



General Certificate of Education  
Advanced Level Examination  
January 2012

## Economics

## ECON3

### Unit 3 Business Economics and the Distribution of Income

Monday 23 January 2012 1.30 pm to 3.30 pm

**For this paper you must have:**

- an AQA 12-page answer book
- a calculator.

#### Time allowed

- 2 hours

#### Instructions

- Use black ink or black ball-point pen. Pencil should only be used for drawing.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The **Examining Body** for this paper is AQA. The **Paper Reference** is ECON3.
- In **Section A**, answer **EITHER** Context 1 **OR** Context 2.
- In **Section B**, answer **one** essay.

#### Information

- The marks for questions are shown in brackets.
- The maximum mark for this paper is 80.
- There are 40 marks for **Section A** and 40 marks for **Section B**.
- This paper is synoptic. It assesses your understanding of the relationship between the different aspects of Economics.
- You will be marked on your ability to:
  - use good English
  - organise information clearly
  - use specialist vocabulary where appropriate.

#### Advice

- You are advised to spend 1 hour on **Section A** and 1 hour on **Section B**.



A major strategy adopted by the MHPA involves anticipating and reacting to changes in the global energy market. The boom years of North Sea oil and gas, which created high wages in skilled jobs for northern ports such as Aberdeen, are drawing to a close. Global oil and gas markets are often concentrated markets. For this reason, as well as for reasons of ensuring security of supply, new sources such as biofuels and other diverse forms of energy are being sought. 20

The MHPA, together with the UK government, has negotiated a long-term deal with the government of Qatar in the Arabian Gulf for the supply of liquefied natural gas (LNG). This is sent to Milford Haven in refrigerated container ships and then stored in huge tanks at the port. When the gas is warmed up, it expands to 600 times its liquefied volume. The gas is sent through a new pipeline to a pumping station 150 miles away in Gloucestershire. It is then distributed into the UK national grid for industrial and domestic use. This is an example of a public–private partnership in action. 25 30

The distribution of fuels such as gas and oil involves some negative externalities. There was controversy when the new pipeline was laid through attractive Welsh countryside, including the *Brecon Beacons National Park*. Some 15 years ago, the oil tanker *Sea Empress* sank near the entrance to Milford Haven and it took the local economy several years to recover from the environmental impact of the resulting pollution. Given the recent environmental experiences of BP in the Gulf of Mexico, environmentalists are concerned about the possibility of some sort of disaster arising from the storage or movement of LNG. 35

There are also concerns about the UK's possible over-reliance on a single product (LNG) from a monopoly source (the state of Qatar) and a single distribution channel (the Pembroke–Gloucester pipeline). Supporters of the MHPA strategy claim that the LNG business actually aids consumer choice and competition through diversification, adding gas installations to the existing oil and renewable energy installations in and around the port. The MHPA states that safety and the prevention of environmental incidents are the 'most important priorities' of their business. 40

Sources: news reports and industry information, 2010

**0 1** Using **Extract A**, calculate the index of UK production of natural gas for **Year X** and identify **one** significant feature of the data for the years 2007 to 2009. (5 marks)

**0 2** Explain what is meant by 'concentrated markets' (**Extract B**, line 21) and analyse **two** possible consequences of energy being supplied through concentrated markets. (10 marks)

**0 3** '...given the activities with which it is involved, there are commercial and wider economic and social arguments against a body such as the MHPA being privatised' (**Extract B**, lines 12–14).

Using the data and your economic knowledge, do you agree with the view that enterprises such as the MHPA should be privatised? Justify your answer. (25 marks)

Turn over ►



The CFP has been widely criticised. For example, critics claim that quotas are wasteful since, if too many fish are caught, perfectly edible fish have to be dumped at sea rather than brought ashore. On the other hand, supporters of the CFP would argue that it gives hope of avoiding the collapse of stocks or even the complete extinction of some species. 25

In the 1950s, deep sea fishing was a multi-million pound business and Grimsby in North Lincolnshire was the largest fishing port in the world. Generations of families found employment in fishing and its related industries, such as food manufacture. The UK's first frozen 'fish finger' was produced in Grimsby in 1955. Demand in product markets leads directly to a derived demand in labour markets and the CFP has had a massive impact on towns such as Grimsby. 30

Nationally, fisheries represent well under one per cent of the UK economy. However, their effects on local and regional labour markets are much greater than this figure would suggest. Workers in the fishing industry tend to be immobile occupationally, in terms of their experience and skills, and geographically, in terms of where they are prepared to live and work. 35

In 1964, 22 000 fishermen were employed in the UK. This fell slowly to 21 000 in 1994 and then more rapidly to 12 000 by 2009. While fishing has been in decline for many years, Grimsby retains several major companies which produce some of the best known brands of fish and other frozen food products in the UK. Also, Grimsby still has the largest fish market in the UK, although most of what is sold is now transported to Grimsby by road from other ports or imported in container ships. New industries such as light engineering, chemicals and plastics have become important employers. Grimsby, like many other towns, relies heavily on retailing as a source of employment, together with tourism in the nearby resort of Cleethorpes. 40 45

Sources: news reports and industry information, 2010

- 0 4** Using **Extract C**, calculate the index of quantity of fish for **Year Y** and identify **one** significant feature of the data for the period 2003 to 2009. (5 marks)
- 0 5** Explain what is meant by 'economies of scale' (**Extract D**, line 3) and analyse how **two** types of economy of scale could affect the fishing industry. (10 marks)
- 0 6** Using the data and your economic knowledge, evaluate the view that intervention in the fishing industry by the EU is unlikely to correct market failure but is likely to result in government failure in **both** UK product markets **and** UK labour markets. (25 marks)

**Turn over for the next question**

**Turn over ►**

---

**Section B**

Answer **one** essay from this section.

Each essay carries 40 marks.

---

**EITHER****Essay 1**

**0 7** 'A pharmaceutical company can expect to make supernormal profits on a new drug or medicine in the short run.'

Explain why some firms might be able to **continue** to make supernormal profits in the **long run**. (15 marks)

**0 8** Evaluate whether profit maximisation is always the most important objective of firms. (25 marks)

**OR****Essay 2**

**0 9** Explain why competition might lead to **both** productive efficiency **and** allocative efficiency. (15 marks)

**1 0** Evaluate the view that, providing there is market contestability, government intervention to ensure competition is unnecessary. (25 marks)

**OR****Essay 3**

**1 1** Explain how marginal revenue product can help to determine **both** wage rates **and** employment in particular occupations. (15 marks)

**1 2** A government wishes to make the distribution of **both** income **and** wealth more equal.  
Discuss whether the most effective way to achieve these aims is to tax income more progressively. (25 marks)

**END OF QUESTIONS**

**There are no questions printed on this page**

**There are no questions printed on this page**