

# Examiners' Report January 2013

## GCSE Business Studies 5BS06 01

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## Introduction

As in previous examination series, the available evidence suggests that this paper was accessible and candidates were able to demonstrate effective knowledge and understanding of the content from Unit 1. The statistical information available shows that centres are preparing their candidates effectively for this objective test paper.

It is worth mentioning that while Unit 1 is more heavily weighted towards Assessment Objectives (AOs) 1 and 2, the questions continue to require candidates to think carefully through the options before selecting an answer.

As in all the GCSE Business Studies examination papers, the questions are produced to target the full range of abilities from G to A\*; therefore some questions will be more challenging than others.

Candidates are reminded that all questions should be attempted rather than missing some out. They are also reminded to mark their answers using black ink. Some candidates did not follow the instructions given, eg if the question asks for one box to be marked, then marking two does not gain a second chance at the question.

## **Summary of candidate performance**

Below is a summary of performance in the questions for which particular issues were evident or for which we feel comment is worth making.

### ***Question 1***

This question was an inviting question on finance for a sole trader and a majority of candidates were able to achieve success. However there were still some candidates who considered an overdraft as a long-term example, which it would not be.

### ***Question 2***

Most candidates were able to identify two objectives for a sole trader when setting up in business.

### ***Question 3***

Candidates were asked to identify the changes to the marketing mix that would help a company expand. This was a slightly challenging question and candidates had to select three examples. Nearly all candidates gained at least one mark, showing that they understood the concept of how the marketing mix could be changed.

### ***Question 5***

Candidates clearly understood the information that could be gained by direct contact with customers and identified the information gained by this method.

### ***Question 6***

This question proved challenging for some with only just over half of the candidates gaining two marks. Perhaps this area of the specification, 1.2 'thinking creatively', may need to be covered in more depth.

### ***Question 7***

This question also proved to be more challenging for a large majority of candidates. They had to understand quite a lot of information before answering the question with regard to exchange rates. However most businesses that deal with other countries are affected by the exchange rates with some consequences and this is an aspect that candidates should be aware of.

### ***Question 8***

This question was well answered with nearly three-quarters of candidates able to work the calculation out.

### ***Questions 10 and 11***

These two questions on stakeholders were answered exceptionally well with over three-quarters of candidates gaining the marks available.

## **Question 12**

Most candidates were able to calculate the missing costs in the given table. However there are still some candidates whose writing is very difficult to read or not sufficiently clear, and candidates are reminded to make their writing as legible as possible.

## **Question 13**

The majority of candidates realised that the effect of an increase in the cost of oil on a business would be an increase in variable costs.

## **Question 14**

Not all candidates realised that legislation protects workers with regard to age and race; the other alternatives given related to the individual.

## **Question 15**

About a third of candidates gained one mark on this question, showing they had not fully realised the ways in which a sole trader can compete with larger rivals. Customer service is one way, with the opportunity of offering an online ordering service another. Launching a national advertising campaign and charging lower prices are something that a sole trader would find more difficult to do.

## **Question 16**

This question appeared to be more challenging for candidates and was aimed at the more able. This was the second graph within the paper and candidates had to interpret the information from the graph and apply it to the question. The topic was from 1.5 'market demand and supply' and was looking at the effect on businesses of changes. Perhaps candidates could practise this type of question more.

## **Question 18**

This question was well answered by most candidates with the exception of Q18(vi) where only a quarter of candidates gained the mark. The reason for this may be that candidates did not read the question properly and missed the word 'skills' out of the definition. It appears that candidates are well prepared for this question and found no problem with the change in style of answering.

## **Question 19**

The six-mark extended writing question is a feature of the Unit 6 examination. This question requires evidence of the skills in Assessment Objectives (AOs) 1, 2 and 3. Candidates need to make a decision and provide reasoned justification for this decision. Note that there is no right or wrong answer: a candidate could have argued that skill is more important than attitude or vice versa.

To score full marks, candidates must offer some evaluation. In this particular case study, for example, the candidate might suggest that skill is more important because Amelia has to maintain her competitive advantage over rival companies (using evidence from the stimulus material) and therefore skill would be more important than attitude. A person with a good attitude might not have the right skills for the business that could affect her company.

As with previous examination series, some candidates provided too much detail, sometimes using additional sheets, often with the result that their arguments and justification became very difficult to understand. Candidates are reminded that full marks can be gained by writing in the amount of space provided.

Candidates can gain top marks if they reference just one factor (in this case, skill is important), providing sufficient analysis and justification is also provided.

## Summary

Below is a summary of advice specifically arising from this examination. This includes some guidance reproduced from previous series.

**Multiple-choice questions** – centres should ensure that candidates are sufficiently prepared to attempt multiple-choice questions. The questions are designed to require skills including application and analysis.

**Six-mark question** – useful advice for candidates on answering this question:

- Organise arguments using paragraphs. Indent, or leave a line between paragraphs if necessary, to emphasise the organisation and structure.
- A common approach is for candidates to make a decision, justify this using appropriate terminology and concepts, suggest how the other option may be affected and finally state why the chosen option is **more** affected than the other. Importantly, candidates should try to arrive at an original conclusion that does not simply repeat what has already been stated in the stimulus material.
- Do not write too much: arguments can become unclear and vague when too much detail is provided.

**Analysis of graphs** – candidates should practise analysing the information presented in graphs and making judgements on that information.

**Key terms** – a number of marks on this paper are gained through knowledge of key terms. Centres could plan to consolidate this knowledge on a regular, weekly basis with their candidates. This could take many different forms such as quizzes, crosswords, etc.

**Practice makes perfect** – to improve performance of candidates, centres should seek to develop examination technique by running mock exams under the same timed conditions as the real paper. On the Edexcel website, there is now a selection of past papers available.

**Timing** – while many candidates scored highly on this paper, it was considered that, at times, incorrect responses were selected by candidates as a result of questions not being read thoroughly enough. Centres are encouraged to work with candidates in using the 45 minutes available to think carefully about each question, identify distracters and finally identify the correct answer. A check by candidates of all their answers is also encouraged before the end of the examination. Candidates need to be aware that questions are designed to include some strong distracters.

## **Grade boundaries**

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>





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