
GCSE ECONOMICS

8136/2 Paper 2 How the economy works
Report on the Examination

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General

This was the first series since 2019 to be completely assessed by external examination with no advance information of the topics which were assessed in order to account for the effects of disruption to teaching and learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Overall student performance was broadly in line with that of the first set of exams for the current specification sat in 2019. However, in line with points emphasised in previous AQA feedback examiners' reports for this specification, there are still key aspects of analysis, application and evaluation skills which students would benefit from developing ahead of future exams. There are still gaps in the knowledge and understanding of certain topics – such as the composition of the balance of payments.

Section A Questions 1-10

The multiple choice questions within section A of the paper were generally well completed. There was a clear progression in the challenge presented with the later questions proving more challenging than the earlier ones.

Questions 1, 3 and 4 were answered correctly by over four-fifths of all students. Questions 8 and 9 were more demanding with under half answering these correctly. Question 9, in particular, was a challenge with less one-third of answers being correct. Around one-third of responses selected option A for this question.

Question 11

Although most students scored at least one mark, it was surprising that less than half of all students scored two marks on this question. Knowledge of relevant factors was not widespread – with a number of students offering answers that were clearly not relevant factors, and often looked like random economic terms offered as answers instead.

Question 12

A reasonably straightforward question with around three-quarters of students gaining both marks. The most common response was to correctly explain how the government would receive more revenue and that this could be used to fund certain activities, such as health, education or infrastructure spending.

Question 13

The majority of students gained both marks with a correct explanation of a relevant factor.

Question 14

The first part of the question was reasonably accessible with just over half of all answers scoring both marks. Marks were often lost for not being able to calculate the level of unemployment, or not rounding the answer appropriately.

For the second part, around half of all answers managed to explain a consequence and gain both marks. However, a large proportion were unable to gain any marks – often confusing the issue of higher unemployment and asserting that this would mean businesses would have to pay higher wages as a result. Looking at the impact of unemployment from a range of perspectives is something that should be covered in lessons.

Question 15

Answers were generally acceptable. There were not as many answers scoring the top level as in previous exams. Only around one fifth of answers achieved level 3. The challenge here was to explain how policies can deal with wealth inequality – which although clearly included in the specification – were not understood by many. Where this was understood, answers were often high scoring. This is something for focus, perhaps, in classroom lessons.

Question 16

An accessible question with the vast majority of answers scoring some credit, and many scoring full marks.

Question 17

This area of the specification has not been covered extensively in previous exams but most students gained some marks. Around half of all answers gained both marks.

Question 18

This question had the highest non-attempt rate on the entire paper – which was surprising as this was not expected to be a challenging question. Supply-side policies are usually widely understood, along with their advantages and disadvantages.

Question 19

Over half of answers scored both marks for the calculation part of this question. Those who didn't were likely to have made a mistake when calculating the taxable income figure to be used.

Around half of answers scored full marks in the second part of this question. Marks were lost if the term was not clearly explained. Many answers that didn't score full marks did not clearly focus on progressive taxes, where the proportion, or percentage, of income paid in tax rises as income increases.

Question 20

Although this style of question has not appeared before, answers were strong and many scored full marks on this question.

Question 21

Most answers were good or better for this question. Many answers gained marks in the level 3 (top) band which is very encouraging. Good answers were well structured, using the information in Figure 3 to reach a well-reasoned conclusion. The data on price elasticities were used appropriately in many cases. It was pleasing to see that there were very few weak answers – those scoring poorly being usually quite short in length. One interesting point is that there was some evidence of planning, but this was not widespread – which it should be for any extended answer question.

Section B**Question 22**

Although this is a commonly used concept, full marks were only achieved by half of all answers – which was lower on this equivalent question in previous series. Common mistakes were to provide definitions that focused on price changes of one good only.

Question 23

Many responses gained no credit at all. This is rather disappointing as the calculation of inflation rates from CPI data has appeared on a number of occasions in previous series. Only a small proportion of students scored full marks. Common mistakes often involved answers that were simple averages of the CPI rather than focusing on the change in the CPI as the method to calculate the inflation rate for the specified year.

Question 24

Most students could access this question. A large proportion of students scored in the top level (level 3) of marks for this question. There were very few poor answers to this question. The effects of interest rate increases were widely understood.

Question 25

A well answered question. The vast majority of answers were in level 2 or above and explanations about policies used to promote growth were clear.

Question 26

The structure of answers for this extended answer question has improved since 2019 but responses were not as strong when compared with the previous series in 2022. Good answers focused on the problems that high inflation creates and contrasted these with the problems in neglecting other objectives (such as growth or unemployment), and the problems generated by the policies needed to reduce inflation. Students were able to produce developed arguments arguing both in favour and against the question and then could generate an effective conclusion. Students were able to use information from the text effectively in supporting their answers but there were a significant number of answers where numbers were used without really clear application to the arguments made. Around half of answers scored more than half marks for this question.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.