



Edexcel A-level Business exam practice answers

How your exams are marked

Questions worth 1 or 2 marks test your knowledge. Aspects of definitions will earn a mark each. These answers show these as a [1] for each aspect that would earn a mark.

Questions worth 3 to 7 marks will earn marks for each of three skills: knowledge, application of knowledge, and analysis of the question. These answers indicate how these skills can be shown for each question.

Questions worth 8 or more marks test four skills: knowledge, application, analysis and evaluation (your ability to make a supported judgement). These are marked using a levels of response grid – this asks the examiner to judge how well you have shown all four skills in your response. Top-level answers will:

- ‘show accurate and thorough understanding throughout, using the business context’
- ‘use well-developed and logical, coherent chains of reasoning, showing a range of cause and/or effect(s)’
- ‘use information well to support judgements, showing a full awareness of the validity and significance of competing arguments/factors’.

As a guide:

- for questions worth 8–10 marks, develop two arguments fully before making a judgement
- for questions worth more than 10 marks, develop three arguments before making a judgement.

These answers will indicate points on which valid arguments can be developed and suggest typical ways to demonstrate all relevant skills for the question asked.



9: Resource management

1 Relevant points could include: [20]

- Recognises different aspects of lean production including cell production, TQM, continuous improvement (kaizen) and just-in-time (JIT).
- Benefits of cell production include more ideas from staff, flexibility to adjust products, relatively high productivity.
- Benefits of TQM include reduction of defects, boosting high quality brand image.
- Benefits from continuous improvement – improvements from staff which could boost productivity, reducing cost per unit – crucial as the business is UK-based and will be competing with firms based in lower cost countries.
- Benefits of JIT – less chance of having stock left after fashion trends have changed, reduced costs due to less stock-holding, leading to a better ability to compete on cost/price with foreign-based rivals.
- Lean production speeds processes up – critical in a fashion industry, and possibly a major source of advantage over foreign-based rivals who are likely to take much longer to get new designs into UK stores from foreign factories.

Potential counterbalance

Successful lean production is reliant on certain key elements:

- Staff buy-in – TQM relies on all staff to put quality as a first priority. Continuous improvement only works if staff are willing to contribute their ideas, while problems in production caused by unmotivated staff could be especially harmful with no buffer stock
- Reliable suppliers – JIT puts the firm at the mercy of its suppliers, needing perfect quality and 100 per cent reliability. The firm, though UK-based, may rely on foreign suppliers for raw materials, potentially making 100 per cent reliability hard to assure if supplies are travelling a long distance.