

GCSE (9–1)

Examiners' report

BUSINESS

J204

For first teaching in 2017

J204/02 Summer 2022 series

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Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. A selection of candidate answers are also provided. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

Advance Information for Summer 2022 assessments

To support student revision, advance information was published about the focus of exams for Summer 2022 assessments. Advance information was available for most GCSE, AS and A Level subjects, Core Maths, FSMQ, and Cambridge Nationals Information Technologies. You can find more information on our [website](#).

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Paper 2 series overview

Questions differentiated well and examiners saw a good number of high level responses. These candidates had a wide-ranging knowledge of the subject, while applying context to their responses, and made judgements based on the information available. However, there were many examples where candidates did not use the case study in their response and therefore did not gain entry into the higher levels.

How to demonstrate skills

Knowledge is a piece of learnt theory that is often demonstrated through a definition.

Understanding is showing that a piece of theory has not just been learnt, but that it has been comprehended. It is often best demonstrated through an example.

Application is showing that a piece of theory is not just understood, but can be used in a specific, and in the case of J204/02, given scenario. This is often demonstrated by recognising which element of the context it relates to or by explaining why something is relevant to that scenario.

Analysis is showing the effect, reaction or consequence of something happening. This is demonstrated by a candidate giving the specific effect, reaction or consequence on the given business or stakeholder. Analysis should be relevant to the business or stakeholder context given, and, as such, some effects, reactions or consequences are plausible, while others are not.

Evaluation is about weighing up data and making a judgement and/or drawing conclusions. This is often demonstrated by giving a recommendation or concluding that one element is more or less important or significant than another.

There was also a significant number of candidates who omitted many questions, in some cases the whole of Section B.

The standard of handwriting and inconsistent use of paragraphs created issues when awarding marks. Candidates need to write legibly, within the answer area and use paragraphs where appropriate to make specific points. There is the potential for some marks not to be given if responses are illegible or unclear.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally did the following:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally did the following:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> included the necessary understanding of a term in their response so that they could access the application and analysis marks made use of the context when required had good knowledge of most concepts being examined did not write about issues not required in the question. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> did not show understanding of the main concept in the question demonstrated a lack of context in responses missed out a significant number of questions did not read the question carefully.

Section A overview

The multiple choice questions performed very well in differentiating between candidates. On the whole, nearly all were answered correctly by the majority of candidates. Questions 1, 5 and 7 were particularly well answered. In contrast, Questions 4, 12 and 14 were not well answered.

Some candidates did not attempt some of the multiple choice questions. Candidates should attempt all questions.

Question 1

- 1 A customer has bought a laptop from a computer shop.

By law, the computer shop must:

- A match the price charged by a local competitor
- B offer to upgrade the laptop for no extra charge
- C provide virus protection to keep the customer's files safe
- D supply a laptop of satisfactory quality

Your answer

[1]

Question 4

- 4 A perfume shop has a gross profit margin of 50%.

This means:

- A for every £10 of sales, it makes £5 profit after all costs have been paid
- B the perfume shop's variable costs are exactly half of its fixed costs
- C the shop charges customers double what it pays when buying the perfume
- D to make £10 of profit, it needs to sell £50 of perfume

Your answer

[1]

This was, the least well answered question in Section A. Few candidates identified the correct answer. A appeared to be the most common wrong answer, probably as £5 is 50% of £10.

Question 5

- 5 QT Homeware Ltd manufactures small kitchen appliances. The company has recently received a number of emails complaining that its kettles leak.

Which of the following actions would help QT Homeware Ltd deal with this problem?

- A Include a cloth to wipe up any leaks in the box of all new kettles
- B Launch a promotional campaign in a housekeeping magazine
- C Meet with production workers to discuss how to reduce costs
- D Physically test every hundredth kettle to ensure it is watertight

Your answer

[1]

Question 7

- 7 Which of the following is **not** a disadvantage of automation?

