



LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

2002

BUSINESS

ORDINARY LEVEL CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT

HIGHER LEVEL CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT

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LEAVING CERTIFICATE

ORDINARY LEVEL, 2002

1. INTRODUCTION

This examination was the fourth one since the introduction of the revised Business Syllabus into schools in 1997. The terminal written examination paper is of two and a half hours duration and has two mandatory elements, Section 1 and Section 2.

Section 1, carrying 100 marks, consists of 15 short-answer questions and candidates are required to answer any ten. This section, which is returned with the examination script, ranges over the syllabus. Until 2001 this section was a separate question paper and was returned with the candidate's script. This year, Section 1 was integrated physically into the question paper and the entire examination paper was returned with the script for marking. This change, also implemented in three other Leaving Certificate examinations, was aimed at minimising the incidence of omission/loss of insert when Section 1 was printed on the separate insert for inclusion with the script. The return of the total paper in this manner was seen as improving the candidates' chances of including the vital Section 1 answers for marking. This seemed to work smoothly this year.

Section 2 consists of eight questions and candidates are required to answer 4 of these. There are two Parts to Section 2 and candidates are asked to take one question from Part 1 (3 questions), two questions from Part 2 (5 questions) and one 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 paper of 400. The topics to be covered in the paper are changed on a predetermined cyclical basis.

2. PERFORMANCE OF CANDIDATES

A total of 7370 candidates sat the examination in 2002 compared with 7824 in 2001. This represents a drop of 5.8% in the number of candidates sitting the paper. The results were broadly in line with the 2001 figures with a slightly higher A percentage (+ 1.2%) and no change in the combined E, F and NG figure. The percentage gaining a B grade was down by 4.6 percentage points while the D grade showed an increase of 3.9 percentage points.

The general feedback from examiners was that most candidates had a reasonable knowledge of the course and were able to demonstrate the basics of the syllabus, particularly in Section 2. The level of English displayed in candidates' answers seems to have improved this year, together with the presentation and layout of answers.

The results are considerably better than those achieved in 1998, the last test under the old Business Organisation programme, when 9499 students took the examination.

The tables below illustrate this fact:

Table 1: 2002 Leaving Certificate Business Ordinary Level Results

Grade	A	B	C	D	E	F	NG	Candidates
Percentage	13.3	30.7	29.8	20.9	3.6	1.7	0.2	7370
Summary		73.8		20.9		5.5		

Table 2: 2001 Leaving Certificate Business Ordinary Level Results

Grade	A	B	C	D	E	F	NG	Candidates
Percentage	12.1	35.3	30.0	17.0	3.5	1.7	0.3	7824
Summary		77.4		17.0		5.5		

Table 3: 1998 Leaving Certificate Business Organisation Ordinary Level Results

Grade	A	B	C	D	E	F	NG	Candidates
Percentage	6.2	23.9	31.2	26.8	7.9	3.4	0.6	9494
Summary		61.3		26.8		11.9		

When comparing the results this year with the outcome in 1998 it is worth remembering that the new syllabus has a greater number of candidates sitting the examination at Higher Level. In 1998 the percentage of Business Organisation candidates sitting the examination at Higher Level was 60.5% (14561:9494). This year in Business the percentage was 68.8% (16232: 7370). If the percentage of

candidates sitting Higher Level has increased by more than 8 percentage points and the results of the remaining group have also improved significantly, it can be said that the new syllabus and examination are more accessible at Ordinary Level than the old one. To put this Higher Level/Ordinary Level ratio in perspective, the percentage taking Higher Level this year in Geography was 73.8% and in Biology was 62.4%.

