



Pearson

Examiner's Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel International
Advanced Level
in Business (WBS04) Paper 01

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Introduction

The main reasons for some otherwise able students underachieving are the usual ones of not heeding command words and not reading the questions carefully enough. Command words are still being ignored by a sizeable number. Instructions to 'Assess' and 'Evaluate' were not followed by some candidates.

Some of the students missed out on marks because they did not answer the question that was set. This was particularly the case with questions 6. Some students missed out several whole questions.

It is worth reminding future students of the need to apply context to all responses. Repeating generic or stock answers will not access the higher levels of the mark scheme. This is particularly important on the longer questions such as Q5, Q6 & Q7. Having said that, there were some excellent responses showing high levels of considered evaluation backed up by relevant examples.

Q1a

A significant number were able to gain 1 mark for increasing GDP. Surprisingly few achieved 2 marks, those that did usually explained it terms of increased productivity in goods and services. Not many identified growth over a period of time. Those responses that did not gain any marks tended to use direct lifts from the evidence about China's economic growth being a benefit to South Korea.

Q1b

Not as well answered as Q1a. There were some who clearly explained a merger as two businesses/companies setting up for form a third entity or new business. However, there were a significant number who gave only partial explanations that could apply equally to joint ventures and were not developed enough to access a mark. Few were able to provide an answer which demonstrated the permanence of the arrangement and its voluntary nature.

Q2

The question was mostly well answered with students able to produce two valid reasons. If there was a difficulty, it was in the consistency of the answers between knowledge, application and analysis. Students would often provide inconsistent responses. Very few answers about saturated markets, which is surprising giving the good quality of answers on this topic in previous series.

Q3

There were mixed responses to this question. Most gave two reasons but often only one was developed. Lots of single reasons were well developed and sometimes the same reason used twice. A significant number wasted time/space on evaluating their response, indicating a lack of exam technique or understanding of command words. Few reached the maximum of 8 marks, often because of a lack of clarity in the response.

Q4

Application and analysis was generally good and a significant number were able to reach L4 by recognising that 'all the other P's need to be considered' but only a few developed this into a fully comprehensive response. The best answers were able to demonstrate a real appreciation of the business of Hyundai and how the changing economy might relate to the marketing mix. Weaker responses focussed purely on the relationship between price and demand with no connection made to the wider economy.

Q5

There were few excellent responses with most students presenting a response which was a general discussion of exchange rates and buying habits. Analysis was good when the connection between the market for the specific fruit and costs/prices were present and consideration of the changing nature of exchange rates.

As before, a question on exchange rates left many candidates struggling to put together a logical chain of reasoning, many responses were simply wrong. This highlights the need for more detailed coverage of the impact of exchange rates on global markets in lessons.

Q6

Outsourcing and offshoring proved to be a good differentiating question. Many students knew the key definitions of both, (although a significant number confused the terms). The question was mostly well answered with students able to identify many positive aspects of offshoring and outsourcing for overseas countries.

Unfortunately, a significant minority of candidates did not read the question carefully enough and chose to focus on the benefits to the company/MNCs rather than the overseas countries. This was one of the weakest questions seen in terms of lack of application. There were some excellent evaluative responses with strong analysis but no acknowledgement of the case study evidence or reference to other examples from their own knowledge. Consequently, they were unable to access the higher marks.

Q7

There were some really good answers to this questions and very few students had any problems gaining marks here. Students demonstrated a good appreciation of the businesses involved and were able to develop their answers well, with most using JLR's location to Slovakia.

Once again, the most significant issue with the responses to this question was lack of application. Some very well analysed and evaluated responses had no mention of Apple, JLR or any other company which limited the marks awarded. A few scripts had an unfinished Q7 and appeared to have run out of time on this last question.

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

- Do read the question carefully and answer the question that is set
- Do watch out for command words such as Assess or Evaluate
- Do use examples to illustrate your argument
- Do use the language of the subject and avoid generalities
- Do watch your timing and do not spend too long on one question
- Do write concisely
- Do add a conclusion to the longer questions

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