

GCSE



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

Summer Series 2024



Foreword

This booklet outlines the performance of candidates in all aspects of this specification for the Summer 2024 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 microsite 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	6
Contact details:		11

GCSE BUSINESS STUDIES

Chief Examiner's Report/Principal Moderator's Report

Assessment Unit 1 Starting a Business

Overview

Performance was again comparable to that of the previous year for this 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 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.

Q1 Creating a Business

The first question was well answered with many candidates showing detailed subject knowledge. The initial parts of the question were all well answered with many scoring full marks. Knowledge of what it means to be enterprising, starting a business, types of business ownership, why the government encourage enterprise and influencing the location of a business were excellent and most candidates scored well in providing examples when required. Some marks were lost on how a social enterprise business could deliver an economic output question as candidates appeared confused with the other outputs identified on the specification. Several candidates were unable to evaluate franchising as a type of business ownership for the franchisee as many had taken this from the franchisor or franchising perspective which was incorrect.

Q2 Marketing

Many candidates scored well on the explanation of the terms marketing mix and e-business, identifying two pricing policies, analysing two advantages of Taste Sensation of using e-business and two ways Taste Sensation could provide good customer service. However, some candidates did not score well when explaining the legal constraints on promotion by the Office of Communications (Ofcom). In addition, the final part of this question was answered poorly by several candidates who found it difficult to analyse the impact that competition has on the marketing mix for Taste Sensation and therefore lost marks (as they had taken it from the competitor's point of view) in this levelled response.

Q3 Business Operations

Many candidates found this area of the course very accessible. Most candidates were able to explain secondary production and job manufacturing but struggled with division of labour and Customer Service Excellence Standard. The majority of candidates were able to identify methods of manufacturing, analysing one reason why Taste Sensation would undertake the process of obtaining a quality standard, evaluating just in time inventory control and identifying the rights and responsibilities of the employees at Taste Sensation. The discussion on the rights and responsibilities of an employer around health and safety was completed to a good standard by many candidates, although some candidates discussed the employees which lost them marks in this levelled response question. In addition to this, many candidates found it difficult to identify the quality standard which Taste Sensation was aiming to achieve.

Assessment Unit 2 Developing a Business

Overview

The paper was well received with most candidates responding positively to all questions, suggesting the language used was both accessible and appropriate. The continued use of in-built scaffolding supported by the embolding of the question requirements helped provide more clarity for the candidates and allowed those of differing abilities to showcase their level of knowledge and understanding. The timing of the paper was sufficient to allow candidates to complete all questions. Examination technique continues to improve with a notable development in the evaluation questions with many candidates now including final judgements and displaying extensive and detailed subject knowledge- teachers should be commended for this. There was however a significant number of scripts with increased additional pages that just had a few words written on them whilst evidence showed that there was available space on the actual paper to continue answers. The space allocated on the paper should be used as an indication of the detail required in the answer and additional pages should not be handed out in centres as a matter of course. It should also be noted that, in quite a few cases when additional pages were used, the candidate failed to label the question number.

Q1 Human Resources

The first question was generally well answered. Question 1(a) on recruitment saw many scoring full marks, but some candidates did get confused with their answer and related to selection thus scoring fewer marks. There was strong knowledge and understanding demonstrated on internal recruitment, reasons for staff training and evaluation of the on-the-job training. There was also much evidence of detailed explanation, evaluation and improved application skills being displayed by many candidates on these questions. Most candidates could identify the legal controls, but some only secured half marks on the two roles of the Equality Commission due to repeat points on preventing discrimination, making this question a discriminator. Most candidates could list one detail and explain the purpose of a contract of employment, but a significant number of candidates did not know it should be issued within eight weeks.

Q2 Business Growth

Candidates answered Question 2(a) to Question 2(e) generally very well, showing good knowledge of signs of success, internal and external growth, factors limiting growth and mergers. However, some marks were lost due to candidates giving the correct description of type of growth, but then failing to identify the type of growth as internal/external. Factors that limit growth were identified but not always discussed in enough detail. Question 1(f) and Question 1(g) that were marked in levels proved to be the discriminator questions. There was some evidence of lack of knowledge on two roles of the Competition and Markets Authority in relation to growth, but candidates who knew the roles could secure full marks in this question. Analysing two disadvantages of growth was attempted by most candidates and answers ranged from a significant number scoring high marks with detailed analysis to others not always reaching the higher levels as the analysis was not given in sufficient detail.

Q3 Finance

Most candidates attempted to answer all parts of the question. Question 3 (a) on the sale of fixed assets was generally well answered, but Question 3(b) and Question 3(c) on cash flow and cash flow forecast proved difficult for many. There was evidence of confusion between cash flow and cash flow forecast and many candidates referred to profit or loss in their answers thus making these discriminator questions. Question 3(d) and Question 3(e) on the completion of figures on the cash flow forecast and commenting on the performance of IvyLeague plc saw many candidates scoring full marks with excellent application to the business. This was well answered. Questions on the difference between fixed and variable costs and calculating the break-even point were extremely well answered, although a significant amount of candidates lost that valuable third mark on the break-even calculation by not labelling correctly with units/bbq's. The significance of margin of safety was generally not well answered but there were more candidates than usual who could calculate the margin of safety.

