

Examiners' Report January 2013

GCSE Business Studies 5BS01 01

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Introduction

As in previous examination series, the available evidence suggests that this paper was accessible and candidates were able to demonstrate effective knowledge and understanding of the content from Unit 1. The statistical information available shows that centres are preparing their candidates effectively for this objective test paper.

It is worth mentioning that while Unit 1 is more heavily weighted towards Assessment Objectives (AOs) 1 and 2, the questions continue to require candidates to think carefully through the options before selecting an answer.

As in all the GCSE Business Studies examination papers, the questions are produced to target the full range of abilities from G to A*; therefore some questions will be more challenging than others.

Candidates are reminded that all questions should be attempted rather than missing some out. They are also reminded to mark their answers using black ink. Some candidates did not follow the instructions given, eg if the question asks for one box to be marked, then marking two does not gain a second chance at the question.

Summary of candidate performance

Below is a summary of performance in the questions for which particular issues were evident or for which we feel comment is worth making.

Question 1

This question was an inviting question on finance for a sole trader and a majority of candidates were successful here. However there were still some candidates who considered an overdraft as a long-term example, which it would not be.

Question 2

Most candidates were able to identify two objectives for a sole trader when setting up in business.

Question 3

Candidates were asked to identify the changes to the marketing mix that would help a company expand. This was a slightly challenging question and candidates had to select three examples. Nearly all candidates gained at least one mark, showing that they understood the concept of how the marketing mix could be changed.

Question 5

Candidates clearly understood the information that could be gained by direct contact with customers and identified the information gained by this method.

Question 6

This question proved challenging for some with only just over half of the candidates gaining two marks. Perhaps this area of the specification, 1.2 'thinking creatively', may need to be covered in more depth.

Question 7

This question also proved to be more challenging for a large majority of candidates. They had to understand quite a lot of information before answering the question with regard to exchange rates. However most businesses that deal with other countries are affected by the exchange rates with some consequences and this is an aspect that candidates should be aware of.

Question 8

This question was well answered with nearly three-quarters of candidates able to work the calculation out.

Question 9

Candidates were able to identify the sources of added value and most gained the marks available.

Question 10

Nearly half the candidates were unable to identify the definition of a stakeholder, which is part of topic 1.5 'what effect do business decisions have on stakeholders'.

Questions 11 and 12

Although these questions were also on stakeholders, they were answered exceptionally well, which conflicts with the previous question. Candidates appear to know what happens with stakeholders but not how they are defined.

Question 13

Most candidates were able to calculate the missing costs in the given table. However there are still some candidates whose writing is very difficult to read or not sufficiently clear, and candidates are reminded to make their writing as legible as possible.

Question 14

The majority of candidates realised that the effect of an increase in the cost of oil on a business would be an increase in variable costs.

Question 15

Not all candidates realised that legislation protects workers with regard to age and race; the other alternatives given related to the individual.

Question 16

About half the candidates gained one mark on this question, showing they had not fully realised the ways in which a sole trader can compete with larger rivals. Customer service is one way, with the opportunity of offering an online ordering service another. Launching a national advertising campaign and charging lower prices are something that a sole trader would find more difficult to do.

Question 17

Fewer than half the candidates gained two marks on this question, showing less than full understanding of the different taxes and how they apply to a sole trader.

Question 18

This question appeared to be more challenging for candidates and was aimed at the more able. This was the second graph within the paper and candidates had to interpret the information from the graph and apply it to the question. The topic was from 1.5 'market demand and supply' and was looking at the effect on businesses of changes. Perhaps candidates could practise this type of question more.

Question 20

This question was well answered by most candidates with the exception of Q20(vi) where only a quarter of candidates gained the mark. The reason for this may be that candidates did not read the question properly and missed the word 'skills' out of the definition. It appears that candidates are well prepared for this question and found no problem with the change in style of answering.

Summary

Below is a summary of advice specifically arising from this examination. This includes some guidance reproduced from previous series.

Multiple-choice questions – centres should ensure that candidates are sufficiently prepared to attempt multiple-choice questions. The questions are designed to require skills including application and analysis.

Analysis of graphs – candidates should practise analysing the information presented in graphs and making judgements on that information.

Key terms – a number of marks on this paper are gained through knowledge of key terms. Centres could plan to consolidate this knowledge on a regular, weekly basis with their candidates. This could take many different forms such as quizzes, crosswords, etc.

Practice makes perfect – to improve performance of candidates, centres should seek to develop examination technique by running mock exams under the same timed conditions as the real paper. On the Edexcel website, there is now a selection of past papers available.

Timing – while many candidates scored highly on this paper, it was considered that, at times, incorrect responses were selected by candidates as a result of questions not being read thoroughly enough. Centres are encouraged to work with candidates in using the 45 minutes available to think carefully about each question, identify distracters and finally identify the correct answer. A check by candidates of all their answers is also encouraged before the end of the examination. Candidates need to be aware that questions are designed to include some strong distracters.

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