

Examiners' Report/  
Principal Examiner Feedback

Winter 2015

Pearson Edexcel International A Level  
in Business (WBS02)

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## Introduction

This was the third sitting of the IAL Business paper with a relatively small number of candidates. The paper was split into 2 sections: Section A had 6 supported multiple choice questions (SMC) and Section B had a total of 7 questions.

### SMC:

- Candidates can only access 3 marks for part (b) if they have part (a) correct
- Candidates are able to gain 1 Knowledge mark for a definition which are listed in the mark scheme for each question.
- Candidates are able to gain up to 2 marks for a fully explanation of the distracters (incorrect answers)
- Candidates **MUST** explain why their answer for part (a) is correct to be able to access all 3 marks for part (b) i.e. a definition and 2 distracters would still only be worth 2 marks if there is no explanation of why part (a) is correct.
- Candidates must explain **WHY** the distracters are incorrect.

### Question 1

This SMC question involved students having to explain why an increase in online sales may have resulted in Blockbuster closing. Unfortunately, many students simply repeated their answer from part (a) so scored no additional marks. Examiners did see some good explanations as to why some of the distracters were incorrect which did gain some students additional marks.

### Question 2

It was very pleasing to see the vast majority of students able to define or show the formula for capacity utilisation. Many students scored full marks on this question. Some students did lose 1 mark due to not showing the formula or the definition of capacity utilisation. It is essential for any calculation question in Section A that the formula or the definition is shown in order to gain the Knowledge mark for part (b).

### Question 3

This has proved to be a more challenging question with many students getting part (a) incorrect so they were only able to access 2 marks for part (b). It was very clear that many students did not know what was meant by zero-based budgeting and simply rearranged the words in order to try to define it. Due to this, many were unable to gain marks for part (b). It is vital that all areas of the specification are covered as questions will be drawn from all areas.

### Question 4

It was pleasing to see many students able to correctly answer part (a) and link the increase in employee productivity to motivation. Some candidates used the context to help support their explanations which was very pleasing indeed. Additional marks were gained by a full explanation **NOT** an definition of the distracters. Marks can only be awarded for distracters if they are fully explained. No marks are available for definitions of incorrect answers suchs as span of control in this particular question.

### Question 5

Many students were able to get part (a) correct and it was very pleasing to the examiners that many students were able to use precisely use business terminology to answer the question rather than common sense answers. Some students did combine all

the incorrect answers together which meant that examiners could only award 1 mark for the explanation. Students should keep the distracters separate and give different reasons for why these are incorrect.

### **Question 6**

Many candidates were unable to get part (a) correct and therefore could only score a maximum of 2 marks for part (b). Many students had incorrectly put Option B (Democratic) as the correct answers as opposed to Option D (paternalistic). Again, many students simply defined the incorrect answers rather than explain why these did not apply to Malcolm.

## Section B

For the IAL Business course, there is an emphasis on **Application/Context**. Candidates must **use** the evidence rather than just lifting figures from the case study. Using the name of the company – Coca Cola in this case or context from the stem, is not considered to be **Application/Context**.

There must be **Application/Context** to access **Level 4** otherwise the top of **Level 3** will be awarded. If there is Analysis but no **Application/Context**, then the top of **Level 2** will be awarded. This has definitely had an impact on the levels achieved this series.

### Question 7

This question was marked using a points based question with 2 Knowledge marks, 2 Application marks and 2 Analysis marks. It was pleasing to see that many students were able to either define product portfolio or give 2 benefits to Coca Cola of having a wide product portfolio. Some students did give generic answers which were not applied to Coca Cola so dropped 2 Application marks. Using the phrase 'soft drinks' was not considered Application as this phrase was used in the question. References to Fanta or flavours was considered Application.

### Question 8a

This question was marked using a points based question with 2 Knowledge marks, 2 Application marks and 2 Analysis marks. Many students were able to give at least one reason why Coca Cola has a global marketing policy and good use of the Evidence was pleasing to see. Many students did lose 1 Knowledge mark as there was no definition provided. Better students were able to link this policy to brand awareness, being ethical and hopefully an increase in sales and/or profits for Coca Cola.

### Question 8b

This question was marked using a points based question with 2 Knowledge marks, 2 Application marks and 2 Analysis marks. Many candidates were able to gain the 2 Knowledge marks from defining capital intensive as well as giving a reason why the bottling plant uses this type of production. Again, Application proved problematic for some students as they gave generic responses which could have applied to any business. Analysis was well done with many students able to link to efficiency and cost.

### Question 9a

This question was marked using a points based question with 1 Knowledge mark, 1 Application mark and 2 Analysis marks. Many students were able to gain 1 Knowledge mark for stating a benefit such as more profit or reducing costs. However, many students gave generic responses so lost the 1 Application mark and just repeated the question so did not gain Analysis marks.

### Question 9b

This was marked using a Levels of response mark scheme (LOR). Many students were only able to enter Level 2 or 3 due to lack of Application and/or Evaluation. It was evident that many students were unable to understand what would affect the productivity for the bottling plant and therefore scored very low marks for this question. Factors which examiners rewarded included labour (skilled or quality), location, motivation of workforce, job enrichment, capital intensive, break downs of machinery and problems with energy supply/water. Many students were unable to analyse or evaluate these

factors so were restricted to Level 2. In order to access Level 4, there must be **evaluation in context** which was often missing and generic evaluations were restricted to the top of Level 3 – 6 marks.

### Question 10

This was marked using a Levels of response mark scheme (LOR). Again, many students were only able to enter Level 2 or 3 due to lack of Application and/or Evaluation. Context was the issue again on this question and many students were writing generic evaluations of quality management techniques which were not applied to Coca Cola so the top of Level 3 was awarded. Better answers were able to apply different quality management techniques to Coca Cola and such as an increase in sales/profits/demand/customer satisfaction. In order to access Level 4, there must be **evaluation in context**.

### Question 11

This was marked using a Levels of response mark scheme (LOR) with a large proportion of the marks for Analysis and Evaluation. This was poorly tackled by some students and there were answers which just provided lists of training methods or chunks of Evidence D copied out without any evaluation. Students could access the range of marks for evaluation for evaluating the different training methods offered by Coco Cola. As in question 9b and 10, there must be **evaluation in context to enter Level 4** and good examples included **using** the context from Evidence D to support the evaluation rather than just copying it. To access the top evaluation marks, examiners were looking for an understanding that the the benefits of training methods used will largely be dependent on a range of factors such as the type of job, quality of the methods used and the impact on costs of the training methods used. There had to be real perceptiveness to access the higher evaluation marks but it was pleasing to see that there has been an improvement in the quality of evaluation seen this series compared to previous series. Examiners saw many more responses at the higher end of the Level 4 band.

### Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, students should:

- Ensure all SMC questions are completed for part (a) otherwise this will restrict part (b) marks to a maximum of 2 marks.
- Always define a key term (either from the stem of the question or in some cases, the correct answer).
- Fully explain the correct answer otherwise you will restrict your mark to 2 marks.
- Fully explain why the distracters (incorrect options) are incorrect and not just define them.
- Read the Evidence very carefully and ensure you spend enough time reading through the different pieces of Evidence.
- Ensure you know what is meant by the command words – Explain, Analyse, Assess and Evaluate require different skills to be shown.
- **USE** the Evidence to contextualise your response rather than just lifting data or saying the name of the business.
- Assess or Evaluate – this is looking at both sides and coming to a conclusion.
- In order to enter Level 4, your response must be in context.
- Ensure that your time management allows you to answer all questions on the paper, especially the Q11 which is worth 14 marks.



## **Grade Boundaries**

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>







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