

CAMBRIDGE TECHNICALS LEVEL 3 (2016)

Examiners' report

BUSINESS

05834–05837, 05878

Unit 1 Summer 2024 series

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Introduction

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

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. A selection of candidate answers is also provided. 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.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

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Unit 1 series overview

This series has seen some successful responses relating to operating as a private limited company (as illustrated by responses to Question 29). Examiners have also seen some improvement in candidates' understanding of organisational structure (as illustrated by responses to Question 26 (a)). However, yet again, LO7 appears to be an area of the specification for which candidates are not fully prepared. In particular, LO7.2 (sources of finance) as highlighted by responses to Questions 2 and 24. In addition, LO6 relating to legislation (as highlighted by responses to Questions 13 and 26 (b)) is a topic which candidates appear to have difficulty assimilating and is, therefore, worthy of extra attention. In contrast, questions relating to business functional areas which have performed poorly in previous sessions, performed as expected this year (see Question 5, Question 14 and Question 21).

As ever, those candidates who showed a sound understanding across the breadth of the Specification, coupled with an ability to analyse and evaluate, did well on this paper.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> researched a wide variety of businesses, targeted to the research brief (for Section B) demonstrated numerical skill (in Questions 7 and 28 (a) (ii)) and the ability to interpret data from graphs (Question 28 (a) (i)) answered questions contextually (in Sections B and C) made judgements supported by justified reasoning (Section C extended response questions). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> left answer spaces blank (including multiple-choice questions and Questions 28 (a) (ii) and 28 (b)) showed little evidence of studying the topics indicated in the pre-release research brief (particularly evident was a lack of knowledge of a venture capital as a form of finance (Question 24)) ended extended response questions abruptly, without making an overall judgement demonstrated little, or no, knowledge of specific legislation (Specification reference LO6) in particular Question 13 the Consumer Protection Act and Question 26 employment protection legislation.

Section A gives time for candidates to settle into the exam. This section of the paper was generally well answered by most candidates. Once again, a few candidates lost out on marks because they ticked two responses, say A and D. Such hedging cannot be given marks. Candidates should be instructed not to take this approach. Where a candidate indicates a response and subsequently changes their mind, they should clearly cross out their original tick. In addition, some candidates lost marks by leaving an MCQ entirely blank which is not good examination technique. Candidates should be encouraged to indicate a response to all 20 questions.

Section B was still not as well answered as might be expected, especially given the clear guidance on areas to focus on in the pre-issued research brief for this examination. Some less successful scripts showed no evidence at all of research for Section B, the one area of the paper where candidates can prepare in advance. Centres are advised to devote adequate time to the preparation of candidates for Section B of this paper, the research brief for each series is specific to that series and is issued well in advance of the examination.

How the research brief linked to the questions in Section B

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder groups and the degree of influence they possess. A venture capitalist as a long-term source of finance for a business. How technological factors affect a business. How organisations maintain financial control. Non-financial factors that contribute to the success of a business. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Question 25 Give an example from a business you have researched of each of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> meeting the requests of a stakeholder group with a high degree of influence; not meeting the requests of a stakeholder group with a low degree of influence. Question 24 Identify two advantages and two disadvantages to a business that you have researched of sourcing long-term finance from a venture capitalist. Question 23 Analyse one positive impact and one negative impact on a business that you have researched of automating its production processes. Question 21 Identify two tasks performed by the finance function that help a business you have researched maintain financial control. Question 22 Explain how two non-financial factors have contributed to the success of a business that you have researched.
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The wording of Questions 22 and 24 linked extremely closely with the wording of the pre-issued research brief, however some candidates still showed very limited knowledge or understanding. Centres are advised to emphasise to candidates the importance of focussing their business research and revision on the topics indicated in the corresponding series' research brief.

Evidence suggests that those candidates who chose to answer all five questions in Section B on the same business did less well than those who selected a business according to the question. Candidates should be encouraged to select the business they use depending on the question, i.e. to choose a specific business for which their understanding is suitable for answering the question. This was especially important for Question 23, where the business needed to have experienced automation and for Question 24 where the business needed to have a venture capitalist.

