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Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
In Commerce (4CM1)
Paper 01 Commercial operations and
Associated risks

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GENERAL COMMENTS

For most of the questions candidates were quite well prepared and some were able to apply their knowledge, application, analysis and evaluation to answer the questions. However, again as mentioned in previous reports there are still several candidates who struggle, with the 'State' questions.

Many candidates had gained a great deal of commercial understanding from studying the course and this was apparent in the answers given. However, there are several candidates who are answering the questions detailing their knowledge of the topic without giving any application, analysis, or evaluative comments when the question is analyse, justify, or evaluate. This does restrict the candidates' access to the full range of marks available. The various scenarios throughout the paper are of real-life commercial operations, which perhaps interested some candidates, and this meant that they were able to relate their comments more easily to the questions. However, it is important that candidates read the questions very carefully before answering, as errors in understanding what is being asked for was apparent in this series.

The mark scheme includes the Assessment Objectives to help in the preparation of candidates for future examinations. Just to reiterate, that all four of the Assessment Objectives (AO's) are covered throughout the paper and the percentage breakdown of each AO can be seen on page 31 in the Specification. Also, on page 44 of the Specification, are examples of the command words used. For example, in question 2 (g) and 3 (f) the command word is 'Justify' and candidates are asked to write an extended answer, using information provided in order to recommend one of the two options to a commercial operation.

It is important that candidates take into account the marks allocated for each question, giving them guidance on the amount of detail they need to answer the question.

Furthermore, it is also worth mentioning, that if candidates need additional sheets of paper they must indicate if they have continued their answer somewhere else on the paper or have added additional sheets. Unfortunately, there are still a few who did not, and they may have missed some valuable marks. For those candidates that used additional paper, their response to the questions must be clearly identified on the paper and ensure that they write the correct question number. It is also important that candidates clearly label the additional pages to show which question they are continuing with. Examiners are unable to guess if a candidate has continued the answer somewhere else. Candidates must clearly indicate by indicating, 'continued', 'contd page' or 'see separate sheet' or something along those lines.

There are also some candidates who do not follow the instructions of the examination paper, for the multiple-choice questions candidates are given the instruction to mark an 'X' in the box. There are some candidates who are using 'ticks' which may not be picked up as these questions are marked by computer.

It is worth noting that questions can be taken from any part of the specification; therefore, centres should ensure that all sections are covered so that they do not

disadvantage any candidates. From the work seen it appeared that some candidates had difficulty answering certain topics.

COMMENTS ON INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONS

SECTION A

Question 1

In part 1 a – most candidates were able to indicate the correct answer of which one best describes branding. Candidates should be reminded that if they do make a mistake when answering a multiple-choice question, they should put a line through the wrong answer and an 'X' through the correct response. A candidate that marks two answers will not gain any marks.

In part 1 b – again well answered by most of the cohort understanding what defines a multinational.

In part 1 c – a define question where candidates had to define the term 'primary sector'. This was not well answered by candidates and with some candidates referring to manufacturing. Candidates should avoid using the term in their response as it will not give a clear definition of the term.

In part 1 d – another define question, where candidates had to define the term 'wholesaler'. Most candidates were able to give a clear definition of the role.

In part 1 e (i) – a calculation question, where candidates had to work out the price of the shoes in euros. A number of candidates did not read the question and only gave one decimal point in their answer. As mentioned earlier candidates should read the question at least twice before attempting to answer. It is worth reiterating to candidates to show their workings within the box, as they may have the correct formula and figures, but the actual calculation was incorrect. Also, candidates should be encouraged to ensure that the figures written are clear and easily readable, thus avoiding any confusion.

In part 1 e (ii) - this is the first of the 'State' questions where candidates must relate their response to the scenario. As in previous series many candidates give the correct answer but do not put their response in the context of the scenario, which means they do not get the mark available. All 'State' and 'Outline' questions must be answered in context. Just putting the name of the scenario, Priceless in the response does not guarantee the mark – as Priceless is in the question, an example needs to be included such as handbags, or shoes, to gain the mark.

