GCSE Principal Examiners' Report

Business

GCSE

Summer 2026

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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 component.

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	Eduqas 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.eduqas.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 Eduqas subject page
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[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.***

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Exam Results Analysis	Eduqas 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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Executive Summary

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

As with previous series, candidates are generally showing good knowledge of a wide range of business terminology and concepts. However, there continues to be evidence that many candidates have gaps in knowledge.

Once again, a clear issue for candidates is a lack of exam technique and recognising when they are required to show more than just recall knowledge, either in AO1 understanding or in AO3 explanations. Many candidates continue to offer short and sometimes brief responses to mid and high tariff questions and as a result miss out on marks. It is frustrating that many responses show a good understanding, but candidates simply do not develop their responses to show a clear understanding or to develop their responses in a more analytical way.

Although the use of data continues to improve, with more candidates now achieving AO2 marks across the paper, the lack of valid application of the data or the context still remains a key issue to redress. In both examination papers, there is a high level of contextualised data and contexts, often included to give candidates some help and guidance on how to answer the question. However, many candidates choose to ignore this data or use it at a very superficial level. This approach will always limit the marks available. Once again, advice to centres is to 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. AO2 contributes 35% of the total marks (the same as AO1) and by addressing the issues around application it follows that candidates will be able to access more marks in both papers.

For questions requiring AO3 evaluation, consideration or advice, far too many candidates give either one-sided responses or brief and superficial responses. Centres need to reinforce that to achieve the higher marks for questions that require judgement, a balanced and developed response is required. Far too many candidates offer short and unsupported statements when it comes to giving judgements.

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COMPONENT 1: BUSINESS DYNAMICS

Overview of the Component

This paper followed a similar structure to the previous GCSE Business papers; 100 marks were split into 5 sections of 20 marks each. The first 3 questions were tests of candidate's ability to use AO1 with AO2 and AO3 introduced from question 4 onwards. The following 3 questions focused on a range of different types of businesses as well as 1 real business. Candidates were expected to apply some of their answers to the specific business. Subsequent papers will continue to follow this style.

Many candidates attempted a large amount of this paper, and questions had a completion rate ranging from 99% to 83%. This is a significant increase from the previous series. The paper this year contained one multiple choice tick box question and one extended response synoptic question that tested candidates' knowledge across a range of areas from the specification.

All extended response questions, except one, had over 90% attempt rate which was pleasing to see and has risen since the last series. Some candidates are able to use their data well when answering AO2 questions. In addition, candidates are starting to use a wide range of data available to them however, frequently, candidates were not always using all available data. More candidates are now picking up marks at AO3 which is good to see but again much of the analysis is limited, with little development.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Q.1 99.9% of candidates attempted the multiple-choice question with a mean score of 2/2 which shows candidates have a clear ability to understand environmental sustainability.

Q.2 One of the most difficult questions to answer on the paper, candidates clearly have a lack of knowledge of the European single market.

Q.3 Another well attempted question that showed almost all candidates are comfortable in their definitions of important business terminology. The main problem here was for candidates not knowing the difference between qualitative and quantitative data and therefore putting an incorrect answer.

Q.4 (a) Some candidates incorrectly used aims and objectives within their answer, whilst these are valid sections of a business plan the question stated that candidates must not use this section in their answer.

(b) Candidates struggled to explain how aims and objectives would be different between the two types of businesses and a lot of candidates did not use the given context. Simply using the business name is not enough, candidates need to relate their answer to the scenario.

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Q.5 (a) Many candidates could clearly identify how a business can achieve quality but often the candidate did then not develop their answer by applying it to the context given in the data.

(b) Candidates used the data comfortably and many candidates examined both sets of data. It was clear that the majority of candidates did not understand what staff turnover rate was and used this data incorrectly. Some candidates merely described the data which ensured they did not collect any AO3 marks for this question.

Q.6 (a) Many candidates on this question assumed that PLC meant publicly owned which meant they could not score any marks.

(b) A clear understanding of market research methods was demonstrated by most candidates in this question. Candidates could correctly identify that primary and secondary methods had been used and analysed their effectiveness well. Many candidates did drop marks though as they did not use the context of the scenario to help develop their answers.

