



Course Report 2015

Subject	Business Management
Level	National 5

The statistics used in this report have been compiled before the completion of any Post Results Services.

This report provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers, lecturers and assessors in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding. It would be helpful to read this report in conjunction with the published assessment and marking instructions for the examination.

Section 1: Comments on the Assessment

Component 1: Question paper

The number of presentations rose from the previous session.

The question paper covered a good breadth of Course content. Section 1 required the candidates to apply their knowledge of the Course to the stimulus material provided, which was handled well.

The paper was accessible for candidates, and there was an expected spread of attainment from the range of ability presented.

Very few candidates failed to finish the paper, but some omitted questions or provided very brief answers. Markers reported that candidates generally handled the paper well, writing detailed answers in many cases.

Component 2: Assignment

Overall performance in the Assignment was high in this second year of presentation, with the vast majority of candidates satisfying standards to an expected or higher-than-expected standard.

Most reports were structured using the headings in the guidelines, but many candidates produced work that was too lengthy.

Most candidates achieved high marks in background and collating and reporting; hence an adjustment was made to Grade Boundaries, reflecting the ease with which the majority of candidates accessed these marks.

Section 2: Comments on candidate performance

Component 1: Question paper

Most candidates demonstrated good knowledge of the syllabus. Many candidates coped well with development in questions, leading to development marks being awarded.

There was good understanding and application of higher-order command words, eg 'explain'. However, there were instances where candidates' descriptions failed to give enough detail.

Component 2: Assignment

Markers commented that they felt the performance in this element was strong. The vast majority of Assignments were well-structured and followed guidelines closely, resulting in many good reports.

A few centres did submit reports that were too lengthy. There was evidence of candidates having submitted reports that were originally intended for Higher, with candidates having changed level.

Section 3: Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1: Question paper

- ◆ Question 1 (b) (i): This was very well answered, with most candidates receiving all the available marks.
- ◆ Question 1 (e) (i): Candidates demonstrated sound knowledge of technology used.
- ◆ Question 2 (e): Candidates demonstrated robust knowledge with many receiving development marks for the question, showing a good understanding of training.
- ◆ Question 3 (a): Candidates coped well with interpretation of the break-even chart, with most candidates receiving all the available marks.
- ◆ Question 3 (c): Candidates demonstrated robust knowledge of break-even terms.
- ◆ Question 5 (b): This was very well answered, with many candidates showing strong knowledge of environmentally-friendly actions that an organisation could take.
- ◆ Question 6 (b): The 'discuss' command word was well-handled with many candidates showing robust knowledge of desk research.

Component 2: Assignment

Markers commented on the quality of Assignments and said that candidates produced well-structured reports. The majority of candidates used the headings given in the marking guidelines.

Presentation was very good, with effective use of headings and graphics/diagrams to support findings. Most candidates were able to access all five marks for background, although many included excessive detail (much more than needed to gain the maximum award) in this section. This, in particular, contributed to over-long reports.

The majority of candidates stated the purpose of their reports, and there was more variety in both topics and businesses researched, this year.

There was good evidence of both field and desk research being used to support findings in the analysis and interpretation section.

Section 4: Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1: Question paper

- ◆ Question 1 (b): Sometimes candidates confused sectors of economy with sectors of industry. Although candidates would have picked up a consequential mark in 1 (b) (ii), it usually had a knock-on effect to Question 2 (a).

- ◆ Question 1 (c): Features of social enterprises caused candidates some difficulty. Some candidates were unable to describe any features of this type of business and responses showed poor knowledge of the topic.
- ◆ Question 2 (b): Candidates' knowledge of features of private limited companies was weak, with some merely identifying objectives of the private sector.
- ◆ Question 2 (a): Again, many candidates confused sectors of industry with sectors of economy.
- ◆ Question 2 (d) (i): A large number of candidates only identified the method of production and did not respond to the use of the command word 'describe'. Sometimes it was not clear if candidates were describing batch production or flow production. Poor descriptions were given for batch production, eg 'where items are made in batches'.
- ◆ Question 3 (b): Candidates showed good knowledge of break-even but they struggled to calculate the variable cost per unit.
- ◆ Question 4 (b): Candidates tended to know technology but failed to relate the use to recruiting and selecting staff. Many candidates did not relate their answer to specific technology.
- ◆ Question 5 (c) (i): Many candidates' answers identified methods of ensuring quality, eg quality assurance and not quality inputs.
- ◆ Question 6 (a) (ii): Many candidates only identified sales promotions, therefore no marks were awarded. The command word 'outline' requires candidates to give a brief description, not just identify.

Component 2: Assignment

In the research methods section, there were a large number of candidates who gave a list of generic, theoretical points which did not clarify how the research method was beneficial to their own Assignment, attracting few marks.

In the analysis and interpretation section, the majority of candidates could list what they had found out from their research, but there was little or no interpretation of their findings. Some candidates did not always base their findings/comments on evidence they had gathered. If a comment had no evidence, no mark was awarded for it. Some candidates also listed points that were unrelated to their research topic — leading to over-long reports.

Conclusions often lacked justifications or links to evidence or comments. Several submissions were longer than the four-page limit and contained large appendices that were irrelevant.

Section 5: Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Component 1: Question Paper

For Section 1, more practice in the use of stimulus material is needed, so that candidates are prepared for using material rather than giving theoretical points. This should include identifying factors from case studies in addition to being able to interpret the information for use in their answers.

In Section 2 candidates are required to have knowledge across the whole Course. This section allows candidates to show depth of knowledge, and development marks are available. In preparation for this, candidates need experience in writing well-developed answers and in applying command words effectively.

Centres should ensure that they keep abreast of any updates and changes made over the year to ensure they are aware of the current requirements. Updates can be found at www.sqa.org.uk/cfe (select Business Management from the drop down menu).

As electronic marking is used, it is good practice for typed scripts to be presented in size 12 font and double-line spacing.

Component 2: Assignment

Centres and candidates are encouraged to follow the **updated** guidelines on the SQA's website closely when preparing their Assignment, and to use the *Instructions to Candidate* as issued by SQA.

Candidates should only use the four main headings provided in the marking guidelines to structure their Assignment. In addition, it is important to stress that no marks will be awarded for analysis and interpretation which present no clear link to the topic area chosen.

When using charts and graphs it would be more beneficial if these included appropriate labels.

Candidates should not exceed four pages for their assignment, with a maximum of two pages for appendices. The Assignment should use a font size no smaller than 12 points, with 1.5 or double line spacing to enhance the clarity and legibility.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2014	5845
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Number of resulted entries in 2015	7602
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Statistical information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of Course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of Course awards	%	Cum. %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark - 100				
A	39.5%	39.5%	3005	76
B	27.5%	67.1%	2093	65
C	18.3%	85.3%	1390	55
D	5.3%	90.6%	400	50
No award	9.4%	-	714	-

For this Course, the intention was to set similar grade boundaries to the previous year. However, the assignment did not discriminate as well as intended and there appeared to be some unintended easing of the question paper. The grade boundaries were raised by 3 marks at C and 4 marks at A and upper A to reflect this.