

Young Enterprise Examination

Examiner's Report 2020

This year's examination was beset with major challenges with the emerging Coronavirus and the subsequent lockdown. There was uncertainty throughout the exam and marking periods resulting in further delays to the moderation and analysis of the results.

All examiners were impressed by the commitment of the young people to the YES programme. The papers provide valuable insights into the inner workings of the projects and how key inputs can make or break a project. The papers overall indicated the critical issues that lead to the success or failure of the enterprise.

- Selection of team members
- Allocation of roles
- Time taken to bring the idea to fruition

However, as one examiner reported – *'That in itself reflects real business situations and should be highlighted as a learning outcome. Welcome to the real world!'*

One student observed: *'Through this experience I have learned that a company is like a machine if one part gives up and starts not working to its fullest potential then the whole thing will fall apart, therefore everyone needs to make sure to do their bit.'*

The three key areas mentioned above might help teachers and advisors for this year when they brief students on their new programme.

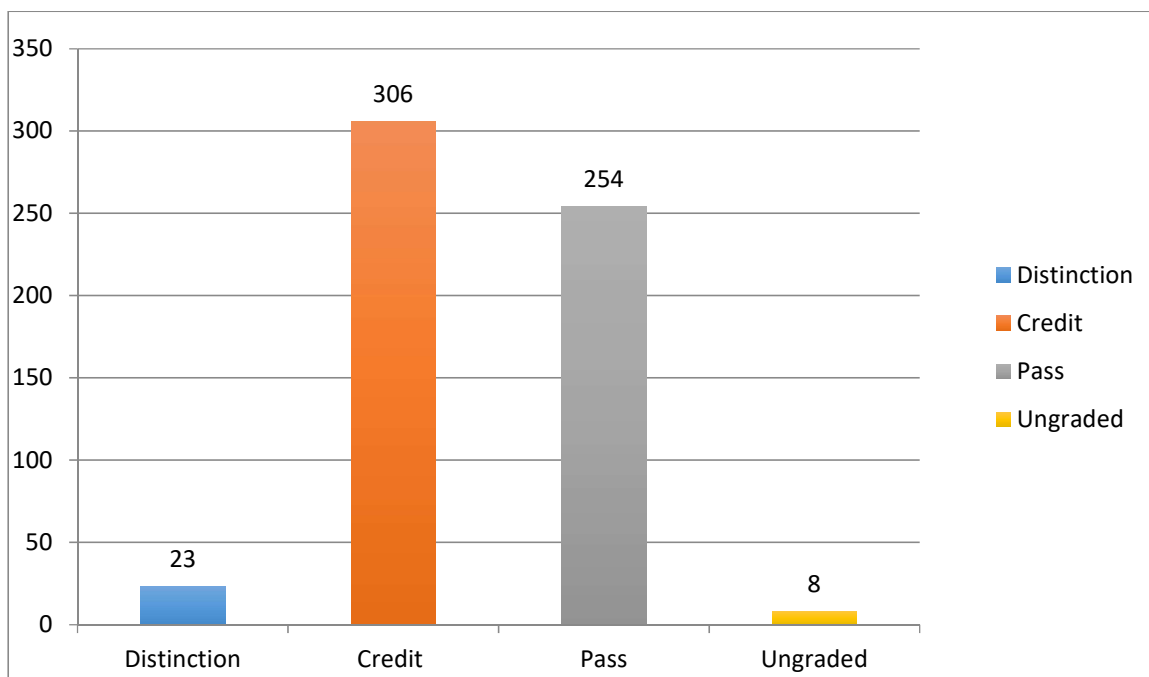
The Grade Levels 2020

Table 1: Grade Breakdown by number and percentage

Distinction	23	4%
Credit	306	52%
Pass	254	43%
Ungraded	8	1%

There were more credit grades awarded for the third year running. To achieve a credit, the paper must convey the reality of the experience and how the participant delivered a high level of enthusiasm and engagement, showing real evidence of learning outcomes.

A paper needs to be outstanding to gain a distinction. While the number of distinctions is lower than in the past two years, the quality of the papers overall continues to rise.



