

Examiners' Report Summer 2007

GCSE

GCSE Business Studies (1503)

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1503/01 - 02 - Business Studies (Foundation and Higher)

General Comments

There was much evidence of centres having used the pre-reading effectively and used the issues flagged up there to prepare candidates. However, too many candidates are answering questions from a generic point of view and not applying their answers to the context. Too many candidates are also not expanding their answers which means they are not progressing to the higher levels.

Comments About Individual Questions

Foundation Paper

Question 1

1(a) No particular question seem to cause candidates problems.

1(b)(i)-(v) Again no particular question caused a problem.

1(c)(i)-(iii) All done well.

1(c)(iv) The majority of candidates were able to give the answer using the correct calculation. Even though not all candidates showed the correct calculation, nearly all demonstrated the understanding that £55 needed to be multiplied by a number.

1(c)(v) Most candidates knew why the Practice Manageress needed to know how many patients there were usually so the practice did not run out or ordered too much.

1(c)(vi) The majority of candidates could give at least one plausible reason. However some candidates interpreted this question to mean 'reasons for forming a partnership' which was question 4(b)(i).

Question 2

2(a) Generally well answered with nearly all candidates scoring at least one mark.

2(b) Some good understanding of cash flow where candidates could see payments exceeding receipts resulting in negative cash flow. Some candidates however failed to recognise that their response should have been based on the figures or at least those items in the cash flow forecast which caused the problem. Credit was given to items even though no figures were mentioned.

2(c) Most candidates made valid points with regard to the cash flow problem. The most common actions being 'buy less materials' or 'get a loan or overdraft'. However, too many candidates are answering in statements with no analysis - the number of marks should indicate to candidates that more than a list of statements is required.

2(d)(i) It was clear that the majority of candidates had very little knowledge of a balance sheet. Some were able to mention assets and liabilities but most confused a

balance sheet with a cash flow or a profit and loss account.

2(d)(ii) Not that well done, though some candidates did know these accounts would show a business's financial position and generally alluding to good business practice.

Question 3

3(a) Many sensible answers but still some totally unrealistic ways given with no regard to the context and the vacancy for a dental nurse.

3(b) Many candidates demonstrated clear knowledge of the difference between a job description and person specification giving sound examples of what each would contain. A number of these examples were applied to the context eg cleaning the surgery, assisting the dentist and keeping records. However despite candidates' good knowledge, many did not apply these to the job of a dental nurse (level 2) or achieved level 3 which called for analysis. Again the number of marks and the command word 'analyse' should indicate to candidates that a fuller answer is needed including application or reference to the position of dental nurse.

3(c) The majority of candidates could explain either a letter or a CV and did so reasonably well.

3(d) Again, candidates knew what advice to give anyone preparing for an interview, but sometimes only gave a list with no development or application to Dovecotes.

3(e) Well done by the majority of candidates who knew that an unmotivated workforce are not going to be happy at work which could affect patient care.

Foundation 1503/01 / Higher 1503/02

Question 4 / Question 1

4(a)(i)

1(a)(i) The vast majority of candidates responded with 'primary' and 'secondary' which demonstrated their understanding of the concept of industrial sectors/sectors of production easy to understand. Some candidates confused these with public and private sectors.

4(a)(ii)

1(a)(ii) Generally no more than a list from many candidates demonstrating no real or only basic analysis which achieved level 1 1-3 marks. Where there was development some candidates usually explained **why** not **how** advertising, banking and communication could support Dovecotes. A disappointing response illustrating candidates' failure to read the question carefully.

4(b)(i)

1(b)(i) Responses from candidates were largely encouraging but it was disappointing to see so many candidates' lack knowledge of the concept of partnership when it was flagged up in the context. However many candidates did demonstrate good knowledge giving responses such as sharing work load, being able to go on holiday, access to more capital, more skills or specialist skills, share decision making etc.

4(b)(ii)

1(b)(ii) Many candidates do know the effects of unlimited liability ie having to sell personal possessions to pay off debts.

Question 5 / Question 2

5(a)(i)

2(a)(i) Candidates' responses to this question demonstrated that most of them had an idea that the system had to do with funds transfer which was implied by the name of the system. Some candidates included debit/credit cards, chip and pin and immediate payment. Many confused EFTPOS with a stock control system - that it told Lucy how many items of stock were left in the practice after one was sold. Some did not really understand EFTPOS at all. Some confused it with some form of online banking or a mechanism for transferring funds from one account or branch to another.

5(a)(ii)

2(a)(ii) Candidate responses to this question depended on their response to 2(a)(i) above. Candidates who gave the correct response above were able to show application in most cases and a number were able to give some form of judgement but unfortunately too many went into detail about stock control systems.

