



**Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit
State Examinations Commission**

LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION 2010

BUSINESS

**ORDINARY LEVEL CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT
HIGHER LEVEL CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT**

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1. General Introduction

The current syllabus in Leaving Certificate Business has been on the Senior Cycle curriculum since 1997. The syllabus is available on the website of the Department of Education and Skills (www.education.ie) under the topic headed: 'Curriculum, Syllabus & Teaching Guides'.

The Business syllabus emphasises the vocational dimension of the subject. The syllabus is common to both Higher and Ordinary Levels. However, some outcomes are designated Higher Level only.

The Leaving Certificate examination comprises of a written examination of two and a half hours duration at Ordinary Level and a written examination of three hours duration at Higher Level. The 2010 examination was the twelfth examination since the introduction of the revised Business Syllabus into schools in 1997. The first examination of the revised Business Syllabus was held in 1999.

The following table shows the total number and percentage of candidates taking Business at Leaving Certificate, from 2007 to 2010.

	2007	2008	2009	2010
Candidates	18,958	18,734	18,423	18,790
Total No. of Leaving Certificate Candidates (established)	50,873	52,143	54,197	54,480
Percentage taking LC Business %	37%	36%	34%	34%

*Popularity is used, in this report, in the context of the subject/section/question most chosen by candidates.

Table 1 indicates that the percentage of candidates taking LC Business as a percentage of the total cohort taking the established Leaving Certificate in the period 2007-2010 has fallen slightly since 2007.

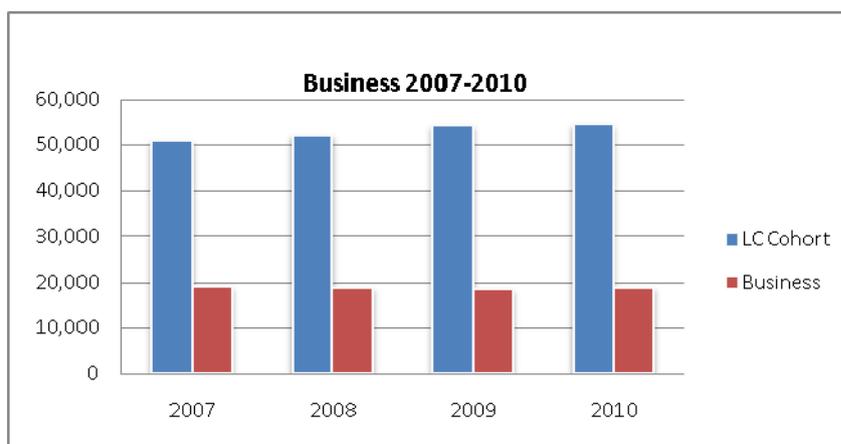


Chart 1: Percentage of candidates opting for LC Business (2007-2010)

2. Ordinary Level

2.1 Introduction

The written examination paper is two and a half hours and has two mandatory elements, SECTION 1 and SECTION 2. A variety of questioning techniques is used and a flexible and varied approach is taken to the style of questions in the written examination.

SECTION 1, carrying 100 marks (25%), consists of 15 short-answer questions and candidates are required to answer any 10. This section, which is returned with the candidate's answer book, has questions which may be drawn from any area of the syllabus.

SECTION 2 carrying 300 marks (75%), consists of 8 questions and candidates are required to answer 4. There are two Parts to SECTION 2 and candidates are asked to take 1 question from Part 1 (out of a possible three questions), 2 questions from Part 2 (out of a possible five questions) and 1 other question from either Part 1 or Part 2. All questions in SECTION 2 carry 75 marks each. The marks for the four questions required for this section (300 marks) are combined with the 100 marks for SECTION 1 to give the total marks for the examination paper of 400.

This report should be read in conjunction with the examination papers and marking schemes, which are available on the State Examinations Commission website, using the following address: www.examinations.ie

Table 2 – Business Ordinary Level 2007-2010				
	2007	2008	2009	2010
Candidates	6288	6579	6013	6095
Total No. of Leaving Certificate (Established) Candidates	50873	52143	54197	54480
Percentage taking LC Business OL	12%	13%	11%	11%

Table 2 above indicates that the percentage of candidates taking LC Business Ordinary Level as a percentage of the total cohort taking the established Leaving Certificate in the period 2007-2010.

2.2 Performance of Candidates

A total of 6095 candidates sat the examination in 2010 compared with 6013 in 2009. This represents an increase of 82(1.3%) candidates sitting the examination paper. The performance of candidates in general was very similar to previous years and this is reflected in the grades awarded. There was a significant number of excellent performances. Some candidates failed to give proper consideration to the question cues used in the question stem, and thereby did not develop points adequately. Some candidates tend to give a minimum of detail in their answers.

The grades for LC Business Ordinary Level for 2007 to 2010 inclusive are presented in Tables 3 below.

Table 3 Business Ordinary Level 2007-2010

Year	Total	A	B	C	ABC	D	E	F	NG	EFNG
2007	6,288	10.60	30.80	32.80	74.20	19.50	4.10	2.00	0.30	6.40
2008	6,579	10.70	32.10	31.20	74.00	19.10	4.30	2.00	0.50	6.80
2009	6,013	10.20	32.00	31.60	73.80	19.00	5.10	1.90	0.30	7.30
2010	6,095	10.80	32.70	30.90	74.40	17.80	4.90	2.60	0.40	7.90

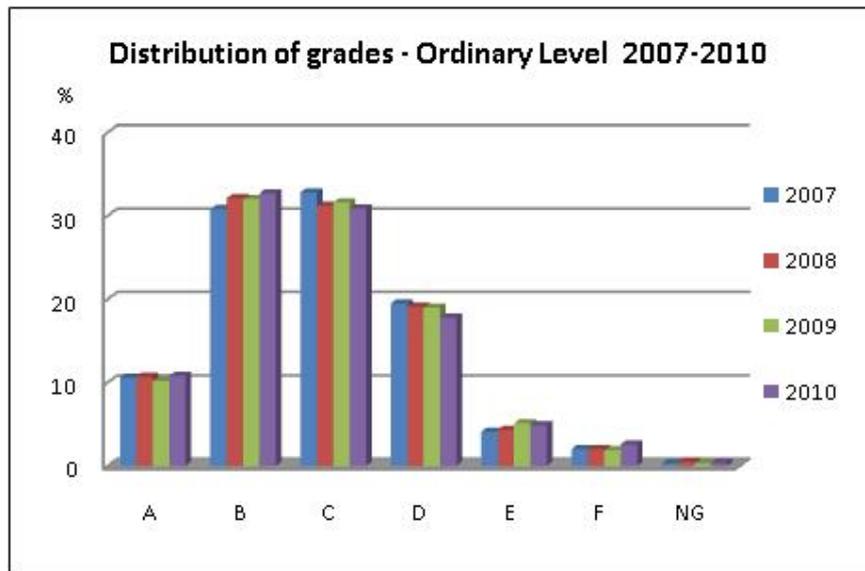


Chart 2: Grade Distribution at Ordinary Level 2007-2010

Analysis of the results for 2010 and 2009 show the percentage gaining an A grade was up by 0.6 percentage points, a B grade was up by 0.7 percentage points, a C grade was down by 0.7 percentage points while the D grade shows a decrease of 1.2 percentage points. Overall, the ABC rate was 74.4% and shows an increase of 0.6% from 2009. The combined E, F and NG rate shows an increase of 0.6 percentage points.

