



2009 Industry and Enterprise Studies GA 3: Written examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

The 2009 Industry and Enterprise examination showed that, in general, students were well prepared and wrote informatively, combining theory with comments on case studies and work placement. It was clear that the majority of students had consulted past Assessment Reports and past examination papers and had used these to inform their study and improve their performance in the examination.

Exemplary examination performance is the result of a combination of factors: consistent work both in and out of class; learning content as it is covered; participation in, and discussion of, structured work placement; an awareness of current issues and their relationship to specific areas of the course; regular practising of written responses and careful consideration of teacher feedback on these answers; and an emphasis on the development of examination skills such as time management and response to action words.

The use of subject-specific language is vital in Industry and Enterprise. As there is no set 'list' of required terminology students are strongly advised to develop their own glossaries during the year. Words and phrases can be located in texts and from various media sources. In particular, students should be able to define, describe the role of and give examples of key concepts, including 'industry', 'enterprise', 'innovation', 'technology', 'globalisation', 'quality', 'work practices' and 'sustainability'. They should seek every opportunity to use subject-specific language in their writing. In addition, where specific terms are central to an examination question (for example, 'enterprise culture' in Section A, Question 5c., and 'competency-based training' in Section B, Question 3a.), students' understanding of their meaning should be explicitly demonstrated.

Questions in this examination frequently require students to refer to an industry or workplace with which they are familiar. During the year, students should build up a range of examples and practise applying them to course work. In the examination, students are advised to think very carefully about the suitability of any example and ensure they make the most relevant choice.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Note: Student responses reproduced herein have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual information.

For each question, an outline answer (or answers) is provided. In some cases the answer given is not the only answer that could have been awarded marks.

Section A

Question 1a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	6	22	37	13	23	2.3

Students were asked to define and give an example of two commonly used terms. This format is used frequently in examinations for this subject. It was disappointing that a significant number of students did not provide an example and therefore did not gain half of the available marks for the question. If students are unfamiliar with terms they are advised to use the literal meaning of the word(s); marks are not deducted for incorrect responses.

Question 1b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	36	16	20	15	14	1.6

Competent responses to this question began with a comprehensive definition of 'research and development' and used this to develop a response which illustrated its pivotal role. Many students did not communicate a clear and detailed understanding of the term. Some students did not select a workplace or industry which enabled them to make relevant comments expanding their response.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Research and development is a set of activities that involve capital investment into creating and/or improving processes and products. R&D relates to innovation and is an important part of innovation. In the manufacturing industry firms routinely invest a lot of money into R&D to develop new products and productive processes to meet the needs of consumer, to supply better

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quality goods and/or cheaper goods. Successful firms tend to have spend a fixed proportion of their profit on research and development.

Question 2

As has been the case in recent years, students generally performed well on the stimulus material question, which this year took the form of a media article and accompanying questions. Students' comprehension was at a higher level and many skilfully applied their knowledge to the set questions. Very good responses made excellent use of specific content, statistics and quotes.

Question 2a.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	17	43	40	1.3

Students were required to make observations about the trend in the industry. Better answers incorporated evidence, such as statistics, in the responses. While the majority of students confined their responses to information contained in the article, it was acceptable to use other knowledge.

Question 2b.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	12	45	43	1.3

Many students identified globalisation as the main factor leading to the change in employment in the industry. These students were able to unpack the term and apply it to the clothing, textile and footwear industry. Their answers demonstrated the ability to link the article to a significant area of the course. Other students who wrote about 'shifting production offshore' were also able to craft acceptable responses.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

The globalisation of the industry and the removal of protection, like tariffs on imported good, have reduced the ability of Australian made goods to compete on price. Many firms have gone out of business as sales have been reduced so much that they were not able to generate a profit. Others, like Pacific Brands, have moved off shore where labour and production costs are much cheaper. This has reduced employment in clothing by two thirds since 1996.

Question 2c.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	29	36	35	1.1

Better responses to this question demonstrated an understanding of the fundamental role of the union to protect and promote workers' rights. Marks were awarded for an outline of any logical role that unions could play in representing workers. Among the suggestions made were: providing legal advice, lobbying government, attracting media attention and providing advice and financial assistance to individual workers. Students were required to outline one role only, so no marks were given for additional roles.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

A key to the role of the union is to support workers by pressuring government to take action to assist workers. To achieve this they take action to attract media attention. They would do this to ensure that the government holds up on the promise of retraining all workers who were retrenched and to show the workers that there are strong reasons to be in a union.

