

A-LEVEL

APPLIED BUSINESS

BS05 – Business Communication and Information Systems
Mark scheme

8610
June 2014

Version 1.0 Final

Mark schemes are prepared by the Lead Assessment Writer and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation events which all associates participate in and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation process ensures that the mark scheme covers the students' responses to questions and that every associate understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for standardisation each associate analyses a number of students' scripts: alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed and legislated for. If, after the standardisation process, associates encounter unusual answers which have not been raised they are required to refer these to the Lead Assessment Writer.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of students' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

Further copies of this Mark Scheme are available from aqa.org.uk

| | Assessment Objectives |
|--|--|
| | The Assessment Objectives represent those qualities which can be demonstrated in students' work and which can be measured for the purposes of assessment. |
| AO1 Knowledge, skills and understanding | Students demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the specified content and relevant business skills. |
| AO2 Application of knowledge, skills and understanding | Students apply knowledge and understanding of the specified content and relevant business skills. |
| AO3 Research and analysis | Students use appropriate methods in order to obtain and select information from a range of sources to analyse business problems. |
| AO4 Evaluation | Students evaluate evidence to reach reasoned judgements. |
| Quality of Written Communication | <p>The quality of written communication is assessed in all assessment units where students are required to produce extended written material. Students will be assessed according to their ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • select and use a form and style of writing appropriate to purpose and complex subject matter • organise relevant information clearly and coherently, using specialist vocabulary when appropriate • ensure that text is legible, and that spelling, grammar and punctuation are accurate, so that meaning is clear. <p>The assessment of the quality of written communication is included in Assessment Objective 4.</p> |

1

Total for this question: 20 marks

- 1 (a) (i)** Create a pie chart showing the responses of customers to the survey question.
Your pie chart should:
- have a title in bold with a font size of 10pt
 - have a legend to the right of the pie chart with a font size of 8pt
 - be 5cm high and 6cm wide.

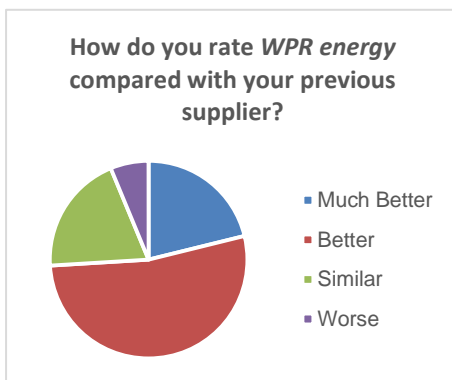
[4 marks]

Correct data shown in the pie chart – **1 mark** (AO1)

Correct text (title **and** legend) – **1 mark** (AO1)

All text formatting applied (font **and** layout) – **1 mark** (AO1)

Chart dimension size – **1 mark** (AO1)



- 1 (b) (i)** Complete the first row of the **DRAFT NEWSLETTER**. You should:
- insert the *WPR energy* logo, the title of the newsletter (**Three Villages Wind Farm Newsletter**) and the month and year of the edition
 - suitably format the title area of the newsletter.

[3 marks]

Title **and** date inserted in correct table cell – **1 mark** (AO1)

WPR energy logo inserted in correct table cell – **1 mark** (AO1)

Suitable formatting (eg font size/emphasis of title text) – **1 mark** (AO2)

1 (b) (ii) Complete the ‘Community benefits – the options’ section of the **DRAFT NEWSLETTER**. You should consider:

- **Item A**
- Sally’s **NEWSLETTER INSTRUCTIONS**
- the audience and purpose of this newsletter section
- the layout and formatting of text and photographs.

[7 marks]

| AO1 | Mark | AO2 | Mark |
|---|-------------|--|-------------|
| At least two paragraphs of relevant text inserted. | 1 | Suitable text above list of options (eg purpose of this edition of the newsletter). | 1 |
| All three options identified. | 1 | Suitable language used to inform reader of options (eg use of ‘you’ as opposed to ‘we’ and use of ‘or’ to indicate optionality). | 1 |
| At least two images inserted from newsletter instructions. | 1 | Suitable text formatting - emphasis/layout (eg paragraph formatting and emboldening of key text). | 1 |
| | | Suitable use of images -positioning/size/text flow (eg locating pictures next to appropriate option). | 1 |

1 (b) (iii) Complete the ‘Thinking of changing your electricity supplier?’ section of the **DRAFT NEWSLETTER**. You should consider:

- Sally’s **NEWSLETTER INSTRUCTIONS**
- the audience and purpose of this newsletter section
- the use and layout of the pie chart saved in **1(a) (ii)**
- the instruction that the **DRAFT NEWSLETTER** fits on one side of A4 paper.

