

Examiners' Report/ Principal Moderator Feedback

Summer 2010

GCSE

GCSE Applied Business (5AB01) Paper 01

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PM Report on Controlled Assessment Unit 5AB01/01

General Comments

The Controlled Assessment Activities:

The work seen ranged from well applied use of material drawn from real businesses to the more remote “hands off” approach from text book or case study sources. Some assessors indicated clearly how and where assessment criteria had been met whilst others provided little or no evidence in support of their decisions (see under ‘Annotation of Work’ below).

In some cases it was evident that downloaded information (images, pictures, maps and graphs) had been sanctioned and/or material plagiarised. Where information has been downloaded, this needs to be clarified as having been done during research time rather than during ‘controlled conditions’ as this is not permitted. In practice, where this, or plagiarism is found, the work will be referred for investigation by the Awarding Body. There was also evident a degree of ‘prescription’ that was also questionable in its legitimacy.

Comments on Individual Questions

Annotation of Work

As a minimum there needs to be an indication of where marks have been awarded for research, presentation, analysis and decision making, evaluation and methodology as prescribed in the assessment criteria. The absence of any annotation (indicating how marks had been awarded) makes it very difficult for candidates to achieve the marks as given and is unhelpful to any form of moderation (internal or external). In future, work without annotation may be returned to centres for assessors to complete.

Activity 1

Although most candidates had tackled the set tasks, there were instances where candidates had only looked at a single business and thus comparisons were impossible. In a couple of instances, tasks had been re-written emphasising other aspects of business that did not match either the specification or the tasks. In these cases it was difficult to agree with the marks given. Many candidates did not give reasons for their choices of organisations investigated. Even where such choices were made by the assessor there needs to be some rationale here. The choice of business is crucial in order for candidates to find out about aims, objectives, activities and so on. A poor choice here will cause recurring problems throughout the work. The skill of ‘justification’ was often weak, even amongst stronger work.

Assessors need to consider the suitability of all chosen businesses particularly the larger supermarket chains where candidates often had difficulty in focussing on particular aspects of their operations.

With regard to ‘ethical’ trade some interpreted this as ‘ethnical’ and others thought ‘fair trade’ was a business brand. However, some did look at this issue seriously and examined the business’ ‘green’ credentials. Whilst the majority of candidates included a limited bibliography, few made it very detailed.

Activity 2

Coverage of functional areas and communications should be applied to the business chosen rather than as a generic topic for the business. An investigation here should be of the **actual** forms of communication used by the particular business. Some candidates covered both businesses for all aspects of the activity and others misinterpreted the requirement completely. Although most were able to give an opinion, few candidates really gave reasons why their chosen method of communication was the most important of the many used.

Activity 3

Coverage was a little 'patchy' here. Generic lists of stakeholders were much in evidence but these need to be interpreted in the case of the particular business investigated. Without this, any work on the ranking of stakeholders or 'conflict' between stakeholders becomes academic. It is also important to ensure that candidates give examples of how the chosen business attracts and retains new customers (marketing and/or customer service could be reviewed here) and select two pieces of legislation affecting the rights and responsibilities of employees. Once again, analysis and some evaluation will be important in examining how far the law impacts on the chosen business.

Assessment Criteria:

Research

It is important that assessor comments support the marks given. This is particularly so where no bibliography is required. Assessors will have witnessed the candidates' research activities and a clear statement will justify any mark given. Sometimes this had to be inferred from the work itself and, in other cases, it was difficult to see how a mark had been chosen.

Present information

Most of the work was reasonably well presented but there were instances of muddled presentation, activities out of sequence, no headings, paragraphs and so on that detracted from the clarity of the work. As with the research criterion, it is important to justify the marks given.

Decision making

There was some evidence of analysis throughout most the work seen. Simply making comparisons, reaching simple conclusions based on findings and making judgements can constitute analysis. Also, 'QWC' is embedded here and in the subsequent criterion so marks can be given for clarity, spelling and expression.

Review/evaluation of activity

The candidate is required to evaluate each task and/or their personal and any group involvement in each activity. In practice, one reflection could cover all three activities and be kept to a minimum to avoid repetition. Better candidates should be encouraged to evaluate their business findings so that evaluation is of their understanding from the investigations of the businesses rather than too focused on the personal aspects.

Methodology

It would have been helpful to see any planning sheets and to have a tutor comment to support the methodology mark given. As with 'research', an assessor statement as to how the candidate set about the tasks would help to justify any mark given. Some candidates had clearly been well guided whilst the work of others lacked much evidence of 'planning' and marks were difficult to agree.

Administration:

In most instances these issues were properly addressed but there were cases where the sample did not include highest and lowest or where signatures were missing from authentication statements and had to be requested separately. The vast majority of the work was received on time.

Grade Boundaries - June 2010

5AB01	Total	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Raw Mark	100	80	71	62	54	46	38	30	22
UMS	120	108	96	84	72	60	48	36	24

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