



**General Certificate of Education**

**Applied Business 8611/8613**

**AS Portfolio Units**

**Report on the Examination**

*2007 examination - June series*

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## General comments

A significant number of centres continue to appreciate the spirit of the qualification. Their candidates produced portfolio work which was genuinely applied. The general comments made in the June 2006 report continue to apply. In particular, successful candidates:

- are sure of the tasks that they had been set
- demonstrate independence of thought and research
- have an applied understanding of the concepts covered by each unit.

However, less successful candidates:

- are uncertain about the purpose of the tasks set
- include large sections of theoretical work which adds very little to the quality of their portfolios
- 'copy and paste' data from Internet sites and fail to use this data.

## Assessment issues

In many centres, portfolio evidence was annotated appropriately, ie specific assessment objectives **and** mark bands were indicated and these were accurately matched against each candidate's portfolio evidence, eg AO2/MB3 against a specific paragraph of evidence.

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.

## BS01

Many centres are interpreting the specification well and providing their candidates with investigative tasks focusing on accessible businesses. Unfortunately, a significant proportion of candidates continue to rely on Internet data using large businesses. This leaves candidates confused and unable to select relevant data. Candidates investigating smaller businesses managed to process the data well and produced genuinely investigative portfolios.

A number of centres misinterpreted the meaning of Requirement D. To repeat the comments from last year's report:

"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**

Some excellent portfolio evidence was produced by candidates from centres providing structured role play activities. These activities were capable of addressing all the portfolio requirements. Please refer to last year's report for further guidance in relation to effective assignment tasks for this unit.

There continues to be some confusion over the meaning of this unit's portfolio requirements.

- In Requirement B, candidates should explain the structure and purpose of their documentation and interview. However, some centres assessed the presentational quality of the documentation produced. This is not part of the assessment criteria.
- In Requirement D, judgement should be based on each candidate's own recruitment exercise, rather than attempting to make judgements on the business's recruitment process.

## **BS06**

It continues to be the case that successful candidates develop product ideas based on very small scale operations, eg single items of clothing. These are easier for candidates to manage in terms of investigating key quality and resource issues.

Where complex products were investigated, candidates were inevitably challenged by their ability to produce comprehensive evidence, eg when investigating resource decisions and costs of production.

Finally, a number of centres interpreted this unit as a small scale business plan. It is not. The focus of this unit **must** be on the development of a product idea, not on the development of a business.

## **BS07**

The majority of candidates described three career pathways and then investigated an appropriate career route. Good evidence was produced to match the portfolio requirements of this unit and the choice of pathway and route followed a clear and logical progression.

In too many cases, however, the career plan was not sufficiently developed – its coherence lost through the lack of a relevant action plan and clear links to each candidate's skills and personality traits.

To repeat last year's report:

"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° appraisal and a range of personality tests freely available on the Internet."

## **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.