As always, Section C contained three high-tariff, extended-response questions. These questions were level of response marked. Candidates needed to demonstrate the skills of analysis (Level 3) and evaluation (Level 4) to gain the highest marks.

Analytical skill (Level 3)

Analysis requires candidates to develop their responses to include impacts on the business/business owner.

It should be noted that phrases such as 'this will change the firm's reputation' (Question 27), 'this will affect her stress levels' (Question 29) or 'this will impact on revenue' (Question 30), cannot be given marks because the direction of the impact is unclear. Candidates need to make explicit the direction of the impact, i.e. 'improved reputation', 'reduced stress levels' and 'increased revenue'.

Evaluative skill (Level 4)

Evaluation requires a reasoned decision that answers the question, i.e. a justification of how the business should alter its service provision (Question 28), the most important advantage of operating a business as a private limited company (Question 29) and a recommendation about how to respond to an expected fall in disposable income (Question 30).

Candidates should be encouraged to reach decisions and give detailed justification to support their argument using contextual information. While an accurate judgement that applies to most businesses would achieve a Level 4 mark, a response which argues using the particular circumstances of the business scenario, in this case a luxury country spa hotel, was more highly rewarded.

Areas which caused most problems on this paper were legal issues (Questions 13 and 26 (b)) and sources of finance (Questions 2 and 24). On the other hand, Question 25 on the degree of influence of stakeholder groups, Question 26 (a) completing an organisation chart and Question 29 on operating a business as a private limited company, were well answered.

Section A overview

Most of the multiple-choice questions were well answered. Those that were more problematic are discussed below.

Question 2

2 Which of the following sources of finance is **not** available to a new company?

A Credit card

B Hire purchase

C Reserves

D Share issue

☐
☐
☐
☐

[1]

This question tested knowledge and understanding of sources of finance, with particular emphasis on financing a new company. Candidate responses were fairly evenly split between the four options. This appears to indicate a lack of understanding about company reserves. Company reserves are built up over time as a company becomes profitable. As such reserves are only available to an established company and not to a new one.

Question 7

7 Joyes Ltd makes children's board games. Its estimated costs and revenues for 2023 are as follows:

- fixed costs: £11 million
- variable costs: 90 p per board game
- average selling price: £15.00 per board game.

Joyes Ltd's break-even level of output for 2023 is estimated to be:

- A** 78 015 board games
- B** 183 334 board games
- C** 780 142 board games
- D** 1 833 334 board games

☐
☐
☐
☐

[1]

This question tested a candidate's ability to calculate break-even. Despite no sub-calculations of fixed or variable costs being required, less than half of candidates were able to select the correct response.

$BE = FC / (SP - VC) = 11,000,000 / £14.10 = 780,141.8 = 780,142$ board games.

It is noted that of those candidates who answered incorrectly, many had jotted down an incorrect formula.

Assessment for learning



Centres are advised to get candidates to practice calculating break-even at frequent intervals throughout the programme of study. Possibly as a starter to a lesson, while waiting for all students to arrive.

Question 13

13 The law that makes manufacturers responsible for the safety of the goods they produce is called the:

- A** Consumer Protection Act
- B** Customer Protection Act
- C** Health and Safety Act
- D** Health and Safety at Work Act

☐
☐
☐
☐

[1]

This question tested knowledge of legislation. Very few candidates gave the correct response (A, Consumer Protection Act). The most common response given was C, Health and Safety Act. This is concerning given that there is no act of this name. Centres are advised to make sure that candidates are aware of the accurate names of legislation as listed in the specification (or their current equivalents).

Question 20

- 20** The following figures have been extracted from Jindo plc's financial statements for the final quarter of 2023.

	October	November	December
Net cash flow	£15 million	(£22 million)	£20 million

According to the figures, which **one** of the following statements is true?

