GCSE

BUSINESS

8132/2 Paper 2 Influences of marketing and finance on business activity
Report on the Examination

8132
November 2020

Version: 1.0

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. In extended responses students need to ensure their responses are in context and that the points made are analysed. When answering the 12-mark question students must cover both bullet points and most did so. 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.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A
A1.1 – A1.6 (Multi Choice)
A range of knowledge was demonstrated in the responses but one area of particular weakness was Question 4 where students had to identify a category of products on the Boston Matrix. 78.69% of students did not achieve a mark on this question. A second area of weakness was identifying what would be on a Statement of Financial Position in Question 1.6. 41% of candidates did not achieve a mark on this question.

Section B

The itemprovided a scenario that seemed accessible to students.

2.1   To achieve a mark the answer had to identify the relevant business sector, Approximately half of the responses gave examples of a business within this sector but did not actually name the sector.

2.2   This question was generally answered well by candidates.

2.3   This question asked for one benefit for TradeUp of expanding through franchising. Many responses described what franchising is and gave advantages to a business of expanding in this way; however, many students gave generic answers and failed to analyse the benefit to TradeUp of doing this.

2.4   Many answers gave a good description of a focus group in generic terms and identified advantages and disadvantages. Half the students achieved marks within Level 2 as they did start to do some analysis but this was not fully developed and lacked a fully justified conclusion.

2.5   This question on the influences on pricing decisions was generally answered well with approximately 70% of students achieving 2 marks.

2.6   Students had to calculate the difference in the gross profit margin between two years and sate the formula. Overall this was not well answered. Marks were achieved for selecting the right figures, but many students did not know how to do the calculation.

2.7   Many responses remained descriptive achieving the top of level 1 or the bottom of level 2 marks. Some students started to analyse and evaluate in generic terms but these skills needed further development in context.

Section C

3.1   Many answers showed understanding of the impact of shareholders, enabling over 60% of students to achieve full marks. A few answers confused shareholders with stakeholders. Some students identified two ways that the business could be impacted (even though they were asked for just one) but did not explain either way so were limited to one mark.

3.2   This question was well answered with many students explaining how personalisation or unique selling point allowed Devine Jeweller to compete internationally.

3.3   Many students were able to select the correct figures and did the subtraction for 1 mark. However very few were able to calculate the percentage correctly and many had the figures the wrong way around.

3.4   Many students gave descriptive answers. Only one impact was asked for in the question; many students identified more but failed to analyse any.

3.5   This question was well answered. Students seemed aware of the use of digital technology and were able to identify and explain one way it is used to communicate with customers.

3.6 This question generated some very muddled answers. Students were often aware of changes in exchange rates, many using example of foreign holidays to show their knowledge; however, there was often confusion as to whether imports or exports would become more or less expensive due to the change.

3.7   Students answered this question well and used the data extensively in their answers with evidence of analysis. Again, this analysis was not fully developed and often more than one benefit was given in the answers.

3.8   This question was attempted by almost all students. However the answers were often descriptive rather than analytical. Very few answers evaluated the impact of either choice on the future success of the business.

Concluding Remarks

Overall students' scripts showed that most were able to attempt to answer all questions in the allocated time. Very few questions were "not attempted on this paper. However, many of the answers to the questions were descriptive and opportunities were missed for further development.Students should read each question carefully and focus on meeting the given demands. For example, if asked to "analyse one potential impact" of a change on a business it is important to focus on one impact and develop the analysis in context rather than identify many generic points. Successful students made good use of time to read the items and incorporate the context into responses to strengthen their line of argument. 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

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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