While the A rate and the ABC rate were broadly in line with previous years, it is noticeable that the E, F, and NG rate has been increasing steadily since 2007, especially the F rate. Candidates who were awarded Grade E or lower did not complete the required number of questions, or develop points adequately and this had an adverse effect on their final grade. Examiners considered the examination paper to be fair and accessible and presented a wide variety of relevant topics. The general feedback from examiners was that, despite the higher E, F and NG rate, the standard of answering in general was better than it was in 2009.

2.3. Analysis of Candidate Performance

In 2010, the work of the candidates who sat the Ordinary Level examination displayed the following patterns:

Table 4	Marks	Topic	Taking Question	Popularity Ranking	Marks Earned	Ranking of Marks
SECTION 1	100	Short Answer Questions	100%	1	79%	1
SECTION 2						
PART 1						
Q1	75	Consumer/Industrial Relations	84%	1	52%	7
Q2	75	Business Organisations/ Environmental Responsibilities	25%	8	52%	7
Q3	75	Government and Business	52%	5	59%	5
PART 2						
Q4	75	Enterprise and Enterprise Skills	66%	2	63%	3
Q5	75	Club AGM/Insurance	32%	7	53%	6
Q6	75	HRM / IT	64%	3	67%	1
Q7	75	Marketing	43%	6	63%	3
Q8	75	Sole Trader/ Advertising	53%	4	65%	2

Table 4 above is derived from an analysis carried out on the marks awarded in the initial sample 20 scripts, chosen at random by each examiner. It shows the average mark scored in percentage terms per question, the rank order of individual questions in terms of average score, the percentage of candidates who answered each question and the order of popularity of individual questions. While SECTION 1 has questions ranging over the entire syllabus, SECTION 2 Part 1 has questions based on Units 1, 6 and 7. SECTION 2 Part 2 has questions based on Units 2, 3, 4 and 5.

SECTION 1

Attempt Frequency: 100%
Average Mark: 79%

SECTION 1, carrying 100 marks, consists of 15 short-answer questions and candidates are required to answer any 10. Answers in SECTION 1 are required to be concise and specific.

SECTION 1 was generally well answered with many candidates achieving high marks. The average mark earned for SECTION 1 was 79, which equates to a percentage mark of 79%. This was an increase of 4 percentage points on the previous year. Many candidates attempted more than the 10 questions required. The least popular questions were Nos. 12, 14 and 15 and these were also among the ones with the lowest average mark, along with Nos. 2 and 11.

In 2010, examiners considered SECTION 1 to be candidate-friendly, well laid-out with a good mix of questions, which allowed candidates to score well.

Section 1, carrying 100 marks, consists of 15 short-answer questions and candidates are required to answer any 10.

1 What do the following letters stand for? PR CV SWOT

Very popular and well answered. PR presented some difficulty for candidates.

2 The following information is available from the final accounts of Casey Ltd on 31/12/2009. Current Assets € 500,000, Current Liabilities €200,000 Calculate: (i) Working Capital (ii) Working Capital Ratio

Very popular and well answered, especially Part (i). Part (ii) proved quite difficult for some candidates, but presentation of workings allowed some marks to be awarded.

3 Sectors of industry:

Very popular. While many candidates achieved full marks here, some candidates could only manage to answer one or two of the five points correctly.

4 State two benefits of EU membership for Irish business:

Fairly popular. The average mark was low because many candidates gave one-word answers and some candidates had difficulty giving a second benefit.

5 Matching Business Terms:

Very popular and very well answered. Many candidates got full marks here.

6 Two effects of high interest rates on business:

Fairly popular. Candidates related it to the current economic situation and tended to give extreme consequences such as bankruptcy or closure, rather than higher overheads etc.

7 Memorandum:

Very popular and well answered. Some candidates put the message on the “Reference” line, thereby losing the mark assigned for “Reference”.

8 True or False:

Very popular. Most candidates identified at least three of the statements correctly. Strategic planning presented the most difficulty.

9 List three grounds on which Employment Discrimination is outlawed under the Employment Equality Act 1998:

One of the most popular questions and also one of the best answered. The most common error was the inclusion of ‘pregnancy’ as one of the grounds.

10 State two benefits of a ‘Partnership’ as a type of business:

Popular but generally not well answered. Shared workload and extra capital were the usual correct answers but an incorrect answer frequently given was limited liability.

11 Stock Control:

Fairly popular. While most candidates had some knowledge of stock control, only a small number could write two distinct points. Having enough/adequate stock to satisfy customer needs was rarely given as part of an answer.

12 Two ways in which the Irish Government supports business:

Fairly popular. Candidates lost marks by not naming the agency/organisation through which the government provides the support.

13 (i) Complete the three missing stages in the chain of distribution:

Fairly popular but generally poorly answered. Many candidates did not know the required terms: Wholesaler, Retailer and Consumer.

(ii) Give two examples of a ‘Manufacturer’:

Well answered. A company name rather than a generic example was required here.

14 Explain the following needs in Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs:

(i) Basic Needs; (ii) Safety/Security Needs.

Fairly popular. While the ‘Basic Needs’ level was reasonably well answered, the ‘Safety/Security Needs’ level was poorly answered and often omitted.

15 Identify three of the main headings in a business plan. (Example: Finance)

This was the least popular question in SECTION 1. It also had the lowest standard of answering. Many candidates wrote Finance (the example given) and could not identify any other heading. Some misunderstood the question and listed management skills.

SECTION 2

SECTION 2 consists of eight questions and candidates are required to answer four of these. There are two parts to Section 2 and candidates are asked to answer one question from Part 1 (three questions), two questions from Part 2 (five questions) and one other question from either Part 1 or Part 2. Each question carries 75 marks.

SECTION 2 was reasonably well-answered, with the majority of candidates attempting the required four questions. Most candidates continue to choose a question from Part 2 as their fourth question. An average of approximately 15% of candidates attempted at least one extra question in SECTION 2. It was noticeable that these candidates earned better marks than those who attempted only the required four questions. This year, the total E, F and NG grades together was higher than in recent years. This was caused by an increase in the F grades especially. One of the main reasons given by examiners for the F grade was that candidates did not attempt the minimum required number of four questions in Section 2.

The most popular questions in SECTION 2 were Questions 1, 4 and 6. However, Question 1 was not among the questions which yielded the highest return in marks to candidates. These questions were 4, 6, 7 and 8. The least popular ranking questions in Section 2 were Questions 2 and 5. Along with Question 1, these questions also yielded the lowest return in marks awarded to candidates.

PART 1

Question 1 – People in Business

Attempt Frequency: 84%

Average Mark: 52%

This was the most popular question on SECTION 2 of the paper but the average mark earned was one of the lowest.

1(A) (i) Name the law that protects the Burkes in this case (purchase of faulty washing machine).