[6 marks]

| AO1 | Mark | AO2 | Mark |
|--|------|---|------|
| Relevant chart inserted. | 1 | Suitable formatting of chart (layout/text flow). | 1 |
| At least one paragraph of relevant text inserted. | 1 | Suitable text which must include accurate URL (eg reference to signing up to <i>WPR energy</i>). | 1 |
| | | Suitable language used to persuade reader to seek more information (eg focus on chart or emphasis on environmental benefits). | 1 |
| | | Newsletter kept to one page of A4. | 1 |

Example response to Question 1 (b)



WPR energy

Three Villages Wind Farm Newsletter

July 2014

Community benefits – the options

During the next three weeks, WPR energy will be asking the opinions of people in the Three Villages area about the possible options for our financial contribution.

WPR energy are committed to giving the community at least £300,000, but it could be up to £1,000,000 and it's for you to decide! Here are some possible **options** – but you might have more:

- **Sports and recreation**– £300,000 to develop play and recreation facilities, right now!
- **Affordable housing** – £600,000 to help develop affordable housing in the next three years – good news for people in Wendsford
- **Community fund** – £50,000 for the next 25 years to benefit everyone in the area to fund local projects, such as the youth services which are needed in Havington

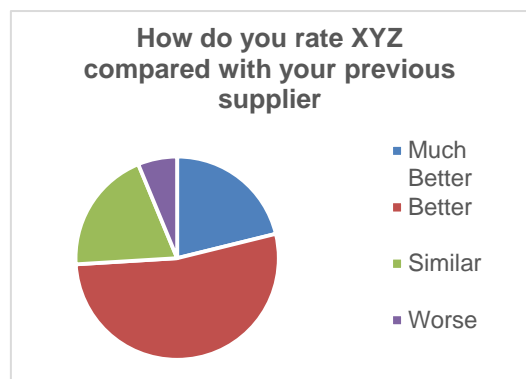


- **Your own idea** - Sally Beamish, from WPR, will soon be holding meetings in your area so that she can tell you more about the benefits WPR energy **will** bring to **you**.

Thinking of changing your electricity supplier?

Have you thought about changing your electricity supplier? If yes, then WPR energy has something to offer you – maybe not cheaper prices, but better customer service (the chart doesn't lie!) and the knowledge that you are saving the planet! All of our energy is generated from renewable sources – wind, solar etc.

Why not find out more by visiting our website – www.wprenergy.co.uk



2

Total for this question: 20 marks

2 (a) Using **Item B**, analyse how the **medium** of communication used by Sally could affect the success of the research into the opinions of the local community.

[8 marks]

| Level | Descriptor | Marks | Assessment Objective |
|-------|---|-------|----------------------|
| 3 | Uses Item B to analyse the impact of communication media on the effectiveness of the research. | 8–7 | AO3 |
| 2 | Uses Item B when explaining the positive and/or negative features of communication media. | 6–4 | AO2 |
| 1 | Demonstrates an understanding of general effectiveness of communication media. | 3–1 | AO1 |

Knowledge and application:

- *media includes: post, telecommunications, face-to-face and printed publications (AO1)*
- *posted questionnaire has benefit of recipient being able to review the questions, yet cost involved in printing/posting and time issue (no response/slow response) are negative aspects (AO1), but this could be delivered with the newsletter (AO2)*
- *telephone has merit of possibly ensuring a higher response (AO1), but Sally's team is small and covering up to 600 households would be difficult (AO2)*
- *online has the benefit of being cost effective (AO1) but age/income profile might exclude some households from the questionnaire as well as the possibility of fraudulent/invalid responses (eg faked responses) (AO2)*
- *face-to-face focus group meetings offer both Sally and the members of the group the benefit of providing feedback about the questions and/or responses, but this might be very time consuming and potentially costly (AO1)*
- *face-to-face communication might be a good way of Sally to gain some examples of the alternative ideas she is looking for (AO2).*

