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Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
In Business 4BS1 Paper 01

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PE REPORT ON GCSE INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS STUDIES 4BS1 02 – 2019

GENERAL COMMENTS

Candidates appeared to have found this new style of paper accessible and were able to complete the paper in the given time. For the majority of the questions candidates were well prepared and were able to apply their knowledge, analyse and evaluate to answer the questions. However, a number of candidates struggled with the 'State' questions.

Many candidates had gained a great deal of business understanding from studying the course and this was apparent in the answers given. However, there are a number of candidates who are answering the questions detailing their knowledge of the topic without giving any application, analysis or evaluative comments. This does restrict the candidates' access to the full range of marks. The scenario of Tata Motor Company a real life business, perhaps interested the candidates which meant that they were able to relate their comments to the business.

The mark scheme includes the Assessment Objectives to help in the preparation of candidates for future examinations. Just to reiterate, that all four of the Assessment Objectives (AO's) are covered throughout the paper and the percentage breakdown of each AO can be seen on page 7 of the Getting Started for Teacher's Guide and page 22 in the Specification. Also on page 32 of the Teacher's Guide and page 31 of the Specification, are examples of the command words used that indicate which of the AO's are being tested. For example in question 2 (f) and 3 (e) the command word is 'Justify' and the Assessment Objectives being tested are AO2 – application, AO3 – analysis and AO4 – evaluation. Candidates are asked to write an extended answer, using information provided in order to recommend one of the two options to a business.

It is important that candidates take into account the marks allocated for each question, giving them guidance on the amount of detail they need to answer the question.

It is also worth mentioning, that the examination paper is marked using the online 'ePEN' system, therefore candidates must indicate if they have continued their answer somewhere else on the paper or have added additional sheets. Although many candidates did follow this information there were still a number who did not. The examiner may not realise that a candidate has continued writing somewhere else on the paper unless it is made clear. 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. Examiners are unable to guess if a candidate has continued the answer somewhere else. Candidates must clearly indicate by using 'continued', 'contd page ...' or 'see separate sheet'.

There are also some candidates who do not follow the instructions of the examination paper, for the first six multiple choice questions candidates are given the instruction to mark an 'X' in the box. There are some candidates who are using 'ticks'.

Questions can be taken from any part of the specification, therefore centres should ensure that all sections are covered so that they do not disadvantage any candidates. From the work seen it appeared that some candidates had not covered the full specification.

COMMENTS ON INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONS

Question 1

The multiple choice questions were answered quite well by the majority of the candidates, with perhaps question 1 (a) (iii) where only half of the candidates gained the correct mark of age, being the only form of discrimination that is covered by legislation.

Q01a - candidates had to calculate the total monthly costs for the business where just over half of the cohort gained the mark available.

Q01b – less than a fifth of the cohort gained the mark available, showing that perhaps candidates were not familiar with the term insolvency, which comes under 3.2.1 the importance of cash to a business in the specification, preventing the business from failing.

Q01c – another define question, candidates had to define, product life cycle. Less than half of the candidates gained the mark for this question. A number of candidates answered the question by turning the term around, such as ‘the life of a product’ which did not gain them the mark available.

Q01d – this is the first of the ‘State’ questions where candidates must relate their response to the business. Only a tenth of the candidates gained the mark available. Although from the responses seen candidates understood why an employee could be dismissed but did not put it in context and therefore did not gain the mark.

Q01e – a calculation question where candidates had to calculate the global vehicles sales figure for Tata Motor Company. Over half of the cohort gained one mark for correctly substituting the numbers of the formula and just under a third gained the two marks available.

Q01f – a question where candidates could have developed their answers more to gain the full 3 marks available. The majority of candidates gained either 1 or 2 marks, having an understanding of the impact of technology on the manufacturing of vehicles. The question asked for one impact as opposed to two, and the response did not have to be in context.

Q01g – this is the first question in the paper which is marked by levels. Candidates were asked to analyse the importance of good public relations for Tata Motor Company. To gain the marks available candidates needed to apply the information and then analyse. Unfortunately a large number of candidates confused public relations with customer loyalty and therefore did not gain the marks available. Some candidates repeated the information from the stem which is not worthy of a mark.

