

INTERNATIONAL GCSE **BUSINESS**

9225/1

Paper 1 Influences of operations and human resources on
business activity

Mark scheme

June 2026

Version: 1.0 Final

Mark schemes are prepared by the Lead Assessment Writer and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation events which all associates participate in and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation process ensures that the mark scheme covers the students' responses to questions and that every associate understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for standardisation each associate analyses a number of students' scripts. Alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed and legislated for. If, after the standardisation process, associates encounter unusual answers which have not been raised they are required to refer these to the Lead Examiner.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of students' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

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Level of response marking instructions

Level of response mark schemes are broken down into levels, each of which has a descriptor. The descriptor for the level shows the average performance for the level. There are marks in each level.

Before you apply the mark scheme to a student's answer read through the answer and annotate it (as instructed) to show the qualities that are being looked for. You can then apply the mark scheme.

Step 1 Determine a level

Start at the lowest level of the mark scheme and use it as a ladder to see whether the answer meets the descriptor for that level. The descriptor for the level indicates the different qualities that might be seen in the student's answer for that level. If it meets the lowest level then go to the next one and decide if it meets this level, and so on, until you have a match between the level descriptor and the answer. With practice and familiarity you will find that for better answers you will be able to quickly skip through the lower levels of the mark scheme.

When assigning a level you should look at the overall quality of the answer and not look to pick holes in small and specific parts of the answer where the student has not performed quite as well as the rest. If the answer covers different aspects of different levels of the mark scheme you should use a best fit approach for defining the level and then use the variability of the response to help decide the mark within the level, ie if the response is predominantly level 3 with a small amount of level 4 material it would be placed in level 3 but be awarded a mark near the top of the level because of the level 4 content.

Step 2 Determine a mark

Once you have assigned a level you need to decide on the mark. The descriptors on how to allocate marks can help with this. The exemplar materials used during standardisation will help. There will be an answer in the standardising materials which will correspond with each level of the mark scheme. This answer will have been awarded a mark by the Lead Examiner. You can compare the student's answer with the example to determine if it is the same standard, better or worse than the example. You can then use this to allocate a mark for the answer based on the Lead Examiner's mark on the example.

You may well need to read back through the answer as you apply the mark scheme to clarify points and assure yourself that the level and the mark are appropriate.

Indicative content in the mark scheme is provided as a guide for examiners. It is not intended to be exhaustive and you must credit other valid points. Students do not have to cover all of the points mentioned in the Indicative content to reach the highest level of the mark scheme.

An answer which contains nothing of relevance to the question must be awarded no marks.

Marking guidance

- Read the response as a whole; follow the flow of reasoning as a whole.
- Remember that the indicative content provides possible lines of argument but there may be others that are equally valid. Be willing to credit other lines of argument.
- Annotate the script as you read using the annotations for application, analysis and evaluation shown below.
- Refer back to the standardisation scripts and guidance to help you benchmark. Marking must be in line with the standard agreed at standardisation. Refer back to standardisation scripts regularly.
- Summarise your findings briefly at the end of the response. This will help you decide on the overall level and is helpful for others to understand the mark given. Make sure the comments fit with the level awarded.
- Within your comment put the level awarded, eg L4, and any further explanation of that decision, needed most commonly where performance has varied across the answer.
- If in doubt about an approach contact your Team Leader, so that we can ensure we have a standardised approach across all marking.
- Be positive in your marking. Look to reward what is there.

Standard annotations:

Annotation	Skill being evidenced
Uses context	AO2 – application to context
Analysed in depth	AO3 – analysis
Partial analysis	
Simplistic analysis	
Evaluation fully justified	AO4 – evaluation
Evaluation with some justification	
Evaluation with limited justification	
Evaluation with no justification	

Section A

Total for this section: 15 marks

Question	Part	Marking guidance	Total marks
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01		Which of these is not a factor of production? Answer: D (Location)	1 AO1=1
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Question	Part	Marking guidance	Total marks
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02		A business increases its production. Economies of scale occur when... Answer: A (average costs fall.)	1 AO1=1
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Question	Part	Marking guidance	Total marks
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03		One feature of a short chain of command is... Answer: D (quick communication.)	1 AO1=1
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Question	Part	Marking guidance	Total marks
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04		Private sector can be defined as organisations... Answer: C (owned by individuals/shareholders.)	1 AO1=1
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Question	Part	Marking guidance	Total marks
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05		Imports to France are... Answer: C (C)	1 AO1=1
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Question	Part	Marking guidance	Total marks
06		Explain what is meant by ‘induction training’. One mark for identifying a valid feature, plus one mark for offering some explanation or development. Possible answers include: • introduction to the roles and responsibilities of the job • familiarisation with workplace (such as a tour), systems and machinery • introduction to the team that the worker will deal with. Specimen response: Induction training is provided for new workers when they start a job (1). This might include, for example, being made familiar with the systems and being given a tour (1).	2 AO1=2