(c) Many candidates could accurately read the break-even chart to arrive at the correct answers. More candidates knew how to read the break-even point though rather than the fixed cost line.

(d) The hardest question on the paper with one of the lowest attempt rates at 87%. Candidates that did attempt the question scored a mean of 3 marks. The errors here were mostly from candidates not knowing economic factors that affect business activity. Some candidates read the word climate in the question and started to talk about how the weather affected a business. The highest scoring candidates discussed the economic factors well and used the information from the case study, especially with the product being a luxury premium product, and came to suitable conclusions about how the business would be affected positively and negatively.

Q.7 (a) Some candidates were vague with their definitions such as “arriving before it runs out” which could be true of any stock control method. However, candidates did score better with the disadvantage of JIT stock control with a mean mark of 1.1 showing that the knowledge is there but there is a lack of explanation.

(b) 89.7% of candidates attempted this question which shows a fear of the supply chain from candidates. If the candidates could identify what logistics meant they could collect a mark in this question. Many candidates did collect at least 1 mark, but many missed out on the development or application marks.

(c) A mean mark of just under half marks for this question of 2.6. Some candidates confused multi-channel with multi-national and struggled to get away from this train of thought. Candidates who did score well explained the benefits of multi-channel, but many candidates forgot about the context of the question, and this limited their answer as 2 of the 6 marks were available for application.

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(d) This question was able to be answered in two ways. Candidates could approach this as a multinational question, in discussing the impacts of Shein being a multinational and setting up in the UK, or they could approach it from the angle of a multinational setting up in the UK and candidates discussing the impacts on the UK. Clearly candidates understood the knowledge well and there was a good attempt to apply the answers to the given scenario and use relevant data from the case study. However, the development of the answers were often limited and candidates weren't able to stretch their answer to achieve the higher marks.

Q.8 (a) Many candidates could identify correctly that unlimited liability meant the risk of losing personal possessions, however, a lot of candidates did not go into sufficient detail about when the possessions could be taken and simply stated about being in debt. Candidates need to be aware that it is when the debt can't be paid that the possessions can be taken, not if the business is merely in debt.

(b) Candidates did well on the calculation question with candidates being more able to calculate the cost of sales rather than the revenue.

(c) Again candidates clearly understood advantages of external recruitment as most picked up at least 1 mark on this question. The AO3 was lacking however as candidates struggled to explain why the point was advantageous to the business.

(d) This was another question that candidates seemed to grasp well. However, a common inaccurate answer was that the hours worked were too high or that people can't be forced to work weekends

(e) Most candidates could identify from the advert the two methods of financial motivation however in the second part candidates did struggle to understand that non-financial methods of motivation were not fringe benefits, so the only relevant example from the case study is training.

(f) The synoptic assessment question with a mean mark of 5 is showing that candidates are starting to understand more how to answer this question. However, many candidates did only focus on one or two of the bullet point areas which severely limited their marks. Data from the case study was used well on occasion but candidates must remember to use a wide range of data and try and use financial data where it is presented too to further extend their marks.

Q.9 (a) Many candidates could correctly identify a stakeholder to a business.

(b) Candidates demonstrated good knowledge of the advantages of being in a partnership

(c) Although many candidates did well on this question, some were not accurate in their use of the terminology in SMART. A common incorrect answer for the R was reliable which is obviously not awardable.

(d) Candidates that struggled to get full marks on this question had not understood what was being asked from them. Some candidates explained how objectives may help the business. All that was required was to write a measurable and time bound objective relevant to the business.

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(e) The mean mark of 2.4 on this question is positive but many candidates simply lifted data from the case study, which is ok, but does not allow them to get all 4 marks. Candidates forgot about the knowledge part and to describe the way the business was acting ethically rather than just using the data to evidence how the business was acting ethically.

(f) A real positive question with nearly 93% of candidates attempting it which is not always the case with the last question on a 2-hour paper. A high mean score of 4.9 is also positive demonstrating that candidates are confident in their knowledge of factors affecting a business site. The map was used well but many candidates did not use any other data about the business. For example, many candidates talked about Costa being a competitor which is correct but not many candidates used the fact that the business has a bit of a USP, by being ethical, to counter this.

