



GCE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**GCE (NEW)
BUSINESS
AS/Advanced**

SUMMER 2022

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WJEC AS BUSINESS
General Certificate of Education (New)
Summer 2022
Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced
UNIT 1: BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

General Comments

This examination paper was accessible to almost all candidates as a full range of responses were delivered. Some impressive answers were written, and candidates demonstrated an ability to attain marks across each of the four assessment objectives. However, the attainment of marks for application to the scenario given (AO2) continues to be an area for development.

It was pleasing to see a number of excellent responses from well prepared candidates who demonstrated their knowledge of the specification content and effective use of a range of skills.

Those with good numerical skills tended to pick up all quantitative skills marks available but there was considerable evidence that a significant number of the cohort lack these skills. It was evident that several candidates did not take a calculator into the examination which caused difficulties when calculating percentages and breakeven level of output. In addition, a lack of precision was evident when responding to numerical tasks and candidates would be well advised to show the workings to all their calculations.

Comments on individual questions/sections

- Q.1 (a)** This was a very accessible opening question. It was the question with the second highest facility factor of 79.3%. Many candidates achieved full marks and the mean mark was 3.2. Some candidates failed to apply the answer to Joe Charman.
- (b)** Nearly all candidates attempted this question with varying degrees of success illustrated by the mean mark of 5.4. Most candidates showed good knowledge of sources of finance which is reflected in the facility factor of 68% for this question. However, some candidates selected inappropriate sources of finance for Joe Charman to expand his business e.g., overdraft, trade credit and debt factoring.
- Q.2 (a)** This question asked for the definition of a competitive market. Responses to this question were generally weaker due to a lack of learning definitions by candidates. A significant number of candidates defined a perfectly competitive market rather than a competitive market.
- (b)** A high majority of candidates were able to identify the key features of a perfectly competitive market which resulted in the majority of candidates achieving full marks for AO1. Most candidates were able to provide some analysis but the application to the dairy industry was weaker.

- Q.3**
- (a)** Many candidates were able to achieve full marks on this question which is illustrated by the high facility factor of 73.4% and the mean mark of 2.2. The exceptions were when candidates lacked understanding of contribution, when candidates did not have a calculator or when candidates provided an answer of £2 000 rather than 2 000 hoverboards. This error was penalised.
 - (b)** A high majority of candidates were able to describe reasons why consumers need protection which resulted in a high number of candidates achieving full marks for AO1. The strongest candidates referred to a particular Act of Parliament. This however was not necessary for full marks. Most candidates were able to apply the answer to hoverboards also.
 - (c)** Responses to this question were generally weaker with a low mean mark of 1.3. This resulted in this question having the third lowest facility factor. A number of candidates were able to identify the new breakeven level of output but failed to answer the second part of the question.

- Q.4**
- (a)** Many candidates were able to achieve full marks on this question. The exceptions were when candidates did not have a calculator, when candidates failed to round the answer correctly or failed to include % in their answer. The error of omitting the % sign was penalised.
 - (b)** A high majority of candidates were able to achieve full marks on this question. The mean mark for the question was 1.2. Only a very small number of candidates were able to identify the organisations stated in the mark scheme. Most referred to other entrepreneurs, business support websites and the government as sources of information.
 - (c)** This was a very accessible question where candidates showed an excellent understanding of primary and secondary market research. It was the question with the highest facility factor of 84.7% as many candidates achieved full marks.
 - (d)** A number of candidates were able to outline the importance of avoiding bias when conducting market research. Due to a lack of detail and repetition, the mean mark was 1.3.
 - (e)** The responses to this question were generally disappointing, resulting in a very low mean mark of 2.2. This resulted in this question having the lowest facility factor of 27.5%. Several candidates discussed sampling in the context of the benefits and drawbacks of giving free samples to customers which illustrated a lack of understanding of the concept of sampling. These candidates were awarded zero marks. Other candidates focussed the answer solely on providing knowledge of random and quota sampling. Even though these candidates were awarded marks, this did not answer the question which asked for the usefulness of sampling to a business and its customers.

- Q.5**
- A number of candidates struggled in their approach to this question resulting in the second lowest facility factor of 30.5% for the question. Several candidates illustrated confusion over the legal structure of a business. Many stated the various legal factors that affect a business e.g. consumer law, discrimination law, health and safety law, employment law. These candidates were awarded zero marks. Poor examination technique was displayed by a number of candidates through poor timing, as some candidates either failed to answer the question or failed to include sufficient detail in the answer.

