Leaving Certificate Business SEC Sample Paper 2
Ordinary Level Solutions

Question 1 **The Business World** **(90 marks)**

(a) (Any **three**)
- Business owners
- Investors
- Employees
- Consumers
- Suppliers
- Local community
- Government

(b) (Any **one**)
- **Creativity:** the ability to think differently and generate original ideas or solutions, such as building the showroom. Innovators use creativity to develop new products, improve existing services or find unique ways to serve customers. This helps businesses stand out in competitive markets and respond to changing customer needs.
- **Risk-taking:** the willingness to take calculated risks and try new things, like expansion, even if success isn't guaranteed. Innovators accept that failure can be part of the learning process. Risk-taking drives growth and allows the business to explore new opportunities.
- **Resilience and persistence:** the determination to keep going despite setbacks or failures, such as the failure to receive the grant. Innovators often face rejection or challenges but keep pushing forward. This is particularly essential during the early stages of a business, when things don't always go as planned.
- **Visionary thinking:** innovators often have a clear vision for the future and the ability to see opportunities where others see obstacles, as seen in this case by PJ Maher's sourcing his own electrical materials. They inspire others to believe in and work towards that vision. This provides direction and motivation for the business and its team.
- **Problem-solving skills:** the ability to identify challenges and develop effective solutions. Innovators often face uncertainty, especially in new markets or industries, and need to think quickly and logically. This keeps the business agile and adaptable, especially during the start-up phase or when expanding.
- **Adaptability:** the ability to adjust quickly to changes in the market, technology or customer behaviour. Innovators embrace change and look for ways to improve. This is critical when expanding into new markets or reacting to competitors.
- **Communication and collaboration:** effective innovators can clearly explain their ideas, gather feedback and work with others (staff, investors, customers). This helps build a team, gain support and bring innovative ideas to life.

(c)
- **Helped secure the long-term loan approval:** the business plan was an important item to have when applying for a loan or funding. The financial institution was willing to approve the loan based on the potential success and/or ability to repay the loan, based on evidence from the business plan.
- **Can help anticipate problems:** elements of the business plan such as a feasibility study and financials may highlight potential problems and challenges. This allows PJ to apply correction, prevention or contingency planning.

Continued on next page →

- **Acts as a means of control:** PJ can use the business's actual performance and measure it against the targets identified in the business plan. Then he can take corrective action if necessary.
- **Shows a focus on the future:** a business plan involves setting goals and targets, along with timelines. This acts as a guide or map for PJ; it can help focus and motivate him.

(d) **(i)** (Any **two**)

- **Induction training:** this is the new hire's introduction to the staff, premises, facility, machinery, etc.
- **On-the-job training:** on-site training on selected machinery, equipment, policies, etc.
- **Off-the-job training:** training held at an external location and generally tailored towards developing softer skills, such as team building or time management.
- **Professional development:** generally external education focused on the long-term development and future promotion of the employee.

(ii) (Any **one**)

- **Improves employee skills and knowledge:** investment in ongoing training and professional development keeps employees up to date with new technologies, industry standards and best practices. It helps workers become more efficient and confident in their roles. It leads to better performance, higher quality work and fewer errors.
- **Increases employee motivation and engagement:** employees who feel supported in their development are more motivated and satisfied. It shows the business values its staff, which can improve morale and commitment. This boosts productivity and reduces absenteeism.
- **Enhances adaptability and innovation:** a trained workforce is better equipped to adapt to changes, such as new technology, business expansion or market shifts. Development encourages creative thinking and problem-solving. It helps the business remain competitive and open to innovation.
- **Supports career progression and talent retention:** providing training opportunities helps employees develop their careers and prepare for promotion or new roles. This builds loyalty, reduces the risk of losing skilled staff to competitors and saves money on recruitment.
- **Improves customer satisfaction:** better trained employees provide better customer service and support. In service based sectors, knowledge and professionalism are key to creating a positive customer experience. This strengthens the brand and encourages repeat business.
- **Ensures compliance with legal and industry standards:** training helps ensure staff follow health and safety regulations, data protection laws and other legal standards, which reduces the risk of legal penalties and improves workplace safety.

