GCSE Examiners' Report

Business
GCSE
Summer 2024

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
Grade boundary information	Grade boundaries are the minimum number of marks needed to achieve each grade. For unitised specifications grade boundaries are expressed on a Uniform Mark Scale (UMS). UMS grade boundaries remain the same every year as the range of UMS mark percentages allocated to a particular grade does not change. UMS grade boundaries are published at overall subject and component level. For linear specifications, a single grade is awarded for the subject, rather than for each component that contributes towards the overall grade. Grade boundaries are published on results day.	For unitised specifications click here: Results and Grade Boundaries and PRS (eduqas.co.uk)

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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.*

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
Classroom Resources	Access our extensive range of FREE classroom resources, including blended learning materials, exam walk-throughs and knowledge organisers to support teaching and learning.	https://resources.eduqas.co.uk/
Bank of Professional Learning materials	Access our bank of Professional Learning materials from previous events from our secure website and additional pre-recorded materials available in the public domain.	Portal by WJEC or on the Eduqas subject page.
Become an examiner with WJEC.	We are always looking to recruit new examiners or moderators. These opportunities can provide you with valuable insight into the assessment process, enhance your skill set, increase your understanding of your subject and inform your teaching.	Become an Examiner	Eduqas

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Executive Summary

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

Candidates generally displayed a good wide coverage of the specification content. However, there were some obvious gaps in knowledge and often candidates showed knowledge but were unable to demonstrate understanding of that knowledge. The examination papers will always allocate a range of AO1 marks across a wide content range, some of these marks will be given for simple recall (knowledge) and some for understanding. Many candidates were unable to develop their responses beyond simple recall and either did not attempt to try to demonstrate understanding or made incorrect developments.

There was also evidence, throughout quite a few questions, of misconceptions and incorrect knowledge of key business terms. Many candidates are missing out on further marks by giving simplistic and brief responses to questions allocated more than 1 mark.

In both examination papers using the given data or context is key to achieving marks beyond AO1. All the data in the stems, scenarios and case studies are there for a reason and in many cases can help candidates frame their responses. However, far too many candidates are simply not using that data or using it in a very superficial way. Centres should 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.

Candidates continue to offer application by simply using the name of the business. This is not application; candidates need to apply their understanding through embedding their response in the given context. The Component 2 paper gives detailed information about the business in question, yet more often than not, this information is underused or ignored. Centres should focus on how to make better use of this information and that time is given in the exam (10 minutes stated on the front of the exam booklet) to allow candidates to identify key information in the scenario.

In higher tariff questions that usually have a higher allocation of marks for AO3, candidates need to develop their answers and if required, give a balanced evaluation. Too many candidates miss out on achieving the higher bands for AO3 by giving superficial explanations and unsupported judgements, which are often one sided.

Areas for improvement	Classroom resources	Brief description of resource
Underpinning knowledge	Eduqas Digital Educational Resources	Knowledge organisers Blended learning Business glossary
Exam technique	Eduqas Website	A walkthrough by examiners of the two components

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Component One: 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 5 questions featured mini-scenarios and the following 4 questions focused on a range of fictitious 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.

Most candidates attempted much of this paper and questions had a completion rate ranging from 99.8% to 85.7%. This is marginally lower than the 2023 series which had a low of 88.1%. The paper this year contained three multiple choice tick box questions and one extended response synoptic question that tested candidates' knowledge across a range of areas from the specification. All high tariff questions had over 90% attempt rate which was pleasing to see.

Once again, a lack of context and use of data has let candidates down in their extended responses. It is also worth reminding candidates that when they are asked to explain an answer they must do so, or risk losing marks for the AO3.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Q.1 **(a)** Almost all candidates attempted this question with the majority identifying the correct responses.

(b) Whilst many candidates could correctly work out the net cash flow, lots of candidates incorrectly subtracted the opening balance from the net cash flow to leave themselves with an incorrect answer.

Q.2 **(a)** Another well attempted question with many candidates opting for employees as well as a range of other stakeholders.

(b) Candidates struggled to pick up the AO2 marks available here as they did not apply the answer in the context of ASDA. Some responses were not specific about how customers affected a business.

Q.3 **(a)** Candidates generally answered the question well although some candidates had a misconception about becoming a partnership through the merger which was not awardable.

(b) Many candidates could identify the correct form of integration but struggled to refer the type of integration to Marriott and Sheraton.

Q.4 Candidates performed well on the majority of this question however some struggled to identify the income received as revenue, instead opting for profit and some candidates confused qualitative and quantitative data.

Q.5 **(a)** Candidates struggled to use the correct terminology for all 3 stages, particularly with maturity.

(b) Responses tended to be too generic. Rather than explaining the sales would rise rapidly in the growth stage candidates were just saying sales increased which is not rewardable. Candidates also had misconceptions about marketing that may or may not occur during the growth stage.