5(b)(i)

2(b)(i) This was well answered with many aware of the minimum wage.

5(b)(ii)

2(b)(ii) Many answers were confined to examples of facilities for the disabled eg installing a disabled toilet and/or ramps. Some candidates when discussing equal pay took this to mean that everyone should be paid the same irrespective of job role - dentist, receptionist, nurse, cleaner and that if Lucy did not pay them all the same she would be at risk of breaking the law. Health and safety answers were better and included providing fire extinguishers, training in health and safety etc. On a basic level candidates could suggest why complying with the legislation would cost money but few were able to offer more than a basic judgement.

Question 3

3(a)(i) Some candidates confused methods of recruitment with the selection process and listed CVs, application forms, testing, interviewing and induction days. Some candidates offered a mix of recruitment and selection and many gave internal and external recruitment which gained marks.

3(a)(ii) Candidates answered this well, the most popular answers relating to how it was cheaper to advertise internally and/or that it would save time and money on training.

3(b)(i) Some candidate did not understand job analysis and argued that it was for the benefit of the applicant.

3(b)(ii) Most candidates answered this correctly.

3(b)(iii) Better candidates discussed motivation theorists showing awareness of material rewards and the use of praise. Because no marks were awarded for particularly mentioning theorists, many candidates gained full marks for good answers without mention of Herzberg and Maslow for example.

Question 4

4(a) The most popular answers were local newspapers with candidates being able to justify their choice - targeting locals, relatively cheap. However application to the context was in many cases poor with many candidates believing that television, in the practice window and billboards would be appropriate for a local dentist. Where candidates had really thought about it answers included the local teaching hospital/dental school, specialist magazines.

4(b) Many candidates had a good knowledge of formulating a questionnaire with popular responses including giving a good range of open and closed questions and having more closed questions as these were easier to analyse. However many failed to apply this to Dovecotes in that this was a medical history questionnaire and said not to ask any personal questions.

4(c) Some candidates seemed to think this question was related to 4(b). Some offered no more than takes up less space or quicker to enter and find data with very little application or judgement. The question specifically asked for the benefits to Dovecotes but too many candidates answered in general terms. However where candidates had thought about it, some good answers were seen related to Dovecotes and the benefits brought by a computer system.

5(a) This question was not particularly well answered because the concept of cash flow was misunderstood or candidates simply did not read the question. Most provided definitions of cash flow but not how Lucy could limit the impact of a cash flow problem. Where candidates had tried, the answers were confined to the use of savings, overdrafts, cut down on wages by getting rid of staff and cut down on electricity to offset short-term problems.

5(b) By contrast this question was well answered affording candidates plenty of opportunity to reach level 4 with some excellent answers seen demonstrating good judgemental skills. Candidates had thought about the practice, the shortage of dentists and the NHS and discussed government grants as well as mortgages, loans and partners' own capital/retained profit. Some candidates however discussed selling shares on the stock market or the usual inappropriate sources - a raffle or coffee morning.

1503/03 - Business Studies (Coursework)

General Comments

The marketing assignment remains most popular with communication again taking second place. Centres that submitted coursework relating to finance and franchises again fell. Candidates generally performed well against AO1, AO2 and some aspects of AO3. Many candidates continue to carry out suitable research and then do not make good use of that research to access AO3 and AO4.

Candidate performance for this series was in line with past series. Candidates whose research into a business or problem generally demonstrated clear thinking and presented work of a high standard. Candidates achieved across the full range of available marks. The level of poorly presented work was less evidence for this series. The use of ICT was almost 100%.

There is still evidence that some centres still do not carry out effective internal moderation or that internal moderation is not happening when it should. Where more than one teacher is marking candidates' work internal standardisation must take place. This can be undertaken in a number of ways: a marking exercise where all teachers mark a limited number of pieces of coursework and agree a common application of the criteria; cross marking, checking by one teacher of a sample from another teacher. Centres that demonstrated good practice this series either indicated their internal standardisation on Record Sheet or OPTEMS.

Annotation / Centre Admin

Annotation was generally good this year. Most centres now annotate at the point that the criteria are being given although a number of centres still annotate at the top of each page or, in the most difficult manner for Moderators, on a page at the start of the coursework sample. Centres are politely reminded that the best practice remains, annotation at the point of award. Those criteria that can be awarded throughout should continue to be placed at the beginning of the coursework. Centres not annotating coursework will continue to have it returned by their moderator for annotation.

