

Business Studies Specification B

General Certificate of Secondary Education **GCSE 1952**

Combined Mark Schemes And Reports on the Units

January 2006

1952/MS/R/06J

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All Examiners are instructed that alternative correct answers and unexpected approaches in candidates' scripts must be given marks that fairly reflect the relevant knowledge and skills demonstrated.

Mark schemes should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and the Report on the Examination.

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GCSE Business Studies B - 1952

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Mark Scheme 2321/01
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- 1 (a) Target: knowledge and understanding of types of organisation.**
- Candidates may mention: limited liability; sell shares to the general public; easier to raise finance; etc.
Give 1 mark for each correct point. 2x1 [2]
- (b) Target: organise, select and use information of the knowledge and understanding of structure of organisations.**
- (i)** Fig.1 [1]
- (ii)** Narrow span of control. Accept only the first tick. [1]
- (iii)** Hierarchy: takes too long to make decisions; decisions become distorted; too remote; difficult communications; poor motivation; etc.
Give 1 mark for the basic idea and 1 mark for some development. 1+1 [2]
- (c) Target: apply knowledge and understanding of training.**
- Candidates may mention: so the employee – meets their fellow workers, knows the ways of working, can ‘pick up the culture’, gets an overall view of the business, health and safety, etc.
- NB the emphasis is on ‘Induction’.
- Give 1 mark for each basic idea up to 2 marks.
Give 1 mark for each explanation up to 2 marks. 2x2 [4]
- (d) Target: apply, organise, select, analyse and evaluate knowledge and understanding of training.**
- Training herself: cheaper, knows what they need, more convenient, workers available at work, etc.
FE – more expertise, does not take her/others away from their main task, new ideas, etc.
- Level 3 [5-6 marks]**
Candidates are able to discuss the points for Jenny doing the training and for FE training and to give a supported recommendation. Candidates must consider both options though not necessarily equally.
- Level 2 [3-4 marks]**
Candidates are able to analyse the arguments for one or both training options.
- Level 1 [1-2 marks]**
Candidates can offer some appropriate knowledge and application. [6]
- Total: [18]**

Candidates will be awarded marks for the quality of their written communication according to the following criteria.

Ideas are expressed clearly, fluently, legibly and in an appropriate way. There are few errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.	2
Straightforward ideas are expressed relatively clearly, legibly and appropriately. There may be some errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar, but these do not obscure the meaning of the answer.	1
Candidate fails to reach the threshold standard in all respects.	0

- 2 (a) **Target: show knowledge and understanding of types of business activity.**

Candidates **must** answer in terms of services, but can mention other aspects as well. Allow any clear idea. [1]

- (b) **Target: apply knowledge and understanding of management of production.**

(i) The output of the business will increase.
Workers become highly skilled.
Take the first two ticks. [2]

(ii) Apply OFR. NB 'for a customer'.

Give 1 mark for a correct statement relating to b(i) and 1 mark for the application to the customer, e.g. 'workers become more highly skilled' will mean that repairs are carried out better [1] so that the customer gains greater satisfaction [1]. 1+1 [2]

- (c) **Target: select, organise, analyse and evaluate knowledge and understanding of finance and cash flow.**

(i) -£6300 [1]

(ii) Rising negative cash balance/total cash available – allow any sensible point.
Give 1 mark for the basic point e.g. negative cash balance, and 1 mark for explanation e.g. increasing. [2]

(iii) Candidates must refer to the three points given in the question.
Loan – a one-off cash injection, but would carry interest with it. Could be used to grow the business and thus increase revenue. Would have to be paid back in the future.
Reduce costs – entirely in Judith and Stuart's control, but looks difficult, except for their own wages, or without reducing the service.
Increase revenue – how easy would it be to do this in the short-run without increasing costs? This might be the least painful approach.

