



LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS

1999

BUSINESS

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

BUSINESS - HIGHER LEVEL

1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to inform teachers of the performance of the candidates in the Leaving Certificate Examination 1999 in Business at Higher level. It is hoped that, taken together with the marking scheme which has already been published, it will be helpful in their work of guiding future examination candidates.

The Business paper at Higher level consists of three sections. Section one comprises a total of ten questions, in short answer format, of which eight are to be answered. The maximum awarded for this section is 80 marks. This section is compulsory. Section two is an Applied Business question. It carries 80 marks and is also compulsory. Section three is divided into two parts. There are seven questions in this section and it carries a maximum mark of 240 marks. Candidates are required to answer four questions from this section, one question from part one, two questions from part two, and one other question from either part one or part two.

The new Business syllabus, which was examined for the first time in 1999, replaces the former Business Organisation syllabus.

2. Performance of Candidates

The paper was well received in general. It was regarded as a fair and well laid out paper, and in keeping with the sample paper already issued to schools at this level. The paper was viewed as a long and testing one by students and although the time for the test had been extended to three hours, students still found it challenging to answer all the questions in that length of time. It was obvious that students had been well prepared by their teachers as there was evidence that good teaching methodology had been used in the classroom. However, the numbering and labelling of questions and parts of questions by candidates could be improved. Due to the fact that teachers and students are now dealing with a new syllabus and a new test format with compulsory questions to be answered, it might be useful for them to apply themselves to layout, neatness, time management and the numbering of questions and parts of questions. Very few candidates answered more than the required number of questions. Very few candidates misinterpreted questions. There was a significant increase in the numbers who took the examination at this level in 1999. The number of candidates who sat the paper in 1999 was 17415. Comparative figures for Business Organisation in previous years are shown below.

Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Candidates	14144	13012	13641	14561	17415

Candidates fared well in answering the paper. The table below illustrates the grades awarded to candidates at this level in 1999.

A1	A2	B1	B2	B3	C1	C2	C3	D1	D2	D3	E	F	NG
2.6%	5.5%	6.2%	9.1%	11.7%	9.4%	11.2%	12.3%	7.7%	7.4%	8.4%	7.0%	1.5%	0%

It can be seen that a total of 68% were awarded an A, B, or C grade and that those attaining E, F and NG came to 8.5%. It is evident that the new syllabus has had an influence on the outcome of the grades achieved. (See appendix I).

3. Analysis of the Paper

The following table is derived from an analysis carried out at the sample 20 stage on the marks awarded. It shows the mark scored in percentage terms of average score, the average mark in rank order and the order of popularity of individual questions.

Question	Average percentage mark scored	Average Mark rank order	Popularity rank order
Section 1	80	-	Compulsory
Section 2	80	-	Compulsory
Section 3			
Part 1			
Question 1	60	4	3
Question 2	47	5	6
Question 3	40	7	7
Part 2			
Question 4	78	1	2
Question 5	61	3	1
Question 6	45	6	5
Question 7	63	2	4

Set out below is an analysis of candidates' answers to each question with specific reference to common errors.

Section 1

- Q.1** 'Intrapreneur' was well answered with a detailed knowledge and the word 'within' appearing regularly.
- Q.2** The memo was well done but headings were missing at times.
- Q.3** The question on video-conferencing was well answered. The marks were lost due to lack of clarity.
- Q.4** This was very well answered with "line" and "functional" being the most popular answers.
- Q.5** Where it was chosen it was reasonably well answered. It was not popular. It was one of the weaker questions of the section.
- Q.6** Candidates failed to be clear in their answer and lost marks accordingly.
- Q.7** The answers were weak. There was no real understanding quite often and the marks awarded here were not high.
- Q.8** This question was very well answered and candidates scored well.
- Q.9** There was good to excellent scoring here. Retained earnings was used a lot here.
- Q.10** There were excellent examples but less clarity in the explanations. The candidates scored well in general.

General:

Many candidates answered ten questions in this section. The scoring was excellent and the scores for the best eight questions answered were taken by the examiner.

