

Commentary on candidate evidence

The candidate evidence has achieved the following marks for each question of this assignment.

Introduction

Candidate A

Tesco marketing mix

The candidate was awarded **2/2 marks** for this section for:

- ◆ stating that Tesco is a supermarket (**1 mark – background**)
- ◆ stating that the purpose of the report was to research the marketing mix of Tesco (**1 mark – business and purpose**)

Candidate B

Effectiveness of Lush's corporate social responsibility policy

The candidate was awarded **2/2 marks** for this section for:

- ◆ stating the purpose of the report was to investigate the effectiveness of Lush's CSR policy (**1 mark – business and purpose**)
- ◆ stating that Lush is a chain of cosmetic stores (**1 mark – background**)

Candidate C

The effectiveness of Marks & Spencer's extended marketing mix

The candidate was awarded **2/2 marks** for this section for:

- ◆ stating the purpose of the report was to research the effectiveness of the M&S extended marketing mix (**1 mark – business and purpose**)
- ◆ stating what M&S sells (**1 mark – background**)

This candidate gave the purpose in the title.

Research

Candidate A

An evaluation of Waterstone's marketing mix

The candidate was awarded **4/4 marks** for this section for:

- ◆ linking the value 'accurate' and direct from the company (**1 mark – explained value**)
- ◆ linking the value 'cost effective' and free to access (**1 mark – explained value**)
- ◆ linking the value 'objectivity' with coming from an external news organisation (**1 mark – explained value**)
- ◆ linking the ability to compare prices with using a competitor's website (**1 mark – explained value**)

Full marks were achieved at this point. The candidate also linked the value 'up to date' with gathering information in January.

A mark was not awarded for saying that the article is easily available as it already exists. Although this may be true in some instances, in others that may not be the case. For example, one might have to pay to access an already existing article which does not make it easily available.

A mark was not awarded for saying that prices are numbers and therefore objective because there would have to be some clarification, for example that numbers make it clearer when looking at trends.

A mark was not awarded for saying that a site visit was appropriate as it is designed to help assess the marketing mix because the activities listed are part of the marketing mix and therefore no explanation of the value has been given.

It is equally acceptable for a candidate to give the information about sources as prose or in a table.

Candidate B

The effectiveness of Marks & Spencer's extended marketing mix

The candidate was awarded **4/4 marks** for this section for:

- ◆ linking the value 'up to date' with the information being updated in February (**1 mark – explained value**)
- ◆ linking the value 'usefulness' with seeing the public's opinions (**1 mark – explained value**)
- ◆ linking the ability to compare marketing mixes with using a competitor's website (**1 mark – explained value**)
- ◆ linking the value 'accessibility' with information being available 24/7 (**1 mark – explained value**)

Full marks were achieved at this point. The candidate also linked gathering information from staff with gaining first-hand information and being able to interview staff with being able to access information that would not be available in other ways.

A mark was not awarded for saying that the M&S website may be biased as an indication of why it may be biased would have to be given, for example wanting to portray the firm in the best light.

A mark was not awarded for saying that a variety of views could be gathered, as no value was given of the benefit of being able to get these views.

A mark was not awarded for saying that customers may not fill in a survey, as no value was given of the disadvantage of this.

It is equally acceptable for a candidate to give the information about sources in a table or as prose.

Candidate C

The effectiveness of the extended marketing mix of Greggs

The candidate was awarded **4/4 marks** for this section for:

- ◆ linking the value 'accessibility' with coming from the organisation's website (**1 mark – explained value**)
- ◆ linking the value 'bias' with the organisation presenting themselves in the best light (**1 mark – explained value**)
- ◆ linking the value 'relevance' to gathering information for a specific purpose (**1 mark – explained value**)
- ◆ linking the value 'time consuming' with the constraints of conducting a survey (**1 mark – explained value**)

Full marks were achieved at this point. The candidate also linked being up to date with being released in January; linked unreliability with customers not being serious about their reviews; linked accuracy with being unbiased; and linked being out of date with potential changes since publication in October 2021.

It is equally acceptable for a candidate to give the information about sources in a table or as prose.