In part 1 e (iii) – another state question. Candidates had to give a disadvantage of accepting foreign currency for payment of goods. This question was not as well answered by candidates, again because it was not put into the scenario.

In part 1 f – candidates were asked to give one disadvantage to a business of using road transport, and the responses clearly showed that they understood the disadvantages of using road transport. However, a number of candidates gave lots of different reasons. Candidates must ensure that they answer the question which asked for one disadvantage not several.

In part 1 g – another question where candidates understood why department stores are a popular type of retailer and were able to gain the marks available. This is probably because they will have visited one and have an understanding how a department store works. However, it is also important that candidates read the question carefully before answering. As the question is an explain one, the response did not have to be in context and candidates could demonstrate their knowledge of the topic.

In part 1 h – this is the first question in the paper which is marked by levels. Candidates were asked to analyse why an insurance business would want Bombay Sweet Shop to meet the principle of insurable interest. Again, a topic of insurance, which is not always well answered by candidates. This question was not well answered by the majority of the cohort, the main reason being that they probably did not read the question carefully enough, saw the words insurable interest and develop their knowledge of the topic. As mentioned earlier it is important to read the question at least twice to ensure that candidates fully understand what they are going to answer. Also, to gain the marks available candidates need to apply their knowledge and analyse it to the scenario.

Question 2

In part 2 a – a multiple choice question where candidates had to identify which risk is uninsurable. Often most candidates find insurance question quite difficult. It is worth practising as many of these types of question as possible.

In part 2 b – a multiple choice question where candidates had to work out the amount of compensation that the insurance company would pay Makro. Most were able to work out the cost of compensation payable.

In part 2 c (i) – candidates had to look at figure 1 and then identify which insurance company had the highest premium. Most candidates were able to identify the insurance company.

In part 2 c (ii) – again candidates had to refer to figure 1 and identify the lowest premium paid to insurance a family, this was not as well answered as expected. Many candidates put the name of the company and not the premium. Another reason for reading the question at least twice before attempting to answer it.

In part 2 d – a define question where candidates were asked to define 'bad debts'. Most candidates understood the question, but some failed to give a good definition. As mentioned, candidates are encouraged not to use the words in the question when giving a definition as it does not always show a true definition of the term/word/phrase.

In part 2 e – this question was an 'explain' hence candidates did not need to put their response into context. Only the use of knowledge is required to answer the question. There were many candidates that confused the role of an assessor, with some answering the question as the person that calculates the insurance, which is not correct. For those candidates that understood the role correctly were able to gain the marks available.

In part 2 f – Another 'explain' question, so candidates do not have to put their response in a context. The question asked what would make an area of land

suitable for building a shopping centre. Most candidates understood the need for access and parking. However, some confused it with a town centre. Again, careful reading of the question is important.

In part 2 g – again this is a question that is marked by levels. Candidates had to choose between the two options of either opening another shop or using ecommerce. Most candidates understood that they had to justify why they had chosen which option. However, a large number of candidates gave very detailed descriptions of the two options, which was knowledge and therefore they did not gain any marks. As mentioned earlier on option questions candidates do not have to make comments on both options, their response can solely be on one option. This was also a question where a number of candidates continued on an additional sheet. Perhaps if they had not included detailed descriptions of the two options, they would probably have answered the question in the space provided. Some candidates made some very valid comments, but then did not develop them to gain the higher level. Most candidates did understand the difference between the two options and were able to gain marks. It is worth noting that candidates should give a detailed conclusion and justification for their choice.

SECTION B

Question 3

In part 3 a – another multiple choice, question where a number of the cohort did not gain the mark available. An insurance question which most found difficult to answer.

In part 3 b – on this multiple choice, question, again most candidates were able to work out the price of two packets of spaghetti with the reduction applied.

