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# Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level  
In Business (WBS14) Paper 01  
Unit 4: Global business

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## **Introduction**

In some ways a slightly more accessible paper than the recent summer one, particularly for those candidates who knew all about Porter's five forces. The paper discriminated well, with candidates accessing a wide range of marks, with some good, and occasionally very good, responses to the questions set.

Strong candidates did well, with some excellent and thoughtful responses, particularly for the longer questions. By contrast, there were also some very weak responses that showed little understanding of, or even familiarity with, the specification content.

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

Some of the students missed out on marks because they did not answer the question that was set, this was a particular problem for Q2.

It is worth reminding future students of the need to apply proper context to all responses. Repeating generic or stock answers, or just copying the text from the case study will not access the higher levels of the mark scheme.

## **Report on individual questions**

### **Section A**

#### **Question 1a**

Demand and supply diagrams are a key part of understanding the business world and this should have been a straightforward start to the paper and an easy 4 marks. For most candidates this was the case, although a minority did shift the wrong curve.

#### **Question 1b**

There were several disadvantages that could have been chosen to answer this question. Most candidates wrote about too much reliance on one product and the damage it would cause to the Turkish economy if anything went wrong with the crop. This was usually backed up with evidence from the extract.

It is worth noting that on this type of question a definition is not needed and does not achieve any marks.

### **Question 1c**

Most understood the way subsidies worked and how they might benefit the EU fishing industry. Balance was less successful with many straying away from the question into environmental concerns and the impact on fish stocks. Better responses looked at the impact on efficiency and/or the possibility of other nations following suit and thus mitigating the benefits.

### **Question 1d**

The least well-answered question on the paper. Many seemed to think it was connected to the previous one and carried on discussing fish stocks and the environment. Others credited the WTO with all sorts of powers it does not possess, assuming it could be the world's policeman and enforce all sorts of rules and laws.

Relatively few were able to link it to its role in increasing globalisation. Those that did, balanced their answer by looking at other factors that have also increased globalisation such as political change, communication, transport costs and MNCs.

### **Question 1e**

This question was generally well-answered. Ethics and sustainability are a popular and widely understood part of the specification and most candidates were able to show that by following such a policy a business such as Epson would be able to enjoy a competitive advantage and increase sales. The downside was the extra cost that might be involved with such an approach.

Nevertheless, there were a significant number of low-scoring answers where brief answers, lack of development and chains of reasoning were the usual problems.

## **Section B**

Both case studies and questions were accessible to well informed students and acted as good platforms from which they could build convincing answers. However, Q2 caused a few problems because some candidates did not read the question carefully enough. With Q3 it all depended on whether candidates could remember enough about Porter to answer the question, unfortunately many could not.

For the students that did not do so well in the 20-mark questions, it was usually because they had simply copied out, or re-written, the evidence with little or no attempt at analysis or evaluation, this was particularly the case for Q2. Good conclusions were rare, simply re-writing previously made points adds nothing to the answer.

As ever, the key to doing well in these longer questions is to develop the arguments and support them with evidence.

## **Question 2**

The marketing mix was well understood but many did not take the time to read the question carefully enough and launched into a long explanation of the 4 Ps. This was supplemented by much repetition of the extract with little consideration of the point of the question. Consequently, many responses struggled to get beyond level 2 on the mark scheme.

Better responses looked at the nature of a global niche market and showed how the marketing mix might need to be adapted to suit such a product. Good balance often took the form of how the market conditions might change and the degree to which the marketing mix would need to change accordingly. The use of examples beyond the case studies was usually a sign of a better-quality response.

## **Question 3**

Those that knew and understood Porter's five forces mostly produced good answers that showed how it could be a useful way of looking critically at a potential market. The example of Glovo was used well in support of arguments and balance achieved by pointing out potential shortcomings of Porter or suggesting other policies that would support and supplement Porter.

For too many candidates it was unfortunately obvious that they knew little or nothing, about Porter's five forces. This meant that they struggled to produce a meaningful response and often just wrote about the extract and Glovo in general terms. This sort of answer did not score highly. The obvious lesson here is of the need to be familiar with all parts of the specification.

There was very little evidence to suggest that candidates did not have enough time to complete the paper.

## **Paper Summary**

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 (and neatly please!)
- Do add a relevant conclusion to the longer questions

