

GCSE Examiners' Report

Business

GCSE

Summer 2025

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Introduction

Our Principal examiners' report provides valuable feedback on the recent assessment series. It has been written by our Principal Examiners and Principal Moderators after the completion of marking and moderation, and details how candidates have performed in each unit.

This report opens with a summary of candidates' performance, including the assessment objectives/skills/topics/themes being tested, and highlights the characteristics of successful performance and where performance could be improved. It then looks in detail at each unit, pinpointing aspects that proved challenging to some candidates and suggesting some reasons as to why that might be.¹

The information found in this report provides valuable insight for practitioners to support their teaching and learning activity. We would also encourage practitioners to share this document – in its entirety or in part – with their learners to help with exam preparation, to understand how to avoid pitfalls and to add to their revision toolbox.

Further support

Document	Description	Link
Professional Learning / CPD	WJEC offers an extensive programme of online and face-to-face Professional Learning events. Access interactive feedback, review example candidate responses, gain practical ideas for the classroom and put questions to our dedicated team by registering for one of our events here.	https://www.wjec.co.uk/home/professional-learning/
Past papers	Access the bank of past papers for this qualification, including the most recent assessments. Please note that we do not make past papers available on the public website until 12 months after the examination.	Portal by WJEC or on the WJEC subject page
Grade boundary information	Grade boundaries are the minimum number of marks needed to achieve each grade. For ungraded specifications grade boundaries are expressed on a Uniform Mark Scale (UMS). UMS grade boundaries remain the same every year as the range of UMS mark percentages allocated to a particular grade does not change. UMS grade boundaries are published at overall subject and unit level. For linear specifications, a single grade is awarded for the subject, rather than for each unit that contributes towards the overall grade. Grade boundaries are published on results day.	For ungraded specifications click here: Results, Grade Boundaries and PRS (wjec.co.uk)

¹ Please note that where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

Exam Results Analysis	WJEC provides information to examination centres via the WJEC Portal. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.	Portal by WJEC
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Bank of Professional Learning materials	Access our bank of Professional Learning materials from previous events from our secure website and additional pre-recorded materials available in the public domain.	Portal by WJEC or on the WJEC subject page.
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Executive Summary

Both examination papers were of a similar standard to previous examination series.

Candidates this year performed broadly the same as last year with the mean marks on both units being similar.

There was a marked improvement in the use of data (AO2) on the extended writing questions, but candidates are still not recognising the prompt i.e. the business name in the lower tariff questions, to highlight their answers which need to be specific to the case studies. Candidates need to know the command words to understand what they are being assessed on but also know that when a question quotes the business name, then AO2 marks are being awarded and there needs to be direct reference to the text and the answers need to be in the context of the case study. Too many of the answers are generic and not meeting the assessment criteria.

Many candidates also lacked the skills to develop their analysis and therefore AO3 marks were relatively low throughout the two units. Candidates need to fully explore the impact(s) of the changes to the business to be able to gain more marks. Often simplistic thoughts are suggested but these are not developed.

Too many candidates miss out on achieving the higher bands for AO3 by giving superficial explanations and unsupported judgements, which are often one-sided. Far too many responses to the evaluation questions were one-sided, resulting in the top band for AO3 not being accessed.

There were a number of topics assessed across the two units that highlighted gaps in knowledge, understanding and skills. These are listed in the detailed report and split into the respective exam the topics were covered in. It is imperative that candidates access the full breadth of the course prior to the exams as many are ill-equipped to answer questions in a variety of topics.

There continues to be issues with the legibility of candidate's work which makes marking more difficult and could result in undermarking answers as the correct answer cannot be understood. This is coupled with candidates not labelling their answers when they are using additional materials. This risks the candidates not having all their answer considered when marked, if it isn't easily found in the booklet. These basic skills are important parts of exam technique to try and maximise the number of marks awarded.

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UNIT 1: BUSINESS WORLD

Overview of the Unit

The performance of candidates on Unit 1 was similar to last year although the mean mark is very slightly down by 2.1% . Candidates, as always, were able to gain many of the AO1 marks available and whilst there was an improvement in AO2 marks on the extended writing questions, there were many examples of AO2 marks not be awarded on the lower tariff questions. This year the AO3 marks were lower, as candidates did not evaluate or assess their answers fully. It is clear that centres need to help candidates develop the skills to consider the wider impact of business decisions.