Well answered but marks were lost for omitting the year or omitting one of the words in the title.

**(ii) Explain three legal rights of the Burke family under the law.
Explain one duty of Murray’s electrical store under the law.**

This was not well answered in general. Many candidates referred to the forms of redress rather than the provisions of the Act. The most common weakness was taking the three legal rights to be the three ‘R’s (repair, refund, replacement), which were acceptable as only one point for redress/compensation. Examiners were surprised with candidates’ performance here as a similar question appeared in previous examinations.

(iii) Explain two advantages of taking a case to the Small Claims Court.

Some candidates had excellent knowledge of the Small Claims Court and did very well here. However, there were many who confused it with a court of law and others who had only a vague knowledge of the subject area.

1(B) (i) Explain Picketing:

Most candidates understood this term and it was generally very well answered.

(ii) Outline two functions of a trade union:

While many candidates answered it well, there were some who could outline only one function. “Protecting workers’ rights” and “negotiating for workers” were common correct answers but some candidates gave vague answers such as “arranging strikes” and “giving workers a good job”.

Question 2 – Domestic/International Environment

Attempt Frequency: 25%
Average Mark: 52%

This was the least popular question on SECTION 2 of the paper and the average mark earned was also one of the lowest. Candidates should be encouraged to take time to read all questions in Part 1 before making their choice, as Q.2 and Q.3 can often be very interesting and topical questions.

2(A) State two advantages of a private limited company:

Candidates generally had limited knowledge of a private limited company. They confused it with both partnership and sole trader.

2(B) Outline two environmental responsibilities of business:

Well answered with “pollution”, “recycling” and “proper waste disposal” being the most common correct answers. Some candidates lost marks for not developing their points. When the question cue ‘outline’ is used at the beginning of the sentence, there must be some development of the points made.

2(C) Explain how Wholefood Farm Products Ltd can behave ethically towards:

(i) its customers; (ii) its employees.

Mixed standard of answering here. Some did reasonably well with answers such as “fair wages” and “good working conditions” for employees and “quality goods” for customers. Some candidates just rewrote the stimulus material in the text while others omitted this part altogether. The stimulus material provided is only to guide the candidates’ thinking and it may not have the answers to the specific questions asked.

2(D) State three challenges/difficulties Jim and Martina may have if they decide to export to other markets.

This part was poorly answered. Candidates were unable to come up with three challenges/difficulties in exporting.

2(E) Outline two possible benefits that Wholefood Farm Products Ltd may bring to the local community:

Most candidates stated that local employment would benefit but many were unable to come up with a second valid benefit. Candidates who keep up-to-date with topical business issues can do very well in these questions.

Question 3 – Domestic Environment

Attempt Frequency: 52%
Average Mark: 59%

This was the fifth most popular question in SECTION 2 of the paper. The average mark was also the fifth highest in the ranking of marks. Questions relating to the domestic and international environment (Unit 6 and Unit 7 of syllabus) have traditionally not been popular questions for the Ordinary Level candidate. However, in light of the major developments in the economic environment currently and the topicality of these units, candidates might consider answering these questions in future years.

3(A) (i) Bar Chart:

The Bar Chart was well drawn and well presented by most candidates but marks were lost for two main reasons:

- The omission of a title – essential information on any chart
- Not drawing the chart to the proper scale.

(ii) Outline two effects of increasing unemployment on the Government's income and expenditure:

Candidates did well here and generally wrote more than was necessary about the Government's part in the current economic situation. However, some lost marks by not linking their answer to government's income and/or expenditure. Candidates must read the question carefully to avoid losing marks.

(iii) Outline two effects of increasing unemployment on business:

Many candidates referred back to the Government and the recession in their answers to this part and usually gave only one effect of increasing unemployment on business.

3(B) Increase in number of Irish consumers shopping in Northern Ireland.

(i) State two effects of this situation for the Irish economy:

Candidates were able to relate to the topical nature of this question and most candidates mentioned the reduction in sales in the south. However, only a minority of candidates could state a second effect.

(ii) The Irish Government reduced VAT rates in its December 2009 budget. How can this measure help to reverse the above situation?

A significant number of candidates were able to link the reduced VAT rates to a reduction in prices.

PART 2

The majority of candidates attempted three questions from this part. The most popular questions were Q. 4 and Q. 6. The least popular question in this part was Q.5.

Question 4 - Enterprise / Managing

Attempt Frequency: 66%
Average Mark: 63%

This was the second most popular question in SECTION 2 of the paper. The average mark was the third highest in the ranking of marks.

4(A) Explain the term autocratic (authoritarian) leader.

Very well answered. Most candidates were awarded full marks here.

4(B) Outline two effects that poor employer-employee relationships may have on a business:

Nearly all candidates were able to outline two effects here and to expand well on them. This led to very good marks being awarded.

4(C) Outline three enterprising skills/characteristics displayed by Roisín:

Some candidates performed very well here. Those who lost marks included some specific management characteristics and/or did not refer back to the text, as was required in the question (skills/characteristics displayed by Roisín).

4(D) Name two long-term sources of finance Roisín may have used to help start her business and explain one of them:

Many candidates did not pick up the reference to long-term sources of finance and therefore lost marks with answers such as “bank loan”. Those who identified long-term sources usually had very brief explanations. Two points of information were required in the explanation.

4(E) Explain McGregor’s Theory Y on Motivation, with reference to given text.

While most candidates wrote excellent answers on McGregor’s Theory Y, they lost marks by not linking their answer to the text, as was required in the question. Perhaps students and teachers could adopt a two-column layout for answering this type of question (as demonstrated in the Marking Scheme and Support Notes, pg.14, which are available on www.examinations.ie).

Question 5 – Managing

Attempt Frequency: 32%
Average Mark: 53%

This was the second least popular question on SECTION 2 of the paper and the average mark earned was also one of the lowest.

5(A) Using today’s date draft the Notice and the Agenda for the Annual General Meeting of Glendarn Sports Club. (The Agenda should contain five items)

While this part was reasonably well answered, many candidates lost marks for some or all of the following reasons:

- The notice date (“today’s date”) was not included.
- The date of the examination (“today’s date”) was named as the date for the meeting.
- The date and/or time of the meeting was omitted.
- The name of a hotel was omitted (“a local hotel” was not acceptable).
- Standard AGM items were not included on the Agenda.
- Notice/agenda was not signed.
- When signed, no title was shown (“Secretary” was required).
- Very poor layout of Notice and Agenda.

5(B) (i) Outline two duties of a Chairperson at a meeting.

Generally well answered, but some candidates included secretarial duties here.

(ii) Outline two duties of a Secretary at a meeting.

Candidates failed to notice that it was the duties at a meeting that were required. While most candidates had one duty correct, many lost marks by stating that the

secretary writes the minutes at the meeting. What was required was that the secretary takes notes of discussions and decisions made at the meeting in order to write the minutes afterwards.

5(C) State two advantages of meetings as a method of communication.

This part was well answered. Most candidates knew two advantages of meetings as a method of communication.

5(D) (i) Explain insurance terms: Policy and Claim form

This proved to be the most challenging part of the question. Candidates were unable to give clear explanations of the insurance terms.

