

Industry and Enterprise Studies GA 3: Written examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

This examination followed the same format as previous papers and was worth 50 marks. Students were required to answer six questions. Questions 1 to 5 formed part of Section A and students were required to answer all questions in this section. For the first time this year Section A contained 5 questions; however, the total marks available for Section A remained at 40 marks. Section B provided three questions from which students had to select one question. The structure of the paper was as follows:

Question	Type	Area of Study/Content	Marks
Section A	Short answer	Technology	8
1	Short answer	Pressures and responses associated with government policy	8
3	Short answer	Enterprise and workplace flexibility	12
4	Short answer	Training and workplace learning	6
5	Short answer	Quality	6
Section B	Choice of three questions – Extended response		10
1		Training and workplace learning	10
2		Quality	10
3		Enterprise culture	10

Choice of options

In Section B, there was a choice of three questions covering different topics. Questions 1 and 2 were more popular than Question 3. Students' choice was often determined by their experience in the workplace. Each question in Section B provided excellent scope for students to draw on and use examples from their work placement and this was evident in many responses.

Areas of strength and weakness

Students generally performed better on questions where they were able to provide relevant workplace or industry examples. Students with a good understanding of current events also performed well. For example, those who were up-to-date with recent government policy changes were able to answer Question 2 with confidence. Students who did well overall were obviously well prepared and were able to draw on a range of examples or industries.

Formula answers

The examination requires students to draw on their own experience from the workplace as well as knowledge about the broader Australian industry. Teachers should introduce students to as many case studies and examples as possible, and they in turn should continue to familiarise themselves with current events relating to workplace and industry issues and be prepared to use these in the examination where relevant.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section A

Question	Marks	%	Response
Question 1	a		Students had to provide an accurate definition of the term 'technology'.
	0/1	16	Sample answer
	1/1	84	Technology covers a variety of knowledge and skills applications. It is the use of tools and processes to complete tasks more effectively and/or efficiently.
	(Average mark 0.84)		
	b		Students had to give an example of the application of technology in the workplace or in an industry.
	0/2	7	Sample answer
	1/2	23	Technology has had a significant impact on the automotive industry. At the mechanics, where I completed my work placement, they now have a diagnostic computer that electronically assesses the tuning of engines in any motor vehicle. The computer was very expensive and the owner had to take out a loan to purchase it, however he saves money because he is able to assess problems much more quickly than in the past. At first, some of the workers did not like the change especially when they had to complete additional training to use it. Now they are very happy because they feel that the machine allows them to deliver better quality work to
	2/2	70	
	(Average mark 1.62)		

		consumers.
	ci–ii 0/5 2 1/5 3 2/5 10 3/5 27 4/5 25 5/5 33 (Average mark 3.68)	Students were required to name an industry or workplace and discuss how the introduction of technology has impacted on work processes and employees in that workplace or industry (1 mark for naming the workplace or industry; 2 marks for the discussion related to work processes and 2 marks for the discussion related to employees). Students had to separate out the differences between the impact of technology on work processes and the impact on employees, with responses that clearly identified how technology had impacted on work processes and on employees. Sample answer 1ci. In my workplace in an office I was able to clearly see the wide variety of changes that information technology had caused in the workplace. The information flow is now much more efficient. The manager is able to get very detailed data much more quickly. Stock control is much quicker as they do not have to do manual counts any more. The whole accounting process has been transformed. Not only can the documents be produced instantly but it is much easier to track clients and their payment details. Electronic banking means that time is saved as we can complete a variety of transactions online. The manager says that without IT the GST would have been a nightmare. When dealing with clients out of the office the fax machine and email allow instant movement of files including visual data. This is also time and cost saving. 1cii. Technology has positive and negative impacts for workers. We all have to be lifelong learners now and not expect that when we get a job we can keep on doing it for the rest of our lives. We need to have a different attitude towards work to be competent in a number of areas and to have enterprise skills. Some workers do not like having to retrain all the time especially when it is in their time. However, in my workplace workers did like the fact that much of the tedious work had gone. They found their work more challenging and satisfying.
Question 2	a 0/2 16 1/2 18 2/2 67 (Average mark 1.5)	Students had to name a current government policy that has impacted on industry and describe one key feature of the named policy (1 mark for naming a specific policy or a fundamental feature of a policy; 1 mark for the description of a key feature of the policy). Sample answer The deregulation of shopping hours by the Kennett government. This has meant that supermarkets can trade for 24 hours per day.
	b 0/2 20 1/2 18 2/2 62 (Average mark 1.42)	An Australian industry affected by the policy identified in Question 2a had to be named. Responses then had to describe the impact or pressure that the policy has had on the industry (1 mark for naming the industry; 1 mark for describing the impact or pressure from the policy). Sample answer The retail industry. This has meant that retail outlets have had to increase their hours of operation to remain competitive.
	c 0/4 42 1/4 12 2/4 23 3/4 7 4/4 17 (Average mark 1.44)	Students had to discuss in detail two responses from the industry identified in Question 2b to the policy as previously identified. Sample answer The retail industry has responded by introducing workplace flexibility through: • casualisation of the workforce • introducing more part-time work • introducing flexitime • decreasing full-time employment. Two of these points needed to be discussed in detail for full marks.