There were clear examples of topics that candidates were not confident in answering questions about including:

- Interpreting graphs (market research data) and advising a business.
- Procurement
- Growth strategies (external)
- Distribution channels
- Impact on stakeholders
- Franchising
- Environmentally friendly policies
- Improving cashflow

Candidates had an attempt rate of 88% on the four higher tariff questions which is the same as last year (2024). This shows that candidates were prepared to attempt the extended writing tasks. These questions, this year, had a lower number of AO1 marks available (all 4 awarded just 2 marks each) with the mean mark being higher than two on all questions. This suggests that most candidates accessed AO2 and/or AO3 marks on these questions, suggesting an improvement in exam technique.

As was the case last year, there were quite a number of examples where writing was barely legible and poorly written. Poor handwriting makes awarding marks more difficult and could result in candidates being awarded lower marks than they should achieve.

Candidates did not always label the additional materials correctly. This meant that answers had to be looked for, rather than being easily found. Candidates should ensure correct labelling to guarantee getting all the relevant marks awarded.

Comments on individual questions/sections

- Q.1** Nearly all candidates were able to gain two marks about the benefits of operating in the EU. This was statistically the most accessible question on unit 1.
- Q.2** Candidates found Q.2 more difficult than Q.1 with many of the incorrect answers selecting BOGOF.
- Q.3** The candidates made more errors on this set of multiple-choice answers than in previous years. There was particular difficulty with 3(c) with more than 50% of candidates selecting ethical practices rather than sustainability. Around 45% of candidates incorrectly answered 3(d) by selecting Private limited company (Ltd) rather than partnership.

Q.4: Wesley Marshal

- (a) The mean mark for this question was less than 1 out of 2. Those candidates that did not gain higher marks generally described characteristics of an entrepreneur rather than the role of an entrepreneur. Many candidates repeated the stem of the question by stating that entrepreneur's start-up a business, which gained no marks.
- (b) Some candidates achieved 2 marks but many were awarded 0. Common errors included suggesting two pieces of a finance plan or explaining the need for a business plan. Some candidates lacked knowledge of key terms and used terms like goals. Candidates need to be more accurate in their understanding of the key sections of a business plan.

Q.5: Holyhead Home Furnishings

- (a) The mean mark suggests that many candidates understood the term cost-plus pricing and could calculate the impact of a 65% mark-up on a £20 product. Those candidates that did not get 2 marks were awarded 1 mark for calculating either £13 or adding £20 to an incorrect calculation of 65% of £20.
- (b) The average mark was 1.3 out of 2 marks, showing a good understanding of the problems of cost-plus pricing. The majority of candidates were able to identify that cost-plus pricing could lead to higher or uncompetitive prices, which would lead to lower sales. A few candidates were not able to answer this question. This correlated with those that were unable to answer 5 (a) showing a gap in their knowledge when it came to cost-plus pricing.
- (c) 54% of candidates successfully identified quantitative data. The most common incorrect answers were primary/field (in the question), market research (in the stem) or describing a method of primary research e.g. questionnaire.
- (d) This is the question that caused the greatest difficulty on the entire paper. The mean mark was less than 1 out of 3. The main issues were that candidates did not refer to the graphs or misread them e.g. stating the average price of a product is £40 - £59.99 (it was the average spend per customer). The candidates also made general statements such as reduce all the prices. Candidates were expected to make more detailed observations and comments.

Q.6: Dobbies

- (a) Candidates struggled to identify two responsibilities of the Human Resources department. The average mark on the question was 0.6 out of 2. Many candidates did not use key terms such as recruitment or suggested answers that were not about the workers of the business.
- (b) Some candidates produced good answers for this question about procurement. They were able to describe what procurement means, link it to Dobbies e.g. plants etc and also explain why procurement was important e.g. impact on prices or quality of products. The average mark for this question was 1.5 out of 4 but the range of marks suggest that candidates were either awarded 3/4 marks or 0. There was clearly a lack of knowledge about procurement with many answers described the supply chain in general terms. This was also the least attempted question on the paper with only 78% of candidates providing an answer.
- (c) Many candidates compared social media to traditional media methods but did not outline the benefits of using it. There were many generic answers but candidates were unable to suggest specific reasons why Dobbies would benefit from using it e.g. having direct links to the website or different platforms attract different market segments.
- (d) Many candidates attempted this question but did not correctly calculate the increase in the number of garden centres, limiting their marks to the own figure rule. Candidates needed to calculate the increase by subtracting 37 from 68. Many candidates just used 37 as the increase.
- (e) Candidates gained higher marks on this question than any other extended answer question in the paper. This was helped by good AO2 marks compared to previous exams. Candidates attempted to use the information such as the £135 million cost, the £8 million per year profits and the impact of being the largest garden centre operator in the UK. However, candidates did struggle to gain AO3 marks as evaluation was generally “limited” and focussed on the costs.