Analysis:

Sally has a tight deadline of three weeks, the requirement to gather as wide a range of opinions as possible from a diverse group and all with a limited set of resources. All of the media suggested in the item have particular problems, but the use of face-face focus group meetings would be an effective way to gather the alternative ideas she is looking for in the time she has available considering the possibility that the questionnaires might not offer any alternative ideas. Both forms of telecommunication (phone and internet) would seem to have significant disadvantages – phone in terms of time/cost and internet in terms of reliability of results (fraud and/or sections of the population being excluded) – such that they don't seem to be favourable options. Whilst the response rate might be low, postal would seem to offer the best choice of media for the questionnaire given Sally's constraints of time, people and money (perhaps the questionnaire could be issued with the newsletter).

2 (b) How might Sally use her team, in the most effective way, to complete the research on time? Use **Item B** to justify your answer.

[12 marks]

| Level | Descriptor | Marks | Assessment Objective |
|-------|--|-------|----------------------|
| 3 | Uses Item B to analyse the factors affecting the completion of the research. | 7–5 | AO3 |
| 2 | Uses Item B to explain how Sally could plan and/or prioritise administrative tasks. | 4–3 | AO2 |
| 1 | Demonstrates understanding of planning and/or prioritising administrative tasks. | 2–1 | AO1 |

Knowledge and application:

- *planning and prioritising can be assisted by using work plans, schedules and/or time management techniques (AO1)*
- *Sally could produce a schedule that she and her team will follow so that each member of the team has specific tasks to complete by given deadlines (AO1)*
- Sally could allocate tasks to her assistants, such as producing the questionnaire or testing the database (AO2)
- Questionnaires need to go out as quickly as possible (say end of the first week) to be returned by the end of the second week (AO2)
- she could also get her assistants to enter the results onto the database in the third week (AO2)
- Sally could complete the focus group research and update the database later with these findings (AO2).

Analysis:

Sally has particular time constraints and she needs to run tasks as efficiently as possible. For example, she could identify tasks that can proceed at the same time which, in this case, would seem to be restricted to developing/carrying out the questionnaire and developing/carrying out the focus group research. She will also have to think about the skill level of the assistants – perhaps she might be better off carrying out the non-routine tasks such as the focus group. Sally might have to test the database if she is to keep control of the process, but she could simply ask for a report from the assistant.

In addition (and separately) award marks for evaluation using the grid below.

| Level | Descriptor | Marks | Assessment Objective |
|-------|--|-------|--|
| 2 | Justifies how Sally might make best use of her team in order to successfully complete the research. Ideas are communicated using a logical structure, with some appropriate use of technical terms. There are occasional errors in accepted conventions of written communication. | 5–3 | AO4 and Quality of written communication |
| 1 | Demonstrates some judgement when identifying how Sally might make best use of her team. Ideas are communicated with some structure evident with occasional use of appropriate technical terms. There are some errors in accepted conventions of written communication. | 2–1 | |

Judgement:

- Sally needs to split the tasks not just by sequence but also by the abilities of the assistants
- as Sally is probably the ‘face of WPR energy’ to the villagers, she may well be best placed to carry out the focus group research and, as it is a 200 mile round trip, she might want to arrange this for a single day if she can
- Sally needs to delegate the routine tasks and schedule these to be completed by the second week so that she can enter all data onto the database and then she should complete non-routine task of the focus group, having a better idea about general opinions.

3

Total for this question: 20 marks

3 (a) Using **Item C**, analyse how Sally could use the research database to provide key information for her meetings with the local community.

[8 marks]

| Level | Descriptor | Marks | Assessment Objective |
|-------|--|-------|----------------------|
| 3 | Uses Item C to analyse how the research database could be used to identify key information using compound search and/or sort criteria. | 8–7 | AO3 |
| 2 | Uses Item C when explaining how the research database could be searched and/or sorted on individual fields. | 6–4 | AO2 |
| 1 | Demonstrates an understanding of how databases generally process and/or retrieve information. | 3–1 | AO1 |

Knowledge and application:

- Databases can process information by using search and sort criteria to produce reports on specific issues – these reports could be in the form of a table (AO1)
- For example, you can sort text fields alphabetically or numeric fields by their value (largest first) or you could search for particular values, eg greater than or equal to (AO1)
- Personal details – sort by postcode to produce reports from each village and area within the village or you could sort by size of family (AO2) etc
- Occupation – search by employment status, for example, to see if different opinions are held (AO2) etc
- Preferences – search by first choice and view the report to find out which option is preferred (AO2).