(e) **(i)**

- **Employees:** PJ considered Wojciech's request to reduce his physical workload and offered a role change. This shows that he is looking to keep his employees happy and comfortable.
- **Workplace environment:** the showroom provides an area where employees, suppliers and customers are encouraged to meet and view products. This creates a welcoming and open environment.
- **Diversity:** the business has diversity in hiring, as we can see from the images (age, race, gender, etc.).

Continued on next page →

(ii) (Any **one**)

- **Improved employee productivity:** when employees feel physically and mentally well, they are more focused and motivated. This leads to increased efficiency, better performance and higher quality output across the business.
- **Reduced absenteeism and sick leave:** a focus on wellbeing can reduce stress-related illnesses and other health issues, leading to fewer sick days. This helps the business avoid disruptions and maintain productivity.
- **Higher staff retention:** employees who feel supported and valued are more likely to stay in their roles. This reduces the costs and time involved in recruitment and helps keep experienced staff within the business.
- **Attracting top talent:** a strong commitment to wellbeing makes a business more attractive to potential employees, especially younger workers who prioritise work–life balance and mental-health support.
- **Improved workplace culture:** wellbeing initiatives help create a more positive and inclusive work environment. They promote teamwork, trust and open communication, all of which contribute to better employee morale.
- **Better customer service:** employees who are happy and healthy are more likely to engage positively with customers. This improves the overall customer experience and helps build a strong brand reputation.
- **Enhanced business reputation:** businesses that prioritise staff wellbeing are seen as responsible and ethical. This not only improves public image but also appeals to customers, partners and investors who value corporate responsibility.

(f) (Any **three**)

- **Employer's liability insurance:** this insurance covers the business in case an employee, such as a qualified electrician, is injured or becomes ill due to work-related activities. It is essential for businesses that employ staff, especially electricians, who may face potential hazards in their daily tasks.
- **Product liability insurance:** product liability insurance protects the business if the electrical materials or other products sold to customers (such as wholesale electrical goods) cause harm or damage due to defects or poor quality. This is crucial for ensuring protection against claims related to the safety of electrical products sold.
- **Buildings and contents insurance:** this type of insurance covers damage to the company's physical premises (e.g. showroom, warehouse) and its stock (such as electrical materials, tools or equipment). It helps protect the business against risks like fire, theft or accidental damage to the building and the goods stored inside.
- **Public liability insurance:** public liability insurance protects the business against claims for injury or damage caused to members of the public, including customers visiting the showroom and any individuals in contact with electricians working on-site. This is important for covering any accidents that may occur in or around the premises.
- **Motor insurance:** motor insurance is required for any business vehicles, such as a delivery van. It covers the company against potential risks like accidents, theft or damage while the vehicle is being used for business purposes. In this case, the delivery van used to transport electrical materials would need to be insured under a commercial motor policy.
- **Goods in transit insurance:** this insurance covers the goods being transported in the delivery van. It ensures that any electrical products or materials in transit are protected against risks such as theft, damage or loss while being delivered to customers or suppliers.

Continued on next page →

(g)

Examples	Yes	No
Provide a service for customers where they can leave used or end-of-life electrical items at his premises for recycling	✓	
Sell energy efficient bulbs, even though they tend to be more expensive.	✓	
Change his packaging from recyclable cardboard to single-use plastic cartons in order to save money.		✓

Question 2 **(70 marks)**

(a) Shadow economy activity involves **businesses** or individuals engaging in **illegal** transactions by acting out of line with legislation or government reporting requirements.

(b) **Benefits** (any **one**)

- **Availability:** fintech gives consumers the opportunity to manage their finances anytime, anywhere, through mobile apps and online platforms.
- **Reduced fees:** fintech companies such as Revolut often operate with lower overhead costs than traditional banks, passing on savings to consumers through lower fees and better interest rates.
- **Fast transactions:** fintech enables instant payments, quicker loan approvals and real-time financial management.
- **Integrated services:** fintech options allow consumers to access a wide range of financial products and services from a single platform.

