GENERAL COMMENTS

The 2012 VCE VET Business examination assessed the underpinning knowledge and skills in the following units of competency.

- BSBWOR301B Organise personal work priorities and development
- BSBINM301A Organise workplace information
- BSBITU306A Design and produce business documents
- BSBINN301A Promote innovation in a team environment

The 2012 examination comprised two sections: Section A, which contained multiple-choice questions, and Section B, which contained short-answer questions.

Students' examination results reflected the effort expended in preparing for the examination. Those who had prepared well achieved good results. Unfortunately, reading for meaning (comprehension), understanding of business terminology and the ability to use this language when responding to questions, as well as paying attention to detail, were lacking in responses provided by most students in this year's examination.

The following approaches were used when assessing students' responses.
- Responses that did not address the subject of the question were not given any marks. Assessors should not have to guess what the student means in a response; responses must be clear and relate to the question. Too often students tried to 'fit' memorised answers to questions.
- If contradictory answers were given, no marks were awarded.
- If a question asked for a number of examples or reasons to be given and the student gave more than was required and no answers had been crossed out, only the required number of answers was considered. For example, if three responses were required and four responses were given, only the first three responses were assessed.
- The competencies taught and being assessed relate to the business industry; therefore, the language used needs to reflect that industry. References such as 'a colleague's mum' when responding to Question 5 (identifying secondary sources of information) and 'a great way to string along a meeting/conference' (when answering Question 9) were not appropriate and were not awarded any marks.

Students and teachers should also note the following information.
- Students are given reading time prior to the commencement of the examination. Students should read the examination paper through several times before commencing the examination. Students should read each question again before answering it so that they are clear on what is being asked of them and can respond appropriately. Students should also re-read their answers before handing in their papers to ensure that their answers are clear and relate to the question asked. For example, Question 17 asked students to identify errors that would and would not be picked up by a spell check. The question did not ask students to edit or reword the passage.
- Students should attempt to answer all questions.
- Repeating the question wastes valuable time and space and is not necessary.
- The space provided and the marks allocated should be used as a guide to the length of the answer required.
- In some cases it was apparent that students were providing answers that had appeared in the 2011 Assessment Report, and that did not relate specifically to the 2012 examination questions.

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SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section A – Multiple-choice questions
The table below indicates the percentage of students who chose each option. The correct answer is indicated by shading.

Question	% A	% B	% C	% D
1	2	9	0	88
2	99	1	0	0
3	33	15	19	33
4	10	4	67	19
5	3	78	6	13
6	42	53	1	4
7	3	95	0	2
8	49	28	18	5
9	8	78	10	4
10	95	1	1	3
11	4	63	10	22
12	5	29	45	22
13	87	2	3	8
14	5	18	69	7
15	86	4	7	2
16	90	1	4	5
17	2	92	4	2
18	9	6	59	26
19	6	39	9	45
20	15	1	68	16

Section B – Short-answer questions
This report provides sample answers or an indication of what the answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

Question 1

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	13	5	82	**1.7**

- portrait
- landscape

This question was answered well.

Question 2

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	22	1	2	3	7	1	65	**4.3**

Explanation	Term
printed heading on stationery	4
greeting in a letter	6
inserting all punctuation in a letter	1
record of the entire proceedings of a meeting	3
title of the group that is meeting, including date, time and venue	5
combining a main document with part of a report from another document	2

Question 3a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	19	8	18	9	18	6	21	**3.0**

Any three of

Term	Explanation
centralised filing system	A system of filing where there is central control in a central location, allowing everyone easy access to it and being in a situation where it is easy to file new material. Specialised filing staff are responsible for operating it. All files are located in one main area.
chronologically	Filing according to the date received, with the most recent always on top. All documents are usually in ascending date order.
suspension file	A light cardboard folder, the width of the filing cabinet drawer, which holds the folders containing the documents. It has metal paper clips on each side, so it can hang onto the sides of the drawer. Used in upright drawer filing cabinets, suspended along a rack.
file register	The written record of the files in the filing cabinet. Contains all file names. For electronic files, it records movement of files.
cross-referencing	When information on a particular topic is stored in more than one place and reference to where it is stored is noted in all places.

