



GCE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**BUSINESS STUDIES (New)
AS/Advanced**

SUMMER 2009

Introduction

Summer 2009 is the first award of the new AS. For all specifications there have been changes to the content of the units, and in many new marking criteria have been introduced and unit weightings altered. Also in some subjects there has been the withdrawal of internal assessment. However, the biggest change in most subjects has been the reduction from a three to a two unit assessment.

In moving to the new specification awarding bodies have sought to maintain the overall United Kingdom standard for AS, as measured by the proportion of candidates achieving grade A and by the proportion achieving a pass grade in each subject. Comparability between 'old' and 'new' specifications is measured in terms of the overall subject outcome and not in terms of unit outcomes. Many of the units in the new specifications will bear little relation to those in the old specifications. Even where they are very similar, it is quite likely that outcomes will be different. The expectation is that the number of grade As at unit level will decrease in a specification where the number of units is reduced, whilst the number of passes will increase. The overall cash-in outcome, however, will be maintained. These same principles will apply to the new A level where a six unit assessment is reduced to a four unit assessment.

Statistical Information

This booklet contains summary details for each unit: number entered; maximum mark available; mean mark achieved; grade ranges. *N.B. These refer to 'raw marks' used in the initial assessment, rather than to the uniform marks reported when results are issued.*

Annual Statistical Report

The annual *Statistical Report* (issued in the second half of the Autumn Term) gives overall outcomes of all examinations administered by WJEC.

Unit	Page
BS1	2
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BUSINESS STUDIES (Legacy)

General Certificate of Education 2009

Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced

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Unit Statistics

The following statistics include all candidates entered for the unit, whether or not they 'cashed in' for an AS award. The attention of centres is drawn to the fact that the statistics listed should be viewed strictly within the context of this paper and that differences will undoubtedly occur between one year and the next and also between subjects in the same year.

Unit	Entry	Max Mark	Mean Mark
BS1	1230	50	26.1
BS2	2189	70	33.2

Grade Ranges	BS1	BS2
A	37	46
B	32	40
C	27	34
D	23	28
E	19	23

N.B. The marks given above are raw marks and not uniform marks.

BS1 – The Business Framework

General Comments

This was the second of the new BS1 papers and entry consisted of re-sit candidates and those making their first attempt. Overall, the standard was high but did not perhaps match the performance of January and this was, in part, due to a large number of good candidates keeping their January result.

- Q.1** The emphasis in this question was on marketing not just promotion. Candidates were expected to have a superficial knowledge of the four Ps. The good candidates identified the four Ps and suggested something for each one that Cari might change. The weaker candidates listed other methods of advertising or promotion. These were often unrealistic ones like large scale TV campaigns.
- Q.2** Apart from 'job production' the other forms of production were acceptable. The key factor for achieving the high marks was the quality of the reasoning in making the selection of method e.g. in batches because there are 64 different versions and it is suitable when production is divided into a number of operations. Also suitable for flow production of standardised products because the demand is huge, continuous sequence as production moves continuously from one stage of the process to the next.
- Q.3** This data response question was not very well done. Most candidates were able to describe the trends e.g. tertiary employment has increased. Others went a little further and said 'tertiary employment has increased from Q1 to Q2. The better candidates showed the changes in percentages i.e. they manipulated the figures and the really good candidates tried to give a reason as to why these changes may have come about.
- Q.4** Those who read the question correctly seemed to find no difficulty with it. Candidates could decide for or against the job share provided that they gave valid reasons for their answers. However, several candidates thought that Sally wanted to job share with Angela, the senior solicitor, consequently, there were some very confused answers.
- Q.5**
- (a) This question seemed within reach of all the candidates. For those who did not score full marks it was usually because of the brevity of their answers e.g. profit and independence.
 - (b) Most candidates were able to identify the advantages and disadvantages of a bank loan. The problem came with the second source of finance. Many did not apply their answer to the scenario and suggested such things as debentures, or floating on the Stock Exchange.
 - (c) There were many good answers in favour of making and using a business plan but since this was a 'discussion' question it was also necessary to evaluate the converse point of view if candidates were to achieve the higher marks. There were some very good answers to this question.
- Q.6** This was another evaluative question where both sides of the argument were called for. This question was a good discriminator. There were many very good answers examining both points of view and finally making a decision as to whether they agreed or not. There were other candidates who wrote at length advising small businesses to cut their prices to the bone so that they could compete with the likes of 'Tesco'.