Challenges (any **one**)

- **Digital divide:** the unequal access to digital technology. Individuals without access to the internet and/or digital devices may be excluded.
- **Digital literacy:** not all individuals are tech-savvy.
- **Security and privacy risks:** more personal data and confidential information being stored online could increase the risk of data breaches and cyberattacks.
- **Disruptions from system outages or failures:** these events can potentially inconvenience consumers or lead to financial loss.

(c) **Inflation** (any **one** category)

- **Rising costs of goods and services:** when inflation increases, the cost of raw materials, wages and operating expenses rises as well. For a business in Ireland, this can lead to higher production costs for goods and services, and it may affect profit margins and overall profitability.
- **Consumer spending:** as inflation reduces the purchasing power of consumers, they may cut back on spending, which can lead to lower sales. Small businesses and start-ups are particularly vulnerable if their customer base is sensitive to price changes.
- **Impact on investment:** high inflation can lead to economic uncertainty, making businesses more cautious about long-term investments. It may affect their willingness to invest in expansion, new technologies or entering new markets in Ireland or internationally.

Employment/unemployment rates

- **Impact of unemployment rates:** high unemployment rates can have a negative impact on business development. While businesses may find it easier to hire workers at lower wages, high unemployment can cause reduced consumer spending and lower demand for products and services.
- **Availability of skilled workers:** high employment rates can be beneficial for business growth, as it means a larger pool of skilled workers is available, making it easier for businesses to hire talent for key roles. This is important for industries that rely on a highly skilled workforce, such as technology and engineering.
- **Wage pressure:** as employment rates rise and the demand for workers increases, businesses may face higher wages to attract and retain employees. This can affect profitability, especially for small businesses or start-ups with limited budgets for salaries.

Continued on next page →

Interest Rates

- **Borrowing/increase in interest rates:** higher repayments (mortgages, etc.) means less disposable income, which will impact on business growth.
- **Borrowing/decrease in interest rates:** if borrowing/loans are cheaper, consumers and businesses are more likely to borrow, leading to increased spending and business growth.
- **Saving/increase in interest rates:** consumers are more likely to save in banks, which means less spending of disposable income, which will impact on business growth.
- **Saving/decrease in interest rates:** consumers are less likely to save in banks, which could possibly lead to increased spending and, in turn, business growth.

(d)

- Threat of New Entrants
- Bargaining Power of Suppliers

(e)

Moving to a hybrid working model …	Driving Force	Restraining Force
may result in employees feeling isolated		✓
may bring about a higher likelihood of confidentiality breaches		✓
may lead to difficulty in monitoring employee productivity		✓
would fulfil an element of the Corporate Wellness Programme	✓	

(f) (Any **four**)

- Age
- Gender
- Race
- Disability
- Marital status
- Family status
- Travelling community
- Sexual orientation
- Religion

(g) **(i)** **Target market:** reference to children, young age, older children with learning difficulties, non-English speakers.

Justify: any reference to the imagery, lettering, colours, content, appearance of the advert.

(ii) (Any **two**)

- **Advertising:** deciding which media would be most suitable for the target audience.
- **Sales promotion:** choosing the most suitable offers, strategies or gimmicks.
- **Public relations:** picking who might best represent and appeal to the target audience.
- **Message and tone of promotion:** the language, tone and content must appeal to the specific target audience. A product targeted at parents might emphasise safety, education, reliability, etc.

