



GCSE Examiners' Report

Business
GCSE
Summer 2024

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 unitised 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 unitised 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
Classroom Resources	Access our extensive range of FREE classroom resources, including blended learning materials, exam walk-throughs and knowledge organisers to support teaching and learning.	https://resources.wjec.co.uk/
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.
Become an examiner with WJEC.	We are always looking to recruit new examiners or moderators. These opportunities can provide you with valuable insight into the assessment process, enhance your skill set, increase your understanding of your subject and inform your teaching.	Become an Examiner WJEC

Contents

	Page
Executive summary	5
Unit 1: Business World	6
Unit 2: Business Perceptions	12
Supporting you – useful contacts and links	15

Executive Summary

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

There was a notable improvement in candidates' overall knowledge of many topic areas of the specification. However, there were also quite a few gaps in knowledge and often candidates showed knowledge but were unable to demonstrate understanding of that knowledge. The examination papers will always allocate a range of AO1 marks across a wide content range, some of these marks will be given for simple recall (knowledge) and some for understanding. Many candidates obtained a high proportion of their marks through AO1 knowledge but were unable to develop their responses beyond simple recall and therefore missed out on AO1 understanding marks and AO3 explanation and analysis marks.

There was also evidence, throughout quite a few questions in both papers, of misconceptions and incorrect knowledge of key business terms. Many candidates are missing out on further marks by giving simplistic and brief responses to questions allocated more than 1 mark. There were far too many short responses, with many candidates only offering a few words in their answer.

In both examination papers using the given data or context is key to achieving marks beyond AO1. All the data in the stems, scenarios and case studies are there for a reason and in many cases can help candidates frame their responses. However, far too many candidates are simply not using that data or using it in a very superficial way. Centres should focus on developing the skill of application and allowing and progressing candidates' ability to use both qualitative and quantitative data in order to explain, analyse and evaluate specific contexts. Too many candidates show good knowledge but make no attempt to apply this knowledge to the specific context in the question.

Candidates continue to offer application by simply using the name of the business. This is not application; candidates need to apply their understanding through embedding their response in the given context. In the unit 1 paper the stems leading into the question give key information that is often ignored. The unit 2 paper gives detailed information about the business in question, yet often, this information is underused or ignored. Centres should focus on how to make better use of this information and that time is given in the exam (10 minutes stated on the front of the exam booklet) to allow candidates to identify key information in the scenario.

In higher tariff questions that usually have a higher allocation of marks for AO3, candidates need to develop their answers and if required, give a balanced evaluation. 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.

Areas for improvement	Classroom resources	Brief description of resource
Understanding how to respond to the different assessment objectives and command words	GCSE business assessment objectives	Interactive slides about assessment objectives and different command words
Gaps in knowledge of some topics	Knowledge organisers	Downloadable and printable topic information sheets

BUSINESS

GCSE

Summer 2024

UNIT 1: BUSINESS WORLD

Overview of the Unit

- Many candidates were able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding across the majority of the examination paper. Those candidates that performed best, made clear and direct reference to the data provided, to add context to their answers.
- There were gaps in knowledge that centres might need to address. The most common topics are sales process, the benefits of franchising, segmentation, taxation, contribution method, SMART targets, legislation and location factors. There were also some candidates that had limited understanding of private limited companies and multi-channel distribution.
- All the extended written questions had an attempt rate of over 88%, demonstrating that most candidates felt confident to try these questions and had some knowledge and understanding of the assessed topics. However, the mean marks on all these questions were only just above the allocated number of AO1 marks, which suggests that candidates achieved few AO2 or AO3 marks. The more able candidates provided some excellent responses to the longer questions. They had good knowledge of terms and concepts, which they applied to the specific context. Data was analysed appropriately to support their response. In the very good responses, the evaluation considered both the positive and negative impacts of business decisions.
- The main issue arising from this year's unit 1 paper, as it was in previous years, was the lack of application (AO2). Whilst some candidates demonstrated effective application to either the business in the scenario or the industry/market in which they operate, the majority made little or no reference to it. Limited use of the data makes it difficult for candidates to gain high AO3 marks as the analysis or discussion does not consider the full impact on the business in the question.
- There were quite a few 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.

