



GCE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

WJEC EDUQAS AS BUSINESS

SUMMER 2016

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BUSINESS

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COMPONENT 1: BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

General Comments

Generally, candidates did well on this paper scoring a mean mark of 29.5 with all candidates able to attempt all questions and make reasonable responses. A large number of good scripts were submitted demonstrating the full range of skills, knowledge, application, analysis and evaluation. The quality of written communication was generally good with very few illegible or incomprehensible scripts. Some candidates misread questions and there were some repetitive and unnecessarily long responses. A large proportion of candidates scored high marks on Question 3 and this seemed to be the most accessible question on the paper with a facility factor of 73.2. Conversely, many candidates scored low marks for Question 2 and this question seems to have been less accessible to candidates with a facility factor of 45.8. Some candidates found it difficult to answer questions in the context in which they were set and lost marks for poor application. The better candidates made an effort to give a balanced answer when it was asked of them and produced good analysis and evaluation.

Question-specific comments

1. (a) The vast majority of candidates scored well on this opening question and were able to identify two motives and gained AO1 marks, but some found it difficult to distinguish between motives and characteristics. Many candidates found it difficult to answer the question in context of the case study and therefore missed out on AO2 marks for application.
- (b) Candidates generally scored well on this question, but some missed out on AO2 marks by not using the case study to support their arguments. A few used income and raw materials as factors, but these were not appropriate in this case and not accepted. Some candidates that included labour skills in their answers did not do so in the right context and therefore these candidates lost AO2 marks.
- 2 (a) (i) This question was generally answered well. Candidates that cited appropriate examples of market segmentation gained full marks. Most candidates scored at least half marks and had a clear understanding of market segmentation but sometimes expression was weak.
- (ii) This question was not generally answered very well and proved to be the most difficult question on the paper. Most candidates failed to achieve full or close to full marks for this question and struggled to reference both customers and Serendipity Ltd, and often failed to give a balanced evaluation of the importance of segmentation to Serendipity Ltd. and its customers. Some candidates just listed ways in which businesses can segment their markets, which did not answer the question. Candidates that applied information from the case study in context tended to do well.

- (b) Candidates tended to write long answers and made a good attempt at answering this question. However, answers sometimes included lots of repetition and reference to the characteristics of a PLC and did not show a clear understanding of the impact on Serendipity Ltd. of operating as a PLC. Some answers included lists with little development and few supporting statements to build on arguments. Many candidates attempted a conclusion or summary but some concluding statements were just repetition with no real decision as to whether to become a PLC or remain as a private limited company.
- 3.
- (a) Most candidates understood what a niche market was but some lost marks because they relied on using an example to develop their answers, as opposed to clarifying the meaning of the term with further development of points made.
 - (b) Many candidates did this well and scored full marks with only a few losing marks for incorrect calculations. Where candidates lost marks this tended to be when calculating total revenue.
 - (c) Most diagrams submitted were generally well labelled and accurate and marks tended to be lost where candidates made silly errors when plotting the graph. Some candidates failed to plot total revenue starting at 0 but started at fixed costs or 1000 instead.
 - (d) Most candidates answered this correctly. Some misread the diagram and therefore lost a mark. Very few OFR (own figure rule) marks were awarded.
- 4.
- (a) This question was not answered as well as similar style questions on the paper (2 (a) (i) and 3 (a)). Only some candidates managed to gain full marks and give a clear and precise definition of an oligopoly. Many candidates made the mistake of relying on the use of examples to clarify meaning but no marks were awarded for this.
 - (b) This question was generally answered well with few candidates not scoring at least half marks by giving the correct definition for both types of research. Where candidates lost marks they often failed to give a correct example of secondary market research. Examples of secondary research were sometimes vague and not specific enough to warrant a mark.
 - (c) For this question candidates were expected to analyse and evaluate both primary and secondary market research methods and to show a clear understanding of how both methods can impact on business success. Not all candidates were successful at doing this. Those candidates that did well when answering this question offered a balanced response, which included valid judgements with qualifying statements and a conclusion. The responses of those candidates that did not score well included lots of repetition and description of the features of each method but contained no real analysis of the impact on the business of using one of or both of these methods.

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COMPONENT 2: BUSINESS FUNCTIONS

General comments

As this was the first exam in this series it was pleasing to see a number of excellent scripts were submitted demonstrating a sound understanding of business knowledge which could be applied to the relevant case study scenarios, analysed and evaluated where appropriate.

Section A

This comprised of shorter questions and offered a good test of candidates skills and abilities. Although knowledge seemed to be lacking from some candidates, particularly on calculation questions, most candidates were able to attempt all questions. It was however notable that many candidates did not evaluate sufficiently during questions 2b, 3b, 4c and 4d where the trigger words of 'discuss' and 'evaluate' indicated the availability of AO4 marks.