Question 3 **(70 marks)**

(a) **(i)**



(ii)

Factors	Name of element
Taxation/government spending/trade policies/government stability.	***Political***
Lifestyle changes/income distribution/fashion/trends.	Social
Carbon footprint/threats from natural events/waste disposal.	Environmental
Changes in IT and internet capability and range/new inventions.	Technological
Inflation rates/exchange rates/consumer confidence and spending power.	***Economic***
Client confidentiality/corporate values/fairness/equality/ wellbeing.	Ethical
Consumer and employee legislation/corporate governance.	Legal

(b) **(i)** (Any **one**)

- LEOs
- IDA
- SEAI
- Project Ireland 2040 Funding
- Bord Bia
- Foodworks Ireland
- Tourism Ireland
- Science Foundation Ireland

(ii)

- It provides support in the form **of funding/grants,** such as financial support in the form of 'Pre-Seed Start Fund' or early stage financial support.
- **Investment** provides financial support by becoming an equity investor in some start-ups.
- **Third-level support** funds partnerships with third-level institutions to aid research and innovation for start-up businesses.
- It funds **events** such as the 'Big Ideas' pitch element at Enterprise Ireland's Start-Up day.

Continued on next page →

(c) **(i)** Yes

(ii) (Any **two**)

- **Collective bargaining:** trade unions negotiate on behalf of employees to secure better wages, benefits, working conditions and job security. By coming together as a group, employees have more bargaining power compared to negotiating individually with employers.
- **Legal support and advice:** trade unions offer legal support to employees, helping them navigate workplace disputes, such as wrongful dismissal, discrimination and workplace harassment. They provide legal advice and representation to ensure that employees' rights are upheld.
- **Health and safety advocacy:** trade unions work to ensure that the workplace meets health and safety standards. They advocate for safer working conditions and take action when employers fail to adhere to health and safety regulations, reducing workplace accidents and injuries.
- **Training and development:** unions often provide training and development programmes for their members, including upskilling opportunities, career advice and access to certifications that improve employability and job performance. This helps employees stay competitive in the workforce.
- **Representation in grievances and disciplinary issues:** if an employee faces a grievance or disciplinary action, a union representative can help mediate the situation, ensure fair treatment and provide support throughout the process. This ensures that employees' rights are respected during conflicts with employers.
- **Campaigning for workers' rights:** trade unions actively campaign for improvements in workers' rights at both the workplace and legislative levels. They fight for better labour laws, including paid leave, work hours and equal treatment in the workplace, benefiting all employees.
- **Job security and protection:** unions work to protect employees from unfair dismissal or exploitation. Through negotiations, they secure contracts and agreements that provide job security, ensuring employees have recourse in the event of unfair treatment or sudden job loss.

(d) (Any **three**)

- **Environmental protection:** Coldplay's commitment to reducing their carbon footprint through initiatives like using renewable energy at concerts demonstrates their dedication to minimising their environmental impact.
- **Cost efficiency:** by implementing sustainable practices, such as using energy-efficient equipment and eco-friendly transportation methods, Coldplay can reduce long-term operational costs while maintaining high-quality performances and tours.
- **Brand reputation and fan loyalty:** Coldplay's sustainability efforts enhance their reputation as a socially responsible band. Their fans, many of whom value environmental conservation, are more likely to continue to support and stay loyal to a band that aligns with their values.
- **Regulatory compliance**: as governments impose stricter regulations on emissions and sustainability, Coldplay's proactive adoption of eco-friendly practices ensures compliance and avoids any potential legal or reputational challenges.
- **Attracting sponsorships and partnerships:** sustainability opens doors for Coldplay to collaborate with eco-conscious brands and organisations. For example, partnerships with companies that prioritise renewable energy or sustainable materials align with the band's image and help fund their efforts.

Continued on next page →

- **Market competitiveness:** Coldplay sets themselves apart from other artists by actively promoting sustainability. This approach makes them stand out in the music industry and attracts fans who prioritise ethical practices in their choices.