Summary of key points

- Candidates must ensure that they have all the necessary equipment in preparation for the examination. Black ink pen and a calculator to ensure accuracy when responding to numerical tasks.
- Some scripts were barely legible, and centres should consider scribes and word processing facilities to candidates with handwriting issues.
- Due to emphasis placed at CPD upon attaining marks through the understanding of the assessment objectives, this has been reflected in the examination scripts. However, the attainment of marks for application to the scenarios given (AO2) is still an area to develop.
- To ensure knowledge marks, candidates must revise concepts and learn definitions fully. The lack of learning concepts and definitions became evident in the questions on a competitive market, bias, sampling, and legal structure of a business.

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UNIT 2: BUSINESS FUNCTIONS

General Comments

A full range of responses were delivered in unit 2. Some impressive answers were written, and candidates demonstrated an ability to attain marks across each of the four assessment objectives.

Most teachers and candidates are conscious of the need to read questions carefully and pay particular attention to command words. This means, for instance, that candidates know when evaluation is expected (key words include assess, consider, discuss and evaluate) and cases where it is not (key words include analyse and explain). Candidates who ignore these command words often waste valuable time in the examination without gaining extra marks.

It appeared that most candidates used the time of the examination effectively and were able to dedicate sufficient time to all questions. Occasionally, candidates missed out a question or provided brief responses, but this seemed to be due to a lack of knowledge rather than an issue with time.

Comments on individual questions/sections

- Q.1**
- 1.1** This data response opening task was undertaken competently by the majority of candidates. Most were able to draw a product life cycle which was applied to the fidget spinner in the UK for 2017. However, only the strongest candidates fully labelled the diagram with Sales on the vertical axis and the stages of the product life cycle. Unfortunately, a significant number of the diagrams were not presented neatly and lacked the use of a ruler to form the product life cycle. Even though this did not affect the mark awarded, it did make reading the response more difficult.
- 1.2** This was a very accessible question. It was the question with the highest facility factor of 84.9% as many candidates achieved full marks. Those candidates who did not obtain full marks did not provide an accurate definition of an extension strategy or failed to give a relevant example for the AO2 mark. However, these candidates were few and far between as the mean mark for this question was 1.7.
- 1.3** A high majority of candidates were able to analyse why the product life cycle of the fidget spinner differs from other products resulting in a mean mark of 2.6 for this question. Most candidates were able to apply the answer to fidget spinners but only the strongest candidates were able to provide examples of other products to analyse the difference between the product life cycle of a fidget spinner and other products. Those candidates referred to Cadbury's Dairy Milk, Coca-Cola and Kellogg's Cornflakes as products who have different product life cycles to the fidget spinner in 2007.

Some candidates discussed the existence of the fidget spinner in the 1990s as part of this answer which was not relevant as that data appeared after question 1.3 in the layout of the paper.

- 1.4** This question asked for a definition of innovation with reference to the fidget spinner. Most candidates were able to provide a definition of innovation. However, the number of candidates using the formal definition which is ‘the commercial exploitation of an invention’ was very limited.
- 1.5** Responses to this question were generally weaker due to a lack of learning definitions and concepts by candidates. This resulted in this question having the second lowest facility factor of 33.7%. Research and development is an area of the specification which should be addressed in more detail as a significant number of candidates considered the costs and benefits of market research rather than R&D. Where candidates were discussing the advantages and disadvantages of primary and secondary research and/or the benefits and drawbacks of quantitative and qualitative market research, those candidates were awarded zero marks.
- Q.2**
- 2.1** This was an accessible question. The question had a facility factor of 61% as many candidates achieved full marks. Those candidates who did not obtain full marks tended to omit either the £ sign or millions from the answer or calculated gross profit rather than net profit. The error of omitting the % sign or millions or m was penalised.
- 2.2** This was a very accessible question. The question had the third highest facility factor of 69% as many candidates achieved full marks. Those candidates who did not obtain full marks tended to omit the % sign or rounded the answer incorrectly. The error of omitting the % sign or incorrect rounding was penalised. However, almost 10% of the cohort failed to answer this question.
- 2.3** A high majority of candidates were able to analyse the financial performance of Tesco over the two-year period resulting in a mean mark of 2.6 for this question and a facility factor of 65.3%. Candidates were able to analyse any aspect of the financial performance of Tesco and the strongest candidates calculated the percentage change in turnover, cost of sales, gross profit, expenses, or net profit in order to analyse the performance further.
- 2.4** A high majority of candidates were able to evaluate ways in which a business could improve its profit, resulting in a mean mark of 3.8 for this question. Most candidates were able to provide good analysis of the suggested ways to improve profit, but some failed to provide an evaluation of the suggested ways.
- 2.5** The responses to this question were disappointing, resulting in a low mean mark of 1.7 and the lowest facility factor of 28.7%. Responses to this question were generally weaker due to a lack of learning definitions and concepts by candidates. Workforce planning is an area of the specification which should be addressed in more detail as a significant number of candidates lacked knowledge and understanding of workforce planning. Without the knowledge and understanding, candidates were unable to analyse the importance of workforce planning, and those candidates were awarded zero marks.