- A** Cash inflows exceeded cash outflows in October 2023 and December 2023
- B** During the final quarter of 2023 the company made an overall profit of £13 million
- C** In November 2023 the company made a loss of £22 million
- D** The company's bank account was overdrawn in November 2023

☐☐☐☐

[1]

This question tested understanding of net cash flow. Net cash flow is calculated by deducting cash outflows for a period from cash inflows. If cash inflows exceed cash outflows, then the net cash flow will be positive. If cash outflows exceed cash inflows, then the net cash flow will be negative. Very few candidates gave the correct response (Option A 'cash inflows exceeded cash outflows in October 2023 and December 2023'). Some candidates incorrectly chose response D, indicating confusion between net cash flow and opening/closing balance. However, by far the most common incorrect responses were B and C. Neither of these can possibly be correct as cash flow, i.e. the timing of monies in and out of a business, cannot be used to calculate profit or loss.

Misconception



It appears to be a common misconception that cashflow can be used to calculate profit or loss, it cannot. To calculate profit, the costs and revenues attributable to the appropriate accounting period need to be known. Cashflow cannot supply this information as it only logs when money was received or payment made, and not to which accounting period that flow of cash refers.

Assessment for learning



Centres are advised to make sure that candidates have a clear understanding of the difference between cash flow and profit.

Section B overview

The questions in Section B should be answered with direct reference to candidates' personal research, as directed by the pre-released research brief available in advance of the examination. How each question in this section links to the research brief is tabulated in the Series Review section at the beginning of this report.

For each question in this section, candidates are advised to select the most appropriate business from the ones that they have researched, rather than answer all questions about the same business. Evidence suggests that choosing a specific business on which to answer each question leads to better focused responses and higher marks.

Question 21

- 21** Identify **two** tasks performed by the finance function that help a business you have researched maintain financial control.

Name of business

Activity of business

1

2

[2]

Most candidates picked up marks on this question. Of those candidates who did not, the most common errors were naming financial concepts rather than tasks (e.g. 'fixed costs', rather than 'calculating fixed costs', etc) and giving vague responses which showed no understanding of the term 'finance' (e.g. 'producing financial reports', rather than 'producing a budget variance report', etc).

Question 22

- 22** Explain how **two** non-financial factors have contributed to the success of a business that you have researched.

Name of business

Activity of business

1

.....

.....

.....

2

.....

.....

.....

[4]

Most candidates picked up some marks on this question by naming at least one non-financial factor that might have contributed to business success. Those who were given the highest marks explained their responses using context. Consider the following two responses 'Asda has a good reputation for selling value for money products' and 'Asda has a good reputation for selling value for money groceries'. The difference is only one word 'groceries' instead of the more generic 'products'. However, this difference affects the marks, and while the first response would gain 1 mark (for a non-contextual explanation), the second response would gain 2 marks (for a contextual explanation).

Exemplar 1

Name of business Laiphoil and Partners

Activity of business supermarket

1 They sell products that people
will always need like food
so people or have to go there
no matter what the economy is like

2 They have great customer service
meaning ~~however~~ people who
don't mind spending a little extra
can get good customer service

Exemplar 1 shows the importance of giving contextual answers.

Response 1 covers bullet point 7 on the mark scheme (product range). It gains 2 marks because the response is not only correct, but also contextual (note the reference to 'food').

Response 2 covers bullet point 16 on the mark scheme (customer service). It is a valid response but this time there is no context, so is given only 1 of the available 2 marks.

Three marks out of an available 4 are given. To gain full marks, response 2 would need to be contextual. The candidate could have achieved this by adding 'on their groceries' or even 'on their food' after 'don't mind spending a little extra'

Assessment for learning



Centres are advised to encourage candidates to avoid generic wording like 'product', 'goods', 'units', 'items', 'services', 'output', etc and instead refer to the specific product or service the business is providing. This is more likely to form part of a contextual response, potentially gaining more marks.

Question 23

- 23** Analyse **one** positive impact and **one** negative impact on a business that you have researched of automating its production processes.

Name of business

Activity of business

Positive impact

.....

.....

Negative impact

.....

.....

[6]

Candidates needed to name one positive impact and one negative impact on a business of automating its production process. The positive impact was almost always a more successful response. Common correct responses being higher speed, less human error, lower wage costs. A lot of the negative responses offered could not be given marks because they were negatives for the employee rather than the business, e.g. lose their job. The question clearly required candidates to respond from the business' perspective.

