

## **J253 GCSE Business Studies**

### **General questions**

#### **What are the guided learning hours for this GCSE?**

The guided learning hours for J253 are 120 to 140 in total.

#### **Can candidates certificate in a January series?**

The first aggregation opportunity for candidates for J253 is June 2011 and every January and June thereafter providing they have adhered to the terminal rule for the series in which they wish to aggregate.

#### **Can a candidate re-sit a unit?**

Yes, candidates can re-sit each unit once before entering for certification for a GCSE. Candidates may enter for the qualification an unlimited number of times.

#### **What is the terminal rule?**

Candidates must take at least 40% of the assessment in the same series they enter for the full qualification certification. Units can be taken in any order as long as the terminal rules are satisfied.

### **Unit-specific questions**

#### **Unit A291: Marketing and Enterprise**

#### **Are Controlled Assessment tasks sent based on estimated entries or can we download them from Interchange?**

Tasks will be available as downloads from Interchange only: they will not be sent in hard copy to centres.

#### **Can candidates re-sit Controlled Assessments?**

Yes, candidates can re-sit Controlled Assessed units but as with any other unit, candidates can only re-sit once. Also, the 40% terminal rule means that 40% of the assessment has to be taken in the examination series in which the qualification is to be awarded.

Centres have the responsibility of ensuring that the correct tasks are used for a controlled assessment re-sit.

**Can any preparation work be done out of the classroom?**

Yes. Controls are set at the level of task taking and task marking. Preparation work comes into the task taking level, under Research and Data Collection, which has a limited level of control i.e. work can be carried out without direct supervision. More guidance on this can be found in Section 5: Controlled Assessment of all revised GCSE Specifications (first teaching in September 2009).

**Can I choose my own title for the work as I have done in the past?**

No. The choice must be between one of the two Controlled Assessments issued by OCR each year.

**Do all candidates at my centre have to do the same Controlled Assessment?**

No. Candidates can complete either of the two choices.

**Do I have to enter candidates as soon as I have completed the Controlled Assessment?**

No. Work that is completed, for instance, in early October in Year 11 can be entered in the January or June series of that same academic year.

**Do we have to take the Controlled Assessment under exam conditions/teacher supervision?**

Yes, but only for task taking, i.e. the last part of Controlled Assessment when candidates are producing their final piece of work – note that this can be over more than one supervised session. More guidance on this can be found in Section 5: Controlled Assessment of all revised GCSE Specifications (first teaching in September 2009).

**Do we mark the Controlled Assessment or does OCR?**

Controlled Assessment tasks for ALL subjects are internally marked by centres and externally moderated by OCR.

**Has the marking changed from previous OCR coursework?**

Yes. The number of marking criteria has been reduced from six to three. The three new marking criteria are directly linked to the three assessment objectives, which are briefly:  
AO1: Knowledge and understanding  
AO2: Application  
AO3: Analysis and evaluation.

**How long is each assessment valid for, i.e. can we use last year's assessment this year?**

Tasks change every year and it is the responsibility of centres to make sure that candidates are submitting the correct task. Tasks will be taken off Interchange on 15 May every year for this subject.

**How many Controlled Assessment tasks are there to choose from?**

There are two.

**How much time should I give to completing the Controlled Assessment?**

The specification recommends that up to 16 hours in total be allocated to completing the Controlled Assessment. The time is divided up into (up to) 10 hours on the research stage and (up to) 6 hours on the writing up stage.

**How often do the Controlled Assessments change?**

They are changed every year, which means they can only be re-submitted in the same academic year.

**How will I mark a Controlled Assessment?**

Teachers will use the assessment marking grid to help judge the correct mark to give a piece of work using a 'best fit' method.

**Is the Controlled Assessment just like previous OCR Business Studies coursework?**

No. There are some similarities, in that there is research to be completed, analysis of data and recommendations made, but there are significant differences in structure and administration. There is a series of three investigations in a Controlled Assessment which target areas of the specification content, unlike coursework which has a single title.

**Is there a minimum or maximum time that can be spent on the assessments?**

Suggested time limits vary per subject: there are suggested time limits given in Section 5: Controlled Assessment of all revised GCSE Specifications (first teaching in September 2009).

**What sort of material is provided in the Controlled Assessment?**

There will be background information in text form on a business situation, and a variety of numerical data.

**What type of research is expected from candidates?**

In their research time, candidates should collect both primary and secondary data. This may be in the form of questionnaires, photographs, Internet research, use of text books etc. The data must be able to support an answer to the Investigations detailed in the Controlled Assessment.

**When can Controlled Assessments be taken?**

Controlled Assessment is a form of internal assessment and as such there is not a specified date on which it has to be taken.

It is up to each centre to decide when Controlled Assessment will be taken. Guidance on this can be found in Section 5: Controlled Assessment of all revised GCSE Specifications (first teaching in September 2009).

**When can teachers and candidates access the material?**

Controlled Assessment tasks will be available from Interchange on 01 June of the year prior to an assessment series, i.e. 1 June 2009 for assessment in January 2010 or June 2010 series.

Tasks change every year and it is the responsibility of the centre to make sure that candidates are submitting the correct task. Tasks will be removed from Interchange on 15 May every year for this subject.

### **When should I do the Controlled Assessment?**

The choice is yours. What must be remembered when making the choice is that the title for a Controlled Assessment only lasts for one academic year. So if you feel that you may want to re-submit the work of candidates in the hope of improving marks, the re-submission must be in the same academic year. It will not be possible to complete work and submit at the end of Year 10 and then re-submit some time in Year 11. In practical terms, if you feel that you would like to have the opportunity to re-submit work, then the original entry would need to be made in the January series of Years 10 or 11, with a view to re-submitting the work in the June series of the same year.

### **Where can the Controlled Assessment materials be accessed and by whom?**

Controlled Assessment tasks and other documents (e.g. mark schemes) are accessed via Interchange.

Centre access to the Interchange Controlled Assessment area will be available to the registered Centre User (normally the Exams Officer/Centre Administrator). The Centre User can allocate a special Interchange role which enables centre colleagues to access past papers and mark-schemes only. The role is called 'Read Only (VQ)' but it applies to 14-19 qualifications as well. To allocate 'Read Only (VQ)' role:

- Log on to [Interchange](#)
- Select Centre Administration
- Click Edit Users
- Click Add New User, complete all sections in the User tab (do not click Add)
- Click Role tab
- In Available Roles list, scroll to and click on Read Only (VQ)
- Click on User tab
- Click Add
- New user now set-up

### **Where can the mark schemes be accessed?**

The mark schemes can be accessed from Interchange. A specimen mark scheme is at the end of each Sample Assessment Material.

### **Will I have to teach all the specification content on Marketing and Enterprise before I begin the Controlled Assessment?**

It is up to you. Some teachers will want to cover all the specification and then complete the three investigations together. Others may choose to study the specification material in stages, and do each of the investigations separately.

### **Will there be separate information for each Controlled Assessment?**

No. The information provided will be for both of the Controlled Assessments.

## **Unit A293: Production, Finance and External Business**

**Is knowledge and understanding or interpretation of a Balance Sheet required within the new specification and in particular within this unit?**

This area is not within the specification; however there are calculation challenges in cash flow, break-even, exchange rates, and gross/net profit and profit margin.