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# **Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback**

## **October 2023**

Pearson Edexcel International A Level  
In Business (WBS11)  
Unit 1 Marketing and people

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## **Introduction:**

Many candidates appeared to have been well prepared for the exam. Most students attempted all questions which indicates students did not struggle to finish the paper within the allocated time. Examiners read some good responses to the questions set. In particular 1c and 2c were answered well by students. It is apparent that students are well practised in answering the six-mark questions and are using the extracts provided to them to contextualise their responses for these particular questions.

However, one question that was not well answered was 1e which examined random sampling. The scores on this question were particularly low with many candidates failing to score any marks. This topic is listed in the specification with other sampling techniques, and it is important that centres cover all areas of the specification.

Whilst there has been an improvement over the last few years, there are still students who are failing to provide counterbalance to the discuss and assess questions. It is also worth reminding students once again of the need to read the case studies carefully and use the evidence provided to apply context to these responses. Providing generic responses will not achieve the higher-level marks of the mark scheme.

## **Report on individual questions**

Question 1a: This definition question was generally well answered. Many students showed an understanding of the term risk and gained the full two marks.

Question 1b: Most students showed an understanding of the topic market mapping and recognised that it is primarily used by a business to spot gaps in a market. However, it is worth reminding centres once again that 4 mark explain questions must have two points of application to gain the full 4 marks. Many answers provided only one point of context and gained only three marks.

Question 1c: There were some good answers to this question with most students explaining the benefits of treating employees as assets rather than a cost. Many students were able to use the evidence provided to contextualise their answers. However, there are still some students who copy sections of the case study but do not use this evidence to support their arguments. Stand-alone evidence which makes no link to the knowledge or points of analysis will not be awarded.

Question 1d: Most students showed good understanding of psychological pricing which is a topic that has not been examined before in this specification. Many students gave examples of such pricing to support their knowledge. However, it was disappointing that some students did not provide balance to their answer or simply stated 'people might not be tricked by this pricing.' Development of evaluative points

are needed to fully explain the consequences to the business, in this case *Nando's*.

Question 1e: Whilst some students were able to define random sampling many could not explain the advantages and disadvantages of this sampling technique. Too many answers simply focussed on the merits of primary research or using a survey. Such answers gained no marks as they were not answering the question asked.

Question 2a: Most students gained one mark for this question, but many did not give a full enough definition to gain two marks. Whilst many recognised that a marketing objective was a goal or a target, they did not refer to marketing activity to gain the second mark.

Question 2b: The calculation of price elasticity of demand (PED) has been examined many times previously in this specification. Whilst many students gained the full 4 marks, others are still making the same mistakes. They are failing to show PED as a minus figure. It was also noticeable that some students are confused about the formula and calculated the percentage change in price divided by the percentage change in demand. The correct formula is percentage change in demand divided by the percentage change in price.

Question 2c: This question was generally well answered. Most students showed good knowledge of factors of demand that may impact a business. However, some incorrectly wrote about supply factors such as government subsidies or the changes in the cost of material.

Question 2d: Many students showed good understanding of the barriers an entrepreneur may face when starting a business. The reasons given were wide ranging and some students used the extracts well to provide context to their points of analysis. However, as with 1d, many students were not providing any counterbalance. Examiners were ideally looking for reasons the barriers might not exist or how they could have been overcome. Due to the lack of counterbalance many students failed to reach level 3 of the mark scheme.

Question 2e: Many students showed reasonable understanding of the characteristics of mass and niche markets. Many were able to explain why there may be challenges when moving from a mass to niche market. Unfortunately, yet again, too many responses did not attempt a counterbalance or simply provided a one line evaluative point which was not sufficiently developed to explain the consequence to the business.

Question 3: This was an accessible question with the majority of students showing reasonable understanding of on-the-job training. However, too many wrote a generic answer which simply listed the advantages and disadvantages of this type of training. The source booklet provided details of job roles and careers at *Walt Disney* but this evidence was generally not well used by candidates to explain the merits of on-the-job training for this particular business. Surprisingly, very few candidates failed to

provide a conclusion to their answers. Students should practise writing conclusion which do not simply rely on repeating their points but demonstrate the ability to weigh up competing arguments to propose a solution or recommendation.

## **Summary**

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

- This advice is given each series but unfortunately not always adhered to: Many students are still failing to provide counterbalance in their answers. For discuss, analyse and evaluation questions students must always provide a balanced assessment. By not providing a counterbalance it is extremely unlikely the candidate can reach the top level in the mark scheme.
- Too many of the discuss and analyse responses are extremely generic in nature. Whilst students often demonstrate good knowledge of a topic, unless there is sufficient application/context to support their answers, they will fail to access the highest marks.
- Equally it is not good practice to simply copy sections from the case study without specifically using the evidence to explain and develop the points. Stand-alone evidence that does not support the answer will not be rewarded.