(ii) Outline how recent flood damage may affect the club's future insurance premiums.

Most candidates stated that the premium would increase but few candidates related it to the increased risk that the insurance company would take into consideration.

Question 6 – Managing

Attempt Frequency: 64%
Average Mark: 67%

This was the third most popular question in SECTION 2 of the paper. It had the highest average mark in that Section.

6(A) Explain the following terms with reference to the given advertisement:

(i) a Job Description (ii) a Person Specification.

Candidates generally did well here. The better answers related to the given advertisement and relevant details were chosen to distinguish between 'job description' and 'person specification'. Those who lost marks failed to do so.

6(B) State three ways in which Cohan IT Solutions could reward its staff.

Very well answered. Most candidates knew at least three ways and gained good marks here. A wide range of methods of rewarding staff was presented.

6(C) Outline two benefits of teamwork to a business.

Candidates scored well here as they knew the benefits of teamwork. Some lost marks because they did not develop their points.

6(D) State two ways, other than the newspaper, Cohan IT can use to recruit new staff.

This was not answered as well as might have been expected. Many candidates did not relate their answers to the type of position advertised. Television was a common incorrect answer, whereas teletext/aertel would have been acceptable.

6(E) Outline three advantages of Information Technology to a business, giving examples.

All candidates were able to mention some form of IT but many failed to state its advantages. There was also some repetition in the answers with candidates stating the same advantage with similar types of IT.

Question 7 – Business in Action

Attempt Frequency: 43%

Average Mark: 63%

This was the third least popular question on SECTION 2 of the paper but the average mark earned was the third highest in the same section.

7(A) State three factors which affect the price of a product.

While most candidates were able to identify one or two factors, only a minority of candidates could mention three. Marks were lost for one-word answers.

7(B) Product Life Cycle diagram:

While most candidates were able to draw a reasonable diagram, marks were lost by omitting labels for the X and Y axis. Also, some had the stages in the incorrect order or failed to name all the stages. Some incorrect answers included the ‘chain of distribution’ or ‘the four Ps of marketing’. Some omitted this part of the question.

7(C) State two reasons why a business would carry out market research:

Candidates in general knew the reasons here and scored very well.

7(D) (i) State two benefits of using a brand name.

(ii) Give two examples of global brands.

The majority of candidates obtained good marks here. Candidates in general knew at least two benefits of brand names and were able to give relevant examples.

7(E) Explain the term ‘target market’.

Most candidates had a good understanding of a target market and gained good marks. They also presented very good examples.

Question 8 – Managing / Business in Action

Attempt Frequency: 53%

Average Mark: 65%

While this was the fourth most popular question in SECTION 2 of the paper, the average mark earned was the second highest in the ranking of marks.

8(A) State two advantages and two disadvantages of a sole trader business.

The majority of candidates scored full marks here.

8(B) (i) Name three types of insurance Jack should have for his business.

(ii) Give one reason for having each type of insurance.

While most candidates were able to give valid reasons for having each type of insurance, they lost marks by failing to give the correct titles for some of the types of insurance mentioned.

8(C) Outline three advertising media that Jack could use to promote his business.

While the majority of candidates knew three advertising media, many failed to get full marks as they did not develop their answers adequately.

8(D) Apart from price reductions, outline two other methods of sales promotion Jack could use to increase sales.

This was poorly answered in general, as many candidates repeated the sales promotion method given in the question. Many candidates gave two examples of special offers, which is just one method of sales promotion, and thereby lost marks.

8(E) Explain the term 'bank overdraft'.

Most candidates answered this fairly well. They knew the meaning of bank overdraft but some did not explain it adequately, thereby losing some of the marks

2.4 Conclusions

- The percentage of candidates taking the Business examination at Ordinary Level in the period 2007-2010 remained broadly consistent at 33% of the total cohort taking Leaving Certificate Business.
- Despite the slightly higher E, F, NG rate in 2010, the Ordinary Level examination remains accessible for the majority of candidates. The ABC rate for 2010 of 74.4% is broadly consistent with the rates recorded in the previous three years.
- Most well-prepared candidates received very good scores in SECTION 1 of the question paper. The 2010 average percentage award of 79% was one of the highest on record.
- The majority of candidates choose a question from PART 2 as their fourth question in SECTION 2.
- There is a continued over reliance by candidates on certain aspects of the syllabus, e.g. topics like the Consumer, Communication, Marketing and Insurance. Candidates should consider answering questions based on Units 6 and 7, which are very topical in the current business environment.
- Question 1 continues to be the most popular question in SECTION 2, PART 1 of the examination paper. However, the depth of knowledge demonstrated by candidates with regard to consumer legislation was generally disappointing in 2010.
- Candidates generally tend to score well in questions involving a diagram but this was not the case in 2010. Questions 3 and 7 were not very popular and the average marks were only 5th and 3rd overall in SECTION 2.
- Some candidates continue to misinterpret the questions asked and in some cases do not develop the points adequately.

2.5 Recommendations to Teachers and Students

It is recommended that teachers

- ensure students practise examination type questions and are familiar with the layout of the examination paper
- advise students to attempt all 15 questions in SECTION 1 and at least the required 4 questions in SECTION 2
- refer to the teacher guidelines/syllabus documents where they set out the meaning of question cues such as “calculate”, “describe”, “explain”, “outline”, etc
- use the published marking scheme as a resource and a guide when teaching the subject (www.examinations.ie)
- provide regular practice in calculation type questions on the syllabus, e.g. income tax, ratios, etc
- refer in class to current business and economic issues (e.g. increases in taxation, unemployment, industrial relations issues etc.), which will help students to integrate their knowledge of business with everyday experiences
- ensure all units of the syllabus are covered .

It is recommended that students:

- take time to read each question carefully before attempting questions
- familiarise themselves with the layout of the examination paper
- attempt all 15 questions in SECTION 1 and at least the required 4 questions in SECTION 2
- answer all required parts of every question attempted
- are clear on the meaning of the question cues used in the Business syllabus and examination papers. These include: ‘calculate’, ‘describe’, ‘explain’, and ‘outline’
- learn the various formulae on the syllabus
- practise calculation type questions on the syllabus, e.g. insurance, taxation and ratios
- learn how to draft a Notice and an Agenda.
- present all work neatly and ensure writing is legible
- start each new question on a new page
- use any spare time in checking answers for accuracy and completeness
- number and label all questions correctly
- label all graphs and bar charts correctly. Ensure they are drawn to scale and include a title.

3. Higher Level

3.1 Introduction

The Leaving Certificate Higher Level examination paper, while considered time intensive and challenging was considered to be a fair paper. Candidates were rewarded for work done throughout the two years of the course. The paper discriminated well between candidates of different levels of achievement and a full range of performances was observed. There were many positive features of the candidates' performances. Most candidates displayed a very good subject knowledge of the topics covered in the examination paper and recognised the different demands of the questions. Good time-management was evident in a significant number of scripts, with many candidates producing their best response in their final question. As business issues become more prominent in everyday life, examiners commented favourably on the increasing ability of candidates to integrate business theory with everyday experiences. It is hoped that schools and students will continue to see the relevance and value of studying Business at Leaving Certificate level, as part of a broad and balanced curriculum.

