

GCSE

Edexcel GCSE

Business Studies (1503)

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Examiners' Report

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Contents

	Page
1503/01 & 02 - Written papers	1
1503/03 - Coursework	5
Statistics	9

Examiner Report 1503/01 & 02 - June 2005

The context in this series seemed well received and understood by candidates. Some candidates though could have made more use of the context for example the nature of the business meant it was probably following some production technique and the fact that space was limited meant they were looking at solutions.

Once again many candidates are failing to read questions carefully enough. They do not actually look at and think about their answers and whether these answers relate to the questions asked.

Throughout both papers candidates are advised to note the buzz words in questions - explain, analyse, discuss, why, suggest, compare etc. Apart from give, identify, list, name and state, it is expected candidates will produce expanded answers otherwise they are unable to gain maximum marks.

Candidates are advised to produce some kind of plan to assist them in those questions requiring extended writing. Some of those candidates who did produce a plan gave excellent, well-thought through answers.

Foundation Paper

Q1(a)(i)-(v)

No one question seemed to cause difficulty. However candidates are advised to use capital letters in their answers. In addition if they make a mistake they should cross their original answer out and re-write it, not try and write on top. This did cause confusion on some scripts where the answer was not clear.

Q1(b)(i)-(v)

Part (i) was not well done and many candidates thought debtors actually collected debts.

Q1(c)(i)-(iii)

Well done in the main, though some candidates did hedge their bets and wrote down more than one month for parts (i) and (ii) consequently gaining no marks.

Q1(d)(i)-(ii)

Some good answers seen. In part (ii) many candidates just turned the question round and said the training would lead to less customer complaints with no real justification for this.

Q2(a)(i)-(ii)

These seemed to be well done with most candidates knowing why Badge Identity Limited needs to know about their customers and their spending habits. Where there was confusion it was because candidates failed to realise the question was about market research so they included name and address to send goods to.

Q2(a)(iii)

Whilst many candidates suggested the benefits of graphs and charts - makes complicated data easier/aids comparison etc - many answered with regard to what the research results show and what Badge Identity Limited might do about these results which was not what the question asked.

Q2(b)

Well done by many candidates who knew Badge Identity Limited advertise to inform/persuade/draw attention to.

Q3(a)(i)-(ii)

Disappointing responses from many candidates. As said earlier, given the nature of the business, it was thought production would have been done better than it was. Even if candidates knew what batch production was, they were not always sure of the advantages.

Q3(b)(i)-(ii)

Similarly with JIT. Many candidates thought it meant goods are made just in time for sale to customers. Given the information in the context this question was disappointingly answered. However where candidates did understand JIT, their responses were generally good.

Q3(c)

The business objectives were given in the context and if candidates had prepared well then they knew why objectives are important to businesses.

Q4(a)-(b) (Foundation-/01)

Q1(a)-(b) (Higher-/02)

(a)(i)

was generally well done with most candidates knowing the purpose of an organisation chart.

(a)(ii)

The advantages of span of control were better done than the disadvantages.

(b)(i)

The responsibilities of the Production Director were generally well done with most candidates knowing she would be responsible for materials/production/quality/health and safety.

(b)(ii)

Most candidates had some idea of why good communication is important and use the example given on the paper in their answer to illustrate.

Q5(a) (Foundation-/01)

Q2(a) (Higher-/02)

Well done by many candidates as they knew the bank would want to know Badge Identity Limited could pay the bank back.

Q2(b)(i)-(iii)

Candidates are advised to always include the £ sign.

Q2(b)(iv)

caused most problems with some candidates omitting to say whether it was a profit or loss.

Q2b(v)

Many candidates knew the costs would increase as would the break even point. Quite a number forgot to mention the break point even point, having talked about costs.

Q2(c)(i)-(ii)

Not particularly well done. Whilst some candidates knew there were twice as many assets as liabilities they could not answer much further. Some talked about profit. Better answers were seen on the higher paper perhaps understandably.

Q3(a)-(ii)

Refreshingly well done by many candidates. The majority of candidates could list three differences and could explain limited liability and the importance of protection from risk encouraging investment.