- Q.3**
- 3.1** 96.3% of the candidates answered this question and those candidates who possess strong numerical skills received full marks for the question. The mean mark for this question was 0.9. Those candidates who did not obtain full marks tended to omit the % sign. The error of omitting the % sign was penalised.
 - 3.2** 93.7% of the cohort answered this question. The responses to this question were disappointing, resulting in a low mean mark of 0.6 and the second lowest facility factor of 29.5%. Responses to this question were generally weaker due to a lack of learning definitions by candidates. Economies of scale is an area of the specification which should be addressed in more detail as a significant number of candidates lacked knowledge and understanding of economies of scale.
 - 3.3** 23% of the cohort failed to answer this question. The responses to this question were disappointing, resulting in a low mean mark of 1.5 and the third lowest facility factor of 38.7%. Responses to this question were generally weaker due to a lack of knowledge and understanding of economies of scale. Economies of scale is an area of the specification which should be addressed in more detail as it is a concept which can be applied to several areas of the specification.
 - 3.4** This was a very accessible question. It was the question with the second highest facility factor of 69.3% as many candidates achieved full marks. Those candidates who did not obtain full marks did not explain how the strategies employed by Propercorn had added value. Candidates made excellent use of the case study to apply the answer to Propercorn.
 - 3.5** This was an accessible question resulting in a mean mark of 1.3 for the question. Those candidates who did not receive full marks for the question provided two purposes of marketing, rather than describing one purpose of marketing.
 - 3.6** The mean mark for this question was 6. Too many candidates failed to apply their response to Propercorn and decided to write a theoretical marketing mix response which resulted in this average mean mark. Those that did refer to the text and Propercorn tended to achieve higher marks. Despite referring to each of the 4Ps and the importance of each analysed, too many responses focussed almost entirely on the other 3Ps, rather than product which was the hook in the question. These candidates sacrificed evaluation (AO4) marks as a result.
 - 3.7** 92.4% of the candidates answered this question which suggests that some candidates failed to answer the question maybe due to time constraints. Those candidates who structured their answers well performed better generally. A significant number of candidates illustrated a good understanding, analysis and evaluation of a democratic leadership style and were able to achieve band 2 for AO1, AO3 and AO4 as the advantages and disadvantages of a democratic leadership style were considered. Only the strongest candidates considered the other leadership styles such as autocratic, paternalistic, laissez-faire and bureaucratic leadership styles which resulted in a facility factor of 49.2% for the question.

Summary of key points

- There was evidence that a considerable number of candidates lack numerical skills. Candidates must take a calculator into the examination to avoid difficulties when calculating percentages. In addition, a lack of precision was evident when responding to numerical tasks and candidates would be well advised to show the workings to all their calculations.
- The quality of written communication is a concern. Some scripts were barely legible, and centres should consider scribes and word-processing facilities for candidates with handwriting issues.
- To ensure knowledge marks, candidates must revise and learn definitions and concepts fully. The lack of learning definitions and concepts became evident in the questions on economies of scale, innovation, research and development and workforce planning.
- Data provided in the examination paper must be read and utilised by candidates as it is provided to help candidates formulate their responses. Candidates must also ensure that they read the questions carefully to offer relevant and meaningful responses. This is particularly true for the longer, evaluative questions.

WJEC A LEVEL BUSINESS

General Certificate of Education (New)

Summer 2022

Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced

UNIT 3: BUSINESS ANALYSIS AND STRATEGY

General Comments

This is the first examination paper to be sat by candidates of A Level Business since 2019. In comparison, this paper was slightly less accessible than 2019, with the mean decreasing from 42.7 in 2019 to 39.6 in 2022. The data from all candidates in relation to attempted % shows that most candidates used the time of the examination effectively to dedicate sufficient time to all questions, with between 95.0% and 99.7% of each question being attempted. When questions were not attempted it was more than likely due to limited knowledge of the content area as opposed to a lack of time.