Candidates, in general, scored particularly well in SECTION 1 and SECTION 2. The layout of the candidates' work was generally of a high standard with suitable headings and paragraphs containing distinct points, which were well-developed. However, candidates who wrote long essay-type answers frequently lost marks for going off the point and for not developing relevant points adequately.

A small number of candidates seemed to be unprepared for the Higher Level examination and may have been more suited to the Ordinary Level examination.

The written examination is of three hours duration and has three mandatory elements, SECTION 1, SECTION 2 and SECTION 3. A variety of questioning techniques are used and a flexible and varied approach is taken to the style of questions.

This report should be read in conjunction with the examination papers and marking schemes, which are available on the State Examinations Commission website using the following address: www.examinations.ie.

Table 1 shows the total number and percentage of candidates taking Business at Higher Level from 2007 to 2010.

Table 1 – Business Higher Level 2007-2010				
	2007	2008	2009	2010
Candidates	12,670	12,155	12,410	12,695
Total No. of Leaving Certificate (Established) Candidates	50,873	52,143	54,197	54,480
Percentage taking LC Business HL	25%	23%	23%	23%

The number of candidates taking LC Higher Level Business as a percentage of the total cohort of candidates taking Leaving Certificate has remained fairly stable over the years.

3.2 Performance of Candidates

A total of 12,695 candidates sat the examination in 2010 compared with 12,410 in 2009. This represents an increase of 285(2.3%) candidates sitting the examination paper. The answering of candidates was, generally, of a high standard.

Table 2: Business (Higher Level) 2010

Year	Total	A	B	C	ABC	D	E	F	NG	EFNG
2007	12,670	11.40	27.30	28.40	67.10	25.20	5.90	1.80	0.10	7.80
2008	12,155	11.30	29.00	31.00	71.30	22.70	4.80	1.20	0.20	6.20
2009	12,410	11.10	29.50	29.30	69.90	22.90	5.70	1.30	0.10	7.10
2010	12,695	11.10	28.60	31.20	70.90	22.60	5.20	1.10	0.10	6.40

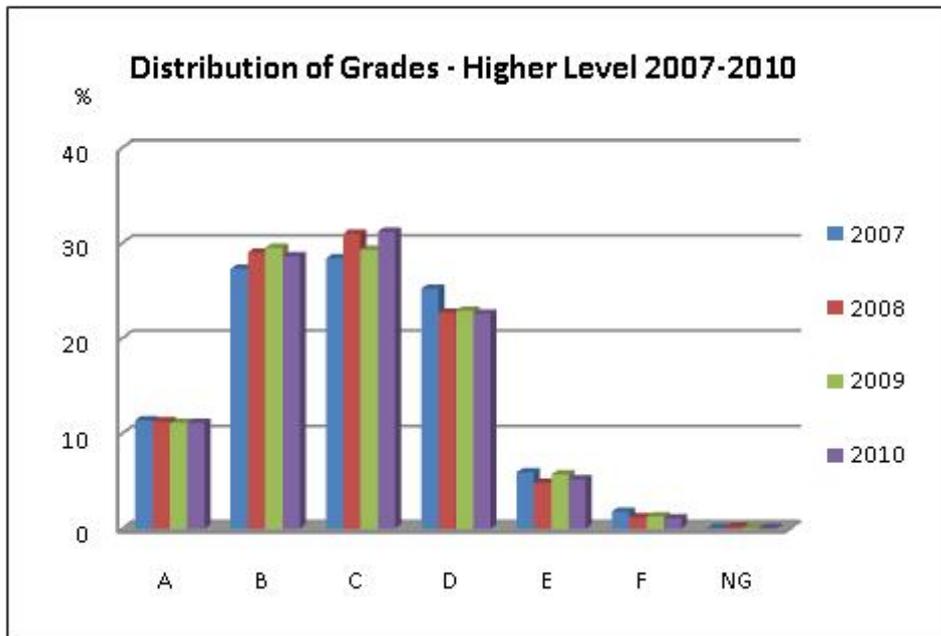


Chart 1: Grade Distribution 2007-2010

The performance of candidates in 2010 was broadly in line with previous years. Examiners noted that candidates who attained Grade E or lower, in general, did not attempt the required number of questions and/or had little understanding of business concepts. Some scripts had very little written material as candidates did not elaborate on answers.

3.3. Analysis of Candidate Performance

In 2010, the work of the candidates who sat the Higher Level examination displayed the following patterns:

Table 3	Topic	Taking Question	Popularity	Marks Earned	Ranking of marks
Section 1 (80 marks)	Short Answer Questions (8)	100%	1	70%	1
Section 2 (80 marks)	Applied Business Question (ABQ)	100%	1	67%	2
Section 3 (240 marks)					
Part 1					
1 (60 marks)	Industrial Relations/ Consumers/ Legal Contract	52%	5	46%	7
2 (60 marks)	Environment/Business Structure/ Government	43%	6	52%	5
3 (60 marks)	Irish Economy/International Economy/EU Policies	34%	7	51%	6
Part 2					
4 (60 marks)	Planning/Managing/Organisational Structure	67%	2	56%	3
5 (60 marks)	Performance Appraisal/Financial Analysis	58%	4	64%	1
6 (60 marks)	Business Expansion/Business Plan/Finance	76%	1	58%	2
7 (60 marks)	Market Research/Promotion/Branding	66%	3	53%	4

Table 3 above is derived from an analysis carried out on the marks awarded in the initial sample 20 scripts, chosen at random by each examiner. It shows the average mark scored in percentage terms per question, the rank order of individual questions in terms of average score, the percentage of candidates who answered each question and the order of popularity of individual questions.

SECTION 1 has questions ranging over the entire syllabus.

SECTION 2 is the ABQ (Applied Business Question) based on Units 2, 3 and 4 in 2010.

SECTION 3, has two parts – Part 1 has questions based on Units 1, 6 and 7, and Part 2 has questions on Units 2, 3, 4 and 5.

SECTION 1

Attempt Frequency: 100%

Average Mark: 70%

SECTION 1, carrying 80 marks, consists of 10 short-answer questions and candidates are required to answer any 8. Each question carries ten marks. This is a compulsory section and represents 20% of the total examination. The questions may be drawn from any area of the syllabus. In SECTION 1 at both Ordinary Level and Higher level the questions are answered on the paper and are returned with the answer book.

In SECTION 1 the overall standard of answering was very good with many candidates achieving high marks. Most questions proved accessible to the majority of candidates. The average percentage mark earned for SECTION 1 was 70% and this has been the trend for the past number of years. The most popular questions were Nos. 1, 2,3,7,9 and 10. Questions based on Units 6 and 7 of the course were not as popular.

In 2010, there was general agreement among examiners that SECTION 1 was fair, candidate-friendly, and well laid-out with a good mix of questions which allowed candidates to score well. The number of questions assigned from the different units is determined by the content being assessed across the entire examination paper.

