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Business and Enterprise

2015 Chief Assessor’s Report

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## Overview

Chief Assessors’ reports give an overview of how students performed in their school and external assessments in relation to the learning requirements, assessment design criteria, and performance standards set out in the relevant subject outline. They provide information and advice regarding the assessment types, the application of the performance standards in school and external assessments, the quality of student performance, and any relevant statistical information.

## School Assessment

Assessment Type 1: Folio

The folio is part of the school assessment component. The weighting of the folio is 40% for a 10-credit subject and 30% for a 20-credit subject. For a 10-credit subject, students undertake two or three assessments for the folio. For a 20-credit subject, students undertake four to six assessments for the folio. One assessment must come from the core topic and the remaining assessments may come from the option topic(s). For this assessment type, students provide evidence of their learning in relation to the following assessment design criteria:

* knowledge and understanding
* analysis and evaluation
* communication
* application.

Good task design provided opportunities to meet the performance standards at a higher level and on more than one occasion. Such design allowed students to show knowledge of theory, apply examples, and evaluate using industry and economic data.

It was pleasing to see a greater variety of topics covered throughout the folio tasks. A large number of schools completed tests which generally focus on knowledge and understanding. Teachers are encouraged to use questions that allow students to analyse and evaluate. This can be achieved through the use of extended-writing responses and allowing questions to be better linked to industry and related to the local community.

While teachers are encouraged to assess each specific feature more than once, teachers should be mindful not to over-assess their students. It is not necessary to be assessing numerous specific features in individual tasks, but, rather, carefully selecting the specific features most relevant to the task.

Many tests allocated a numerical grade to each question. Teachers are encouraged to assess directly against the performance standards and allocate a corresponding grade to each question. Good task design will highlight which assessment design criterion is being assessed for each question.

It was noted at moderation this year that there were a number of missing tasks in student folios. Where a task has been requested for moderation and cannot be provided, teachers should complete and submit a Variations — Moderation Materials form with the student materials.

Assessment Type 2: Practical

The practical is part of the school assessment component. The weighting of the practical is 30% for a 10-credit subject and 20% for a 20-credit subject. Students undertake one practical for a 10-credit subject and at least one practical for a 20‑credit subject. Each practical is derived from an option topic. Students inquire, analyse, plan, and undertake the assessment on a focus of particular interest in their selected option topic(s). For this assessment type, students provide evidence of their learning primarily in relation to the following assessment design criteria:

* knowledge and understanding
* communication
* application.

It was pleasing to see a number of improvements in the task design. Those tasks that allowed students to demonstrate creativity or originality allowed students to achieve at higher levels. An example of this were marketing tasks that required students to develop a new product.

Good task design encouraged students to relate tasks to business theory.

Teachers should familiarise themselves with any word-limits outlined in the subject outline for Business and Enterprise. The word-limit in this assessment type (for a 20‑credit subject) changed in recent years from 1000 words to 1500 words.

When this assessment type is completed in groups, teachers and students are encouraged to clearly identify which student completed which component/s, and teachers need to award grades appropriately to each student.

All evidence needs to be clearly provided for each student, with individual students handing up their own work rather than a group package. Those tasks that require students to undertake oral presentations need to be accurately captured. Evidence needs to be produced and the focus is on content rather than presentation. Students and teachers are advised to submit all multimodal responses in a format that is accessible at moderation. The Submission of Elecronic Files document provides students and teachers with further information about acceptable formats.

Assessment Type 3: Issues Study

The issues study is the external assessment component for a 10-credit subject. It is part of the school assessment component for a 20-credit subject. The issues study is weighted at 30% for a 10-credit subject; the weighting for a 20-credit subject is 20%. Students undertake one issues study in which they identify and investigate a theme, development, or current issue in business and enterprise. The issues study should be a clear, concise, and polished piece of writing of a maximum of 1000 words for a 10-credit subject, and of a maximum of 1500 words for a 20-credit subject. For this assessment type, students provide evidence of their learning primarily in relation to the following assessment design criteria:

* knowledge and understanding
* analysis and evaluation
* communication.

Good task design allowed students to select an issue of choice. Such design generally led students to deeper analysis and evaluation. Topics that directly related to the students’ local environments and were current and relevant to Australian businesses were more successfully completed.

Students who accessed a wide range of resources also tended to analyse and evaluate to a higher level.

Students should clearly outline their issue and teachers are encouraged to guide students to identify not just a topic but an issue affecting that topic. Students then create a guiding question/hypothesis.

