

GCSE



**Chief Examiner's and
Principal Moderator's Report
Business Studies**

Summer Series 2019



Foreword

This booklet outlines the performance of candidates in all aspects of this specification for the Summer 2019 series.

CCEA hopes that the Chief Examiner's and/or Principal Moderator's report(s) will be viewed as a helpful and constructive medium to further support teachers and the learning process.

This booklet forms part of the suite of support materials for the specification. Further materials are available from the specification's section on our website at www.ccea.org.uk.

Contents

Assessment Unit 1	Starting a Business	3
Assessment Unit 2	Developing a Business	4
Assessment Unit 3	Planning a Business	5
Contact details		8

GCSE Business Studies

Chief Examiner's Report

Assessment Unit 1 Starting a Business

Performance was again comparable to that of the previous year and included a rise in the number of candidates taking the examination. The paper proved to have very accessible language that allowed many candidates to show their knowledge and understanding of subject content. The timing of the paper seemed to be sufficient to allow candidates to attempt to complete all questions. Examination technique seems to be improving with evidence of many candidates taking time to underline command words and business terms.

Question 1 – Creating a business

The first question was well answered with many candidates showing detailed subject knowledge. The initial definitions were all well answered with many scoring full marks. Knowledge of sole traders and partnerships was excellent and most candidates scored well in giving examples of business resources. Some marks were lost on the location question by not fully relating to the factors that would have influenced Emma's business. Most candidates could define social enterprise and attempted to analyse economic and environmental outputs, although not always scoring the full marks.

Question 2 – Marketing

Many candidates scored well on secondary research, pricing policies and the relationship between price and demand, although some were lost by not giving examples as the question asked for. The question on promotion was generally well answered but some did give the definition for sales promotion. Most candidates attempted to answer the question on Trade Description Act with many scoring 2/4 as they could not always give two effects of the Act on promotion. Product life cycle and extension strategies allowed pupils to demonstrate good subject knowledge and the marketing mix question saw many candidates scoring high marks.

Question 3 – Business Operations

Some candidates found this area of the course more challenging. Many were unable to explain process manufacturing and also struggled to relate examples to the business. Batch manufacturing and division of labour were generally well answered with many showing good understanding. ISO 9001 did not always score the full marks for definition but candidates scored well in analysing why the standard was important. Most candidates could attempt the role of the HSE and many scored full marks. Question on health and safety was generally very well answered with many candidates showing detailed knowledge and understanding.

Assessment Unit 2 Developing a Business

Performance was again comparable to that of the previous year and included a rise in the number of candidates taking the examination. The paper generally proved to have accessible language that allowed candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of subject content. The timing of the paper seemed to be sufficient to allow candidates to complete all questions. Examination technique seems to be improving with evidence of many candidates taking time to underline command words and business terms, although evaluation skills still need to be worked on.

Question 1 – Human Resources

The first question was reasonably well answered with many candidates showing detailed subject knowledge. Knowledge of the examined areas was mostly very good, but some questions were answered out of context, for example candidates seemed to focus on the benefits of social media as opposed to the role – Question 1(b). Some marks were lost in Questions 1(e) and (f) due to lack of evaluation skills, with candidates at time focusing solely on advantages, or disadvantages, not both.

Question 2 – Business Growth

The first five parts of this question were well answered. Candidates demonstrated good levels of knowledge regards signs of failure, takeovers, factors which would limit growth and other advantages of growth. The remainder of the question which focused on economies of scale was less well answered, with a considerable amount of candidates losing marks due to their inability to define economies of scale and to explain the four different types of economies of scale. Marketing economies was without doubt the least well answered, with candidates in general were happy to discuss 'bulk buying' throughout.

Question 3 – Finance

Parts A – D and G were well answered. Candidates demonstrated good levels of knowledge and understanding throughout these parts. As with previous years and examinations, candidates struggled with the Final Accounts questions. Too many candidates did not show understanding of ROCE and the Working Capital Ratio. There was also an inability to relate the information, whether worked out or pre given to the business as asked.

Principal Moderator's Report

Assessment Unit 3 Planning a Business

The team of moderators was very impressed with the high standard of work submitted for the GCSE Business Studies Controlled Assessment Task, Unit 3: Planning a Business. It was evident that candidates were provided with an appropriate challenge which proved to be valid, reliable and stimulating.

BOOKLET A: Planning

Criteria 1: Aim and specialist business terms (Assessment of A01)

Whilst the majority of candidates had made excellent use of appropriate specialist business terms throughout and achieved the top mark of 3, some candidates did not use the terms in the correct context and so were unable to access full marks. The aim should address all five areas to be researched to support Ellie with her new business. This was not the case for some of the candidates.

Criteria 2.1: Action Plan (Assessment of A02)

Appropriate and detailed action plans were evident in many candidates' work, which included more than 3 specific actions relating to the aim of the task. Many other candidates produced simple action plans which were brief and limited in detail and in the 'Actions' column, referred to what they 'did' rather than what they were 'going to do'. The 'Actions' column should commence with "I" to indicate that this is the candidate's own work. Personal target dates were sometimes omitted or were not in chronological order. The 'working log of progress' should reflect what happened when these actions were carried out, and these should be written in the past tense.

Criteria 2.2: Primary Research (Assessment of A02)

Excellent evidence of well-designed primary research carried out by candidates with good consideration of the research aim was awarded full marks. However, it is of the utmost importance to note that candidates should not be provided with the same photocopied set of results (collated answers and graphs) and interview responses to questions. In many centres, business representatives who were interviewed provided photocopied pages of questions and answers and these were inserted into the candidates' task. This must be avoided in future as it may be regarded as over-direction by the teacher and is most certainly against the criteria set for carrying out the Controlled Assessment. Candidates are required to re-write the photocopied material in their own individual style and subsequently write up their own set of results.

