Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

November 2020

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
In Commerce 4CM1 Paper 01

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PE REPORT ON GCSE INTERNATIONAL COMMERCE 4CM1 01 – November 2020

GENERAL COMMENTS

From the scripts seen the majority of candidates completed the paper in the allotted time. Candidates were well prepared and able to apply their knowledge, analysis and evaluation to answer the questions. However, a number of candidates still struggled with the 'State' questions. Candidates must ensure that their response are in context and relate back to the stem of the question. Many of the comments made in the June 2019 and January 2020 series still apply to this particular series, it is worth reiterating this to candidates, so that they can fully prepare themselves for the examination.

Many candidates have gained a great deal of commercial understanding from studying the course and this was apparent in the answers given. However, there are still a number of candidates who are answering most questions giving detailed knowledge of what the question is, without any application, analysis or evaluative comments. This does limit the candidates' access to the marks available. The scenarios chosen are from actual commercial operations. This may have helped some candidates to relate their comments more easily to the questions.

The question paper is set with all four of the Assessment Objectives (AO) in mind and the candidates responses are marked accordingly. A reminder that the percentage breakdown of each AO can be seen on page 31 in the Specification. Also on page 44 of the Specification, are examples of the command words used. For example in question 2 (g) and 3 (f) the command word is 'Justify' and candidates are asked to write an extended answer, using information provided in order to recommend one of the two options to a commercial operation.

It is important that candidates take into account the marks allocated for each question. This gives them guidance on the amount of detail they need to include when answering the question.

Again, and on only a few candidates scripts this series, candidates did not indicate that they had continued their response somewhere else on the paper. It is important that candidates do this so that the additional work can be included in the response and a mark given. For those candidates that used additional paper, their response to the questions must be clearly identified on the paper. Sufficient lines are given for candidates to answer questions. It is also important that candidates clearly label the additional pages to show which question they are continuing with. A few candidates on this series failed to do this and the examiner had to identify which response related to which question. Candidates must clearly indicate by using the words 'continued', 'contd page ….' or 'see separate sheet', with each response clearly identified e.g. 2(f), 3(g) as examples.

From the work seen it appeared that some candidates had not covered the full specification or were unable to answer the question as there were blank responses. As mentioned previously questions can come from any part of the specification.

COMMENTS ON INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONS

SECTION A

Question 1

In part 1 a – over three quarters of the candidates gained the mark for identifying why retailers used barcodes on their products. Candidates should be reminded that if they do make a mistake when answering a multiple choice question they should put a line through the wrong answer and an 'X' through the correct response. A candidate that marks two answers will, in most cases, not gain a mark.

In part 1 b – again well answered by nearly all of the candidates, showing an understanding of a loss leader.

In part 1 c – a 'Define' question, candidates had to define the term cooperatives. Candidates found defining the term cooperatives more difficult with only about 5 per cent of the candidates gaining the mark available. Some candidates confused the term with a supermarket. Candidates should be encouraged to avoid using the term straight from the question when answering, as it does not show full understanding of the term.

In part 1 d – again another 'Define' question; there are three define questions in total on the paper, where candidates had to define bad debts. This was much better answered than 1 (c) with nearly half of the candidates gaining the mark available. Most of the candidates understood that bad debts are funds that would not be paid to a business.

In part 1 e (i) – a calculation question, where candidates had to work out the percentage difference between, visible exports and imports. Less than a fifth of the cohort gained the full marks available and a third gained one mark. It is worth reiterating to candidates to show their workings within the box, as they may have the correct formula, which would gain them a mark but then make a calculation error. Candidates should be reminded that there is a line at the bottom of the box for their response. This makes it clearer and easier for the examiner when marking. From the responses seen some candidates had their answer within their workings, which was not always easily identified. It is also worthy of note that if the question asks for a calculation to two decimal places, then marks will not be given for a response that only gives one decimal place. Also candidates should take care with their writing of certain numbers e.g. the writing of the figure 4 sometimes looks like a 7.