- A Expensive to buy, so will need to find a way of raising finance
- B Machines can break down, disrupting production
- C Operatives may need additional training, increasing business costs
- D The machinery can be reprogrammed, making production more flexible

Your answer

[1]

Question 12

12 Which of the following is a benefit to a public limited company of using a share issue to raise finance?

- A** Dividends will need to be paid
- B** New skills will be brought into the company
- C** No interest will be paid
- D** Repayments will be spread over a long period of time

Your answer

[1]

Some candidates identified the correct answer as C. This was one of the synoptic questions in Paper 2 which requires candidates to link their knowledge and understanding of topics from both papers.

Question 14

14 The marketing function of a well-known action toy manufacturer is about to launch a major advertising campaign.

This advertising campaign will affect the operations function of the business because:

- A** job production will need to be used to speed up production
- B** market research into which toy figures are most popular will be required
- C** more sets of action toy figures will need to be produced
- D** vacancies for action toy designers will need to be advertised

Your answer

[1]

Answered correctly by some candidates. Although there is reference to marketing and advertising in the question (which may explain why B was a popular wrong answer), it is the impact on the operations function that is required. Section 7 of the specification requires candidates to appreciate the interdependent nature of business operations.

Section B overview

Each of the three sets of questions in this section is centred around a real or fictitious business. The contexts are selected to provide a range of scenarios; large or small, local or international, primary, secondary or tertiary.

Candidates need to understand how to answer the different types of questions. For example, the need to be contextual if the business name is in the question, the need to show understanding before marks can be given in the 3 mark analyse questions, and the structure of the 'scaffolded' questions.

OCR support



[Candidate exemplars](#) are available with examples of the full range of question types in this paper.

Of the three questions in Section B, Question 17 was the best answered and Question 18 was the least well answered.

The amount of space provided in the question paper for an answer is based on the expected length of an answer. Many candidates wrote overly long answers which lacked focus. This lack of focus can lead to answers which are both repetitive and contain material which is not pertinent to the question.

Question 16 (a)

16

(a) Identify **two** possible advantages to a business of being environmentally friendly.

1

2 [2]

Most candidates scored 1 or 2 marks, with most selecting increased reputation and increased sales as their responses.

Less successful responses ignored the phrase 'to a business' in the question and gave responses about consumer behaviour or the advantages for climate change.

Question 16 (b)

(b) Explain **one** way climate change might affect business activity.

.....

.....

.....

..... [2]

This was one of the least well answered question on the paper, with many candidates scoring zero. Many candidates did not know what was meant by climate change, with references to 'poor weather' or 'oceans freezing over'. More significantly, few candidates identified how the business would respond to climate change, i.e., the change it would make, rather than how it would be affected. This led to responses which described things, such as 'not being able to produce as much solar power' or 'ice creams selling well and coats not'. Other responses considered the implication for the planet, rather than the business.

Question 16 (c)

(c) Analyse how BP's finance function may influence its ability to meet BP's objectives.

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..... [3]

This was the first of the 3 mark analyse questions which requires understanding to be shown before any further marks can be accessed. The majority of candidates gained no marks, as they did not identify what the finance function of a business involved. Many responses referred generally to 'managing the business efficiently' or gave the finance function credit for activities they would not undertake, such as ways of increasing revenue or deciding what to spend money on.

Assessment for learning



In all questions requiring analysis, candidates must be able to show explicit understanding of the key term in the question. In this case, what does the finance function of a business carry out? Without this explicit understanding no marks can be given. Candidates also need to use words other than those in the question to show understanding.

Question 16 (d) (i)

- (d) (i) Calculate the percentage change in BP's revenue between 2017 and 2019.

Show your workings

Answer %

[2]

Most candidates did well on this first calculation, with many scoring full marks. A few more may have gained 1 mark if they had shown their workings more clearly. The most common wrong answer was 13.4% when the wrong number was used as the denominator. If the working was clear this still gained 1 mark, for the correct calculation of £38bn.

Question 16 (d) (ii)

- (ii) Identify **two** factors that can affect a company's revenue.

1
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2
.....

[2]

Some candidates scored both marks on this question. Confusion between costs and revenue meant some candidates did not gain marks on this question. Revenue is ultimately price multiplied by quantity sold, so any factor affecting either of these two variables was accepted. A few responses also appeared to show confusion between revenue and profit.

Misconception



Candidates need to know the difference between price and cost. This is a growing issue due to the frequency with which non-specialists (particularly in the media) interchange the two terms quite freely.