Question	Part	Marking guidance	Total marks
07		Explain what is meant by ‘organic growth’. One mark for identifying a valid feature, plus one mark for offering some explanation or development. Possible answers include: • expanding using the business’ own capacity • growing through opening new stores • growing business with an online website • developing and selling new products • franchising • outsourcing. Specimen response: A business expanding existing operations to increase the business’ capacity (1). This could include opening new stores to gain more sales from customers (1).	2 AO1=2

Question	Part	Marking guidance	Total marks
08		Calculate the percentage of employees remaining in the business at the end of the year. Show your calculations. 36 staff leave out of 180 staff = $36/180 = 0.2$ or 20% 1 mark for showing 20% of staff leave. 1 mark for showing therefore 144/180 staff stay or 80% remain. 2 marks for correct answer. Full marks awarded for correct answer, even without working shown.	2 AO1=2

Question	Part	Marking guidance	Total marks
09		Explain how these two methods of motivation could increase employee productivity: • style of management • training. One mark for identifying how motivation is increased plus one mark for some development/explanation relating to productivity. Apply twice. Possible answers include: • style of management may offer greater empowerment to staff • style of management may pay more attention to staff needs • training can make staff feel more valued • training may boost skill levels of staff boosting productivity Specimen response: Training would allow employees to work more effectively (1), increasing the number of items they can produce per day (1). Style of management may allow an employee to feel engaged with the work (1) and therefore mean they are able to be more encouraged to produce more items in a time period (1).	4 AO1=4

Section B

Total for this section: 39 marks

Question	Part	Marking guidance	Total marks
10	1	Explain how a rise in the unemployment rate in Europe might affect SDB. One mark for identifying an effect, one mark for some valid explanation with some relevance to context, one mark for clear reference to context. Possible answers include: - likely to see fewer sales and therefore a fall in revenue - likely to need to pay lower wages and therefore a drop in costs - staff are more likely to stay so less recruitment will need to be carried out. Specimen response: A rise in the unemployment rate will lead to it being likely to have fewer sales (1). This is because people in Europe, who currently have jobs and high incomes, will see their ability to spend fall as fewer are in work on average (1) which in SDB's case will mean the sales will fall for gifts for special occasions or people (1).	3 AO1=1 AO2=2

Question	Part	Marking guidance	Total marks
10	2	Explain one benefit to SDB of operating in a global market. One mark for identifying a benefit, one mark for some valid explanation with some relevance to context, one mark for clear reference to context. Possible answers include: - large market is available in Europe – 750 million potential customers - labour is cheaper in Brazil than in the UK - specialist suppliers are in Mexico – can buy in bulk and benefit from discounts. Specimen response: Being in a global market allows SDB to sell to a larger market (1) as they are able to take advantage of the nearly 750 million customers in Europe (1). This can allow the business to expand and be more profitable in the long term (1).	3 AO1=1 AO2=2

Question	Part	Marking guidance	Total marks
10	3	SDB is considering changing to a supplier closer to the factory. Explain one reason SDB may want to make this change. One mark for identifying a valid reason, plus two marks for offering some explanation or development in context. Possible answers include: • shipping at present takes 3 weeks • cost of moving the materials will be incurred • delivery problems – 40% of items arrived late last year. Specimen response: SDB wants to reduce the delivery time (1) so it could buy from local suppliers local to the factory in Brazil. This would mean that there would be no delays in the production of the goods (1) which may allow it to distribute goods more quickly improving reputation and sales (1).	3 AO1=1 AO2=2