Q.6 **(a)** Candidates struggled with this question to explain either how a business may compete within the competitive environment or define the term competition. Many candidates simply reworded the question and did not demonstrate an understanding of the competitive environment.

(b) Similar to the previous question many incorrect responses simply said "how much it costs to make a sale" which is too generic to be awarded a mark. Other candidates stated variable cost which again is not a suitable definition as this is more of an example of a cost of sale.

(c) All of these questions had a high attempt rate, but some candidates struggled with the NPM question and were coming up with several incorrect answers.

(d) Many candidates simply stated that this was "research you do yourselves" which, as in previous series, is not an acceptable response. Candidates needed to be clear that it was research that generated new data otherwise this was not an acceptable response.

(e) A lot of candidates got confused with the ARR question as they have in previous series. Candidates often came unstuck with the formula as they did not carry out the first stage of adding up the revenue and dividing this number by the number of years. Some candidates had only done this stage before failing to divide the answer to stage 1 by the cost of the investment.

(f) It is always pleasing to see a high attempt rate on the high tariff questions and this had nearly 94% (93.8%). Candidates however did not make good use of the data and limited their responses because of this. Where candidates had accessed the higher marks, they had used the financial data available to them; looking at the falling revenues of the business and the ARR of the investment and had also considered the market research data that Ellie had available to her. Too many candidates did not use the data, or only used one source which meant they were limited to a maximum of 5 marks.

Q.7 **(a)** Nearly all candidates attempted this question, but performance was lower than expected. Incorrect candidates mostly thought that James was providing a commercial service which suggests some gaps in the knowledge of what a commercial service is.

(b) Again another well attempted question and candidates were mostly able to identify a suitable motive for starting a business. Many pulled out the data from the case study about James' previous job being stressful, but it was pleasing to see other data being used too.

(c) **(i)** The mean response for this question was 2 as candidates either identified external factors but did not apply them to the given context, or only correctly identified 1 external factor. Some candidates unfortunately explained factors that were not external. Other candidates used similar factors to 9(c) which we did award marks for when relevant.

(ii) The common mistake on this question was that candidates did not divide their difference by the original figure. Some candidates had also selected the wrong data and had used the predicted sales instead of the actual sales. Where this mistake had taken place, OFR (own figure rule) was used and awarded 1 mark.

Q.7 **(d)** Candidates identified a variety of different sales promotion techniques but did not always apply them to the given context. Several candidates had incorrectly talked about advertising and, in particular, the use of social media, in this question which was not valid.

(e) Another high tariff question with a high attempt rate (97.6%). However, candidates often failed to consider both sides of the question. Candidates who did well advised James by looking at both potential options and considering the advantages and disadvantages of each. Candidates also dropped marks here by not using the context of the scenario which limited their ability to access all of the marks. The best candidates considered the seasonality of the business, the size of the business and the customers that would utilise the booking methods.

Q.8 **(a)** The biggest surprise on this question was that candidates seemingly could not always define a simple business ownership type, with a mean score of 0.5. Candidates often stated vague responses such as a "business with 2 people in it", or a "business ran by 2 people" and this was unrewardable.

(b) Candidates often could identify reasons why e-commerce was popular but sometimes struggled to develop their answers with developed explanations. Occasionally candidates would explain why e-commerce was popular for a business, not a customer, which could not be rewarded.

(c) It was apparent from this question that most candidates understood the importance of quality but often they had used the wrong data to back up their responses, or used the data in a way that did not demonstrate their point. For example, using the data about having to "pay a £240 fee to join the site would ensure quality" was not the correct use of the data.

(d) Almost all candidates correctly identified the answer of consumer law on this question with a mean mark of 0.9 and an attempt rate of 99.1%.

(e) This high tariff question had an attempt rate of 95.1% which shows that candidates had good understanding of this topic area. When candidates had done this question well, they had used a wide variety of data from the previous page and used this to demonstrate the advantages of being on the Not on the High Street platform as well as the potential problems a small business may face. Candidates used the £240 fee as both a positive and a negative which was acceptable, and many candidates also identified the size of the platform as being both good and bad too.

Q.9 **(a)** Candidates were rewarded on this question for suggesting many suitable forms of software although going forward it would be desirable to agree that storing of customer details should be done in a database.

(b) Whilst many candidates attempted this question, lots of them did not realise it had two stages. Candidates were expected to work out the commission Drakes receives and then from this result, calculate the 5% for the sales staff. Several candidates simply worked out 5% of the £200 000 which, whilst being a nice payout, was incorrect.

(c) Candidates could often easily identify economic factors, but many struggled to apply them to the given context. Clearly candidates had been having discussions with their teachers as the cost of living was referenced several times and candidates demonstrated a good understanding of inflation in most cases, and whilst this is not expected from the specification, it was rewarded with marks.

