A-Level Business

This paper is marked against four assessment objectives, and almost every lost mark is a missing objective rather than missing knowledge: no definition, no case material, no developed chain, or no judgement. Everything below is from Cambridge's examiner reports. 本科按四个评分目标给分，失分多是漏了某一项：没定义、没引用案例、没展开、没结论。

The four assessment objectives – where the marks actually are

✗ Going straight into the argument, so the key term is only defined by implication.

✓ **Open with the definition: 'Decentralisation is passing decision-making authority down the hierarchy.'**

Examiners record candidates losing the knowledge marks because the definition was implied rather than stated.

开头先写定义 ER 2 sessions P3

✗ Writing a correct answer that would fit any business.

✓ **Name the business and use its numbers, its market and its situation.**

Application is a separate objective, and examiners state the application must be used IN the analysis to be awarded.

必须结合案例材料 ER 4 sessions P3

✗ Making a point and stopping – 'this will motivate staff'.

✓ **Continue the chain: motivated staff work more productively, so unit costs fall, so the firm can cut price or raise margin.**

Analysis means point, link to the business, then consequence. Examiners describe short undeveloped points as the ceiling on the analysis mark.

要写出因果链条 ER 2 sessions P3

✗ Analysing well and never giving an opinion.

✓ **Answer the question asked: yes they should, or no they should not, and why that outweighs the other side.**

Half the marks on a 12-mark question are evaluation. Examiners state there has to be a definitive answer.

必须给出明确判断 ER 3 sessions P3

✗ Ending with a conclusion that repeats the arguments above it.

✓ **Weigh them: which factor matters most here, under what condition would the answer change.**

Examiners state a brief repeating conclusion is never enough to move beyond limited evaluation.

结论要权衡，不是复述 ER 2 sessions P3

✗ Writing the evaluation in general terms after an answer full of case detail.

✓ **Keep the context in the judgement too: 'for a firm with this cash position, the risk is...'**

Examiners note strong candidates losing marks specifically for evaluation written out of context.

评价也要结合情境 ER 2 sessions P3

Reading the question

✗ Writing a paragraph for an 'identify' question.

✓ **Identify means one or two words. Save the time for the essay.**

Examiners state the command word tells you the detail required, and record long answers to identify questions in four sessions.

"指出"只需一两个词 ER 4 sessions P1

✗ Discussing the disadvantages when the question asked only for benefits.

✓ **Give what was asked. Nothing else is read.**

Examiners state that analysis of disadvantages of decentralisation was not required and received no credit.

只写题目要求的一面 ER 2 sessions P3

✗ Analysing four benefits when the question asked for two.

✓ **Take two and develop them properly.**

Examiners note the extra ones rarely lower the mark but are not an effective use of time – and the time is what the developed chains need.

写两个并展开 ER 3 sessions P1

✗ Opening an answer by surveying the topic – listing the measures of elasticity before defining the one that matters.

✓ **Go to the concept the question uses, define it, and apply it.**

Examiners describe this preamble as providing no credit while consuming the answer's time.

不要铺垫无关内容 ER 2 sessions P3

✗ Evaluating whether marketing activity SHOULD be used when the question asked you to judge marketing that has already happened.

✓ **Judge what was done, against its results.**

Examiners record candidates suggesting alternatives where the question was retrospective – a well-argued answer to the wrong question.

看清是回顾还是建议 ER 2 sessions P3

5 · Finance and accounting 财务与会计

✗ Producing a ratio answer with no working.

✓ **Write the formula, substitute, then give the answer with its unit or percentage sign.**

Examiners stress the need for the calculation to be shown; a bare figure cannot earn the method marks.

计算要写公式和过程 ER 3 sessions P3

✗ Calculating the accounting rate of return with your own version of the formula, or leaving it as a decimal.

✓ **Use the syllabus formula and express the result as a percentage.**

Examiners state both requirements explicitly for maximum marks.

ARR 用大纲公式并写成百分数 ER 2 sessions P3

✗ Calculating ROCE or gearing without including reserves and retained profit in capital employed.

✓ **Capital employed is share capital plus reserves plus retained profit plus non-current liabilities.**

Examiners name the omission of reserves and of retained profit as the recurring fault, and marks are available for the capital-employed stage alone.

资本运用要含储备和留存利润 ER 3 sessions P3

✗ Writing 14.29 as the answer to a ROCE question.

✓ **Write 14.29%, with the sign.**

Examiners record candidates losing a mark purely for the missing percentage sign on a correct calculation.

百分比别忘了% ER 2 sessions P3

✗ Answering an ARR question with a discounted cash flow method.

✓ **Use the method the question names; a different technique earns nothing however well executed.**

Examiners record incorrect attempts at discounted cash flow where ARR was asked for.

用题目指定的方法 ER Nov24 P32

✗ Skipping a calculation because the figures look hard.