Question 3	a 0/2 28 1/2 23 2/2 49 (Average mark 1.2)	Students had to name two enterprising characteristics of an enterprising worker (1 mark for each enterprising characteristic named using a specific name or tag). Sample answer Adaptability – being able to cope with change Teamwork – being a team player Others could include versatile, motivated or other enterprise skills.
	b 0/4 28 1/4 11 2/4 28 3/4 10 4/4 23 (Average mark 1.9)	This question involved the description of two examples of flexible work practices used in Australian workplaces (2 marks for each description; no marks if a student only named flexible work practices without any description). Sample answer Flexitime – allows employees to vary their hours of work, as long as they complete a minimum number of hours per week. Telecommuting – allows employees to use technology to work from home and still be in contact with the office.
	c 0/6 14 1/6 9 2/6 20 3/6 20 4/6 17 5/6 7 6/6 13 (Average mark 2.91)	Students had to discuss three advantages of workplace flexibility for employees, using examples to support their discussion (2 marks for each advantage with 1 mark for the discussion and 1 mark for the example). Sample answer Advantages of workplace flexibility for employees include: • greater job satisfaction for employees • increased morale in the workplace • the workplace becomes more family friendly. Each advantage needed to be linked to examples for full marks.
Question 4	a 0/2 46 1/2 15 2/2 39 (Average mark 0.93)	Students were required to name an industry training board or Registered Training Organisation (RTO) (2 marks for correctly identifying a specific industry training board or RTO. Responses that mentioned TAFE were only awarded 1 mark, but if a specific TAFE was named the answer was awarded 2 marks). Sample answer Electrical and Electronic, Printing and Information Technology Industry Training Board.
	b 0/4 42 1/4 28 2/4 18 3/4 8 4/4 4 (Average mark 1.02)	Students had to explain the functions of industry training boards. Responses had to explain four functions (or two functions in more detail). Sample answer The functions of an industry training board are: • to collect up-to-date information from industries about training needs • to provide advice to government about training needs for industry • to oversee training provided by training organisations in their industries • to offer advice and guidance to training organisations on industry changes.
Question 5	a 0/3 6 1/3 19 2/3 35 3/3 40 (Average mark 2.09)	The scenario outlined how a boss had just heard that a major competitor had introduced a quality process into his business. Responses should have outlined three reasons why their boss should also introduce a quality process (1 mark for each correct reason). Sample answer Reasons given would be ‘in effect’ a list (with some comments) of the benefits of introducing quality systems and processes: • to maintain a competitive edge and maintain market position • to keep a ‘lid’ on costs • to become more efficient • to eliminate waste.

	b 0/3 15 1/3 31 2/3 33 3/3 21 (Average mark 1.59)	Students had to give three reasons why employees should have an external, customer-focused approach in the workplace (1 mark for each correct reason). Sample answer Some reasons why employees should have an external customer-focus include: • employees are at the front line of the business so therefore they need to 'own' it rather than being 'told' to do it • they will understand it better and thus there will have fewer hiccups in implementation • it will happen more quickly and more effectively than if it was introduced 'over the top' of them • improved quality and service through customer focus.
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Section B

In this section students were required to answer one of three questions.

Question 1 – Training and workplace learning

a.

Name and describe three common types of training or workplace learning used in Australian workplaces.

Sample answer

Occupational Health and Safety training

Occupational Health and Safety training is vital to assist employees to perform their work safely. This means that employers must arrange training which covers health and safety issues related to the tasks being performed, as well as training in the overall approach to health and safety taken by the organisation. Every employer, whether their business is big or small, whether it is based at one location or many, has a legal obligation to ensure that the working environment is safe and without risks to health. This not only includes workers, but also customers, visitors and the public.

