

Business and Technology (FBT/BT) September 2025 - August 2026 Examiner's report

The examining team share their observations from the marking process to highlight strengths and weaknesses in candidates' performance, and to offer constructive advice for those sitting the exam in the future.

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General Comments

This report provides general guidance on the structure of the examination and feedback on the performance of candidates in recent examination sessions. It also offers suggestions on best practices for future candidates when sitting the examination.

The report includes examples of questions selected from several parts of the syllabus. The pass rates for these sample questions have been lower than average and are discussed in order to assist candidates preparing for their examination.

The examination comprises two parts.

The first part asks candidates to answer 46 objective test questions drawn from across the six syllabus areas. These are worth either 1 mark or 2 marks.

The second part of the examination consists of 6 multi-task questions, each worth 4 marks. There is one multi-task question on each area of the syllabus, and none of the individual questions crossover the syllabus areas. Some, but not all, of these questions are based on short scenarios.

The time permitted for completion of the examination is 2 hours. All questions are compulsory.

The pass rate for the FBT examination is consistently high. Most candidates can build sufficient knowledge and understanding by undertaking a systematic course of study. However, the syllabus is broad so candidates will find that they experience greater difficulty with some topics than others.

Part A of the examination – objective test questions

Part A questions test knowledge, or basic applications of knowledge. Some of the 2-mark questions include brief scenarios; these are not more difficult but do take longer to read than shorter questions. Although candidates deal with the objective test questions in this part of the examination very well, some candidates do not answer all questions. A reasonably well-prepared candidate should be able to make some attempt at every question, either by deducing the answer by a process of elimination or by narrowing down the choices.

Candidates generally perform well on questions relating to topics in part C (which includes some subjects which overlap with other examinations at this level on financial accounting and management accounting) and part D of the syllabus (which includes topics such as time management and teams, which candidates may have received training on by their employers).

Candidates can find some topics difficult. Economic theories can be difficult when they are encountered for the first time. It should also be noted that some of the management theories and concepts can be challenging when learning them from first principles, especially for those who, at the time of sitting the exam, have limited experience in the workplace.

Sample Part A questions for discussion

This section of the report gives six examples of part A questions from a selection of syllabus areas.

Example 1

The following diagrams show demand curves for two products. Diagram A is for BigSys Co's product and Diagram B is for Spring Tree Co's product. One of these products is a necessity and the other is a discretionary purchase.

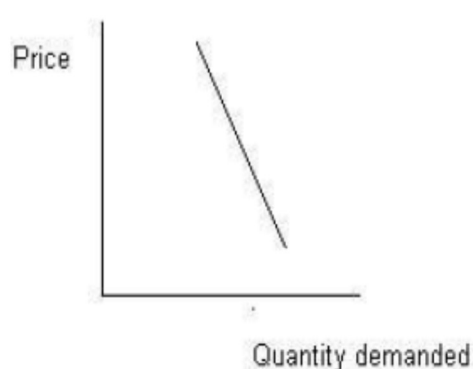


Diagram A

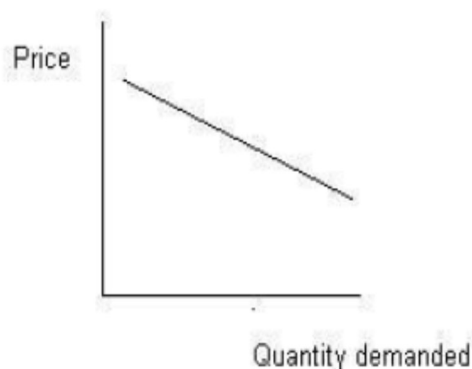


Diagram B

Which of the following statements are FALSE?

- (1) Diagram A represents the demand curve for the discretionary purchase.
- (2) The elasticity of demand in Diagram A exceeds the elasticity of demand in Diagram B

- 1. 1 only
- 2. 2 only
- 3. Both 1 and 2
- 4. Neither 1 nor 2

The correct answer is 3, both statement 1 and statement 2 are false.

