

Moderators' Report/ Principal Moderator Feedback

June 2011

GCSE Applied Business (5AB03)
Paper 01

Edexcel is one of the leading examining and awarding bodies in the UK and throughout the world. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers.

Through a network of UK and overseas offices, Edexcel's centres receive the support they need to help them deliver their education and training programmes to learners.

For further information, please call our GCE line on 0844 576 0025, our GCSE team on 0844 576 0027, or visit our website at www.edexcel.com.

If you have any subject specific questions about the content of this Moderators' Report that require the help of a subject specialist, you may find our **Ask The Expert** email service helpful.

Ask The Expert can be accessed online at the following link:
<http://www.edexcel.com/Aboutus/contact-us/>

Alternatively, you can contact our [Business Studies] Advisor directly by sending an email to [Business Studies specialist] on BusinessSubjectAdvisor@EdexcelExperts.co.uk.

You can also telephone 0844 372 2187 to speak to a member of our subject advisor team.

June 2011

Publications Code UG027310

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Edexcel Ltd 2011

INVESTIGATING PEOPLE, BUSINESS AND CHANGE

Administration

In most cases 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.

Most of the work was received on time.

Controlled Assessment

It is important to recognise the differences between the earlier 'coursework' approaches to the original version of this specification and the requirements of 'controlled assessment' here.

Many candidates produced responses which it was difficult to believe had been completed within the time allowed. Whilst it is not intended that 'exam' sessions should be held, the work submitted should reflect the candidates' responses to the set activities within the time limits allowed whilst adhering to the nature of a 'medium' level of control. This was better evidenced where clear references were made to sources of information used even where a 'bibliography' as such was not required. This would remove the practice of some centres whose candidates submitted all their research files. This is not required as the Awarding Body reserves the right to request such files in cases where there are some doubts concerning validity or authenticity but there is no need to send all research materials with the submitted work.

The nature of controlled assessment makes annotation of the work an essential feature, which is explained below.

Annotation of Work

The importance of clear annotation cannot be stressed enough; it provides guidance both for internal and external verification and moderation of assessment decisions.

The minimum requirement as identified in the Code of Practice is that there must be an indication of where marks have been awarded against the assessment criteria i.e. marks for research, presentation, analysis and decision making, evaluation and methodology. These could be indicated by reference to 'criterion' ('R', 'P', 'A', 'E', 'M' and 'descriptor'/level achieved – '1', '2', or '3', refer to the specification for further details). Annotation by Assessment Objective ('AO') is rather more difficult as these underpin the whole specification.

Assessors need to clearly indicate where, and to what extent, these have been by reference to the mark descriptors contained in the Unit specification. Sometimes, in the recent series, assessors indicated that

more could have been done then proceeded to award the highest mark possible.

In cases where there is little (or any) annotation indicating how marks had been awarded it is often very difficult for moderators to agree the marks as given and this lack of annotation is unhelpful to any form of moderation (internal or external). In future, work without any clear annotation will be returned to centres for assessors to complete.

The Controlled Assessment Activities

This year work moderated again ranged from the applied use of material drawn from real businesses to the more remote 'external' approach with information taken from text book or case study sources. Some assessors again indicated clearly how and where assessment criteria had been met whilst many others still provided little or no evidence in support of their decisions (see 'Annotation of Work' above).

In some cases there was still evidence that downloaded information (images, pictures, maps, graphs and in some cases whole passages of text) 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. It must be emphasised in the strongest possible terms that the work submitted by candidates must be their own work in its entirety and if material is copied across it must be referenced and used as part of the candidate's answer and not as a substitute for the candidate's own work. . In practice, where evidence of this or of plagiarism is detected by moderators, the work will be referred to the 'Malpractice' section of the Awarding Body. The rules on plagiarism and on the conduct of controlled assessment must be made clear to candidates and centres must also ensure they are fully aware of the rules and apply them diligently.

