

Business Studies

Entry Level Certificate R343

Examiners' Report

January 2012

R343/R/12J

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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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Any enquiries about publications should be addressed to:

OCR Publications
PO Box 5050
Annesley
NOTTINGHAM
NG15 0DL

Telephone: 0870 770 6622
Facsimile: 01223 552610
E-mail: publications@ocr.org.uk

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Chief Examiner's Report

Introduction

There was a smaller entry for this session than in the June 2011 examination series, though candidate performance was generally in line with that seen in June 2011.

The written tests were clearly accessible at this particular level, and the two coursework format scenarios enabled candidates to collect simple primary and secondary data. Candidates reaching Entry Level 3 displayed some basic analysis of the data and could provide some general judgements in the context of the investigation.

Centres are reminded that there are two separate methods of entering their candidates. Entry option 1 uses the OCR repository and requires the required sample to be uploaded electronically for moderation. Entry option 2 is the postal option, where the required sample is posted to the moderator.

Written tests

The written tests were completed well by the majority of candidates, who responded well to the stimulus material. There was no evidence of particular questions, or style of questions, being especially challenging for candidates. There are two sets of tests available, split into sections A and B. Centres may wish to complete the tests by section in order to maintain concentration within their candidates. Centre marking of the tests was accurate and clearly shown.

Coursework format task

The two scenarios were equally popular with candidates who responded well to the situations within the investigations. Tom wished to set up a business making and selling badges, whilst Emma wanted to establish a business selling jeans.

The coursework format task is marked using three assessment objectives: AO1, knowledge and understanding; AO2, application; AO3, analysis and evaluation. It should be emphasised again that marking of the coursework format test should be in the context of Entry Level. Analysis and evaluation in particular will be at a very basic level, with simple statements of what data might show and a general recommendation which fits the context of the investigation.

Application of the assessment objectives

AO1

The knowledge element in Investigation 1 was completed well, with candidates understanding the attributes of an enterprising person (Tom) and the market requirements for a jeans shop (Emma).

In investigation 2, candidates showed knowledge and understanding of how products such as jeans may be priced, and the different types of products within the badge market. It is worth emphasising once again that GCSE terms (skimming, penetration, etc, within pricing) are not expected within Entry Level work. Candidates were able to show how shops selling jeans were using similar prices and that prices were reduced at times to boost sales.

The knowledge element in Tom's badge business for Investigation 3 was completed well, with candidates recognising the potential problems of Internet sales and the benefits of handling things in a shop, or door to door sales between friends. The work on this aspect was an improvement on June 2011.

For Emma's jeans business in Investigation 3, candidates were aware of the different places where jeans might be advertised with some good use of selected Internet and magazine pages.

AO2

The application of knowledge was generally good for Entry Level.

In Investigation 1, candidates were able to see which town was most suitable for a jeans shop, with better candidates being able to use selected figures which applied to such a shop being successful. Those looking at Tom's entrepreneurial skills were at times a little weaker in this element of the work. Candidates should be looking to see which parts of the information provided actually applied to a person wanting to establish a new, small business making badges.

In Investigation 2 it is important that candidates consider the type of product and the situation of the individual. Candidates choosing Emma were able to provide good information on pricing, with better candidates stating that Emma's business was new and would not be able to sell jeans at a price lower than older, larger businesses.

For candidates looking at Tom, good knowledge on types of badges was not always fully applied, with candidates not considering how being a new, small business might affect the type and range of badges he might offer.

In Investigation 3, candidates were able to show that the choice of advertising was often limited by cost, and that a new, small business such as Emma's would not be able to afford television advertising. Candidates investigating Tom were able to show that a simple website was within Tom's reach, though a shop on its own would not be appropriate. Selling within a local shop (e.g. newsagents), however, would be appropriate.

AO3

For AO3 in Investigations 2 and 3, candidates should undertake some simple primary and secondary research in order to provide a basis for analysis and some supported recommendations. There is no requirement for any additional research within Investigation 1, where all the necessary data is provided.

For Tom, candidates in investigation 1 were able to make a reasoned judgement on whether Tom would succeed in business. The data provided for Emma's choice of where to market her jeans was very well used at times in order to provide a justified recommendation.

In Investigation 2, pricing was analysed well for Emma's decision where secondary data was concerned. There was, at times, little evidence of primary data on whether local people would, for example, buy jeans which were priced well below, or well above, the competition.

For Tom in Investigation 2, there was rather better primary data collected on what badges would be the most popular local choice, giving evidence to support simple recommendations.

Investigation 3 for Emma and Tom requires data on local opinion as to whether a preference is to buy on the internet or shops (Tom) and attitudes/reactions to advertising (Emma). Simple questions on where people noticed advertising (for those methods appropriate to Emma) would have helped provide evidence for a recommendation to be made. Candidates should not just state their own judgement, without using some evidence, if they are looking for higher marks in this assessment objective.

Overall, the work seen for moderation this session was a credit to candidates and centres.

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)
1 Hills Road
Cambridge
CB1 2EU

OCR Customer Contact Centre

14 – 19 Qualifications (General)

Telephone: 01223 553998

Facsimile: 01223 552627

Email: general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk

www.ocr.org.uk

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Head office
Telephone: 01223 552552
Facsimile: 01223 552553