2019 Business and Enterprise Subject Assessment Advice

Overview

Subject assessment advice, based on the previous year’s assessment cycle, gives 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, and the quality of student performance.

Teachers should refer to the subject outline for specifications on content and learning requirements, and to the subject operational information for operational matters and key dates.

School Assessment

Assessment Type 1: Folio

Students are required to undertake four to six tasks which allow them to demonstrate provide evidence across all assessment design criteria. One of these tasks must cover the core topic The Business Environment; the remaining tasks may come from the selected option topic(s).

The more successful responses commonly:

* addressed tasks in a range of forms, including supervised and extended responses such as mini reports
* demonstrated the student’s ability to establish links between their knowledge and understanding and analysis and evaluation
* addressed tasks that provided the opportunity for students to present evidence of learning in a range of formats (e.g. a combination of multimedia and written)
* included a range of tasks that required students to provide detailed responses which incorporated analysis and evaluation
* incorporated extensive research, including interviews with business owners, and addressed current business issues
* showed depth of knowledge and the application of business theory to tasks.

The less successful responses commonly:

* had no variety in tasks (e.g. completed only reports or only tests). This was particularly an issue for students who completed several tests, which limited their opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding
* were in response to tasks that provided limited opportunity for students to show evidence of analysis and evaluation
* lacked depth in analysis and evaluation
* lacked research, including primary sources, to substantiate their responses
* demonstrated limited application of conventions, referencing and use of sources.

General information

There is an ongoing concern about the number of tests undertaken in some folios; undertaking too many tests limited student ability to consistently demonstrate analysis and evaluation at higher grade levels.

* Teachers are advised to ensure there is no repetition of concepts in tasks.
* Student samples submitted for moderation should include all pieces of work for all tasks in an assessment type.
* Tasks that required students to follow a template hindered student ability to meet the performance standards at a higher level.

Assessment Type 2: Practical

Students are required to complete a practical which focuses on an area of particular interest derived from an option topic. Students may work collaboratively or individually to inquire, analyse, plan, and complete the assessment. Some students chose to run their own enterprise.

The more successful responses commonly:

* provided student choice in business/product focus
* were presented using multimodal formats
* demonstrated contextual application of knowledge and understanding to the task
* connected broader concepts relating to business practice specifically to the activity, this provided the opportunity for students to demonstrate knowledge and understanding
* explored more complex theory and used extensive research and applied it to the task
* included highly innovative market research focused on current or recently released products
* developed creative and innovative solutions to a marketing opportunity
* applied or adapted the key components of a business plan to a practical example.

The less successful responses commonly:

* did not utilise the full 1500 words; this limited a student’s ability to address all assessment design criteria to a high standard
* followed a prescribed format which did not allow for individuality of student work relevant to the task. This especially impacted more capable students who were limited in their ability to demonstrate knowledge and understanding and application
* presented marketing plans that lacked scope
* lacked coherent communication of ideas
* did not successfully demonstrate the use of technology to a proficient standard
* provided business plans which did not include relevant content such as financial statements.

General information

When presenting tasks in multimodal format students must adhere to the word limits (i.e. if completing an oral component and an accompanying written piece the total is equivalent to 1500 words).

If students complete a group practical the tasks/components undertaken by individual students must be clearly identified and evidence must be provided for each student.

Assessment Type 3: Issues Study

Students completed an issues study in which they identified and investigated a theme, development, or current issue in business and enterprise. Students identified, selected, analysed, and evaluated primary and secondary sources of information about the trend, development, or issue and made recommendations based on their findings.

The more successful responses commonly:

* addressed a current issue that students had an interest in or was relevant to their local community
* demonstrated depth of analysis and evaluation
* made use of a range of research material to support their theoretical knowledge of the topic including substantial and relevant primary research
* incorporated research that was relevant to a contemporary issue and relied on current, credible sources
* provided analysis and evaluation of a higher order substantiated with reference to current businesses or case studies
* made recommendations that were specific, clear and practical.