Again, as with 5AB01, it was evident that in some instances excessive 'prescription' had been given to candidates. This is questionable in its legitimacy. This was particularly so where all candidates had received very similar information and tackled the 'activities' in a prescribed manner making differentiation between candidates difficult not to mention bringing into question the whole purpose for which controlled assessment was introduced.

Activity 1

As with 5AB01, assessors need to consider the suitability of all chosen businesses particularly the larger supermarket chains where candidates often had difficulty in focusing on particular aspects of their operations. It is advisable that candidates choose their own businesses to investigate rather than the business being chosen by the centre. There are many appropriate and accessible businesses available for students to choose – one of the businesses does not have to be Tesco or another supermarket – there are plenty of other interesting businesses available!

Much of the work seen here was generic they could have applied to any business and lacked depth. This was always done better where the smaller business had been considered. 'Customer expectations' tended to be generic and any evaluation tended to be limited and/or of the business itself rather than of this aspect of the business.

'Recruitment' was likewise rather generalised and few candidates identified actual job roles for which their CV's might be suitable (some omitted this requirement completely)

Although most candidates had tackled the set tasks, in some instances the tasks had been re-written emphasising other aspects of business that did not match either the specification or the activity. In such a case it was impossible to agree with the marks given.

Activity 2

Some of the work was superficial with limited analysis with little use made of the required location maps or references to these. Candidates did not always seem to have understood that many large businesses are multi-faceted and have many products and locations and thus make mention of this when tackling issues of location.

There was often little analysis of why a particular business might choose to relocate although this is part of the set activity. On occasions, the issues had not been thought through e.g. one suggestion was for an animal park in a stately home to move elsewhere!

Activity 3

Many candidates produced a largely generic approach that meant that the work contained was very basic information and lacked focus e.g. on how the business might respond to external influences. Instead, any evaluation tended to be of the whole business and did not address the required tasks i.e. three factors that make its goods and/or services competitive; two ways in which technology is used to maintain or improve its competitiveness; how economic conditions have affected the business and two ways in which the business affects the environment and how such effects may be managed.

Reflection on Skills

As well as completing the tasks contained within the activities above, candidates are required to consider these issues as detailed in the specification. One reasonably detailed reflection may be used to cover all three tasks so long as it addresses:

- time management, personal organisation and action planning
- use of data and problem solving
- roles played in any group work undertaken
- suitability of chosen methods of presentation

Please refer to the Controlled Assessment tasks for full details.

Assessment Criteria

Research

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

Present information

As with last year 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. However, in some cases, simple bulleted lists were presented making it merely a list of statements containing little or no analysis, application or evaluation. Just as it is for the research criterion, so it is important here for the assessor to be able to justify the marks given.

Decision making

There was again evidence of some analysis throughout most of 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 marks can be given for clarity, spelling, expression, use of appropriate business terminology and so on.

Review/evaluation of activity

The specification requires candidates 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 further encouraged to evaluate their business findings so that evaluation is of their understanding from the investigations of the businesses rather than too focussed on the personal aspects. Again, as with 5AB01, evaluation of the task involves applying higher order skills to the task itself (i.e. the questions posed in the task) not simply the process involved. There is little business understanding being demonstrated by students trotting out a standard list of what they did, how they did it and what they would have done differently if they had to do the task again. It must be remembered that the student is being assessed primarily on the basis of their business understanding.

Methodology

Again, it would have been helpful to see any planning sheets or 'logs' used 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 again been well guided whilst the work of others lacked much evidence of 'planning' and marks were difficult to agree.

Further copies of this publication are available from
Edexcel Publications, Adamsway, Mansfield, Notts, NG18 4FN

Telephone 01623 467467
Fax 01623 450481
Email publication.orders@edexcel.com
Order Code UG027310 June 2011

For more information on Edexcel qualifications, please visit
www.edexcel.com/quals

Pearson Education Limited. Registered company number 872828
with its registered office at Edinburgh Gate, Harlow, Essex CM20 2JE

Ofqual




Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

