tactics Lacks eye contact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses some persuasive language and other sales tactics Establishes minimal eye contact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good use of persuasive language and other sales tactics Establishes eye contact at the appropriate times
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respond in single words or short phrases with no elaboration or explanation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides some elaboration or explanation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides elaboration or explanation

Total: 40 marks

8. Table of Specifications

The table of specifications for the written, practical and coursework examinations is as follows:

TABLE OF SPECIFICATIONS

Syllabus Item	Written Examination			Practical Examination		Coursework Examination		
	Paper 1			Paper 21	Paper 22	Paper 3		
	Knowledge & Understanding A01	Application A02	Analysis A03	Performance Skills		Product Research and Sales Presentation		
1.1	Q 1			Q 1				
1.2								
1.3								
1.4								
1.5	Q 2							
1.6								
1.7								
2.1	Q 3				Q 1			
2.2								
2.3								
2.3	Q 4						Q 1	Q 1
2.4								
3.1	Q 5				Q 1			
3.2								
3.3								
No. of Questions	5					1	1	1
Marks	21 marks	30 marks	9 marks			102 marks	110 marks	40 marks
	60 marks			252 marks				

VI SYLLABUS CONTENT

1. HANDLING RETAIL OPERATIONS

This section introduces the different types of retail stores and the range of core retail operations. Students will learn how to perform point-of-sale operations, handle sales activities, perform stock control operations, handle merchandise display, and apply good housekeeping practices.

The section is organised into 7 units:

- Types of Retail Stores
- Performing housekeeping
- Receiving and storing merchandise
- Tagging merchandise
- Replenishing merchandise
- Displaying merchandise
- Perform cashier duties

1.1. Types of Retail Stores

Students should be able to:

- 1.1.1. Describe the retailing process
- 1.1.2. Describe the characteristics of the different types of retail stores
 - Specialty stores
 - Convenience stores
 - Department stores
 - Supermarkets
 - Hypermarkets

1.2. Performing Housekeeping

Students should be able to:

Maintain the cleanliness of the store

- 1.2.1. Explain the importance of good housekeeping.
- 1.2.2. Perform housekeeping activities:
 - Dusting
 - Vacuuming
 - Cleaning displays
 - Tidying work areas
 - Removing litter
 - Clearing bins

1.3. Receiving and Storing Merchandise

Students should be able to:

Receive Merchandise

- 1.3.1. Describe the different channels of distribution:
 - Direct selling
 - Producer to wholesaler
 - Producer to retailer
- 1.3.2. Explain the purpose of and the information found in the following documents:
 - Purchase order
 - Delivery note
- 1.3.3. Check merchandise received from suppliers:
 - Type and quantity received tally with documentation
 - Quality
 - Condition of merchandise received (e.g. spillages, breakages)
 - Expiry date
- 1.3.4. Reject unacceptable merchandise due to:
 - Wrong items
 - Poor quality
 - Damaged items
- 1.3.5. Return and record damaged or incorrect merchandise to vendor.

Store Merchandise

- 1.3.6. Explain the importance of proper handling, packaging and storing of merchandise.
- 1.3.7. Explain the guidelines to observe for handling merchandise:
 - Manufacturer's instructions
 - Hygiene and safety rules
- 1.3.8. Follow the guidelines for packing merchandise:
 - Re-pack for storage
 - Use proper packing materials
- 1.3.9. Follow the guidelines for storing merchandise:
 - Place in designated locations
 - Adopt first-in first-out method
 - Turn labels to face forward
 - Use appropriate storage receptacles (e.g. bins, boxes)
 - Ensure appropriate room conditions (e.g. temperature, humidity)
 - Observe hygiene, safety and security

1.4. Tagging merchandise

Students should be able to:

Mark prices of merchandise

- 1.4.1. Explain the purpose of marking prices on merchandise.
- 1.4.2. List the general information commonly displayed on a price tag:
- Price
 - Weight, dimensions
 - Supplier's code
- 1.4.3. Identify the different types of common price tags:
- SKU
 - String ticket
 - Price label
 - Ring seal ticket
- 1.4.4. Describe the factors to consider when selecting an appropriate tag for marking merchandise:
- Type of merchandise
 - Visibility of tag
 - Security of tag on merchandise
- 1.4.5. Perform price tagging on merchandise.
- Analyse features of merchandise
 - Select an appropriate tag
 - Write/print information on tag
 - Attach tag to merchandise

