



**General Certificate of Secondary Education
June 2011**

Business Studies 413003

Business Studies (Short Course) 413014

(Specification 4133/4131)

Unit 3: Investigating Businesses

Unit 14: Investigating Small Businesses

Report on the Examination

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General Issues

Once again, it was pleasing to see a range of high quality Controlled Assessments that were well written, well presented and which enabled students across the whole ability range to gain the full range of marks available.

The Controlled Assessment task clearly indicates what is required of students. Centres do not need to modify or add to the bullet points. In order to produce a good piece of work, it is sufficient for students to simply address the bullet points as stated in the Controlled Assessment task.

The best students addressed each of the bullet points and were able to select relevant and appropriate information, as well as completing all elements of the task. The best work demonstrated substantial knowledge and understanding whilst using relevant business concepts and terminology throughout. A range of conclusions were drawn and these were linked to the analysis of data selections. Throughout the work, good, clear chains of argument were present which were logical and detailed. However, in some cases, students spent too long writing about their local area at the expense of analysing and evaluating their research findings. Although most centres are aware of the importance of the bullet points, one common error is that one or two of the main bullet points were given insufficient coverage. These are often the bullets which require students to analyse, evaluate and make recommendations and/or judgements.

The Controlled Assessment task contains additional Teachers' Notes. The purpose of these is to amplify and explain what is required for successful completion of the tasks. Centres should refer to this, as it sets out clearly what students are expected to do. It was pleasing to see that the majority of centres followed the guidance in the accompanying Teachers' Notes, enabling them to support their students well.

A minority of centres chose to standardise the research by having all students consider the same business. The vast majority of centres allowed students to make their own choice of business, giving them greater autonomy over their work. As has previously been stated, unless it is not possible for centres to gain access to local businesses, students should be encouraged to study a business of their choice.

A range of marketing solutions were seen in this Controlled Assessment. However, centres are reminded that the content for Unit 1 provides the basis for the Controlled Assessment task. All work undertaken should, therefore, only be based on the content for this unit.

A range of work was presented by students which included word-processed and hand-written pieces. The majority of work was word-processed, rather than hand-written. The presentation of work was generally of a high standard with some of the most outstanding pieces of work being hand-written and not word-processed. Students made good use of ICT for research purposes and the presentation of their findings.

The Assessment Objectives continue to be covered well, particularly AO1 'Recall, select and communicate knowledge and understanding'. For AO2, all sections of the task must be completed to achieve Level 3 or higher. For AO3, the Controlled Assessment task requires students to demonstrate an ability to make sensible choices, gather relevant information, select appropriate data and draw supported conclusions based on their analysis. Students who gained good marks were able to make selections from a wide range of relevant primary and secondary sources.

A recurring issue is the use of appendices. Centres need to be aware that appendices should be used and students must incorporate them into their assignments. In general, more evidence needs to be seen in the main body of the report of students' research, including summaries of questionnaires and interpretation of graphs, coupled with detailed analysis of the data. Appendices should be numbered and organised and must be referred to in the main body of the report to gain any credit. It is not necessary for centres to annotate work in the appendices. However, it must be made clear to the moderator exactly what was produced during the three-hour report writing phase. In some cases, it was not evident where the research and planning phase ended and where the final write-up began.

The majority of centres provided clear and accurate marking, with excellent annotation. Some centres, however, did not annotate at all, which is unacceptable. Annotation does not need to be onerous. An indication of the level reached by the student, eg '1L1' in the body of the work, together with a brief teacher comment, is sufficient.

The majority of centres were clear about how marks were awarded and applied the assessment criteria accurately and consistently. An increasing number of centres gave a summary comment for the mark awarded for each assessment objective on the Candidate Record Form. This is particularly helpful to moderators as it allows them to see the rationale behind the centres' awarding of marks.

There were very few problems with the administrative process. Correct forms were used and the Controlled Assessments were despatched promptly. The marks were sent in by the deadline, together with the Centre Declaration Sheet. Moderators do appreciate this and Centres are to be commended for their efforts.

In summary, the moderation process has again worked well and efficiently. Overall, there was considerable evidence to suggest that centres have managed the Controlled Assessment process well. There were many excellent assignments seen and teachers and students should be credited for this.

Finally, centres are reminded of the Controlled Assessment Advisory Service. Contact can be made via the Guildford Office to discuss the suitability of potential approaches to Controlled Assessments and other related matters. Teachers are encouraged to contact AQA Guildford for details of their area's adviser.

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