Principal Moderator's Report

Assessment Unit 3 Planning a Business

Overview

Planning a Business

Once again this year, the Business Studies moderating team was very impressed with the high quality of work submitted for the GCSE Business Studies Controlled Assessment Task, Unit 3: Planning a Business.

Booklet A: Planning

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

The moderators noted that a large majority of candidates had made excellent use of appropriate specialist business terms throughout their Controlled Assessment task and were awarded the full 3 marks for these criteria. Some candidates had used several appropriate specialist business terms and achieved Band 2 marks. It is important to note that the aim should be clearly stated, ensuring that **all areas of the specification identified on the cover of Booklet A** have been clearly referenced in this section. This was not the case for some of the candidates.

Criteria 2.1: Action Plan (Assessment of A02)

Appropriate and detailed action plans were produced by a large majority of candidates, which included more than 3 specific actions relating to the aim of the task. However, it was noticed that many candidates produced simple action plans which were quite short and rather limited in detail. Some candidates referred to what they 'did' rather than what they were 'going to do' in the 'Actions' column. It is recommended that the 'Actions' column should commence with 'I' to indicate that this is the candidate's own work. As these are planned actions, i.e. what the candidate intends to do, then obviously they should be written in the future tense. Personal target dates were sometimes not written in chronological order and in some cases omitted from the candidates' work altogether. The 'working log of progress,' column should then reflect what happened when the candidate completed these actions and accordingly these should be documented in the past tense.

Criteria 2.2: Primary Research (Assessment of A02)

Those candidates who produced well-designed primary research with good consideration of the research aim achieved the full 3 marks for this criterion. However, it is important to note that candidates should not be provided with the same photocopied set of results (collated answers and graphs) and interview responses to questions, individual notes on responses are required or individually annotated findings. Moderators noted that business representatives who were interviewed in many of the centres provided photocopied pages of questions and answers, and these were then inserted into the candidates' portfolio without any analysis of these answers being provided by the candidates themselves. It must be clearly emphasised to the candidates that they are required to re-write this photocopied material in their own individual style and write up their own set of results. If candidates are designing a questionnaire or preparing interview questions, they should follow this procedure:

1. Initially candidates should produce evidence of their own set of questions.
2. Following discussion in class whereby these questions are shared, a decision can then be made on the actual questions that are to be included in the candidates' work. This can take the form of collaborative class work.
3. Having carried out the interview or completed the questionnaire, the candidates should then create a collated set of results, which each candidate will carry out individually.

All candidates should ensure that they have documented clear application to the business in this section of the Controlled Assessment.

Each of the above steps should be appended to Booklet A. It must be clearly emphasised that when a candidate is presenting their results from their primary research, they should include an explanation of their meaning/relevance to the business, as this will be helpful to them when they are completing Booklet B.

Criteria 2.3: Secondary Research (Assessment of A02)

The moderators noted that most candidates carried out thorough and relevant secondary research with good consideration of the research aim and thus were awarded full marks for this criterion. However, it was remarked that teachers in some of the centres provided their candidates with photocopied material that the candidates used to answer their questions in Booklet B. This can be seen as over-direction by the teacher and is against the criteria set for carrying out the Controlled Assessment. It is of paramount importance that teachers encourage each of their candidates to carry out their own secondary research in an independent manner instead of providing them with pre-printed material to accumulate research evidence. Under Section 5 in Booklet A, candidates must include evidence of research from a range of sources, ensuring that all sources are clearly documented.

This section should summarise information sourced from any relevant sources; and for example, may include any of the following:

- the internet (world wide web),
- social media,
- textbooks,
- class notes, newspapers,
- television/radio programmes, etc.

It must be emphasised that three different sources must be used for each of the aims. One source is required for the finance section if the content is related, for example, to calculations or financial statements. Three sources are required if the content is related to, for example 'consequences of incorrect forecasting'. Two of these sources may include the internet, but these should be different web addresses.

All the above should be appended to Booklet A. When a candidate is presenting their results from the research, they should include a brief explanation of their meaning/relevance, as this will be helpful to them when completing Booklet B.

Criteria 3: Research Findings (Assessment of A03)

This section of Booklet A is used to provide a record of information that candidates will require to complete their research. Each of these sources should be documented by the candidates. Website addresses must be clearly documented if using web site sources. The moderating team noted that many 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, therefore gaining full marks for this criterion. Those candidates who demonstrated an ability to present their findings in an appropriate manner were credited with marks from Band 2.

It is of the utmost importance that all the above is appended to Booklet A. When a candidate is presenting their results from the research, they should include a brief explanation of their meaning/relevance, as this will be helpful to them when completing Booklet B.

