

Business and Enterprise

2013 Chief Assessor's Report



Government
of South Australia

SACE
Board of SA

BUSINESS AND ENTERPRISE

2013 CHIEF ASSESSOR'S REPORT

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 weighting of the folio is 40% for a 10-credit subject and 30% for a 20-credit subject. The folio is part of the school assessment component for both a 10-credit subject and 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.

Please refer to the 2014 Business and Enterprise subject outline for more information on Assessment Type 1: Folio.

Most teachers provided the correct sample for moderation as outlined in the subject operational information. However, teachers are encouraged to visit the Stage 2 Business and Enterprise minisite to access advice on preparing Stage 2 materials, and to complete the correct Variations — Moderation Materials form if student work is missing. The quality of student work was generally good; however, work was generously assessed in areas of knowledge and understanding, analysis and evaluation, and application. There was improvement overall in task design, which allowed students to have a range of options to choose from and the opportunity to achieve at higher levels.

Folios that included a variety of tasks allowed students to analyse and evaluate at much higher levels. Some folios also allowed for all topics studied to be covered in the folio tasks. These provided students with the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding at high levels, and to develop a greater level of analysis and evaluation. There was some concern about the number of tests that were set and the standard of questions. The tests that included extended response

questions or responses to scenarios allowed for greater display of analysis and evaluation.

Comprehension tasks did not provide students with the opportunity to show understanding and evaluation at higher levels. Overemphasis on one option in the folio tasks may also disadvantage students (particularly with analysis and evaluation).

While the report format was generally followed it is encouraged that greater emphasis be placed on students adhering to report conventions, for example referring to figures in the text or appendices. Teachers must ensure that tasks include relevant and recent legislation. Although the majority of tasks used up to date terminology such as new Acts, some tasks referred to outdated laws and regulations.

Assessment Type 2: Practical

The weighting of the practical is 30% for a 10-credit subject and 20% for a 20-credit subject. The practical is part of the school assessment component for both a 10-credit subject and 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.

Please refer to the 2014 Business and Enterprise subject outline for more information on Assessment Type 2: Practical.

There was a continued trend that saw a wider variety of practicals being completed by students. The standard of tasks and student work showed some level of improvement. However, concern was raised over what constitutes a practical. Practical that allowed students the opportunity to effectively apply business theory to current practice were completed to a higher level.

A number of practicals were undertaken by students in groups. Teachers should clearly identify which students completed which components and award grades appropriately to each student. Students should each submit their own piece of work rather than a group package.

Practicals that required only personal reflections did not allow students to show sufficient evidence against the assessment design criteria. Tasks should also enable students to apply their knowledge, understanding, and skills to a task rather than copy existing documents or access website information.

Assessment Type 3: Issues Study

The weighting of the issues study is 30% for a 10-credit subject and 20% for a 20-credit subject. The issues study is the *external assessment component* for a 10-credit subject, and is part of the *school assessment component* for a 20-credit subject. For both a 10-credit subject and 20-credit subject, 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.

Please refer to the 2014 Business and Enterprise subject outline for more information on Assessment Type 3: Issues Study.

The issues studies were generally completed well by students. Better studies allowed students to identify a question or hypothesis that was relevant to the student or the local environment. These tasks provided students with the opportunity to apply their knowledge and understanding at higher levels, and also permitted greater depth of analysis and evaluation of the chosen issue.

Students addressed a theme, development, or current issue in business and enterprise. Students are encouraged to address an issue that is recent and relevant to the Australian business environment. It is also imperative that students reference correctly and acknowledge all sources of information. Teachers and students are encouraged to access SACE support materials to ensure they correctly acknowledge the materials used in issues studies.

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

Assessment Type 4: Report

The report is for the 20-credit subject only, for which it forms the external assessment component. It is weighted at 30% and should be a maximum of 2000 words. Students are required to write one report (specifically a 'formal business report' from 2014) that may be either a situation analysis or an enterprise report. 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.

Please refer to the 2014 Business and Enterprise subject outline for more information on Assessment Type 4: Report.

Word-count was a significant issue encountered by markers. The SACE Board word-count policy is adhered to and a maximum of 2000 words are read in each report.