Analysis and interpretation

Candidate A

The effectiveness of Marks and Spencer's extended marketing mix

When choosing the marketing mix/extended marketing mix, candidates can write about any of the 7Ps (or all of them, or as many as they want). If a candidate chooses the marketing mix and also specifies some elements of it, marks can be awarded for elements that were not listed. However, if a candidate specifies only a few elements (eg the effectiveness of Marks and Spencer's pricing and promotion) and does not also mention the marketing mix, then marks will only be awarded for the analysis of pricing and promotion. Additionally, in this example, the candidate must then cover pricing and promotion.

The candidate was awarded **13/13 marks** for this section as follows:

- ◆ In paragraph 1 the candidate gives a source and a finding, leading to one analytical point **(1 mark)**.
- ◆ In paragraph 2 the candidate gives two findings from one source, leading to two analytical points **(2 marks)**.
- ◆ In paragraph 3 the candidate gives two findings from one source, leading to two analytical points **(2 marks)**.
- ◆ In paragraph 4 the candidate gives one finding which contradicts the finding from the first paragraph, therefore no mark was awarded for analysis coming from this.
- ◆ In paragraph 5 the candidate gives a source and a finding, leading to four analytical points **(4 marks)**.
- ◆ In paragraph 6 the candidate gives a source and a finding, leading to one analytical point **(1 mark)**.
- ◆ In paragraph 7 the candidate gives a source and two findings, leading to one analytical point **(1 mark)**.
- ◆ In paragraph 8 the candidate gives a source and a finding, leading to one analytical point **(1 mark)**.
- ◆ In paragraph 9 the candidate gives a source, repeats one finding and gives another, leading to one analytical point **(1 mark)**.

Full marks were achieved at this point. The candidate gave an additional source, finding and analytical point.

Candidate B

Impact of external factors in BP PLC using PESTEC

This candidate submitted the report in single line spacing which makes it hard to read. The guidance asks candidates to present their reports in 1½ or double line spacing.

This candidate did not cover all six elements of PESTEC (ie not technology) which is acceptable.

The candidate was awarded **2/13 marks** for this section as follows:

- ◆ In paragraph 1, under the 'political' heading, the candidate gives a source and a finding, but no analytical points. The statement about loss of working capital would require clarifying figures, for example changes in revenue and inventory, to be mark worthy. It is not clear which people could lose brand awareness – is it the Russians if BP returns there after the war?
- ◆ In paragraph 2, under the 'environmental' heading, the candidate gives a source and a finding, leading to one analytical point (**1 mark**). The statement about working capital is a recommendation and not analysis.
- ◆ In paragraph 3, under the 'environmental' heading, the candidate gives a source and a finding, but no analytical points. The statement about daily profits is too vague to be mark worthy.
- ◆ In paragraph 4, under the 'economic' heading, the sanctions have affected the supply, not the demand for oil, therefore the candidate's point is invalid. The candidate was awarded an analysis point for increasing prices leading to lower customer loyalty (**1 mark**).
- ◆ In paragraph 5, under the 'economic' heading, the point about October 2019 is historic and does not make sense.
- ◆ In paragraphs 6 and 7, under the 'social' heading, there are no social factors given.
- ◆ In paragraph 8, under the 'competitors' heading, the candidate gives a 'story' that is not expressed clearly, rather than analysis.

Conclusions and recommendations

Candidate A

An evaluation of Waterstone's marketing mix

The candidate was awarded **7/10 marks** for this section as follows:

- ◆ In paragraph 1 the candidate justifies a mostly effective marketing mix but suggests that some downfalls could be improved (**1 mark**).
- ◆ In paragraph 2 the candidate recommends a price reduction in order to attract more customers (**1 mark**).
- ◆ In paragraph 3 the candidate recommends using penetration prices in order to increase sales volumes on publication (**1 mark**).
- ◆ In paragraph 4 the candidate recommends using press releases in order to raise awareness (**1 mark**).
- ◆ In paragraph 5 the candidate recommends using free gifts in order to increase repeat or first-time purchases (**1 mark**). The counter argument of expense was not strong enough for a development mark.
- ◆ In paragraph 6 the candidate recommends holding competition in order to create excitement around new publications (**1 mark**).
- ◆ In paragraph 7 the candidate brings various points from the analysis together to conclude that retaining a wide product range will prevent customers using competitors (**1 mark**).

