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General Certificate of Education

Applied Business 8611/8613

Report on the Examination

2006 examination – June series

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Contents

Portfolio Units

General comments

This has been an encouraging start to the new AS Applied Business qualification. The hard work of teachers and candidates, who are to be congratulated, has ensured this. It was apparent that a significant number of centres appreciated the spirit of the qualification and their candidates produced portfolio work which was genuinely applied.

Successful candidates were sure of the tasks they had been set. They demonstrated a degree of independence which allowed them to develop fruitful avenues of investigation and, ultimately, show insight. These candidates had been given appropriate support by their centres. This took the form of guidance on the overall purpose of each portfolio unit and assistance in respect of research and analysis. These candidates had developed an applied understanding of the concepts covered by each unit and had the confidence to use these concepts in context. Very little “copy and paste” was evident and the data collected was used selectively. In short, these candidates knew what they were doing!

Less successful candidates appeared to be uncertain about the purpose of the tasks set them. These tasks would often be overly prescriptive, leaving candidates with little room for manoeuvre, and resulted in descriptive work. In an attempt to compensate for a lack of independent investigation, candidates would sometimes include large sections of theoretical work which added very little to the quality of their portfolios. Much “copy and paste” was evident and the data collected was, in too many cases, poorly used.

As centres’ understanding of the qualification develops it is hoped that a higher proportion of candidates will demonstrate the qualities shown by successful candidates. The advice which follows is intended to encourage this development.

Assessment issues

In some centres the annotation of portfolio evidence was exemplary i.e. specific assessment objectives were indicated and these were accurately matched against each candidate's portfolio evidence. This greatly assisted moderators and, in these cases, it was a simple task to check whether the correct mark bands were being selected by assessors.

However, in too many cases, centres failed to annotate portfolio evidence in an acceptable way. The annotation was deficient because either:

- annotation was vague and did not identify specific assessment objectives, or
- the wrong assessment objective had been selected.

Centres are reminded that a particular piece of portfolio evidence can demonstrate more than one assessment objective. For example, evidence intended for requirement B will hopefully demonstrate application (assessment objective 2) but could also demonstrate analysis and judgement (assessment objectives 3 and 4).

Annotation does not need to be copious. However, it does need to be accurate and sufficient for moderators to understand how and why particular marks have been awarded to each assessment objective for each candidate.

BS01

This unit acts as a broad introduction to business. The unit covers a wide range of concepts and it is this aspect which has the potential to confuse candidates and block their progress. For this reason it is recommended that centres see this unit as an investigative one where candidates apply their broad understanding to a business they are familiar with and are motivated to investigate. How they develop their investigation should be down to each individual candidate and a prescriptive approach should be avoided.

Successful candidates' work demonstrated the following features.

- Candidates had been given the opportunity to investigate businesses which were accessible.
- Candidates had direct contact with their businesses.
- The chosen businesses, profit or not-for-profit, clearly interested the candidates and they were motivated to investigate particular aspects of them eg marketing communications, specific teams and the enterprising nature of these teams.
- Candidates carried out research and analysis prior to explaining how marketing activities, enterprise skills and teams contributed to the success of the business.
- Centres had encouraged candidates to use a variety of evidence formats eg leaflets/magazine articles and presentations (with accompanying notes).
- Centres avoided setting overly prescriptive tasks but did provide a framework that encouraged application, analysis and judgement ie frameworks that supported skills development.

The evidence presented for requirement A – a description of the main aims and objectives of the business and how external environment factors have affected their achievement – should be concise and in context. Better candidates used this requirement to provide clear background information about the business: their portfolio evidence presented a concise story about the business's activities, what it is trying to achieve and how external environment factors have assisted and/or hindered its activities. Evidence formats such as magazine articles and newspaper reports were entirely appropriate and helped to keep the candidates focussed on the task at hand i.e. to tell a story about the business and not to regurgitate concepts from a text book.