✓ **Attempt every one – the ratios are a small, fixed list worth learning.**

Over 10% of candidates did not attempt one or more calculations, and examiners note finance remains the problem area of the syllabus.

计算题一定要做 ER 2 sessions P3

✗ Abandoning the follow-on question because you think the calculation was wrong.

✓ **Use your own figure and interpret it. The application and analysis marks do not depend on it being right.**

Examiners state that an error in the calculation still allows the later marks to be awarded.

算错也要继续用你的结果 ER 4 sessions P3

1 · Business and its environment 企业及其环境

✗ Naming a takeover as external growth and moving on.

✓ **Say what it gives this business: market share, a distribution network, economies of scale – and name which.**

Examiners describe the strong responses as identifying the takeover AND demonstrating what economies of scale followed.

要说明带来什么好处 ER Jun24 P32

✗ Listing internal economies of scale as a set of labels.

✓ **Choose two, and show how each lowers this firm's unit cost.**

Examiners record candidates trying to analyse more than two, and reaching Level 1 analysis on all of them.

选两个讲透 ER 2 sessions P1

4 · Operations management 运营管理

✗ Defining buffer inventory by explaining only what 'buffer' means.

✓ **Define the whole term: the minimum level of stock held to meet unexpected demand or delivery delay.**

Examiners note candidates concentrating on one half of a two-word term, which leaves the definition incomplete.

复合术语要整体定义 ER Jun24 P11

✗ Explaining quality assurance in general and applying none of it to the business.

✓ **One developed chain about its usefulness TO THIS FIRM earns both analysis marks.**

Examiners state exactly that, and note many candidates offered far more, less developed, material instead.

一条展开的分析就够两分 ER 3 sessions P3

3 · Marketing 市场营销

✗ Defining market segmentation as 'dividing the market into segments'.

✓ **Define it without using the words being defined: dividing buyers into groups with similar needs or characteristics.**

Examiners state candidates should not use 'market' or 'segment' in the answer – a definition cannot contain the term.

定义不能用被定义的词 ER 2 sessions P1

✗ Explaining cross elasticity of demand with one percentage change.

✓ **It needs two: the percentage change in the quantity demanded of one good over the percentage change in the PRICE OF ANOTHER.**

Examiners set out both pieces of information as required for the calculation.

交叉弹性需要两个变化率 ER Jun24 P32

2 · Human resource management 人力资源管理

✗ Explaining how flexible contracts benefit the EMPLOYEES when the question asked about the business.

✓ **Answer for the party the question names.**

Examiners record answers about work-life balance where the requirement was the benefit to the firm.

看清是对谁的好处 ER Jun23 P32

✗ Identifying a financial motivator when the question asked for a non-financial one.

✓ **Non-financial means job rotation, enrichment, empowerment, teamworking – not fringe benefits.**

Examiners note a few candidates naming fringe benefits, which is financial.

非经济激励不含福利 ER Jun24 P11

✗ Naming a specific person when the question asked to identify a stakeholder.

✓ **Name the GROUP: employees, shareholders, suppliers, the local community.**

Examiners caution against being too specific – the managing director by name is not a stakeholder group.

利益相关者写群体 ER Nov23 P11

✗ Naming a motivation theory and describing it.

✓ **Apply it: which of this firm's employees are at which level, and what would the manager therefore change?**

Knowledge of the theory is one objective of four; the other three all require it to be used on the case.

理论要用在案例上 ER 2 sessions P3

- Show the syllabus terminology deliberately – 'span of control', 'delayering', 'job enrichment'. Examiners describe this as one of the best ways to secure the knowledge marks.

主动使用大纲术语 ER 2 sessions P3

Using the case material

✗ Referring to 'the appendix' without saying what is in it.

✓ **Quote the figure and say what it shows: 'operating profit fell from $4.2m to $1.8m'.**

Examiners note a wealth of information in the timeline and appendices, and that it must appear in the analysis to be credited.

要引用具体数据 ER 2 sessions P3

✗ Building an argument on events from three or four years back in the timeline.

✓ **Use the recent case material, and say why it bears on the decision now.**

Examiners describe weaker answers referencing past timeline events that were not relevant to the future decision being taken.

引用与当前决策相关的材料 ER Jun24 P33

✗ Answering a Question 1 issue without saying how it affects the business.

✓ **Identify the issue, give its positive and negative impact, and offer an alternative course of action.**

Examiners set out that three-part structure as the opportunity Question 1 provides.

问题、影响、替代方案 ER 5 sessions P3

✗ Presenting an opinion as if it were evidence from the case.

✓ **Distinguish the two: say which is the firm's data and which is your judgement about it.**

Distinguishing factual evidence from opinion is named in the assessment objective itself.

区分事实与观点 ER 5 sessions P3