Sample answer

Competency based training

Competency based training has become an integral part of workplace training in Australia. This type of training has been embraced by most industries and Industry Training Boards have been instrumental in its design, development and implementation. In a competency-based system, an explicit basis is expected where the measurable standards of performance are outcomes based and reflect the actual expectations of performance.

Sample answer

Self-paced learning

Self-paced learning provides trainees with the opportunity to work through a program at their own pace. Self-paced learning programs are often computer based, where the trainee works through a particular module at their own pace. Not all self-paced learning programs are competency-based. There are numerous examples of courses which provide broad aims in place of clearly specified competencies, and reading lists for trainees to work through at their own pace in order to satisfy assessment requirements which are norm-referenced instead of criterion-referenced.

b.

Explain by giving two reasons, why highly skilled and trained workers are vital for Australia's future international competitiveness.

Sample answer

Highly skilled and trained workers are vital for Australia's future international competitiveness. Without highly skilled and trained workers Australian business will not be able to compete internationally. Through developing skilled employees, business can increase productivity and as a result Australian produced goods and services become cheaper on a global scale. Increased skill is not only important for employees, but also for management. The Karpin Report, 1995, identified skills required by management to develop Australia's future international competitiveness. The report also placed a great emphasis on the need to develop a widespread enterprise culture in Australian business.

Question 2 – Quality

a.

Describe a quality process that you are familiar with. Explain three advantages of using this process.

Sample Answer

Total Quality Management (TQM) is a process that I am familiar with. It was first used on a large scale in Japan in after World War II and today is used around the world. Its most basic feature is an emphasis on continuous improvement in all areas. This includes processes, products and service. The aim is to eliminate error at every level in the workplace. A basic feature of the approach is the use of quality circles where teams of workers use a standard response to decision making. This involves a circle where they Plan, Do, Check and Act. The aim is that the process will be automatic so that they continually monitor and improve all aspects of their work.

Three advantages of the approach are:

1. It provides a framework for decision-making, which is common to all works and allows for increased predictability and consistency.
2. It uses teams as a fundamental feature. Teams are an important part of today's organisations and not only facilitate synergy but help motivate workers. Workplaces using quality circles tend to treat all workers more fairly.
3. It results in improved quality from inputs, through processing to outputs.

b.

Explain two ways employees can improve internal quality in the workplace.

Sample answer

Employees have a very important role in improving quality. If a quality approach is used the individual worker will be encouraged to accept responsibility for their work and their decisions. This will sometimes involve additional training and may be linked to pay and conditions. At Arnott's biscuits they work as part of quality teams to improve productivity and to offer input to work processes. This means that they have regular meetings where they are asked for their opinion and observations. Management has adopted a more consultative style and frontline workers know that their observations are valued. This has led to cost saving for the firm and has been the springboard to further action.

Question 3 – Enterprise culture

a.

You have just had extended leave from your job and on your return to work your employer claimed that the workplace has now embraced an 'enterprise culture'. Name and explain three pieces of evidence you would look for to check the accuracy of her statement.

Sample answer

Enhanced enterprise culture:

- much more evidence of teamwork and cooperative/collaborative work-practices
- a mechanism has been established whereby employees, as stakeholders, have an opportunity to contribute to future directions of the company
- management has set in place a constructive process whereby employees can contribute ideas to management about the workplace and about the opportunities for growth of the business (i.e. all strategic knowledge does not rest with management)
- management has set in place a mechanism whereby employees can share in profits resulting from increased productivity and new initiatives
- management has set in place a program of professional development for the employees that enables them to increase their skill levels
- in recruiting new personnel, management has focused on people who have enterprising skills as a priority, i.e. not just the right training or specific job expertise.

b.

Explain two techniques that you could use to evaluate the successful application by individual employees of enterprise in the workplace.

Sample answer

These evaluative techniques would either be internal or external. You either bring a person or team into the business to conduct the evaluation or you do it 'in-house'.

Techniques:

1. **Survey questionnaire:** employees and managers etc. are asked to complete a set of questions that focus on testing whether the application of enterprise has been successful. Questions could be closed (yes/no response) or open (longer response required).
2. **Focus groups:** employees and managers etc meet with a member of the research team and 'brainstorm' the way enterprise has been introduced and its success.
3. **Individual questioning:** the most intensive and most expensive way would be for the evaluator to do one-on-one questioning of staff. It would realise good information but would be time consuming and expensive.