Two marks were awarded for each correct explanation.

Many students were not familiar with a number of these terms.

Question 3b.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	17	32	51	**1.4**

Any one of the following reasons.
Manual filing system
- Many hard-copy documents are received in every business and they need to be kept in an organised and easily accessed system.
- Some documents, such as legal documents like wills, can only be hard copy and must be filed safely.
- It is easy to have a locked cabinet in which to keep confidential documents.
- Paper documents can be held in a temporary file until the filing clerk has time to file them in the cabinet.
- Contains hard copy documents, and allows for shared access.

Electronic filing system
- It is easy to add new information and to access existing information.
- There is easy access from all computers in the business, except for some files which may be password protected.
- It is possible to limit access by giving only certain people the necessary password.
- It saves storage space, and doesn't take up nearly as much room as a filing cabinet.

Reasons relating to fire and theft were not acceptable for having an electronic filing system.

Some students described the systems only, rather than giving a reason for using the system.

Question 3c.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	8	37	55	**1.5**

Any two of
- remove and archive files
- remove and destroy dead files
- set up another filing cabinet for additional files
- make electronic copies of 'hard' documents to reduce physical filing capacity required

- decentralise.

'Clean out and organise the current filing cabinet' was not considered to be an acceptable response.

Question 4

Marks	0	1	Average
%	46	54	**0.6**

Any of

- click on the file name and a rectangle appears with the date and time of the most recent activity
- check in 'Properties'
- look at the date it was last opened or modified
- go to View, Properties.

Very general answers were provided by some students; for example, 'look within history'.

Question 5a.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	36	35	29	**0.9**

Primary source of information	Secondary source of information
• survey/questionnaire • focus groups/interviews • original data/article downloaded from the internet • raw data	• government departments • the Australian Bureau of Statistics • industry • the internet • the media (magazines and books) • minutes • sales reports • research papers

Responses generally indicated that students had guessed the answers. 'Primary' was often defined as first/true/best and 'secondary' as second, suggesting that many students were unaware of the correct meanings.

Question 5b.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	41	26	32	**0.9**

- A primary source of information is first-hand information gathered by you. It is information directly from the author and not copied by someone else and quoted by them.
- A secondary source of information is information quoted by someone else, or gathered by someone else outside your organisation.

Some students were able to explain the difference between the above terms but were unable to provide examples. Too often the example provided was repeated from Question 5a.

Question 6a.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	7	33	60	**1.6**

Self-assessment is important because it helps you to (any two of)

- identify factors affecting the achievement of work objectives
- see where your strengths are and where you may need extra training to be able to get the job done
- assess your relationships with other team members
- develop closer working relationships in order to achieve work objectives
- understand how you affect others and how they affect you in a work situation
- ensure continuous improvements and review your performance; the way you work towards both the organisation's and your own personal work goals
- meet deadlines

- follow policies and procedures.

Students must read the question carefully.

Question 6b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	19	9	35	4	34	**2.3**

Different ways to improve administrative skills and knowledge included (any two of)

- undertake further study to gain additional qualifications
- discuss workplace opportunities with your supervisor
- undertake internal/external training
- seek a coach/mentor
- speak to a supervisor regarding a personal development strategy/plan/ways to improve
- check with the company's Policies and Procedures manual on how to work in the company
- read manuals/books (educate yourself)
- listen to and learn from others (mentoring, sometimes by older, more experienced colleagues).

The answers needed to focus on ways to improve, rather than on how to identify problem areas. Students' responses for Question 6a. and 6b. overlapped in many responses.