Question 2

Q02a – another ‘State’ question where candidates were asked to state one non-financial objective for Tata Motor Company. Again as mentioned previously candidates were able to identify a non-financial objective but not relate it to the business and therefore did not gain the mark available.

Q02b – a ‘State’ question, candidates were asked to state one reason for employing casual staff at Tata Motor Company. Candidates were able to give some valid reasons but again did not relate it to Tata Motor Company, with less than ten per cent gaining the mark available. On these type of questions candidates should be encouraged to ensure that it is related to the scenario of the paper, to enable them to gain the marks available.

Q02c – candidates had knowledge of fringe benefits and as the question is ‘explain’ they did not need to put it in context, although a large number did and were not penalised for doing this.

Q02d – nearly half of the cohort did not gain any marks on this question. As it was another ‘explain’ question candidates did not have to put it in context. From the responses seen some candidates understood that job production needed skilled workers but then did not justify why it would require skilled workers. A number of candidates mentioned that it would be cheaper and increase sales, which it would not always be the case. Some candidates gave an example of what job production is used for and even if the example might not be feasible, it did help them to develop their answers and gain the marks available.

Q02e – most candidates had an understanding of the benefits of a short chain of command and were able to develop their answer to gain the marks available.

Q02f – candidates had to choose between the two pricing strategies that Tata Motor Company could use to launch a new vehicle. Most candidates understood that they had to justify why they had chosen which option. 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. Most candidates were able to justify the differences between the two pricing strategies understanding that cost plus would ensure that Tata Motor Company would be guaranteed to make a profit on the sale of a vehicle, whereas promotional would not gain as much profit but might sell more vehicles. From some of the responses seen some candidates confused promotional pricing with promotions and discussed the free gifts that could be given with sale of the vehicle.

Question 3

Q03a – well answered by most candidates with over half gaining the mark available. However some candidates referred to revenue as goods produced which are not actual sales and therefore they did not gain the mark available.

Q03b – this question seemed to challenge candidates with over three quarters of the cohort not gaining a mark. Candidates had to outline one reason why Tata Motor Company would use an overdraft. A number of candidates described what an overdraft was, this is knowledge and therefore did not gain them any marks.

Q03b – 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. Candidates seemed to find this calculation difficult as over half of the cohort did not gain a mark on this question. A number of candidates did not give the response to 2 decimal places, this is not answering the question and therefore they did not gain the full marks available.

Q03d – this question asked candidates to analyse how Tata Motor Company could use the financial information given in Figure 2. From experience of previous papers candidates tend to find any financial questions more difficult to answer. Just under a quarter of the candidates gained no marks for this question. Also very few candidates actually used any of the figures from the table given which would have helped them gain the AO2 marks of application which they could have then analysed.

Q03e – again another option question where candidates have to justify which one of the two options would be more suitable to Tata Motor Company. As in question 2 many candidates described both methods of research giving the advantages and disadvantages. There are no knowledge marks available for this type of question. Again from the responses seen a number of candidates confused the two methods of research, which was a great pity. Candidates should be encouraged to analyse and evaluate the two options to enable them to gain the higher marks.

Question 4

Q04a – this question was well answered by over half of the cohort, showing clear understanding of the calculation required. Again candidates should be encouraged to include their workings.

Q04b – most candidates were able to gain some marks on this question, with only just under a third gaining no marks at all. As previously mentioned and indicated in the 'Getting Started Booklet', page 32 an analyse question is looking for application and analysis of why a business would have a detailed induction programme. Some candidates referred to the benefits of selling cars and knowing what the vehicles do, this was not always relevant to their response.

Q04c – It is worth pointing out to candidates that this question does carry the most marks and they should allow sufficient time to answer it with all four of the Assessment Objectives being covered. 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 made.

Candidates were asked to evaluate the factors of Tata Motor Company making decisions of where to locate new factories. A variety of valid comments were made by candidates, such as access to raw materials, labour, land etc. However they then failed to develop these points and justify their decisions to enable them to gain the higher level marks.