Level 3 [4-6 marks]

Candidates are able to relevantly discuss the methods and to give an appropriate statement as to which would be best. At the top, candidates will clearly use the scenario. Candidates who do not refer to all three points can get a max of 5. Candidates who offer a purely theoretical answer will get a max of 4.

Level 2 [2-3 marks]

Candidates are able to apply the methods to the business and to offer some analysis. Candidates who only make reference to one point are offering application/analysis not discussion.

Level 1 [1 mark]

Candidates can offer some knowledge. [6]

- (d) **Target: ability to select, organise and analyse knowledge and understanding of financial control and business objectives.**
- (i) Otherwise they will go out of business, make a loss, have to borrow money, etc.
Give 1 mark for a basic point and 1 mark for some **application**. [2]
- (ii) $\pounds(44000 + 12000)$ [1] - $\pounds25000$ [1] = $\pounds31000$ [1]
Give 3 marks for correct answer. OFR applies. [3]
- (iii) Overheads or fixed costs or indirect costs. [1]
- Total: [20]**

3 (a) Target: Knowledge and understanding of promotion.

- (i) NB this asks for a definition, NOT examples.
Possible definitions include: a) promotion is the persuasion of customers to purchase [1] in a competitive market [1]; b) promotion is part of the marketing mix [1] and attempts to persuade customers to purchase products [1]; c) promotion increases the desire of customers [1] to purchase the products on offer [1].
Award marks in line with the examples above giving credit for other relevant points. If promotion is equated solely to advertising there is a max of 1 mark available. **[2]**
- (ii) Candidates may mention: advertising – allow any variations on this i.e. TV, newspapers, etc; sponsorship; leaflets; BOGOF; etc.
Give 1 mark for each point and 1 mark for some application. 2x2.
'The LVRC could advertise in the local press [1] so that more people would know about their services [1]'. **[4]**

(b) Target: organise, select, analyse and evaluate knowledge and understanding of pricing strategy.

To achieve full marks candidates must name a business.

Level 3 [4-6 marks]

Candidates are able to select a suitable pricing strategy and to clearly discuss why this would suit the named business. To reach this level, the pricing policy must be fully applicable to the business.

Level 2 [2-3 marks]

Candidates can analyse the suitability of a strategy.

Level 1 [1 mark]

Candidates are able to select a pricing strategy and offer some application or will offer some general pricing ideas.

[6]**Total: [12]**

4 (a) **Target: knowledge and understanding of types of organisation.**

'The state'.

Accept only the first tick.

[1]

(b) **Target: apply knowledge and understanding of communication.**

(i) Lack of clarity in communication; written communication does not convey the correct meaning; misunderstanding of verbal communication; hierarchical problems; virus in the system; etc.

Allow any one sensible suggestion.

[1]

(ii) The method will clearly depend on the problem identified. OFR applies. The marks here are for application to the problem.

Give 1 mark for the basic idea and 1 more for further development e.g. written communication: 'Maurice could ensure that all emails conform to a set format [1] that all can give and receive clear instructions [1].

1+1

[2]

(c) **Target: To organise, select, analyse and evaluate knowledge and understanding of the location of a business.**

Answers will clearly depend on the business chosen. OFR applies.

Advantages may include: better transport links, government grants, more space, nearer to customers/suppliers, etc.

Disadvantages may include: costs, customers not willing to follow, workers not willing to move, etc.

To achieve full marks candidates must name a business.

Level 3 [4-6] marks]

Candidates must discuss the factors affecting whether or not the business should change its location and, at the top, reach a clearly supported conclusion.

Level 2 [2-3 marks]

Candidates will offer application and analysis of relevant points.

Level 1 [1 mark]

Candidates are able to offer some appropriate knowledge.