Q3(b)

As with the foundation paper, Badge Identity Limited's business objectives were given in the context and whilst many gave sensible ways of achieving these objectives, some tended to offer the same way twice and gave repetitive, waffly answers. It was felt more could have been made of the context here.

Q3(c)

Some good answers seen where candidates knew the council might give grants/loans which they then developed to include employment/unemployment/local economy etc. There was confusion between local and national government. Again mention was made in the context of the local council keen to help small businesses so it was disappointing some candidates failed to capitalise on this.

Q4(a)(i)-(ii)

This was a topic not tested very often but which was relatively well done. Most candidates knew in the introductory phase costs would not have been recovered and then went on to develop this in part (ii). Some excellent answers seen.

Q4(b)

Well done by many candidates. Where they used bullets/numbering and dealt with advantages then disadvantages their answers benefited from the structure. Most knew the advantages and disadvantages of mail order.

Q5(a)

As with the foundation paper, those candidates who had used the context and learnt production techniques, produced good answers. However too many candidates at this level did not really understand batch production and how it might benefit Badge Identity Limited.

Q5(b)

Some candidates had used the context and Badge Identity Limited's mission statement and gave excellent answers on quality including TQM, as well as quality circles and Kaizen (even though they are not in the specification). Structure helped candidates to produce sensible, logical answers. Some candidates strayed away from the question and gave answers on motivation which was not really required here.

Moderator Report 1503/03 - June 2005

There was a small improvement in the performance of candidates in this series. Many candidates had undertaken research into a problem they had been set and such candidates usually demonstrated clear thinking and presented work of a high standard. There was, again, good discrimination with candidates achieving across the full range of available marks. The use of ICT was almost 100% remains high and it was encouraging to see even more candidates using software other than word processing. Some candidates continue to submit coursework that contains too much material that is either irrelevant or not valid to the problem they have been set.

The marketing assignment remains the most popular piece with communication again taking second place. Centres that submitted coursework relating to finance and franchises again fell. Only a few Centres submitted coursework on Production. Candidates generally performed well on AO1, AO2 and some aspects of AO3 but did not generally do as well on AO4 where evidence of effective evaluation is often difficult to find due to a lack of comment, judgement and conclusion. Where this occurs it is often because candidates are not making use of the work they have done towards AO1 to AO3. Too often candidates carry out suitable research and then do not comment on what they have done.

The best candidates have a clear structure to their work to. One benefit of such a structure is the generally the action plan with appropriate deadlines and evidence that this had been a working document. A small number of candidates continue to have action plans which bear little or no relation to the coursework submitted.

There was some evidence that not all Centres were undertaking effective internal standardisation procedures. Where there is more than one teacher than internal standardisation must take place. Centres that demonstrated good practice in this area had indicated either on the Record Sheet or the OPTEMS the work that had undergone this important process.

There were weaknesses in annotation this year. These ranged from work where there was not annotation at all, work where the annotation was either at the start of the coursework or grouped at the end of tasks. All Centres are politely reminded that the best practice is to have annotation at the point of award. There remain a few criteria which can be awarded throughout and these should be placed at the beginning of the coursework. There was an increase in the number of Record Sheets that did not match the coursework annotation.

The number of incorrectly completed Record Sheet was greater this year. The most common error was that the certification of authenticity sections had not been completed by both the teacher and the candidate. Errors in the transfer of marks to the OPTEMS remain and this is often to the detriment of the candidate. Centres are reminded that it is their responsibility to inform Edexcel if their original marks are not correct. Centres will always be informed if this is the case by their moderator.

The majority of coursework continues to make good use of ICT. The main software remains word processing and spreadsheets. Some candidates made effective of databases, DTP and in a few cases PowerPoint. The submission of lengthy pieces of coursework continues to fall, although it remains a problem for some Centres. Such Centres appear to encourage candidates to include in their coursework every piece of preparatory work they have undertaken.

Assistant Moderators generally reported very few problems, other than those already mentioned above. A few 'niggles' remain:

- Each page of the coursework is submitted in a plastic wallet, or worse sections are submitted in the same way. The moderation team would be happy if all work came with a treasury tag attaching the pages.
- Incomplete or non-completion of Record Sheets and the Authentication Sheets.
- Mismatches of annotation in the coursework and its recording on the Record Sheet.
- The non-inclusion of the highest and lowest marked candidates where these are not part of the indicated sample.