Q.7: Lewis Pies

- (a) Candidates found this the second most difficult question on the exam with an average of 0.6 out of 2. One of the reasons that so many candidates struggled to gain credit was their inability to explain what batch production was, with many describing mass production. However, the main issue was that candidates could not link how batch production was essential to Lewis pies to produce their range of products/favours/different size of orders/making products fresh for orders.
- (b) The average mark for this question was 2 out 4. Candidates were generally able to describe one or two methods of ensuring how quality products were manufactured but struggled to apply this to Lewis Pies.
- (c) Many candidates could identify one reason for selling to retailers and individual customers with the most common explanation being an increase in the size of the target market and therefore greater sales. Few candidates were able to consider other reasons such as higher profit margins when sold to customers or retailers having established customers. This question highlighted that many candidates could not identify the benefits of using different channels of distribution.
- (d) The average mark on this question was 3.9 out of 10. The majority of candidates could identify stakeholders of the business. Those that did not, confused the term stakeholder and shareholder. Whilst Lewis Pies is Ltd and therefore has shareholders, candidates were unable to gain many AO2 or AO3 marks as their assessment focussed solely on the owners. Candidates were able to use some of the data to support the answer such as the increased range of food and the cleaning systems but AO3 statements centred around the benefits to employees and customers with very few considering the negative impacts on stakeholders.

Q8: A Tutor 4 U

- (a) Candidates were able to provide a basic outline of a sole trader with most identifying it as a business owned by one person. Those candidates that did not earn full marks often described an entrepreneur and the characteristics of an entrepreneur.
- (b) Many candidates were able to identify at least one benefit of being a sole trader. However, many struggled to link this benefit to June Davies and A Tutor 4 U. Candidates need to use the data on the lower tariff questions to justify and support their suggestions.
- (c) The average mark and the spread of marks suggests that most candidates were awarded either 2 or 0 marks. Candidates sometimes suggested expansion, when growth was already provided. Candidates also provided single word answers such as sales or profit. There is an expectation that candidates are aware that most businesses try to increase profits or sales.
- (d) Many candidates could identify a suitable source of finance such as a loan, savings or friends and family. Very few answers explained why June would use the specific method suggested e.g. only £5000 start-up costs or had savings from previous job as a teacher.
- (e) The average mark for this question was 1 out of 2. There were a few candidates who did not understand the term trademark but many that knew that it stops other people using the name. However, not many candidates were able to explain the importance of a trademark to a business suggesting a gap in understanding.
- (f) This question about franchising highlighted a lack of understanding about the advantages and disadvantages of using franchising as a specific growth method. Many candidates focussed on the general benefits of growth but could not confidently demonstrate that they knew why franchising would be used to grow a business. Some candidates discussed how A Tutor 4 U could be a franchisee which resulted in some low marks. Those candidates that did discuss how franchising could be used to grow a tutoring business were able to gain AO2 marks by considering that the business may struggle to attract franchisees as it was a small local business without a unique selling point.

Q.9: Little Haven Campsite

- (a) Many candidates were able to suggest an environmental policy for Little Haven campsite with most successful candidates suggesting recycling or bins. Those candidates that were not awarded marks generally suggested banning motorhomes/caravans or allowing wildlife in the campsite.
- (b) The average mark for this question was 1.3 out of 2. Most candidates understood what a business would include in a job description but despite the question telling candidates to use the information above and relate their answer to Little Haven Campsite, they provided generic answers such as number of days, hours of work and duties. Candidates need to know that including the name of the business in the question identifies that AO2 marks are being awarded.
- (c) Many candidates could identify on-the-job training as a suitable training method. Credit was also given for examples of on-the-job training such as job shadowing or induction. Candidates generally struggled to gain a second mark as the answers were generic and not able to describe how Little Haven Campsite would deliver that training or what the workers would be trained to do.
- (d) Candidates struggled with this question with an average of only 0.8 out of 2. Most answers that gained marks met the criteria for AO1 marks and identified the benefit of training staff but very few candidates were awarded AO2 marks as they didn't describe how Little Haven Campsite would benefit from training.
- (e) Candidates found Q.9(e) one of the most accessible questions with an average mark of 2.5 out of 3. This shows that most candidates understand cashflows and how to calculate missing figures. Those candidates that didn't get all three answers correct generally calculated part (iii) as a positive answer when it was a negative amount.
- (f) The average mark for this question was 3.4 out of 10. The best answers were able to identify ways that Little Haven Campsite could improve its cashflow position by increasing revenue and cutting costs. Many candidates were able to gain AO2 marks by selecting specific information from the text such as deposits, advertising and salaries. The AO3 marks were general low with many candidates unable to identify the positives and negative impacts of methods to improve cashflow.