[6]

Total: [10]

**Mark Scheme 2321/02
January 2006**

- 1 (a) Target: apply knowledge and understanding of types of organisation.**
- Give 1 mark for a explaining limited and 1 mark for relating it to shares/shareholders.
Credit may be given for relating it to easier to borrow money and other valid points. **[2]**
- (b) Target: apply knowledge and understanding of structure of organisations.**
- (i)** Candidates may say 'it is where there are several layers of management/control [1] and with delegation from the top. [1]
Reward marks to candidates as above. An example can also be rewarded. **1+1 [2]**
- (ii)** Candidates may mention – length of time to take decisions, one-way dialogue/poor communication, bureaucracy, lack of motivation of workforce, etc. NB Jenny is the HR Director.
Give 1 mark for a basic idea.
Give 1 mark for some explanation. **[2]**
- (c) Target: apply knowledge and understanding of training.**
- Candidates may mention: so the employee – meets their fellow workers, knows the ways of working, can 'pick up the culture', gets an overall view of the business, health and safety, etc.
- NB the question is about 'Induction'.
- Give 1 mark for each basic idea up to 2 marks.
Give 1 mark for each explanation up to 2 marks. **2x2 [4]**
- (d) Target: apply, analyse and evaluate knowledge and understanding of training.**
- Candidates may mention on-the-job/off-the-job or may look at specific techniques.
- Level 3 [4-6 marks]**
Candidates can discuss two or more methods and offer a supported recommendation. Answers that consider only one method will be at the bottom of the level.
- Level 2 [2-3 marks]**
Candidates are able to offer some application and analysis.
- Level 1 [1 mark]**
Answers show some knowledge of methods. **[6]**

Candidates will be awarded marks for the quality of their written communication according to the following criteria.

Ideas are expressed clearly, fluently, legibly and in an appropriate way. There are few errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.	2
Straightforward ideas are expressed relatively clearly, legibly and appropriately. There may be some errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar, but these do not obscure the meaning of the answer.	1
Candidate fails to reach the threshold standard in all respects.	0

Total [18]

- 2 (a) **Target: show knowledge and understanding of types of business activity.**
- Candidates **must** answer in terms of services, but can mention other aspects as well. Allow any clear idea. [1]
- (b) **Target: apply knowledge and understanding of the management of production.**
- (i) Candidates may mention: cheaper price due to more experience; can offer a better service; provide a service not offered elsewhere, etc.
NB 'to customers'.
Give 1 mark for a basic point and 1 mark for some application.
1+1 [2]
- (ii) Candidates may mention: economies of scale/lower average costs; develop knowledge of each customer's needs; achieve a better level of customer service/satisfaction, etc.
NB 'to the business'.
Give 1 mark for a basic point and 1 mark for some application.
1+1 [2]
- (c) **Target: select, organise, analyse and evaluate knowledge and understanding of accounts and finance.**
- (i) $-(6300 - 1300)$ [1] = £5000 [1]. Give 2 marks for the correct answer.
OFR applies. [2]
- (ii) To show to the bank to get a loan etc; to support the business plan; to allow him to monitor the finances, to show him when he will need an overdraft, etc. Allow 'to predict what may happen in the future' etc. [1]
- (iii) Candidates may refer to both Fig.1 and to their own knowledge of small businesses.
Bank may want assurance that the business will be profitable and/or that there are adequate assets to back the loan etc.
Cashflow – will it improve? NB it is deteriorating, but revenue is rising.
- Level 3 [4-6 marks]**
Candidates will refer to the business and use the data. They will offer a supported discussion with, at the top, a clear conclusion. Candidates who consider both the view of the bank re loans and the view of the cashflow will be at the top of the level.
- Level 2 [2-3 marks]**
Candidates will offer some application and analysis of the material.
- Level 1 [1 mark]**
Candidates can offer some knowledge e.g. bankruptcy which may relate to the business rather than the bank. [6]

- (d) **Target: ability to select, organise and analyse knowledge and understanding of financial control and business objectives.**
- (i) Otherwise they will go out of business, make a loss, have to borrow money, etc.
Give 1 mark for a basic point and 1 mark for some **application**. [2]
- (ii) $\pounds(44000 + 12000)$ [1] - $\pounds25000$ [1] = $\pounds31000$ [1]
Give 3 marks for correct answer. OFR applies. [3]
- (iii) Overheads or fixed costs or indirect costs. [1]
- Total [20]**

3 (a) Target: Knowledge and understanding of promotion.