(e) (Any **two**)

- **Access to the single market:** Ireland's EU membership grants businesses access to the European single market. This allows Irish businesses to trade goods and services freely across EU member states without facing tariffs or trade barriers.
- **Trade agreements:** as part of the EU, Ireland benefits from the EU's extensive network of free trade agreements with countries outside the EU. These agreements help Irish businesses expand into international markets with reduced trade barriers, lowering costs and increasing export opportunities.
- **Financial support and funding:** the EU provides various financial supports to businesses in Ireland, including grants, subsidies and low-interest loans for research, innovation and regional development.
- **Consumer protection:** the EU enforces high standards of consumer protection, which ensures Irish businesses operate in a safe and fair market environment. This builds trust with consumers and ensures that Irish businesses meet stringent product quality and safety standards.
- **Protection of intellectual property:** Irish businesses benefit from EU regulations that provide strong intellectual property protection, such as patents, trademarks and copyrights. This helps safeguard innovations and ensures that businesses can protect their products and brand within the EU market.
- **Regulatory harmonisation:** EU membership ensures that Irish businesses are subject to uniform regulations across the EU, reducing the complexity of operating in multiple countries. This regulatory consistency makes it easier for businesses to trade and comply with laws across the EU without facing differing national standards.
- **Labour mobility:** EU membership allows for the free movement of workers across member states. Irish businesses have access to a wider talent pool, enabling them to recruit skilled employees from other EU countries without the need for work permits or visas.
- **Investment and economic stability:** Ireland's position within the EU attracts foreign investment due to the stability and economic integration provided by the EU. Being part of the EU makes Ireland an attractive destination for multinational companies, boosting business opportunities and job creation.

Question 4 **Possible Solutions** **(70 marks)**

(a) **(i)** February

(ii) March, April

(iii) Purchase of equipment in March for €36,000

(iv) (Any **two**)

- They could try to increase their sales through marketing of the inn and offering special promotions.
- They can try to cut back on purchases and other payments by deciding on what they really need and what can be postponed.
- Consider whether the inn really needs this equipment right now. Can they do without it for a while?
- Have they shopped around to buy the equipment at a cheaper price or considered purchasing second-hand equipment?
- Instead of purchasing the equipment fully, they should consider a loan, lease or hire purchase in order to spread out the cost into smaller repayments over a number of years.
- At least one piece of advice should be related to the €36,000 equipment spend.

(b) *Increase in personal tax credits*
Impact: an increase in net pay.
Reason: an increase in tax credits leads to a reduction in PAYE, therefore an increase in net pay.

Increase in USC rate
Impact: a decrease in net pay.
Reason: an increase in USC leads to a higher deduction from gross pay, therefore a decrease in net pay.

(c) (Any **two**)

- **Limited liability:** shareholders are not personally liable for debts.
- **Continuity of existence:** the business is legally independent of its owners.
- **Access to more capital:** it is an opportunity for more shareholders/investment/expertise/contacts.
- **Lower tax paid on profits:** they can avail of the corporation tax rate.
- **Reputation:** a limited company may be viewed as more credible due to the legal compliance obligations and annual returns required.

(d) (Any **two**)

- **Increased productivity:** teamwork allows for the distribution of tasks, ensuring that work is completed more efficiently. By leveraging the strengths of multiple team members, tasks can be completed faster and more effectively, leading to an overall increase in productivity.
- **Enhanced problem-solving:** a team brings together a variety of perspectives, skills and expertise. This diversity leads to more creative solutions and better decision-making when facing challenges, as team members can brainstorm and collaborate to overcome obstacles.
- **Improved communication:** working in teams encourages constant communication between members. This promotes the exchange of ideas and information, helping to avoid misunderstandings and improve overall clarity in the organisation.

