

Young Enterprise Examination 2017

Examiner's Report

Introduction

The overall standard of exam result continues to rise. It is gratifying that all examiners report a consistent upward trend in perception, insight, reflection, presentation and fluency.

This year more distinctions were awarded than in any previous year and the volume of credits increased significantly. The level of ungraded papers has fallen to its lowest level so far.

This is a tribute and a credit to all the students who participated in the programme and the teachers and advisors who supported them in their endeavours.

There is a clear improvement in the students' understanding of the key components and dynamics of the business start-up process. Some provided impressive, often remarkable insights.

Also, most students demonstrated awareness of the importance of marketing and branding and a mature appreciation of the critical importance of market research and buyer behaviour. Most focussed on the needs and wants of the potential customer markets and were not driven solely by their infatuation for their product or service.

In my experience, this demonstrates a major shift in the young peoples' approach to enterprise creation.

The Grade Levels

The number of students sitting the exam rose slightly on last year and it was heartening to see a number of schools returning to the programme.

Table 1: Grade Breakdown

Distinction	71	7%
Credit	400	40%
Pass	514	52%
Ungraded	9	1%

The number of distinctions and credits now stand at an all time high. It is important to know that to achieve a good credit the candidate must achieve a very high level of reporting on their YES experience.

Together with the required level of insight and reflection, candidates must also be able to convey their attitude, motivation and the benefits gained from the experience.

This calls for the candidate to demonstrate that they have been deeply engaged and committed to the experience: That they made a significant contribution to the venture and collaborated effectively with the other team members. Finally, they must show clearly considered reflection on

their role, what they learnt about themselves and how the whole process informed their understanding and learning.

The most difficult job for the examiners is grading on the margins of pass/credit and credit/distinction.

Most passes are awarded because the answers merely describe the bare facts of the project and a brief commentary on what occurred. They recount events without any depth or insight. There is also the issue of perfunctory, short answers that express little of the experience.

Looking at the grades over the years we can see the increase in the overall standard.

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	6.7%	35%	57%	1%
2017	7.1%	42%	51%	1%

Examiners' Observations

All examiners agreed that the results were positive with clear and consistent evidence; that the YES programme was a beneficial and worthwhile experience, and that this was reflected in the quality of the answers.

All examiners expressed their admiration and respect for the efforts generally. One noted that the experienced presented him *'with another opportunity to marvel at the endeavour and commitment of these young people in applying themselves to a process that would prove daunting to most of their peers. The fact that these youngsters continue to give up their free time to engage with the experience fills me with admiration and a positive outlook for the future of business in Scotland.'*

Positives

There was a marked improvement in the presentation of the papers due mainly to the increased number of word documents and more care being taken to write legibly.

Students expressed *'a good balance of reflection on the positives and negatives of how the companies worked together and what they could have done in hindsight.'*

One examiner observed that when the advisors and teachers allocated the roles, rather than the students themselves, there appeared to be less friction when deciding on choosing a product. Conversely, some teams when left to their own devices came up with equally creative solutions and productive outcomes.

Less successful ventures were those that did not have solid foundations from the beginning. This does not mean that a candidate who has been part of a less successful project cannot achieve high

marks in the exam. The ability to outline and reflect on what went wrong can be as good a learning experience as understanding and knowing what went right.

Individual willingness to honestly reflect on their own and their fellow members' behaviours through the various stages of the experience was clearly evident in most papers.

There is a growing number of students expressing aspirations to become entrepreneurs or go into business as a career option.

Issues

The range of questions offers a broad scope of potential content that students can approach and help them write about their experience.

Too much time is devoted to question 1 at the expense of the others. The majority of the lower grades were due to the brevity of the questions in section B.

Typically, more time was given to questions 1 and 2.

The majority of students achieve higher marks for Question 1 and marginally less on Question 2. But the bulk of the higher marks are achieved from these two mandatory questions in Section 1.

Most pass grades are awarded to papers that 'run out of steam' in section 2.

Devoting equal time to all four questions achieves higher marks overall.

Lower grades were due to insufficient and short answers. Examiners wonder if the students were using all of the allocated one and a half hours.

There are still some issues with legibility and poor presentation.

As mentioned last year; some papers are rambling narratives recounting how events unfolded with little meaningful analysis.

For many schools there is insufficient focus on ideas generation. The business idea is 'stumbled upon' or an obvious or predictable idea is chosen and does not inspire the students over the programme.

Schools might consider introducing ideas generation exercises in the early stages.

There is abundant evidence that some members are less committed or engaged thus leaving the more committed to carry the load.

Few students follow the question prompts provided. Using the prompts provides a simple and easy structure and will make it easier to cover the essential points.

Questions Answered

The clear favourite subject is promotion and selling – question 5.

Nearly 80% tackled this question and most showed understanding of the concepts and process. However, the increasing focus on this question is at the expense of the other, equally important question areas such as question 3 that was attempted by only 20% of students. Even those candidates who carried out the financial management function did not attempt it.

Reluctance to answer the finance question may be due to a lack of interest in the subject or a lack of confidence.

While we need to look at this again for future exams it must be accepted that given the choice students will tackle the questions that are most interesting and attractive to them

Table 3: Questions Answered

2017	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6
Number of Students	994	994	204	451	793	528
Percentage of Students	100%	100%	20.5%	45.4	79.7%	53.1%

Recommendations

More focus on the foundation of the start-up idea ensuring that all participants are fully integrated and committed to the business idea and vision.

Students must be made aware that in order to do well in the exam they must devote equal time to each question.

To answer all questions fully and adequately then the full hour and a half time allocation is required.

The prompts are there to help and guide the students and by following them a good structure and flow of thought can emerge.

It is essential that legibility and presentation continues to improve. It would be of great benefit if the schools could remind the students of these issues.

Conclusions

The continuing upward trend in the quality of the papers is positive and promising and augers well for the future of the YES programme. This success is a tribute to the dedication of the schools and the commitments and hard work of the participating students.

Many thanks for all the diligent work of the examiners and to Emma Stephens at Stathclyde University for her enormous support this year.

Frank Dunne Senior Examiner May 2017

Ten of the Best

- Aidie Chumbe Scenteemental St Margaret's Academy
- Amber Ramsay Trade Waid Waid Academy
- Ross Lamb Elevate Dainel Stewart's & Melville College

- Elidh Fairgrieve The 99s Greenwood Academy
- Iona Johnston Food for Good Hamilton College
- Annie Lennam Squad St Leonard's School
- Mahnoor Ahmed Scenteemental St Margaret's Academy
- Gideon Green The Box Company Hutcheson's Grammar School
- Paige Milne The Little Cottage Oldmacher Academy
- Raghav Kumar Nano Star Bocclair Academy