1.5. Replenishing Merchandise

Students should be able to:

Perform Inventory Control

- 1.5.1. Explain the importance of inventory control.
- 1.5.2. Differentiate the following terms relating to inventory control:
- Stock check
 - Stock take
- 1.5.3. Explain the uses of information and details shown on a stock record card.
- 1.5.4. Perform stock check:
- Check for accuracy of stock records
 - Determine the type and quantity of merchandise to replenish or reorder

1.5.5. Update a stock record card.

Handle Stock Replenishment

1.5.6. Explain the importance of prompt replenishment of stock on shelves.

1.5.7. Check shelves to determine:

- Type of merchandise to replenish
- Quantity to replenish

1.5.8. Remove expired and damaged stock from shelves.

1.6. Displaying Merchandise

Students should be able to:

Display merchandise

1.6.1. Explain the importance of merchandise display:

- Promote sales
- Encourage shoppers to enter shop
- Enhance store's image

1.6.2. Explain the factors to consider when displaying and arranging merchandise:

- Occasions (e.g. sales, festive seasons,)
- Floor/shelf space
- Colour and size of merchandise
- Fixtures available
- Hygiene, safety and security considerations

1.6.3. Describe the features of a good merchandise display:

- Delivers the message clearly
- Connects target prospects emotionally
- Motivates the buyer

1.6.4. Describe the stages in merchandise display:

- Select the merchandise
- Prepare the merchandise (e.g. touch-up, iron out, clean out)
- Assemble props and materials
- Prepare display space (e.g. clean shelf, floor)
- Assemble display

1.6.5. Arrange merchandise based on the following common patterns:

- Step pattern
- Radiation pattern
- Pyramid pattern
- Zig-zag pattern
- Repetition pattern

1.7. Perform cashier duties

Students should be able to:

Wrap and Pack Merchandise

- 1.7.1. Explain the purpose of wrapping and packing merchandise.
- 1.7.2. Identify the types of materials used for wrapping and packing different types of merchandise:
- Wrappers
 - Carrier bags
 - Bubble wrap
 - Styrofoam
 - Boxes
- 1.7.3. Select appropriate wrapping/packing materials for merchandise based on:
- Nature of merchandise (e.g. perishable, fragile, bulky)
 - Quantity
 - Weight
 - Ease of carrying
- 1.7.4. Apply the techniques for wrapping and packing the merchandise:
- Sorting
 - Folding
 - Bagging
- 1.7.5. Wrap and pack merchandise:
- Check merchandise before packing and payment
 - Clarify with customer on correct merchandise
 - Select wrapping/packing materials
 - Wrap and pack merchandise while scanning the prices

Prepare Check-out Counter

- 1.7.6. Identify the components and functions of an Electronic Point-of-Sale System (POS):
- Monitor
 - Pole monitor
 - Scanner
 - Cash drawer
 - Credit/debit card processing machine
- 1.7.7. Set up the POS terminal:
- Collect cash float
 - Count cash and sign verification slip
 - Set equipment in operational mode
 - Report malfunction, if any

Perform POS transactions (cash and non-cash payments)

- 1.7.8. Convert common foreign currency into local currency and vice versa
- 1.7.9. Outline the procedure for handling cash payments using:
 - local currency
 - foreign currency
- 1.7.10. Outline the procedure for handling non-cash payments using:
 - Vouchers, gift cards
 - Credit card
 - Debit card
 - NETS
 - Loyalty card
- 1.7.11. Handle payments received following standard procedure for cash and non-cash payments

Perform end-of-day closing

- 1.7.12. Outline the procedure for end-of-day closing:
 - Close POS
 - Print day sales report
 - Count cash
 - Reconcile terminal reading with sum of cash and non-cash transactions
 - Submit cash and other relevant documents to supervisor
- 1.7.13. Perform end-of-day closing.

2. SELLING PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

This section focuses on selling products and services to customers. Students are taught how to project a professional image to customers and to identify customers' needs in order to satisfy customer purchase requirements. They will also learn to handle customer objections and maximize sales opportunities.