Continued on next page →

- **Employee motivation and morale:** working with others fosters a sense of belonging and can increase employee morale. Being part of a successful team gives individuals a sense of achievement and satisfaction, motivating them to contribute more and stay engaged in their work.
- **Skill development:** teamwork provides opportunities for employees to learn from each other. Team members can share knowledge, expertise and skills, helping individuals develop new competencies and improve their performance within the organisation.
- **Flexibility and adaptability:** teams can adapt quickly to changes or challenges within the workplace. With different team members bringing varied skills, the team is more likely to manage change smoothly and flexibly, finding the best way forward in dynamic environments.
- **Enhanced innovation:** a team environment encourages collaboration, which can lead to new ideas and innovations. Working together allows for the cross-pollination of ideas, and diverse viewpoints often spark innovation and new product or service developments.
- **Better conflict resolution:** in a team setting, conflicts are often resolved more quickly through open discussion and cooperation. Having multiple viewpoints helps in finding mutually agreeable solutions, thus fostering a positive work culture.
- **Support and accountability**: teams provide a sense of support and accountability among members. When employees know they are working together towards a common goal, they are more likely to meet deadlines and take responsibility for their tasks, improving the overall effectiveness of the organisation.
- **Improved employee retention:** a collaborative work environment where teamwork is encouraged can enhance job satisfaction and employee retention. Employees who feel valued and connected to their colleagues are more likely to stay with the organisation long-term.

(e) Contingency planning refers to the process of preparing for unexpected, disruptive events that could negatively impact an organisation. It involves creating a set of predetermined strategies, procedures and actions that an organisation can implement if a crisis occurs.

(Acceptable answers include any reference to a back-up plan/plan B/planning for crisis or unforeseen events.)

(f) (Any **one**)

- **Risk assessment:** the first step in contingency planning is identifying potential risks and crises that could impact the organisation. This could include natural disasters, cyberattacks, financial crises, reputational damage or supply chain disruptions. By understanding these risks, a business can plan for possible scenarios.
- **Crisis response procedures:** contingency planning includes developing specific action steps that need to be taken during a crisis. These procedures outline who is responsible for what actions, how to communicate internally and externally, and what resources will be needed to manage the crisis.
- **Resource allocation:** the plan involves identifying the resources (personnel, equipment, finances, etc.) needed to handle a crisis effectively. Ensuring that these resources are readily available can make the response more efficient and timely.
- **Communication plans:** a contingency plan should define the channels for internal and external communication. It should also set protocols for informing stakeholders, including employees, customers, suppliers and the public, in a timely and transparent manner.

Continued on next page →

- **Business continuity:** the plan outlines strategies to maintain essential operations, even if some parts of the business are disrupted. This may include having backup systems in place, offering remote working solutions or identifying alternative suppliers.
- **Testing and review:** contingency plans should be regularly tested through drills and simulations to ensure that employees are familiar with the procedures and can act quickly in a real crisis. Periodic reviews of the plan are also essential to ensure it remains up-to-date and relevant as new risks emerge.

Question 5 **(70 marks)**

(a)

Entrepreneurship	☐
A circular economy	☐
Intrapreneurship	✓

(b) **(i)** (Any **two**)

- **Repair the product**: the retailer will fix the item/controller.
- **Replace the product**: the retailer will give you another controller/item.
- **Obtain a full refund**: the retailer will give your money back if a repair or replacement is not an option.
- **Cancel your purchase**: the purchase can be cancelled when you contact the retailer about the fault within 30 days of receiving goods. A full refund is also available in this instance.

(ii) No

(c) **(i)** **Workings:** 155.1 – 117.2

Answer: 37.9 million

(ii) (Any **two**)

- **Easier to read/interpret:** non-verbal communication, such as body language, facial expressions and visual aids, can often convey a message more clearly and instantly than words alone. For example, a well-designed infographic or a graph might be easier for the receiver to understand than a lengthy verbal explanation.
- **Easier to remember:** visual stimuli tend to be more memorable. When information is presented through visuals (e.g. charts, diagrams or images), the receiver is more likely to retain that information compared to purely verbal communication. This is due to the 'picture superiority effect', which suggests that people tend to remember images better than words.
- **More visually appealing and attention-grabbing:** non-verbal communication like visuals, videos or graphics can make content more engaging and interesting. This is particularly important for capturing the attention of the intended audience, especially in environments with information overload (e.g. social media or advertising). Attractive visuals often draw more attention than text-based communication.
- **Easier to present:** for the sender, using non-verbal communication can simplify the process of conveying complex information. Visual aids, for example, can help break down complex ideas or data into digestible formats, reducing the need for lengthy explanations and making presentations smoother and more effective.
- **Helps overcome language barriers:** non-verbal communication can be particularly useful in international business settings. It helps bridge language barriers by relying on universal symbols, signs or gestures that transcend language differences. For example, using visual icons or pictograms in presentations or advertisements can ensure that the message is understood by a diverse audience, regardless of their language.