The quality of written communication was very good, with very few scripts or sections of scripts being illegible. There were examples of excellence within scripts where candidates achieved the very highest standards. In these scripts, there was evidence of detailed knowledge and understanding from across the specification content areas, excellent levels of analysis and evaluation with balanced responses and high levels of reasoning as well as knowledge being applied to the data and/or within the context of the business within the data. Good levels of knowledge and understanding (AO1) were shown across a wide range of topic areas within the examination paper. In particular, candidates seemed to understand methods of growth for Question 2, special orders and contribution for Question 4 and window dressing for Question 5(c). Similar to the examination in 2019, weaker answers tended to repeat/quote the stimulus material, whereas stronger answers were able to provide judgements and bring in wider context knowledge.

Candidates often failed to show good or excellent levels of analysis. For example, points were listed as opposed to developed with chains of reasoning, thus making it difficult for them to score higher marks on certain questions, this was particularly noticeable in Question 1(d) and Question 6. The candidates that did score higher marks were able to provide a sufficient number of points to show knowledge, but they then went on to fully develop the points with chains of reasoning and balanced arguments. In addition, they would use the data presented to justify their arguments and provide evidence.

Quantitative skills in terms of calculations were strong in this examination paper, shown within Question 1(a) and Question 4(b). However, it should be noted that candidates are not as effective when asked to use the data within a written response or when the data could be used to help develop arguments.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Q.1 (a) There were a number of candidates who achieved full marks on this question.

The exceptions were when candidates misinterpreted the graph. This question proved to be least challenging of all on the examination paper with a facility factor of 79.7 and a mean mark of 0.8 out of 1.

- Q.1** (b) There were a number of candidates that answered this question well, with some achieving full marks. Those that did achieve high marks were able to illustrate good or excellent levels of application of knowledge, by identifying suitable reasons why data within a sales forecasting graph would aid the planning of the Seaways Hotel Chain or a hotel in general for example, 'to plan staffing' or 'to plan stock levels'. These candidates then went on to provide specific examples of stock or staff needed within a hotel and gave the reasons why this would benefit the hotel chain. Weaker answers suggested points that illustrated knowledge and understanding but no AO1 was assessed in this question, these answers failed to apply this knowledge to the business in the questions or the data in the graph. The case study provided information that could quite easily have been applied.

Overall, this proved to be the second most challenging question for candidates, with a facility factor of 43.0 and mean mark of 2.6 out of 6.

- (c) Many candidates were able to achieve at least 3 marks on this question because there were AO1 marks available for illustrating knowledge and understanding of the factors that may affect the reliability of sales forecasts. Responses included issues such as 'past data not being a true reflection of the future, manual errors in data entry and the impact of external influences on future sales'. However, candidates found application of knowledge more challenging. The better answers would link their knowledge to areas such as 'Covid causing hotels to close and therefore sales would be lower than expected or resulting in increased staycations, so sales would be higher or the impact of poor weather in the Summer which would result in a loss of sales and fewer customers staying at the hotel'.
- (d) This proved to be one of the more challenging questions on the examination paper, with a facility factor of 46.8 and a mean mark of 3.7 out of 8. The main issue was that despite having knowledge of the meaning of qualitative sales forecasting, candidates either did not have knowledge of the Delphi method and intuition or the analysis and evaluation of relevant points lacked detail, chains of reasoning and judgements, preventing candidates from achieving band 3 and excellent levels of analysis (AO3) and evaluation (AO4). The candidates that did perform well in this question provided a definition of qualitative techniques and then fully analysed both the benefits and drawbacks of using both the Delphi method and intuition.

- Q.2** (a) With a facility factor of 56.3, this was an accessible question for the majority of candidates. Many candidates were able to identify benefits and/or drawbacks of horizontal integration. Therefore, many candidates were able to access band 2 for AO1. With an extensive case study, nearly all candidates were able to achieve AO2 marks but in a number of cases, application was limited with data simply listed and not used effectively. In order to achieve the higher bands for AO3, candidates were expected to provide good or excellent levels of analysis. In the majority of cases, candidates were able to access at least band 2 for AO3, with a good progression of arguments provided to demonstrate the effects of horizontal integration to a business, such as increased revenue due to an increased customer base as a result of reduction competition or potential costs savings as a result of economies of scale. However, there were candidates who simply listed points or provided a one-sided argument, therefore they remained in band 1 or band 2 for AO3.