(d) The last question on the paper still had over 90% attempt rate (92.1%) but candidates struggled to access many marks on this question on the whole. In order for candidates to do well they must have covered both financial, which on the whole was done well, and non-financial. Common mistakes seemed to include candidates talking about the business throwing parties, giving free food and free breakfasts which we not felt to be awardable. Many candidates also were talking about fringe benefits, such as company cars, as non-financial methods which the specification clearly states that they are. The data was used the most poorly in this question with many candidates ignoring the scenario completely which further limited their marks.

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Component Two: 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, Taylors of Harrogate and the second section was a fictional business based around hot tubs.

Most candidates attempted much of this paper and questions had a completion rate ranging from 99.5% to 92.7%. This was higher than the previous years, which has now shown progress for two years in a row. The lowest attempted question was the 12-mark question and this also proved to be the most challenging question.

Whilst general business knowledge was good, many candidates did not use the wide range of data available to them and often their answers were not in context. It was also apparent that some candidates struggled to develop their answers and simply listed facts in some cases.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Q.1 **(a)** Candidates could mostly identify that branding was the image of a business although some candidates were too simplistic and simply said it was the name of the business.

(b) Whilst many candidates could identify the importance of branding, some struggled to add enough detail to access all the AO3 marks available. Many candidates did not apply their answer to Taylors of Harrogate which limited their answer.

(c) Candidates clearly saw the data from the case study here and many used the example of younger people preferring fruit and flavoured teas and linked this into their answers well. Again, some candidates did not add sufficient detail to access all the AO3 marks.

(d) The popular answer here was by age and then with examples from the case study to back this up. However, several candidates did have a misunderstanding that the market would be segmented by different products, in this case types of tea, which obviously is not a correct response.

(e) This question showed that some candidates did not understand the difference between batch and flow production. Too many candidates described flow production instead of using specific batch production definitions and examples. When candidates had done this answer well, they had used the market segments from the previous question to demonstrate and apply their points.

(f) Several good points were made by candidates on this question with candidates picking out several key fragments of data from the case study such as the ethical payment of their workers and suppliers. When candidates had done this, they were able to access a fuller range of marks, unfortunately some candidates failed to put context into their answer and were, therefore, limited in their response.

(g) This was the most difficult question on the paper for candidates statistically with a facility factor of 33.3%. Many candidates struggled to answer the full extent of the question which required them to discuss supply chain AND logistics. Lots of examples were seen where candidates had just focused on the supply chain which limited them to a maximum of 6 marks. Data application on this question was also lacking which was disappointing as there was an abundance of relevant data littered throughout the case study for candidates to use. Some candidates did not focus on the impact of enough stakeholders, often coming back to customers, instead of widening the scope of their answers.

Q.2 **(a)** Candidates mostly answered this question well, when candidates did drop marks, it was for using generic terms like "ran by one person" instead of "owned" by one person.

(b) This question was a struggle for some candidates as they did not seemingly understand how to explain why someone would change from being a sole trader to becoming a private limited company. When candidates answered this well, they tended to focus on the business expansion, linking this to liability, and the worries of the cash flow in order to access all 3 marks.

(c) A question that candidates seem to enjoy answering and is straightforward to them, many went for the aspect of making more money and increasing their market share. Some candidates simply stopped at making more money though and did not access the explain marks of the answer.

(d) Some candidates did not understand what a warehouse and distribution centre were and put answers such as competition and footfall. Whilst these answers were rewarded with AO1 marks it was not in context, as competition and footfall would not matter for a warehouse and distribution centre. When this answer had been done well, candidates had applied the answer to the given context; for example, several candidates talked about the size of the products that Barry was going to be storing and linked this to the size of the premises and the accessibility for deliveries.

(e) It was apparent that candidates had been taught what makes data reliable and candidates had retained this knowledge. Many candidates identified the issues with the sample size, date and the validity of the data and pulled several examples from the case study within their answer. Where candidates had not understood the question was when they had started to analyse the results of the market research, rather than assess the reliability. In these cases, the candidates were not able to be awarded any marks.

(f) Candidates had an understanding of improving cashflow but often the answers were too generic, such as "cut costs" without going into the necessary detail and explanation to assess the AO3 marks. Some candidates did explain answers well and used a variety of techniques of improving cash flow such as raising and lowering prices, marketing more and choosing new suppliers.

Q.2 **(g)** A question with a mean score of 5.2 shows that candidates enjoyed answering this question. Many candidates used a wide range of data to support their answer and covered the positives and negatives of the internal growth that Barry was planning. Where candidates struggled to achieve marks was because their arguments were one sided or they had not used a wide variety of data, instead only using the market research data, the contextual business data, or the financial data for the business.

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