Continued on next page →

- **Conveys emotions and tone:** non-verbal cues can express emotions, tone and intentions that might not be captured by words alone. In business, showing empathy, enthusiasm or confidence through body language, facial expression, or tone of voice can strengthen the message and foster better relationships.
- **Enhances clarity and focus:** non-verbal communication, such as using gestures, can help emphasise key points and enhance the clarity of a message. It draws attention to specific details, making it easier for the receiver to focus on what is important and helping to avoid misunderstandings.

(d) **(i)**

RESEARCH TOPIC	1	2	3	4	5
SOURCE OF INFORMATION	*B*	C	D	E	A

(ii) (Any **two**)

- **Accuracy of information:** online sources can sometimes contain errors, outdated information or inaccuracies. Verifying your findings ensures that the information you're relying on is accurate and up to date, which is critical for making informed decisions or building credible arguments.
- **Credibility of sources:** not all online sources are equally trustworthy. Some websites or articles may have a biased agenda, be written by unqualified individuals or be unreliable. Verifying your findings involves checking the credibility of the sources, ensuring they come from reputable and authoritative websites or publications.
- **Avoiding misinformation and fake news:** the internet can be a breeding ground for misinformation and fake news. There are many websites and social media accounts that spread false or misleading information, intentionally or unintentionally. Verifying your findings helps to filter out these false claims.
- **Differentiating between opinion and fact:** not all online content is based on facts. Some sources present opinions or subjective interpretations of events. It's crucial to distinguish between factual information and personal viewpoints or biased commentary.
- **Confirming consistency across multiple sources:** verifying findings involves checking whether different reliable sources report similar information. If multiple credible sources agree on a particular topic or fact, it increases the likelihood that the information is accurate.
- **Legal and ethical considerations:** using unverified or plagiarised content can have legal or ethical repercussions. It's important to verify your findings to avoid copying or relying on false or unauthorised information.
- **Protecting your reputation:** whether you're an individual, business or academic, presenting unverified or inaccurate information can harm your reputation. Others may perceive you as unreliable or untrustworthy if you fail to verify the accuracy of your research.
- **Supporting better decision-making:** when your research is based on verified facts, it enables you to make better, more informed decisions. Accurate, reliable data leads to more effective strategies and outcomes, whether in business, education or your personal life.
- **Enhancing quality of research:** verification enhances the overall quality of your research. By validating your findings, you can ensure that your research stands up to scrutiny and meets high standards.

Continued on next page →

- **Addressing potential bias:** some online sources may present information with inherent biases, whether political, commercial or ideological. Verifying your findings helps identify and mitigate such biases, allowing you to present a more balanced and objective view.

(e) **(i)** Employee appraisal is a formal process used by organisations to evaluate and assess an employee's job performance, skills and overall contribution to the company. It typically involves reviewing the employee's work, setting goals, providing feedback, and discussing strengths, areas for improvement and career development.

(ii)
- **Clear goals outlined for employees:** clear, well-defined goals reduce ambiguity and stress, enabling employees to focus their efforts and achieve specific outcomes, boosting productivity.
- **Increased communication between employees and managers:** regular communication fosters trust, strengthens relationships and enhances morale, creating a supportive environment that motivates employees.
- **Pay increases and praise:** pay raises and praise recognise hard work, boosting employee morale and motivating them to maintain or improve their performance.
- **Addressing training needs:** identifying and addressing training needs leads to more skilled and confident employees, improving productivity and job satisfaction.
- **Clear role linked to organisational goals:** when employees see how their work aligns with company goals, they feel a sense of purpose and motivation, enhancing engagement and performance.