- Q.2** (b) This question required candidates to evaluate whether or not horizontal integration was the best form of growth for Sainsbury's. Nearly all candidates were able to provide evaluation but to varying degrees of success. The strongest candidates were able to pull all the arguments together to provide fully balanced evaluations with judgements to support their evaluation. For example, candidates suggested that horizontal integration would help to improve efficiencies or save money through rationalisation and also may have suggested that it could negatively affect short term profits due to the cost. However, weaker answers would repeat points from Question 2(a) which tended to be knowledge as opposed to evaluation.
- Q.3** (a) With a facility factor of 55.7 and a mean mark of 2.8 out of 5, this was an accessible question. Many candidates were able to distinguish between financial and non-financial data and were therefore able to identify key figures from the case study. For example, candidates would identify that the customer rating improved and/or the staff turnover or accident rates were getting worse. However, the biggest challenge to candidates was using this data to analyse the performance of PD Home Builders Ltd. The majority of answers simply stated that the performance was good or poor and/or it was improving. To achieve the highest levels, the data needed to be used to analyse the reason(s) why the data may suggest that the business is improving or underachieving, such as stating that with customer ratings improving it may suggest that quality of homes are better and customers are satisfied.
- (b) This question required candidates to demonstrate an ability to identify business objectives and use them to analyse and evaluate the impact they could have on the business, its customers, and employees. A wide range of financial and non-financial data was provided in the case study. The very best answers identified three objectives and provided positive and negative impacts on the business, its customers, and employees. It did not require a positive and a negative impact for each objective and for each stakeholder, but there did need to be balance across the answer. A minority of candidates found it difficult to relate to customers, employees, and the business and therefore this negatively impacted on the overall marks awarded. In some cases, it appeared as though candidates were unsure of which objectives or how the objectives, linked to customers, employees or the business.
- Q.4** (a) A mean of 1.1 out of 2 illustrates that this was an accessible question. Most candidates were able to either provide an acceptable definition of special orders or they were able to provide an accurate example to Classy Bows Ltd. There were a number of candidates who provided perfect responses with an accurate definition and valid example.

- (b) Overall, this was answered well, with many candidates achieving all 3 marks.

This is evident in the facility factor of 69.8 and mean mark of 2.1 out of 3. As with all calculations, it is best practice to show all workings, for example the formula for calculating contribution – contribution per unit x quantity sold, followed by the relevant steps within the calculation. OFR is applied to calculation questions so in situations where a candidate makes an error in one part of the calculation, then 2 marks could still be awarded despite having an incorrect final answer. It is important to remember that the final figures, in this case the total contribution, must be expressed in the correct format, in this case with a £ sign. If not AO2 marks will be deducted, in this case 1 mark.

- Q.4** (c) Generally, this question was answered extremely well, with a number of candidates achieving full marks and very few candidates illustrating no knowledge and understanding of the factors that should be considered before taking a special order. Key issues identified included the impact on staff and resources, existing customers, and the opportunity to gain loyal customers and/or enter new markets. The strongest candidates used the data very well to provide detailed and balanced analysis of the impact accepting the order would have on the business (Classy Bows Ltd). Those that did not achieve the top bands across the assessment objectives usually achieved 3/4 marks but missed out on Band 2 for AO2, AO3 and/or AO4 by providing a list of factors to consider.

The facility factor for this question was 57.1 and the mean mark was 4.6 out of 8.

- Q.5** (a) The majority of candidates answered this question well, with an accurate definition of 'Current Liabilities' provided and a relevant example. There were very few candidates illustrating misconceptions with Current Assets or Long-term Liabilities. There was also some evidence where candidates knew the definition but could not provide a relevant example.

- (b) This question required candidates to demonstrate knowledge of current ratios and then use this knowledge to evaluate the current ratios of Sheds For Wales Ltd. In the main, candidates were able to demonstrate knowledge of what current ratios measure and what textbooks suggest the ideal ratio is in order to access the AO1 marks. However, candidates found this question to be the most challenging on the examination paper because only a minority were able to use their knowledge and the data to evaluate the ratios and make judgements. Candidates often thought it was sufficient to say that the current ratio increased without suggesting why that would be important to Sheds For Wales Ltd or what it actually means for the business.

The facility factor for this question was 39.4 and the mean mark was 2.0 out of 5.

- (c) This was another question that candidates found difficult because it assessed AO2, application of knowledge as opposed to AO1, knowledge and understanding. Many answers would provide an accurate definition of window-dressing but failed to show how or why Sheds For Wales Ltd used window-dressing. The best answers would suggest that the business sold fixed assets such as vehicles to generate cash that would improve profits in the profit and loss account and/or was used to improve the current assets, current ration and therefore the liquidity of the business. Further development would then allow candidates to access band 3, for example suggesting why the improved liquidity was required by Sheds For Wales Ltd.