Question 2d.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	60	21	19	0.6

Students needed to read this question very carefully. They were required to discuss the role of government in promoting change in the industry, not in supporting workers who were retrenched. Answers which discussed the latter did not gain any marks. Again, students who had an understanding of globalisation and an awareness of contemporary issues wrote high quality responses.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

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The government has attempted to implement positive change in the industry through a series of programs promoting innovation. In some cases it has provided direct financial support to firms. At a more general level the government creates an economic climate which encourages firms to establish and maintain business in Australia.

Question 3a.

Marks	0	1	Average
%	18	82	0.8

Many students provided a strong definition of innovation. As the question was worth one mark, there was no benefit in providing too much detail.

The following is an example of a good response.

Innovation is the creation of new ideas or the better use of existing ideas and products. It also refers to the process of introducing a significantly improved good or service as well as a significantly improved operations process.

Question 3b.

Marks	0	1	Average
%	24	76	0.8

The majority of students identified that there were strong links between innovation and the ability of the economy to be globally competitive. Again, the question was worth one mark so elaboration was not required and could not be rewarded.

The following is an example of a good response.

The government promotes innovation is a driver of productivity and economic growth which will make our economy stronger and more competitive.

Question 3c.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	49	18	33	0.9

A number of students struggled with this question, with many failing to select an example of innovative change focused on either work practices or processes. It appeared that many students still did not have an understanding of these terms.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

One example of an innovative change in work practices or processes is the introduction of self service registers. This innovation allows consumers to complete transactions without a sales assistant. They can by pass queues and scan and package their own items. It has changed work duties for many staff in retail stores like BigW and Woolworths, where some staff have moved from registers to help customers and others now package goods.

Question 3d.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	37	35	28	0.9

Although the wording was straightforward, this was a relatively difficult question and required students to isolate and justify why the change identified in Question 3c. was innovative. The key was to refer to the definition by identifying the new or changed idea or process.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

I believe that this change is innovative as it has adapted an existing process – in this case the process used at point of sale in modern stores and has significantly modified it in response to the need to operate efficiently. The innovation also responds to some customer complaints about the length of time spent in queues.

Question 3e.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	40	33	26	0.9

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While some students found this question difficult, it did provide capable students with the opportunity to link two important areas. If students find that they are unsure of how to answer a question, a logical starting point is to define key terms.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Innovation assists quality improvement by creating better ideas and processes which often lead to an improvement in the quality of the finished good. Innovative ideas, like the self service cash register, assist quality by improving management of resources and maintaining a focus on an awareness of quality considerations.

Question 4a.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	32	38	30	1

If students accurately defined the terms 'multiskilling' and 'flexible work practices' they were given one mark. The second mark was awarded for an explicit statement of the difference between the concepts. Many students did not attempt the second part and limited themselves to a definition of each term.

Question 4b.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	30	34	36	1.1

This question required students to demonstrate that they understood how the application of workplace flexibility could improve competitiveness. Many students used examples from case studies or their work placement.

Question 4c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	13	14	30	15	28	2.3

This broad question required students to outline how employees and/or workplaces benefited from improved employability skills. Many students isolated specific employability skills and developed responses around these.

The following is a good example of one possible benefit.

Employees may be more employable if they improve their grasp of the range of employability skills. When applying for a position employability skills mean that in addition to having the industry specific skills required the applicant will have the generic skills, like communication skills and empathy, to assist them to complete the job description at a high level.

Question 5a.

Marks	0	1	Average
%	7	93	0.9

The key to this question was to identify a benefit of occupational health and safety training from an employer's perspective rather than an employee's. Students who were aware of this wrote appropriate answers.

The following is an example of a good response.

A benefit for employers is that an improvement in training should lead to a reduction in work place accidents which will not only mean that time will not be lost. Insurance premiums should also be lower.

Question 5b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	3	1	6	14	22	54	4.1

Once again students made excellent use of the table to address all required areas. Students should note that in this context the term 'cost' is not limited to financial cost. Teachers may find it beneficial to use graphic organisers, for example a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) or fishbone chart, to explore all sides of an area.

