Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

November 2024

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
In Business Studies (4BS1) Paper 02

Introduction:

Examiners saw many well-answered responses which indicate many candidates were well prepared for the examination. The paper discriminated well, with candidates accessing a wide range of marks.
Many of the 3 mark 'explain' questions were well answered with students showing logical and clear development to their points.
Timing did not appear to be an issue for candidates and most questions were attempted on the majority of papers.

As with paper 1, the main reasons for students underachieving were the usual ones of not using context in their answers especialy on the 'state' questions and not providing balanced arguments in the justify and evaluation questions . It is worth reminding students once again of the need to read the case studies carefully and use the evidence provided to apply context to their responses.

Report on individual questions

Question 1

The multiple-choice questions were generally well answered with many candidates achieving full marks. However Question 1a(iii) saw only half of the candidates selecting the correct answer and appeared to not understand the advantages of job production.
Question 1 (b) – this question saw only half of candidates correctly define the term job description. Many gave vague definitions and simply stated it was a description of a job which was inadequate for the mark.
Question 1 (c) – 60% of candidates were able to correctly define the term public corporation. Many confused the term with public limited company.
Question 1 (d) –This 'State' question required students to give a reason why a manager would delegate a task at the Premier Inn. Whilst many were able to give a valid reason the responses were not in context and so did not get the mark. Unfortuantely 80% of students failed to score on this question.
Question 1 (e) – a calculation question where over a half of candidates gained full marks. Whilst many students were able to calculate the discount they failed to subtract the discount from the full price.
Question 1 (f) – Many candidates showed some basic understanding to provide an advantage of a focus group though many stated it was a quick, easy or an unbiased method which is not correct.
Question 1 (g) – This question showed a wide range of results. Many level 3 answers were provided but unfortuantely 25% of candidates failed to score any marks on this question. The reason being was that the question asked how new Premier Inn hotels in India would benefit India. Many students wrote about how the new hotels would benefit Premier Inn and not India. This is a prime example of students not reading the question carefully.

Question 2

Question 2 (a) – This question was particularly poorly answered. This 'State' question required candidates to suggest one role that an employee in the marketing function of Premier Inn may do. Many students either failed to contextualise their answers or gave a role that was not within the marketing function.

Question 2 (b) – another 'State' question but this was much better answered. More candidates contextualised their answers to gain the mark.

Question 2 (c) – An 'explain' question where candidates had to explain one advantage of the use of robotics. It was very well answered with 95% of students gaining some marks. A total of 56% gained all three marks.

Question 2 (d) – This question about the advantages of sponsorship saw mixed results. 20% of candidates gained zero marks whilst 50% were awarded full marks. Many candidates wrote about the benefits of being sponsored rather than the benefits to a business when sponsoring an event or a person.

Question 2 (e) – As with 2d this question on the topic of trading blocs differentiated candidates with a wide range of marks awarded. Those awarded full marks explained well how a trading bloc would benefit a country whilst others confused the term and wrote about protectionism rather than liberalising trade.

Question 2 (f) – for this question candidates were asked to choose between competition and promotional pricing strategies. It was obvious than many candidates do not correct understand the meaning of competition pricing. It is not about charging a very low price / much lower than competitors but in fact charging approximately the same price as competitors. Due to this over 10% of candidates failed to score any marks on this question.

Question 3

Question 3 (a) – Half of the candidates gained the mark for defining net cash flow. Many answers were too vague and simply referred to cash in and out of the business rather than the difference between inflows and outflows.

Question 3 (b) – an 'outline' question which continues to provide a challenge for some candidates. The response to this question must be in the context of Premier Inn to gain the full available marks. Some candidates did well to identify a valid reason why Premier Inn may use an application form when recruiting but failed to develop this reason.

Question 3 (c) – a well answered calculation question where the majority of candidates gained the full 2 marks.

Question 3 (d) – these 6 marks analyse question was answered extremely well with over 80% getting 3 or more marks. Candidates developed their points well to explain why motivated employees would benefit Premier Inn. A minority of candidates focussed on methods of motivation.

Question 3 (e) – for this question candidates were asked to choose between internal and external recruitment. This is topic candidates are generally familiar with, however only 10% gained level 3 marks. Candidates in general are failing to ' Make a judgement, providing a clear justification based on a thorough evaluation of business information and issues relevant to the choice made' which is AO4 in the specification and mark scheme. Centres should take time with students to practise writing a detailed judgment based on the points discussed.

Question 4

Question 4 (a) – a calculation question where many candidates only gained one mark out of a possible two. The main reason was failing to round the answer to two decimal places.

Question 4 (b) – a well answered question which saw over 80% of candidates scoring between 3 and 6 marks. Candidates clearly understood the importance of a quality service however many failed to contextualise their answers to get the higher level 3 marks.

Question 4 (c) – This differentiated student and a wide range of marks were awarded. The more able students were able to explain why Premier Inn would use profit as a measure of success and counterbalance this with why it wasn't the best method or why other measures might be more appropriate. Others found the question a challenge and showed incorrect knowledge of profit as a measure. Many answered failed to show balance or provide a justification to satisfy A04 requirements.

Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice for both paper 1 and paper 2:

- This advice has been reported many times through the PE report to centres but remains an issue. Context is crucial to gain the top marks. The extracts provide evidence that candidates can utilise to support their answers. Any question which refers to a specific business should give answers that are in the context of that business. This has historically been an issue on the 'state' questions where answers need to be specifically applied to the business/person referred to in the exam paper.

- Many candidates are still failing to provide developed counterbalance in their answers. For justify and evaluate questions students must always provide a balanced assessment. Failing to provide balance means it is extremely unlikely the candidate can reach the top level in the mark scheme. The counterbalance should be as equally developed as the points of analysis.

- As mentioned already in this report it is advised that centres give guidance to candidates on how to write a justification for their answers. Two few students are satisfying AO4 criteria in the longer questions. For the justify and evaluation questions students are required to 'Make a judgement, providing a clear justification based on a thorough evaluation of business information and issues relevant to the choice made. (AO4)'