Analysis marks were given where the business-facing consequence of a valid impact was clearly stated, e.g. 'higher speed (1) leading to greater output (+1)', 'less human error (1) improving quality (+1)' or 'lower wage costs (1) increasing profit (+1)'. Likewise for negative impacts.

To be given full marks, the response also needed to be contextual rather than generic.

Exemplar 2

Name of business Cadbury's

Activity of business Chocolate brand.

Positive impact Automating its production processes has helped cadbury's in the long run to reduce its costs and increase its efficiency. This is because the chocolate bars can be made quicker with machines and machines ones bought don't need paying a wage like people. As a result, this means cadbury's output can be higher as they have a quicker production process along with increased profits as it cuts costs.

Negative impact A negative impact is that in the short term, it was a large cost for cadbury's to purchase the machinery to make the chocolate bars as a result their profits will've been lower for a short while until they made back all of what they spent on the automation.

Exemplar 2 is given full marks. The candidate's positive impact is that 'chocolate bars can be made quicker'. This gains 2 marks, 1 for identification and 1 for context. The analytical consequence is stated earlier in the response and linked using the word 'because'. Therefore, the reference to 'reduce its costs' is awardable as analysis.

The candidate's negative impact is written the conventional way round with the point preceding the analysis. In this case 'large cost for Cadbury's to purchase the machinery to make the chocolate bars' gains the identification mark and the context mark. The analytical consequence i.e. 'profits will have been lower' follows.

Question 24

- 24** Identify **two** advantages and **two** disadvantages to a business that you have researched of sourcing long-term finance from a venture capitalist.

[4]

Name of business

Activity of business

Advantage 1

.....

Advantage 2

.....

Disadvantage 1

.....

Disadvantage 2

.....

Most candidates were given half marks or less on this question, with the disadvantages proving slightly more accessible than the advantages. By far the most common correct disadvantages related to a loss of equity/profit and loss of control/decision making. Common correct advantages included expertise/networking and not having to pay the money back.

Many candidates appeared to confuse venture capital with other sources of finance. This led to suggestions such as 'buy now pay later' and 'interest will be charged', which could not be given marks.

Assessment for learning



Centres are advised to make sure candidates have a clear understanding of the eleven sources of finance listed in the specification.

Question 25

- 25** The degree of influence a stakeholder group possesses usually affects how a business responds to its requests.

Give an example from a business you have researched of each of the following:

- 1 meeting the requests of a stakeholder group with a high degree of influence;
- 2 not meeting the requests of a stakeholder group with a low degree of influence.

Name of business

Activity of business

1

.....

.....

2

.....

.....

[4]

This question was testing TC 5.3 exemplification bullet point 1 of the specification, i.e. 'the degree of influence individual stakeholders possess is likely to determine how businesses respond to the individual stakeholder's objectives'.

To gain full marks, the candidate needed to name a stakeholder group and state what request was/was not met. Most candidates given at least 2 marks for naming two stakeholder groups. Of those who did not, the most common errors were to use the same stakeholder group in both responses (this could not be given marks because the stakeholder group cannot be declared as having both a high degree of influence and a low one) or to name individuals, e.g. Steve Jobs, rather than a stakeholder group as required by the question.

OCR support



Centres are advised to give candidates plenty of practice in preparing for Section B, since it is the one section of the exam where candidates can prepare well in advance. [Teach Cambridge](#) contains copies of all previous series' research briefs and question papers. A research brief could be set for homework with questions being tackled as a test in class (simulating the experience of an exam) or one or more questions from Section B could be tackled as part of a lesson starter or plenary.