Criteria 2.3: Secondary Research (Assessment of A02)

Those candidates who carried out thorough and relevant secondary research with good consideration of the research aim were awarded full marks for this criteria. However, it must be pointed out that many teachers provided their candidates with photocopied material from which the candidates answered their questions in Booklet B. This again can be regarded as over-direction by the teacher and is against the criteria set for carrying out the Controlled Assessment. It is important that teachers encourage all candidates to independently carry out their own secondary research and not provide them with pre-printed material in order to gain research evidence. Under Section 5 in Booklet A,

candidates must include evidence of research from a range of resources, ensuring that all sources are clearly documented. A number of candidates did not record the sources for the three hair dressing products researched in Section 4.

Criteria 3: Research Findings (Assessment of A03)

The majority of candidates demonstrated an ability to present their findings in a highly effective way. The research was appended at the back of Booklet A and a range of presentation methods were used which were appropriate to the aim of the task, thus gaining full marks for this criteria. Those candidates who merely presented some results of their research findings in a very basic way were credited with a Band 1 mark.

BOOKLET B: Communicate Findings

This was approached positively by the majority of candidates, with many providing high quality responses to the questions asked.

Question 1

The majority of candidates demonstrated an excellent understanding of the three key characteristics an entrepreneur requires to operate a business successfully, with excellent application to Ellie's business. Candidates were not required to use their research material for this question, and therefore should not affect the marks awarded.

Question 2

On the whole, this question was well answered by a large number of candidates who demonstrated an excellent understanding of two factors affecting job satisfaction for Ellie with reference to their research from Booklet A. These candidates were able to make full and clear analysis of the two factors and thus were awarded with marks within the third Level of Response. On the other hand, some candidates demonstrated a limited understanding of factors of job satisfaction and merely provided a basic explanation but did not relate these factors to Ellie's business. These candidates were awarded marks within the first Level of Response.

Question 3(a)

A large majority of candidates accurately completed the projected Income Statement for Ellie and were awarded the 5 marks for this part of the question. The projected Statement of Financial Position for Ellie's hairdressing business was also answered quite well by a large percentage of the candidates. Centres need to ensure the correct application of Own Figure Rule (OFR), as there appeared to be a misunderstanding in some centres as to how this should be correctly applied and marks awarded appropriately by the teacher.

Question 3(b)

Whilst many candidates demonstrated an excellent understanding of the financial plan component and one other component of a business plan for Ellie with excellent reference to their research from Booklet A, some other candidates were unable to achieve marks outside of Level 1. The evaluation of the financial plan component and one other component of a business plan required additional detail. It is important to note that an evaluation question requires the candidate to provide a conclusion to their answer as stated in the mark scheme, which was not included by the majority of the candidates.

Question 4

The majority of candidates answered this question very well and analysed two of the ethical issues in the indicative content. These candidates demonstrated excellent knowledge and understanding of two ethical issues associated with business aims and made excellent

reference to the research from Booklet A. Some candidates had a limited understanding of ethical issues and thus were unable to provide an analysis and therefore could not access marks outside of Level 1.

There were instances when responses to questions in Booklet B made little or no reference to the research material in Booklet A. Candidates must be aware that this referencing is important if high levels of responses are to be awarded and teachers must emphasise this for future submissions so that their candidates can improve on their performance.

It is of vital importance that Booklet A is submitted in the same folder as Booklet B as this leads to an ease of cross-referencing with Booklet A appearing before Booklet B in the final submission. It is important that all teachers ensure that they are fully aware of the requirements set out in the Guidance on Controlled Assessment Section of the Specification (Section 6).

Annotation is, without doubt, a very important aspect of the moderation process. Assessment decisions were supported by annotation throughout the booklets, which was of great benefit to the moderation process. Some centres submitted samples of work without any annotation, either in the form of written comments throughout the work or identification in various paragraphs where assessment objectives had been met by candidates. Constructive comments made by teachers on the eCandidate Record Sheet certainly help to justify why marks are being awarded. It is a pleasure to moderate work where it is evident that teachers had given of their time to provide meaningful comments throughout the work of the candidates, thus allowing the moderation process to function smoothly.

The moderating team noted the importance of attending the Agreement Trials. Teachers who attend Agreement Trials – especially with this new Specification - can apply the information they gain from these meetings, as well as taking part in meaningful discussion and undoubtedly the practicalities of engaging in trial marking of exemplar material.

It is of the utmost importance that teachers pay particular attention to all guidelines provided in the 'Instructions to Teachers' booklet regarding the submission of the candidates' work. The samples requested should be placed in order of merit, starting with the candidate with the highest mark, ensuring that the top and bottom candidates are included. Samples of work should be submitted in a clear covered report file. Use of plastic multi-punched poly-pockets or loose pages stapled together are not acceptable. It is of paramount importance that all administrative tasks are carried out in a diligent manner by all teachers.

Internal standardisation continues to play a very important role in the marking of the Controlled Assessment Task. This procedure ensures that all candidates in a centre are marked fairly and consistently, especially if there are a number of teachers involved in the marking of the work.

The Sample Cover Sheet (available on the CCEA website) must be placed at the front of each candidate's work with the combined marks for Booklets A and B.

Teachers are to be congratulated for the professional manner in which they managed this new Controlled Assessment Task for GCSE Business Studies. Teachers are also reminded that they are cordially invited at all times to avail of the advice, assistance and continued support from CCEA with regard to any aspect of the internally assessed component. Centres requesting such assistance should make formal contact with the Education Manager for GCSE Business Studies.

Contact details

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