Question	Part	Marking guidance	Total marks
10	4	SDB is recruiting new employees to senior positions. Explain one advantage and one disadvantage of using external recruitment for these positions. One mark for identifying a valid advantage/disadvantage, plus two marks for offering some explanation or development in context. (2 × 3) 1 × AO1 and 2 × AO2 marks applied twice. Possible answers include: • external recruitment will lead to a larger pool of candidates • external recruitment may bring new ideas and more diversity • external recruitment can be costly • external recruitment can take longer to get the best candidate. Specimen response: The opportunity to recruit externally will mean that it can bring in new ideas (1). The business has been operating for the same way for 20 years and new ideas may mean it can make improvements to production (1) which is important as it is in a very competitive environment (1). External recruitment can be very slow and time consuming (1) though, it will take SDB 12 weeks and will increase the costs for the business as it completes the process (1). It is therefore likely that the business will need to either raise prices (which will be hard in their competitive market) or make smaller profit margins (1).	6 AO1=2 AO2=4

Question	Part	Marking guidance	Total marks
10	5	Analyse one impact on customers of the increase in size of SDB. Possible answers include: • as the business expands it may offer more new products or more locations to allow customers to access the products more • the business expanding in size may also allow for the brand to be more recognised. Customers in this market like high quality and branded goods • there can be decreased quality as the workers have to work harder. There were problems in this business with the quality of new products that came out • customers may find that there are delays or operational issues – SDB have to import goods from a long way away that takes time • prices may rise as the business looks to recoup the expenses – such as having to recruit new staff as in this case. Specimen response: SDB are expanding rapidly and this can present some operational issues with areas such as quality. The business expanded rapidly last year and as a result was rushing their designs out. By doing this the workers are having to work harder and training and quality control is not in place to ensure high quality products. As a result of the quality control issues the business will harm its reputation. In a competitive market this will mean they lose repeat purchases and have poor word of mouth advertising, hence losing sales and market share.	6 AO2=2 AO3=4

Examiners are reminded that AO2 and AO3 are regarded as interdependent. When deciding on a mark all should be considered together using the best fit approach. In doing so, examiners should bear in mind the relative weightings of the Assessment Objectives. Due to the greater number of marks available for AO3, answers at level 3 will have a greater depth of analysis (AO3) but may show similar levels of application of knowledge and understanding (AO2) to a level 2 answer.

Level	Marks	Descriptor
3	5–6 AO3×2	Detailed analysis of topics based on the context • Business areas are analysed in depth. • Applies knowledge and understanding to the context sufficiently, throughout the answer.
2	3–4 AO3 AO2	Sound analysis of topics based on the context • Business areas are partially analysed. • Applies knowledge and understanding to the context sufficiently, in most areas.
1	1–2 AO3 AO2	Basic analysis of topics based on the context • Analysis of business areas is simplistic. • Knowledge and understanding is applied to the context, but may be fragmented.
0	0	Nothing worthy of credit.

Question	Part	Marking guidance	Total marks
10	6	Analyse why one group of stakeholders may be unhappy with the shareholders of the business trying to make a higher profit. Possible answers include: - customers could suffer if the shareholders want to make high profits as they will need to make prices higher to cover their increased costs (such as the bank loans) or they will need to cut costs by reducing an area like supplier costs, which could damage the quality of the products - if shareholders want to make higher profits this will lead to costs potentially having to be cut. This could affect the employees whose wages could be cut to make the costs lower and to increase profit levels - banks may also be concerned about the rapid growth of the business as the loans need to be paid back with high interest rates and this will lead to big risks which could lead to the business not being able to pay back their interest. Specimen response: As the shareholders of SDB Ltd want to expand with profits as their objective they are attempting to cut costs. The toys are currently high quality but this cannot be maintained. To save costs the business will have to buy cheaper materials and use cheaper suppliers. As a result of this the quality of the materials being used in the toys will fall and the change in quality may start to become apparent to customers who are only willing to buy high-quality materials. This will hit sales as the customers will start to look to rivals first.	6 AO2=2 AO3=4

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Level	Marks	Descriptor
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2	3–4 AO3 AO2	Sound analysis of topics based on the context • Business areas are partially analysed. • Applies knowledge and understanding to the context sufficiently, in most areas.
1	1–2 AO3 AO2	Basic analysis of topics based on the context • Analysis of business areas is simplistic. • Knowledge and understanding is applied to the context, but may be fragmented.
0	0	Nothing worthy of credit.

