Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2023

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Subsidiary and International Advanced Level
In Business (WBS14)
Paper 01

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This proved to be an accessible exam paper for most students. The questions discriminated well, with candidates accessing a wide range of marks, with some good, and occasionally very good, responses to the questions set.

Strong candidates did well, with some excellent and thoughtful responses, particularly for the longer questions. By contrast, there were also some very weak responses that showed little understanding of, or even familiarity with, the specification content.

The main reasons for some students underachieving were the usual ones of not heeding command words and not reading the questions carefully enough. Once again, 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. For example, for Q1c some candidates concentrated on other indicators of growth rather than focusing on the usefulness, or not, of GDP. For Q2, some embarked on a pre-prepared answer about the pros and cons of MNCs rather than addressing the actual question of control.

It is worth reminding future students of the need to apply proper context to all responses. Repeating generic or stock answers, or just copying the text from the case study will not access the higher levels of the mark scheme.

SECTION A
Question 1a
For most candidates a straightforward start to the paper and an easy 4 marks. Those that did not gain all 4 marks had made errors with the relative number of noughts in billions and millions. Some candidates failed to add the dollar sign; they should always use the right units in their final answer.

Question 1b
There were several advantages that could have been explained to answer this question. However, the majority of candidates wrote about the reduction of trade barriers and the opportunity to increase exports. This was usually backed up with evidence from the extract, although this did need to be applied to the points being made rather than just being copied out separately.

It is worth remembering that on this type of question a definition is not needed; many candidates offered a definition of free trade which did not gain any marks.

Question 1c
Perhaps a deceptively straightforward question but many candidates seemed more intent on describing other indicators of growth such as HDI rather than addressing the main question. Those that did were able to show why it could be a useful indicator of growth such as ease of comparison and then by balance, some of its drawbacks, such as the impact of inflation and unrecorded economic activity.

Question 1d
Good responses looked at political stability in its wider sense and not just the narrow focus of war and internal strife. Businesses need a stable and strong legal framework and the right financial framework in which to operate. Balance was usually provided by looking at other factors that might have influenced where a business chooses a production location. Good use was made of the extract by pointing out that those businesses that relied on natural resources often had little choice. Some looked at the type and cost of labour needed or the infrastructure needs. It was good to see the use of examples from wider study.

Question 1e
Mostly a well-answered question, candidates were able to use the evidence to show how reduced costs of transport and communications lead to more trade and more interconnectivity and hence increasing globalisation. By way of balance and competing argument, most candidates looked at other factors such as the role of the WTO, political change, trading blocs

and the mobility of labour. As with the previous question it was good to see wider examples being used to support the points being made.

SECTION B
Both case studies and questions were accessible to well informed students and acted as good platforms from which they could build convincing answers.
For the students that did not do so well in the 20 mark questions, it was usually because they had simply copied out, or re-written, the evidence with little or no attempt at analysis or evaluation. Good conclusions were rare, simply re-writing previously made points adds nothing to the answer.
As ever, the key to doing well in these longer questions is to fully develop the chains of reasoning, look at the competing arguments and support them with evidence before reaching a supported conclusion or judgement.

Question 2
MNCs are a popular topic and for the most part well understood. Where some candidates went astray was in answering a different question on the good and bad points about MNCs and FDI. The question was specifically about controlling their actions. Disappointingly some just repeated the evidence without development, relying on assertions with little reference to other examples.
Better responses produced wide-ranging discussions looking at a range of issues backed up by examples. Good balance came from looking at the effectiveness of consumer pressure when the MNC was not consumer oriented, the power and wealth of some companies enabling them to mount effective defences and the relative power dynamic between a state and a MNC. The use of examples beyond the case studies was usually a sign of a better quality response.

Question 3
Perhaps not as well answered as the previous 20 marker but stronger candidates were able to see the growing economic power of Asia as both an opportunity and a threat for non-Asian businesses. Although most concentrated on the impact on sales and market share, some candidates looked at the effect on businesses which had chosen to manufacture in Asia and were facing increased costs as the wages of employees rose with economic growth. Balance was generally good, with many considering the type and nature of non-Asian businesses and their willingness or ability to embrace change.
There was very little evidence to suggest that candidates did not have enough time to complete the paper.

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 (and neatly please!)
• Do add a relevant conclusion to the longer questions