Evidence for requirements B, C and D can be presented in a variety of ways e.g. within a single report or in the form of a report with appendices. Successful candidates recognised the importance of selectively analysing their collected data and it was clear that they had a definite purpose in mind when using a particular piece of data. They identified interesting information and used concepts to illustrate its importance eg profiles on the owner of a business, analysis of the significance of a new product or a review of the tasks involved within a team. In general, it was very clear that appropriate analysis formed the basis of good application and informed judgement.

When candidates adopted a mechanical approach to requirements B, C and D, the results were disappointing. The purpose of marketing activities, enterprise skills and teams within each business was unclear and only seemed to be included because that is what the assignment task required. This approach inevitably resulted in low marks for assessment objectives 2, 3 and 4.

A number of centres set tasks for their candidates asking them to judge whether the business had achieved its main aims and objectives. This is **not** the intention of requirement D. Centres are reminded that, in requirement D, candidates are being asked to judge the importance of marketing activities, enterprise skills and team work in achieving the business's main aims and objectives. This requires them to reflect on the importance of these aspects of the business and may well be embedded within evidence initially intended for requirements B and C.

BS02

It was evident from the portfolios that many candidates enjoyed this unit and appreciated its practical nature. The challenge of this unit is the requirement for candidates to reflect on their practical recruitment exercise. For this reason it's recommended that centres encourage candidates to role play the recruitment of personnel at a supervisory/employee rather than a managerial level. As in unit one, tasks set by centres should not be overly prescriptive. In particular, centres should avoid encouraging candidates to use motivational theories which are not listed in the specification eg Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

Successful candidates investigated local enterprises which were accessible to them and provided the range of information required. This inevitably necessitated either a visit from a representative of the business or a visit to it.

Several schools chose to investigate their own establishment and this often worked very well – candidates felt at ease and could better appreciate the nature of work within the organisation. Other successful approaches included theme parks and local transport organisations.

The evidence presented for requirement A, describing the roles and responsibilities, and other aspects, of an employee, supervisor and manager, was often excessive. While the criteria in the assessment might invite such an approach, this requirement is meant to be a background task which prepares candidates for the main task – the practical recruitment exercise. Some of the best work targeting requirement A adopted a “week in the life of...” approach: candidates produced magazine-style articles profiling the duties and other aspects of the three personnel. The work was concise and consistently applied, avoiding the common pitfalls of copying out job roles and outlining various motivational theories.

Some centres allowed candidates to base their evidence for requirement A on a different business to that used in the role play (requirements B, C and D). This was accepted for this moderation session only. In future, centres must ensure that candidates base all of their portfolio evidence on the same business.

Evidence for requirements B, C and D revolves around the practical recruitment exercise and the quality of the role play helps to determine the overall quality of the portfolio evidence. Successful candidates put a good deal of thought and preparation into the practical recruitment exercise: this showed in the quality of their work. In particular, evidence for requirement B was successful because they explained, in detail, the purpose and structure of their documents and interview process ie the reader was left in no doubt that the candidate understood why they did what they did!

Some centres encouraged candidates to keep a log-book recording the whole process and their reflections on this. At its best this approach provided a rich source of evidence for assessment objectives 2, 3 and 4. At its worst it consisted of bullet points itemising “what we did today”. As such, the log-book approach does appear to have worked and this could be one way in which centres can help candidates to capture their thoughts as they work through the practical recruitment exercise.

Centres are reminded that requirements C and D ask candidates to reflect on their **own** recruitment exercise and not that of the business. In other words, this should not be a case study of a business's recruitment processes but a consideration of how effectively each group of candidates carried out their practical recruitment exercise.

BS06

This unit provides an opportunity for candidates to investigate the form and function of a product and carry out their own research and development process. While candidates are not expected to produce the product, which can be a good or a service, a significant number of candidates produced alternative trial versions of their products and carried out customer surveys to help assess the suitability of their product's form and function.

At its best, this unit offered successful candidates an opportunity to carry out realistic research and development. At its worst, the unit was misinterpreted as a cut down business plan resulting in rather confused portfolio evidence which failed to consider the characteristics of the product in sufficient detail and spent too much time on the financial aspects of the product.