It is recommended that the research for both primary and secondary sources are placed together for each of the aims, to facilitate not only marking by the teacher, but also ease of moderation.

Booklet B: Communicate Findings

The moderating team noted that many candidates provided high quality responses to the questions asked.

- Q1** A large majority of candidates demonstrated an excellent understanding of three advantages that Michelle may have as the sole owner with excellent application to Michelle's Sweet Treats business and were awarded marks from the third Level of Response. As in previous years, candidates were not required to use their research material for this question.
- Q2** The moderators remarked that this question was very well answered by many candidates who demonstrated an excellent understanding of two different ways in which Michelle can provide customer service for her business with excellent reference to their research from Booklet A. These candidates provided an excellent analysis of two different ways in which Michelle can provide customer service for her business and made excellent use of specialist business terms. Their quality of written communication was also excellent. Some candidates demonstrated a limited understanding of one or two different ways in which Michelle can provide customer service for her Sweet Treats business and made little or no reference to their research from Booklet A, thus they were only credited with 1 to 4 marks from the first Level of Response.
- Q3 (a) (i)** Many candidates accurately calculated the break-even point per week for Michelle's Sweet Treats business and achieved the three marks for stating the correct answer.
- (ii)** Many candidates were confident in drawing and correctly labelling the break-even graph and achieved the full seven marks for this part of the question. However, 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.

- (b)** The moderating team noted that many candidates answered this question very well and were awarded the marks from the third Level of Response in the mark scheme. These candidates demonstrated an excellent understanding of one advantage and one disadvantage of Michelle using batch manufacturing in her production of sweet treats for her business with excellent reference to their research from Booklet A. They made an excellent evaluation of one advantage and one disadvantage and drew a suitable conclusion. It was also noted that they made excellent use of specialist terms in their answer. At this point, it is important that teachers remind their candidates that an evaluation question requires them to draw a conclusion to their answer as stated in the mark scheme. However, the moderating team noted that many candidates did not provide a conclusion and hence could **only access marks from the first Level of Response in the mark scheme.**

Q4 Most candidates demonstrated an excellent understanding of two reasons why the government encourages enterprise and provided an excellent analysis of these reasons. They made excellent reference to their research from Booklet A. These candidates were credited with marks from the top Level of Response. Where candidates demonstrated a limited understanding of one or two reasons as to why the government encourages enterprise with little or no reference to their research from Booklet A were only able to access marks from the first Level of Response. Quite a few candidates achieved 3 to 4 marks as they provided a good analysis of one or two reasons why the government encourages enterprise with good reference to their research.

As in previous years, the moderators noted that there were instances when responses to questions in Booklet B made little or no reference to the research material gathered in Booklet A. Candidates must be made 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 and thus achieve the highest mark possible. **Those candidates who failed to provide any supporting evidence that they were using their research were only able to be credited with marks from the first Level of Response for each of the questions.** Candidates should be encouraged to begin sentences with the words... “From my primary research” or “From my secondary research”, depending on the area of research they are providing evidence from. Unfortunately, this is where many candidates lost their marks in Booklet B.

Moderators also referred to the fact that some centres are submitting work where Booklet A is not presented in the same folder as Booklet B. By submitting both booklets in the same folder it leads to an ease of cross-referencing, with Booklet A appearing before Booklet B. 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).

It is worthy of note that annotation unequivocally remains a very important aspect of the moderation process. Assessment decisions for most centres were supported by annotation throughout the booklets, which undoubtedly was of great benefit to the moderation process. Some centres submitted samples of work with absolutely no annotation whatsoever, either in the form of written comments throughout the work or identification in various paragraphs where assessment objectives had been met by candidates. Constructive meaningful comments for each candidate made by teachers on the eCandidate Record Sheet 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 constructive 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. It is advisable for Business Studies teachers to attend the annual Agreement Trial in the Autumn term to ensure their Centre is familiar with the required standards and protocols. These teachers can then apply the information they gain from these meetings, as well as taking part in meaningful discussion, coupled with the practicalities of engaging in trial marking of exemplar material.

Teachers should 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. 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.** As in previous years, moderators noted that some centres are still submitting their candidates' work in the form of loose pages stapled together and sometimes not safely fastened. It is so important 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 several 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. Many centres seemed to have omitted these cover sheets this year. It is also important that this cover sheet is **signed by each candidate**.

Once again teachers are to be congratulated for the professional way in which they manage the Controlled Assessment Task for GCSE Business Studies. Teachers are also reminded that they are invited 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

The following information provides contact details for key staff members:

- **Specification Support Officer: Arlene Ashfield**
(telephone: (028) 9590 6678, email: aashfield@ccea.org.uk)
- **Officer with Subject Responsibility: Jill Armer**
(telephone: (028) 9590 6686, email: jarmer@ccea.org.uk)



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE

