



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2023

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level
In Business (WBS11) Paper 01
Unit 1: Marketing and people

Introduction

In general, candidates appeared to be well prepared for most topic areas on this paper and this proved to be an accessible exam paper for most students. The questions discriminated well, with candidates accessing a wide range of marks, with some good responses to the questions set.

However, some of the students missed out on marks because they did not answer the question that was asked, and candidates are reminded to read the questions very carefully. One example of this is Q1b where many students calculated the PED values rather than explain the consequence of PED on revenue.

Another reason for low marks is down to students not providing counterbalance on 'Discuss', 'Assess' and 'Evaluate' questions.

It is worth again reminding students of the need to read the case studies carefully and use the evidence provided to apply context to all responses. Providing generic answers, or just copying the text from the case study will not access the higher levels of the mark scheme.

Most students attempted all questions which indicates students did not struggle to finish the paper within the allocated time.

Report on individual questions

Question 1a: This definition question was generally well answered. Many students showed a good understand of the term 'competitive advantage' and gained the full 2 marks.

Question 1b: This question was generally not answered well by many students. The students were asked to explain the impact of price elasticity of demand (PED) on the revenue of a business. Whilst many students demonstrated they could calculate the percentage change in demand when provided with the PED value, they could not use this information to explain the impact to business revenue. This question clearly differentiated students with many failing to score any marks.

Question 1c: There were some good answers to this question with most students recalling the elements of the marketing mix. Some students however are still confusing the marketing mix with the design mix. Many students were able to use the evidence provided to contextualise their answers and analyse why the marketing elements were of importance to smartphone providers.

Question 1d: There was a wide range of responses to this question. Some students showed good understanding of a niche market and used the extracts to support their responses. However, it is still the case that many students do not use the evidence provided to contextualise their responses.

The question also allowed students to utilise knowledge of any niche product they had covered in class as the question referred to 'a niche product such as the folding smartphone.' Students should look out for such questions to use evidence of prior learning and refer to businesses or products discussed in the classroom.

It was also disappointing to see that many students are still providing a one-sided answer for the discuss questions. A counterbalance is required to reach the higher-level marks.

Question 1e: Students appeared to understand the term 'market share.' However, students need to understand the benefits and limitations of setting business objectives such as increased market share.

Many candidates provided generic answers which were not specific to the smartphone market and failed to include a counterbalance in their arguments. All assess questions require a balanced argument. Due to this, many students failed to score high marks.

Question 2a: This was generally well answered with a significant number of candidates gaining the full 2 marks for showing understanding of the term 'entrepreneur'.

Question 2b: Many students were able to suggest a suitable pricing strategy and explain why it would benefit a start-up business. However, there were few candidates that scored the full 4 marks. This is because two points of application are needed for the 4 mark 'explain' questions and many students were only providing one point of context.

Question 2c: Many students were able to suggest methods used by a business to build its brand. Most students were awarded some marks on this question, and many answered it very well to score full marks. Some lacked valid application and simply copied sections from the extract without integrating the context into their response. Stand alone evidence which is simply copied from the source booklet and not used to explain or develop the point will not be awarded.

Question 2d: This topic has been examined a number of times and students generally have a basic understanding of test marketing. However, students commonly provided generic points that could apply equally to any method of primary research. Students needed to convince the examiners that they understood specifically the advantages and disadvantages of trialling a product in a small area. For example, students will not be awarded high marks for counterbalance that simply states 'test marketing is expensive and takes time', which is true of any method of primary research. The points need to be more specific about test marketing and written in the context of the business referred to in the source booklet.

Question 2e: Most students today have a good understanding of online retailing and the benefits it brings a business. This was evident in the responses with most students picking up some marks on this question. However, a high number of students did not utilise the extracts provided to provide context to their arguments. Some students simply copied paragraphs from the case study but did not use the evidence to explain or develop their points. Again, as with 1e, some students are failing to provide counterbalance to their arguments and so unable to access the higher marks.

Question 3: The majority of students showed some basic understanding of flexible working. However, many simply wrote about part-time workers. As per the specification flexible working includes multi-skilling, part-time and temporary workers, zero hours contracts, flexible hours and homeworking. The source booklet provided evidence of all these working practises at Toyota, but this evidence was generally not well used by candidates. As a result, the arguments given were not wide ranging and generic in nature. Many candidates failed to show the significance of competing arguments or provide a recommendation to access the higher band of marks. Students should practise providing a detailed conclusion which does not simply rely on repeating points but shows the ability to weigh up competing arguments to propose a solution or recommendation.

Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

- Students should practise answering questions in the context of a wide variety of different businesses and products. Too many of the responses are extremely generic in nature. Whilst students often demonstrate good knowledge of a topic, unless there is sufficient business context in their answers, candidates will fail to access the highest marks.
- Equally it is not good practice to simply copy sections from the case study without specifically using the evidence to explain and develop the points. Stand alone evidence that does not support the answer will not be rewarded
- As always, it is important that students read the questions carefully and ensure they fully address the requirements of the question. Question 1b is a typical example of this. For 1b students were required to explain the relationship between price elasticity of demand (PED) and total revenue, yet most students simply performed a PED calculation. This was the first time this specific topic was examined in this specification. It is important that students revise all topics.
- Many students are still failing to provide counterbalance in their answers. For discuss, analyse and evaluation questions students must always provide a balanced assessment. The answer must not simply provide a one-sided view.