Successful candidates restricted their product proposals to those capable of very small scale production, as stated on page 50 of the specification, and this greatly assisted in allowing the investigation to focus realistically on research and development. Too many candidates decided to investigate the modification of mass produced consumer items, such as mobile phones and digital cameras, which significantly detracted from the realism of the investigation.

The evidence presented for requirement A, a description of the quality and resource decisions made by a business producing a product similar to the candidate's own proposal, should serve as a guide for each candidate's investigation into their own product proposal. As such, it is sensible to select a small-scale organisation, preferably local and capable of providing the necessary information. If candidates, for example, are intending to develop a chocolate-based product, it is difficult to see how investigating Cadbury's will provide any real insight – the scale of production is simply too large. However, visiting a local branch of a major supermarket chain to see how they produce their own, in-store, pizzas could provide some useful insights.

Requirements B, C and D require candidates to produce a product proposal based on an analysis of relevant research. Successful candidates illustrated their product proposals and were very realistic about the resource requirements in the context of small scale production. The portfolio evidence provided a clear picture of the product's characteristics and how this product would be produced. This was particularly noticeable when the product idea was sufficiently contained for candidates to comprehend eg clothing or food and drink products.

Less successful candidates spent too much time on the image of the product and failed to consider the practical realities behind their chosen form and function. Candidates often attempted to compensate for this by providing detailed costings. However, as little consideration had gone into the reality of the production process, these costings were often based on dubious assumptions.

BS07

This unit is both popular and, it would seem, of considerable benefit to candidates. It offers a systematic way for candidates to reflect on their career opportunities and to consider the reality of achieving their career aspirations.

The demands of the unit rest in the requirement for candidates to produce a coherent career plan – anyone reading the completed portfolio should understand the candidate's chosen career, career route and the reasons why these have been selected. As such, mechanical approaches – where each candidate goes through the motions of completing a series of tasks – produced portfolios where it was often unclear exactly which career the candidate had chosen.

Successful candidates, on the other hand, produced excellent career plans where:

- focused research into the skills and personality traits of the candidate had been carried out and used to inform the choice of pathway and route, and
- The chosen career pathway and route were communicated in clear and concise ways with the reader left in no doubt that the candidate understood the knowledge, skills and training required by the pathway

Requirement A, a description of three suitable career pathways, often proved to be the greatest challenge for both centres and candidates. Many centres appeared to be confused about the exact meaning of a career pathway. Moderators were instructed to ignore this confusion, for this moderation session, and to assess the evidence on the basis of the assessment objectives and the standards required at each mark band. This was sometimes an onerous task for moderators and it is important that centres understand the meaning of a career pathway.

For the purposes of this specification, a career pathway is a **broad occupational group** such as graphic designer or accountant. In contrast, a career route is a description of **how** an individual might establish themselves within a career pathway. In basic terms:

- Career pathway – a type of occupation
- Career route – how to get into that occupation

Apart from the confusion mentioned above, the evidence presented for requirement A was often too mechanical and consisted of little more than articles copied and pasted from career websites such as connexion's “jobs4u”. This is perfectly acceptable as an initial starting point. However, candidates are being asked to put this information into context and they are required to filter it.

Successful candidates used the information to tell informative stories about the jobs available within the sector and the skills required. As three career pathways are described, these candidates selected what they considered to be the most important information and told concise stories. The resulting evidence was clearly their own work and helped to inform their choice of career pathway.

Evidence for requirements B, C and D revolves around a completed career plan which considers a **single** career pathway. This pathway is likely to be chosen from one of the three pathways described in the evidence for requirement A. Ample opportunities exist for candidates to demonstrate application, analysis and judgement (AO2, AO3 and AO4).

Successful candidates demonstrated “joined up thinking” within their evidence for requirements B, C and D. Moderators could clearly perceive the logic behind each candidate's choice of pathway and route. This was backed up by careful analysis and a series of clear judgements using techniques such as 360 degree appraisal and a range of personality tests freely available on the Internet.

