AQA

GCSE
BUSINESS

8132/1: Influences of operations and HRM on business activity
Report on the Examination

8132
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General Introduction to the November Series

This has been an unusual exam series in many ways. Entry patterns have been very different from those normally seen in the summer, and students had a very different experience in preparation for these exams. It is therefore more difficult to make meaningful comparisons between the range of student responses seen in this series and those seen in a normal summer series. The smaller entry also means that there is less evidence available for examiners to comment on.

In this report, senior examiners will summarise the performance of students in this series in a way that is as helpful as possible to teachers preparing future cohorts while taking into account the unusual circumstances and limited evidence available.

Overview of Entry

This was a small entry but overall, the paper allowed discrimination between students. Most students were able to offer responses to all the questions in the allocated time. Less successful students demonstrated a lack of detail in subject knowledge particularly on shorter questions. Less successful students demonstrated a lack of detail in subject knowledge. In extended responses students need to ensure their responses are in context and that the points made are analysed.
Students, where required, made good use of the additional pages at the back of the booklet to finish responses but must be careful to clearly label the question they are continuing to avoid any confusion and to ensure their response is correctly attached to the question.
When answering the 12-mark question students must cover both bullet points and most did so. The effect of delayering could have been positive or negative and once again an answer does not need to analyse both the advantages and disadvantages to achieve a detailed line of argument. The key to achieve level 4 for these questions is through the evaluation; the best approach is to provide a detailed conclusion which is linked to the analysis but which does not just repeat the arguments previously outlined.

Section A
Questions 1.1 – 1.6

The multiple-choice questions enabled students to show their knowledge across a range of the subject content.
There were a few students who did not know how to show their answer and ticked or crossed out the circle instead of filling it in as per the instructions.

Questions 1.7 – 1.12

In question 1.7 most students could identify two consequences of producing poor quality goods. In the other questions in this part of the paper many students failed to explain; for example, in question 1.8 they described an objective rather than explain why it might be set. In question 1.12 successful students explained the benefits of an effective recruitment and selection process rather than simply identified benefits.

Section B

In this section the students had to use the context from the item in several questions. This proved problematic for some.

The calculation question 2.3 proved difficult for most students; many could not identify the correct formula and showed a lack of understanding in their calculations. In question 2.4 very few students reached Level 3 as conclusions were weak, often repeating points already made and remaining generic in nature. Also, although the question clearly stated that John's decision was not to be based on the extra investment by Lucas many students ignored this. Successful students in question 2.4 produced supported recommendations using the item. In the 6 mark question 2.6 Level 3 proved difficult to achieve for most students as responses often described and did not analyse; some students included more than one benefit. Those students who responded well clearly focused on one benefit, developed the argument and linked their response to Adventures. The majority of responses to the second 9-mark question in this section, question 2.7, achieved Level 2. In this question students were given financial data regarding profit sharing but many did not use this in their response. Successful students used this data which enhanced their response and they also drew other points from the item to strengthen the context of their response.

Section C

Successful students in this section were those who clearly understood what the question was asking eg explaining and analysing, rather than describing, and then applied their answer to the item.

In question 3.2 many responses were not linked to JCC Shoes but to business in general. The calculation question 3.3 in this section was also problematic for most. Very few scored well as working with percentages proved difficult. Successful students not only could complete the calculation but also appreciated that the number of customer responses was in 000's.
Questions 3.4 and 3.6 were 6-mark questions. Those who were successful on 3.4 were able to link how the benefit of social media would improve customer service for JCC Shoes rather than just describe the benefit. In 3.6 the responses proved to be often generic and descriptive; those students who used context well showed greater understanding. For question 3.5 many students successfully identified one other way to measure success but did not explain it.
It was good to see that most students attempted question 3.7. It was also pleasing that they addressed both bullets in their attempted analysis of the situation. In the lower levels most students were describing rather than developing a line of argument and applying context to it. Successful students used context effectively to support their response and, in their conclusions, drew together points on both options to make a supported judgement.

Concluding Remarks

Overall students' scripts showed that most were able to attempt to answer all questions in the allocated time. Many students demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the different areas of the specification. Responses in the main were quite concise which meant there was no overuse of additional pages. Most scripts showed that in the 9- and 12-mark level of response questions students recognise the need for a conclusion but students need to try to provide a supported judgement rather than repeat the points already used. The two calculation questions proved the weakest and the financial data in 2.7 was largely ignored. Successful students made good use of time to read the items and incorporate the context into responses to strengthen their lines of argument.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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