



General Certificate of Secondary Education

Business Studies 3133/3139

Full and short Course

Specification B

3133/9/1F Foundation Tier

Report on the Examination

2007 examination - June series

Further copies of this Report are available to download from the AQA Website: www.aqa.org.uk

Copyright © 2007 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

COPYRIGHT

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered centres for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to centres to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

The Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (company number 3644723) and a registered charity (registered charity number 1073334). Registered address: AQA, Devas Street, Manchester M15 6EX
Dr Michael Cresswell Director General.

General Issues

For Paper 1 in 2007, the total marks were reduced to 94, including 4 marks for QWC. This gave candidates more time to develop answers and to ensure that there were no problems in completing the full paper in the allotted time. The evidence indicates that candidates were able to fully develop answers within the time limits and the only candidates who did not finish were those who over-answered early questions. The time issue was also helped by the decision to reward 16 marks for question 7 which required 3 complex options to be compared and a conclusion reached and justified. This allowed both 'quantity' and 'quality' to be rewarded appropriately.

The levels mark scheme used for paper 1 operated well and appears to be understood by both teachers and students. Level 1 marks are gained from 'simple' recall of knowledge and for answers that are not developed in any way. Level 2 marks are then accessed when candidates start to apply their knowledge. This may be achieved by candidates using examples to help explain a term or when a point is developed or simply described. Level 3 marks are available to reward students who select and interpret data and then go on to analyse some sort of business situation or problem. This may involve some sort of chain of reasoning or may require a discussion that typically compares the advantages and disadvantages of specific options. Finally, level 4 marks are available for candidates who draw conclusions and justify their judgements.

For all questions, examiners start at the top level available to see if the candidate's response matches that descriptor. If not, the examiner moves down to the next level, and so on. A typical 12 or 16 mark question will usually operate at all four levels. The mark scheme gives clear descriptors for each level and explains how marks may be awarded within a level. The list of points usually given at the start of the mark scheme for each question are indicative only and examiners are trained to identify different wording and to award candidates for points that are feasible or realistic for the business at the heart of the case study.

There is clear evidence of a need for candidates to have better preparatory in reading and correctly acting upon questions. Candidates must learn to identify key command words, to enable them to structure their answers appropriately.

Question 1

This style of question is frequently used as a form of 'friendly opener'. Candidates who simply lift the reasons from the data without some further description will stay at level 1, with a maximum of 3 marks at 1 mark for each un-described reason. For the first described reason candidates will be awarded 4 marks as they are operating at level 2 by applying knowledge. The description can be quite simple, e.g. 'He has spotted a gap in the market which means he will be sure that customers will want to use his services.'

Question 2

A few candidates went outside the scope of the question to talk about non-market research information thus making it very difficult to score many marks. Those who homed in on market research items generally chose the most obvious and relevant, but relatively few were able to achieve level 3 marks by showing how the information would be important to Dave's business.

Question 3

This proved to be a strong question for most candidates, with a pleasing proportion managing to access level 3 by comparing the advantages and disadvantages of the two research methods. Many gave a simple conclusion with a small amount of justification. This is an area that could be developed further by centres.

Question 4

The phrase “Using two examples” does not mean a candidate will be awarded 2 marks for simply naming two typical running costs. The marks will be gained when the examples are used to help explain the term. A number of candidates tried to talk about fixed and variable costs while others were far too vague and failed to suggest that running costs would have to be paid on a continuous basis.

Question 5

We are always looking for ways to improve questions and to make difficult topics more accessible to Foundation Tier candidates. The two part structure to this question worked well, with most candidates able to suggest obvious advantages of both types of organisations. While some failed to make comparisons and thus missed out on up to 3 marks in part (a), most gained additional marks in part (b) for making a conclusion which was at least simply supported.

Question 6

There was also some innovation in this question with all of the key figures included in the data. This meant that candidates did not have to calculate any values beyond simple subtractions between pairs of figures. The question achieved the full range of marks. Some candidates made no use of the figures and so remained in level 1. Other candidates, however, did compare the figures fully to illustrate clear conclusions about Dave’s profitability.

Question 7

This type of question is a key part of this specification’s exam papers. To recognize the quantity of writing required of candidates to compare three detailed options as well as drawing a conclusion the marks were increased to 16 marks. Few candidates had problems moving beyond a level 1 response. However, to move from level 2 to level 3 candidates needed to compare the advantages and disadvantages of the three options. Some managed this by simple use of words such as ‘but’ or ‘however’, while others made it more secure by making a more direct comparison within the wording of a sentence. The very best candidates were able to make comparisons as part of an integrated analysis. Having achieved level 3 analysis, it was rather surprising that candidates failed to give enough justification when it came to making their conclusions in giving their advice to Dave. On the other hand, it was pleasing to see candidates on the Foundation Tier clearly coping with this question and scoring well.

Question 8

Few candidates got stuck in level 1 because most were at least able to describe the role of price and quality for a business like Dave's. A large proportion took this further into level 3 by explaining why these two factors are important to such a business. This question allowed many candidates to show their understanding of the workings of a business.

Question 9

While chain of production is usually thought to be a fairly basic concept, relatively few candidates scored full marks. Many somehow confused the concept with channels of distribution.

Question 10

Performance was rather typical of the last question with most candidates able to score a couple of marks for general points about waste and with few able to explain why the high but realistic figure would be a concern to the business.

The quality of written communication was very similar to previous years but it was pleasing to note fewer attempts to use bullet points in answers and greater attempts to use specialist terminology. Quality of handwriting continued to cause problems in marking some scripts especially when the pen used had pale blue ink, however, there was little evidence of 'text speak'.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the **Results statistics** page of the AQA Website.