NB this asks for a definition, NOT examples.

Possible definitions include: a) promotion is the persuasion of customers to purchase [1] in a competitive market [1]; b) promotion is part of the marketing mix [1] and attempts to persuade customers to purchase products [1]; c) promotion increases the desire of customers [1] to purchase the products on offer [1].

Award marks in line with the examples above giving credit for other relevant points. If promotion is equated solely to advertising there is a max of 1 mark available. **[2]**

(b) Target: ability to select, organise and analyse knowledge and understanding of promotion.

For: good publicity – seen by a large number of people in target market; can be relatively cheap [depends on team]; supports local community; etc.

Against – can give wrong image; expensive [depends on team]; may be affected by team performance; etc.

Candidates may take this on either a national or local basis.

Level 2 [3-4 marks]

Candidates must refer to LVRC at this level. They can apply and analyse whether LVRC should be involved in sponsorship. To get to the top candidates must offer some analysis.

Level 1 [1-2 marks]

Candidates show knowledge of sponsorship and/or do not apply to LVRC. **[4]**

(c) Target: organise, select, analyse and evaluate knowledge and understanding of pricing strategy.

To achieve full marks candidates must name a business.

Level 3 [4-6 marks]

Candidates are able to select a suitable pricing strategy and to clearly discuss why this would suit the named business. To reach this level the pricing policy must be fully applicable to the business.

Level 2 [2-3 marks]

Candidates can analyse the suitability of a strategy.

Level 1 [1 mark]

Candidates are able to select a pricing strategy and offer some application or will offer some general pricing ideas.

[6]

Total: [12]

- 4 (a) **Target: knowledge and understanding of types of organisation.**
A business owned by the state/government. Allow public sector. [1]
- (b) **Target: apply knowledge and understanding of communication.**
- (i) Lack of clarity in communication; written communication does not convey the correct meaning; misunderstanding of verbal communication; hierarchical problems; virus in the system; etc.
Allow any one sensible suggestion. [1]
- (ii) The method will clearly depend on the problem identified. OFR applies. The marks here are for application to the problem.
Give 1 mark for the basic idea and 1 more for further development e.g. written communication: 'Maurice could ensure that all e-mails conform to a set format [1] so that all can give and receive clear instructions [1]'.
[1+1] [2]
- (c) **Target: organise, select, analyse and evaluate knowledge and understanding of location of production.**
Factors will clearly vary according to the business.
To achieve full marks candidates must name a business.
- Level 3 [5-6] marks]**
Candidates offer supported discussion clearly identifying the most important factor.
- Level 2 [3-4 marks]**
Candidates can select, organise and analyse information relevant to the location of their chosen business.
- Level 1 [1-2 marks]**
Candidates show knowledge of location factors and can apply these to the business. [6]

Total: [10]

REPORT ON THE UNITS
January 2006

Chief Examiner's Report

General Comments

There have been many improvements in candidates' examination technique over the last few years and there have also been many organisational improvements in terms of candidates being entered for the most appropriate tier of examination. What has not improved, however, has been the basic theoretical knowledge of a significant number of candidates. This was most apparent where questions directly required theoretical knowledge, such as the pricing strategy questions this session. Also, opportunities to demonstrate theoretical knowledge were missed in the more general questions, such as those about training. The specification provides very clear guidance on what theoretical content should be covered and this provides a very clear agenda for the areas to be tested in the Unit 1 examination.

