

IB Trimester Assessment Worksheet

HL extension: matrix, project-based and flexible organizations

Time allowed	60 minutes
Total marks	50
Materials	No calculator required. HL content included.
Instructions	Answer all questions. Show working for calculations. Use business terminology and apply answers to the scenario where given.

Command terms quick guide

Define: give the meaning of a term. **Explain:** give detailed reasons using business theory. **Analyse:** break down and show relationships / impacts. **Discuss/Evaluate:** present balanced arguments and reach a justified conclusion.

Section A: Multiple choice

Circle the correct option. (10 marks)

Q	A	B	C	D	Answer
1	Only vertical hierarchy	Only project teams	Functional departments and project teams	No formal roles	_____
2	No specialization	Divided loyalties (two managers)	Always low costs	No communication needs	_____
3	Oil refining	Construction/film/advertising	Mass manufacturing of identical goods	Sole traders only	_____
4	Less authority	Greater authority	No responsibility	Only HR duties	_____
5	Directors, managers, workers	Core, contract, peripheral	Head office, branches, franchises	Shareholders, customers, suppliers	_____
6	Permanent high-skilled staff	Freelancers paid by results	Part-time/temp staff for routine tasks	Board members	_____
7	Slower response to customers	Easier adaptation to changing demand	More bureaucracy	Longer chains of command	_____
8	Improved loyalty	Lower flexibility	Weaker loyalty/knowledge retention	Higher promotion opportunities	_____
9	Teams may be isolated and temporary	There are too many hierarchy levels	No customer focus exists	They cannot use specialists	_____
10	Work is routine and standardized	Highly trained professionals work as a team	A firm has 12 hierarchy levels	A business is fully centralized	_____

Section B: Short answer

B1. Define the term **matrix organizational structure**. [2]

B2. Explain **two** reasons why businesses may use matrix/project teams to increase innovation. [4]

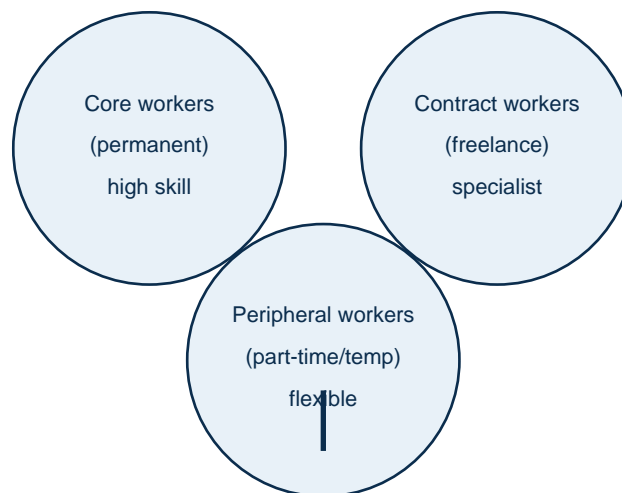
B3. Explain **two** disadvantages of a matrix structure. [4]

B4. Define the term **shamrock organization** and identify its **three** workforce groups. [4]

Reference diagram

Use the model below to support your thinking in Section C and D.

Handy's shamrock workforce (simplified)



Section C: Data response (case study)

Case: StreamSpark Media

StreamSpark is a fast-growing advertising agency. It runs many client campaigns at the same time, and demand is seasonal. The firm currently uses a matrix structure: employees belong to functional departments (Design, Data/Insights, Client Service, Finance) but are also assigned to campaign teams led by project managers.

Workforce mix: 40% core employees on permanent contracts; 35% contract specialists (freelance editors, animators, data scientists) hired per project; 25% peripheral workers (part-time assistants) who help during peak demand. Recently, staff surveys show frustration about 'two bosses' and unclear priorities. Senior leaders are considering moving to a more project-based organization where project managers have stronger authority and teams change frequently.

C1. Define the term **project-based organization (PBO)**. [2]

C2. Analyse **one** advantage and **one** disadvantage to StreamSpark of using a flexible workforce. [4]

C3. Discuss how StreamSpark could reduce divided loyalties and conflict if it moves from a matrix structure to a more project-based structure. [6]

C4. Evaluate whether StreamSpark's workforce approach is sustainable from an ethical and performance perspective. [4]

Section D: Extended response

D1. Discuss the claim: *“Creative employees are essential for business success.”* Use organizational structure to support your answer (e.g., delegation, decentralization, matrix/project teams). **[10]**

Include a balanced argument and link to how structures can help or hinder creativity and change.

Answer key and marking guidance

Indicative answers are provided for guidance. Accept any other well-reasoned responses.

Section A (10 marks)

- Q1: C
- Q2: B
- Q3: B
- Q4: B
- Q5: B
- Q6: C
- Q7: B
- Q8: C
- Q9: A
- Q10: B

Section B (14 marks)

B1 (2) Matrix structure: task/project teams formed from different functional departments while maintaining a vertical chain of command.

B2 (4) Any two reasons: improves responsiveness/flexibility; pools specialist skills for innovation; focuses on tasks like new product/campaign launch; can motivate staff with varied work. 2 marks per explained reason.

B3 (4) Any two: divided loyalties/two managers; conflict over priorities/resources; uncertainty over accountability; can be expensive to administer. 2 marks per explained disadvantage.

B4 (4) Shamrock organization: flexible workforce with three groups - core workers (permanent, high skill), contract workers (freelance specialists), peripheral workers (part-time/temp, routine tasks). 2 marks definition + 2 marks correct groups.

Section C (16 marks)

C1 (2) PBO: structure where most work is organized around time-limited projects led by project managers; teams form and reform as projects change.

C2 (4) Advantage: matches capacity to seasonal demand, controls labour costs, access to specialist skills quickly.
Disadvantage: weaker loyalty, inconsistent service, onboarding/coordination costs, knowledge retention. 2 marks per side (point + explanation linked to StreamSpark).

C3 (6) Indicative: clarify authority (project manager final say on priorities), define RACI/accountability, single performance appraisal line, agreed escalation route, shared objectives and timelines, resource planning meetings. Marking: 1-2 knowledge, 1-2 application, 2 analysis and practicality.

C4 (4) Sustainability judgement should consider ethics (job security, fair pay, wellbeing) and performance (quality, knowledge, culture). Award up to 2 marks for balanced argument + 2 marks for justified conclusion and improvements (e.g., fair contracts, training, inclusion).

Section D (10 marks)

D1 (10) Discussion should link creativity to structure: delegation and decentralization empower employees; matrix/project teams combine specialist skills; flatter structures can speed learning and iteration. Counterpoints: creativity needs direction, resources and ethical HR; too little control can create chaos; bureaucracy can sometimes support reliability. High marks: balanced, concept-driven, and ends with a clear judgement about conditions where creativity is 'essential'.