Question 7

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	10	26	64	**1.6**

Purpose

- It is an assessment of you by others (usually your supervisor) as to how you are completing your work, measured over a set period of time.

Importance

- It is necessary for you to be able to see how well you are meeting your task requirements and whether you need to undergo further professional development.
- It can ensure opportunities for promotion.

Students needed to provide a purpose and its importance in order to be awarded two marks.

Question 8a.

Marks	0	1	Average
%	45	55	**0.6**

Formal feedback (either of)

- meet with a manager
- obtain a report (or letter) following an appraisal

Question 8b.

Marks	0	1	Average
%	33	67	**0.7**

Informal feedback (either of)

- congratulations from a colleague or customer
- a text message from a colleague

One-word responses such as 'letter', 'discussion' or 'email' were often given for Questions 8a. and 8b. These were not adequate to answer the questions.

The difference between formal and informal appraisals posed a problem for some students.

Question 9

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	0	2	4	11	17	15	51	**4.9**

- word processing: letters; reports; newsletters; to present documentation in a clear, readable way
- desktop publishing: formatting/layout of newsletters or brochures, to promote business activity
- internet: research, customer contact
- email: letters, agenda, reports, to have 24-hour access to clients and to provide quick responses
- presentation: to create displays or overheads
- spreadsheet: charts, formula work, data sheets

Some students were unable to explain the purpose or link their answers back to business usage. Some answers lacked detail.

Question 10

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	6	5	18	20	52	**3.1**

Any two of

- photocopier: multiple copies; double sided; enlarge or reduce print; create a booklet, lighten or darken the print; staple; separate pages of a textbook to two separate A4 sheets; colour
- electronic calendar: access meetings or notes
- input devices: can be done by a keyboard, mouse or scanner to allow text, graphics or photos to be put into a document on the computer
- computer: can produce a wide range of documents by means of word processing, using a spreadsheet to produce tables, or other software (such as PowerPoint) to produce a presentation; access for a database; can use it to design documents (such as business cards or brochures); connects to the internet to do research; provides a business website for advertising; sends emails; can share access to documents; space-saving medium for storing files
- fax machine: transmits documents to another destination via the phone line

Students were awarded two marks for naming two pieces of workplace technology and two marks for describing those technologies. They needed to provide at least four functions in order to receive full marks.

Most students could identify the technology but more specific details were required as to 'how' the technology was used. In most cases, general responses were provided; for example, 'computer – record any information on it', 'computer – keeping things up to date' or 'photocopier – making extra copies'.

Question 11

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	39	27	34	**1.0**

One of

- the introduction or implementation of a new or significantly improved good or service, operational process, organisational managerial process or marketing method. It can either be developed by the firm or be introduced to the firm
- innovation is not necessarily something new; it can be something that has been reworked to improve processes or products
- when something new or different is introduced. The act of 'innovating' means introducing new things or methods
- doing things differently to increase productivity.

Question 12

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	25	16	44	4	11	**1.6**

Any two of

- evaluate and reflect on what the team needs and wants to achieve
- analyse information about current or potential team members' work in the context of developing a more innovative team

- bring people into the team, or make suggestions for team members, based on what needs to be achieved and the potential for cross-fertilising ideas
- acknowledge, respect and discuss the different ways that different people may contribute to building or enhancing the team
- give members a chance to present ideas
- provide time and resources for the team
- organise meetings to discuss, etc.

Two marks were available for the explanation and a further two marks for examples to support the explanation.. Students are reminded that they should use business terms.

Question 13

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	28	50	22	1.0

Any two of
- jointly establish ground rules for how the team will operate
- agree on and communicate responsibilities in ways that encourage and reinforce team-based innovation
- agree on and share tasks and activities to ensure the best use of skills and abilities within the team
- conduct team meetings
- use a rewards system.

The focus of the question was on ways to work innovatively; the question did not require a description of what constitutes a team.