Question	Part	Marking guidance	Total marks
10	7	SDB directors are considering introducing Total Quality Management (TQM). Using Items A and B: - analyse the advantages and disadvantages to SDB of using TQM - use your analysis to recommend whether SDB should change to TQM. Possible answers include: Advantages: - total quality management focuses on constantly improving the quality and involving all the employees in the quality process - customers could see the quality of new products, like the new designs, improve in quality if they use TQM - employees will also feel more motivated in the business with improved engagement if they are more involved in the quality process. They may need more responsibility as they are experienced and this could suit them well - the improved quality could also improve the reputation of the product in this market, improving their brand in a market where customers are focused on quality. Disadvantages: - however, the initial costs of introducing TQM could be challenging with training and time needed to introduce the ideas. This may not work for SDB as they are very keen to cut costs at the moment and it will harm profit margins - overall, given the recent quality issues it feels like shareholders must do something. TQM will allow the business to stand out for quality if it works well so, although expensive, would be appear to make sense. Possible themes for evaluation: - will workers who are experienced and have been at the business for a long time really be willing to put up with change? - TQM can be costly to implement. Does this fit with the shareholders' objectives to raise profits as in the short term there will be some increased costs from training and putting the changes in place? - How long will it take to implement this change – the workers will need time to adjust to the new methods and in the meantime will quality issues continue?	12 AO2=4 AO3=8

Examiners are reminded that AO2 and AO3 are regarded as interdependent. When deciding on a mark all should be considered together using the best fit approach. In doing so, examiners should bear in mind the relative weightings of the Assessment Objectives. More weight should therefore be given to AO3 than AO2.

Level	Marks	Descriptor
4	10–12 AO3 AO3 AO2	Detailed analysis and evaluation of topics based on the context - Coherent line of reasoning followed, which is sustained, relevant and substantiated. There is a focused conclusion that is fully justified and follows clearly from the analysis. - Business areas are analysed in depth. - Knowledge and understanding is detailed and appropriately applied within context.
3	7–9 AO3 AO3 AO2	Sound analysis and evaluation - Coherent line of reasoning given and the conclusion is appropriate and related to the preceding analysis. - Business areas are partially analysed. - Knowledge and understanding is detailed and appropriately applied within context.
2	4–6 AO3 AO3 AO2	Limited attempt made to analyse the topics based on the context - Evidence of some line of reasoning, with a conclusion that has limited justification. - Analysis of business areas is simplistic. - Some knowledge and understanding is applied within context.
1	1–3 AO3 AO3 AO2	Basic evaluation of topics but without any real support or analysis - A conclusion is present but without any reasoned support. - No discernible or relevant analysis. - A clear attempt to apply knowledge and understanding, but context may be lacking.
0	0	Nothing worthy of credit.

Section C

Total for this section: 36 marks

Question	Part	Marking guidance	Total marks
11	1	Explain one benefit to High Ridge of opening a shop in the town. One mark for identifying a valid benefit, plus two marks for offering some explanation or development in context. Possible answers include: • opening a new shop will benefit the business as they will be able to compete and take market share away from rivals who do have high street stores • it may be less risky to open a new shop as they have an established set of customers in the local area who may now buy more from the shop if they are accustomed to the brand from online. Specimen response: If High Ridge open a shop in the town it will create more opportunities for customers to visit (1). As competitors have physical shops customers may be drawn from them (1). The opening of the store will allow High Ridge to compete directly with the popular stores and increase sales (1).	3 AO1=1 AO2=2

Question	Part	Marking guidance	Total marks
11	2	Explain one benefit to High Ridge of using long-lasting materials. One mark for identifying a valid benefit, plus two marks for offering some explanation or development in context. Possible answers include: - the business will benefit from more sales if the business operates using long-lasting materials due to the increased demand for this - the business may gain from an improved reputation, for example by using materials that last and will not end up in landfill. This will mean that customers who are demanding this will reflect more positively on High Ridge as a brand and buy more of the products - there may be more investors willing to put investment into the business as they recognise High Ridge are doing less harm to the environment which aligns with their own ethics - if High Ridge uses long-lasting materials this will reduce the amount of damage and therefore reduce the amount of free repairs. Specimen response: If High Ridge uses long-lasting materials the business will gain an improved reputation with its customers (1). This is because they are reducing environmental harm and this aligns with their customers' views (1). This will lead to repeat purchases and increase sales (1).	3 AO1=1 AO2=2