3. ANALYSIS OF PERFORMANCE

In 2002, the results of the candidates show the following pattern:

Table 4: 2002 Analysis of pattern of answering and marks earned

Question	Topic	Taking question	Marks earned	Popularity ranking	Ranking of marks
Section 1 (100 marks)	Multiple Test	100%	71%	1	4
Section 2					
Part 1					
1 (75 marks)	Consumer Rights	89%	70%	2	5
2 (75 marks)	National Economics	29%	63%	8	8
3 (75 marks)	International Economy	19%	41%	9	9
Part 2					
4 (75 marks)	Company Management	73%	80%	4	2
5 (75 marks)	Distribution/Finance	71%	77%	5	3
6 (75 marks)	IT/Recruitment	55%	68%	6	6
7 (75 marks)	Financial Analysis	50%	65%	7	7
8 (75 marks)	Insurance	77%	81%	3	1

The most popular question area was obviously the compulsory Section 1 with 100% take-up. However, it returned percentage marks earned which only ranked fourth overall. It was clear that weaker candidates tended to struggle in this area, often not attempting the required number of questions. While each question is relatively short and there is a considerable choice available in the section, the general % return for candidates here is less than for three of the optional questions in Section 2, Part 2 (Questions 8, 4 and 5). However, the marks earned return of 71% this year is up on the 67% last year and equals the 71% in 2000.

The least popular 4 questions (Questions 3, 2, 7 and 6) yielded students the least return in terms of marks per question, showing perfect matching in terms of

popularity and % marks earned. In other words, the sixth most popular question was also sixth in the marks earned and so on down to the ninth and last.

SECTION 1

Section 1 was testing, had a good choice and was, in general, answered to a better standard than in 2001. Approximately 20% of the candidates attempted more than the 10 questions required.

Question 1 **Abbreviations:** this question was popular and candidates scored well in it.

Question 2 **Agenda:** not so popular and not as well answered. The word company caused some confusion. Some candidates gave a notice instead of an agenda.

Question 3 **Product Life Cycle:** quite popular and well answered.

Question 4 **Entrepreneur:** very popular question with a wide variety of points given.

Question 5 **Franchise:** very popular question with good answers. Many candidates gave an example.

Question 6 **Taxation Topics:** very popular question with candidates scoring well, though the P21 form was generally not known.

Question 7 **Business Ethics:** not popular and poorly answered.

Question 8 **Cooperative:** very popular and well answered.

Question 9 **Finance:** very popular and well answered.

Question 10 Business Plan: popular but poorly answered with low marks earned.

Question 11 Stock Control: very popular with candidates scoring well.

Question 12 Draft Memo: very popular and very well answered.

Question 13 Indigenous Firm: least popular with poor answers.

Question 14 Prototype Development: not popular but candidates scored well.

Question 15 Types of Business Organisation: popular but candidates scored less well.

SECTION 2

Section 2 was perceived as fair. This section was well answered with the majority of candidates attempting just 4 questions. Most had no difficulty in attempting the appropriate number of questions available in the two parts and candidates rarely omitted the minimum number of questions from each part. About 10% of candidates attempted more than the required number of questions.

Part 1

Question 1 Consumer Rights

This was the most popular question on the paper and the majority of candidates scored well (70% of marks available).

1.(A): Candidates performed well in this section. Some candidates did not know the year and some gave the wrong Act.

1.(B): Very well answered.

1.(C): Well answered. Some candidates had difficulty with the duties of the shop.

1.(D): 'Work to rule' poorly understood compared with 'official strike'.

1.(E): Less well answered. Some candidates gave only one point.

Question 2 National Economics

This was not a popular question (7th in the ranking) and the average percentage mark at 63% was also 7th in the ranking.

2.(A): Well answered. Some candidates gave examples only and no explanation.

2.(B): Well answered although some candidates gave only one point.

2.(C): Well answered.

2.(D): Well answered.

2.(E): Poorly answered.

Question 3 International Economy

This was the least popular question on the paper (19% of candidates) and the average percentage gained was also lowest at the bare pass level (41%).

3.(A): Reasonably answered.

3.(B): Poorly answered.

3.(C): Poorly answered. International trade caused some difficulty for candidates.

3.(D): Not well answered. Some candidates omitted invisible trade.

Part 2

The majority of candidates attempted three questions from this part. Some candidates answered an extra question from this part. The most popular questions were 8, 4 and 5.