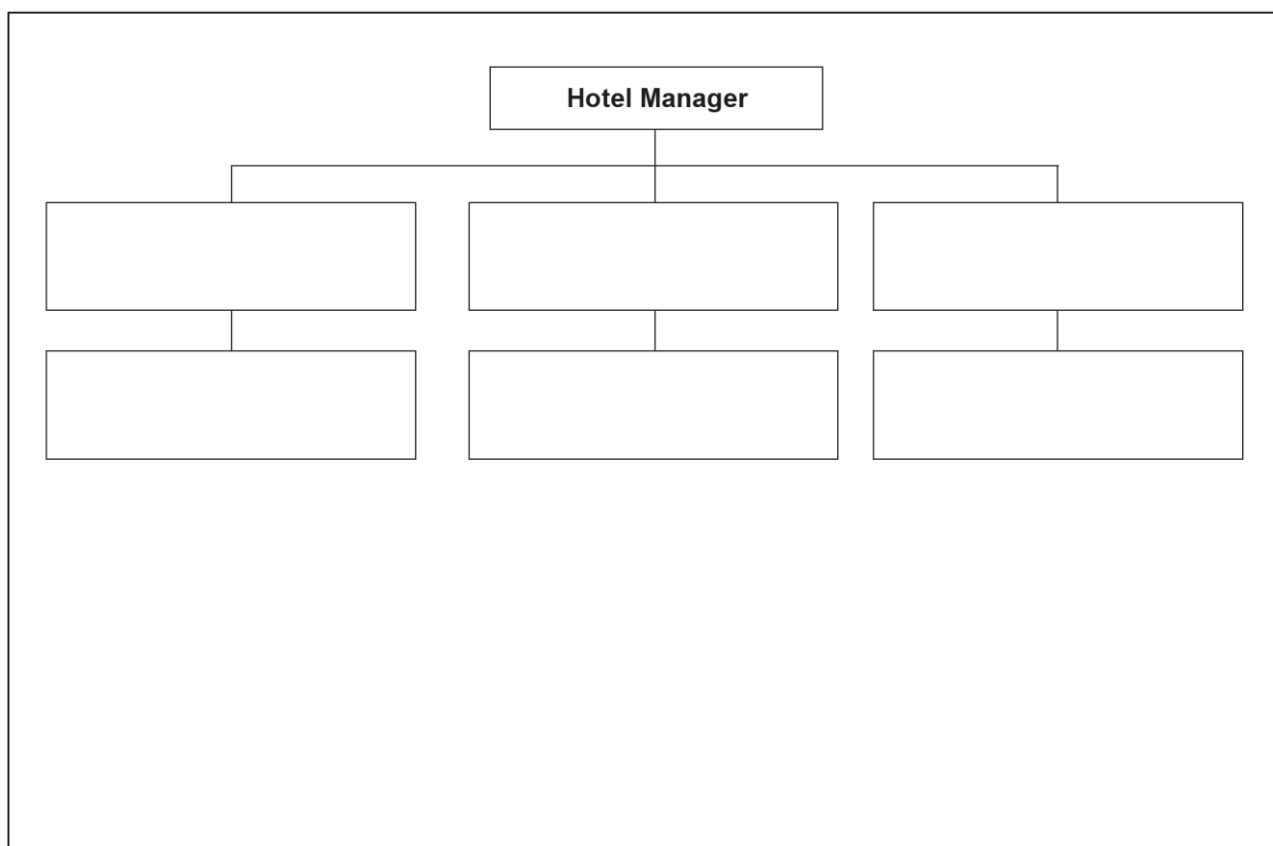
Section C overview

All of the questions in this section link to the business scenario which should be read carefully before answering any of the questions in this Section of the exam paper.

Question 26 (a)

26

(a) Complete the organisation chart below for Fordland Manor Ltd's Hotel division.



[4]

Most candidates were able to extract the required details from the business scenario and produced an accurate response and were given full marks.

Question 26 (b)

- (b) Name **two** pieces of employment protection legislation that Fordland Manor Ltd appears to have complied with.

1

2

[2]

Candidates who were able to accurately name two pieces of employment legislation that the business appears to have complied with were given marks for this question.

Less successful responses tended to make two types of errors: either giving vague responses (e.g. 'Minimum Wage Act' instead of 'National Minimum Wage Act') or giving areas of a law rather than the name of the legislation (e.g. limits on work hours, rather than 'Working Time Directive').