The coursework component continues to produce much excellent work. The supported coursework, based on a national T-mobile investigation, has again been popular and the guidance provided for this title can be thoroughly recommended to all centres, whether they decide to undertake the title or not. The best coursework shows a real sense of investigation with a clear logical development from the title, through the research, to recommendations that are sourced and based on the preceding work. There were, however, some examples of work that was not so logical in the development of arguments, and the presentation of conclusions that bore little or no relation to preceding work. With the current debate surrounding coursework, a well written business coursework report continues to be an item of considerable pride and achievement for many candidates.

Business Organisation, 2321

General Comments

The great majority of candidates continue to show that they have gained some knowledge and understanding of the specification and are able to offer some analytical and evaluative skills at both Higher and Foundation levels. It is very pleasing to see that, where specific knowledge of a business is required, an increasing number of candidates are now able to both name a business and to clearly show some knowledge of it. Some candidates still fail to achieve to their potential because they either ignore key words, such as 'discuss' 'justify' and 'recommend', or ignore the scenario within which the question is set.

Most centres have continued to exercise care over the entry of candidates for the foundation tier paper, although there were some who achieved marks that indicated they would have performed well at the higher tier. Too many candidates, however, are still being entered for the higher paper when their results indicate that they would have benefited from taking the foundation paper.

Quality of Written Communication [QWC] marks are attached to one specific part of a question, usually carrying six marks. This question is carefully chosen in the expectation that all candidates will be able to offer some answer and thus gain one or both QWC marks. While an increasing proportion of candidates on the foundation tier paper are now providing answers to this question, too many still throw the marks away. Centres should make sure that candidates are aware of this.

Candidates who did less well often disadvantaged themselves by either failing to fully read the stimulus material and the question, as with 'induction training', or by not knowing basic business ideas such 'pricing strategies'.

2321/1 – Foundation Tier

There was a much wider range of achievement than in recent examinations. Most candidates were able to complete all the questions and to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of business studies ideas.

1 (a) Many candidates were able to state two advantages to a business of being a public limited company, such as the existence of limited liability and the ability to sell shares to the general public, but a sizeable minority believed that a public limited company was owned by the government.

(b) Candidates were divided into three very distinct groups. A minority clearly understood the idea of hierarchy and gained all the marks. A large proportion had some knowledge, but this lacked a sure base, leading to a correct identification in part (i), but a failure to tick 'narrow span of control' in part (ii). A third group, which comprised too many candidates, had no idea. Good answers to part (iii) usually included mention of the difficulty of communication, which was then explained.

(c) Many candidates ignored the word 'induction' and either wrote about training in general or equated the idea with the selection process. Good answers tended to come from a limited number of centres.

Teachers' Tip

Make sure candidates have a good knowledge and understanding of the basic concepts and ideas.

(d) There were some very good answers to this part of the question. Candidates were able to give appropriate reasons for the two courses of action and to then make a recommendation in support of one of the options. These answers considered the freeing up of Jenny's time, the saving of money or training and were focused clearly on the needs of the business. A common misinterpretation of this question was to consider whether Jenny should, herself, first do the training. A few candidates gave no answer and did not, therefore, score either of the two extra marks.

2 (a) The majority of candidates equated 'tertiary sector' with selling; just one aspect of it, rather than with the idea of services.

(b) Nearly all candidates scored one mark in part (i), but many thought that 'quality control' was an advantage. In part (ii), the two most common errors were to ignore 'customer', despite it being in bold, or to ignore the scenario and to assume it was manufacturing.

(c) (i) A majority of candidates realised that 'cash brought forward' equalled the previous 'cash balance', although some forgot the important minus sign. In part (ii) a large number of candidates recognised that Judith and Stuart were making a loss and that this deficit was increasing each month. It was, therefore, not likely that the bank manager would give them a loan if there was some doubt whether the loan would be paid back. In part (iii), good candidates were able to discuss all three options before choosing one and justifying why it would be preferable to the other two. Many answers, however, showed widespread confusion over the difference between costs and prices, with the terms being used interchangeably, while other candidates assumed that revenue could only be increased by raising price.