Question 4 Company Management

This was the 4th most popular question and was very well answered. The average percentage mark was 80%.

4.(A): Very well answered. Many candidates gave Eircom as an example.

4.(B): Well answered.

4.(C): Very well answered. Good lists of duties were often provided.

4.(D): Well answered, though some candidates opted for management activities other than those mentioned in the question. Most opted for planning.

4.(E): Reasonably well answered. Some candidates provided very good diagrams.

Question 5 Distribution/Finance

Approximately 71% of all candidates attempted this question and the average % mark gained was 77%. It was well answered.

5.(A): Very well answered. Many examples were given.

5.(B): Very well answered with many candidates achieving full marks.

5.(C): Well answered. Benefits were not understood or described.

5.(D): Reasonably well answered. There was some confusion between 'long term finance' and other categories.

Question 6 IT/Recruitment

This was the 6th most popular question on the paper with an average percentage mark of 68.

6.(A): Surprisingly, a considerable number of candidates were not able to differentiate between Hardware and Software.

6.(B): Well answered. The Spreadsheet section caused a little confusion with some.

6.(C): Very well answered with full marks often scored.

6.(D): Well answered. Some candidates omitted the date and inside address and used an inappropriate salutation.

6.(E): Not well answered. Some candidates achieved only half marks by outlining recruitment and ignoring selection.

Question 7 Financial Analysis

Just 50% of the candidates attempted this question giving it a popularity ranking of 6th. This type of question proved more popular this year and the provision of some figures helped weaker candidates in the calculations. It was well answered by those who attempted it.

7.(A): Very well answered.

7.(B): Very well answered.

7.(C): Very well answered

7.(D): Reasonably well answered. Some candidates confused gross and net pay with gross and net profit.

7.(E): Reasonably well answered. Many candidates omitted the comment though it was underlined in the question.

Question 8 Insurance

While this question was only the 3rd most popular question, attempted by 77% of the candidates, it ranks first in the percentage of marks earned with 81%. It was answered extremely well by the large number of candidates who attempted it.

8.(A): This section was very well answered.

8.(B): Very well answered. Some candidates omitted outlining what a premium was.

8.(C): Very well answered.

8.(D): Very well answered. Many candidates gave an example.

8.(E): Poorly answered. Some candidates could not do the calculation.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- The Ordinary Level examination seems accessible for candidates, judging by the overall results, particularly the small number of lower grades (E, F and NG grades of 5.5%).
- There is reliance by some candidates on well-aired aspects of the syllabus, e.g., Consumer Rights, Insurance, Company Management, and Channels of Distribution, as shown by the choice of questions in Section 2. There is a danger that candidates might be relying on the Junior Certificate Business Studies course and not developing their knowledge and skills. Specifically, the poor support by candidates for the questions in the area of Economics (both questions 2 and 3 were low overall in terms of popularity and in the % return in marks) is disappointing.
- Candidates achieve higher marks in areas where they have to produce something, e.g., a memo or a letter of complaint, and often have difficulty with questions looking for definitions or knowledge of items such as ‘business ethics’ or ‘indigenous firm’.
- The usual faults were noted again this year of misinterpreting the question, not completing the correct combination of questions, and failing to complete the full quota of questions.
- The results show that the majority of candidates achieved quite well in the subject this year and obtained grades that matched their understanding of the topics.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Reference in class to current business and economic issues will help candidates to put theory in perspective and help motivate the more practical candidates in the class. Local events and developments can sometimes be used to improve understanding and thus memory.
- Candidates need practice at examination type questions, and familiarity with the layout of the paper and the requirements of each question. The teacher guidelines/syllabus set out the meaning of examination terminology like ‘describe’, ‘contrast’, ‘outline’, etc.
- Group work within classes will help formulate answers to examination questions. Formal and informal debates on popular issues such as multinationals, consumer rights, marketing, underage workers, etc., will help reinforce learning and aid information retention.
- While economics is seen by many candidates as a wide-ranging and difficult area, the impact of the economic environment on business is so fundamental that knowledge of it can be a great aid in putting many of the issues into perspective.
- Candidates’ scripts do not indicate general pressure of time and they should be encouraged to utilise any spare time in checking their responses for accuracy and completeness.