Analysis:

In order to make the best use of the database, Sally could create combined search and sort criteria to produce meaningful reports. For example, instead of just searching by first preference, she should then sort that field as well – this would produce a report which was much easier to read and you could then determine which was most popular (you might even be able to produce an automated count). Sally could use a search on more than one field, eg by gender and by first priority to see if a difference exists according to gender (this could also be carried out by a search by first preference and then a sort by gender). Using these ‘compound’ criteria, Sally could start to build up a picture of what and why people have different preferences, which will help her to produce materials for the meetings.

3 (b) *Sally's main priority is to encourage sensible and informed discussions at each meeting with the local community.*

*Recommend, with examples, the methods of communication Sally should use in the local community meetings. Use **Item C** to justify your answer.*

[12 marks]

| Level | Descriptor | Marks | Assessment Objective |
|-------|---|-------|----------------------|
| 3 | Uses Item C to analyse the factors affecting the suitability of communication methods. | 7–5 | AO3 |
| 2 | Uses Item C when explaining the features of communication methods. | 4–3 | AO2 |
| 1 | Demonstrates an understanding of general effectiveness of communication methods. | 2–1 | AO1 |

Knowledge and application:

- *Methods include written, verbal/non-verbal and graphic (AO1)*
- *Written useful for conveying detailed information and/or information that needs to be clearly stated; verbal useful for immediate communication and feedback whilst non-verbal plays a role in setting tone etc; graphic communication useful for communicating numerical information, conveying ideas and emotions etc (AO1)*
- *Context of a face-to-face meeting so a range of examples could be provided (AO2):*
 - *exhibition materials could illustrate the three villages and how one or more of them might be enhanced by the financial benefit*
 - *rolling presentation could be used to provide more information about WPR energy and how it benefits communities and the environment*
 - *Sally could use a PowerPoint presentation to convey her findings to the meeting – using tables, charts and images*
 - *Sally could produce a brief report to be handed out to each attendee – this could highlight some of her key findings, maybe with a section for the focus groups*
 - *verbal/non-verbal communication will be key – Sally and her assistants will need to be communicative and friendly, presenting a positive/upbeat image whilst showing that they are conscious that opinions may well differ.*

Analysis:

Variety of methods could be used, but a key issue is Sally's objective to encourage discussion – whatever methods are employed, they need to inform people at the meeting and then provide for a way in which they can have constructive discussions. Exhibition materials would be useful, maybe before the meeting starts to allow people to chat amongst themselves. Sally then needs to provide people with a way of carrying out their discussion – this could be through a presentation then question and answers, but could also be by putting people into smaller groups (perhaps a mixture from each village, but difficult to arrange) – they could be given written materials to help structure their discussions.

In addition (and separately) award marks for evaluation using the grid below.

| Level | Descriptor | Marks | Assessment Objective |
|-------|---|-------|--|
| 2 | Justifies how the recommendations could contribute to the success of the meetings. Ideas are communicated using a logical structure, with some appropriate use of technical terms. There are occasional errors in accepted conventions of written communication. | 5–3 | AO4 and Quality of written communication |
| 1 | Demonstrates some judgement when making recommendation(s). Ideas are communicated with some structure evident with occasional use of appropriate technical terms. There are some errors in accepted conventions of written communication. | 2–1 | |

Judgement:

- one key issue will be how many people are attending each meeting – the most effective form of communication may well have to be a PowerPoint presentation followed by question and answers
- if the size of the meeting is smaller, then people could be put into groups and Sally's team could monitor these allowing her to use more interactive communication methods
- however people are organised, the range of ideas coming out of the research might be so wide ranging that Sally will almost certainly have to produce a brief report which can be quickly read and understood – graphic communication would seem to be vital here as will the use of exhibition type materials
- to encourage discussion, Sally's presentation should not simply list all of the options, but should try to summarise the range of opinions and indicate the next steps in deciding the form of the financial benefit.