A discretionary purchase is one where, when the price of the product increases, the quantity of the product purchased would drop very quickly. The slope of the curve in Diagram A is such that if the price increases, the quantity purchased, although it does reduce, it does not reduce to a great extent. This is more likely to be the curve for a necessity, where increases in price lead to smaller changes in quantity demanded. It is

the flatter curve of Diagram B which represents a discretionary purchase as a small change in price leads to a much greater change in demand. This makes statement 1 false.

Elasticity of demand represents the rate at which the quantity demanded changes in relation to changes in price. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, Diagram A shows smaller changes in demand caused by changes in price than Diagram B. Therefore, the elasticity in Diagram B is greater than in Diagram A. This makes statement 2 false,

Example 2

A government department maintains a database of individuals who will be entitled to tax credits because they have low incomes. The database is registered with the country's Data Protection Authority. The data is derived directly from the latest tax returns and tax credit claims. A copy of the database has been found on a computer purchased via the internet by a member of the public.

Have the following data protection principles been breached by the government department in selling this computer without first deleting the data it contained?

		Breached	Not breached
1.	Personal data shall be obtained for one or more specified and lawful purposes, and shall not be further processed by the data user in any manner incompatible with those purposes		
2.	A data user is responsible for the security and protection of data against unauthorised access, alteration, disclosure or accidental loss		
3.	Personal data must not be kept for longer than is necessary		
4.	Personal data shall be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date		

The correct answers are;

1. Not breached
2. Breached
3. Not breached
4. Not breached

Data protection principles are designed to ensure the data of individuals (data subjects) is kept safe and secure. They contain prohibitions against:

- holding more data than is necessary,
- using data for purposes other than the one declared,
- keeping data for longer than is required for the work being done.

They also require the holder of the data to:

- protect it from any unauthorised access, alteration or loss; and
- ensure the data held is accurate and up to date.

Looking at the four statements:

The government department has not used the data for a purpose other than the ones specified and the data has not been used unlawfully or processed further. Hence, the principle in the first statement has not been breached.

The principles require the government department to keep the data secure and protect it against unauthorised access. In this instance, by not removing the data before selling the computer the government department has failed to uphold this principle and therefore statement two has been breached.

Based on the information we have been given, the government department has not kept the data for longer than necessary. Therefore, the principle in the third statement has not been breached.

The question tells us the data has come from the latest tax returns and tax credit claims this means it is up to date. As the data comes from reliable sources it is likely to be accurate. Therefore, the principle in the fourth statement has not been breached.

Example 3

Morag, the finance director for Frederrick Co, is planning to give a presentation on audit committees to the board of directors.

Which TWO of the following should Morag include in her presentation as responsibilities of an audit committee?

- 1. Recommending whether the financial statements should be approved**
- 2. Performing detailed checks on possible fraudulent transactions**
- 3. Recommending suitable applicants to fill board vacancies**
- 4. Reviewing reports on the internal control system**

The correct answers are:

1. Recommending whether the financial statements should be approved, and
4. Reviewing reports on the internal control system.

A key role of the audit committee is to review the financial statements to give a recommendation to the board on whether they should approve them. So, Morag should include this in her presentation.

The audit committee will not perform detailed checks on possible fraudulent transactions itself. This work is performed by the internal auditors however they may be asked to do this work by the audit committee.

The nominations committee recommends suitable applicants to fill board vacancies not the audit committee.

To assist with the accuracy and reliability of the financial statements, the audit committee will require the internal audit team to review internal controls. The audit committee will then review the reports produced on those controls by the internal audit team. Therefore, Morag will include this in her presentation.

Example 4

Which TWO of the following are advantages of deploying artificial intelligence systems?

- 1. Rules-based tasks can be automated**
- 2. Less reliance on specialist programmers**
- 3. New long-term strategies can be created**
- 4. Allows data driven decision making**

The correct answers here are:

1. Rules-based tasks can be automated; and
4. Allows data driven decision making.

Artificial intelligence (AI) can perform rules-based tasks quickly and without tiring or becoming bored, allowing humans to make time for more creative work and analysis. An example used by many businesses currently is using AI to transcribe online meetings. This allows all attendees to be fully engaged in discussions without having to take time out to record minutes. Also, many online retailers use chatbots to answer common queries from customers – saving staff costs on customer service teams.

