



**General Certificate of Secondary Education  
June 2011**

**Applied Business  
(Double Award)**

**413004/5/6**

**(Specification 4136)**

**Unit 4: People in Business**

**Unit 5: Marketing and Customer Needs**

**Unit 6: Enterprise**

***Report on the Examination***

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## General

In general, the work produced was interesting and challenging, with centres using different, mainly successful, approaches to managing the controlled assessment. Marking and internal moderation was usually accurate.

Unfortunately, some centres took a fairly prescriptive approach to the controlled assessment, often setting several small tasks which sometimes failed to help students to gain an overview of the business studied. In all three units, sometimes structures were provided by centres that were too closely managed so that numerous micro-tasks were produced. Whilst this may be an approach that could help less-able students to gain some credit, it is also one that could prevent more-able students from fulfilling their potential.

In each option, Task C was least-well completed. This is surprising as it is this task that is really the culmination of the research. In Unit 4, students consider the business as a possible place of future employment for themselves; in Unit 5 students consider whether, taking into account the activities of competitors, the business is successfully meeting customer needs, whilst in Unit 6 students consider the effectiveness of the enterprise activity they have conducted, judging both their own contribution and that of other team members. In each case, Task C is effectively the synoptic task, the one for which the other tasks provide support. In many cases, however, effort has been concentrated on descriptive tasks linked to Tasks A and C, rather than the analysis and judgement which earn the higher marks in Task C.

There were one or two instances where centres totally misread the specification. These included using more than one business and letting students focus on areas that were brands, not businesses (such as MS Windows).

## Annotation

In better examples, annotation was precise and accurate, showing where **both levels and** marks *within* levels had been awarded. In the best of these, annotations were also supported by a commentary on an additional cover sheet. Unfortunately, in a number of other cases, annotation was sparse and of little use. Annotation that refers to a whole page rather than flagging up specific work, or annotation that does not show marks *within* levels, is of little use in supporting marking judgements. Centres should also make it clear as to which comments are annotations for the moderator and which are formative assessment meant for the student during the preparation stage. Once the work is complete, it should be marked and annotated with moderation in mind, using the assessment criteria published, rather than with formative comments aimed at helping students to improve work in the future.

## Approaches

A number of centres sensibly and effectively adopted the ‘two folder’ approach, with a folder of research and information collected during the 17-hour preparation stage being taken into the final 7-hour controlled assessment phase (called ‘Final Presentation’ in the specification). Students were then able to use this information to support their individual responses. This allowed them to reach the higher levels, where they can ‘select and organise’ information, ‘apply effectively and consistently skills, knowledge and understanding’ and draw up conclusions based on ‘analysis of selected data’ and an ‘evaluation of its significance’.

Centres should note that, in each option, ‘Students’ portfolios must include evidence of materials used to make a presentation’. Materials could be slides (preferably printed at three to a page with notes), notes, a script, a set of prompt cards or a poster or, indeed, any way that the student can show that they had prepared a presentation.

## **Timing**

Some work appeared to have taken longer than the set controlled assessment time to complete, and there was a suggestion, from the annotation, that individual students had been given feedback and support during the final controlled element.

## **Unit-specific feedback**

### **Unit 4**

This unit tends to be completed in Year 10 and may, therefore, show gaps in knowledge or signs of students struggling to grasp concepts. Some centres, however, showed excellent knowledge and application.

Some students showed a lack of understanding of personality tests and how they were used in business and, instead, concentrated on Belbin team roles. There are a number of business-based personality tests online should students wish to try them, however students may find more efficient ways of considering their own personality traits. The task actually refers to an understanding of such tests and how they are used, so actually using them is not compulsory, nor a substitute for the student's reflection on his or her own personality strengths.

There are still some mechanical approaches to work, for example, making lists of employment legislation, drawing up imaginary contracts of employment or drawing Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Centres should encourage students to concentrate their efforts on the Tasks set under the 'assessment' heading and to use the knowledge gained through classroom teaching to tackle these, rather than 'ticking off' the bullet points in the Specification content.

### **Unit 5**

This Unit lends itself nicely to some engaging and practical approaches to customer needs and customer satisfaction, such as surveys and mystery customer exercises. On the whole, therefore, this Unit was tackled well.

In the best cases, students often looked successfully at the activities of competitors and clearly linked customer service features to the specific products and target markets of the business, showing good knowledge of where, for example, after-sales service would be more, or less, important.

The most apparent problem with this Unit was for students to choose a business that was too large for them to really engage successfully with. Choosing businesses via brand names from the internet tends to lead to businesses that are too complex for students to understand (examples included Google, Facebook and T-mobile).

The weakest part of many assignments was Task C, requiring analysis, judgement and evaluation.

## **Unit 6**

Centres demonstrated some excellent work on entrepreneurs, especially when the choice was a local entrepreneur who was familiar to students. This allowed them to ‘connect’ in a way that is not possible with those entrepreneurs who they have only seen on TV or in the newspapers.

Problems were apparent when students were allowed to choose ‘entrepreneurs’ about whom they had little knowledge and for whom there was little access (examples included Warren Buffett, Bill Gates and Henry Ford). Richard Branson, Anita Roddick, James Dyson, Alan Sugar and some of the TV ‘Dragons’ featured heavily, and students tended to draw on their websites or official biographies for their ‘insights’. The work on such characters tends to be very descriptive, and to provide uncritical pen portraits of characters as their PR would wish them to appear.

The use of local entrepreneurs produced more insights and better answers.

Some techniques - such as a magazine article regarding enterprise skills, and a table grouping enterprise characteristics in order to see common features, which students can rank and comment on – are effective.

In tackling Task C, students were refreshingly honest about both their own and their team members’ contributions, leading to good analysis and evaluation where this was the case.

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