

Examiners' Report/  
Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2014

Pearson Edexcel International  
Advanced Level in Business Studies  
(WBS04) Paper 01 Business in a  
Global Context

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# **International Advanced Level Business Studies (WBS04)**

## **January 2014**

### **General comments**

This paper only attracted a very small number of entrants and as such it is difficult to reach many meaningful conclusions. There were also some very weak responses and it was hard to see the rationale behind their submission. This is after all, the final A2 unit in a two year course and it was surprising to see entries after only one term. Nevertheless there are some useful lessons to be learnt from the responses to the questions set.

The main reasons for some otherwise able candidates underachieving are the usual ones of not heeding command words and not reading the questions carefully enough. Command words are still being ignored by some candidates. Instructions to 'Assess' and 'Evaluate' were not followed by some candidates.

Some of the candidates missed out on marks because they did not answer the question that was set. This was particularly the case with questions 3 and 7. Some candidates missed out several whole questions.

It is worth reminding future candidates of the need to apply context to all responses. Repeating generic or stock answers will not access the higher levels of the mark scheme.

### **Specific comments**

#### **Question 1a**

Mostly well answered by candidates who were able to explain the definition and give an example. Some used investment in the personal financial sense rather than its business meaning and missed out on marks.

#### **Question 1b**

Again, a mostly well answered question, with examples of tariffs being the most common example used.

#### **Question 2**

Some candidates struggled to provide a suitable explanation as to why car sales in developing markets were strong. Some identified rising incomes and economic growth as being characteristics of such markets but then did not develop the consequences of this into increasing demand for cars. Consequently, they missed an opportunity to gain marks.

### **Question 3**

For those that read the question properly this was a reasonably straightforward answer to produce. Unfortunately a significant number wrote about FDI and thus did not answer the question set. Many candidates gave a superficial and/or generic response that was lacking in specific reference to either the businesses or markets concerned.

### **Question 4**

Most candidates were able to describe the positive impact of FDI on an economy. Fewer were able to fully assess that impact by considering the potential drawbacks and fewer still used the context of a 'country like Mexico'.

### **Question 5**

This question was by and large very poorly answered. Although knowledge of the importance of the labour force was good, most candidates struggled with a meaningful assessment of its importance. Some responses assessed the problems of recruiting and training a labour force rather than its relative importance in determining the location of production facilities. Those candidates that considered other factors such as transport costs, ease of doing business, tax regimes, trade blocs and infrastructure were rewarded accordingly.

### **Question 6**

A reasonable number of candidates were able to use specific examples to analyse the benefits of adapting the marketing mix to suit each market. Better answers made good use of the evidence and other examples to reinforce their arguments. However, evaluation was often either not present or was not always very perceptive with candidates making generic points or lacking any real context. Few were able to use examples of successful businesses that did not adapt their marketing mix as an evaluative point. Conclusions were rare indeed.

### **Question 7**

Some candidates misread the question and focused on marketing as a source of difficulty in entering a new market. Unfortunately this meant that they could not access the full mark scheme and rarely got beyond level 1 or 2. Candidates that looked at areas other than marketing, as the question directed, fared much better. Language and cultural barriers featured in many of the better responses along with levels of disposable income and infrastructure. Once again evaluation was not always perceptive with candidates resorting to generic stock answers.

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

- Do read the question carefully and answer the question that is set
- Do watch out for command words such as Assess or Evaluate
- Do use examples to illustrate your argument
- Do use the language of the subject and avoid generalities
- Do watch your timing and do not spend too long on one question
- Do write concisely
- Do add a conclusion to the longer questions

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