Reports should be submitted with a generic front cover sheet, which is available on the Stage 2 Business and Enterprise minisite. The cover sheet must be single sided and stapled in the top left hand corner, and must be completely de-identified.

Situation Analysis

A wide variety of businesses were studied again in this year. The better reports used businesses that were small-to-medium-sized enterprises while poorer reports generally focused on micro-businesses or large companies (including multinational and public companies) that fell outside the scope of the subject.

The more successful reports showed a high level of knowledge and understanding and were able to demonstrate understanding of a wide variety of business theory with specific and effective use of tables, charts, and diagrams. In addition, the better reports were able to analyse various theories and assess their effectiveness in relation to the specific business. The better reports effectively addressed a variety of business structures including ownership, management, and production methods, and specifically assessed their impact on the business's operations.

Less successful reports focused solely on basic theory, such as the four P's of marketing and the human resource cycle, and often showed little analysis of the relevance of these theories to the business. These reports tended to flow like a narrative and separate sections of the report were often quite disconnected from one another. It was evident that many of these reports followed a general template. Although the less successful reports addressed business structure, this was often given a cursory mention and instead included a generic table of characteristics. These tables were often referenced from texts and generally made little specific reference to the business and the reasons for their inclusion.

As per previous years, the assessment design criterion analysis and evaluation was not a strong point in many of the 2013 reports. A high number of reports did not address this criterion at all. The more successful reports were able to look at current issues in the economy that affected business such as the value of the Australian dollar, the economic downturn, and slumps in the retail sector. These reports were also able to address current opportunities and their impacts on the business, such as how increasing use of technology (related to specifically to the business) may provide the business with economies of scale. The more successful reports were able to effectively use data, charts, and graphs to effectively integrate information and demonstrate a high level of analysis. The less successful reports generally referred to a current trend, issue, or opportunity, but failed to analyse this in relation to the business being studied.

The majority of reports this year were in an appropriate business format. Better reports were consistent throughout in terms of language and terminology used as well as style and formatting, while less successful reports had significant inconsistencies. Referencing and footnoting was generally appropriate, although the sources used were largely limited to the Internet and interviews with the business owner or manager. The more successful reports were able to integrate a wide variety of sources including interviews with competitors, surveys, academic literature, and newspaper articles. These reports showed a lot of initiative and depth in their research and preparation of the report.

In terms of applying understanding in the report, the more successful reports integrated a wide variety of theory throughout the report and particularly in the recommendations. In the better reports, recommendations were supplemented with diagrams or charts that elaborated on the recommendation.

A significant number of submitted reports fell outside the scope of the subject, with approximately 5% of students choosing to study a public company or multinational organisation.

Enterprise Report

This year, significantly fewer enterprise reports than situation analyses were submitted. The enterprise reports were generally of a lower standard than the situation analyses. The better reports showed a significant amount of depth to all criteria. It was also evident that the students had spent a significant amount of time running the business prior to writing their enterprise report. The less successful reports were limited in their ability to demonstrate depth of understanding of business and enterprise concepts. This was largely due to the very micro nature of the enterprises, which did not allow students to effectively address the assessment design criteria. This was particularly evident in specific features KU2, KU3, AE1, and Ap2.

The better reports were able to incorporate the necessary financial documents accurately; however, many reports did not include the required financial documents that are detailed in the subject outline.

OPERATIONAL ADVICE

Packaging and presentation of materials was generally good; however, teachers are encouraged to arrange tasks according to each student and to separate each student's package into assessment types. On several occasions it was noted that student work was missing from the chosen sample. If this work is not able to be submitted then teachers need to follow SACE Board regulations and complete the Variations — Moderation Materials form which can be found on the Stage 2 Business and Enterprise minisite. Teachers' use of colour coding systems (e.g. the task sheet with assessment decisions on the performance standard was in an appropriate colour — folio in blue, practical in pink, and issues in yellow — and stapled to the front of each student's piece of work) helped in the moderation process.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Work that was presented in the appropriate format allowed students to display their work well. The length of student work was a concern in all assessment types — folio, practical, issues study, situation analysis, and enterprise report — especially regarding the use of tables, figures, and so on. Teachers and students are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the SACE Board word-count policy, as many pieces of work excessively breached these guidelines.

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