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Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
In Business 4BS1 Paper 02R

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PE REPORT ON GCSE INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS STUDIES 4BS1 02R – 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 Yellow 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) (iv) where less than a fifth of the candidates gaining the correct mark of Yellow being able to charge lower prices due to the change in the exchange rate. For 1 (a) (v) candidates had to identify the source of long-term finance of reinvested profit and less than two fifths of the cohort gained the mark.

Q01b – less than a fifth of the cohort gained the mark available, showing that perhaps candidates were not familiar with the term crowdfunding, or they were unable to sufficiently define it clearly. Most identified that it was a group of people which is correct, but then they were unable to develop the comment correctly to gain the mark available.

Q01c – another define question, candidates had to define, branding. Over two thirds of candidates gained the mark available showing they clearly understood the term.

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 a diseconomy of scale but did not put it in context and therefore did not gain the mark.

Q01e – a calculation question where candidates had to calculate the cost of T-shirts if there was a markup. Over half of the cohort gained the two marks available for the correct formula and over a fifth gained one mark for the formula even though the actual price was incorrect. Some candidates did ‘round up’ the figure which was incorrect as the question asked for the selling price.

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 having loyal customers. The question asked for one advantage as opposed to two, and the response did not have to be in context. Very few candidates did not gain a mark.

Q01g– this is the first question in the paper which is marked by levels. Candidates were asked to analyse why Yellow would encourage its clothing manufacturers to use Kaizen. To gain the marks available candidates needed to apply the information and then analyse. Unfortunately a large number of candidates gave a very detailed description of what Kaizen is and the benefits of using this method, the question did not have any AO1 knowledge marks available. Less than a third of the candidates did not gain a mark, with most candidates gaining 2-3 marks.

Question 2

Q02a – another ‘State’ question where candidates were asked to state one benefit of Yellow introducing the new product ‘Design Your Own Shirt’. Again as mentioned previously candidates were able to identify a benefit but not relate it to the business and therefore did not gain the mark available.

Q02b – another ‘State’ question, candidates were asked to state one way Yellow could carry out market research. Candidates were able to give some valid ways but again did not relate it to Yellow, with just over a fifth of candidates 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 the benefits of a business retaining its employee and as the question is ‘explain’ they did not need to put it in context, although a large number did. Over a quarter of the candidates gained the three marks available.

Q02d– this was another ‘explain’ question, so candidates did not have to put their response in context. From the responses seen most candidates understood the advantage of using targeted advertising online. However they tended to give more than one advantage for the business, where the question clearly asked for one.

Q02e – candidates do tend to find finance questions more difficult and this was no exception, with approximately a quarter of the candidates not gaining any marks. From responses seen candidates tended to confuse this document with a statement of financial position.

Q02f – candidates had to choose between employing full-staff or only part-time staff for sales assistants in their stores. 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 employing full or part time staff. From the responses seen some candidates miss read the question and referred to manufacturing of clothes for Yellow as opposed to sales assistants. Very few candidates did not gain marks on this question.

Question 3

Q03a a – well answered by most candidates with over three quarters gaining the mark available.

Q03b – this question seemed to challenge some candidates with half of the cohort not gaining a mark. Candidates had to outline one benefit of BEXIMCO owning Yellow. A number of candidates gave statements about each of the businesses as opposed to the benefit of one owning the other.

Q03c – 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 be able to cope with this type of calculation with over two thirds gaining the marks 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 why Yellow sell to all demographics. This question was taken from 4.2.3 of the specification on Marketing. Just under a fifth of the candidates gained no marks and over half of the cohort gained either one or two marks. Again a majority tended to give a detailed description of what demographics means but did not apply or analyse the information.

Q03e – again another option question where candidates have to justify which one of the two options would be more suitable for Yellow. As in question 2 many candidates described both methods of non-financial rewards giving the advantages and disadvantages of each. There are no knowledge marks available for this question. Again from the responses seen a number of candidates confused the two methods of rewards 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 three quarters 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 fifth 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 as opposed to knowledge. Some candidates referred to the advantages of using social media for Yellow instead of the disadvantage. Candidates should be encouraged to read the question carefully at least two or three times before answering.

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 how Yellow may have gained a competitive advantage in the clothing market. A variety of valid comments were made by candidates, and the majority used the bullet points in the stem of question to develop their responses. However they then failed to develop these points further and justify their reasons to enable them to gain the higher level marks.