



General Certificate of Secondary Education

Business Studies 3133/3139

Full and Short Course

Specification B

3133/9/1H Higher Tier

Report on the Examination

2007 examination - June series

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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 preparation 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 '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 per undescribed reason. For the first described reason, candidates will be awarded 4 marks, as they are operating at level 2 by applying knowledge.

Question 2

There was a similar question on last year's paper and it was pleasing to note a general improvement in the responses to this year's version. However, it was still surprising to note several candidates insisting on discussing secondary data or desk research when the question specifically referred to **field** research. It is also important for candidates to ensure that they compare advantages and disadvantages, as instructed by the question, rather than just describing them.

Question 3

While most candidates could suggest and describe useful general desk research for Dave, a much smaller proportion managed to explain **why** the research would be useful to Dave in preparing a business plan.

Question 4

The phrase “Using two examples” does not mean candidates 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

Most candidates spotted the wording of the question, requiring advantages to be compared for **both** types of organisation rather than comparing advantages with disadvantages. This was achieved in a variety of ways. The best candidates explained an advantage and then immediately contrasted that with the alternative business in an integrated analysis.

Question 6

While it was quite surprising to see many candidates failing to use any figures in their responses and therefore limiting their marks to a maximum of 3 marks at level 1, the majority made sound attempts at analysing the profitability of Dave’s business. Those who calculated net profit margins generally did so correctly, although it was quite amazing to see some attempt liquidity measures, ROCE and even break-even.

Question 7

This type of question is a key part of this specification’s exam papers. To recognise 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, which was used to reward simple undeveloped points. 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 the transition more securely by making a more direct comparison as part of an integrated analysis. Having done the hard work with the level 3 analysis, it was rather surprising that candidates failed to give enough justification when it came to making their conclusions and giving their advice to Dave.

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 were able to access level 3 by explaining why these two factors are important to such a business. This question really allowed many candidates to show their understanding of the workings of a business.

Question 9

The majority understood trade credit, but relatively few reached the full 4 marks for showing how it would help Dave's business. A few misinterpreted it as a method for Dave to test the products before having to pay for them.

Question 10

We have known for some time that 'production' is one of the more difficult content sections for most candidates and the responses to this question generally failed to dispel this assertion. Most responses tended to be general and seemed to discuss the concept of specialisation rather than batch production. Some candidates did achieve full marks for a clear comparison of the advantages and disadvantages, which were linked to a product such as photographic paper. Their analysis included references to job and flow production to support their comparison.

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.