In part 1 e (ii) - this is the first of the 'State' questions where candidates must relate their response to the scenario. Only a very few candidates gained the mark available. Although from the responses seen candidates understood the effect on trade if the import figures were lower than export, but did not put it in context and therefore did not gain the mark. Just by putting South Africa in the response does not guarantee the mark, if they had included diamonds they would have gained the mark. For examples of how candidates could answer a 'State' question please refer to the mark scheme.

In part 1 e (iii) – the second 'State' question of three. Candidates had to give a disadvantage to South Africa if the crops failed. Approximately a third of the cohort gained the mark available, as mentioned earlier a 'State' question must relate back to scenario. From the responses seen candidates identified a disadvantage less exports, which is correct, but then did not develop their response by referring to the scenario.

In part 1 f – a question where candidates could have developed their answers more to gain the full 3 marks available. The question asked why voluntary chains are still popular and on this occasion as it is an explain question, the response did not have to be in context. However, from the responses seen many candidates did not understand fully what a 'voluntary chain' was and confused it with supermarkets purchasing from a manufacturer. Two thirds of the cohort did not gain a mark on this question.

In part 1 g – candidates were asked to give one disadvantage of ecommerce business using road transport to deliver goods.   Over half of the cohort were able to gain one or two marks with less than a fifth gaining no marks. Most candidates understood the disadvantage of an ecommerce business using road transport; delays due to traffic, poor roads were common reasons. However some candidates misread the question and gave reasons relating to sea travel and air travel which was not appropriate.

In part 1 h – this is the first question in the paper which is marked by levels. Candidates were asked to analyse why after sales service is important to a business. To gain the marks available candidates needed to apply the information and then analyse it, as these are the only two AO's available for this question. Unfortunately a large number of candidates responded with comments that general and not related to the business. Some candidates repeated the information from the stem which is also not worthy of a mark. Less than a fifth of the cohort did not gain any marks on this question with most candidates achieving a Level 2 mark.

Question 2

In part 2 a – a multiple choice question where candidates had to work out the percentage increase on a product. Most candidates were able to work out the correct figure with three quarters gaining the mark available.

In part 2 b – a multiple choice question where candidates had to identify which insurance protects against fraud, three fifths of the cohort gained the mark available.

In part 2 c (i) – candidates had to look at figure 2 and then identify which business was in the secondary sector. Over 90 per cent of candidates were able to identify the correct business.

In part 2 c (ii) – candidates had to refer to figure 2 and identify a business in the tertiary sector, again the majority of the cohort identified the business with only a tenth of not gaining the mark available.

In part 2 d – a 'Define' question where candidates were asked to define the term logo. Well over three quarters of the candidates gained the mark for this question, defining a logo. Care should be taken with this type of question to ensure that candidates give a full definition of the term, a picture on its own would not have been sufficient to gain the mark.

In part 2 e – this question was 'Explain' hence candidates did not need to put the response in context. Just over a tenth of candidates did not gain a mark on this question. It is worth reiterating that candidates should be encouraged to read the question at least twice before answering. A number of candidates read street markets and popular giving a response related to the customer and not the retailer, which meant they were unable to gain all the marks available. For those candidates that understood the question and referred to retailers being flexible in where they sell their goods, opening at times they want as opposed to having regular hours were. Most candidates gained either one or two marks.

In part 2 f – surprisingly nearly a quarter of the cohort did not gain any marks on this question and mail order is now one of the main methods of purchasing products. As mentioned before this is an 'explain' question so candidates do not have to put it in context. From the responses seen some candidates understood why customers prefer to use mail order however they then did not develop their comments by giving reasons as to how it would be of benefit. Some candidates compared it to email which is different.

In part 2 g – again this is a question that is marked by levels with only Application, Analysis and Evaluative of the AO's being tested. Candidates had to choose between the two options of either introducing marine insurance or increasing provision for young drivers. Most candidates understood that they had to justify why they had chosen one option as opposed to the other. However, a large number of candidates gave very detailed descriptions of the two options, which was knowledge and therefore they did not gain any marks, this accounted for less a quarter of cohort who gained no marks. From the responses seen a number of candidates made a decision on which option would be better for Jubilee Insurance and justified the reasons with application and analysis but failed to give evaluative comments. Half of the cohort gained marks in Level 1. Perhaps if candidates could summarise why they have chosen one option and not the other might help in their response and gain the higher level.

