

Business Studies

2010 ASSESSMENT REPORT

Society and Environment Learning Area



Government
of South Australia

SACE
Board of SA

BUSINESS STUDIES

2010 ASSESSMENT REPORT

GENERAL COMMENTS

Student enrolments were similar to last year, with 2700 students enrolled from South Australia and the Northern Territory.

On the whole, work remained at a consistent standard, with evidence that most teachers referred to the curriculum statement and learning area manual for clarification, particularly for assessment requirements and processes.

ASSESSMENT COMPONENT 1: FOLIO

It is pleasing that most teachers provided the correct sample, as prescribed in the learning area manual, as well as their results spreadsheet. The general quality of student work was good, but again many of the students who were awarded outstanding marks by their teacher had clearly breached the word-limit. Greater vigilance by teachers is required to ensure equity for all students.

Unfortunately, there was an overall increase in work that had been generously marked across all criteria, but particularly for understanding and application, and evaluation. It is imperative that marks be allocated where analysis of the information has occurred, rather than for a simple recall of factual information. In addition, tasks under supervision should contain a range of short-answer, stimulus-response, and/or extended-writing tasks. While two tasks from the core topics were compulsory, only one was required for each option topic. Some teachers included two tasks per option topic, resulting in less depth and therefore less opportunity for students to achieve at the highest levels. Of the option topics, 'Business and the Global Environment' and 'Business and Marketing' were popular.

A noticeable improvement was evident in the performance of oral presentations. Teachers requested supporting documentation from students to validate the marking standards and this was very pleasing.

ASSESSMENT COMPONENT 2: INVESTIGATIVE STUDY

Most students chose to produce a situational analysis, but the number of feasibility studies did increase this year to about 15% of the student cohort. Generally, the feasibility studies were still not as well executed as the situation analyses, but markers commented that there had been some improvement in the quality of these reports.

A significant number of reports contained only one form of direct contact, and this was not always the person who owned the business or at least had managing control of it. Students often talked about 'surveys', but meant 'interviews'. Where a face-to-face interview is not possible, it is advisable that the student finds an opportunity to talk to the person over the phone at some point during the study. Many reports showed evidence of surveys with customers, suppliers, employees, councils, real estate agents, and competitors. Where these students used the surveys to good effect within the report and referenced them well, outstanding reports eventuated. Unfortunately, surveys were often conducted, but were not well constructed or were not used efficiently to back up findings or analysis. It is important to

show evidence of the direct contact in the report, not just to list it in the bibliography or appendixes. Summary sheets for surveys should be provided to indicate how many people were included in the survey.

Many students' reports contained a restating of the facts with no attempt to critically appraise information gained or to carry out further research to find out if these answers were applicable within the business sector being studied. There were some successful reports that did do appropriate appraisal or research by contacting other similar businesses, checking industry statistics, sourcing current economic conditions and data, and showing evidence of originality and creativity.

A number of students incorrectly claimed that globalisation had no impact on the business they were investigating as it was not exporting or importing. Some students recognised the importance to the Australian economy (and thus to small business) of the global recession, the high value of the Australian dollar, and resources and mining activity, and included this perspective in their report by indicating the impact on business activity over the past two years.

Diagrams were often very well constructed. However, some students are still including diagrams that have little relevance or significance, while others included so many diagrams that they are distracting and do not contribute positively to the report. Many students are using tables well, but approximately 20% included too many words in their tables. Where time-line diagrams are being used, more students are now making them relevant to the particular business by including the relevant dates and business activity for the specific business, and not just including a textbook time-line.

There were some excellent studies which had insightful answers and referenced well-designed surveys that gave good information for analysis and evaluation. The students who prepared these studies did not simply state what products or services were provided, but explored the relative importance of each to the business' income; they did not merely provide statistics for full-time, part-time, and casual hours of employees, but explained how this compared to the industry average. Surveys can be used to back up owner's comments. For example, if the owner says that the Yellow Pages are the most significant form of advertising, ask in the customer survey: 'How did you find out about the business?' Students are advised that when providing a SWOT table, it is not necessary to then comment on each aspect of it; rather, the recommendations and conclusion should explain and highlight the main focus for the business going forward.

Many students presented highly successful reports for this component. Students are reminded to ensure that the headings used in the body are chosen for their relevance to the business being studied. Students are advised to include direct contact details in the bibliography and to correctly reference throughout the report. Teachers are advised not to remove appendixes where these are referred to by the student. Any references to the student, teacher, or school need to be removed prior to submission. Students are reminded to proofread their work.

ASSESSMENT COMPONENT 3: CURRENT ISSUES STUDY

This assessment component only applied to the 1-unit subject and, as only two students were enrolled, generalised comments are not possible.

Chief Assessor
Business Studies