

Business Studies

Entry Level Certificate **R343**

Examiners' Report

June 2011

R343/R/11

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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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Chief Examiner's Report

Introduction

This was the first examination series for this new specification for which entries were received. Overall the candidates entered performed well, with the assessment materials and coursework format task proving to be accessible at all the targeted levels.

The new specification requires entry either for a postal moderation route (option 2) or a repository route (option 1). The repository allows for an electronic uploading of the sample of work required for moderation. Care should be taken to choose the option required at centre level. In both cases, the moderation sample is chosen by OCR, unlike the previous specification where the sample was chosen by the centre.

Overall this can be seen as a very good start for the new specification.

Written tests

The written tests were completed well, with centres choosing one of the two sets available. Candidates responded well to the stimulus material presented and there were no aspects of the specification which could be identified as problematic at Entry Level. The performance over the range of available tests was consistent.

Centres should remember that each of the tests is split into two sections, A and B. If required, candidates can take each part separately in order to spread the demands of the assessment. The marking of the tests was accurate and clear to follow.

Coursework format task

There is a choice of two scenarios for candidates to follow; Tom, aiming to set up a badge making business, and Emma wanting to set up a business selling jeans. Both scenarios proved equally popular with centres.

The marking of this element of the assessment is centred on the three assessment objectives (AOs):

AO1 is concerned with knowledge and understanding

AO2 relates to the application of knowledge and understanding

AO3 requires candidates to analyse and evaluate information and provide recommendations.

In all cases, marking must be judged in the context of Entry Level. Thus any analysis and recommendations will be simplistic, with any justification for recommendations made being in general terms. At times centres were not rewarding candidates sufficiently for the work they had produced.

Application of the assessment objectives**AO1**

In investigation 1 candidates showed good knowledge of what is required for an enterprising person (Tom) and the market requirements for a jeans shop (Emma).

In investigation 2 there was some detailed knowledge shown of the badge market, and the possible directions in which Tom might take his business. Pricing for Emma's jeans showed a good knowledge of approaches to pricing by different businesses. Once again any response in this area must be judged at Entry Level, where the use of GCSE level terms is neither required nor expected. Candidates did, however, recognise that at times there was a similar approach by businesses to pricing and that there was a distinction between quality brands and more budget operations.

Knowledge in investigation 3 requires candidates to understand the advantages and disadvantages of using shops and the Internet to sell badges and the different places a business might advertise. Note that for AO1 these sections can be completed with a generic approach. The application of this knowledge is assessed under AO2. Candidates had a good knowledge of advertising methods and media, and had, at times, a very good understanding of selling through the Internet. The advantages and disadvantages of using a shop for Tom were not dealt with quite as well.

AO2

Here candidates need to apply their knowledge and understanding to the scenario. Those candidates investigating Tom should consider the context of a person setting up a small business making badges. For Emma it is a person who already has one shop selling jeans but wants to open another.

In investigation 1 candidates should look at the data and how each town is suitable (or not) for a shop aiming at the teenage jeans market. In the case of Tom, candidates have to look at the information and examine whether it is relevant to someone wanting to set up a small badge making business.

The data for Emma was, at times, dealt with very well, with candidates making the link in the data to potential customers for her shop. For Tom, the information on enterprise was again used well, with candidates recognising that certain factors were important for Tom in his situation. In investigation 2 there was some excellent work on pricing in the jeans market with candidates using Internet research (and many shop visits) to apply ideas on pricing to Emma's situation. For Tom there was an appreciation of the types of badges available, though perhaps more thought should be given to the fact that he is only just starting out in business and that the number of products he can offer will be restricted.

For Investigation 3 candidates should take care with what might be appropriate for Emma as far as advertising is concerned. It is likely to be a small business, and so unlikely to be able to afford (or need) advertising on television. Candidates need to retain a sense of realism.

In Tom's case investigation 3 requires candidates to look at how appropriate selling through the Internet and shops is *for badges*. For example, badges are small and can be posted easily, but postage costs may be high compared to the value of the badge. This aspect of the investigation does need more care from candidates with simple connections being made from the theory to a small badge making business.

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AO3

For this AO candidates should use the data given in investigation 1 and collect their own primary and secondary data for investigations 2 and 3.

The analysis of the data in investigation 1 was good, with candidates giving a recommendation for either Tom or Emma. Whilst a number of candidates supported their recommendation by some reference to the data, a number did not.

The data collected for the jeans shop in investigation 2 gave many candidates a lot of opportunities for analysis, with good, supported recommendations being made on the price Emma should charge for her jeans. Where the data collection was less thorough, there was a corresponding reduction in analysis and evaluation.

For investigation 3 candidates need to collect data on consumer attitudes to buying products such as badges through the Internet or attitudes of local consumers to different advertising methods. This should allow for an analysis of whether consumers prefer Internet or shops for any purchases of badges, with supported recommendations being made. For Emma, an analysis of consumer attitude to advertising methods should give the opportunity to come to a justified conclusion as to which method of advertising Emma should use (again bearing in mind the size of the business).

At times there was little primary research in investigation 3 for Tom's situation, with some candidates relying on their own interpretation of the pros and cons of using shops and the Internet. For Emma, research was at times rather less than for investigation 2, with candidates having little or no data analysis on which to base any recommendation. Simple questionnaires need to be designed to help candidates make a justified choice in the context of the scenario

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