

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2014

GCSE Business Studies (5BS01)

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General Comments

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

Again it is also worth mentioning that whilst Unit 1 is more heavily weighted towards Assessment Objective (AO) 1 and (AO) 2, the questions continue to require candidates to think carefully through the options before selecting an answer.

As in all 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.

Centres should advise candidates that all questions should be attempted rather than missing some out. Also candidates should remember that all papers are scanned to enable them to be marked by computer and therefore they should mark clearly their answer using black ink so that it can be seen. Some candidates did not follow the instructions given e.g. if the question asks for one box to be marked then marking two does not gain then a second chance at the question.

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 – Again this question was an inviting question, with various options and candidates had to choose which one would be most suitable for a small business if they wished to have short-term finance. There appeared to be some confusion with a number of candidates who gave the answer Bank Loan. This is more mid to long term finance.

Question 2 – Candidates were asked about what questions an entrepreneur would ask to find out if there were enough customers, this was well answered by most candidates who gained the two marks.

Question 3 – A question on risks and why businesses tend to fail during their first year. This was well answered by candidates who tended to gain the three marks available, with just a small percentage gaining one or two marks. This topic is evidently understood by candidates and they realise the implications involved.

Question 4 – As in previous questions with graphs included in them, some candidates found difficulty in understanding the graph and then applying the knowledge gained to answer the questions.

Question 5 – A further question related to the graph where candidates had to analyse and then apply the information to decide the impact it would have on Northern Coffee Merchants Ltd. Most were able to gain one mark but the second mark proved more difficult for some.

Question 6 – Candidates had to understand a further graph and comment on how the interest rate would affect small businesses. This question was aimed at the higher level candidates and this proved to be more challenging for candidates with most only gaining one mark. This is in Topic 1.5 'Impact on changes in interest rates on small businesses.' Perhaps this type of question could be practiced more with candidates to help them in the future.

Question 7 – Topic 1.3 covers Venture Capital and candidates always seem to have difficulty with this section of the syllabus, with less than half gaining the two marks available. Perhaps this is also where further practice could be given to help candidates.

Questions 8 – 10 required candidates to read details of three companies and then answer the questions on the following page.

Question 8 – The decision as to which would be a good market for Connie to enter was not always fully understood, less than half the candidates gained the three marks available with most gaining two. Candidates should be encouraged to read the information carefully before answering the question, especially when there is so much information to understand and then apply to the questions.

Question 9 – This question was well answered by the majority of candidates who gained the full two marks, fully understanding what effective customer service is.

Question 10 – Identification of two non-financial objectives for Connie when starting her business was very well answered with almost all candidates gaining full marks.

Question 11 – This question tended to confuse some candidates on what Fayazee was actually showing as an entrepreneur. A number opted for showing determination, which she might have been doing however, on closely reading the scenario, she was in fact showing leadership skills.

Question 12 – Candidates clearly understood which skills she demonstrated on Thursday with a large majority gaining the mark available.

Question 13 – The majority of candidates understood the question on location and where able to select the option that would be most appropriate for Sachin.

Question 14 – A second question on the diagram and candidates had to select two sources of added value. This is a topic that has been tested before and candidates had clearly understood and where able to gain the marks available.

Question 15 – A question on exchange rates which most of the candidates were able to gain the mark available.

Question 16 – Customer focus was a topic understood by the vast majority of candidates who gained the full marks available.

Question 17 – This question on 'increased economic activity' proved to be slightly challenging for some candidates. This topic 1.5 'How do business cycles affect small', may need to be revisited for candidates in the future.

Question 18 – This question appeared to be more challenging for candidates and was aimed at the higher grades, with just over half of the candidates gaining the two marks. The topic was from 1.4 'the marketing mix' and was looking at the effect of promotion on businesses. Perhaps this type of question could be practiced more with candidates to help them in the future.

Question 19 – As reported in previous years' stakeholder questions seem to cause some concern with candidates and this question was no different with just over half of the candidates gaining the full marks.

Question 20 – As with previous papers, this question was well answered by most candidates. It appears that candidates are well prepared for this question.

Advice for centres

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

1 **Multiple choice does not necessarily mean easier** – centres should work with candidates to ensure that they are sufficiently prepared to attempt multiple choice questions. The questions are designed to require skills including application and analysis.

2 **Analysis of graphs** – this is perhaps where centres perhaps could prepare candidates more by giving them examples of graphs so that they can analyse the information and make judgements. In case this type of question appears in future papers.

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

4 **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.

5 **Timing** - whilst many candidates scored highly on this paper, it was considered at times incorrect responses were selected by candidate 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 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.

Additional support

There is extensive support for teachers in relation to the course from Edexcel. This includes:

Ask the Expert – a service which allows teachers to ask question to the senior examining team directly

<http://edexcel-5571.custhelp.com/app/ask/session/L3NpZC9pOUI5cHJfag%3D%3D>

There are exemplar materials and regular updates on training, including online training on the GCSE Business website –

<http://www.edexcel.com/quals/gcse/gcse09/Business/Business/Pages/default.aspx>

Customised training can be arranged to deal with specific queries that centres have –

<http://www.edexcel.com/quals/gcse/gcse09/Business/Business/Pages/training.aspx>

Resultsplus – a service which gives centres feedback on how students have performed for the examination series.

<https://www.edexcel.com/resultsplus/Pages/default.aspx>

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

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