Section 2

This part was excellently answered. It was obvious that candidates were well tutored to look for skills such as were required to answer the question. The relevant conflicts were identified by the vast majority of the students. The laws were well known although the incorrect Acts were referred to in some cases. However, the link to the conflict was well established. In general, the report format was neglected. Marks were lost due to this but in general the scoring for this part was quite good. Management activities were confused at times with skills. There was, in general, good scoring but full marks were not common in this part.

Section 3**Part 1**

- Q.1** (a) This part was well answered. The relationship between the two was not well developed by many candidates.
(b) This part was poorly answered by candidates. It was obvious that many could not grasp what was required. They wrote about the elements of a contract or about terminating a contract. The evaluation was poorly done.
- Q.2** (a) The answers were generally of a high standard. The majority gave a good explanation and an example of a franchise. Some candidates confused a business alliance with a merger.
(b) This was well answered. The weakness was in showing how socially responsible business practice was good for business. There were plenty of good examples with regard to the environment and sponsorship. The evaluation caused the problems.
(c) The good candidate did well here. The majority discussed three variables. Some went on in rambling fashion about the "Celtic Tiger".
- Q.3** (a) This part on opportunities/challenges for Ireland in relation to international trade was patchy. The opportunities were better dealt with than the challenges.
(b) On policy and institutions of the EU, the candidates wrote much on the CAP. The Parliament and the Council of Ministers were the institutions mainly dealt with. Some candidates found this area difficult.

Part 2

- Q.4** (a) This part was well answered setting out the characteristics of managers with the layout being good.
(b) The factors to be considered for effective communications were generally well handled apart from the explanations in many cases. The answers in many cases lacked focus.
(c) The better candidates scored well here giving reasons to support the statement. Most agreed. Very few would have given all three reasons and two examples.

- Q.5** (a) This part on activities of household and business caused candidates to wander widely. Examiners discovered that much material had been written and that candidates found it difficult to match both types of activities. Some candidates gave one word answers and no explanations. Some of the answering however was very good.
(b) In this part relating to tax and insurance, candidates lost marks by giving a list of taxes and insurance without explanations.
(c) It was well answered by the majority of candidates. Marks were often lost for not giving valid reasons in part (ii). The style of question was welcomed by the examiners.
- Q.6** (a) This question on debt/equity was generally well answered but very few candidates gave more than one valid point. Only the best candidates understood gearing.
(b) The calculations and formulae were very well answered by the majority of candidates, but the comments on the trends were brief and not all candidates gave a proper analysis of the trends.
- Q.7** (a) It was a popular question with candidates. The greatest weakness was confusing the new product development process with the product life cycle.
(b) This part dealing with the marketing concept was often confused with market research and it was only the better candidates who understood the significance of the term.
(c) The marketing mix was well known. A product was chosen and it was in the area of evaluation of the choice of product and the mix that marks were lost. Overall, it was obvious that candidates liked the question and they wrote at length on it.

4. Overall General Comment

As this was the first time for the subject to be examined, a sense of anticipation was to be found among students and teachers. The general view was that the paper was fair but perhaps a little long. The significant increase in the number of candidates who sat this level compared to the same level at Business Organisation could be a comment on a more student-friendly syllabus.

Examiners reported that students wrote a lot more than in other years. In general students seem to know more about Business as each year passes. The amount of material in the form of teaching aids being used by teachers in the classroom probably accounts for this, coupled with the improved methodology that is being used with the new syllabus. The layout of the paper with its different sections has been welcomed by the examiners and also the uniformity of marks per question. Marks were generally lost through the lack of evaluation where this was required or by stating a point without giving any explanation for the point.

5. Recommendations for Teachers and Students

It is important that the student give deep consideration to the level of the subject being attempted. As is evident from the syllabus a student at the higher level of the subject is required to evaluate and analyse. These are demanding skills. It is important therefore that students continue to perfect these skills.

Although it was evident that no great misinterpretation of questions took place this year it is always important for the candidate to read each question carefully.