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UNIT 2: BUSINESS PERCEPTIONS

Overview of the Unit

The mean mark on Unit 2 was 24 marks out of 60. This shows that the exam had a similar mean mark as 2024 (23.7). Candidates were more confident with their application to the data than in previous years but like Unit 1 need to develop their answers to earn higher AO3 marks.

The topics that candidates had the greatest difficulty with were:

- The meaning of product portfolio
- Calculating net profit margin and stating the formula
- The purpose of the recruitment process
- Evaluating multi-channel distribution
- Describing how to provide good customer service
- International trade

The lower marks on the topics listed above was not generally the knowledge and understanding (apart from net profit margin) but the candidates' ability to provide analysis, evaluation and judgements (AO3).

There were continued issues with presentation. There were many examples of scripts that were very difficult to read accurately which may be reducing the number of marks that candidates are awarded.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Q1: Sports Kit and Clothing (SKC)

- (a) Describing the term product portfolio was statistically the 4th most difficult question on the Unit 2 exam. Those that did know the term could give a limited description but struggled to provide more detail. Those candidates that were awarded 2 marks generally used the case study to provide an example of SKCs product portfolio which was credited marks.
- (b) Stating the formula and calculating the net profit margin was the second hardest question on the exam paper according to the data. Many were unable to state the formula and therefore calculate the correct answer, resulting in 0 marks. Those candidates that could state the formula generally got the calculation correct as well, although there were some errors with rounded which meant only 1 mark was awarded.

- (c) Many candidates were confident in attempting this question and were generally able to refer to the data or make calculations such as the change of key figures between years. However, many candidates did not analyse the data and identify the reasons for the change in the financial performance, such as opening new stores. This was required to be awarded the AO3 marks. Another issue that some candidates had was not being specific about whether they were referring to gross or net profit and therefore marks could not be awarded in those instances.
- (d) Generally, the candidates were awarded 0 or 2 marks on this question. Many candidates could not show specific understanding of VAT with some descriptions being generic and confused with income tax. Those candidates that did achieve two marks were able to explain how prices of goods increasing would affect sales of the business, although other correct responses were credited.
- (e) This was statistically the most difficult question on Unit 2 with a mean average of 1.6 out of 6. Candidates were able to show knowledge of the recruitment process and a few of the stages, although others did not develop anything more than general statements about internal and external recruitment. Very few candidates explained why each of the stages is important and how it ensures the business recruits the best person for the job. Candidates were also expected to show the formal nature of a recruitment process when appointing a manager.
- (f) Most candidates understood the term multi-channel and could give a limited explanation about the advantages and/or disadvantages. Answers also lacked reference to the data, how SKC is a multi-channel business and how being a multi-channel business would help them serve the whole of the UK and not just those areas with shops.
- (g) Candidates had good knowledge and understanding of ethics and considered the effects of being ethical. Most responses focussed on the positive affects of being ethical but a balanced view was needed for full AO3 marks. Many candidates could make reference to the ethical policies of SKC and therefore gained AO2 marks.

Q2: Rimstyle

- (a) The data shows that many candidates could calculate the increase in the value of the alloy wheel market. However, a significant number of candidates did not know how to calculate percentage increase. There were a minority of candidates that made the calculation but rounded incorrectly and so were awarded 1 mark.
- (b) The mean mark on this question was 1 out of 4. Candidates found it difficult to separate customer service and the sales process so were unable to recall the stages of good customer service. The most common answers for those that did understand the topics referred to “encouraging feedback” or “responding to feedback”. Candidates that couldn’t remember the stages still gained marks by making reference to emails or an easy to use website to help customers.
- (c) This was statistically the best answered question on the exam with many candidates identifying at least one location factor and explaining how it benefits Rimstyle. The average mark was 2.4 out of 4. The most common reference to the location was the variety of transport links available.
- (d) Many candidates had good knowledge and understanding of buying in large quantities and referred to it as just-in-case. Candidates could evaluate the stock control method with the most common advantage being economies of scale. However, candidates did not make enough use of the data to support their answers and there was very little development of their evaluation beyond limited statements. Answers were often talking about the impact in profits rather than exploring all the impacts of buying in bulk.
- (e) The average mark on this question was 4.4 out of 12. Candidates were able to identify at least one benefit of international trade but not all answers considered the problems. There were many candidates that did not use the data to support their answers although the most common link was the excellent transport options. The evaluation and advice given was often too superficial to gain significant marks for AO3 and candidates need to develop this skill further.

Supporting you

Useful contacts and links

Our friendly subject team is on hand to support you between 8.30am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

Tel: 029 2240 4257

Email: business@wjec.co.uk

Qualification webpage: [GCSE Business](#)

See other useful contacts here: [Useful Contacts | WJEC](#)

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