Question 16 (e) (i)

(e) (i) Identify **two** reasons why a UK business might choose to locate in another country.

1

.....

2

.....

[2]

Many responses considered location to be more of a marketing concern rather than an operations issue. This led to responses linked to increases in customers and market share, which could be achieved regardless of location.

Question 16 (e) (ii)

(ii) Evaluate how globalisation has influenced where BP locates its businesses.

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..... [7]

Many candidates knew what globalisation was but often wasted time setting out, at length, a definition of it. (A reminder that there are no knowledge or understanding marks in this question). However, a few candidates did not know about the concept. This often led to responses which were more about the pros and cons of international trade for a business.

Often, candidates made comments without fully using the context. For example, many wrote about the petrol stations and oil drilling but did not link them with globalisation. This meant that examiners were often able to award application marks but not the analysis marks. Few candidates attempted to evaluate and those who did often interpreted the question as 'is globalisation important to BP', rather than how it has influenced BP. In addition, some attempts at evaluation were just a repetition of previous analysis and therefore were not awarded.

The most successful responses made use of the material (location/profits, etc.) linked it to analysis (lower costs or greater access to raw materials etc) and made a straightforward evaluation. Exemplar 1 is a full mark response.

Exemplar 1

Globalisation is the increasing interconnection of the world's economies. It has improved transport infrastructure, which has allowed BP to locate oil rigs in Norway, Australia, Angola, and other areas. This gives them a close proximity to their raw materials of oil to produce petrol, which makes for an ease of access and reduces transport costs to areas across the globe.

Globalisation also involves free trade agreements, lifting tariffs and taxes on foreign businesses. This has enabled BT to build 18700 petrol stations worldwide, with 10200 overseas. This allows BT to gain a closer proximity to its foreign market, therefore boosting the amount of sales and revenues experienced from a wider customer range that drive us.

To conclude, the largest impact globalisation has had is the improvement of transport, because BT has to be able to extract oil from remote areas, which would not be possible without globalisation. Furthermore, the UK oil and gas supplies around the North Sea will eventually run out, so they have to be able to access other cheaper locations globally.

[7]

This response clearly sets out two points. First, the increased proximity to raw materials and easy access by locating in Norway, Australia, and Angola. Second, how having 10,200 petrol stations worldwide means that BP can increase sales. In each case, 1 analysis and 1 application mark is given. The 3 evaluation marks were given in the final paragraph. Globalisation has influenced BP's location (1 mark), and this is justified by using the context (2 more marks).

Question 17 (a)

- (a) Identify **one** method of selling products to customers.

..... [1]

Most candidates gained this mark, although some referred to promotional methods or pricing strategies, such as price skimming or penetration.

Question 17 (b) (i)

- (b) (i) Identify **two** ethical considerations for a business.

1

2 [2]

Most candidates scored 1 or 2 marks. However, a significant minority did not know what was meant by an ethical consideration. Some listed issues which are a legal requirement, such as minimum wage or discrimination. Others listed environmental issues, even though these had been asked about in Question 16.

Ethics is about what is fair or is over and above what is legally required.

Question 17 (b) (ii)

- (ii) Explain **one** reason why a business should act ethically.

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..... [2]

Even candidates who were unable to correctly identify an ethical consideration were at least able to explain why it was important to be ethical. The most common responses focused on it being about a firm's marketing, so that it appeared to act in a 'good' way so it was able to attract customers or employees more easily.

Question 17 (c) (i)

- (c) (i) Calculate the average rate of return (ARR) for the Standard Van by using the information in **Table 2**.

Show your workings

Answer %

[3]

As the more demanding of the two calculations in Section B, this was generally well answered by candidates. Most candidates either scored 3 marks for a well set out correct answer or scored 0 (often by omitting the question). Where answers were wrong this tended to be due to poor knowledge of the formula and/or an inability to select data from the correct table.

OCR support



Support is available with teaching the finance topics, such as [ARR and break-even](#).

Question 17 (c) (ii)

- (ii) Analyse **one** reason why QT should buy the Standard Van. Refer to **Table 2** in your answer.