1 Indigenous Firm

This question was very popular and most candidates scored well. Candidates tended to give two points of information in part (a) rather than an explanation with an example, as was required in the question. Candidates should pay careful attention to the question cues at the beginning of the sentence, which in this case was “illustrate”. The benefits for the economy did not present problems for the majority of candidates and most candidates wrote clear sentences.

2 Prototype Development and Test Marketing

It was generally well answered; however, some candidates gave only one point of information and failed to distinguish between both business concepts. The term “distinguish” requires candidates to highlight the difference between both concepts. Candidates should practise writing direct, concise and precise answers.

3 Exchange Rate

For part (a) of the question the majority of candidates scored 3 marks out of a possible 6, with the better scripts gaining the 6 marks. Part (b) was poorly answered in general as candidates could not analyse the impact on Irish Exporters of a changing value of the euro. Candidates at Higher Level are required to apply business concepts to address issues.

4 EU Institutions

Many candidates displayed an inadequate knowledge of the EU institutions. The most common mark awarded was 6 out of 10. For those candidates who knew the EU institutions it was a very straightforward question.

5 Articles of Association

This was not a popular question with few candidates earning full marks. The majority of marks were awarded to part (a) and many candidates confused the articles of association with the memorandum of association. Candidates must practise the “recall of knowledge” in relation to the syllabus content.

6 Break-Even Chart

This was considered a new style of question where candidates had to apply their knowledge of the Break-Even concept to answer the questions asked. Examiners reacted positively to this question and considered it a very good test of candidate knowledge. The first two parts of the question were generally wellanswered with only the better candidates determining the profit and the margin of safety. Some candidates failed to read the axes correctly and gave the answer of 4 units and €40 euro as the break-even point, and therefore lost marks.

7 Insurable Interest and Indemnity

This was a popular question and did not present any problems for the majority of candidates. The question cue “illustrate” required candidates to give an example, which the majority of candidates did in this case.

8 Quota and Tariff

Candidates were required to state the difference between the two barriers to free trade. It was not a popular question; however, the candidates who did it answered it to a very high standard. It appeared to examiners that some candidates avoided questions from either Unit 6 or Unit 7 of the syllabus. Candidates are required to have a sound grasp of all units of the course in order to perform well on SECTION 1.

9 Grounds for Fair Dismissal

This was a very popular question and in general well-answered. Candidates should be careful to write three distinct points as in some cases the same point was written twice. Candidates are advised to write the heading first (i.e. incompetence, lack of qualification, redundancy etc.) and then explain each heading briefly. The question cue “outline” requires the candidate to give brief detail of the subject matter.

10 Tax Calculation and Tax Credit

This was a popular question with most candidates earning the 7 marks for the calculation. The generality of candidates could only give one tax credit, thereby losing 1 mark. In marking answers involving calculations, examiners apply the “own figure rule” so that candidates are not penalised more than once for a computational error.

SECTION 2 – APPLIED BUSINESS QUESTION

Attempt Frequency: 100%

Average Mark: 67%

This section consists of a single compulsory question requiring candidates to apply relevant business theory to the context of the ABQ (Applied Business Question) given. The question has a mark allocation of 80 marks.

There are 7 units in the course and each year three of these units form the basis of assessment in SECTION 2. In 2010 the three units assessed were units 2, 3, and 4. Specific questions are set for each of the units. Definite links are provided in the ABQ for the questions that have been set. The aim when writing the ABQ is to make it topical, relevant and realistic, as readable as possible for the candidates, and to provide clear links to the relevant business theory.

This was considered a very accessible ABQ which allowed the majority of candidates to respond positively. There were many excellent answers which showed an in-depth understanding of the business theory and also demonstrated excellent teaching. This section has seen major improvements in recent years with the average mark for the question at 67%, up 2% on the last published Chief Examiner Report in 2005.

There is a tendency, however, for some candidates to provide purely theoretical answers and not link their theory to the context of the questions. In addition, some candidates find the links in the ABQ but do not provide any theoretical business detail. No marks are awarded for links without relevant business theory. The questions set are not invitations for candidates to write all they know about a particular topic. The better answers were from candidates who paid careful attention to the wording of the questions, the mark allocations and planned the use of their time accordingly. Well-structured answers which addressed the issues raised were rewarded.

A Intrapreneurship and Benefits

(i) This was a very straightforward question with most candidates able to define the term “Intrapreneur”. A small number of candidates confused the term with “Entrepreneur” and discussed the activities of Mary, the owner of the business – resulting in no marks being awarded. Examiners can only award marks for answers that address the question asked. It is essential to always read the question twice, to avoid losing marks carelessly.

(ii) Candidates who explained the term correctly in part (i) had no difficulty identifying the intrapreneurial activities in the ABQ. Candidates, who gave the relevant links, without presenting any business theory on the benefits of intrapreneurship, were not awarded marks. Two distinct points were required with two relevant and different links in each case for full marks. Three specific examples of intrapreneurial activities were given in the ABQ.

B Impact of Technology

While the majority of candidates earned good marks, some responses were very poorly structured and presented some difficulty for examiners to mark. Candidates should present answers in point form and thereby avoid over development of one point to the exclusion of other relevant points. Many candidates did not provide distinct headings such as Marketing, ICT, and Customer Service etc. Refer to the support notes provided in the marking scheme on the SEC website www.examinations.ie. Three distinct impacts were required with three different relevant links in each case.

Some candidates quoted at length from the ABQ, even quoting whole paragraphs. Quoting whole paragraphs is not a relevant link. Candidates need to be selective with the material, choosing a particular sentence as a relevant link. Writing whole paragraphs, in addition to it not being awarded any marks, is also counterproductive as the candidate is using up valuable time which might have been used for analysis of the information and for evaluation.

Some links used in (A) (ii) could also be presented in (B); however, the business theory required in the answer to (B) was based on the impacts of technology. As three distinct impacts of technology were required, two relevant points of information and a relevant link for each impact were required for full marks. In many cases relevant references to technology within the ABQ were given, but the business theory was insufficient at times.

Some candidates lost marks for non-development of points made or for repetition of points, indicating the importance of practicing ABQ type questions. Some candidates could improve their overall grade by better aligning their efforts to the marks available and giving more detailed answers when required. Candidates should pay attention to the question cue used in the question as different question cues require different depths of explanation.

C Management Skills

Where candidates correctly identified the management skills, high marks were generally awarded. Some candidates failed to gain high marks by providing insufficient detail and not providing any links. Link marks are often some of the easiest to attain and candidates should be careful not to miss out on them. There were plenty of links relating to management skills provided in the ABQ, to make the application relatively easy. In a number of cases candidates misread the question and discussed management activities and in some cases entrepreneurial skills, thereby being awarded no marks.

A lack of meaningful evaluation by candidates continues to be a problem. Some evaluations/judgements tended to be superficial. Based on the information given in the ABQ the candidate is required to make an informed judgement on Mary's management skills and how her management skills may lead to continued success of the hotel. Some candidates failed to provide any form of judgement, thereby losing marks.

SECTION 3

SECTION 3 consists of 7 constructed response type questions and candidates are required to answer 4. There are two parts to SECTION 3 and candidates are required to answer 1 from Part 1 (out of a possible three), 2 questions from Part 2 (out of a possible four), and 1 other question from either Part 1 or Part 2. Each question carries 60 marks. A variety of questioning techniques is used.

