

Moderators' Report/
Principal Moderator Feedback

Summer 2013

GCSE Business Studies (5BS06)

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General Comments

The paper yet again allowed students to demonstrate effective knowledge and understanding from the content of the specification. Students are well prepared by centres for the paper and this is proved by the statistical information gained.

The questions will continue to require students to think carefully through all the options before selecting an answer.

As in all examination papers, the questions are produced to target the full range of abilities from A* to G therefore some questions will need to be read very carefully.

Students have heeded the advice given in previous reports and there are very few questions that are not attempted by students. There are still some students who do not follow the instructions given when they change their mind and select a different response to their first one. By not following these instructions exactly they may risk not gaining the mark if one of the responses is correct.

As mentioned in the January 2013 report there will be **no** January 2014 series.

A commentary of the performance of students for all questions is given below.

Question 1 - as in previous years this question allows students to access the paper and students were able to identify which was the most important feature of enterprise.

Question 2 – a number of students were not able to identify the two most likely reasons for a starting a business as a franchise. However approximately half of the students were able to gain one mark of the two marks available. This is perhaps were students need to read the question several times before attempting to answer it.

Question 3 – this question appeared to be more difficult for students than anticipated with a number of students able to gain two of the three marks available and approximately 20% only gaining one mark. There may have been some confusion with some students indicating that salaries are variable costs which they are not.

Question 4 – for some students calculation questions prove difficult and this was apparent for all three calculations for question four. A number of students were able to gain one mark out of the three. Perhaps centres could practice with students on similar questions. However as mentioned in previous reports, there are still some students whose writing is very difficult to read for example, 3's looking like 8's and 5's looking like 6's.

Question 5 – Very few students were able to gain full marks on this question, although most were able to gain one mark. A number of students indicated that a loan from the bank and venture capital were short-term sources of finance.

Question 6 – the disadvantages and consequences upon a business of using personal savings as a source of finance, was understood by most students.

Question 7 – as mentioned in previous years', exchange rate question seems to cause problems/issues for a large number of students. Students had to work out the effect the exchange rate would have on the business. This is an area of the specification where more practice would assist future students.

Question 8 - this question was well answered by almost every student.

Question 9 – this question was well answered by almost every student, understanding how legislation affects advertisements.

Question 10 – this was another question well answered by students who clearly demonstrating that they understood the effect of providing quality customer service.

Question 11 – this question proved more challenging for some students where they had to identify two benefits of knowing how the staff could deal with difficult customers. Just under half were able to gain one mark and about a third did not gain any marks. Perhaps students need to look further at customer service and the effects of ensuring that staff of a company, are properly trained to deal with all different situations that may arise.

Question 12 - most students were able to identify which option was the least effective for adding value to a customer's experience.

Question 13 – as in previous papers, questions on interest rates, seem more difficult for students. Just over a fifth of students gained two marks with half gaining one mark. Students needed to read the options carefully to check which two would be the most appropriate. Perhaps centres need to develop this area of the specification so that students have an understanding of the effect of a change in the interest rates on companies and people.

Question 14 – most students were able to make the correct calculations for the individual flights and then decide which flight would generate the highest income. Although there were about a third of the students who opted for the flight with a greater number of passengers this could be due to the fact that they did not work out the income from the individual flights as the question required.

Question 15 – the aspect of ‘adding value’ to a business also seemed to test some of the students, with most students only gaining one mark. It is important that students read the stem of the question as well as the question to ensure that they fully understand the question they have to answer. Reading the question alone will not always give them the answers.

Question 16 – another question that students understood, how one aspect of a business can have an affect on the rest of the business. In this case a flight that begins to make a loss, the impact it will have on how the business trades.

Question 17 - as with previous papers this question was well answered by most students with the exception of 17 (vi) with only half gaining this mark. Perhaps students had confused qualitative data and quantitative data. However, as mentioned earlier with regard to hand writing students should ensure that their letters are legible and could not be confused i.e. the E and F.

Question 18 – the 6 mark extended writing question is a feature of the unit 6 examination. This question requires evidence of the skills in Assessment Objectives (AO) AO1, AO2 and AO3. Students need to make a decision and provide reasoned justification for that decision. Note, as in previous papers there is no right or wrong answer: a student could have argued that primary research is more important than secondary research and vice-a-versa.

To score full marks students must offer some evaluation. In this case study, the student might suggest that secondary research is more important because Layla and Erin would be able to gain the research without having to physical go and collect it. This would save them time and effort. However primary research would give them the information about what the people in the area would be prepared to pay for the chocolates and the types they prefer, (using evidence from the stimulus material). However to obtain primary research it is both time consuming and costly.

As with previous series, some students provided too much detail, sometimes using several additional sheets – often with the result that their arguments and justification become too difficult to understand. Centres need to ensure that students know that full marks can be gained by writing in the amount of space provided.

Advice for centres

Below is a summary of advice specifically arising from this examination series. This includes the guidance from the previous series.

1 Multiple choice does not mean easier – centres should work with students to ensure that they are sufficiently prepared to attempt multiple choice questions. The questions are designed to address skills including application and analysis.

2 6 mark question – useful advice for students on answering this question.

- Organise arguments using paragraphs. Indent or leave a line between paragraphs if necessary, to emphasise the organisation and structure.
- A common approach is for students to make a decision, justify this using appropriate terminology and concepts, suggest how the other option may be affected and finally state why the chosen option is **more** affected than the other. Importantly, students should try to arrive at an original conclusion that does not simply repeat what has already been stated in the stimulus.
- Don't write too much: arguments become unclear and more vague when too much detail is provided.

3 Analysis of graphs – this is perhaps where centres perhaps could prepare students more by giving them examples of graphs so that they can analyse the information and make judgements. In case this type of question appears in future papers.

4 Key terms – a number of marks on this paper are gained through knowledge of key terms. Centres should plan to consolidate this knowledge on a regular – weekly – basis with their students. This could take many different forms such as quizzes and crosswords.

5 Practice makes perfect – to improve performance of students, centres should seek to develop examination technique by running mock exams under the same timed conditions as the real paper. On the Edexcel website, there is now a selection of past papers available.

6 Timing - whilst many students scored highly on this paper, it was considered at times that incorrect responses were selected by students as a result of questions not being read thoroughly enough. Centres are encouraged to work with students in using the 45 minutes available to think carefully about each question, identify distracters, and finally the correct answer. A check by students of all their answers is also encouraged before the end of the examination. Students need to be aware that questions are designed to include some strong distracters.

Additional support

There is extensive support for teachers in relation to the course from Edexcel. This includes:

Ask the Expert – a service which allows teachers to ask questions to the senior examining team directly

<http://edexcel--5571.custhelp.com/app/ask/session/L3NpZC9pOUI5cHJfag%3D%3D>

There are exemplar materials and regular updates on training, including online training on the GCSE Business website –

<http://www.edexcel.com/quals/gcse/gcse09/Business/Business/Pages/default.aspx>

Customised training can be arranged to deal with specific queries that centres have –

<http://www.edexcel.com/quals/gcse/gcse09/Business/Business/Pages/training.aspx>

Resultsplus – a service which gives centres feedback on how students have performed for the examination series.

<https://www.edexcel.com/resultsplus/Pages/default.aspx>

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

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