Only eight papers from a total of 593 were ungraded, mostly because all four questions were not answered. One paper had question 1 repeated four times, verbatim.

Another mistake is attempting to answer all six questions. But no paper was ungraded as a consequence of this.

Many candidates state that the experience has influenced their future career choice or acts as a stimulus to further education.

The markers are mindful of the diversity in maturity, ability and fluency across schools and all papers are evaluated on their own merit.

Table 2: grades awarded by year

Year	Distinction	Credit	Pass	Ungraded
2010	3%	29%	66%	2%
2011	6%	38%	53%	3%
2012	3%	36%	56%	5%
2013	4%	28%	64%	4%
2014	3%	33%	61%	3%
2015	4%	37%	57%	2%
2016	7%	35%	57%	1%
2017	7%	42%	51%	1%
2018	8%	54%	36%	<1%
2019	8%	53%	39%	<1%
2020	4%	52%	43%	1%

Not all YES programme participants take the exam and some great papers sometimes come from members of teams whose project was less than successful. Students can still demonstrate the value of the experience without their company achieving business success.

Questions Answered

Table 3: Questions Answered

2020	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6
Number of Students	589	585	78	198	463	424
Percentage of Students	99%	99%	13%	33%	78%	72%

There is a total of six questions. Candidates must answer four.

Section One – Must answer both

- Q1. The role of the candidate
- Q2. Project planning/management and performance

Section Two – Any two

- Q3. Finance and company compliance
- Q4. Leadership, teamwork and networking
- Q5. Marketing and promotions
- Q6. Ideas generation and innovation

The best results are achieved by devoting sufficient time to each of the four questions equally. Many students spend too long on the mandatory questions and insufficient time on the two choice questions in section B.

Some papers merely recount a list of events as they occurred providing no insights or analysis. These papers read like rambling, unstructured narratives.

Higher grades are achieved by papers that follow the structure advised in the guidance notes which are provided with the exam paper.

The Most Answered Questions

The question on marketing and promotions (Q5) is by far the most popular. Over 78% answered it this year. Predictably, the question is appealing as the candidates themselves are consumers and influenced by advertising and social media.

In second place is Q6 asking about ideas generation and innovation. Again, not surprisingly as one of the most obvious challenges in the entire process is the creation of the business idea and concept. A danger here is that sometimes the answer has already been recounted in Q2 and marks can be lost due to this repetition.

The Least Answered

Q3 (Finance and company compliance) is by far the least popular question. Only 13% of students attempted it, even those who had been responsible for the accounting and compliance function did not attempt it. As outlined in previous reports, the subject may be seen as 'dry' or less exciting than the other choices.

A number of schools encountered difficulties opening bank accounts and some resorted in managing the money in a locked safe. Very few papers described how the accounting was managed.

Q4 (Leadership, teamwork and networking) was answered by only 33% of candidates. In previous years it was a popular choice.

Incredibly, a whopping 70% of the top ten distinctions answered question 4 and 40% answered question 3.

Table 4: Top Ten questions answered

2020	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6
Number of Students	10	10	4	7	4	7
Percentage of Students	100%	100%	40%	70%	40%	70%

Distinction achievers all provided excellent insights in the following areas:

- Understanding of Leadership
- High degrees of self-awareness
- Logical structure in the layout of answers
- Used S.W.O.T template
- Equal attention paid to each question
- Comprehensive coverage and consistency in all answers.

Notable quotes: *'I learnt humility and the need to understand others while discovering my own leadership potential. I now want to do a business degree.'*

Another candidate wrote: *'I learnt that I need to be agile and not always look at things from my own bubble. Always focus on being innovative and this can drive the passion for business.'*

Simple steps to the best grade

Read the guidance notes carefully and thoughtfully

Make sure you answer all four questions

Follow the prompts for best structure

Write honestly about the experience.

Don't leave out important detail because you think it should be obvious. (Like what the business idea itself was!)

Show how well you performed and how much you learnt

Write as clearly as you can in your own words

But make sure it is readable

There are no right or wrong answers – it's your story

Number all questions.

End of Report - Frank Dunne July 2020