Candidates continue to submit work of a descriptive nature which makes it virtually impossible to access AO3 and AO4.

The majority of Centres carried out their administration efficiently. The main administrative problem remains the failure to double the raw score and then add the QWC marks to give a total mark out of 76, although this was less so for this series than the last. Centres continue to make transcription errors when entering marks on the OPTEMS. Where these are seen they are corrected.

Centres are thanked for their continuing monitoring of the use of photocopied material and Internet resources. This problem remains of a minor nature. Centres should remind candidates that all Assistant Moderators are teachers of this specification and are aware of most of the sources that candidates will access.

This report again concludes with a section that indicates the nature of the criteria and highlights those criteria that often incorrectly awarded or not awarded at all. No excuse is made for its repetition. The criteria included are there for the simple reason that all Assistant Moderators have referred to some or all of them in their post-moderation reports.

- 1.2 Candidates are **simply** asked to list their sources of knowledge - this could be in the form of an information log. It has been an annual surprise that often even the best candidates fail to gain this simple criterion. At its most basic it can be a list containing at a minimum two separate sources. A bibliography on its own is insufficient as that is only one source ie texts. The other three are people, organisations and electronic. The candidate who writes:

Ms A N Other, my Business Studies teacher (*people*)
Understanding Business by R Branson (*text*)
Tesco plc (*organisation*)
<http://www.bized> (*electronic*)

will have covered all four sources and **identified** each.

- 1.3 This award can only be for **business** and not personal aims/objectives

1.6 Where the word **consider** appears in the criteria (1.6, 1.7, 2.4, 3.6, 4.4, 4.6) it is expected that candidates will show that they have thought about and not just described, for example, in 1.6, a simple sentence that just states or describes an influence is insufficient for this award.

- 1.8 Candidates are expected to demonstrate **sound** knowledge or to show that they recognise relationships within the subject content.
- 1.9 Where this is awarded, rarely correctly, it is the **critical** element that is missing. If it is awarded for *make comparisons* then there must be actual comparisons and not just a description of two pieces of knowledge.
- 2.7 This criterion requires candidates to do three things: (i) recognise strengths (ii) recognise differences and then (iii) make decisions. Usually it is (iii) that is absent. It should be noted that each is in the plural. This is rarely correctly awarded.
- 3.4 This criterion continues to be under-awarded as does 3.5 in the work of all candidates.
- 3.7 There must be clear evidence of the system that the candidate has used to gather from a wide range of sources. Often awarded when 1.2 was not awarded, which is impossible. An excellent Action Plan, which had at least one identified source from the four groups, might well meet this criterion. A list of four sources alone is not sufficient evidence for this award.
- 3.9 The report or presentation should be in a recognisable business format.
- 4.5 Still rarely correctly awarded. There must be evidence of (i) the facts, (ii) the opinions from which candidates will (iii) draw limited conclusions. This series has seen some Centres clearly understanding the requirements of this criterion and correctly awarding it.
- 4.7 Whilst outcomes are given and evaluated possible improvements are usually missing: again note the plural.
- 4.8 To achieve this award candidates have to do **three** separate things. They must (i) produce the detailed evaluation, which must contain (ii) suggestions for improvements and such suggestions, must be (iii) justified.
- 4.9 The effects, whether economic, social or environmental must be linked to the candidates' suggestions.

Centres are reminded that details of training days in 2004-2005 for this specification have been circulated to all Centres.

Statistics

Written paper 1 - Foundation Tier

Grade	Max. Mark	C	D	E	F	G
Raw boundary mark	105	47	38	29	21	13

Written paper 2 - Higher Tier

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D
Raw boundary mark	105	76	66	56	46	37

Coursework paper 3

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Raw boundary mark	76	69	59	50	40	32	24	16	8

Notes

Maximum Mark (Raw): the mark corresponding to the sum total of the marks shown on the mark scheme.

Boundary mark: the minimum mark required by a candidate to qualify for a given grade.

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