Comments on individual questions/sections

- Q.1** Nearly all candidates attempted this question about cooperatives. A large number of candidates achieved two marks. Those that did not, correctly identified that one feature of a cooperative was "decisions are made by voting". Those candidates that got at least one answer wrong thought that cooperatives were "owned by shareholders".

Q.2 100% of candidates attempted this question about environmental policies with nearly all candidates achieving two marks (mean mark was 1.9). This shows that it was an accessible question that allowed candidates to demonstrate good understanding of environmental policies.

Q.3 Over 99% of candidates attempted to identify the correct terms with most candidates gaining full marks. However, those candidates that selected the incorrect answers generally selected “closing the sale” for 3(a) and “private sector” for 3(d).

Q.4: Purrrfect Petz

- (a) Many candidates correctly selected the data from the table. However, very few candidates were able to use the figures to calculate the percentage change.
- (b) This question required candidates to describe a trend about the number of franchises. Statistically most candidates were awarded one mark for a limited description that simply stated that the number of franchises was increasing. Very few candidates achieved two marks as they did not identify that the number of franchises was increasing at a faster rate.
- (c) This question required candidates to suggest and explain one benefit of becoming a franchisor. This was statistically the most difficult question on the exam paper with a mean mark of just 0.4 out of 2. The main reason for this was because candidates described the general benefits of growth rather than being specific about being a franchisor. A common example of this would be that the business has more shops and so can increase its profits.

Q.5: Gareth Rees SimplyApps

- (a) Candidates needed to name characteristics of being an entrepreneur (AO1) and link these to information in the text (AO2). The mean mark of 2.7 out of 4 shows that most candidates could either name characteristics or select parts of the data to demonstrate the characteristics with few candidates being able to do both. A few candidates selected a valid piece of information but identified a characteristic that it didn't represent. Over 98% of candidates attempted this question, outlining its accessibility.
- (b) This question could be answered by either stating USP meant unique selling point or giving an accurate definition. The mean mark of 0.8 out of 1 shows that many candidates were able to answer this correctly.
- (c) Many of the candidates' answers to this question showed they did not understand the concept of cash and how it differs to profit. Too many candidates didn't suggest a valid reason why cash (in the bank) was important when running a business.

Q.6: Sumptuous Scents

- (a) The mean mark for this question was 0.5 out of 1. This highlights that only 50% of candidates got this correct. The most common correct answers for this question were income and gender. The most common incorrect marks stated “expensive” or “male/female”. There was a gap in knowledge about the key segmentation terms.

- (b)** Many candidates understood that to calculate the average, they needed to add up all the market values and divide by the number of years. However, many candidates did not get full marks due to incorrectly adding the totals, dividing by a number other than six or rounding the answer incorrectly. Those that made these errors were awarded one mark.
- (c)** Many candidates struggled with this question as they seemed to confuse the different types of taxation. The most common error was candidates describing the effect of income tax changes. Those candidates that did earn full marks generally stated that lowering VAT could allow Sumptuous Scents to reduce their prices, as less revenue paid to the Government, making products more affordable, increasing sales.

(d) (i) and **(d) (ii)** were the most accessible parts of Q.6. There was a mean mark of 1.5 (out of 2) for Q.6(d)(i). Most candidates could describe the information in the profit and loss account. Those candidates that did not get full marks generally used the word profit rather than using the specific terms of gross or net profit. There was a mean mark of 0.9 (out of 1) for Q.6(d)(ii). This shows that most of the candidates gained a mark. The most common reason for candidates not getting the mark was caused by confusing the word cost and price e.g. the business could increase its costs.

