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# Examiner's Report Principal Moderators Feedback

## Summer 2018

Pearson Edexcel GCSE Business  
5BS02 Paper 01  
Investigating Small Businesses

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# INVESTIGATING SMALL BUSINESSES

## General comments

This was the final series of the Unit 2 controlled assessment. As the new qualification does not include an equivalent internally-assessed component, this is therefore the last time controlled assessment will be used.

Controlled assessment has provided students the opportunity to investigate actual business for a real purpose. To this end it has been a valuable exercise. It has been pleasing to see a snapshot of local businesses from different areas across the UK (and beyond).

As this is the final series of controlled assessment, the purpose of this final report is not the same as it has been in previous year. Previous reports have been written with a formative rationale, to provide guidance and advice for teachers and students for the next series. This report is summative - giving feedback on performance for this final series.

A summary of controlled assessment is as follows:

- Candidates have a choice of 5 investigation titles. New titles are published each year.
- There are 4 assessment objectives – Research, Presentation, Analysis and Evaluation.
- The investigation is to be carried out under controlled conditions. Research should be up to 6 hours under low levels of control. The write-up is 3 hours and under conditions of high control. The specification and Controlled Assessment Guide provide further detail.
- The investigation should be of a **small business**.
- All candidates should investigate a different business.

The most popular tasks this year Task 4 (repeat purchase) and Task 1 (market segmentation). A relatively small number of candidates chose Task 5. Below is a summary of the main points from this final series:

## Research

A wide range of primary research was once again in evidence, including interviews with business owners, customer surveys, images from businesses and local maps. Work showed that students typically have a good understanding of the criteria and often demonstrated good levels of selectivity and focus with their research.

## **Presentation**

The quality of presentation this year was similarly strong to previous series and the comment here echoes what was stated previously. Lots of images were once again in evidence this year, and these are good to see, providing tangible evidence of candidates carrying out 'field research'. Importantly, candidates have had to use the actual images to help answer the question in their investigation. Images are an excellent means of demonstrating original thinking. Candidates are rewarded for presenting their findings using appropriate methods and in terms of their, '*attention to detail*'. For some investigations this may involve presenting statistical data using charts and diagrams. Where an interview has been carried out it may involve relevant quotes being used in the write up. The point is candidates must 'do something' with the information and data they collect, and this must be appropriate. For example, a pie chart showing the results of a 'yes or no' question on a survey is not appropriate. Simply including a chart was, in itself, not enough.

## **Analysis**

As noted in previous years, some candidates perform very well in this area, whilst others find the skill more difficult. This is the nature of a higher order skill like Analysis.

The following feedback is what has been said in previous series. Sometimes moderators found examples of centres rewarding work with the annotation '*Analysis*', when in fact the information was not analysis. Key here is that candidates make use of their research information to address the particular investigation question. When candidates conduct interviews or surveys, they need to be clear on why they have asked a question. How do their questions link with the relevant concepts and theories that are integral to their investigation? The impression is that candidates feel it is vital to include some form of questionnaire, produce graphs and/or pie charts and then to talk about their findings in general terms with little or no meaningful analysis. Some candidates justify the questions asked by showing the links to the relevant concepts and theories and by including their rationale in the appendices and by referring to each question's validity in the analysis of their findings. Others, however, once again used quotes as analysis (not rewardable) or made simple or basic statements which did not merit the higher level marks sometimes given.

## **Evaluation**

As with the previous series this was the weakest strand for many candidates, although the view of the senior examination team was that performance has improved over the duration of the qualification. It is important that the analysis of research data should inform the conclusion candidates arrive at. Once again, examples were again seen this year of 'evaluation' where a candidate suggested what they would do differently if they were to do this task again. This is not evaluation. Suggesting that, '*...next time I would get more questionnaires completed...*' should not be rewarded at Evaluation. Too often, teacher annotation indicated that this was being rewarded.

## **Final comments**

The senior examination team would like to pass on its gratitude and thanks to teachers who, over the duration of this course, have provided some excellent opportunities for students to investigate real businesses. We have been privileged to see some fantastic work over the last 8 years. The course was designed to help provide young people with a real insight into how businesses operate, and controlled assessment was an integral part of this approach. Controlled assessment could not work without the professionalism and determination of teachers who want the very best for their students. Thank you.

### **Grade Boundaries**

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