The facility factor for this question was 44.1, with a mean mark of 1.8 out of 4.

- Q.6** The final question required candidates to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of different factors that would affect the location or relocation of manufacturing business. There were some excellent answers with candidates discussing a wide range of factors including access to suppliers, access to labour and transport links. In these answers, each factor was analysed in terms of the importance to a business and judgements were made. In addition, the very best responses applied their arguments specifically to a manufacturer of furniture and/or the issues identified in the case study. There were also some answers that illustrated good levels of knowledge and provided arguments to address the question, but they did not access the higher bands for AO2, AO3 and particularly AO4 because there was very little development or detail – points for and/or against the statement in the question were simply listed. Unfortunately, it also became clear that some candidates either did not understand the questions or they did not understand the type of business it was and therefore answers went off track, such as discussing the importance of being close to the general public and being located on a popular high street for passing trade.

The facility factor for this question was 45.7 and the mean mark was 4.6.

Summary of key points

- Candidates did demonstrate knowledge and understanding across the questions but there was evidence that candidates lost marks for application, particularly in questions when there was vast amounts of data/information provided e.g., Q1(b), Q1(c), Q3(a) and Q5(c). In addition, to achieve the highest standards application involves using the data to analyse and evaluate not simply listing important data/information from the case study.
- Centres and candidates are reminded that quantitative skills does not necessarily mean calculation but it can also involve interpreting and/or using data e.g., Q1(b) and Q3(a). Calculations are actually a low-level skill whereas interpreting data is a higher-level skill.
- Candidates should be reminded that points provided within an answer should be developed with chains of reasoning and/or judgements and the requirements of command words and/or question types should be understood.

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UNIT 4 BUSINESS IN A CHANGING WORLD

General Comments

The examination for unit 4 is synoptic and therefore requires candidates to utilise knowledge from a variety of content areas within the specification. For example, question 4a and 4b assessed knowledge gained from unit 2, and questions within Section A contain terminology from topic areas within all units which could have been used to develop responses or to build argument. This always poses a challenge to candidates, however there were examples of responses from candidates illustrating that they were frequently able to draw information from a range of topic areas to generate some high-quality answers. Most candidates wrote in clear and well organised paragraphs which allowed examiners to follow the candidate's argument effectively. However, there were examples of illegible responses which could hinder the performance of candidates.

It was pleasing to read responses where candidates used the data within the case study extremely well to illustrate good levels of application of knowledge; this was particularly the case for Question 1(b) and 1(c). In these questions, candidates would have achieved higher marks if key terminology was utilised to build arguments and more detailed analysis to develop arguments. Although, on the whole, knowledge (AO1) and analysis (AO3) were frequently well expressed in Section A.

It was also pleasing to see that candidates are much more aware of the requirements of questions and are able to identify this from the command words. For example, candidates are much more aware of how they should respond to questions with command words such as 'analyse', 'explain', 'evaluate', 'to what extent do you agree' and 'consider', as a result, equipping them with the ability to perform much better in this examination. However, some candidates frequently provide responses that are too vague or limited in development and which are one-sided. As a result, those candidates did not manage to score highly on AO3 and AO4.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A

In this part of the examination candidates were provided with an extended case study which provided information on the evolving car industry and provided extensive data on environmental issues, economic, legal, and technological issues, as well as the changing market conditions. Candidates responded well to the case study information and many candidates produced detailed and well-made points.

Most candidates used their time effectively during the examination to attempt all the required questions. Often candidates allocated an appropriate amount of time to each question in relation to the marks available. However, some candidates spent too much time on Question 1(a) and Question 1(b) with long detailed responses and therefore left less time for questions with more marks available. A few candidates missed out some of the higher mark questions entirely or answered with listed points rather than detailed analysis and evaluation. Therefore, this impacted on the marks awarded.

The attempt rate for each question for Section A was in the main excellent: 1(a) 99.8%, 1(b) 99.5% and 1(c) 97.6%. However, this reduced slightly for 1(d) 95.6% and 1(e) 96.7%. This illustrating the level of challenge both questions posed, with Question 1(d) having the lowest facility factor of 36.9 and Question 1(e) having a facility factor of 50.6 – clearly two of the most challenging questions on Section A.