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..... [3]

The majority of candidates scored 2 or 3 marks. Most candidates scored 2 marks by stating that the standard van was £10,000 cheaper or had a higher ARR of 50% compared to 35%. However, it was often the case that analysis was weak as to how this would impact the business.

A common reason for poor marks on this question was not using the data from the table that was referred to in the question. Another common error was for candidates to focus on whether to buy a van. Even though the decision had already been taken to buy another van, some candidates wasted time suggesting a new van should not be bought.

Exemplar 2

It is the cheaper van and still has an estimated life of only one year less than the superior van. In the case study, it states 'cash flow forecast suggests it may struggle to pay the monthly van loan repayment', therefore QT is less likely to damage their cash flow with the cheaper ^{standard} van ~~of~~ and will still get the job done with less chance of liquidity problems. [3]

This appears to be a good response which could be awarded 3 marks. However, although the response is sensible, it has ignored the instruction to use Table 2 (ARR, price and net profit). The application in the response comes from Fig.1 (cash flow). Although the marks for understanding ("it is cheaper") and analysis ("less likely to damage cash flow") were awarded, no mark could be given for application.

Question 17 (d) (i), (ii) and (iii)

(d) (i) Analyse QT's cash position considering its current expansion plans.

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..... [3]

(ii) Analyse QT's profit position considering its current expansion plans.

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..... [3]

(iii) Recommend whether QT's cash position or profit position will have the biggest impact on its expansion plans.

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..... [3]

The three questions making up Question 17 (d) assessed the important distinction between cash and profit. Question 17 (d) (ii) about profit was the least well answered of the three parts.

There were some very strong responses which made excellent use of the context available and considered how the profit or cash position of the business would significantly affect QT's expansion plans. In particular, QT's closing balance of 0 may cause liquidity problems and increasing profit margins may encourage external investment to pay for the expansion. However, some responses did not manage to gain the analysis mark, as they did not link back to the expansion plans which were the focus of the question.

Less successful responses often contained general points about QT's financial situation and, although context was provided, no understanding was first shown. Candidates did not show sufficient understanding of cash or profit. This could be demonstrated by making references to cash flow or profit margins, respectively. (Clearly, candidates needed to use language that was more than just 'cash' or 'profit'.)

The last question part discriminated particularly well, despite only being worth 3 marks. Some candidates could not reach a decision, even in the light of being led to this question by the preceding two. Others wrote a few short sentences that neatly encapsulated the position, and it was pleasing to be able to award full marks to so many good responses.

Assessment for learning



Candidates need to use specific terminology when referring to financial planning documents. Many candidates do not appear to understand the difference between profit and profitability/margins. Simply using the word 'profit' without understanding what this means (and how it is different from cash) will not help candidates to gain the understanding mark (and hence no other marks) in finance-based questions.

Question 18 (a)

(a) Identify **one** economic factor which may affect a company's profit.

.....
 [1]

Some candidates were able to correctly identify an economic factor. Wrong responses ranged from climate change and deforestation to costs of raw materials. Any recognised economic factor was accepted, in addition to the two listed in the specification.

Misconception



Confusion across Questions 16 (a), 17 (b) and 18 (a) proves that candidates need to have a better understanding of the very clear differences between environmental, ethical, and economic issues. This distinction is set out in Section 6 of the specification.

Question 18 (b)

(b) Analyse the importance of quality in the production of the houses that BD plc produces.

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..... [3]

Better responses recognised that quality was important for reasons of reputation, customer satisfaction or to make sure consumer law followed. These responses typically went on to highlight BD's stated vision about quality and that this would help to increase sales or prevent costly repairs.

Some candidates did not consider the importance of quality for the business. This meant that they did not gain the understanding mark so, although many of these responses contained context and analysis, scored no marks (see Exemplar 3). Other candidates did not manage to write about a tangible impact for the business, only referring to 'bad reputation' or 'customer dissatisfaction'. To gain the analysis mark, the impact must be tangible, for example, less costs from repairs/prosecution, or higher sales/profits. Answers such as 'will be successful', 'could do well', 'may struggle' or 'could find things are difficult' are not enough to show analysis.