Candidate B

Tesco marketing mix

The candidate was awarded **8/10 marks** for this section as follows:

- ◆ In paragraph 1 the candidate recommends retaining current prices in order to maintain customer satisfaction (**1 mark**).
- ◆ In paragraph 2 the candidate recommends continuing to offer online services as customers are happy with it (**1 mark**).
- ◆ In paragraph 3 the candidate recommends continuing the current marketing strategy as it increases customer numbers (**1 mark**).
- ◆ In paragraph 4 the candidate recommends introducing training in order to improve customer service (**1 mark**).
- ◆ In paragraph 5 the candidate recommends hiring full time cleaners in order to improve cleanliness (**1 mark**).
- ◆ In paragraph 6 the candidate recommends continuing appraisals and bonuses in order to main staff morale (**1 mark**). The point the candidate is making is from the People section of the course content and therefore not about the marketing mix. The finding was not awarded in the analysis and interpretation section, but not to award it here would be to penalise the candidate twice for the same mistake.
- ◆ In paragraph 7 the candidate recommends continuing quality measures in order to main quality products (**1 mark**).

- ◆ In paragraph 8 the recommendation that Tesco should 'put more time and effort' into their deliveries is too vague to be awarded a mark.
- ◆ In paragraph 9 the candidate recommends continuing price matching with Aldi in order to retain customers (**1 mark**).

Candidate C

The effectiveness of the extended marketing mix of Greggs

The candidate was awarded **9/10 marks** for this section as follows:

- ◆ In paragraph 1 the conclusion does not gain a mark because it is a repeat of an analysis point in the analysis and interpretation section.
- ◆ In paragraph 2 the candidate recommends expanding the product line in order to attract customers (**1 mark**).
- ◆ In paragraph 3 the candidate develops the counter argument of the increased cost involved (**1 mark**).
- ◆ In paragraph 4 the conclusion does not gain a mark because it is a repeat of an analysis point in the analysis and interpretation section.
- ◆ In paragraph 5 the candidate recommends staff training in order to deal with customer effectively (**1 mark**). The recommendation about monitoring staff through comment cards is confusing and does not gain a mark. The recommendation about staff training is developed (**1 mark**).
- ◆ In paragraph 6 the candidate develops the counter argument of reduced productivity during training (**1 mark**).
- ◆ In paragraph 7 the conclusion does not gain a mark because it is a repeat of the finding in the analysis and interpretation section.
- ◆ In paragraph 8 the candidate recommends hiring staff to develop the online ordering process in order to meet customer needs (**1 mark**). The following sentence describes the way in which the online process could be improved and is therefore not a development of the recommendation to hire staff.
- ◆ In paragraph 9 the candidate develops the counter argument of the increased cost involved which reduces available finance elsewhere (**1 mark**).
- ◆ In paragraph 10 the conclusion does not gain a mark because it is a repeat of the finding in the analysis and interpretation section.
- ◆ In paragraph 11 the candidate recommends expanding the product line in order to attract different market segments (**1 mark**).
- ◆ In paragraph 12 the candidate develops a counter argument to the point made about Primark in paragraph 10 (**1 mark**).

Appendices

Candidate A

The effectiveness of Lush's corporate social responsibility policy

The candidate lists the sources that have been used, numbering them 1-5. Of these, four are URLs to website and the fifth is a link to the survey that the candidate created. This is a suitable sequence in which to present sources.

Candidate B

The effectiveness of Marks & Spencer's extended marketing mix

The candidate lists the sources that have been used, numbering them 1-4. Of these, two are URLs to websites, one is a link to the survey that the candidate created, and one is information about a site visit. This is a suitable sequence in which to present sources. Best practice would be to give a full date of the site visit, including the month and year.

Candidate C

Evaluating the corporate social responsibility of Lush Cosmetics

The candidate gives three sections of the Lush website in Appendix 1. Appendix 2 is a list of the questions used in a survey. Appendices 3-5 are URLs of non-Lush websites. This is a suitable sequence in which to present sources.

The candidate chose to give the survey questions in an appendix. If the candidate had given a URL link to the survey, it would not have been necessary to include the survey questions. Either method is acceptable.