



**General Certificate of Education**

**Applied Business 8611/8613**

**BS13 Managing Information**

**Report on the Examination**

*2008 examination - June series*

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## General comments

It was pleasing to observe many centres getting to grips with the particular challenges set by the GCE Applied Business A2 portfolio units. Candidates from these centres had:

- set realistic problems to solve that were neither too complex nor too simplistic (Requirement A)
- carried out sufficient primary and secondary research to analyse the nature of the problem (Requirement C)
- developed practical solutions that addressed key parts of the problem (Requirements B and D).

As stated in last year’s report, where candidates and centres struggled, it was nearly always the case that one or more of the above conditions were missing. In particular, when a mechanical approach was adopted which encouraged candidates to trawl through each unit’s specification rather than selectively applying concepts to the problem at hand, the evidence was descriptive and failed to demonstrate the candidate’s ability to solve realistic problems.

Finally, a few words on the use of group work. It is entirely in the spirit of the GCE Applied Business to use group work as it encourages the development of key skills and helps reduce the burden of research. It is also a key component of Unit 14 (Managing Change). However, the following rules must be observed when assessing candidates’ portfolios:

- each candidate must complete their own unique portfolio of evidence
- assessment decisions must be based on evidence produced solely by the candidate.

Unfortunately, albeit in a limited number of cases, some assessors were awarding marks using evidence which could not be attributed to a particular candidate. This left moderators in an intolerable position where they could not validate candidate evidence and could not support assessor decisions.

## Assessment issues

The quality of annotation improved and many more centres were using assessor feedback sheets to indicate where candidates had achieved the highest mark band within each assessment objective.

Where annotation was effective, assessors accurately indicated the Assessment Objectives and mark bands against key candidate evidence. This greatly assisted the moderation process and enabled moderators to provide focused feedback to centres.

Unfortunately, it is still the case that a significant proportion of centres are failing to annotate their candidates’ portfolios and/or are misinterpreting the qualities required by the mark bands. It is of the utmost importance that assessors annotate candidate evidence by indicating both the assessment objective and the mark band next to key pieces of evidence e.g. AO3/MB2. It is also obviously important that the mark band standards, across the four assessment objectives, be understood by the team of assessors within a centre. Further guidance can be found on pages 22 to 27 of the Teachers’ Guide, which can be downloaded from the AQA website.

The following comments on individual A2 units identify successful and less successful approaches to each unit by candidates.

### **BS13 - Managing Information**

This unit continues to have the lowest number of candidate entries. Perhaps the perceived technical nature of it deters teachers, yet, interpreted correctly, this unit is as applied and accessible as the other A2 units.

Successful contexts include school/college related information problems. They also include information management problems faced by local businesses. What makes these contexts successful is that each one is complex not because of data structures but because of the variety of people involved.

From this position, candidates can concentrate on what information is needed. They can then interview the people affected by the information system and specify the data requirements. Given this, candidates can then research and analyse possible solutions. Centres are reminded that candidates are only required to propose an outline of the information system and are not required to develop components of it.

Candidates should be encouraged to explain how the proposed system would meet the information needs of the people they interviewed earlier in their investigation. This was often quite poorly evidenced by candidates and centres are reminded of the importance of candidates carefully explaining the components of their solution in A2 units.

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

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