Exemplar 3

Quality is really important in the production of the high quality homes that they ~~er~~ build. This is ~~be~~ due to the vision created by the UK's largest house builder, of putting customers at the heart of everything. If the quality wasn't produced to a high standard then the company would loose customers and therefore lose revenue and decrease profit too. [3]

This shows the importance for the candidate to recognise what is the concept being asked in the question. In this case it is 'the importance of quality'. This response starts by repeating this statement, without identifying what the importance is. (Examiners would also accept a definition of quality, 'fit for purpose', as evidence of understanding.) Although the response goes on to make thorough reference to the context ("putting customers at the heart of everything" and "UK's largest house builder") and has analysis ("lose revenue and decrease profit") without the mark for understanding, these skills cannot be rewarded.

Question 18 (c)

(c) Analyse **one** advantage to BD plc of obtaining 90% of its raw materials from the UK.

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..... [3]

The vast majority of candidates recognised the most likely reason for using raw materials from the UK was due to transport costs or ease of access and went on to provide analysis by considering the impact on price, profit or completion time. However, very few responses considered the ample context, such as BD's close monitoring of break-even, its already high profit level or the types of materials involved.

Question 18 (d) (i) and (ii)

- (d) (i) Analyse **one** advantage and **one** disadvantage to BD plc of producing components in batches at its factory.

Advantage:

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Disadvantage:

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- [6]
- (ii) Recommend whether BD plc should continue to produce components in batches at its factory.

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[3]

Some candidates were unable to show an understanding of an advantage or disadvantage of batch production. Given the high tariff for the question this often made a significant impact on the candidate's overall score. The main issue was that statements such as, 'it is quicker' or 'there are less problems' were not explained. This sort of statement must be a relative one to be rewarded. What is it quicker than? What option would have more problems?. This could have been overcome by comparing or contrasting with an alternative method of production, such as job or flow. Without this comparison it was very difficult to give any credit since the statement was too vague.

Another common mistake was candidates focusing on the fact the components were being made in a factory rather than the method of production being used. This led to many unrewardable responses about the transportation of components from the factory and how the weather would be less of an issue. It was also clear that many candidates did not really know what batch production involved, with many responses more appropriate to flow production. The use of context was again an issue in this question.

There were a small number of good responses. These followed a clear structure and usually focused on the advantages of being able to produce a range of styles between batches and the time taken to switch between producing them. The disadvantage was generally answered better than the advantage.

Most candidates who attempted the second part of this scaffolded question gained at least 1 mark for a decision, if it was a decision focused on the correct question (i.e., whether to continue to use batch production). The best of these responses scored full marks by essentially using the argument of 'if it isn't broke, don't fix it'. The evidence of £900m profit, growing by 8.9% per year, strongly supported this decision. However, it was equally possible to score full marks by suggesting that BD should switch to job production, especially as the business had quality as a key vision and that was typically the method used to build houses. Better responses usually made a comparison with an alternative method of production.

Assessment for learning



Centres need to make sure that methods of production are taught contextually and in comparison with each other. For example, a candidate could correctly write that batch production produces more or less output. It would produce more output than job, but less than flow. Without this comparison many advantages and disadvantages are too vague.

Question 18 (e)*

(e)* Evaluate how useful break-even analysis is to BD plc's pricing and promotional decisions. **[9]**

This synoptic question was poorly answered. Many candidates chose not to attempt it. Many candidates who did attempt the question did not understand the concept, often making references to cash flow, fixed costs, and profits. Often responses repeated statements when attempting to show application to, or analysis of, pricing and promotion. Most candidates did not focus on the implications for pricing or promotion - instead tending to make general comments about the business.

A number of candidates who did show knowledge and/or understanding of break-even were still unable to consider how it may be used when making pricing or promotional decisions.

Some of the better responses did not go on to gain any of the evaluation marks, as they focused on whether BD should use break-even, rather than how useful it was. These responses tended to fall back on the textbook disadvantages of break-even as a concept, in terms of the assumptions made about linear costs, a single price, and no external factors being considered. These were largely irrelevant to this question.

Assessment for learning



The 9 mark question will always require all of the five skill areas (knowledge, understanding, application, analysis, and evaluation) to be demonstrated to gain full marks. These cannot be implied but must be explicit in a candidate's response.

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