Teachers' Tip

Revenue, costs and price need to be clearly understood and the links between them fully explained. This could be done not only in the Finance section of the specification, but also when discussing pricing strategies.

(d) (i) Most candidates realised that profits were needed to survive, but could not go beyond this. Part (ii) usually drew one of three answers: the correct one, £31000; an addition of all three figures, which gained one mark; and sales income minus the other two, although a few multiplication and division responses were also seen. Total cost was a favourite answer to part (iii), although a sizeable minority of candidates did offer fixed costs.

3 (a) A few good candidates actually defined 'promotion', referring to informing and persuading the public. Equally, a few candidates ignored the scenario and linked it to the work place. For most, however, promotion and advertising were synonymous. This was often carried over into part (ii) with two examples of advertising. It was pleasing to see that many candidates were able to offer a good range of ideas and to explain them.

(b) Better candidates were able to both identify an appropriate pricing strategy and to address the word 'suitable'. Others could explain a strategy, but failed to justify it. Many candidates, however, had no real idea of pricing strategies and talked in terms of 'good prices' or 'BOGOF'.

- 4 (a) As with question 1(a)(i) the basic concepts of business structure were confused or unknown to many candidates. Many equated 'public enterprise' with plc.

(b) (i) Most candidates were able to correctly state one reason why an internal communication problem could arise in an organisation, such as a verbal misunderstanding or a problem with a computer system. Some candidates, however, confused internal and external and wrote about problems with outside agencies. Equally, in part (ii), most candidates were able to state one way to solve the internal communication problem, such as that emails should be clearly written to avoid any ambiguity, but many did not fully explain how the problem would be solved.

(c) Good candidates were able to weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of any possible move before coming to a reasoned conclusion. Many of the answers, however, were limited to saying that the business was making a profit so should not move or that it should move to a busier place.

Teachers' Tip

Be sure to give all topics sufficient time in the teaching programme and to relate these to business(es) that have been studied.

2321/2 – Higher Tier

The majority of candidates demonstrated a good knowledge and understanding of the material in the specification. The best answers showed a real ability to apply, analyse and evaluate this in the context of the scenarios provided. Unfortunately, some candidates, mainly those who would have been better entered for the foundation tier, still either did not read the question carefully enough or did not put their answers in the context of the question.

- 1 (a) The shareholding aspect of a plc was understood by most candidates, and limited liability was mentioned frequently.

(b) Better answers clearly defined 'hierarchical' and offered an idea of many layers, often giving examples. These candidates usually went on to offer sensible suggestions about the problems of this structure, normally in terms of communication or motivation, with the very best making clear links to the HRM role. Weaker candidates restricted themselves to either layers or examples and ignored the scenario.

(c) Many candidates ignored the word 'induction' and either wrote about training in general or equated the idea with the selection process. Good answers tended to come from a limited number of centres.

(d) Candidates who referred to on-the-job and off-the-job training usually did well with a good idea of advantages and disadvantages and, at the top, a supported recommendation. A small minority, however, just described training.

Teachers' Tip

Make sure that candidates tackle the key word, especially those that indicate AO4, and give supported recommendations rather than vague conclusions.

- 2 (a) Approximately half the candidates had a clear idea of 'tertiary sector'. The rest equated it with selling; just one aspect of it, rather than with the idea of services.

(b) This question proved more demanding than expected because many candidates did not appear to understand specialisation. Some others ignored the scenario and talked about manufacturing rather than retailing, 'a shop selling computers', while others ignored 'customers' and 'business' even though they were in bold type. Those who did read and obey did well with some excellent comments on customer care generating increased profits and new customers in part (ii). Good answers to part (ii) referred correctly to the idea of 'forecast' in terms of either the business or the bank. Too many candidates, however, responded in terms of profit and loss or assumed that this was the actual cashflow. Good answers to part (iii) made sensible use of the forecast and commented on the bank's likely policy to debt repayment with the best realising that the situation was likely to improve as revenue increased.