In part 3 c – another 'state' question where candidates had to give a reason why Shoprite might take out credit insurance. As mentioned earlier, from the responses seen, a number of candidates gave a valid answer but did not relate it back to Shoprite and therefore did not gain the mark available. Again, even if the candidate mentioned Shoprite, but did not put the response in context, they would not gain the mark. If Shoprite appears in the question and the candidate uses the name in the response, then they are not answering the question in context.

In part 3 d – this is an 'outline' question which is very similar to a state question where candidates must put their response in the context of the question. Candidates were asked one advantage for Shoprite of providing credit facilities to its customers. Again, from the responses seen a number of candidates gave more than one reason. Many candidates gave the correct response, but it was not in context, and therefore did not gain the marks available.

In part 3 e – candidates were asked to analyse the importance of Shoprite having good after sales service. Most candidates understood the importance of having good after sales services and gained marks. Candidates should be encouraged to develop their answers with interconnected points to move them into the higher level.

In part 3 f – again another option question where candidates had to justify which one of the two options would be more suitable for the Shoprite to buy from

suppliers in South Africa or other countries. As in question 2 many candidates described both methods giving the advantages and disadvantages. Again, there are no knowledge marks available for this type of question. Most candidates were able to gain marks on this question with only a small number of responses not gaining a mark. Candidates should avoid putting lists of reasons for either of the two options as this is not applying the information or developing the response. Candidates should be encouraged to analyse and evaluate either of the two options to enable them to gain the higher marks. There is no right or wrong answer on this type of question, the candidates can justify either one. Candidates should also be encouraged to draw conclusions and make judgements or evaluative comments to enable them to gain the higher-level marks.

SECTION C

Question 4

In part 4 a - candidates should be encouraged to show their workings as advised in this question, as they could gain a mark for the first part of the calculation, even if the actual answer is incorrect. Also as mentioned earlier candidates need to take care when writing their figures in the box, for some candidates it is difficult for the examiner to read, for example, if they have written a 4 or 7 or 9. However, most of the candidates gained the two marks available. It is worth reiterating that if the question asks for a calculation to two decimal places if a response only has one decimal place, with the correct answer they would not get one mark, for not following what the question asked. Also, any question that is in the context of monetary value there are normally two figures after the decimal place. Again, if only one is given then no mark would be awarded, unless part of the calculation is correct.

In part 4 b – As previously mentioned, this is an analyse question, which is looking for application of knowledge and analysis of the impact of why Microsoft wants a cover note when taking out insurance. From some of the responses seen a number of candidates gave a response that a cover note, was the actual policy. Again, candidates had not fully read the question. It is important to reread the question perhaps three times to ensure that candidates answer what is being asked. Also, a cover note helps if there is a need to claim on an insurance policy before the policy is issued.

In part 4 c – It is worth pointing out to candidates that this question does carry the most marks and they should allow sufficient time to answer it, with all four of the Assessment Objectives being covered. A number of candidates only completed a few lines and therefore did not gain many of the marks available. Some candidates are using bullet points or numbered format, this will not allow them to gain the higher-level marks because they may not have analysed or evaluated the points made.

Candidates were asked to evaluate why Microsoft should ensure that it does not sell faulty goods. A variety of valid comments were made by candidates, such as losing sales, bad reputation. However, they then failed to develop these points and justify their reasoning or give evaluative comments to enable them to gain the higher-level marks. Most candidates were able to gain marks and understood

the implications of selling faulty goods. Candidates should ensure that they give detailed comments about the question with some application of knowledge, analysis and evaluative comments.

Some candidates continued on additional paper, which is acceptable, but if there is no indication on the examination paper that they have done so, valuable marks could be lost. Candidates must let the examiner know that they have continued their answer, simply by adding the word 'continued', or 'contd' or something similar is acceptable and as mentioned earlier, together with which question they are continuing with.