Question	Part	Marking guidance	Total marks
11	3	Explain two advantages to High Ridge of providing good customer service. One mark for identifying a valid advantage, plus two marks for offering some explanation or development in context (2 × 3). Possible answers include: - the business will have a unique selling point as it allows customers to repair old clothes. This will make them more competitive in the market, standing out compared to rivals and as such the high levels of customer service lead to more sales - the quicker delivery of the orders increases brand reputation, as customers needs to satisfied and this leads to them potentially being able to create more word of mouth advertising and save on advertising costs. Specimen response: If High Ridge provide high levels of customer service, it will get repeat purchases (1). For example, in this case if customers are allowed to return their old clothes to be repaired the customer satisfaction levels will be higher (1). As a result, customers will be more likely to buy items from High Ridge again (1). In addition, the provision of a “very high level of customer service” and quick delivery means the business will build a strong reputation in the market (1). As a result, positive word-of-mouth advertising will be received (1) and the business may save costs of advertising as people will know of the strong brand reputation (1).	6 AO1=2 AO2=4

Question	Part	Marking guidance	Total marks
11	4	Analyse how High Ridge opening the new shop might affect the local community. Possible answers include: • there are positive economic benefits from the increased wages for local people who could take jobs in the shop with higher wages than in the factory and it may help local high unemployment • customers of the brand in the local area will find it more convenient for them to now shop at the shop and they get more choice of clothing outlets, currently there is little choice • visitors who are attracted to the local area to travel in and visit the shop bring economic activity to the local area which is in need of it given the high unemployment • the opening of shops may bring more traffic into the local community as people need to access the shop and park to visit it which causes a negative impact on the local community who need to go about their normal business. Specimen response: The town around the factory has high levels of unemployment so the opening of the new shops should be a welcome addition as it will bring in job opportunities (L1) that do not currently exist. As a result of the new jobs being offered more people will be able to find work. Some of this money is likely to be spent in the local area (L2) and this will improve the local economy, creating more employment. This is important as there is already a rising unemployment rate. People having more money will generate more wealth, benefiting local shops including High Ridge (L3).	6 AO2=2 AO3=4

Examiners are reminded that AO2 and AO3 are regarded as interdependent. When deciding on a mark all should be considered together using the best fit approach. In doing so, examiners should bear in mind the relative weightings of the Assessment Objectives. Due to the greater number of marks available for AO3, answers at level 3 will have a greater depth of analysis (AO3) but may show similar levels of application of knowledge and understanding (AO2) to a level 2 answer.

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1	1–2 AO3 AO2	Basic analysis of topics based on the context • Analysis of business areas is simplistic. • Knowledge and understanding is applied to the context, but may be fragmented.
0	0	Nothing worthy of credit.

Question	Part	Marking guidance	Total marks
11	5	Analyse how increasing its output would allow High Ridge to take advantage of economies of scale. Possible answers include: • as the business increases production they can buy in larger quantities that will allow them to get discounts by buying in larger quantity and make savings. They have a large warehouse that would allow them to do this. This can allow them to reduce prices for products and increase their sales • as the business can invest in the new machinery that will make the products more quickly they benefit from technical economies of scale, with less electricity being used (100 000 SEK rather than 300 000 SEK per year) and that will bring down unit costs and allows them to be more competitive. Specimen response: The business has been offered discounts for buying in larger quantities. The materials could therefore be bought in larger quantity and work out cheaper by item. These savings allow the economies of scale to reduce average unit cost. The business will be able to do this as it has a large warehouse already. By doing this prices could be reduced or a higher profit made on each item. Furthermore, the new machinery will be used if the business expands that makes the products more quickly. Making the products more quickly means that the fixed costs are spread over more items allowing average unit costs to be lower. Again, this would allow the business to charge a lower price making them more competitive in the clothing market.	6 AO2=2 AO3=4

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0	0	Nothing worthy of credit.

Question	Part	Marking guidance	Total marks
11	6	High Ridge is considering buying new machinery which is technologically more advanced. Using Items C and D and Table 1: - analyse the benefits and drawbacks of using the new machinery for High Ridge - using your analysis, recommend whether High Ridge should use the new machinery to improve its performance. Possible answers include: - investment in the machinery will be significant and this will raise the price of the products - the capacity of the new machinery is much higher and this can generate economies of scale – the business has spare capacity in the warehouse to be able to do this and save unit cost - the new machinery will provide significant environmental savings as electricity use will be saved - training will be required for staff which will take time. Possible themes for evaluation: - it will depend on the amount of finance the business has available - if prices need to rise to be able to afford the investment in the machinery will this put off some customers and actually mean sales revenue falls? - will staff in the business be able to cope with the change to the new machinery? - will the economies of scale be able to be realised by the business?	12 AO2=4 AO3=8

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