Less successful candidates completed the same types of data collection and analysis exercises but tended to see each task as a distinct exercise, never managing to see the overall picture. As a consequence it was often difficult to identify the chosen pathway or the logic behind the final choice.

Further improvement in this unit is likely to come from encouraging candidates to review their findings on a regular basis and, perhaps, present their pathway and route to an audience prior to writing this up – this might encourage candidates to consider the logic behind their final choices.

Written Units

BS03

General Comments

The second sitting of this unit attracted an entry of nearly 5000 candidates and a pleasing number of good quality responses. A number of candidates wrote fluently and knowledgeably and applied answers effectively to the scenario. Similar numbers of candidates were confident with the numerical aspects of this paper and demonstrated good understanding of the key elements of the Module Three specification. Examiners were able to award the full range of marks for this paper.

Despite these positive aspects of candidates' performances, a number of issues remain on which centres would be advised to work in order to further improve attainment on this paper. Firstly, thorough preparation using the pre-issued materials is vital. Those who had conducted thorough research had more focussed knowledge and were better prepared to apply this knowledge to the context of the questions.

Secondly, it is vital that candidates develop a limited number of arguments when responding to the questions on this paper, and particularly those carrying high mark allocations. Limiting the number of points raised allows candidates to develop a line of argument fully and to link theory to the context. Bringing a greater number of points into an answer inevitably results in superficiality and few marks for higher skills such as analysis.

Finally, although the calculations were generally tackled with a fair degree of competence, a small minority of candidates appeared not to have a calculator, making life unnecessarily difficult. Furthermore, centres need to work on promoting understanding of the results that candidates generate from such calculations. When asked to comment on the implications or importance of financial data or concepts, a high proportion of candidates struggled to produce good quality responses.

Question 1

This question offered the potential for many candidates to score highly. However, in reality a significant minority of candidates were unable to rise above descriptive responses. A number of candidates failed to distinguish between hardware and software: 'a computer' cropped up more than once as an answer. The majority of candidates were able to identify benefits to Peter but few had any idea of software's role in putting together a business plan. Even able candidates who wrote knowledgeably failed to focus on the precise demands of the question which was to explain the potential benefits of chosen software in developing a business plan.

Question 2

(a) On the whole this question attracted a better level of responses than question one, with many candidates explaining clearly two distinct disadvantages. However, confusion was evident in some centres over the meaning of limited liability. Also a disappointing number of candidates appeared to believe that a sole trader is unable to employ anyone. Finally, there was also a fairly widespread misconception that a sole trader had to take out a bank loan and must therefore pay interest charges.

(b) Only a minority of candidates experienced difficulties with this question. These candidates fell into two categories. Some candidates were unable to add positive and negative numbers together. This is a common task in completing a cash flow forecast and one which candidates should practise regularly. The second cause of difficulty was the apparent absence of a calculator leading to long, and often incorrect, responses.

(c) The quality of responses to this question was profoundly disappointing. Some candidates simply concentrated on the mechanics of producing a cash flow forecast and described the mechanical difficulties that Peter might face as part of the process. Only a small minority of candidates related standard textbook responses to the particular circumstances of this question and therefore picked up on issues such as this was a new business with no financial history on which to base forecasts. This is one area on which centres need to work with candidates.

(d) Most candidates were able to offer at least one valid action to improve the business's forecast cash flow position and to offer some explanation as to how it might work. Many did not develop explanations fully and a disappointing proportion failed to make a judgement as requested in the question. Not all actions proposed were appropriate to improve the **cash** position of the business: many opted for sacking workers or increasing marketing with no recognition that these would worsen the cash position in the short-term.

However, the most worrying aspect of the answers to this question was the extent to which candidates confused cash and profits. A significant number of candidates used these terms synonymously thereby demonstrating a lack of understanding at a fundamental level. The ability to distinguish between cash and profits is an important element of achieving success on this paper.