Question 5c.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	57	24	19	0.6



Responses covered a variety of contributions that training can make to the development and maintenance of an enterprise culture. This included communication and interpersonal skills, Maslow's hierarchy of needs and enhanced team work. Better answers made clear and specific references to enterprise culture.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Improved training facilitates the development of an enterprise culture as employees will be better able to manage risk, solve problems and communicate effectively. Training will make them more confident and so they will contribute consistently and at a higher level. Thus more ideas will be generated. The more widespread the training the greater the benefit for the workplace culture.

Section B

There were a number of very brief answers in this section. Students are reminded that Section B is worth 10 marks. This means that, in general, approximately 10 points should be made in the responses, and many of these should be developed. Students are encouraged to incorporate comments on their work placement and to use relevant terminology. They should consider using the reading time to select the option that best suits their knowledge base and examples. Time management skills are also important and students must ensure that enough time is left to complete this section.

Question chosen	None	1	2	3
%	3	26	39	32

a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	18	15	26	16	25	2.2

b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	21	9	15	16	11	9	19	2.9

Question 1a.

An understanding of the meaning and role of e-commerce was required to answer this question. Students and teachers should note that e-commerce is more specific than using technology at some stage in a transaction; rather, it is a business or commercial transaction occurring over an open network like the Internet. It can be either business to business or business to consumer.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Electronic commerce refers to buying and selling goods and service over the internet. This can be between the business and a final consumer (B2C) and between two businesses (B2B). It includes related activities like the transmission of documents and orders. I completed my work placement at St Hubert's Wool Product in regional Victoria. They specialise in the production and sale of naturally dyed knitting yarn over the internet. The idea for the venture was to capture a niche market created by the increase in demand for hand knitted jumpers. The owners found it very difficult to secure a retail outlet to stock products so decided to sell direct to consumers over the internet. In order to operate their business they purchased a powerful computer and required soft and hardware and the fastest broadband connection possible. The role of e commerce in this firm is to allow potential customers to access the website, see the range of products and then place orders. Payment is made by direct transfer of funds when the order is placed. The other main role of e commerce is to order dyes from suppliers and to make all payments. Given the remote location of the firm it would not be able to exist without e commerce.

Question 1b.

Most students worked sequentially to identify individual stakeholders and analyse the impact of e-commerce on each of them. There was no restriction on whether the impacts had to be positive or negative. Two marks were allocated for each stakeholder. Examples were required in order to be awarded full marks.

Question 2a.

This question produced some excellent responses. Students identified and wrote about a wide range of events, including the global financial crisis, drought, bushfires or floods, and government stimulus packages. The direct impact of the event on the industry needed to be discussed.



Question 2b.

Although answers were, in part, dependent on the choice of event, there were a number of common elements that could have been discussed. Challenges included improving efficiency in production and resource use, changing work practices, and an increased need for competitiveness. Opportunities could have included introducing new technology, location of new markets and innovation in work practices. Students needed to recognise that each event created both opportunities and challenges and that it was up to the industry and its firms to develop a response. The emphasis in the marking was on the analysis of the challenges and/or opportunities mentioned, and the precision and detail with which they were analysed.

Question 3a.

Although a definition of competency-based training (CBT) was not required, students needed to demonstrate a clear understanding of the concept. It was disappointing that a number of students wrote about key competencies. The core aspect of CBT is the ability to demonstrate a skill or process to a set standard. High quality answers needed to outline the role of CBT in a particular workplace.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

The role of competency-based training is to provide knowledge and training that requires the trainee to demonstrate their ability to complete a task to a specified standard. This very practical type of training was used at my workplace Jill's Chemist as the employer felt that it was the most efficient way to train workers. The role of the training was to ensure that all workers could complete all tasks associated with their jobs without supervision. As much of the training takes place in the workplace the employer is able to modify the training to suit the firm. This guarantees a quality service to customers which in this workplace is important from a safety perspective.

Question 3b.

This is a common type of question and so it was not surprising that students generally wrote accurately for the format. Students needed to provide comments on a range of impacts for both nominated groups and had to ensure that they provided enough detail for a six-mark question. Better answers, in general, made strong use of relevant examples which were directly related to the question.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response which follows on from the one above.

Another positive impact of using CBT in my workplace was that employees had evidence to demonstrate their grasp of key aspects of their job. This assists them to seek promotion in that workplace or to apply for more complex positions elsewhere. Therefore not only will they be more confident in themselves but they will be more employable at a higher pay rate.