- (e) (i)** This question was attempted by over 97% of candidates and had a mean mark of 1.4 out of 2. Most candidates could name at least one stage of the recruitment process, but some struggled to remember two. Some candidates could not remember the key terms of the stages so tried to describe them instead.
- (ii)** Proved more difficult with an average mark of 0.8 out of 2. Many of the candidates could explain why references were important e.g. to see how they performed in their previous job, but too many used general statements such as to make sure they are trustworthy. Although it wasn't essential for the candidates to get full marks, very few explained that references came from employers/teacher etc which would have gained further marks.
- (f)** Was the first of the extended writing questions. The mean mark was 3.3 out of 8. Most candidates were able to identify different forms of media to gain AO1 marks. However, there was very limited application to Sumptuous Scents with only a few candidates using the data to influence their advertising choices. Those candidates that did gain AO2 marks identified that they sell expensive products, to men and women, were opening new shops and had net profits of 64 000 in 2024. The evaluation of the advertising methods often only considered the advantages of each method and not the disadvantages. Without candidates making reference to the data, it is difficult for them to get high AO3 marks as the evaluation is often generic.

Q.7: Yum Yum Meals

- (a) The mean mark for this question was 0.7 out of 2. Too many candidates had limited knowledge of the importance of writing a business plan. Those candidates that were awarded marks outlined either business plans were used to set out aims and objectives or required to get a loan. Very few candidates could develop their answer, which limited their marks. Statements such as it “means that the business won’t fail” or “it will stop any problems” were common, which were not credited marks as they are not accurate enough.
- (b) This question required candidates to state the contribution formula for break-even and then use it to calculate the break-even point using the data. The statistics for this question suggest that candidates generally achieved 3 marks or 0. This would suggest that 50% of candidates were not able to recall the correct formula and therefore unable to gain further marks.
- (c) Candidates were generally able to identify a stakeholder that is affected by UK legislation. The most common examples were workers/customers/owners. However, many candidates were unable to explain the impact of the legislation. Many answers were too general e.g. “treating workers fairly”. Those candidates that were able to gain 3 marks knew specific aspects of the legislation and could describe the effects on the stakeholder.
- (d) Most candidates struggled with this question and answers were often about the reasons for having an organisation chart. Those candidates that gained 2 marks made specific reference to Yum Yum meals. These answers referenced the flat structure, being a small business or there being only one owner.
- (e) This question had a mean mark of 3.7 out of 10. Again, like Q.6(f), most candidates were awarded AO1 marks for their knowledge and understanding of bonuses/piece rate, training and/or job enrichment. Many candidates could evaluate the advantages of each of the methods and how it would improve performance. Once again, many candidates did not receive AO2 marks. Candidates were expected to link the motivational methods to the different roles in the business e.g. managers/factory workers, that it was a small business, it made a loss of £70 000 last year and it was a manufacturing business.

Q.8: Kickflip

- (a) The mean mark was 0.7 out of 2. Those candidates that were awarded 2 marks generally stated that people that invest in businesses are owners and would get a share of the profits. Those candidates that did not gain marks often used the term “money” rather than profit.
- (b) Once again, the statistics suggest that candidates were generally awarded 2 marks or 0. The majority of correct answers simply stated that Kickflip would open another skatepark by the end of the year. Only 88% of candidates attempted this question suggesting a gap in their knowledge.

- (c) This question had a mean mark of 3.8 out of 6. Nearly 96% of candidates attempted this question demonstrating that it was a very accessible, higher tariff question. Most candidates referred to both graphs, with many using specific aspects of the data to support their answers. Candidates that used the data to suggest how the skatepark could be adapted, were awarded AO2 marks.
- (d) The mean mark for this question was 0.8 out of 2. The majority of candidates could suggest a valid example e.g. quick to gather, cheaper than primary research etc. However, most candidates could not describe the reason for the advantage.
- (e) A mean mark of 2.1 out of 8 shows that this was the most difficult of the extended answer questions. One reason for the lower mean mark is that it was attempted less than the other higher tariff questions (88%). There were also common errors such as some candidates referred to PLCs. Many candidates were not awarded AO2 marks. Those candidates that did gain AO2 marks referred to the £55 000 the partners had invested, the £21 000 profit, the cost of setting up another skatepark and the facilities needed (using the graphs).