2.1. Maintain a professional image

Students should be able to

- 2.1.1. Explain the importance of projecting a professional image to customers.
- 2.1.2. Demonstrate how to project a professional image to customers through:
 - Grooming
 - Eye contact
 - Posture
 - Etiquette
- 2.1.3. Describe the characteristics of a successful sales professional:
 - Self confidence
 - Motivated

- Positive selling attitude
 - Service-oriented mindset
- 2.1.4. Explain the importance of teamwork and collaboration at the workplace:
- Creates synergy
 - Maximizes the strength of each team player
 - Promotes sense of achievement and camaraderie
 - Contributes to the success of the business
- 2.1.5. Demonstrate safe working habits:
- Keep work area neat and clean
 - Store tools and equipment safely
 - Wash hands after handling unclean/raw merchandise
 - Know the location of emergency exits

2.2. Identify customer needs

Students should be able to:

- 2.2.1. Explain the factors that could affect customers' buying behaviour:
- Cultural
 - Social
 - Psychological (e.g. past experience, brand consciousness)
 - Budget
- 2.2.2. Apply open and closed questioning techniques to identify customer needs.

2.3. Selling products and services

Students should be able to

- 2.3.1. Explain the importance of having an in-depth knowledge of products and services offered.
- 2.3.2. Show in-depth knowledge of a retail product of choice and its target customers, and describe the key elements to highlight when promoting the product in terms of its:
- Product features
 - Benefits to end-user
- 2.3.3. Explain the importance of sales presentation/product demonstration.
- 2.3.4. Differentiate between using cross- and up-selling techniques for generating additional sales.
- 2.3.5. Explain the guidelines for making a sales presentation/product demonstration:
- Structure the presentation
 - Focus on benefits
 - Keep it short

- Make it relevant to your customer
- Engage customer (e.g. encourage trial, answer queries)
- Recommend alternatives where appropriate
- Recognize customer buying signals (e.g. verbal and non-verbal)
- Maximise sales opportunities by cross or up-selling

2.3.6. Perform selling process:

- Demonstrate knowledge of project
- Recognize customer's buying signals
- Maximise sales opportunities

2.4. Handle customer objections

Students should be able to

2.4.1. Identify the main reasons for customer objections:

- Price
- Indecisiveness
- Skepticism

2.4.2. Demonstrate the steps in handling customer objections:

- Determine reason for objection
- Acknowledge the objection
- Highlight other benefits of product

3. INTERACTING WITH CUSTOMERS

This section focuses on effective communication with customers. Students will learn the importance of customer service, techniques for effective communication, and strategies for dealing with different customers and to perform service recovery.

3.1. Communicate Effectively with Customers

Students should be able to

3.1.1. Explain the techniques for effective communication in providing customer service:

- Prepare to listen
- Be open-minded
- Establish eye contact

3.1.2. Apply common non-verbal communication techniques through:

- Body language
- Personal space
- Physical contact
- Facial expressions

3.2. Provide Customer Service

Students should be able to

- 3.2.1. Explain the importance of good customer service.
- 3.2.2. Explain the consequences of poor service:
 - Loss of business
 - Loss of customer goodwill
 - Cost of attracting and replacing customers
- 3.2.3. Explain the concepts in providing quality customer service:
 - Customer touch-points
 - Go the Extra Mile for Service (GEMS)

3.3. Perform Service Recovery

Students should be able to

- 3.3.1. Identify the causes of service failure:
 - Poor customer service (e.g. rudeness, delay in service)
 - Mistakes by sales staff (e.g. over-charging, wrong items packed)
 - Failure to meet customers' expectation
- 3.3.2. Identify the common types of difficult customers:
 - Angry customer
 - Rude customer
 - Demanding customer
- 3.3.3. Explain the guidelines for handling difficult customers:
 - Be tactful
 - Stay calm
 - Do not blame the customer
 - Do not take it personally
- 3.3.4. Identify the reasons why customers return and exchange for merchandise purchased:
 - Price related issues
 - Wrong/different merchandise
 - Defective merchandise
- 3.3.5. Outline the procedure for handling returns and exchanges:
 - Obtain proof of purchase from customer
 - Check condition of merchandise
 - Verify with customer the reasons for exchange/return
 - Take appropriate action in accordance with company policy (e.g. exchange, refund, price adjustment)
 - Fill in forms for record purposes

3.3.6. Demonstrate the process of handling service recovery:

- Apologise
- Listen for facts
- Suggest solution (e.g. exchange merchandise)
- Escalate to supervisor if necessary