BUSINESS
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HIGHER LEVEL, 2002

1. INTRODUCTION

This examination was the fourth since the introduction of the revised Business syllabus into schools in 1997. It consists of a terminal written 3 hour paper with two mandatory elements, Section 1 and Section 2.

Section 1, totalling 80 marks, comprises 10 questions, ranging over the syllabus, and candidates are required to answer any eight. Each question incorporates space for the answer to be completed/filled in by the candidate. Until 2001 this section was a separate question paper to be detached and returned for marking with the candidate's script.

This year, Section 1 was integrated physically with the question paper and the entire examination paper was returned with the script for marking. This change, also implemented in three other Leaving Certificate examinations, was aimed at minimising the incidence of omission/loss of insert when Section 1 was printed as a separate insert for inclusion with the script. The return of the total examination paper was seen as improving the candidates' chances of including the vital Section 1 answers for marking. This seemed to work smoothly this year.

Section 2 of the paper comprises a single Applied Business question, based on the 'case study' approach. This question carries 80 marks.

The remainder of the paper, Section 3, has two separate divisions, Parts 1 and 2, with a total of 7 questions, 4 of which must be answered. Candidates are required to take one question from Part 1 (out of 3 questions), two from Part 2 (out of 4 questions) and one other question from either Part 1 or Part 2.

All questions in Section 3 carry 60 marks and the four of these are combined with the 80 marks for Section 1, and the 80 marks for Section 2 to give the total for the paper of 400 marks. The topics covered in the paper are changed on a predetermined cyclical basis.

This year, the finishing time of the examination on the cover of the Higher Level question paper was incorrectly printed as 12.00 instead of 12.30. This had been picked up at proofing stage and a correction had been included in the errata list for reading out at all the relevant examination centres. The correct time had also been printed in the official timetable sent to schools. The error caused little disruption or difficulty.

2. PERFORMANCE OF CANDIDATES

A total of 16232 candidates took the examination in 2002 compared with 16415 in 2001, a drop of 1.1%. The overall results this year were slightly improved on those achieved in 2001, with the combined A,B, and C grades up by 1% to 69.7%, grade Ds up by .9 to 24.2 and the combined E, F and NG grades down by 1.7% to 6.3%. These better results were somewhat balanced by a reduction in the level of A grades, by 1.7% to 7.8%. The summary of results in both years are shown below:

Table 5: 2002 Leaving Certificate Business Higher Level Results

Grade	A	B	C	D	E	F	NG	Candidates
Percentage	7.8	28.1	33.8	24.2	5.3	0.9	0.1	16232
Summary		69.7		24.2		6.3		100.0%

Table 6: 2001 Leaving Certificate Business Higher Level Results

Grade	A	B	C	D	E	F	NG	Candidates
Percentage	9.5	27.0	32.2	23.3	6.2	1.6	0.2	16415
Summary		68.7		23.3		8.0		100.0%

The examination paper was regarded as fair and balanced, though challenging, for Higher Level. It was seen as comprehensive with questions and topics ranging over the entire Business Syllabus. Although demanding, it contained a good choice and candidates had little difficulty finding suitable questions. There was little evidence of candidates attempting more than the required number of questions.

The preparation of candidates by their teachers for the examination was good in general. There was widespread evidence of the use of good methodology in the classroom teaching of the subject. The layout of the answers by candidates and the labelling and numbering of questions were also generally good. However, numbering, presentation, neatness and layout could be improved by some candidates, particularly by those who achieved marks towards the lower end of the range.

Some candidates tended to misinterpret questions. Candidates need to respond to the questions as presented on the examination paper and to pay particular attention to the outcome verbs used. For example, in questions where candidates are asked to ‘evaluate’ (Question 1 (C), 3 (A) and 7 (C), some attempt must be made to give an opinion/judgement on the issues covered in the answer.