Question 3

(a) Most candidates approached this by calculating total costs and total revenues and a good number scored well. The most common error was failing to adjust monthly to annual figures, although poor arithmetic skills and the apparent absence of a calculator also resulted in low marks being scored. The minority of candidates using the contribution approach often failed to provide a correct answer. They were often able to calculate monthly contribution and usually picked out fixed costs but after that frequently failed to calculate annual contribution resulting in an inflated figure for annual profits.

(b) Once again this question exposed the shortcomings of many candidates when asked to apply knowledge to the scenario. Few candidates went beyond the stereotype textbook response and attempted to relate the importance of profit to Peter's circumstances. Once again candidates confused cash and profit in developing answers. The minority of candidates who wrote good quality responses argued a number of applied points including that profits are important if Peter is to attract a business partner or to reassure the bank about the business's creditworthiness.

Question 4

Overall the responses to this question were poorer than expected. There were a number of fundamental weaknesses. A majority of candidates made little or no use of the evidence scattered throughout the paper to support their arguments and to put them in context. Equally, a large number of candidates failed to consider both sides of the question as a lead into making a supported judgement. Many answers were surprisingly short, not because of a lack of time, but a lack of examination technique. It was apparent that not all centres had researched the issues a potential investor might consider and this, along with widespread uncertainty about how to tackle this type of question, resulted in many poor quality responses.

Other errors included failing to distinguish between private and public limited companies, not understanding the nature of share capital and, of course, confusing cash and profit. Indeed a surprising number of candidates assumed the business was making a loss because of the negative closing balances in Peter's cash flow forecast, ignoring that they had earlier calculated that his business was forecast to make a profit!

Because of the high proportion of marks allocated to this question, it is essential that centres give candidates advice on how to tackle evaluative questions, focussing on how to structure answers and the importance of using information given to place arguments in context. It is also important that candidates recognise when figures are forecast and when they are actual results.

BS04

Generally, candidates seemed to be a little better prepared for this exam than in the January series. This may be due to the added maturity of the candidates at this stage in their studies, as well as having had more exposure to exam questions. It is pleasing to see that some candidates are able to put their answers into context and make some sound judgments when commenting on business issues.

Question 1

(a) This was poorly answered by many candidates who seemed content to be very generic in their answers, without saying any more than "value and suitability" or "after sales service".

(b) This was generally well answered by the majority of candidates, with good use made of the item to put their answers into context. The "Walkers Lites" aspect of the answer was generally answered better than "Nobbys Nuts", as the explanations did not always link the demographic issue with the new product.

(c) Again, this was well answered by candidates who knew what the term "actual product" means. There was plenty of data for them to relate to in the item, but this needed to be specific – such as reducing the level of salt. A significant number of candidates answered **why**, and not **how** Walkers has differentiated its product.

Question 2

(a) This question was answered in too generally by many candidates. In some cases there was very little acknowledgment of the findings of the industry-level research, and too much description of what research is.

(b) It is very easy to say, but it is imperative that candidates read the question. A large number of candidates talked about "high levels of customer service" without linking this to the findings of the ACS research – such as friendliness, speed etc. The nature of this qualification means that candidates must apply their knowledge to a business situation.

(c) Those candidates who were able to put into context the idea of customer research in a convenience store scored well on this question. Good candidates discussed the fact that in a business of this nature a consumer panel may not be all that useful, and that probably the best way to gather data would be a few short questions as the customer is at the till or walking around the store However there was too much theory of data collection, with several candidates coming up with ideas such as online surveys which would be fine for a national supermarket, but not for a local convenience store. Purely theoretical answers will gain few marks.

Question 3

(a) It would seem that many candidates have studied Tesco in depth as part of their course, and as a result there were some good responses to this question

(b) Again there were some good descriptions and explanations of the activities of Britain's biggest retailer, and as a result there were some good examples of understanding in context. In order to attain higher marks on this question there needs to be a demonstration of more specific uses of the data and how this can meet certain customer needs. Too many candidates went down the line of "sees how much is sold and enables Tesco to have full shelves". This is more a POS issue, and not related directly to loyalty cards.