A few candidates named pieces of legislation, but gave responses that did not relate to employment legislation. Answers such as 'Consumer Rights Act', 'Copyright, Designs and Patents Act' or 'Companies Acts', etc could not be given marks.

Question 26 (c)

- (c) Explain **one** potential consequence for Fordland Manor Ltd if Zayn further delays listening to employee concerns about safety.

.....

.....

.....

..... [2]

Most candidates were able to suggest a potential consequence on the business, thus gaining at least 1 mark. By far the most common correct responses were 'being sued'/'fined' or 'employees leaving'/'absenteeism'. Those that gave a contextual response, gained full marks.

Those who did less well on this question tended to give responses relating to consequences on the employees or customers, rather than on the business.

Question 27

- 27** Zayn has conducted some customer research to identify how Fordland Manor Ltd might improve its business performance. He gave last month's guests a list of five suggested improvements to the business. He then asked the guests to rate these suggested improvements in order of preference. The guests' preferences are shown in the table below.

Suggested improvements to our service provision	% of guests who rated the suggested improvement as their first choice
Be more environmentally friendly	43%
Make better use of available land	36%
Focus on corporate social responsibility activities	20%
Make the dining options more innovative	1%
Open an on-site leisurewear shop	0%

Recommend how Fordland Manor Ltd should alter its service provision in response to the preferences of its guests as shown in the table above. Justify your answer.

[12]

As with all 12-mark questions on this paper, the question is level of response marked. The type of response that examiners were looking for is shown in the exemplar response in the published mark scheme. This question centres around how the business should alter its service provision in response to survey results indicating that guests were interested in a greater focus on CSR, land use and being environmentally friendly.

More successful responses gave practical suggestions on how the business could alter its service provision, e.g. provide recycle bins, build a golf course or raise money for humanitarian aid. Less successful responses tended to give vague ideas such as 'reduce waste' or 'improve energy efficiency' or even 'be more environmentally friendly' without saying how the business could achieve this. Practical suggestions, i.e. alterations in service provision were needed to gain marks.

By far the most common practical suggestion was 'install solar panels (Level 1), attracting more customers (Level 2) leading to greater revenue' (Level 3). Such a chain of argument scored 7 of the available 12 marks solely for discussion of this one change in service provision.

Other commonly cited suggestions (i.e. Level 1's) were 'create a play park' and 'install lighting sensors'. Many candidates were able to develop their responses through a chain of argument to the impact on the business, gaining extra Level 3 marks.

Once Level 3 had been achieved, candidates needed to justify why one or more of their suggestions would be beneficial to the business in order to achieve Level 4. Those candidates who gave a contextual justification achieved a minimum of 11 marks.

Some candidates attempted a justification of one or more specific methods, thus gaining Level 4 marks. The majority ended their responses abruptly with no attempt to justify their recommendations.

Assessment for learning

Centres are advised to encourage candidates to always write an evaluative conclusion justifying their response to all 12-mark questions.

Question 28 (a) (i), (ii) and (b)**28****(a)** Refer to **Figs. 1 & 2**.**(i)** Identify:

- the year when the business' **revenue** performance was the best

.....

- the year when the business' **cost** performance was the best.

.....

[2]

(ii) Calculate the amount by which Fordland Manor Ltd's 2023 profit **fell short** of the profit made by the business in 2020.

Show your workings.

[3]

(b) Name the financial statement that summarises the annual revenues, costs and profits of a business.

..... **[1]**

Question 28 tested candidate understanding of revenues, costs and profits and was split into three parts. Questions 28 (a) (i) was well answered by most candidates. Question 29 a) (ii) dichotomised candidates: many were given full marks, while others did not even know how to make a start. Question 28 (b) proved difficult for most candidates with less than a quarter giving the correct response, i.e. income statement.

Question 29

- 29** Analyse **three** advantages to Jane of operating Fordland Manor as a private limited company rather than as a sole trader.

Which advantage is most important? Justify your answer.