Q.9: Gwlad Gadgets

- (a) The vast majority of candidates correctly identified the smart-band as a durable good.
- (b) The mean mark for this question was 1.5 out of 3. Many candidates made a suitable suggestion for improving sales (extension strategy) and referred to the sales falling (decline/saturation) but did not say how it would improve sales e.g. make the product more affordable.
- (c) Location, as in previous exams, proved to be a difficult topic for many candidates. There was clear confusion with siting factors resulting in lower marks. Those candidates that gave answers that can influence location and siting e.g. close to competitors, close to workers were rarely able to link their answer to Gwlad Gadgets. The mean mark on this question was 1.6 out of 4.
- (d) The mean mark on this question was 0.5 out of 2. Candidates confused characteristics of the job role and the characteristics of a person that might have that job role. Many candidates made comments such as “supervisors are in charge of all workers”, which isn’t accurate enough. Those candidates that did get awarded marks usually stated that operatives “made products” and supervisors “had control over the operatives”.

- (e) The mean mark on this question was 3 out of 10 and 10% of candidates did not attempt this question. Most of the candidates that attempted this question were able to show a good understanding of multi-channel (AO1), although there were cases where candidates confused the term with multinational. Candidates were able to discuss the advantages of being a multi-channel business but did not consider the disadvantages. Again, application (AO2) was not readily seen in the answers. Those that identified that Gwlad Gadgets was selling through retailers and not their own shops were awarded AO2 marks and gained more AO3 marks as they discussed the higher profit margins of selling online due to not having to give the retailers a bigger percentage of revenue. Other candidates gained AO2 marks by discussing the idea of gadget sales benefitting from customers trying the products, considering the size of the retailers they use and the difference in selling directly to customers rather than supplying to warehouses.

BUSINESS

GCSE

Summer 2024

UNIT 2: BUSINESS PERCEPTIONS

Overview of the Unit

- The knowledge and understanding of most of the topics being assessed was good. There were some examples of gaps in knowledge. The key topics were the supply chain, zero-hour contracts, reasons for growth and benefits of internal recruitment.
- AO2 marks were generally better on unit 2. This is likely to be the case as centres are teaching candidates that they have to use the data and explaining that it is a case study paper. There were good examples of candidates being able to select the relevant data from the resource booklet and apply it to the question. However, there is still room for improvement and candidates need to be aware that when the name of the business is in the question that AO2 marks are being awarded.
- When candidates are asked to describe the data, it is important that key information is taken from the case study and written into the answers. The link between the data on the resource booklet and candidates' answers should be clear and direct.
- There were elements of this exam where the AO3 marks were lower than they have been previously. Candidates are writing brief answers which are not fully evaluating or discussing or explaining the effect of the suggestions on the business. There is a tendency for candidates to focus on the knowledge and understanding without fully explaining their answers.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Q.1: PowysRocks Music Festival

- (a) (i) The mean mark for this question was 1.5 out of 2. Most of the candidates were able to select the number of tickets sold in 2023 (15 253), in order to calculate the percentage of tickets sold. There were a number of candidates that were only awarded 1 mark as their answer had been incorrectly rounded when written down.
- (ii) The vast majority of candidates that attempted this question were awarded 1 mark (out of 1). Nearly all candidates found the ticket price of £195, in the data and multiplied it by 15 253.
- (b) The mean mark was 1.4 out of 3. Many candidates could identify a reason why market research was important with the most common answers being "understanding a target market", "checking demand" and "find out about competitors". The answers were often developed to explain the reason for needing this information (AO3). However, few answers applied their answer specifically to PowysRocks and therefore missed out in AO2 marks.

- (c) The statistics on this question shows that there was a gap in understanding about zero-hour contracts. The candidates that knew the terminology were able to gain 2 marks, but a large percentage were awarded 0 marks. There were a few candidates that stated that zero-hour contracts do not guarantee hours but did not apply their answer to StagingUK so were awarded 1 mark.
- (d) A significant number of candidates defined ethics and or profit without linking the points to conflict. The best responses were those linking fair trade or living wage to the effect on profit and prices. A small but notable proportion referenced child labour and paying below minimum wage as considerations. There were a number of candidates that argued that being ethical could earn extra profits (no conflict) which was also awarded marks.
- (e) This question had a mean mark of 3.5 out of 8 which was predominately awarded for AO1 marks. Some candidates were unable to recall key terms e.g. accessibility and others used siting factors that were not relevant in this example e.g. footfall. There were some excellent answers that used the data to support their answers. The site map was particularly effective when discussing size, facilities such as power and water but candidates also referenced the text selecting information about grants, hotels and public transport. The discussion (AO3) was generally marked as limited or good as candidates did not fully discuss the factors that were important when choosing the festival site.
- (f) The mean mark was 3.4 out of 10 although the standard deviation shows that some candidates accessed much higher marks. Once again AO1 was awarded the most marks with many candidates being confident in their knowledge of sources of finance. A few candidates talked in vague terms about internal and external sources of finance without giving relevant examples. In this question the data was generally used well with reference to the £590 000 profit, government grants, inviting more partners/becoming a Ltd and leasing equipment. However, the evaluation of the sources of finance was generally limited with most candidates not considering the disadvantages at all or in a relatively simplistic way e.g. “they have to pay interest”.