As time is important, it is useful to practice time management of examination tests.

Candidates should choose as carefully as possible the questions they intend to answer. Instructions should be read carefully and all required questions answered.

It cannot be emphasised strongly enough that candidates must ensure that all their work **including Section One** is returned to the Department on the day of the examination.

It is important to ensure that questions and parts of questions are marked clearly.

Business Organisation -Higher level, 1996-1999**1996-13012 candidates**

A1	A2	B1	B2	B3	C1	C2	C3	D1	D2	D3	E	F	NG
1.6%	4.6%	3.4%	7.8%	12.6%	8.9%	12.4%	14.6%	7.7%	9.2%	9.1%	6.6%	1.5%	0.1%

1997-13641 candidates

A1	A2	B1	B2	B3	C1	C2	C3	D1	D2	D3	E	F	NG
2.4%	4.7%	4.6%	8.1%	12.5%	8.2%	11.3%	14.2%	6.5%	8.7%	10.5%	6.6%	1.6%	0.1%

1998-14561 candidates

A1	A2	B1	B2	B3	C1	C2	C3	D1	D2	D3	E	F	NG
2.5%	5.6%	5.8%	8.4%	12%	8.8%	10.8%	13.2%	7%	8.6%	9.6%	6.4%	1.2%	0.2%

1999 – 17415 candidates

A1	A2	B1	B2	B3	C1	C2	C3	D1	D2	D3	E	F	NG
2.6%	5.5%	6.2%	9.1%	11.7%	9.4%	11.2%	12.3%	7.7%	7.4%	8.4%	7.0%	1.5%	0%

BUSINESS - ORDINARY LEVEL

1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to inform teachers of the performance of candidates in Business at the Leaving Certificate examination 1999. Taken together with the detailed marking scheme, which has already been published, it should be helpful to teachers in guiding future examination candidates.

The Business examination at Ordinary level consists of two sections. Section 1 comprises a total of fifteen short response type questions. Candidates are required to answer ten of the questions and may be awarded a maximum of 100 marks. Section 2 comprises a total of eight questions. Candidates are required to answer four questions and may be awarded a maximum of 300 marks.

The syllabus replaces the former Business Organisation syllabus which was examined for the last time in June 1998. The new syllabus has a new emphasis. There are seven units and seven prescribed pieces of legislation. The 1999 examination was the first written examination based on the new syllabus.

2. Performance of Candidates

The 1999 Ordinary level paper was generally well received. It was perceived as a well-laid out paper with the questions ranging over the entire syllabus. It was in keeping with the sample paper which had been issued to schools. The syllabus states inter alia, that "candidates at ordinary level are required to recall and demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of the syllabus content". It was obvious that candidates had both a good knowledge and a good understanding the new syllabus.

The number of candidates who sat ordinary level Business in 1999 was 7168. Comparative figures for the subject Business Organisation for previous years are illustrated below.

Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Candidates	9560	8515	9476	9494	7168

It is evident that many more candidates took the higher level paper in this subject than in former years. The new syllabus was the factor that guided that decision, it seems.

The candidates who took this level fared well. The format of the paper including the wide choice of questions contributed to a substantial reduction in those gaining E, F and NG. The percentage breakdown of grades in 1999 was as follows:

A1	A2	B1	B2	B3	C1	C2	C3	D1	D2	D3	E	F	NG
2%	6.9%	6.7%	11.9%	15.1%	11.8%	12.3%	11.6%	6.1%	5.5%	5.4%	3.8%	0.9%	0.1%

78.3% of candidates received an A, B, C grade in 1999 with fewer than 5 in 100 receiving an E, F, or NG. This is a vast improvement on other years and speaks well of the new syllabus and the assessment format for ordinary level candidates. (See Appendix II)

3. Analysis of the Paper

The following table is derived from an analysis carried out at the sample 20 stage on the marks awarded. It shows the average mark scored in percentage terms of average score, the percentage of candidates who answered each question and the order of popularity of individual questions.

