

Business Studies

Entry Level Certificate R343

OCR Report to Centres

June 2013

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This report on the examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the examination.

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Overview

Introduction

The entry for this series was smaller than in 2012. The overall standard achieved by candidates was in line with previous years with the candidates making a good attempt at all three of the assessment components. The two written tests were completed well, with the coursework task enabling the candidates to use their own research to reach basic business conclusions.

The written tests

There are two sets of tests available. Centres are free to choose which set they wish to use, and can also use one set for a trial examination if that would be helpful to their candidates. There is no time limit on the tests, which can be taken at any point within the course. Each test is split into two sections, in order that the candidates can take the tests in smaller component parts, if desired.

As in previous years there were no particular parts of the tests which proved difficult for all candidates. It was again pleasing to see the response to the stimulus material within the tests which enabled the candidates to display their knowledge and understanding of business studies at this particular level.

Centre marking of the tests was generally clear and accurate with the allocation of marks being shown on the tests. This enabled moderation to run smoothly.

The coursework test

There are two scenarios to choose from. Emma is a young entrepreneur wishing to open a shop selling jeans and Tom is a young entrepreneur wanting to establish a business making and selling badges. Both scenarios were equally popular with centres and candidates. There was no difference seen in the quality of the work produced by the candidates between the two choices.

The coursework task is marked using the same three assessment objectives (AOs) as GCSE, though judged at Entry Level. The three AOs are Knowledge and Understanding, Application, and Analysis and Evaluation.

Application of the Assessment Objectives in the Coursework Test

AO1

Here candidates should show their knowledge and understanding of the relevant specification content.

In Investigation 1, candidates need to show their knowledge of what makes an entrepreneur for Tom; while those opting for Emma need to show how a business might target its marketing effort at a particular place. Investigation 1 is supported by data within the scenario, which was again used very well by candidates.

For those candidates investigating Tom, Investigation 2 required knowledge of the badge market (supported by secondary research); or pricing strategies for those opting for Emma. It should be emphasised that the technical terms within, say, pricing are not required at this level. Candidates should, however, understand that businesses will often utilise a price lower than its competitors, or sometimes make sure that their prices are the same. Again, this should be supported by some secondary research.

Both of these elements were completed well by candidates who often produced good data, especially on the comparative pricing of jeans.

In Investigation 3, candidates investigating Tom are required to look at different methods of distribution. There was good knowledge of e-commerce with some candidates showing a detailed understanding of the comparative advantages of selling through the Internet and using a shop. In the case of Emma the candidates were required to investigate the advertising of jeans. This was completed well with charts often being devised to show where jeans might be advertised.

AO2

This is a more difficult assessment objective to achieve, with candidates needing to understand the particular circumstances of Tom and Emma.

Both Tom and Emma are young, inexperienced and do not have much money. This will have an effect on how they approach marketing.

For Tom the candidates should use their knowledge of what makes an entrepreneur and, using the data provided, see if these attributes apply to Tom. In Investigation 2, some types of badge might not be suitable for Tom to make/distribute as he is new to business and he lacks the money to invest in machinery to make certain products. For Investigation 3, Tom might have the finance to start to build a simple website for Internet sales, but he would not be able to afford a shop, which is likely to be unsuitable for selling badges and nothing else. Candidates coped well with Investigation 1, but at times found it more difficult to see how Tom, in his situation, might not be able to make or sell a full range of products. Candidates who had collected informative secondary data performed rather better on this element.

Those candidates investigating Emma's jeans business used the data well in Investigation 1, and were able to apply some knowledge of pricing to her proposed business in Investigation 2. For example, the more able candidates realised that being a new, small business, Emma would not be able to sell jeans at the same low price as large supermarkets. In Investigation 3 there was a general understanding that Emma would not be able to afford certain types of advertising, especially television. Few candidates explored the possibility of using social media.

Wherever possible, candidates should try to consider the situation of either Tom or Emma and explain how this might affect their choice of marketing methods.

AO3

The analysis and evaluation in Investigation 1 is based on the data provided in the scenario. In Investigations 2 and 3 it is based on the knowledge and primary/secondary data collected.

While in Investigation 1 candidates were often able to use the data well and come to a simple, justified conclusion; the quality of work in Investigations 2 and 3 was dependant on the research undertaken.

The candidates who were more successful in this assessment objective collected good primary data, often interviewing 10 people on their views on pricing and advertising (Emma) and different badge products and Internet/shop distribution (Tom). Candidates then used the results of their findings to help justify the ideas which they were putting forward. Where there was little or no data available, candidates found it difficult to come to a reasoned conclusion.

It should be remembered that the analysis and evaluation is to be seen in an Entry Level context, and that simple analytical statements and judgements should be well rewarded, especially if there is any reference to the collected data.

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