SECTION B

Question 3

In part 3 a – nearly half of the candidates did not gain the mark available for this question, perhaps they did not understand what specialisation in a factory means.

In part 3 b – again four fifths of the candidates did not gain the mark available for this question, showing that they did understand what was meant by limited liability.

In part 3 c – the third 'State' question where candidates had to give a reason why PetShop would have created a website. Again as mentioned earlier, from the responses seen, a number of candidates gave valid responses but did not relate it back to PetShop, and therefore did not gain the mark available. Less than a fifth of the candidates gained the mark. Even if the candidate mentions PetShop but did not put the response in context they would not gain the mark. An example where a candidate's response would not gain the mark. 'PetShop created a website to show the goods'. The response could be considered correct but it is not in context, for the candidate to gain the mark they could have added, 'to show the dog food they sell'.

In part 3 d – candidates were asked to outline one reason why Petshop might take out public liability insurance. The AO allocated for this question is AO2 therefore the response had to be in context. Nearly three quarters of the candidates did not gain any marks on this question. From the responses seen, for those candidates that gained marks they identified that public liability insurance would be taken out to protect PetShop, incase a dog bit a customer or a customer was injured by a dog in the shop.

In part 3 e – candidates were asked to analyse why PetShop's insurance company would want a proposal form completed. For this question candidates had to Apply and Analyse their response. Nearly a third of the cohort failed to gain a mark on this question. From responses seen a number of candidates gave a detailed description of what is included in a proposal form, but this is knowledge and there are no knowledge marks available. Approximately a third of candidates gained at least two marks by identifying that the insurance company can work out the cost of the premium of PetShop once they have completed the form and identified the risks involved. Some candidates confused a proposal form with a cover note.

In part 3 f – again another option question where candidates had to justify which one of the two options would be more suitable for PetShop whether to produce their own range of products or offer additional services. As in question 2 g many candidates described both methods in detail. Again there are no knowledge marks available for this type of question. From the responses seen a number of candidates understood the difference between the two options with option 2 being more popular than option 1. Most candidates were able to gain some marks on this question. Candidates should be encouraged to apply, analyse and evaluate the two options to enable them to gain the higher marks. There is no right or wrong answer on this type of question, the candidates can justify either one. Candidates should be encouraged to draw a conclusion or conclusions from the information they have given which might help them to evaluate their response and gain the evaluation marks available.

SECTION C

Question 4

In part 4 a - candidates should be encouraged to show their workings as advised in the question, as they could gain a mark for the formula, even if the actual answer is wrong. As mentioned earlier candidates should ensure that their figures are easily readable and that they put their answer in the space provided.

In part 4 b – Under half of the candidates gained no marks on this question, and most of the candidates that gained marks were only in Level 1 or the bottom of Level 2.   As previously mentioned this is a question marked to AO2 and AO3 as to the benefits of Mayse Artisan Bakery being in a partnership. From the clips seen and as mentioned previously a number of candidates tended to give details of a partnership and the benefits but did not relate it back to the scenario.

In part 4 c – It is worth reiterating to candidates that this question does carry the most marks and they should allow sufficient time to answer it, as the question is marked against all four of the Assessment Objectives. A number of candidates only completed a few lines and therefore did not gain many of the marks available. Some candidates are using bullet points or numbered format, this will not allow them to gain the higher level marks because they may not have analysed or evaluated the points/comments made.

Candidates were asked to evaluate which are the most important factors when locating a new shop. A variety of valid comments were made by candidates, such access to customers, availability of ingredients for making the bread and cakes, easy access to roads for transporting goods which are all very relevant, but some candidates failed to develop these points and justify their decisions to enable them to gain the higher level marks. Again a conclusion would help candidates to develop their evaluative comments. A tenth of candidates failed to gain any marks on this question, but it was pleasing to see a higher number of candidates gaining a Level 3 mark.