Although AI tools make some basic coding/programming easier and faster, the creation and further development of the AI models themselves require very specialist programming skills and programmers with expert knowledge of mathematics, algorithms and specialist programming languages. AI increases the reliance on specialist programmers to develop these models.

Despite being able to deal with vast amounts of historic data and even extrapolate and forecast what may happen in the future AI does not have the human ‘lived experience’. It does not have intuition and valuable qualitative insights to understand whether a proposed strategy will actually work within the reality of the industry, its culture and the nuances of those involved. Only humans have this ability.

Modern businesses deal with vast amounts of raw data and processed data. AI can perform calculations to uncover hidden patterns in this data quickly and often in real time. This gives decision makers rapid access to fact-based data on which to make decisions.

Example 5

Which of the following is an appropriate style for the team leader during the forming stage of Tuckman's team development model?

- 1. Takes a supportive approach, actively listening to team members**
- 2. Takes a directive approach, outlining how the process will develop**
- 3. Takes an overview, but day-to-day leadership is shared**

The correct answer is 2: Takes a directive approach, outlining how the process will develop.

The forming stage is the first stage of team development. This is where the individuals chosen for the team first meet the other members and the team leader and learn about the work they are going to be expected to perform. As the team members have only just come together at this stage, it is important that the leader takes control of the team and takes a directive approach to explain both the task and how the team development process will take place.

Example 6

Identify whether each of the following situations represent a threat to an accountant's ethics or not.

		Threat to ethics	No threat to ethics
1.	Being asked by a manager to sign off an inventory count valuation without the supporting documentary evidence		
2.	Being offered an incentive to show specific targets in a department's report are being met		

The correct answer is that BOTH situation 1 and 2 represent a threat to ethics.

If an accountant was to sign off an inventory count without evidence, they would be breaking three ethical principles:

- Integrity - they may be providing misleading or incorrect information and would not be acting in an honest and truthful way.
- Objectivity – without further evidence the count could be seen as biased or subjective. Therefore, the accountant would not be acting objectively using factual evidence.

- Professional competence and due care – accountants are charged with ensuring that transactions are verifiable and ensuring an audit trail. If the accountant does not ask for the evidence to ensure the count is correct, they would not be acting in a professional way or with due care.

Being offered an incentive to show specific targets are being met would represent a self-interest threat for the accountant. It would be in their best interest to show the results required, even if they were not the real results.

If the accountant reported incorrect results this will also be an integrity threat – as the accountant would not be being truthful about the results.

Part B of the examination - multi-task questions

Part B requirements may be set out in various ways. These include:

- choosing more than one correct response, such as selecting two correct answers from up to six options;
- matching definitions or descriptions to the words, phrases or sentences;
- clicking on the correct response on a graph or diagram;
- selecting the correct words or phrases from a drop-down list.

Some multi-task questions are based on scenarios. As the examination is not time pressured, candidates are advised to read scenarios carefully, and perhaps several times, to gather the facts necessary to address the requirements.

Some requirements test knowledge of specific topics, while others ask candidates to apply their understanding to arrive at the correct answers.

Conclusions

The FBT examination is broad-based but serves as an introduction to many diverse subjects, some of which require more detailed consideration in subsequent examinations, notably Strategic Business Leader. Candidates need a relatively shallow knowledge and understanding of many subjects rather than comprehensive understanding of all of them. To achieve this, it is essential to pursue a systematic programme of study, combining reading, taking notes and question practice.

The examination is set at a level that enables well-prepared candidates to pass. However, it should also be understood that the examination does require formal study, and it must be emphasised that few of the answers to the questions will be obvious without having studied the relevant subject. It should not be assumed, for example, that skills required in daily work such as time management and working in teams will automatically mean that answers can be based on common sense alone.

Candidates should attempt all of the questions in the available time. If a candidate is well-prepared, they will be able to answer some of the questions immediately, thereby releasing more time to deal with questions that are more challenging. The questions do not have to be answered in numerical order, so it is possible to defer questions that are consuming too much time and return to them later. Ideally, time management begins before the examination itself, and the ability to pace one's progress can be tested with effective question practice.