Q.2: Wren Kitchens

- (a) Despite over 97% of candidates attempting this question the mean mark was 0.7 out of 2. Too many answers were too simplistic e.g. “to be well known” and “increase reputation”. The most common correct answer was “to increase profits” but not many candidates could identify two correct answers.
- (b) 92% of candidates attempted this question about methods of production. The majority of the marks were awarded for being able to recall the methods of production (AO1) whilst fewer answers correctly linked the method to Wren’s range of kitchens (AO2). There were a number of answers that confused batch and flow/mass production when describing the methods suitability.
- (c) This proved to be the most difficult question on unit 2. Many candidates were unclear about the stages of the supply chain. The answers focussed on their chosen functional area but did not consider the supply chain. Procurement was the best developed stage of the supply chain and those candidates that selected finance were able to access higher marks. The mean mark of 1.6 out of 6 highlights the difficulties faced with this question.

- (d) This question was well answered. Nearly all candidates were able to gain the AO2 marks for selecting a new technology from the resource e.g. 3D design. Slightly fewer candidates could explain how the technology would improve the customer experience but “making changes or “spotting problems” were the two most common reasons given that were credited marks.
- (e) Many of the candidates could describe what internal recruitment was. However, this was not awarded marks as the question asks to assess one benefit of internal recruitment. There were many answers that were limited as candidates made statements such as “reduces training costs”, “motivates workers” and “advertising costs are lower”. However, few candidates could assess why this was the case. There were a number of candidates that gave several benefits rather than developing their answer.
- (f) The mean mark for this question was 0.7 out of 2. Candidates made general statements about the data rather than picking out specific figures and comparing Ikea and Wren. There were some examples of excellent answers which demonstrated good interpretation of the data.
- (g) The spread of marks suggests that most candidates achieved between 2 and 7 marks out of 12. Most candidates had a good awareness of the marketing mix and could describe what they meant (AO1). There were a number of candidates that discussed market research and also packaging which is sometimes considered a 5th element of the marketing mix although it is not relevant in the sale of kitchens. Unfortunately, there was a clear divide with those candidates that used the data and those that gave more generic answers. The better answers used the price comparison chart, the quality chart, the chart about the number of showrooms and the text about sales promotions and advertising. There were some candidates that used this data to justify their approach and were awarded high AO2 marks. Many candidates struggled to gain AO3 marks as they didn’t discuss how Wren could adapt their marketing strategy but tried to evaluate what it was already doing. This was awarded marks but without giving advice about the adaptations, it was difficult to get many AO3 marks.

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 \(wjec.co.uk\)](https://www.wjec.co.uk/gcse-business)

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

CPD Training / Professional Learning

Access our popular, free online CPD/PL courses to receive exam feedback and put questions to our subject team, and attend one of our face-to-face events, focused on enhancing teaching and learning, providing practical classroom ideas and developing understanding of marking and assessment.

Please find details for all our courses here: <https://www.wjec.co.uk/home/professional-learning/>

WJEC Qualifications

As Wales' largest awarding body, WJEC supports its education community by providing trusted bilingual qualifications, specialist support, and reliable assessment to schools and colleges across the country. This allows our learners to reach their full potential.

With more than 70 years' experience, we are also amongst the leading providers in both England and Northern Ireland.



WJEC
245 Western Avenue
Cardiff CF5 2YX
Tel No 029 2026 5000
Fax 029 2057 5994
E-mail: exams@wjec.co.uk
website: www.wjec.co.uk