



General Certificate of Education

Applied Business 8611/8613

AS Portfolio Units

Report on the Examination

2009 examination - June series

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General comments

It was pleasing to see many examples of evidence being presented in a variety of formats from centres, for example using newspaper articles and leaflets. Many centres also made good use of contacts with, and visits to, organisations that helped candidates apply their understanding. In terms of assessment, it was pleasing to see many centres annotating work where they found evidence of the assessment criteria. It is helpful to have detailed feedback sheets to indicate how assessment decisions had been reached. It is very difficult to agree with assessor decisions in the absence of annotation. At the very least, assessors should indicate, against key evidence, both the assessment objective and mark band achieved, eg AO2/MB3.

BS01 – Investigating Business

Centres are looking at a wider range of businesses for this unit, moving away from previous heavy reliance on internet data of large businesses. This is a real step forward as investigating larger businesses through internet sources often resulted in superficial coverage of the evidence requirements.

Many centres are interpreting the specification correctly, although there are still occasions when candidates within a centre look at ‘whether’ instead of ‘how’ objectives are met. For Requirement D (AO4), candidates should be investigating which factors played a key role in helping the business to achieve its objectives. They should not be assessing the extent to which objectives have been achieved.

There continues to be some over-assessment of AO4 across all the units. For AO4, mark band 4 should only be awarded to candidates who provide a reasoned justification, consider countervailing arguments and weigh up the relative importance of the key factors contributing to the success of the business.

BS02 – People in Business

Some excellent work was received from centres who are obviously putting in a lot of effort to the role play interviews, providing students with the opportunity of accessing the higher mark bands across AO2, AO3 and AO4. However, there does appear to be some confusion on the meaning of the higher mark bands for AO2. Here we are looking specifically for learners ‘targeting issues with precision’. In terms of the BS02 specification criteria, we might see this, for example, through explanation of essential and desirable characteristics on the person specification or explaining the methods that have been selected to assess these characteristics. Alternatively, there could be an explanation of the questions being planned for the interview and how these specifically relate to key aspects of the person specification. Further examples include explanations of:

- key considerations in the job advertisement
- how candidates are being motivated to apply for the post
- the decision on where to advertise
- legal issues taken into consideration.

All of these examples are ways in which the learner may provide evidence towards the higher mark bands on this assessment objective. A logbook, or diary, might help candidates to provide explanations of these examples. Production of documentation from scratch is not essential, nor would it help learners to achieve higher mark bands.

Finally, regarding AO4, judgement should be based on the candidates’ recruitment exercises, rather than attempting to make judgements about the business’s recruitment process.

BS06 – Developing a Product

Where centres are effective in this unit, they are focusing on small-scale product ideas that help learners to understand and produce comprehensive evidence of resource decisions and costing information. Using complex products limited the learners' ability to produce higher quality evidence in this unit. The unit should be based on the development of a product idea, not on the development of a business.

Candidates should focus more on the form and function of their proposed product idea. They should analyse the requirements of the target market, in terms of form and function, whilst also considering the ability of a small-scale operation to meet these requirements. Candidates are more likely to produce relevant and realistic ideas through this process.

BS07 – Career Planning

There was evidence of effective work from centres. Most centres are distinguishing between three different career pathways rather than narrowly focusing on one in Requirement A. Good evidence was produced to match the choice of pathway and route following clear and logical progression. The one area which could be improved is the production of a career action plan that incorporates the findings and demonstrates a logical development for the learner in achieving their selected pathway and route. The coherence of the career plan is lost without a suitable action plan to logically tie elements together and develop the suitable route for the learner.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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