



Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

November 2021

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE in
Business Studies (4BS1/02)

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Publications Code 4BS1_02_2111_ER

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General

Candidates appeared to have found this 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 Huawei 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.

Report on individual questions

Question 1

All the multiple choice questions were answered correctly by over 70% of the candidates, showing a clear understanding of the topics covered.

In part 1 b – again a question well answered by the cohort gaining the mark available for a definition of a sole trader.

In part 1 c – another define question, candidates had to define, demographics. Less than a third of the candidates gained the mark for this question. A number of candidates answered the question by turning the term around, such as 'the graphics made to check a profit or loss' which did not gain them the mark available.

In part 1 d – this is the first of the 'State' questions where candidates must relate their response to the business. Less than a tenth of the candidates gained the mark available. Although from the responses seen candidates understood why share capital may be used as a source of finance, but did not put it in context of Huawei and therefore did not gain the mark.

In part 1 e – a calculation question where candidates had to calculate the operating profit margin for Huawei. Over three quarters of the cohort gained the two marks available for correctly substituting the numbers of the formula and just over a tenth gained one mark. Candidates should be aware that if the question asks for two decimal places and there response has three decimal places they will not gain all the marks available for the question.

In part 1 f – a question where candidates could have developed their answers more to gain the full 3 marks available. Just over half of the candidates gained either two or three marks, showing some understanding of the advantage of sponsorship for a business. The question asked for one advantage as opposed to two, and the response did not have to be in context. Some candidates did give more than one advantage. For some candidates there was confusion over what sponsorship is and a number of responses seen mentioned that it enables more money to be put into the business. Perhaps giving the benefits of those who are sponsored.

In part 1 g – this is the first question in the paper which is marked by levels. Candidates were asked to analyse the benefits for Huawei of locating its factories near to its labour

sources. To gain the marks available candidates needed to apply the information and then analyse. Unfortunately, a large number of candidates gave very detailed response of the benefits for its employees not Huawei and therefore did not gain the marks available. Some candidates repeated the information from the stem which is also not worthy of a mark. Less than a tenth of the candidates gained Level 3 marks and approximately half gained the top of Level 1 or the bottom of Level 2.

Question 2

In part 2 a – another ‘State’ question where candidates were asked to state one reason why Huawei would pay its employees above the minimum wage. Again, as mentioned previously candidates were able to identify why a business would pay its employees above the minimum wage but not relate it to the business and therefore did not gain the mark available. Less than a tenth of the cohort gained the mark available.

In part 2 b – a ‘State’ question, candidates were asked to state one reason for keeping its customers loyal to its brand. Candidates were able to give some valid reasons but again did not relate it to Huawei, with just over 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.

In part 2 c – the question is ‘explain’ question and therefore candidates do not need to put it in context. The concept of why good public relations is important to a business was understood by most of the candidates with only a fifth of the cohort not gaining a mark, and a quarter of candidates gained the full three marks available.

In part 2 d – As it was another ‘explain’ question, so candidates did not have to put it in context. From the responses seen some candidates understood the benefits of being a multinational business. A number of candidates mentioned that the business is world-wide but then did not develop the comment. However, over a third of candidates were able to develop one benefit to gain the full marks available and only a tenth of the cohort did not gain a mark.

In part 2 e – most candidates had an understanding of the reason why secondary research would be used by a business and were able to develop their answer to gain the marks available. However, over a quarter of the candidates did not gain a mark for this question, from the responses seen a number of candidates, described what secondary research was, rather than how it would be used.

In part 2 f – the first question where candidates had to choose between the two motivational methods that Huawei could use to retain its employees. Most candidates understood that they had to justify why they had chosen one option as opposed to another. 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 one of the options. Less than a tenth of the candidates did not gain a mark on this question with most candidates gaining a Level 2 mark.

Question 3

In part 3 a – well answered by most candidates with nearly two thirds gaining the mark available. However, some candidates referred to revenue as money received and therefore, they did not gain the mark available.

In part 3 b – this question seemed to challenge candidates with nearly three quarters of the cohort not gaining a mark. Candidates had to outline one reason why Huawei would use robotics in the production of its products. A number of candidates described what robotics was, this is knowledge and therefore did not gain them any marks, even though the description was accurate. The response needed to include the scenario as the marks allocated are for Assessment Objective 2, application.

In part 3 c – 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. Nearly three quarters of the candidates were able to calculate the amount of interest on the loan. It is also worth reiterating to candidates that they should take care to ensure that their figures are easily recognisable, in some cases the writing of candidate's number 4 and number 9 could be confused by the examiner.

In part 3 d – this question asked candidates to analyse why Huawei offers its new employees off-the-job training. Nearly half of the cohort gained a mark at either the top Level 1 or the bottom of Level 2. Some candidates discussed on-the-job training, which the question did not ask for, others again described in depth what off-the-job training was. Candidates should be encouraged to read carefully the question so that they fully understand what is being asked.

In part 3 e – again another option question where candidates have to justify which one of the two options would be more suitable for Huawei. As in question 2 many candidates described both methods of pricing strategies giving the advantages and disadvantages. As mentioned earlier, 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 pricing, which was a great pity. Candidates should be encouraged to analyse and evaluate the two options to enable them to gain the higher marks. Nearly half of the candidates gained a Level 2 mark, with only a twentieth gaining a Level 3 mark. It may help some candidates gain the higher level if they actually gave evaluative comments as to which option would be more suitable.

Question 4

In part 4 a – the final calculation question of the paper and just over half of the cohort gained one mark, a number of candidates only answer with one decimal place as opposed to two. Again, candidates should be encouraged to include their workings, so that if the final answer is incorrect, they could get one mark for the calculation. As mentioned earlier, some candidates may have lost marks due to the examiner being unable to read their figures.

In part 4 b – most candidates were able to gain some marks on this question, with half of the cohort gaining a Level 2 mark. 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 want good quality control. Some candidates made relevant and valid points with regard to quality and not wanting to harm customers because of liability claims, Huawei could encounter if the products were not made to the highest standard possible.

In part 4 c – 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 why Huawei would carry out market research before designing a new product. A variety of valid comments were made by candidates, such as they know what the customers want, finding a gap in the market that they could fill. However, they then failed to develop these points and justify their decisions to enable them to gain the higher level marks. Nearly half of the cohort gained a Level 2 mark and nearly a tenth of the cohort gaining a Level 3 mark.

Some candidates continued on additional paper, which is acceptable, but if there is no indication on the examination paper that they have done so, valuable marks could be lost. As mentioned at the beginning candidates must let the examiner know that they have continued their answer, simply by adding the word 'continued', or 'contd' or something similar is acceptable.