At times, candidates did not develop points as well as might be expected at Higher Level to gain reasonable to high marks. The ABQ type of question seems to present difficulties for a range of candidates. As there is no escape, all candidates have to attempt it and the low marks earned by some reflect their difficulty with the advanced level skills of synthesis and evaluation.

Development of results since the introduction of the revised syllabus

In order to put the results into a longer term perspective it might be worthwhile to compare the overall results this year with those of 1998, the last examination under the old syllabus.

The results for 1998 and for 2002 are shown in the tables below:

Table 6: 1998 Leaving Certificate Business Organisation Higher Level Results

Grade	A	B	C	D	E	F	NG	Candidates
Percentage	8.1	26.2	32.7	25.2	6.4	1.2	0.2	14561
Summary		67.0		25.2		6.8		100.0%

Table 7: 2002 Leaving Certificate Business Higher Level Results

Grade	A	B	C	D	E	F	NG	Candidates
Percentage	7.8	28.1	33.8	24.2	5.3	0.9	0.1	16232
Summary		69.7		24.2		6.3		100.0%

On the face of it, the results are quite comparable, showing a reassuringly similar pattern of grades. However, when comparing the results this year with the outcome in 1998 it is worth remembering that the new syllabus has a greater number of

candidates sitting the examination at Higher Level. In 1998 the percentage of Business Organisation candidates taking the examination at Higher Level was 60.5% (14561:24055) while this year in Business the percentage was 68.8% (16232: 23602). If the percentage of students taking Higher Level has increased by over 8 percentage points, and the overall pattern of results has remained comparable, it can be said that the new syllabus and examination are more accessible at Higher Level than the previous one. To put this Higher Level/Ordinary Level ratio in perspective, the percentage taking Higher Level this year in Geography was 73.8%, and in Biology was 62.4%.

3. ANALYSIS OF PERFORMANCE

In 2002 the results of Higher Level candidates show the following pattern:

Table 8: 2002 Analysis of pattern of answering and percentage marks earned per Section/Question

Question	Topic	Taking question	Marks earned	Popularity ranking	Ranking of marks
<u>Section 1</u> (80 marks)	Multiple Test	100%	74%	1(joint)	1
<u>Section 2</u> (80 marks)	Applied Business Question (ABQ)	100%	53%	1(joint)	8
<u>Section 3</u> (240 marks)					
<u>Part 1</u>					
1 (60 marks)	Industrial Relations etc.	71%	62%	5	3
2 (60 marks)	Transnational/Ethics	35%	58%	9	7
3 (60 marks)	International Trade/Mkt.	40%	61%	8	5
<u>Part 2</u>					
4 (60 marks)	Communications/Mngt	59%	50%	6	9
5 (60 marks)	Household/Ins/Finance	76%	71%	4	2
6 (60 marks)	Business Plan	44%	59%	7	6
7 (60 marks)	Marketing/Promotion	79%	62%	3	4

The most popular questions were obviously the compulsory Sections 1 and 2, though the percentage marks earned in both showed a marked contrast. The highest marks earned were in Section 1 with 74% gained on average, but the second lowest marks earned were in the Section 2 the Applied Business Question with 53%. Only Question 4 in Section 3 produced a lower mark than this at 50%.

In general, Section 3, Part 2, questions were more popular than Part 1 questions and the optional fourth question in this Section was chosen more frequently from Part 2. The most popular pattern was Section 3, Part 1 Question 1 and Section 3, Part 2 Questions 4, 5 and 7. Candidates taking this combination of questions, plus Sections 1 and 2, and who achieved the average mark per section/question, would have gained a total mark of 248 out of 400, a grade C2.

SECTION 1

This section was compulsory and candidates scored well in it. It ranked highest in terms of the percentage of marks gained. The majority attempted 9 or 10 questions from the section. The questions were regarded as straightforward and candidate friendly, and the layout was well received.

