

International AS and A-level Business (9625) BU01- Unit 1 Business and markets Report on the Examination

January 2026

REPORT ON THE EXAMINATION: INTERNATIONAL – JANUARY 2026

Overall, candidates demonstrated better exam technique compared to previous series. As a result, most candidates were able to finish the paper within the time constraints. Candidates for this paper showed more evidence of better skills of application and analysis.

Candidates who were able to effectively support their judgement by bringing in new considerations were generally able to access higher marks than those making superficial comments. Some students wrote too much, illustrating a lack of focus on the question asked. Candidates should be encouraged to think about their answer before beginning to write.

QUESTION A1

This was the strongest answer of all the multiple-choice questions on the paper with around 90% of candidates correctly identifying the correct option of D, illustrating good knowledge of the product life cycle.

QUESTION A2

This was the most challenging multiple-choice question on the paper, with nearly 50% of the candidates failing to select the correct answer (B). This shows limited understanding of marketing research. Centres should ensure that candidates understand concepts rather than learning the definition, as this can aid students in answering questions that may be phrased in a slightly different way.

QUESTION A3

Around 80% of candidates selected the correct answer of B, showing good knowledge of market segmentation. Candidates should be reminded that if they wish to change their response, a clear cross should be placed through the error.

QUESTION A4

This proved to be an accessible quantitative skills question with the majority of candidates achieving both marks. Candidates should be reminded of the importance of showing their working as there were some examples where an error in calculation resulted in the incorrect answer however the candidate was still able to achieve one out of the two marks available.

QUESTION A5

This quantitative question was more challenging than question 4 with some candidates struggling with the concept of dividend yield. Those candidates who knew the formula were able to achieve all three marks easily. Some candidates tried several iterations of calculations using all of the numbers provided generally illustrating weaker subject knowledge in this area. Candidates should be reminded that any quantitative skill can be tested and that the revision of all formulas should be encouraged to avoid missing out on easier marks.

QUESTION A6

Most candidates were able to identify a valid stakeholder group, such as employees. A small minority confused stakeholders with shareholders, rather than identifying shareholders as a stakeholder group. Some candidates also referred to 'stakeholders' as a generic group, rather than identifying a group, meaning they could not access any marks.

QUESTION A7

Many candidates failed to show strong knowledge of entrepreneurial characteristics. Some candidates identified intelligent or smart which is not an accepted entrepreneurial characteristic limiting them to 0 marks. Those candidates who did identify a correct characteristic such as innovative or risk taking would generally be able to apply to the context well. A small minority of candidates simply repeated the context of an entrepreneur starting a business in a competitive market rather than using the context.

QUESTION A8

This question highlighted a gap in knowledge for many candidates. A small proportion did not attempt the question. A significant number of candidates incorrectly defined a PED of -1.4 as price inelastic, meaning they were unable to access any marks.

QUESTION B9

This question was the best answered of all the 9-mark questions with most candidates showing good knowledge of social media and how this could be used in the context of a business targeting younger demographics. The context of a new business was less well used. Candidates should be reminded that all areas of context in the question or stem should be referred to in order to maximise marks.

QUESTION B10

This question illustrated a weaker knowledge of the topic of market mapping with many candidates making generic references to entering a new country without specific focus on the knowledge of the question. The candidates who had good knowledge of market mapping were able to answer the question well, meaning this question polarised candidates. Stronger responses were able to comfortably achieve level 3, whereas weaker responses often scored zero due to lack of knowledge.

QUESTION B11

Most candidates showed good knowledge of price skimming strategy. Whilst starting a response with a definition isn't required, many candidates did so. Candidates with good knowledge were generally able to effectively analyse the benefits of a price skimming strategy. A number failed to use the context of a fast-changing market, which limited their response to level 2.

QUESTION C12

This question showed that many candidates had very secure knowledge of different forms of business. Weaker responses simply relayed all knowledge of sole traders and private limited companies without application to the context of a sole trader looking to expand or referencing her son's experiences and situation. Candidates should be reminded that knowledge only forms a small part of the marks available for any question and to access the higher bands the knowledge must be applied to the context and analysis needs to be well developed. When knowledge was secure and application used effectively candidates were generally able to produce well considered and balanced responses allowing them to access level 4.

QUESTION C13

Sales promotion proved to be a challenging concept for some students. A significant proportion of students discussed promotion more broadly. In addition, many students failed to balance their argument with an alternative aspect of the promotional mix. This limited some candidates to the lower levels of the mark scheme. Centres are reminded that any area of the specification can be examined.

QUESTION C14

A number of candidates for this question seemed to have learned the definition of multi-channel distribution but failed to fully understand the concept. Many candidates simply referred to multi-channel distribution as e-commerce limiting their marks those candidates who did have good knowledge of multi-channel distribution were able to apply to the context well. Better candidates make good use of the context throughout the argument including in their final judgement and were able to make a solid recommendation based on their preceding arguments.