Section B

Questions 5, 6 and 7, allowed stronger candidates to demonstrate their flare in linking concepts together to form fully analysed and evaluated responses. Weaker candidates found this section of the paper challenging. During section (a) weaker candidates did not use the context and therefore missed out on AO2 marks, whilst in section (b) candidates did not always evaluate in an effective manner.

Although Section B allowed candidates to pick one question from three options. Occasionally, a candidate would attempt all three questions. In this instance the candidate received the marks from the best question but will have reduced the time spent on each response therefore limiting their chance of scoring well.

Question-specific comments

SECTION A

1. (a) A large proportion of candidates were able to identify examples of flexible working. Those who did not achieve full marks often described the same situation twice. Some candidates provided examples of jobs that would be carried out in a flexible manner therefore did not receive any marks.
- (b) Those candidates achieving full marks were able to use the case study situation to develop further explanation of the advantages of flexible working. Candidates performing less well provided either theory based responses, ignoring the case study, or offered benefits to either the employees or British Telecom.

2. (a) The labelling of the stock control diagram and calculation of lead time posed little problem to the majority of candidates. A common fault was for candidates to calculate lead time as two weeks. As this was a classic stock control diagram most candidates were able to achieve full marks.
- (b) Evaluation skills were an important part of the scoring process in this question. A number of candidates described or explained stock control issues rather than evaluating the importance of holding the correct level of stock. However, stronger candidates evaluated each point made and generated effective judgements in their overall conclusions achieving full marks.
3. (a) (i) The productivity calculation was unproblematic for prepared candidates. In order to achieve both marks candidates should ideally identify the correct formula, use the data to calculate the correct response and note the answer and unit of measurement. Many candidates answered 5 400. However, 2 marks were only given for the answer 5 400 per employee (per year).
- (ii) This question was tackled in a similar vein to part (i) of this question. Most candidates were able to calculate labour turnover and remembered to note the % symbol at the end of the answer. Occasionally, candidates calculated incorrectly by adding the 5 leavers to the 40 staff to come up with the answer 11.11%.
4. (a) Most candidates found this question accessible and were able to demonstrate a good knowledge of the Boston Matrix. Weaker answers did not discuss market share and market growth being high or low and therefore did not explain the subsequent relevance of this information in managing a product portfolio.
- (b) The GPM and NPM calculations were accessible to well-prepared candidates. Again, most candidates remembered to identify the % mark in their answer achieving full marks on this section. A proportion of candidates left this section blank and therefore struggled in part c of this question.
- (c) There were some excellent responses to this question with more developed candidates discussing the changes to GMP and their subsequent knock on effect for NPM. This was followed by a discussion on restricting overheads and the implications of doing so. Weaker candidates struggled to show a good understanding of the formulas and their component parts leading to a limited value response.
- (d) The vast majority of candidates were able to discuss the impact of technology on Premier Foods. However, weaker candidates did not use the context and gave straightforward theory responses or looked at the use of technology for retail operations. Those candidates with higher order skills made good use of the large scale manufacturing process to describe possible benefits and problems for Premier Foods.

SECTION B

5.
 - (a) Most candidates attempting this question were able to describe at least three different leadership styles. However, those achieving a limited number of marks failed to make use of the 'supermarket' context and created theory based responses. Such answers would only achieve a maximum of 6 marks. Better candidates looked at the nature of staff and tasks which take place in a supermarket to develop well rounded responses.
 - (b) Stronger candidates moved on from part (a) by describing the importance of good leadership to the success of a business. Many candidates brought in other factors which could lead to success or failure despite the leaders actions. Weaker candidates seemed unable to move on from section (a) and instead simply tried to consider which leadership style was best.
6.
 - (a) Perhaps the most popular choice amongst candidates, this questions saw candidates making effective use of the fast-food context to describe pricing strategies commonly used by this industry. Weaker candidates seemed to describe pricing in a general manner without referring to specific pricing strategies.
 - (b) This response was handled expertly by a number of candidates. Many candidates were able to discuss all elements of the marketing mix without issue. Although there are no AO2 marks for this question some candidates continued with the fast-food theme from part (a) in order to contextualise their response. This led to clear responses from candidates, aiding their analysis and evaluation.
7.
 - (a) Candidates selecting this question often demonstrated a good or excellent level of knowledge. The manufacturing nature of this question led candidates to focus on various elements of total quality management in developing a full and effective response.
 - (b) Again, this question was handled with skill by the vast majority of candidates. Candidates were able to discuss the benefits and problems of improving quality with most candidates able to cover a range of stakeholders. Weaker candidates tended to offer a one-sided argument and did not effectively cover the AO4 marks within the question.



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