Question 1 Arbitration: This question was very well answered and candidates demonstrated a good knowledge of the term and area.

Question 2 Types of Industry: This was generally very well answered with above average scores common. Some candidates gave the name of a company rather than a type of industry. Marks were lost by some candidates who gave confused responses.

Question 3 Gross Profit Vs Gross Pay: This was not well answered and many candidates were not able to define/describe gross pay.

Question 4 Span of Control: The answers in this area were excellent and very well presented, with the result that most candidates gained full marks.

Question 5 EDI: Most candidates got 6 marks for Electronic Data Interchange and only better candidates achieved the additional 4 by outlining how it helped a business.

- Question 6** **5 Business Terms:** This was excellently answered with very high scores.
- Question 7** **5 Common Abbreviations:** Good to excellent scores were gained here. ROI and PLC (Post Leaving Certificate was one contribution) caused the most difficulty.
- Question 8** **Performance Appraisal:** Many candidates did not understand this term and gained relatively low marks here.
- Question 9** **Deregulation:** This was the least popular question in the section and was not well answered.
- Question 10** **Notice for AGM:** Most candidates achieved high marks in this question. However, they frequently omitted the heading, memo, the name of the company and, sometimes, the signature.

SECTION 2

This comprises a single compulsory 80 mark question, attempted by the full range of candidates taking the subject at Higher Level. It is based on the ‘case study’ approach and requires candidates to demonstrate sophisticated skills, particularly in relating theory to the facts of the ‘case’.

The overall performance in this area was very uneven and the average percentage gained was the second lowest of all the sections/questions in this examination. One of the reasons for this is a tendency by many to see the answers in narrow terms and not to consider the bigger picture. For example, in (C) candidates often confined their suggestions for ‘socially responsible business’ to the physical environment alone.

(A). HRM area:

In general, the responses to this part were good, but some candidates neglected to relate their answers to the text of the ABQ.

(B). Expansion Strategies:

Responses and marks in this part were reasonable to good. Again, there was some difficulty in relating the points made to the information given. Some candidates described methods of raising finance or becoming a PLC instead of concentrating on strategies.

(C). Social Responsible Business:

This section was answered reasonably well with links often made to the text. Poorer scoring answers limited their focus to the physical environment and sometimes confused social responsibility with public relations.

SECTION 3.

Part 1: People in Business/Business Environment

Question 1. Parties in Business, Relationships and Industrial Relations Act 1990:

This question was the most popular one in this part with 71% of candidates attempting it. It was 5th in overall popularity and yielded a percentage return that was 3rd highest on the paper.

1.(A): Good to excellent answers with commensurate marks.

1.(B): Reasonable to good answers in general. Some candidates confused conflict and competition in their responses.

1.(C): Only average marks were gained here. The lack of clear knowledge was evident with some candidates. The evaluation requirement proved a challenge for a number of candidates and this was reflected in their overall marks.

Question 2. Transnational and Ethics/Irish Economy:

This question was the least popular question (9th) on the paper with reasonably good marks of 58% (7th in the % marks gained category).

2.(A): Good to excellent answers resulted in good marks in this section. Some candidates outlined the disadvantages but contrast was rarely made between transnational and state companies.

2.(B) (i) and (ii): Answers here were generally good leading to a fair return in marks.

Question 3. International Trade and Global Marketing:

This question was the second least popular question (40%) yielding a good return of marks at 5th best.

3.(A): Answers ranged from poor to excellent. The evaluation requirement proved a challenge in many cases.

3.(B): Reasonable to good marks were gained in this part. Some candidates omitted examples.

Part 2: Enterprise

Question 4. Barriers to Communication, Benefit of Management Skills and Organising

This question was 6th in popularity and on average it achieved the lowest percentage marks of all the questions on the paper.

4.(A): Marks here tended towards good in the vast majority of cases. The draft report was good in general but some candidates lacked knowledge of the barriers to communication.