[12]

As with all 12-mark questions on this paper, this question was level of response marked. The type of response the examiner was looking for is shown in the exemplar response in the published mark scheme. This question required candidates to consider the advantages of operating a business as a private limited company rather than as a sole trader

There were many successful responses for this question, with at least half of candidates knowing that a private limited company has limited liability, separate legal identity from the owner or the ability to issue shares. These Level 1 responses were frequently analysed moving the candidate directly to a Level 3 mark. Less successful responses wrote about control, decision making, workload and responsibility, seemingly based on a private limited company having lots of employees (or perhaps erroneously thinking that a sole trader is not allowed employees). Either way, such responses could not be given marks as they do not relate to the difference in legal status.

In an attempt to encourage all candidates to make a justified judgement for Level 4, the question demanded this explicitly. The majority of candidates, therefore, wrote a final paragraph which selected an advantage. Those that gave a valid reason for their choice were given Level 4. Those candidates who gave a contextual justification achieved a minimum of 11 marks.

It is good practice to re-read the question before attempting to write the conclusion. This hopefully avoids writing an incorrect type of judgement. For this particular question, an incorrect type of conclusion would be that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages or that a private limited company is preferable over being a sole trader. Neither of these types of conclusions answers the question set. The question explicitly asks candidates to pick one advantage (and one advantage only) and justify why it is more important than any other advantages mentioned in the response.

Question 30

30 Jane has just read the following announcement on her newsfeed:

“The UK government expects disposable income levels across the UK to fall significantly over the next three years.”

Jane knows that low levels of disposable income are a major threat to her business.

Advise Jane how Fordland Manor Ltd should respond to the expected fall in disposable income levels across the UK. Justify your answer.

[12]

As with all 12-mark questions on this paper, this question was level of response marked. The type of response examiners was looking for is shown in the exemplar response in the published mark scheme. This question centres around responding to an expected fall in UK disposable income levels.

Some successful responses were seen to this question with practical suggestions such as reducing room rates, offering deals in low season, reducing staffing, advertising overseas, etc. All of these were appropriate for a period where disposable income is falling and were given Level 1. Unfortunately, some candidates suggested that in a period of falling disposable income, prices should be increased (supposedly to make up for the loss of customers) or wages should be increased (supposedly to increase their standard of living) and these suggestions are incorrect. Some candidates also suggested that the cost of rooms should be lowered which has a very different meaning to the price of rooms being lowered.

To move through the levels of response candidates needed to explain the reason for their suggestion (Level 2) and analyse the advantage/disadvantage to the business of their suggestion (Level 3). One such common chain of argument was ‘lower prices (Level 1) so that customers can still afford to stay at the hotel (Level 2), improving cash flow (Level 3)’.

Many successful responses ended abruptly after the final suggestion had been analysed. To improve their responses, candidates should be encouraged to add an evaluative conclusion in order to achieve Level 4.

Misconception



It appears to be a common misconception that the terms ‘cost’ and ‘price’ are interchangeable. They are not. ‘Cost’ relates to expenses whereas ‘price’ relates to revenue.

In a question like Question 30, interchanging these terms totally alters its meaning. Care must be taken to use the correct technical term.

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If you don't have a Teach Cambridge account yet, ask your exams officer to set you up – just send them this [link](#) and ask them to add you as a Teacher.

Access the courses **anytime, anywhere and at your own pace**. You can also revisit the courses as many times as you need.

Which courses are available?

There are **two types** of online course: an **introductory module** and **subject-specific** courses.

The introductory module, Building your Confidence in Internal Assessment, is designed for all teachers who are involved in internal assessment for our qualifications. It covers the following topics:

- the purpose and benefits of internal assessment
- the roles and responsibilities of teachers, assessors, internal verifiers and moderators
- the principles and methods of standardisation
- the best practices for collecting, storing and submitting evidence
- the common issues and challenges in internal assessment and how to avoid them.

The subject-specific courses are tailored for each qualification that has non-exam assessment (NEA) units, except for AS Level and Entry Level. They cover the following topics:

- the structure and content of the NEA units
- the assessment objectives and marking criteria for the NEA units
- examples of student work with commentary and feedback for the NEA units
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