



GCE A LEVEL EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**BUSINESS
A LEVEL**

AUTUMN 2020

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COMPONENT 1: BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES AND FUNCTIONS

General Comments

It was encouraging that virtually all questions were attempted by candidates, signifying the accessibility of the paper. Candidates were able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of a range of key concepts and analyse the impact of these on businesses and their stakeholders relatively well. Candidates' writing was vastly legible, which was helpful in being able to award accurate marks and awarding a fair result.

Candidates were generally able to reflect the demands of each question by responding well to the command words used, although there were specific instances in which there was little or no application or evaluation in responses that required these specific skills to be demonstrated. As such, a key point for improvement is ensuring that responses consider the case study and business context, and that evaluations are included where indicated by relevant command words. Candidates that did provide evaluation in their responses did so to varying degrees, which was often good, but few candidates were able to secure the top band for evaluation, which requires evaluation which is well-reasoned, well-balanced and detailed.

Questions that assessed quantitative skills were generally answered accurately, although three specific areas for improvement should be noted: using units (e.g. £); ensuring any minus figures are indicated as such; and showing all workings so that the own figure rule can be awarded where the final answer is incorrect.

It was pleasing that candidates were able to write detailed responses to questions such as market research, quality and appraisals, for which clear knowledge and often excellent analysis was demonstrated. It is therefore clear that candidates can respond well to substantial topic areas. Although it appeared that more focussed aspects of the specification, in particular the motivation theory of L. Porter and E. Lawler, were less confidently responded to, reinforcing the need for all aspects of the specification to be studied in detail.

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COMPONENT 2: BUSINESS ANALYSIS AND STRATEGY

General Comments

Generally, the paper worked well. There were a number of quite technical questions that posed a challenge for candidates, this may have been exhibited as it was the Autumn series of 2020 where many candidates may have missed out on revision of these key technical theories, which would be less evident in a summer series. It was notable that on the less technical questions based on theories that are easier to revise independently, candidates performed better. Finally, the extended and other evaluation answers appeared to be more mixed than previous exam series with a lack of focus on the whole question or understanding of how to build an overall answer. This could possibly be due to a lack of exam practice in the run up to the Autumn series.

A good understanding of key terms and theories allow access to the question. This also allows candidates to have detailed definitions/explanations/analysis, but it is important that these arguments are applied to the information/situation in contrast to being generic.

A good understanding of numeric and technical concepts such as financial ratio analysis and critical path analysis is important so that candidates can either calculate them or manipulate them depending on changes.

Being able to build detailed arguments with how and why a key theory matters, such as PED, for decision making is beneficial.

A focus on the demands of the question is important for access to the highest levels. Candidates can be guilty of not fulfilling the demands of the whole question as set by only going part of the way, not completing all the requirements such as both theories, all calculations or missing judgments answering the question. Exam practice in the run up to exams can help with this.

Justified end judgments are important, especially in questions asking for an overall decision. Exam practice in the run up to exams can help with this.

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COMPONENT 3: BUSINESS IN A CHANGING WORLD

General Comments

In this synoptic paper candidates were required to utilise knowledge from a range of areas in the specification. It was pleasing to see that candidates were able to apply the specification content to a wide range of business and economic scenarios during the completion of the paper. Candidates were able to integrate areas of the specification in order to develop some impressive responses.

Most candidates were able to organise their responses in clear and concise paragraphs in order to develop arguments. It was clear that knowledge (AO1), application (AO2) and analysis (AO3) skills were in place for most candidates. However, fewer candidates focused on evaluation (AO4) during the course of their responses.

Section A

This section of the paper focused on an extended case study which, this year, was based on the taxi hiring platform, Uber. The case study itself covered a range of scenarios which have affected Uber in recent years including staff disputes, legal issues and the challenge of technological developments. Candidates made good use of the case study and were able to effectively apply question responses to the scenario. Time management amongst candidates seemed to be good with the vast majority completing all questions.

Section B

This section allowed candidates the option of answering one of the three questions on offer. Each question comprised of two sections (a) 10 marks and (b) 20 marks. Each candidate managed to complete (a) and (b) from their chosen question within the course of the exam. Unlike previous years, no candidate answered more than one question in this section. This meant that time was not wasted, and candidates had been appropriately prepared. High level responses were seen within the answers to each of the three questions which was pleasing to see in this exam series.

In section (a) most candidates were able to apply theory to the scenario laid out in the question. However, some paid little attention to the scenario and instead offered a mainly theoretical answer. It is worth noting that in section B, part (a) 4 of the 10 marks available are for AO2, therefore the context must be utilised to maximise marks.

During section B, better candidates were able to demonstrate an excellent level of analysis and evaluation within their chosen question. Although analysis was generally good, AO4 was generally only addressed at the end of the question rather than during the main body of the text. In order to fully develop AO4 marks it is advisable to judge each paragraph point as well as offer an overall conclusion.



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