The less successful responses commonly:

* lacked analysis and evaluation of theoretical concepts
* lacked detailed research and had limited analysis and evaluation of the research that was undertaken.

General Information

It was evident that when students were given the freedom to select an issue or topic that was of interest to them they performed to a higher standard.

Students are encouraged to apply a consistent approach to appropriate referencing.

Students must adhere to the word limits (1500 words for issues study), students and teachers are reminded of the SACE Board Word Count Policy.

External Assessment

Assessment Type 3: Investigation

Students are required to write one formal business report that may be either a Situation Analysis or an Enterprise Report. Most students elected to complete the situation analysis with a wide variety of businesses being studied.

Situation Analysis

The Situation Analysis provides the opportunity for students to undertake a detailed analysis and evaluation of a small to medium sized enterprise through the integration of business theory and its application in the business environment.

The more successful responses commonly:

* were able to analyse key issues in regard to its relevance to the chosen business as well as evaluate these in relation to their impact on the business. For example, exchange rate fluctuations
* proposed meaningful/relevant recommendations that reflected extensive knowledge and understanding of business theory
* applied business theory and relevant quantitative data to the business being studied
* demonstrated depth of knowledge and understanding, integrating a range of business theories including PESTLE, ANSOFF, Kotter’s 5 Forces, and 7Ps of marketing, that had specific relevance for the business being analysed
* referred to a variety of business structures such as organisational, HR and decision-making
* incorporated appropriate business terminology
* seamlessly incorporated pertinent graphs and figures and analysed them in the body of the report
* communicated depth of analysis in a succinct and coherent manner
* proposed valid recommendations that reflected a thorough knowledge and understanding of current trends affecting the business
* incorporated a wide range of relevant sources.

The less successful responses commonly:

* were more generic in nature, often addressing all areas of content briefly rather than focusing on content that had specific relevance to the business
* referred to the business lifecycle without making direct links to the business being analysed
* incorporated generic tables (e.g. technology used by the business) which limited the extent of analysis and evaluation that students were able to engage in
* incorporated generic information and/or data that was of limited relevance to the business being studied
* exceeded the word limit which meant that in some circumstances, a significant portion of the report appeared outside of the 2000 words, including recommendations and conclusions
* were poorly referenced and failed to acknowledge sources of information
* were often descriptive in nature and lacked analysis of findings
* made excessive use of tables throughout the report and often did not include these in the word count
* focused on a micro-business as the business of study.

Enterprise Report

The Enterprise Report is designed to allow students the opportunity to operate their own small business enterprise. Students are required to assess the feasibility of the enterprise and evaluate methods used to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the businesses.

Most enterprises conducted were school based, with business operations undertaken within school hours.

General comments

The more successful responses commonly:

* demonstrated engagement with the broader community and ran for an extended period of time
* effectively analysed current trends and opportunities as well as analysing the broader market
* provided more complete and sophisticated financial documentation
* demonstrated knowledge and understanding of business theory, particularly in relation to financial matters.

The less successful responses commonly:

* did not include the financial documentation outlined in the subject outline (balance sheet, income statement, bank reconciliation)
* used generic data from the local council, industry associations or wider economic data such as interest rates and apply it to their school-based business. In many cases, this information was not directly relevant to the enterprise, thereby limiting the level of analysis and evaluation.

Teachers are reminded of the following:

* reports are not marked beyond the 2000-word limit
* the content of tables is included in the word count
* the conventions of a business report should be adhered to (table of contents, executive summary, list of figures, subheadings, etc.)
* all sources of information should be appropriately referenced using footnotes or in-text referencing and a bibliography
* student work submitted for external marking should have all teacher comments and assessment decisions removed prior to submission
* all reports should be de-identified
* Enterprise Reports must include all financial documents prescribed in the subject outline, particularly the balance sheet, income statement and bank reconciliation
* appendices should be brief, as per the subject outline.