

# **Business Studies**

Entry Level Certificate R343

## **OCR Report to Centres**

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**June 2012**

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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

There was a slight increase from January 2012 in the number of centres entering for the specification. Centres took advantage of the choice between the two sets of written tests available, and there was no clear favourite in the choice of coursework format tests.

The general level of performance was very good, with most candidates who had completed all components reaching Level 3. Within the coursework format test there was some good research undertaken, with candidates making some relevant recommendations for this level of qualification.

## Written Tests

As mentioned above, there are two sets of tests available. Centres are able to choose which tests to undertake. The two tests are further divided into sections A and B. Centres can choose to do a complete test at one sitting or split it into two parts. There is no time limit imposed.

Performance within the tests was good, with candidates following the instructions well and responding to the stimulus material provided. There was no evidence of particular questions being more or less accessible to the candidates. Centre's marking of the tests was generally clear and accurate.

## Coursework Format Test

As with the written tests there is a choice of two scenarios for candidates. Both scenarios were clearly accessible to the candidates who responded with some well directed research and in places some well argued points of analysis.

The marks for this component are based around the assessment objectives (AO):

AO1: Knowledge and understanding

AO2: Application

AO3: Analysis and evaluation.

Within their work, candidates should, therefore, look to show their knowledge of a particular area of the specification, apply it to the scenario, and analyse the data they have collected and then make recommendations in order to answer the question posed within the investigation.

All of the above should be viewed at Entry Level. The analysis and evaluation, for example, will be on a simple level with a general justification as to why a particular course of action is being recommended.

## Application of the Assessment Criteria

### AO1

Knowledge was generally good within the work seen. Those investigating Tom showed some good understanding of what makes an entrepreneur and in Emma's case the requirements for establishing a jeans shop.

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In Investigation 2 (Toms' badges) many candidates completed some good secondary research into the different types of badge which are available, though at times the use of illustrations was a little excessive.

Those candidates investigating Emma collected some good information on the pricing of jeans. A number of centres used group research in this element, which gave candidates more data on which to base any later recommendations.

For Tom's badge business there was some good knowledge and understanding from candidates on the advantages and disadvantages of Internet selling compared to a shop. The use of charts and tables could have been used more to structure this part of the work, and help make any differences more apparent. Those candidates investigating Emma's jeans shop showed good knowledge of advertising with magazine and web pages being used to illustrate the point. Again, care should be taken with regards to just how much of this material is submitted for moderation.

**AO2**

In Investigation 1 some candidates found the application of entrepreneurial skills to Tom rather difficult. Others looked at what information was available on Tom and made a decision as to whether that would help him be an entrepreneur or not. Again, it must be remembered that this is a small badge making business. Candidates should look at the skills, etc which are needed in this context.

The data available for the jeans shop in Investigation 1 was used well by many candidates who looked at the age ranges and recognised that certain groups were more likely to buy jeans.

In Investigation 2 the application of types of badges to Tom was completed well by candidates who recognised that he was just starting out in business and that he might not be able to make/supply all the different types of badges offered by other, larger businesses.

For Emma, the pricing issue should be viewed, as with Tom, in that this is a new, small business up against larger more established competitors. A number of candidates did recognise this, understanding that she might not be able to sell at prices below certain competitors.

In Investigation 3 the Internet was seen as applicable to Tom in that badges could be easily sent through the post. A minority of candidates also recognised that customers often liked to see and touch an item before they bought it, and this favoured a shop. Cost saving also applied in this investigation, with Tom and his new business being a suitable Internet organisation.

In Emma's case, for Investigation 3, candidates looked at her ability to advertise. Again this reverts back to the business being small and new, with clear constraints being placed on advertising. A small number of candidates thought that television advertising was applicable, though most restricted their idea to a more locally based activity.

**AO3**

The collection of data, especially in relation to Emma's scenario, gave candidates an opportunity to analyse and to make some reasoned recommendations for Investigations 2 and 3.

In Investigation 1 where the analysis and recommendations were based on the data provided, candidates generally made a good reasoned judgment as to whether Tom would make a good business person, or in which town Emma should concentrate her marketing efforts.

For Investigation 2 candidates considering Tom did not always collect enough primary data in order to inform any decision as to what type of badge he should make. For Emma there was more evidence that primary data had been collected and then used to come to some decision as to how she should approach the pricing of her jeans.

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In Investigation 3 there was better work in relation Tom and his decision regarding Internet selling. At times this was based on general knowledge and understanding, with only the better candidates collecting primary data on consumer views on where they preferred to buy such products. In Emma's case there was some data collected by a minority of candidates on where buyers noticed jeans advertisements which helped justify any ideas being put forward. Weaker candidates made assumptions which though reasonable (and rewardable) in the context, lacked sufficient data to back up the recommendations being made in order to access full marks.

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