On the whole candidates appeared to possess the knowledge to answer the questions but seemed to need more practice in examination technique e.g. reading the question carefully to highlight the key words that tell them what is required – outline, explain, discuss, etc.

BS2 – Business Functions

General Comments.

The paper discriminated effectively and allowed top grade candidates to exhibit their knowledge of the syllabus, as well as their ability to analyse and evaluate. Some impressive scripts were submitted. The area of greatest concern is the reluctance of the majority of candidates to use the data provided to enhance the quality of their responses. Application of data and the use of examples are techniques that centres might emphasise to their candidates in preparation for future AS Business Studies examinations.

- Q.1**
- (a) Generally speaking candidates had a good knowledge of CAD and were able to outline at least two advantages, thereby gaining all four marks. Some confused CAD with CAM, whilst others merely attempted to described CAM. Some wrote too much and may have left themselves short of time to answer the later questions.
 - (b) On the whole, research and development (R&D) was not well explained and it is an area of the syllabus that some centres may need focus on more closely. Far too often candidates wrote entirely about market research and failed to score at all. Others failed to use examples, as specifically requested, and therefore did not reach Level III. Some excellent responses were given – benefits were clearly explained and relevant examples were provided.
- Q.2**
- (a) The majority of candidates had some idea about the concept of brand awareness but many were unable to develop their responses sufficiently to get into Level II. For example, many candidates mentioned brand loyalty but failed to link this to repeat purchasing. Better candidates gave two distinct reasons why brand awareness was important to Kid Me Not and developed their responses effectively. Poor communication skills were evident in many responses.
 - (b) Knowledge of the Boston Matrix was generally very good. Some candidates used a diagram to assist their explanation and the majority of candidates made reference to market share and market growth. Weaker candidates failed to undertake meaningful analysis but generally candidates wrote about the ways in which the Boston Matrix might help a business in the management of its portfolio. Disappointingly, all too often candidates exhibited poor examination technique and failed to undertake any application to Kid Me Not's product portfolio.
 - (c) The best candidates produced some excellent responses and fully evaluated the statement, providing a well-balance argument that was required to reach Level III. Many candidates failed to develop their response in relation to the importance of innovative products and were in far too great a hurry to discuss the other elements of the marketing mix. This resulted in responses that lacked balance. Yet again, the most disappointing aspect was the lack of any attempt by a significant number of candidates to undertake any application to Kid Me Not. This is an aspect of examination technique that centres might wish to emphasise to candidates as it is a feature that characterises 'A' grade candidates from the rest.

- Q.3** (a) (i) The majority of candidates coped well with this calculation and laid out their workings in a clear format. It was evident that a minority of candidates did not bring a calculator to the examination and their responses reflected this. The inability of some candidates to calculate percentages is a concern at this level and the 'own figure rule OFR' had to be applied on numerous occasions. Candidates who avoided this task altogether were, thankfully, few in number.
- (ii) Top candidates gave three sensible solutions to the cash flow problems that the business was encountering and evaluated them as required. Again, technique let a significant number of candidates down as they failed to evaluate their suggested solutions. A not insignificant number suggested that borrowing even more money was a solution, giving no thought as to the consequences of such a 'solution'.
- (b) The majority of candidates had some idea as to what an autocratic management style is, although there was quite a lot of repetition evident. Those who went on to develop their responses in a clear and logical manner gained full marks.
- (c) It was evident that weaker candidates had no understanding of the concept of productivity and often confused it with capacity utilisation (although they are not totally unrelated). Motivating the workforce was a common suggestion but many candidates did not go on to explain how this might improve productivity. Replacing labour with machinery was seen in many responses and was the best explained of all the reasons submitted. Those achieving full marks offered a number of sensible solutions and fully analysed how they might improve productivity.
- (d) Candidates knowledge of the motivation theorists was generally good, although quite a number of responses got Herzberg and Maslow confused. Nonetheless, some excellent responses were written and they exhibited the full range of skills required to reach the top of Level III. The best answers engaged with the argument and applied the information in the data (poor working conditions, boredom, 'them and us attitude' and the pay issue) to effectively develop the debate. Far too many candidates undertook no application and merely described the various motivational theorists that they had studied.

In some cases no motivational theorists were referred to at all.

It is also very disappointing to report that the quality of written communication was generally poor. Spelling was particularly weak and 'Herzberg' was, more often than not, spelt incorrectly. Sentences were often badly constructed and the points that candidates were trying to make were often confused and difficult to comprehend.



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