(c) Many candidates realised that shopping from home helped meet the needs of customers with busy lifestyles, but did not really go into that much more depth. A better answer related the website to both high and low involvement products, as well as both during and after sales. Too many candidates talked generally about after sales service, without linking this to the Tesco website. Judgment was lacking in a large proportion of responses, and this needs addressing in the preparation of candidates for this exam.

BS05

Candidates appeared to cope well with the combined practical and written approach of this paper. The practical application of information systems in question 1 produced a positive range of responses.

Question 1

(a) and (b) Where data entry is required (for example, an addition to records), entries must be accurate, in particular where property and buyer details are given. On (b)(iv), full marks were awarded where candidates printed three records from their search, showing all fields.

(c) Higher marks were awarded where candidates explained valid ways that security of data can be ensured, including restriction of access, restricted user rights and use of virus/spyware protection. Marks were awarded where candidates referred to *relevant* principles of the Data Protection Act. The question did not ask for candidates to provide details of this Act, and some candidates lost marks where they focussed solely on the Act without reference to the security features that the business may use.

(d) Higher marks were awarded where candidates related to the way in which the database could be interrogated, illustrating the contents of the search and how this would enable the business to find the information they required.

(e) This presented a wide range of responses from candidates. The advertisement needed to be suitable for the audience it is intended to reach. It also had to be fit for purpose, capable of creating interest and prompting action from the reader. Information relating the sale and rental of houses by the business therefore had to be worded appropriately, purposefully selecting relevant information to include, and enticing the reader to take action. The name of the business should have been included.

Please note, as per the instructions provided in the Materials List, centres are required to provide a hard copy of their original file (Tutor's copy) for question 1 with the candidates' scripts. These were not always provided by entres in this series. They are required to ensure candidates are not penalised for errors that may have been caused by inaccurate inputting of the original materials list.

Question 2

(a) Many candidates provided observations of visual features on the draft brochure (comments relating to layout and graphical errors, and choice of font styles/emphasis) but too few actually provided a response in context. Candidates need to consider in their responses what the business, Homefinder, was trying to achieve as result, and consider the extent to which this might help it to achieve this.

(b)(i) A disappointing number of candidates referred to the various data types used by the business. Candidates should be aware of how a database is set up, and are expected to know about the types of data (numeric/text/pictorial/values).

(b)(ii) When candidates are asked to assess the advantages to the business of using a database, they were able to respond well at lower levels, providing an explanation of using a database in general. However, higher marks were awarded where candidates were able to relate these advantages to how these features may be of advantage to the business. The analysis may have included comparison to use of an alternative system. The analysis should have examined how it would have helped the business given the work it is involved in.

When discussing the advantages, many candidates used unqualified comments such as 'quick and easy' and 'at the click of a button'. Such comments do not provide the reasoning behind whether the system is of use to the business or not, and will not achieve higher level marks.

Higher marks were awarded where candidates provided a response in context, considering how the database might be used by the business. A marginal number presented such analysis.

Question 3

(a) and (b) Prioritising of tasks was evident in the majority of candidate's answers. However little evidence of grouping of tasks was evident where it was appropriate to do so. Justification of the order of priority was weak in many cases. Some aspects were considered, but it appears candidates have difficulty in establishing the level of importance of each of the tasks. This question allows candidates to apply their skills and knowledge relating to given tasks that need to be carried out. At the top level, analysis of the relative importance of tasks was clearly given, with full justification of the order of priority. Lower level marks were awarded where candidates restated the task list and provided a brief description or statement of factor(s) affecting the task.

(c) This question was poorly answered overall by candidates. The question asked candidates to provide an explanation of how the schedule could be produced, using ICT. Some candidates provided explanation of GANTT charts, without explaining *how* they could be produced using ICT. Others mentioned that the schedule may be produced on a spreadsheet, but did not explain *how* this could be produced. A disappointing number of candidates provided details of how ICT could be used to *send* details of the schedule to the General Assistant (ie by email), but did not focus on the question being asked.