Question	Average percentage mark scored	Average mark rank order	% attempting	Popularity rank order
Section 1	75	-	100%	Compulsory
Section 2				
Q.1	77	1	89.80	1
Q.2	54	6	29.50	6
Q.3	56	5	13.50	7
Q.4	58	3	83.40	2
Q.5	69	2	64.50	3
Q.6	53	7	37.50	5
Q.7	57	4	10.50	8
Q.8	52	8	60.50	4

Set out below is an analysis of candidates' answers to each question with specific reference to common errors.

Section A

- Q.1** It was well answered. A number left out the examples.
- Q.2** It was well answered. Some candidates gave types of retail outlets.
- Q.3** This was a very popular question. Some of the bar charts were poorly presented; some marks were lost for not labelling the axis with the countries. Some produced a line graph.
- Q.4** It was well answered. SWOT was well known. There were many variations of TQM. HRM was not well known.
- Q.5** This question was not well answered. Some candidates made the error of giving liability in the answer.
- Q.6** It was well answered. Some found difficulty matching number 3, Capital Gains Tax and number 6 Corporation Tax with the definitions.
- Q.7** It was reasonably well answered. Some candidates used explanations but omitted the terms.
- Q.8** This was not answered well. Many gave one word answers. Some explained effective communications and not the barriers.
- Q.9** This question was very well answered.
- Q.10** It was not well answered. In fact, it was rarely attempted.

- Q.11** This was a very popular question. Many failed to gain maximum marks as they based PRSI on the taxable income.
- Q.12** This was a popular question. It was well answered. Some candidates gave the four Ps or methods of transport.
- Q.13** This question was very well answered. Some candidates gave only one point.
- Q.14** This was well answered with part (e) being answered best.
- Q.15** It was very popular and well answered. Most candidates scored full marks.

Section 2

This section carries a total of eight questions. Candidates are required to answer four questions from the section, one question from part one two from part two and the final question from either part one or part two. Section 2 was, again, well answered with the majority of candidates attempting four questions. Most candidates had no difficulty in attempting the appropriate number of questions offered in the two parts and candidates rarely failed to answer the minimum number of questions from each part. Approximately 18% answered more than the required number of questions.

Part 1

Q.1 People in Business/Consumer Law

Approximately 90% of candidates attempted this question. It was the most popular question on the paper. Most candidates scored highly in parts (a) to (d). Some found 'redress' in part (e) difficult.

- (a) Candidates did well here. A number omitted key words like 'goods' or 'services'. Others gave the Consumer Information Act.
- (b) It was well answered.
- (c) Again, this was well answered. Some did not realise that there were two parts to the question.
- (d) Shop Stewart was generally well answered. Some neglected to mention trade union. Secret Ballot was less well answered with some candidates giving only one point.
- (e) The provisions of the Unfair Dismissals Act were dealt with very well. Some candidates failed to see that there were two parts to this question and did not deal with employee redress.

Q.2 Domestic/International Trade – Categories of Industry

- (a) Candidates did well here. A number used secondary or tertiary.
- (b) This was very well answered.
- (c) This part was also very well answered.
- (d) It was well answered. Candidates scored very high marks. Candidates gave a lot of detailed explanations and were clearly well versed in environmental issues.
- (e) This was not answered well. Some candidates did not know the names of any state companies much less describe them.

Q.3 Domestic/International Trade-Privatisation

- (a) This part was not well answered. Candidates did not know the meaning of privatisation. Some confused the term with limited liability.
- (b) It was not well answered. Candidates who did not understand part (a) had difficulty here also. Those who understood (a) answered well.
- (c) This was well answered.
- (d) It was not well answered. It was confused quite often with the single currency.
- (e) It was not well answered. Candidates were able to name the EU institutions but found difficulty in explaining one of them.

Part 2

Q.4 Enterprise/Managing Electronic Mail/Letter

- (a) This was well answered with a lot of information provided.
- (b) This was also well answered. Some did not explain or apply the skills named.
- (c) This was very well answered with very good detail provided.
- (d) This part was very well answered.
- (e) This was very well answered. In some cases the letter was poorly laid out.