(c) Most candidates realised that profits were needed to survive and many were able to expand on this for both marks. Part (ii) usually drew the correct answer of £31000, but some candidates added all three figures, which gained one mark. Total cost was a favourite answer to part (iii), although a sizeable minority did offer fixed costs. Too many candidates simply offered any financial term they could think of, such as assets.

- 3 (a) A few good candidates actually defined 'promotion' referring to informing and persuading the public. Equally, a few candidates ignored the scenario and linked it to the work place. For most, however, promotion and advertising were synonymous.

(b) Good answers made a clear link between sponsorship and the Lune Valley Railway Company with the best considering both the advantages and the disadvantages of sponsorship. Others made clear reference to the fact that the company was already making a loss and that this should/should not encourage it to sponsor a sports team. A large number of candidates, however, ignored the scenario and just wrote about sponsorship, thus limiting themselves to half marks.

(c) The best answers clearly specified a recognised pricing strategy, understood what it meant, applied it to the chosen business and justified its suitability. It was good to see some candidates using their critical faculties. Too many candidates, however, had no real idea of pricing strategies and talked in terms of 'good prices', 'sales' or 'BOGOF'. Others named a strategy, but then described a different one. These candidates often failed to apply their answers to the chosen business.

Teachers' Tip

Remind candidates that in their revision they should try to link material to the business/businesses they have studied and to then make these links when answering questions.

- 4 (a) Too many candidates still confuse 'public enterprise' with plc.

(b) The best candidates often referred to the structure of the company, such as span of control and hierarchy (links with question 1(b)), and suggested either delayering or electronic methods of communication as ways of dealing with this. Others gave a wide range of practical suggestions leading to straightforward solutions, although some of these were not fully developed. Weak answers confused internal with external or talked in terms of shareholders.

(c) Good candidates had a clear idea of why their business had located where it was and were able to discuss a number of factors before deciding on 'the most important'. Too often, however, the answers focused solely on nearness to customers, though some did refer, also, to ease of parking. These answers usually showed a lack of analysis and clear discussion and rarely achieved more than half marks.

2322 – Business Studies Coursework

General Comments

Once again, the work submitted in this January cycle was of a high standard. Many candidates displayed a clear understanding of the subject matter and applied that understanding to realistic business situations. There were many examples of work which displayed excellent use of business language, detailed analysis and interpretation which fed into well justified recommendations.

Imaginative presentation continues to be seen within the work, though candidates should always make sure that the investigation is clearly set out and take care not to be too elaborate. In a minority of cases the layout of individual sections within the assignment was good, though the overall organisation of the work was less clear to the reader.

The titles used by the majority of centres were sufficient to enable candidates to meet the necessary assessment criteria, though in some instances they did not give candidates enough clarity and scope to achieve their true potential. Centres are reminded that there is a consultancy service available through the OCR Birmingham Office for the checking of a coursework title. For those centres wishing to have more coursework support, the national T-mobile investigation contains guidance and materials from the Principal Moderator. Details are available from OCR's Birmingham Office.

Application of the Assessment Criteria

Criterion 1

In criterion 1 candidates are required to state their aim and explain their strategy for achieving that aim. Whilst most candidates stated some aim, there was less clarity in justifying a strategy for achieving the aim.

Candidates should be advised that it is necessary, for example, to explain why they are using say a questionnaire. Why, for example, are they questioning a particular group of people? They may well use other primary sources which again need to be justified and linked back to their stated aim.

In some cases not enough time was spent on this criterion, with rather superficial statements being over rewarded.

Criterion 2

For criterion 2 candidates must collect sufficient data/information to complete their assignment. This may well mean both primary and secondary sources. Candidates must ensure that all material used is relevant and supports the aim of the investigation. There are still too many instances of candidates including vast quantities of 'support' material, especially from the Internet, which is really not connected with the study. Its inclusion adds only weight to the assignment.