External Assessment

Assessment Type 4: Report

The report is an assessment type for the 20-credit subject only. Students are required to write one formal business report that may be either a situation analysis or an enterprise report.

Situation Analysis

It is important that students choose small to medium-sized enterprises to conduct their situation analysis, as stated in the subject outline. Businesses that are outside the scope of the subject, such as public companies or micro businesses, significantly disadvantage students in achieving the performance standards.

Reports that performed well in knowledge and understanding applied current business theory to the business, and considered impacts on the business and stakeholders. These reports steered away from giving definitions of concepts, but integrated the concepts seamlessly through application to the business, indicating a comprehensive level of knowledge and understanding.

The specific feature KU2 appears to be an area that can be emphasised. Many reports addressed the ownership structure of the business; however, many of these reports did not address any other forms of business structures. Reports that performed strongly in this criterion incorporated reference to multiple business structures including organisational, HR, decision-making, management, motivational frameworks, and financial structures with a high degree of depth and relevance to the business.

Reports that performed well in analysis and evaluation integrated current issues and trends using industry statistics that had direct impact on the business. Some common issues reported in the situation analysis included the global economic downturn, the decreasing value of the $A, the downturn in retail, and low interest rates. Students who performed well were able to make recommendations for the business related to these issues.

Stronger reports were able to integrate figures effectively to concisely convey information. These reports tended to have a high sentence density appropriate to the audience. Poorer reports tended to use more emotive language and often lacked reference to graphs, charts, or tables. Referencing was improved from previous years.

Students who performed highly in application were able to apply business theory directly to the business in the form of recommendations, as well as apply their knowledge and understanding about current issues and trends affecting the business. These reports often had a wide range of relevant sources including both primary and secondary. Reports that did not perform highly against this criterion had few references and often only one primary source which may have been accessed on several occasions.

The word-count continues to be an issue in this assessment type, with many reports significantly in excess of the required word-limit. It is imperative that teachers and students are familiar with the SACE word-count policy and should consult the policy and the illustrative example on the Business and Enterprise mini-site.

In ensuring word-count adherence, some students gave a running/cumulative word count in the footer of their reports.

Teachers are reminded about the following:

* reports are not marked beyond the 2000-word limit.
* student work submitted for external marking should have all teacher comments and assessment decisions removed prior to submission
* all reports should be de-identified
* the current subject outline must be used
* appendices should be brief, as per the subject outline.

Enterprise Report

Fewer enterprise reports were submitted in 2015, with the majority not achieving at a comparable standard to the situation analysis. In saying this, however, the standard of enterprise reports has increased from previous years. The greatest limitation seen in the enterprise reports was the very micro nature of the enterprise being conducted.

Students who performed well in the enterprise reports often displayed well-thought-out business theory that they were able to apply to the business, and provided complete financial statements from the enterprise’s operation, as well as the analysis and evaluation of key issues affecting the enterprise.

## General Comments

The word-count again proved to be a significant issue, with a large number of reports for Assessment Type 4 exceeding the 2000-word limit. Teachers are encouraged to ensure that their students are familiar with the SACE word-count policy, particularly in regards to the use of words in tables. Some students gave a running word-count in the footer of their reports to aid with word-count verification.

It was evident that a large percentage of reports followed a teacher scaffold. While this can benefit lower-performing students, it was clearly a limitation for students to achieve in the higher grade bands.

Students who achieved in the higher grade bands were able to differentiate the most relevant aspects of the business to discuss.

Students are encouraged to follow correct conventions, such as including a table of contents, a list of figures, subheadings, page numbering, and so on.

Students should ensure they follow correct referencing conventions, by either using in-text referencing or footnoting. When using either of these conventions, students need to ensure they have all the relevant details included. ‘Class notes’ is not a valid reference.

## Operational Advice

School assessment tasks are set and marked by teachers. Teachers’ assessment decisions are reviewed by moderators. Teacher grades/marks should be evident on all student school assessment work.

Generally teachers made note of changes to their learning and assessment plan in an appropriate addendum. Teachers must carefully enter grades and ensure they match with what is allocated on student work so that students are not unduly disadvantaged.

The packaging and presentation of materials was generally very good. Teachers who presented their packages as requested in the Business and Enterprise subject operational information and the School Assessment Sample Materials Submission Form ensured that moderation process ran smoothly. Stapling cover sheets to the front of student work is generally good practice. Teacher annotations throughout school-moderated work helps the moderation team determine a rationale for teacher judgments.

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