



General Certificate of Education

Applied Business 8611/8613

BS14 Managing Change

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.

BS14 - Managing Change

As with BS10, this unit is proving to be popular and capable of supporting genuinely applied investigations. It provides an opportunity for candidates to consider the reality of managing change within a business and often helps them to reflect on their own personal skills and personality types.

It remains the case that the majority of candidates investigate school-based change management problems and that the 'introduction of healthy eating' is still one of the most popular contexts. This is not a cause for concern. What is worrying is a tendency towards indiscriminate data trawling. Centres should encourage candidates to demonstrate greater selectivity in their use of data - more purpose and less volume.

One other issue worth noting is the role played by group work within this unit. The following points should be observed:

- candidates are required to work as a team when carrying out the investigation
- part of the portfolio evidence relates to the setting up and operation of the team, including a reflection on the effectiveness of the team
- each candidate should write up their *own* portfolio evidence covering Requirements A, B, C and D.

Some candidates avoided any reference to their team, its effectiveness and/or their role within it. Other centres assessed individual candidate evidence even when it was apparent that other candidates included identical evidence and it was not possible to identify 'who did what'.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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