The most popular questions (in order) were taken from Part 2 as follows: Questions 6,4,7,5. In Part 1 Q.1 was the most popular question but it ranked 5th in overall popularity this year. The majority of candidates chose their optional 4th question from Part 2, which has become the trend overtime.

The questions in this section are specific, requiring candidates to be specific with their answers. The more specific the questions are, the greater clarity of response required from candidates. The better answers were well-structured and focused on the specific questions asked.

PART 1 – People in Business/Business Environment (At least 1 question out of 3)

Question 1 – Industrial Relations/Consumer Protection/Contract Law

Attempt Frequency: 52%

Average Mark: 46%

This question was fifth in order of popularity in Section 3 and had the lowest average mark overall. While still being the most popular choice in Part 1, it had the lowest average mark in Part 1. This indicated a change of trend on previous years.

1(A) (i) While some candidates presented excellent, well thought-out answers, indicating excellent knowledge of the provisions of the Industrial Relations Act 1990, a significant number of candidates found this question challenging. Some candidates did not seem to understand what was required in the question and the points made related to the functions of a trade union. Three distinct points of information were required. Many examiners commented that the question was perhaps less predictable than previous years and candidates may not have focused on the trade union aspect of the Industrial Relations Act 1990.

(ii) The majority of candidates had no difficulty describing two types of official industrial action a trade union can undertake. Few candidates, however, used the term “official strike” in their answers.

1(B) While the role of the Small Claims Court in protecting consumers did not present any problem for the majority of candidates, answers in relation to the role of the Office of the Ombudsman were often very vague and, in some cases, factually inaccurate. Some candidates confused the Ombudsman with the office of the

Director of Consumer Affairs. Many candidates failed to provide any form of evaluation/judgement on their roles.

- 1(C) This was generally well answered with most candidates giving a clear definition supported by an appropriate example. Reference to “legal right” was required for the award of full marks.

**Question 2 – Environmentally Conscious Business/Organisational Structures/
Government**

Attempt Frequency: 43%

Average Mark: 52%

This question was sixth in order of popularity in Section 3 and had the 5th highest average mark in Section 3.

- 2(A) There was a significant number of poor answers for this section. Candidates were required to discuss the characteristics of an environmentally conscious business and four distinct characteristics were required. Reference to “reduce/reuse and recycle” in terms of the business product and/or the manufacturing process represents just one valid point and other distinct points were required for full marks.

Acceptable characteristics included openness and honesty, awareness of environmental issues, compliance with the law, sustainable development etc. The question presented was not how businesses could become more environmentally responsible or the impact of environmental issues on business, as have been asked in previous examination questions.

There was some evidence of candidates trying to fit a planned answer into this question. An over-emphasis on preparation for the examination through rote learning of particular answers may result in low marks being awarded to candidates. Some candidates misread the question and focused on “ethical and social responsibilities”.

- 2(B) This question was very well answered by the majority of candidates. Candidates identified four reasons and they were generally well developed. Some candidates abbreviated Private Limited Company to PLC and many candidates stated that a minimum of two shareholders is required for a Private Limited Company. The better answers presented a heading and two relevant points of information under each heading.

- 2(C) While many candidates identified relevant points, answers weren’t always well developed. Candidates should pay attention to the question cue given, as different cues require different depths of knowledge. There was some evidence of candidates answering a prepared question and not the question asked. Some candidates referred to how the Irish Government affects business and made no reference to the “labour force”, which was given in the question.

The most common points referred to were taxation policies, employment, grants and Legislation/Regulation. There was some repetition of points especially in relation to taxation policies, indicating the importance of practice in doing examination type questions. Candidates must read the wording of the questions very carefully before beginning to write, to avoid irrelevance.

Question 3 – Balance of Payments/International Economy/EU Policies

Attempt Frequency: 34%

Average Mark: 51%

This question continues to be the least popular question on the examination paper, even though it was considered a very straightforward question. The take-up at 34%, however, is up on previous years (being 27% when the Chief Examiner Report was last published in 2005), and is possibly due to the drop in candidature attempting Q.1 in the 2010 examination.

- 3(A) (i)** The majority of candidates identified an open economy as one trading in goods and services with other countries. However, a second point referring to a significant proportion of national income devoted to imports and exports was only written in the better scripts
- (ii)** Candidates' answers were generally good. Many candidates illustrated the terms by either providing examples or by doing calculations. Two valid points of information for both terms were required.
- 3(B)** Some candidates had excellent, focused answers while others discussed only globalisation/global recession and made no further points, losing valuable marks. Candidates were required to identify four changing trends in the international economy, one of which is the growth in globalisation. Candidates had to refer to the impact of each trend on Irish businesses to be awarded full marks. Answers given must address the question asked. It is essential to always read the question twice to avoid losing marks carelessly. Rather than offering many points, candidates should be advised to concentrate on developing four/five distinct points fully.
- 3(C)** This section was generally well answered. Two distinct well-developed points were required for each policy. The CAP and CFP were the two most popular answers given. Some candidates supported their answers by providing relevant Irish examples, which helped clarify the importance of the particular policy for Ireland.

PART 2 – Enterprise (At least 2 questions out of 4)

Question 4 – SWOT/Planning/Organisational Structure

Attempt Frequency: 67%

Average Mark: 56%

This was 2nd in order of popularity in Section 3 and had the 3rd highest score.

4(A) (i) This question was extremely well-answered with the majority of candidates scoring full marks. A small number of candidates explained what the letters represented with no further detail provided, thereby losing some marks.

(ii) Some excellent SWOT analysis of different businesses, both local and national were provided. A small number of candidates confused strengths with opportunities and weaknesses with threats, while some candidates lost marks for an incorrect second opportunity or threat.

4(B) This section was reasonably well answered by candidates. While some candidates defined both types of planning and gave examples, they did not refer to how both contribute to the successful management of a business. Some candidates omitted examples, indicating the importance of reading the question carefully before beginning to write.

4(C) The responses here were moderate. Many candidates drew a functional organisational structure but made no reference to the specific question asked, which referred to the benefits of this organisational structure for a business. While many candidates defined “chain of command” and “span of control” they did not refer to the advantage of a linear chain of command in a functional structure or the advantage of possibly having a wide span of control in a functional organisational structure. The question asked for benefits and marks were only awarded for this approach.

Question 5 – Performance Appraisal/Ratios and Analysis

Attempt Frequency: 58%

Average Mark: 64%

This was 4th in order of popularity in Section 3 and had the highest score

5(A) (i) This was generally very well answered. Candidates had a clear understanding of the concept and many candidates earned full marks.

(ii) Some candidates wrote the benefits of performance appraisal for a business in part (i) and (ii). Marks were, however, only awarded in part (ii) for the benefits of performance appraisal. Some candidates wrote about the benefits of performance appraisal for employees and not for the business, as was required in the question. Examiners would appreciate candidates taking more care in writing in their answer book the number of the question, the section of the question and the sub-section of the question, if applicable, especially as there is choice in this examination paper.