- 4.(B): Marks earned ranged from good to excellent, with good knowledge being demonstrated all around. Some candidates did not read the question and attempted to answer all four areas instead of the one required. Knowledge of the management skills varied among candidates and this affected the marks they earned for their attempts.
- 4.(C): Good marks were common here with relevant information and examples from the majority of candidates. Some candidates, however, found it difficult to support their stance with cogent reasons, demonstrating lack of knowledge of the course content. Candidates who disagreed with the initial statement tended to give poor answers.

Question 5. Business Vs Household, Insurance Principles and Cash Flow Calculation

This questions ranked 4th in popularity, yielding the 2nd best marks percentage.

5.(A): This part was well answered with good marks being earned all round. The presentation of the answers was good but marks were lost because candidates did not elaborate on their points.

5.(B): This was perhaps the best-answered part of any question on the paper. Candidates seem to have a good grasp of the principles of insurance and full marks were quite common here.

5.(C): Reasonable answers and marks were common in this section. There was some discussion of Profit or Loss, which was of marginal relevance. Weaker attempts often only identified one reason/problem, which tended to be repeated.

Question 6. (Business Plan)

This question was third last in popularity, with almost the same ranking in terms of % of marks gained.

6.(A): Answers in this area varied from weak to very good. The requirement to explain caused difficulty for some candidates.

6.(B): Good answers were given in general for the Business Plan but sometimes answers could be vague on the contents of the plan. In addition, many candidates failed to identify the required number of headings.

Question 7. Market Research, Segmentation and Promotional Methods

This was the most popular optional question and was 2nd in ranking for percentage marks gained for such questions of choice. Best marks were earned in Parts (A) and (B). Very few evaluated three promotional methods for full marks in Part (C).

7.(A): Generally, this section was very well answered.

7.(B): Also, very well answered.

7.(C): Some lack of knowledge was evident here as less than 30% of candidates knew the three promotional methods. Some candidates described different methods of sales promotion and only earned marks for one point. Other candidates confused Promotion and Sales Promotion and often failed to relate the methods to a product or service.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- Students achieved reasonable marks in the paper and the results were slightly improved at the combined A, B and C grades, and at the D, E, F and NG grades compared with last year. However, the number of A grades is down on last year. Nevertheless, Business remains an accessible subject and the examination gives a broad outlet for a wide range of candidates.
- The most popular areas of the paper were Marketing, Household/Insurance/Cash Forecast, Industrial/Business Relations, and Communications/Management. Most candidates took their 4th question from Part 2 of Section 3. As at Ordinary Level, questions with a broad economic focus tended to be avoided.
- The usual examination weaknesses were commented on by the examiners. These include: not reading/answering the question; failure to respond to the verbs used in the question, e.g., evaluate, contrast, explain; lack of neatness in, and unclear layout, of answer book; and failure to expand on points made.
- The ABQ area of the examination (Section 2) proved difficult for a significant number of candidates. Candidates need practice, and guidance, in dealing with this type of problem and in deciding the points that should be covered in the answer.
- The subject is maintaining its popularity within the schools and is continuing to offer a reasonable reward for the wide range of students who take it at both levels.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- In class, groups of candidates could be given the task of formulating an ABQ type question from a suitable area of the syllabus and other groups could be asked to answer it. Discussion and debate on the meaning/clarity of the question, how it could be approached, when it might be answered within the examination, what time to devote to it and the devising of a proposed marking scheme could have a useful impact on the candidates. Emphasis could be placed on the need to incorporate relevant elements from the ‘case’ within the answers.
- At Higher Level, candidates are expected to elaborate on points made in their solutions. This helps to convince examiners that the candidate understands the subject and the topic. Examples from the business and economic domain also help to demonstrate understanding and mastery.
- While economics is considered by many candidates as a wide-ranging and difficult area, the impact of the economic environment on business is so fundamental that knowledge of it can be a great aid in putting many of the issues into perspective.
- Candidates should be encouraged to check that they have answered all parts of the questions attempted and that they have correctly interpreted the exact requirements of the questions.