Q.1 (a) With a facility factor of 60.8 and a mean mark of 3.6 out of 6, this was the second most accessible question on Section A. Candidates were required to analyse the importance of risk management to car manufacturers. The majority of candidates were able to identify at least one reason why risk management is important and were able to apply this knowledge by drawing something from the case study. The best responses would identify two reasons why risk management is important and would then provide an example from the case study as to why it would benefit car manufacturers. This knowledge would then be developed with chains of reasoning to explain the benefit of risk management to car manufacturers. Some candidates simply listed risk factors from the case study but failed to illustrate knowledge for the importance of risk management.

(b) This was the most accessible question of Section A, with a facility factor of 70.4. Candidates made effective use of data within the case study to demonstrate and apply knowledge of how car manufacturers are responding to environmental issues. The best answers would suggest environmental strategies such as waste minimisation and using alternative sources of energy and they would then provide examples from the case study of how car manufacturers are implementing these strategies, for example, through the use of Just in Time production or through developing products such as electric vehicles. Finally, these candidates would then develop the response to demonstrate analysis of how these strategies will help the environment. Without development, Band 2 for analysis (AO3) could not be achieved.

The mean mark was 4.2 out of 6, therefore this question proved a good source of marks for the majority of candidates. However, because it was accessible, responses were occasionally overly long which may have limited scoring elsewhere in the paper.

(c) This question focussed on Ford's plan to launch electric vehicles in China. This was another accessible question and the majority of candidate scored well. The mean mark was 7.2 out of 12. In order to achieve the highest bands for AO3 and AO4, both quantitative and qualitative data had to be used to build and/or develop arguments for and against the plan. There were some excellent responses that focused their analysis and evaluation on both sides of the argument, assessing the plan from the viewpoint of widening the product range as well as entering a new market.

Within these responses, the data was used but key terminology was evident such as attracting a wider market and spreading risk through a range of products and selling in different markets.

Alternative arguments focussed on the data, and it was used effectively to develop arguments for and against the plan to launch 15 electric vehicles in China. A few candidates illustrated good knowledge of Ford's plan but resorted to listing the impact of the plan on Ford and therefore achieved Band 1 for AO2, AO3 and AO4.

- Q.1 (d)** This question asked candidates to discuss the impact of multinational car manufacturers on the UK. This question proved to be the least accessible to candidates. There were a number of candidates who simply failed to show knowledge and understanding of the benefits and drawbacks of multinationals on the UK. In addition, a balanced response was required to achieve band 3 for AO4, unfortunately there were candidates who only focussed their response on the benefits of multinationals, restricting them to Band 2 and quite often 3 marks out of 6. A few candidates analysed the benefits and drawbacks in relation to the business as opposed to the UK, this was not considered to be acceptable. However, there were excellent answers where candidates provided two benefits and two drawbacks to the UK, with arguments centred around creation of jobs, providing more choice for society/customers and the environmental impact of multinationals in terms of traffic congestion and pollution as well as the amount of capital spent by the UK government to encourage multinationals to locate in the UK.
- (e)** The facility factor for this question was 50.6, proving to be another accessible question. This question required candidates to consider the impact of economic, legal and technological factors on both car manufacturers and their customers. Unfortunately, a large number of candidates focussed on the impact on car manufacturers only, which restricted their marks to Bands 1 and 2. There were some excellent responses, highlighting the impact of changing interest rates, potential tariff costs, increasing taxation on petrol and diesel vehicles, as well as the impact of technological developments in the production of vehicles. The best candidates provided answers which analysed the positive and negative impact of these factors on both the car manufacturers (the business) and its customers. However, there was no need to have a positive and a negative argument for each factor but a balance across the factors. There was evidence that candidates either lost focus on this question and/or did not utilise their time appropriately, with far too many writing limited responses.

Section B

This section of the examination required candidates to select one question from a choice of three options. Occasionally a candidate answered more than one question. In such instances candidates were awarded the marks from whichever total question response yielded the greatest number of marks.

Candidates found the essay question more challenging than the previous cohort who sat the 2019 examination paper. The questions attempted in Section B were split with approximately 67% attempting question 2, 24% attempting question 3 and 9% attempting question 4. Each of the part (a) questions required the candidate to apply their answer to a scenario noted within the question, with 6 marks for AO1 and 4 marks awarded for AO2. Part (b) has 4 AO1, 8 AO3 and 8 AO4 marks on offer, the high level of analysis and evaluation marks on offer could have acted as a barrier to the achievement of a high total mark for candidates.