Q.5 Managing – Agenda/management skills

- (a) This part was very well answered.
- (b) This was poorly answered. Some candidates did not know how to draw up a relevant agenda.
- (c) This was well answered. Some candidates found it difficult to explain the points.
- (d) This part was very poorly answered.
- (e) This was well answered. In some cases no explanation was given.

Q.6 Managing – Cash Flow

- (a) This part was well answered.
- (b) This was also well answered although some had difficulty explaining points.
- (c) It was well answered. However, some candidates did not realise that there were three parts to this answer.
- (d) This part was well answered.
- (e) This was poorly answered. In some cases no explanation was given.

Q.7 Managing-Ratios

- (a) This question was well answered.
- (b) Again, there was good answering here.
- (c) This question was well answered.
- (d) This was a well answered question.
- (e) A good knowledge was shown here.
- (f) This part was poorly answered. In some cases no explanation was given.

Q.8 Business in action – sole trader, types of production

- (a) This part was well answered.
- (b) The question was well answered but some candidates found difficulty in explaining the difference.
- (c) This part was well answered.
- (d) It was not well answered. Some candidates could come up with only one relevant source i.e. ‘term loan’.
- (e) This was well answered. In some cases, however, it was confused with the types of advertising.

4. Overall General Comment

There was general agreement that the paper was a very fair and balanced one and similar to the sample paper already distributed which was welcomed by teachers and students. It was regarded as student friendly while at the same time a good test of the syllabus. The subject topics ranged over the entire course and the choice of questions left students with a fair opportunity to show their knowledge. It was obvious that students were well prepared and that they had the new syllabus well covered. They had a knowledge and understanding of the core elements of the syllabus and were able to apply them in a practical manner during the examination. It is obvious that teaching methodologies being applied to the new syllabus are having the desired effect.

5. Recommendations to Teachers and Students

Examination candidates should bear in mind the following advice:

Ensure that you choose with care the level which you are going to attempt.

Read all questions very carefully before you begin to write. There is a good choice on the examination paper. It is not necessary to answer the questions in the order in which they appear on the examination paper. Ensure that you follow instructions and answer questions as required from the various units. Think carefully about the answer which is required.

Take advantage of the full allotment of time for the examination and write as much as possible. Give the requisite number of points requested and develop them if necessary. Avoid one word answers where at all possible. Write all relevant details.

Stay in the examination centre for the full duration of the examination. If time allows, return to your answers and check them against the questions asked.

The following are some common reasons, identified by examiners, why candidates do not perform well:

- not reading the question carefully
- not doing the required number of questions
- making a poor choice of questions
- not developing a point.

Business Organisation -Ordinary level, 1996-1999**1996 - 8515 candidates**

A1	A2	B1	B2	B3	C1	C2	C3	D1	D2	D3	E	F	NG
2.2%	3.9%	5.5%	7.2%	10.7%	8.8%	10.4%	13.1%	7.1%	8.8%	11.1%	8.2%	2.7%	0.3%

1997 - 9476 candidates

A1	A2	B1	B2	B3	C1	C2	C3	D1	D2	D3	E	F	NG
1.1%	3.8%	3.8%	7.7%	12.8%	7.3%	11.4%	14.9%	5.6%	8.5%	12.2%	7.2%	3.3%	0.6%

1998 - 9494 candidates

A1	A2	B1	B2	B3	C1	C2	C3	D1	D2	D3	E	F	NG
2%	4.2%	4.5%	7.6%	11.8%	8.0%	10.4%	12.8%	6.6%	7.7%	12.5%	7.9%	3.4%	0.6%

1999 – 7168 candidates

A1	A2	B1	B2	B3	C1	C2	C3	D1	D2	D3	E	F	NG
2%	6.9%	6.7%	11.9%	15.1%	11.8%	12.3%	11.6%	6.1%	5.5%	5.4%	3.8%	0.9%	0.1%