

# Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback

## Summer 2010

GCSE

### GCSE Business Studies (5BS04) Paper 01

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## PE Report On Examination Paper 5BS04/01

### General Comments:

This is the first paper for this unit with a very small number of students sitting the exam. Overall responses demonstrated there were some areas of the specification where students across the board demonstrated very weak knowledge. What is encouraging, however, is the way in which the higher tier questions have been tackled. There were far greater numbers of students offering well constructed, coherent arguments, which used the context well and demonstrated the skills of analysis and evaluation.

One area for the new qualification is in students using contexts more effectively to demonstrate application skills. If a question has a particular context which students are asked to refer to, then their answer must be rooted in that context. In general, if an answer to such a question could be applied to any business then the candidate is not applying their knowledge and understanding effectively. Centres can help students develop this skill by using as many different contexts as possible in covering the content of the specification so that students become more used to thinking about how a particular body of knowledge relates to a specific business.

In previous papers connected with the pilot there were a large numbers of students who seemed to believe (or have been coached) to include catch-all statements which really do not demonstrate much in the way of business understanding. These are typically - 'if the business does X then they will sell more and so make a bigger profit.' The new qualification has learnt lessons from the Pilot and senior examiners have stated that adding this into the end of every answer is unlikely to be credited. As a result it is incumbent upon centres to help students focus on developing answers that require a little more thought about the question, how to develop answers and how to avoid regularly giving such catch-all phrases.

Catch-all phrases can be avoided by helping students to gain a better understanding of the costs and benefits of decision-making. There are a worryingly large number of students, who at the end of a business studies course, seem to think that if a business does something (for example, advertises their services) that it will automatically encourage many more sales and that profits will automatically increase. There is rarely an attempt to qualify or quantify decision-making at any level in business and to recognise that any such decision has costs which will offset any possible revenues. The simplistic analysis that results does not reach the levels which will help to give students access to the top grades.

It was encouraging that there were no candidates using additional sheets to answer questions. It was mentioned with the pilot there was evidence that some centres are deliberately encouraging this practice. As stated with this, students gain no benefit from doing so - these scripts are not necessarily marked by senior examiners as some centres seem to believe. It must be stressed that the amount of space students are given to answer questions is designed to allow candidates to provide an answer that can gain all the marks available for that question. In the time available to students, the awarding body cannot expect students to have to give more than is made available; as stressed previously to centres; it is quality which examiners are looking for not quantity. If students demonstrate the assessment objectives targeted for that question then they will earn the marks. Offering additional writing is not going to gain them any further marks and merely wastes time which could usefully be spent

on the higher tariff questions. Some students, for example, gave almost essay-like responses to Questions worth 2 marks - these answers (assuming they had the correct response) got 2 marks; students who had simply given the correct answer - also got 2 marks. It should be obvious in this situation that time is being wasted by the candidates giving unnecessarily long answers.

It must be stressed that centres must not encourage students to always give definitions to key terms if they appear in the question regardless of the command word in that question. It must be stressed that with this qualification that this is not required unless the student is specifically asked for a definition (or the question implies as such - 'What is meant by the term...', for example). It must be stressed that for simply regurgitating pre-learned definitions does not gain any additional marks.

There were a number of candidates who insist on repeating the question as the start to their answer. As with the above, this does not gain the candidate any marks and simply wastes time. Students should be encouraged to answer the question set and to demonstrate their business understanding and the assessment objectives.

On the whole, however, responses by students were encouraging. Centres doing the new GCSE will see some similarities between the style of extended questions in the pilot and those on the new papers. It is to be hoped that the lessons learned from this paper will be used to help prepare students effectively for future examinations.

## Grade Boundaries - June 2010

5BS04_01	Total	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Raw Mark	90	73	62	51	41	36	31	27	23
UMS	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20

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