Authentication processes were much improved this year and it was rare that moderators had to contact centres on this issue. Errors in the transfer of marks to the OPTEMS were seen occasionally this year. Centres are reminded that it is their responsibility to inform Edexcel if they are informed by their moderator that their original marks are not correct. A few centres are still not checking that the indicated sample on the OPTEMS does include the top and bottom mark for the centre. If this is the case the centre must add these to the indicated sample.

The best candidates continue to have a clear structure and sequence to their work. One benefit of such a structure is an action plan with appropriate deadlines and evidence that it has been a working document. A few centres are providing candidates with a structure that is considered to be too tight. Some centres continue to use writing frames and these can limit access to AO3 and AO4 for candidates. In a similar vein there continues to be a theoretical approach by some candidates with an over-reliance on textbooks and/or the internet and little evidence of the knowledge being applied to the business or problem. In such cases

access to AO3 and AO4 will prove difficult to access. A number of candidates have action plans which bear little or no relation to the coursework submitted.

The majority of coursework continues to make good use of ICT. The main software remains word processing and spreadsheets. Fewer candidates used databases or DTP in this series. The submission of over-long pieces of coursework continues to fall, although it remains an issue for some centres. Such centres appear to encourage candidates to include in their coursework every piece of preparatory work they have undertaken - this is not necessary; nor is it necessary to include every completed questionnaire.

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

- Each page of the coursework is submitted in a separate plastic wallet - the moderation team would be happy if all work came with a treasury tag attaching the pages.
- Some candidates still submit work of a purely descriptive nature that makes it virtually impossible to access AO3 and AO4.
- Inaccurate transfer of marks from the Record Sheet to the OPTEMS
- Late submission of the sample

Centres are thanked for their continuing monitoring of the use of photocopied material and Internet resources. This problem was about the same as for the last series year. Centres should remind candidates that most moderators are teachers of this specification and are aware of the sources that candidates can and do access.

This report again concludes with a section that highlights those criteria that are often incorrectly awarded or not awarded at all. Again, no excuse is made for its repetition. The criteria included are there for the simple reason that most 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 is still a constant surprise to find good candidates who do not gain this criterion. 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 related to the 'doing of' the coursework - the latter continues to be still given by some centres.
- 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 When this is awarded it is the **critical** element that must be present. If it is awarded for *make comparisons* then actual comparisons of two pieces of knowledge is required and not a separate description of each piece. In 1.8 and 1.9 lists, that purport to be critical or a comparison, are unlikely to be meeting the requirements.
- 2.3 This remains an easy mark - candidates simply have to state what they are going to do (in the future tense). If they then clearly indicate deadlines then 2.6 can be given. This year a greater number of candidates did achieve 2.9, usually through comments on their action plans that showed change, the reason for those changes and how this impacted upon their knowledge requirements.
- 2.4 Too many candidates continue to just state the terms of an Act of Parliament and do not apply it to their business or business problem. A simple statement of the main terms of any Act of Parliament is insufficient evidence for this criterion. Candidates who do this are demonstrating their knowledge (AO1) and not applying it (AO2).
- 2.7 This criterion requires candidates to do three things at least twice: (i) recognise strengths (ii) recognise differences and then (iii) make decisions. Usually it is (iii) that is absent because there is not clear and direct link between decisions and strengths and weaknesses. Candidates who do SWOT and or PEST will only meet (i) and (ii) initially. If they do not then show how the SWOT and or PEST comments relate to two decisions then 2.7 cannot be given.
- 3.4 This criterion continues to be under-awarded even when there is clear evidence of either three sources of knowledge or an ability to organise as does 3.5 in the work of many candidates.
- 3.7 There must be clear evidence of the system that the candidate has used to gather their information from a wide range of sources. Often awarded when 1.2 has not been awarded - this is impossible. A list of four sources with no system evidenced is insufficient 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 more candidates had a clear understanding of the requirements for this criterion and were correctly given it. However, these were in the minority and too often candidates were given this award incorrectly.
- 4.7 Whilst outcomes are given and evaluated, possible improvements are usually missing: again note the plural. Candidates should also note that evaluation and suggested improvements must relate to the business or problem they have been studying.
- 4.8 To achieve this award candidates have to do **three** separate things. They must (i) produce the detailed evaluations, which must contain (ii) suggestions for improvements and such suggestions, must be (iii) justified.

4.9 The effects, whether financial, social or environmental must be linked to the candidates' suggestions.

Grade Boundaries - June 2007

1503/01 - Foundation Tier

Grade	Max. Mark	C	D	E	F	G
Raw boundary mark	105	48	39	30	22	14

1503/02 - Higher Tier

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D
Raw boundary mark	105	72	65	58	51	42

1503/03 - Coursework

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Raw boundary mark	76	69	59	49	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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