The amount of primary data, such as interviews, is generally satisfactory, with both teaching staff and candidates realising that to make justified recommendations there must be a reliable bank of data on which to call.

Criterion 3

This criterion recognises the ability of candidates to present their assignment in an appropriate form. With the continued development of presentation software available on PCs, many candidates are presenting work very well indeed.

Thought should always be given to the context of the study. If, for example, a candidate was investigating whether a new fast food outlet would succeed in the local area, appropriate maps (with annotation) would help the work, as would photographs of potential locations or as indications of possible problems.

Charts and tables of different formats may well present data in a clearer form. Graphs are now becoming more uniform (and clearer), with the instances of over complex and often unreadable graphs being greatly reduced.

Criterion 4

Criterion 4 is concerned with candidates' ability to use business terms and techniques within their assignment. As stated in the introduction to this report, rather better examples of this were seen this examination session.

In simple terms, the assignment should read as though it was written by a GCSE Business Studies candidate, using the particular language and techniques of the subject. Better assignments contained both width and depth; for example, candidates covering the marketing mix made sure that all elements of the mix was covered (width) and, for example, in pricing, all necessary pricing strategies were investigated (depth), using appropriate language.

Weaker candidates took a more general approach to their writing, at times with a total absence of any business related language. In some instances this was not recognised in the marking, with some centres taking a rather generous approach to crediting this criterion.

Criterion 5

In criterion 5 candidates must analyse and interpret the data collected. Experience has shown that most candidates will attempt some elements of analysis; rather fewer will offer some interpretation of the data.

In order to support the later recommendations, it is vital that more able candidates look closely at the data, in numerical or graphical form, and examine closely why results have worked out in a particular way. Once this has been completed it is a natural step to move to recommendations which are then more clearly based on the data.

It may be beneficial for centres to consider using exercises to practise the process of analysis and interpretation prior to the assignment being completed in order to give candidates the necessary skill to look at data in such a way. Criterion 5 remains one of the main differentiating criteria within this OCR coursework.

Criterion 6

Here the candidates have to evaluate the data collected and make justified recommendations based on the original aim of the investigation.

It is important that the recommendations fit both the context of the study (recommending a marketing strategy for a plc will differ from that of a sole trader), and the results of the earlier analysis and interpretation of data. In some work the recommendations were not connected in any way to the data and seemed to be the general, and unsupported, opinion of the candidate.

Report on the Units Taken in January 2006

Candidates should refer closely to the data, using figures (percentages if possible) to add both weight and accuracy to their suggestions. General comments such as 'the business should advertise more' are not helpful unless supported by evidence and an explanation as to where and why this advertising should take place. Given a higher level of analysis, it was encouraging to see candidates make very precise recommendations. Having earlier looked, for example, at the gender split of their data, it is then possible to make different recommendations for males and females, if supported by the analysis.

Candidates should be reminded that within the OCR specification, evaluation in coursework refers to the evaluation of the data, not making a judgement on how enjoyable the work had been or how the candidate would complete it so much better next time if given another opportunity.

Quality of Written Communication

Whilst this element was marked accurately by the majority of the centres, there was evidence that rather more generous marking is emerging than is merited by the work presented.

Centres should use the full mark range available, including zero. For full marks, candidates should have few errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation, with ideas being expressed in an appropriate (business) way.

**General Certificate of Secondary Education
Business Studies B (Modular) (1952)
January 2006 Assessment Session**

Unit Threshold Marks

Unit		Maximum Mark	a*	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	u
2321/1	Raw	60				36	30	24	18	12	0
	UMS	69				60	50	40	30	20	0
2321/2	Raw	60	45	41	35	29	22	18			0
	UMS	100	90	80	70	60	50	45			0
2322	Raw	60	50	44	38	33	26	19	12	5	0
	UMS	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20	0

The total entry for the examination was:

2321/1 = 940 candidates

2321/2 = 939 candidates

2322 = 1727 candidates

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