Question 14

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	22	38	29	7	4	1.3

They can
- model behaviour that supports innovation
- seek external ideas to feed into team activities
- proactively share information, knowledge and experiences with other team members
- challenge and test ideas within the team in a positive and collaborative way
- proactively discuss and explore ideas with other team members on an ongoing basis
- be willing to act as a mentor
- undertake group training to learn how to be more innovative
- hold regular meetings
- use supportive communication (such as listening).

Students' focus was on teamwork, rather than innovation.

Question 15

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	26	32	31	8	4	1.3

A team can
- debrief and reflect on activities and on opportunities for improvement and innovation
- gather and use feedback from within and outside the team to generate discussion and debate
- discuss the challenges of being innovative in a constructive and open way
- take ideas for improvement, build them into future activities and communicate key issues to relevant colleagues
- identify, promote and celebrate successes and examples of successful innovation.

Many students did not answer in terms of a team reflecting on working innovatively together. Rather, responses often focused on assessing individual performance.

Responses to Questions 12 to 15 were often used repeatedly as answers to more than one question. In particular, Questions 13 and 14 received responses such as 'ground rules', 'no bullying', 'discrimination', 'team members not criticised or put down', which had no relationship to the questions asked.

Many students referred to working in groups and their responses revolved around teamwork and group cohesion. This suggested that students were unaware of the meaning of the term 'innovation' and ways in which it can be fostered within workplaces.

Question 16

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	19	6	75	**1.6**

- hard copy: printed version of the document
- soft copy: electronic version of the document

The majority of students were able to describe the difference between the terms.

Question 17a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	22	2	29	33	15	**2.2**

Error	Correction
move	more
not	now

17b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	8	0	14	1	76	**3.4**

Error	Correction
traditionel	traditional
dificult	difficult

Most students were able to explain which errors would and would not be picked up by a spell check. However, some responses indicated that students had not read the question properly. Students were asked to identify errors that could be corrected using a spell check. The question did not ask students to edit or reword the passage.

Question 18

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	12	27	62	**1.5**

Backing up data: a storing process; archiving; zipping work to have another copy; compressing; archiving or secondary storage; separate to the main storage area

Copying data: making another copy of the work on USB, hard drive, CD, portable hard drive, iPad etc.; copy and paste function within a document or to another document

Many students correctly explained the differences. Some students were able to answer 'copying data' but forgot to state 'on another storage device' or 'in a different location'.

Question 19

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	26	28	47	**1.2**

Any of

- use the widow/orphan feature
- create a non-breaking space using Ctrl+Shift+Spacebar
- move all of last paragraph to page 2
- press Ctrl + Enter before the last paragraph

- move at least two lines of the last paragraph to page 2
- press Ctrl + Enter before the second last line in the last paragraph
- use a smaller font
- use narrower margins (in page layout)
- adjust the margins.

Most students appeared to know the feature that should be used but many had difficulty expressing themselves in their answers.

Question 20

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	94	2	4	0	0.1

- left-aligned
- only essential punctuation is used within the body of the letter (full stops)
- there is no punctuation in the date, inside name and address, salutation or complimentary close.

This question was poorly answered. The question specifically asked for features, not parts, of a business letter.

Question 21

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	14	37	35	12	2	1.5

Section of a one-page business letter	Number of 'enters'
from the date to the inside name and address	3–5
from the inside name and address to the salutation	2
from the inside name and address to the body of the letter containing two paragraphs	2
from the body of the letter to the complimentary closure	2

This question was poorly answered. Business letters are still an integral form of communication within the business world, and effective layout is covered in the Unit of Competency (Refer to the Elements 1 and 2), Performance Criteria (1.2 and 2.2), and Required Skills and Knowledge section of the Unit of Competency.

Turning on the paragraph mark (¶) will show the number of 'enters' used within specific parts of a business letter and helps when ensuring balance in the layout of business documents.