

GCSE (9–1)

Examiners' report

ECONOMICS

J205

For first teaching in 2017

J205/02 Autumn 2020 series

Introduction

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



Reports for the Autumn 2020 series will provide a broad commentary about candidate performance, with the aim for them to be useful future teaching tools. As an exception for this series they will not contain any questions from the exam paper nor examples of candidate responses.

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. 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.

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Paper 2 series overview

This assessment was the second time J205 GCSE Economics was sat and in extraordinary circumstances due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. The cohort was particularly small compared to summer examination series, but the range of marks given was reasonably in line with the previous cohort.

<i>Candidates who did well on this paper generally did the following:</i>	<i>Candidates who did less well on this paper generally did the following:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used evaluative terms effectively. • Used 'chains of reasoning' in context on extended responses. • Used economic terms precisely. • Wrote clearly and concisely. • Used correct notation on the answers for numerical questions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rewrote sentences and information from the source material without any analysis. • Left answers unanswered (especially multiple choice questions). • Did not use any evaluative terms where required.

Section overview

Many candidates displayed confidence in numerical skills and used the correction notation where necessary such as the £ or % sign to indicate what the resultant figure in the answer meant.

The standard of responses in the final set of questions tended to be slightly higher displaying a good understanding of globalisation and international trade, particularly the causes of a persistent current account deficit for the UK.

Most candidates used the space provided for responses and wrote responses of a suitable length and there was little of evidence that time was an issue for them. Candidates generally indicated the continuation of their responses well.

Candidates were less confident in displaying evaluative skills in general. This was often only found in a judgement at the end and then this was often a reiteration of a point already made. The top level of 'Good Evaluation' should include a well-developed chain of reasoning and can be demonstrated by using comparative terms such as 'more/less important than...' or terminology that indicates limiting or mitigating factors like 'will be dependent on...'

There were not many candidates that misread questions, although where this happened was due to a common misconception such as confusing the current account with budget deficit. Also, some candidates rewrote information from the source material given at times, rather than using this and so limited the marks awardable considerably.

Comments on responses by question type

Multiple choice questions

Given the size of the cohort, there were not many discernible patterns with the multiple section choice section other than where mentioned below. The overall performance on this section was good, although some candidates left some questions unanswered. More often than not, most candidates answered anyone question correctly.

Question 2 – A significant proportion of candidate answered 'A', showing a misunderstanding of a falling rate of increase.

Question 3 – Some candidates answered 'D', demonstrating a misconception between wealth and income

Question 4 – Several candidates answered 'B' or 'D' showing a misunderstanding of changing (positive) rates of change

Question 14 – Several candidates answered 'C' demonstrating a confusion between interest rates and exchange rates

Question 17 – Several candidates responded 'B' which demonstrates a misconception of the term opportunity cost.

Level of response questions

Question 21a – Most candidates identified the link between increased (government) spending and falling income. Some linked to increased government spending on one particular aspect e.g. education rather than overall expenditure and income.

Question 21b – Most candidates identified that this was due to increasing employment, however some identified an unsubstantiated increase in expenditure elsewhere.

Question 21c – Most candidates made a sound attempt at answering this question, linking the effect of increasing government spending to the impact on increased economic activity or the externalities that would ensue. However, many only concentrated on one and some attempted evaluation which is not a rewardable skill in this question.

Question 21di – A significant proportion of candidates did not factor in the £11850 personal allowance (and some who did used the figure of £11851).

Question 21dii – The vast majority of candidates attempted this question, with several identifying suitable two externalities. A significant proportion identified direct impacts of increased government spending such as 'better health care'.

Question 21diii – Many candidates wrote logically about the effects of using redistributive policies. A significant proportion demonstrated relatively little evaluative skills other than an unsubstantiated judgement at the end.

Question 22a – This was a generally well answered question

Question 22b – This was a generally well answered question, although some candidates omitted the £ sign.

Question 22c – This required candidates to analyse differences and some of the better responses analysed the differences in the data by calculating the comparative differences. A significant number of candidates simply quoted or paraphrased the information in the source material which is not analytical and therefore not rewardable.

Question 22di – This was a very well answered question overall

Question 22dii – Again a well answered question overall, although some candidates defined economic growth rather than explaining the benefit.

Question 22diii – Nearly all candidates could identify and analyse a cost of economic growth and relate it to the UK. Many candidates found it hard to demonstrate evaluative skills such as saying that economic growth may lead to the development of more environmentally friendly processes after arguing that there will be more pollution. Evaluation was often reserved for an unsubstantiated judgement at the end of the response.

Question 23a – A well answered question overall, although some candidates omitted the \$ sign.

Question 23b – A well answered question overall

Question 23c – Most candidates identified reasons for a persistent current account deficit but confused this with a government budget deficit. Given that this question is worth 6 marks, some candidates concentrated on one cause, which could be enough however only demonstrated one link in their 'chain of reasoning'. For example, writing that more competitive producers overseas resulting in demand falling for UK producers/increasing for exports and then nothing further. Other candidates quoted statistics, rather than analysing them.

Question 23di – Most candidates identified the link between Free Trade Areas and tariffs, but few either quoted the textbook definition or identified the fact that signatories can have differing arrangements with other countries.


Question 23dii – This question was generally answered well, although some candidates stated a cost, rather than explaining it.

Question 23diii – Most candidates identified benefits to producers (and rarely only to consumers and/or the government) and were able to give a superficial judgement at the end. Only the highest achieving candidates were able to evaluate as part of a logical argument however.

Common misconceptions

Candidates generally answered the questions in context. Occasionally there was a confusion between an economy and the government.

Key teaching and learning points – comments on improving performance

	AfL	<p>Teaching evaluative skills for the 6 mark questions that require this skill would be the priority. This can be demonstrated by better use of comparative terms or mitigating/limiting factors. Also quoting different points of view would be beneficial, but not as a separate point. Evaluation is not one point argued and then a different one written as a separate point, but the comparison of them.</p>
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