- Q.2 (a)** This question proved accessible to many candidates, with a facility factor of 51.2 and a mean mark of 5.1 out of 10. There were some excellent responses in which candidates identified and described the three steps in Lewin's theory of managing change – this may have proved accessible because this is a unit 4 topic area and therefore the knowledge may have been easier to recall. However, despite candidates having knowledge and understanding of the theory, unfortunately too many candidates were unable to apply the knowledge very well to removing resistance to change when competing businesses merge. Therefore, this restricted the marks awarded for AO2 to 0 or limited to band 1.
- Q.2 (b)** This question had a mean mark of 9.6, with the majority of candidates attempting this question. Excellent answers tended to define different types of change and used examples of both internal and external causes of change to discuss the importance of managing change. For example, some candidates may have focussed on change in ownership, economic factors, and technological factors. The best candidates would then analyse how changes in these factors may impact on a business, as well as why it is important for a business to adapt to these changes. Unfortunately, a number of candidates focussed only on one cause of change, and this tended to be on the impact of change on employees, candidates often repeated knowledge and analysis from Q2 (a) – this was credited with marks but also usually resulted in a limited response.
- Q.3 (a)** This was the most accessible question of all part (a) in Section B. The mean mark was 5.3 out of 10. From the stronger responses, it was clear that candidates displayed good to excellent knowledge and understanding of the differences and similarities between the public sector and the private sector in terms of the aims and objectives they may have. The best responses included application with reference to how BUPA generate profits or maximise profits by improving efficiencies and charging for healthcare, whereas the NHS use taxpayer money and funding from the government to try and improve quality. In addition, the better responses would illustrate how both the NHS and BUPA would aim to improve quality but for different reasons e.g., BUPA may wish to gain recognition and an improved reputation to justify the prices charged which will help improve profits. With the weaker responses, there were often one-sided answers in terms of just outlining the aims of the private or the public sector or the responses listed profit and improving customer service only and often lacked application to the NHS and/or BUPA.

- Q.3 (b)** This question proved to be the most challenging of all the essays in Section B, with a mean mark of 8.2 out of 20. The stronger responses would analyse and evaluate both sides of the argument. For example, candidates would raise a number of points in favour of no government involvement in business such as better quality products and services or a wider range of goods and services provided by the private sector. In addition, candidates would suggest that private sector businesses would consider their workforce and/or the environment in operations to improve its reputation. The stronger responses would also then analyse and evaluate the importance of the government from providing public and merit goods, to implementing legislation to protect customers and employees. Weaker responses tended to be one-sided in favour of government intervention or in favour of private sector businesses. For example, these candidates would focus on how the government provides services that may not be provided by the private sector.
- Q.4 (a)** With a facility factor of 38.9 and a mean mark of 3.9 out of 10, this was the most challenging question of Section B. Many of the candidates know the key features of McGregor's Theory X and/or Theory Y. In addition, even those that demonstrated good levels of knowledge and understanding, application was often limited with only the strongest answers illustrating application of knowledge to manufacturers and designers of fashionable clothing. The very best responses would link McGregor Theory X to manufacturing and ensuring production targets are met with a strong leader and supervision as well as piece-rate pay being offered because workers are mainly motivated by money, whereas Theory Y could be applied to designers who could be more innovative if trusted by leaders to take responsibility for their own work.
- (b)** This question proved to be the highest scoring of all 3 essay questions in Section B, with a mean score of 9.8 out of 20. Candidates who clearly understood Marketing and Human Resources in unit 2 were able to create well-structured responses with a number of arguments in favour of investing money into advertising, and in favour of investing in the workforce. Strong candidates focussed their arguments for advertising on the impact on businesses in terms of creating awareness of products and services, informing customers and persuading customers to purchase. In addition, candidates would analyse and evaluate methods of advertising to illustrate their importance to a business. Counter arguments included the importance of other elements of the marketing mix as well as the importance of investing in workers, such as recruitment, training and motivation. Weaker responses tended to address the importance of either advertising or investing in the workforce and it was therefore unbalanced.

Summary of key points

- As with the previous examination in 2019, candidates should be advised to carefully consider the mark allocation of each question to allocate sufficient time for each question – there was evidence of candidates writing long responses for Q1(a) and Q1(b) but then leaving insufficient time to fully respond to other questions.
- Candidates need to practice responding to questions such as Q1(e) which require two stakeholders and/or two parts to be addressed to achieve the highest bands in the assessment objectives – too many candidates only assess the impact on one stakeholder or the business.
- Candidates need to practice responding to essay style questions whereby a statement is provided, and they need to provide arguments for and against the statement. In addition, within these essays there needs to be a synoptic nature to ensure that candidates are retrieving knowledge from various areas of all 4 units of the A Level specification.



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