Quality of Written Communication

This was assessed in questions 2(a) and 3(b). Whilst many candidates did provide responses in continuous prose, it is important to note that it is not possible to gain high level marks in these questions through bullet points/lists. For these questions, clear presentation is essential. In 2(a), marks for A04 were also awarded for justification of improvements to the draft brochure. In 3(b), marks were A04 were also awarded for justification on the order of priority of the tasks.

Mark Range and Award of Grades

Unit	Maximum Mark (Raw)	Maximum Mark (Scaled)	Mean Mark (Scaled)	Standard Deviation (Scaled)
Unit 1 BS01	70	70	39.4	14.6
Unit 2 BS02	70	70	38.3	14.3
Unit 3 BS03	60	60	27.4	8.2
Unit 4 BS04	60	60	29.6	7.9
Unit 5 BS05	60	60	30.2	8.0
Unit 6 BS06	70	70	36.1	15.1
Unit 7 BS07	70	70	39.6	15.0

For units which contain only one component, scaled marks are the same as raw marks.

Unit 1 BS01/Investigating Business
(5310 candidates)

Grade	Max. mark	A	B	C	D	E
Scaled Boundary Mark	70	60	52	44	36	29
Uniform Boundary Mark	100	80	70	60	50	40

Unit 2 BS02/People in Business
(5175 candidates)

Grade	Max. mark	A	B	C	D	E
Scaled Boundary Mark	70	59	51	43	35	28
Uniform Boundary Mark	100	80	70	60	50	40

Unit 3 BS03/Financial Planning and Monitoring
(4729 candidates)

Grade	Max. mark	A	B	C	D	E
Scaled Boundary Mark	60	40	35	30	26	22
Uniform Boundary Mark	100	80	70	60	50	40

Unit 4 BS04/Meeting Customer Needs
(1591 candidates)

Grade	Max. mark	A	B	C	D	E
Scaled Boundary Mark	60	43	38	34	30	26
Uniform Boundary Mark	100	80	70	60	50	40

Unit 5 BS05/Business Communication and Information Systems
(957 candidates)

Grade	Max. mark	A	B	C	D	E
Scaled Boundary Mark	60	41	37	33	29	26
Uniform Boundary Mark	100	80	70	60	50	40

Unit 6 BS06/Developing a Product
(1201 candidates)

Grade	Max. mark	A	B	C	D	E
Scaled Boundary Mark	70	58	50	43	36	29
Uniform Boundary Mark	100	80	70	60	50	40

Unit 7 BS07/Career Planning
(1646 candidates)

Grade	Max. mark	A	B	C	D	E
Scaled Boundary Mark	70	60	52	44	37	30
Uniform Boundary Mark	100	80	70	60	50	40

Advanced Subsidiary award

Provisional statistics for the award (2943 candidates)

	A	B	C	D	E
Cumulative %	5.3	18.2	40.0	62.0	82.1

Advanced Subsidiary Double award

Provisional statistics for the award (1430 candidates)

	AA	AB	BB	BC	CC	CD	DD	DE	EE
Cumulative %	2.8	5.9	10.3	18.3	28.8	39.9	53.9	68.1	78.7

Definitions

Boundary Mark: the minimum mark required by a candidate to qualify for a given grade.

Mean Mark: is the sum of all candidates' marks divided by the number of candidates. In order to compare mean marks for different components, the mean mark (scaled) should be expressed as a percentage of the maximum mark (scaled).

Standard Deviation: a measure of the spread of candidates' marks. In most components, approximately two-thirds of all candidates lie in a range of plus or minus one standard deviation from the mean, and approximately 95% of all candidates lie in a range of plus or minus two standard deviations from the mean. In order to compare the standard deviations for different components, the standard deviation (scaled) should be expressed as a percentage of the maximum mark (scaled).

Uniform Mark: a score on a standard scale which indicates a candidate's performance. The lowest uniform mark for grade A is always 80% of the maximum uniform mark for the unit, similarly grade B is 70%, grade C is 60%, grade D is 50% and grade E is 40%. A candidate's total scaled mark for each unit is converted to a uniform mark and the uniform marks for the units which count towards the AS or A-level qualification are added in order to determine the candidate's overall grade.