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COMPONENT 2: BUSINESS CONSIDERATIONS

Overview of the Component

This paper followed a similar structure to the previous GCSE Business papers; 60 marks were split into 2 sections of 30 marks each. The first section was based on a real business; B&M and the second section was a fictional business based around a luxury chocolate manufacturer.

Most candidates attempted much of this paper and questions had a completion rate ranging from 98.9% to 87.5%. This is slightly lower than last year which had a low of 91.4% however it is still pleasing to see how accessible these papers are to the majority of candidates.

The lowest attempted question was not the 12 marker which was attempted by over 95% of candidates (95.5%). The question that was the least attempted at 87.5% was one linked to the supply chain and procurement.

Whilst general business knowledge was good candidates also started to use the resource material more which has improved their marks. However, similar to Component 1, candidates often did not develop their responses in line with AO3 and lost marks because of lack of development.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Q.1 (a) Candidates seem to struggle with percentage change every time it is on the paper. Candidates are better now at the first stage which is calculating the difference, but then the candidates divide the difference by the wrong value. This was common again in this series with many candidates getting 1 mark for the difference but then arriving at the wrong answer.

(b) As stated above this was the least attempted question and when it was attempted candidates struggled to pick up marks. It should have been a simpler question if candidates remembered what procurement was.

(c) The difficulty on this question was picking an appropriate stakeholder and how the supply chain impacts them and then explaining why the supply chain being effective is important. Many candidates could list stakeholders but could not clearly link to why the supply chain was important to that stakeholder. A common incorrect link was that suppliers were affected by the effective supply chain because they can make more revenue. This was not sufficient to award marks to.

(d) In the first part of the question candidates had a clear understanding of what horizontal integration was but, frustratingly, many candidates did not then use the examples from the resource material. Some even suggested other retailers that had not been mentioned. In the second part candidates dropped marks for giving generic answers to responses, such as “growing the business” which is not awardable as that is not a specific advantage to horizontal integration.

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(e) As has been mentioned previously, there was a really pleasing number of attempts at this question and a decent mean mark of 5.4. This was the synoptic question and candidates needed to cover all areas to get the most marks. Many candidates did only focus on the marketing mix, and this limited them to a maximum of 4 marks. Better candidates covered all areas but some of the AO3 evaluation was weak and superficial.

Q.2 (a) Whilst candidates could identify characteristics of an entrepreneur, they must be reminded that most of this paper needs to be in context. Some candidates were just listing characteristics without a clear link to the resource material. Without this link there could be no award of mark as these are AO2 marks.

(b) This was another AO2 and AO3 question that some candidates did not use the resource material effectively for. Especially as the job and batch production information was really signposted. Successful candidates did use this signposted information, but some then forgot to explain why that production method would be used in the given scenario.

(c) This was the second most accessible question on the paper with a facility factor of 51.8. Candidates clearly have a good understanding of quality and why it is important to a business. A high mean score of 3.1 also is pleasing. Again, higher scoring candidates used the resource material well, but some did not go on to develop their answer to get the higher AO3 marks.

(d) This was a more difficult question for some candidates. There needed to be a clear link to how profits are affected by being ethical. It was also important for candidates to give specific explanations as to why the profits were affected in this was. Whilst not incorrect, too many candidates purely focused on the treatment of suppliers and should be reminded that this is not the only way a business can act ethically.

(e) For the first part of the question some candidates clearly did not understand that a number in brackets is a negative number in accounting documentation and incorrectly added a positive value which left the candidates with an incorrect result. The second half of the question was the most difficult question on the paper with a facility factor of 27.9. Many candidates just described what a cash flow forecast shows rather than being able to explain how it can be used.

(f) This was another well attempted question, especially with it being the last on the paper, at 94% and with a mean score of 3.6 it shows the longer answer questions are becoming more successful for more candidates. Candidates who did well on this question went through the positives and negatives of growing and staying small. Some candidates only focused on growth or staying small which limited their marks. It is also apparent in Component 2, as in Component 1, that candidates don't always want to use financial data available to them with only a few candidates using the cash flow forecast to support their answers.

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