5(B) This section on ratios was very straightforward and presented few problems for the majority of candidates. Candidates are required to record the formulas first before doing the workings and present answers in the correct format i.e. % format or ratio format. Some candidates wrote numbers as final answers, without giving them any meaning. Candidates were given the results of the previous year in the question, therefore this requirement of writing answers in the correct format should not have presented any problems.

5(C) While the new format of this question presented some challenges for candidates the question was generally well managed by most. Some candidates tried to link all the ratios to each stakeholder. While candidates were required to link the liquidity ratios to the suppliers, they had a choice in relation to the other two stakeholders. In relation to each stakeholder, the candidate was required to choose a ratio, indicate the trend over the two years and explain the significance of the trend for the relevant stakeholder.

Question 6 – Business Expansion/Business Plan/Finance *Attempt Frequency: 76%*
Average Mark: 58%

This was the most popular question in Section 3 and had the 2nd highest score

6(A) The majority of candidates misinterpreted the question asked and discussed the benefits and risks of franchising from the point of view of the franchisee. The focus of this question was on methods of business expansion and not types of business organisation. If candidates had read the stimulus material provided in the introductory text, as directed to do in the question, they may not have made this mistake. Again there was an absence of evaluation in many responses given.

6(B) Answers to this section were generally good and most candidates demonstrated a sound grasp of the benefits of preparing a Business Plan. The weaker responses did not include any reference to the context given and were not awarded full marks.

6(C) (i) This subsection was generally well-answered. Three distinct well-developed points were required for full marks. Some candidates stated many points but development was often very limited.

(ii) Many candidates correctly identified and analysed two medium term sources of finance, as was required in the question. In relation to loan, reference to “medium term loan” was required for full marks.

Question 7 – Market Research/Promotion/Branding

Attempt Frequency: 66%

Average Mark: 53%

This was 3rd in order of popularity in Section 3, slightly below Q.4 and had the 4th highest score.

7(A) This question provided a straightforward challenge and led to many excellent answers. Some candidates wrote answers which were far too long for the marks available. Some candidates gave surplus points, indicating the importance of aligning efforts to the marks available and giving more detailed answers when required. Three well developed reasons were required for full marks. A significant number of candidates misread the question and explained the two types of market research, thereby losing valuable marks.

7(B) In general candidates showed low levels of understanding of this topic area. A significant number of candidates made no reference to incentives/short term gimmicks when discussing Sales Promotion, while they had no problem in identifying examples. The answers presented in relation to Public Relations were in general poor, with many confusing the term with advertising or personal selling. Once again, evaluation was absent from many answers. Learning definitions for the different forms of promotion would enable candidates form a sound starting point for developing their answers.

7(C) There were many very good answers to this question. Some candidates had difficulty distinguishing between benefits of branding for the consumer and for the business. At least one from each was required. An example of a product/service brand and some development on it was required for full marks.

3.4 Conclusions

- There was general agreement among examiners that the paper was accessible, fair, topical, and represented a good sample of the syllabus.
- There has been a slight increase in the number of candidates taking Higher Level Business in the last two years.
- There were many very good answers from candidates, who displayed excellent knowledge and understanding of business concepts.
- As business issues become more prominent in everyday life, candidates demonstrated an increasing ability to integrate business theory with everyday experiences.
- The ABQ was considered very topical and accessible, with the majority of candidates responding positively.
- Candidates' performance was broadly in line with that of previous years with a slight increase in the ABC grades on 2009 (up 1.0%) and a small decrease in the EFNG grades (down 0.7%).
- Examiners reported that candidates who performed well had a detailed knowledge of business theory and showed a clear understanding of its significance, in the specific context of the questions asked.
- Candidates who performed less well on the Higher Level paper tended to do so because they had not engaged fully with the questions asked, failed to read the questions carefully, and their answers lacked structure or appropriate development.
- An over-emphasis on preparation for the examination through rote learning of answers resulted in low marks being awarded to some candidates in certain questions.
- The majority of candidates attempted the required number of questions and, while examiners noted that some candidates did not complete the required number of questions, shortage of time did not appear to be a general problem.
- SECTION 1 questions continue to be well-answered by the majority of candidates. The average score was 70%.
- Marks continue to be lost through non-development of points made.
- Basic business definitions and technical terms continue to prove difficult for some candidates.
- A lack of meaningful evaluation, which is required in some questions, continues to be a problem.

3.5 Recommendations to Teachers and Students

It is recommended that teachers

- ensure students practise examination type questions and are familiar with the layout of the paper
- refer to the teacher guidelines/syllabus documents for the subject
- use the published marking scheme as a resource and a guide when teaching the subject (www.examinations.ie)
- advise students that assumptions about future marking schemes on the basis of one year's marking scheme should be avoided, as details on the marking scheme may change depending on the content of the particular examination paper
- advise students that questions may appear similar to previous years but the focus of the question and the specific context of the question may vary, thereby requiring different responses
- refer in class to current business and economic issues (e.g. Government effects on labour force, changes in exchange rates, trade unions etc.) which will help students to put business theory into perspective
- initiate group work within classes to help formulate answers to examination questions. Formal and informal debates/discussions on popular issues such as the consumer, industrial relations, marketing, insurance and international trade, will help reinforce learning and aid in the retention of such information.
- provide designated class time to candidates to engage in critical thinking so that they may be more willing to answer questions where evaluation/judgement is sought in relation to current business issues
- ensure all units of the syllabus are covered
- clarify the meaning of examination terminology (question cues) e.g. 'illustrate', 'outline', 'explain', 'evaluate', etc.
- ensure that students understand the difference between management skills and management activities
- ensure that business theory is provided with relevant links in the ABQ
- bring the following points, highlighted by the examining team, to the attention of students:
 - definitions of business terms must be precise and accurate
 - separate paragraphs should be used for each point developed and essay type answers should be avoided
 - writing long passages of irrelevant material should be avoided
 - include key points and avoid repetition of points
 - start each question on a new page
 - number each question, section, sub-section correctly.

It is recommended that students:

- choose the level at which they will take the examination very carefully
- take time to read each question carefully before attempting questions
- be familiar with the layout of the examination paper
- use “thinking time” to decide on examination questions, plan responses, and thereby avoid writing extended answers to questions or drifting into different questions
- practise writing accurate and concise definitions of business terms
- answer all required parts of every question attempted
- recognise the question cues used in the Business syllabus and examination papers i.e. ‘calculate’, ‘describe’, ‘distinguish’, ‘explain’, ‘outline’ ‘evaluate’.
- practise writing answers to different levels of question, rather than purely recall type questions e.g. discuss, analyse, evaluate
- refer to the stimulus material provided in the questions, if required
- make effective use of the ABQ in devising answers to questions asked
- use valid examples to help clarify/express ideas
- practise writing examination type questions to avoid drifting from the question asked
- focus on the question asked and avoid writing irrelevant detail
- note the mark allocations of questions and allocate time according to the marks available
- learn the various formulae on the syllabus
- present all work neatly
 - start each new question on a new page
 - number and label all questions, sections and subsections correctly.
 - label all Graphs / Bar Charts correctly and ensure they are drawn to scale and include a title.