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Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
In Commerce (4CM1) Paper 01R

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GENERAL COMMENTS

As reported in previous series candidates are finding the paper more accessible than previous series as they were able to complete it in the given time. For the majority of the questions candidates were well prepared and were able to apply their knowledge, analyse and evaluate to answer the questions. However, again as mentioned in previous reports there are still a number of candidates who struggle, as in previous years 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 a number of 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 or justify or evaluate. This does restrict the candidates' access to the full range of marks. The various scenarios throughout the paper are of real-life commercial operations, which perhaps interests some candidates and this meant that they were able to relate their comments more easily to the questions.

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.

Further more, 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. 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 – over 95% of the candidates gained the mark for identifying the sector that fishing would be found in. 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 would not gain any marks.

In part 1 b – again well answered by the majority of candidates with over two thirds of the cohort gaining the mark available on indicating which of the risks was uninsurable.

In part 1 c – a define question where candidates had to define the term specialisation. This was well answered by candidates with four fifths of the cohort gaining the mark available.

In part 1 d – another define question, where candidates had to define the term indemnity. Just over half of the cohort gained the mark for this question, showing that the majority of candidates understood what the term meant. From the responses seen a number of candidates, referred to indemnity as a loss of funds, but it is not an actual definition. Candidates should be encouraged to avoid using the term straight from the question when answering as this does not always show what the definition is.

In part 1 e (i) – a calculation question, where candidates had to work out the cost of a Samsung television. Over 70% of the candidates gained the two marks for this question. 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, less than 10% of the cohort gained the mark available. Although from the responses seen candidates understood the effect on Samsung of the appreciation of the KRW against the GBP, but then did not put it in context and therefore did not gain the mark. Just putting Samsung in the response does not guarantee the mark – as Samsung is in the question, an example needs to be included such as mobile phones to gain the mark.

In part 1 e (iii) – another state question. Candidates had to give a reason why Samsung exports its products to many countries. Again, a very small number of candidates gained this mark and from the responses seen they had not put their answer in context, therefore not gaining the mark available.

In part 1 f – a question where candidates could have developed their answers more to gain the full 3 marks available. Over half of the candidates gained the marks on this question, showing an understanding of why a business buys directly from suppliers in its own country. For those candidates who did not gain full marks, may have misread the question and from responses seen given more than one reason. It is important that candidates read the question carefully before answering. The question asked for one reason as opposed to two, and on this occasion as it is an explain question, the response did not have to be in context and candidates could demonstrate their knowledge of the topic.

In part 1 g – candidates were asked to give one advantage to a business of being a multinational. Less than 10% of the cohort did not gain a mark on this question. Showing that two thirds of the cohort were able to gain the full marks, showing their knowledge of an advantage to a business of being a multinational.

In part 1 h – this is the first question in the paper which is marked by levels. Candidates were asked to analyse the benefits of the Imarat Group of having employers' liability insurance. To gain the marks available candidates needed to apply their knowledge and analyse it to the scenario. Nearly 40% of the cohort understood the impact on customers and gained a Level 3 mark, with just under half gaining a Level 2 mark. Candidates should be encouraged to ensure that they apply the knowledge given and then analyse it to gain the higher level.

Question 2

In part 2 a – a multiple choice question where candidates had to identify what would be the cost a customer would pay for a pair of sandals with 20% decrease. Just over four fifths of the cohort gained the mark available.

In part 2 b – a multiple choice question where candidates had to choose which option best described a quota. This also proved to be a well answered question with nearly the whole cohort gaining the mark available. Perhaps because it was a topic, that candidates are extremely familiar with.

In part 2 c (i) – candidates had to look at figure 1 and then identify which item had the largest difference between branded and own label products. Again, nearly a 100% of candidates were able to choose the correct product gaining the mark available.

In part 2 c (ii) – again candidates had to refer to figure 1 and identify the product with the smallest price difference between branded and own label items, again, well answered with nearly 90% gaining the mark available.

In part 2 d – a define question where candidates were asked to define cash-and-carry. Just over half of the candidates gained the mark for this question. Most understood the term cash, but then did not include the carry part in their response. 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 this question. Just over 40% of candidates did not gain any marks on this question. The question asked for one reason why a business might take out insurance for consequential loss. Candidates do tend to struggle with insurance questions/phrases/terms and if they do understand what the term is they have difficulty in giving detail. Less than a quarter of the cohort gained the full marks available. Candidates should take care in reading the question carefully to ensure they answer what is asked.

In part 2 f – nearly a third of the cohort did not gain a mark on this question. As it was another ‘explain’ question, so candidates do not have to put their response in context. From the responses seen candidates appeared to have confused the role of an actuary with that of an assessor. It is important that candidates do read the question carefully to ensure they know exactly what they are answering. A fifth of the cohort gained the full marks available.

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 the shop for seven days a week, or offering additional services of making/repairing leather handbags. 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. This was also a question where a number of candidates continued on an additional sheet. Perhaps if they had not included details 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 analyse and evaluate marks available. Just over 45% of the candidates gained a Level 3 mark, and just over 7% gained a Level 1 mark showing sound application of knowledge, analysis, and evaluative comments.

SECTION B

Question 3

In part 3 a – another multiple choice, question where over 70% of the candidates gained the mark for identifying which option described branding.

In part 3 b – on this multiple choice, question, over half of the cohort gained the mark for calculating the balance of trade.

In part 3 c – another state question where candidates had to give one reason why Happy Fresh considers the principle of utmost good faith to be important when completing its insurance forms. As mentioned earlier, from the responses seen, a number of candidates gave a valid answer but did not relate it back to Happy Fresh and therefore did not gain the mark available. Very few candidates gained the mark available. Again, even if the candidate mentioned Happy Fresh, but did not put the response in context, they would not gain the mark. If Happy Fresh appears in the question and the candidates 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 why Happy Fresh would make a claim if goods were lost or damaged while being delivered. Only just over 10% of the cohort gained the full marks available for this question. Again, from the responses seen a number of candidates gave more than one reason and a number of 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 how Happy Fresh could reduce the risk of bad debts from its clients. A number of candidates misread the question and answered as if Happy Fresh had bad debts. Nearly 40% of the cohort gained a Level 3 mark showing that they clearly understood how Happy Fresh could reduce the risk of bad debts. With just 7% of the cohort gaining a Level 1 mark. 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, either offering a 15% discount off their first shopping bill for new customers, or a loyalty card offering lower prices to existing customers. 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 just over 1% of the cohort not gaining a mark. Over two thirds of the cohort gained a Level 2 mark and nearly a third gaining a Level 3 mark. Candidates should be encouraged to analyse and evaluate 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 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 formula, 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, nearly two thirds 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 only 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 only one mark would be awarded.

In part 4 b – over 40% of the cohort gained a Level 2 for this question. As previously mentioned, this is an analyse question, which is looking for application of knowledge and analysis of the advantages to Wilmar International of being based in a country that is a member of the ASEAN trading block. From some of the responses seen a number of candidates understood the advantages of Wilmar International being a member. It is important to reread the question perhaps three times to ensure that candidates answer what is being asked.

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 Wilmar International wants to maintain its reputation by obeying consumer protection legislation. A variety of valid comments were made by candidates, such as reputation, customer retention. 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. Nearly half of the candidates achieved a Level 2 mark for this question and just below a tenth of cohort not gaining a mark. 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.