

## **Principal Assessor Report 2003**

**Assessment Panel:**

**Management and Enterprise**

**Qualification area:**

**Subject(s) and Level(s)  
Included in this report**

**Business Management Standard Grade**

## Statistical information: update

<b>Number of entries in 2002</b>	4956
<b>Pre appeal</b>	

<b>Number of entries in 2003</b>	5070
<b>Pre appeal</b>	

### General comments re entry numbers

There has been a very slight rise in the number of candidates being presented.

## Grade boundaries at C, B and A for each subject area included in the report

Cut-off scores (Raw marks)

<b>Credit</b>	KU	DM
Total marks	38	35
Grade 1	27	23
Grade 2	21	17

### **General**

Total marks	29	29
Grade 3	17	18
Grade 4	13	14

### **Foundation**

Total marks	30	32
Grade 5	20	23
Grade 6	15	18

## Comments on grade boundaries for each subject area

At Credit level the cut-off scores reflect the level of challenge of the paper – candidates were able to demonstrate their knowledge and decision making across a wide spread of the areas of study. However, a number this year's candidates performed less well in decision making which led to a reduction in the number of grade 1s achieved.

At General level the cut-off scores reflect the level of challenge of the paper for candidates.

At Foundation level the cut-off scores reflect the nature of the paper which candidates appeared to find slightly more challenging than last year.

## Comments on candidate performance

### General comments

Candidate responses at all 3 levels were very good. On the whole candidates are well prepared for the examination. There is evidence, however, that this year's candidates at all 3 levels found the examination slightly more difficult.

The ability of candidates is not evenly spread over the 3 levels. There are more candidates being presented at General/Credit level than at Foundation/General level.

Candidates coped very well with the stimulus materials and had little difficulty with the reading involved. Some candidates responded from their own personal knowledge and beyond the scope of what was required at General and Credit level.

At General level there was a wide variation in the responses from candidates. Whilst many candidates gave good responses, there were many 'weak' responses and 'one word' answers. Answers must be more descriptive to gain marks.

At Credit level candidates were very well prepared. Responses were very good with good explanations, descriptions and justifications. Candidates often gave more information than was required for the question and were very articulate in their answers. However, there was a very clear distinction between candidates gaining a grade 1 and 2. Where vague or weak answers were given candidates sometimes just 'scraped' a grade 2 or achieved a grade 7.

### Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

#### Foundation

- Q1 – on David Beckham was well done with candidates responding with a wide range of creative answers.
- Q2 (a) – on organisation charts was well done by the majority of candidates.
- Q3 (a) – 'on-line shopping' was well done by almost all candidates.
- Q3 (d) – on ICT software packages was well done by the majority of candidates.
- Q4 (a) – candidates had little difficulty reading the correct answer from the graph.
- Q6 – on methods of distribution was well done by almost all candidates.
- Q8 (a) – on the advantages of being your own boss was well done by the majority of candidates.

## **General**

Q1 (a) – on the business plan was well done by the vast majority of candidates. This is possibly because of the links with the [Business@Work](#) CD.

Q1 (b), (c) and (d) – were also done by the majority of candidates.

Q3 – on finance was handled well by candidates because there were no actual calculations involved. However, there were some vague responses.

Q4 (b) and (c) – on organisation aims were well done by the majority of candidates.

Q4 (d) – on the hospital website gave rise to a wide variety of creative and imaginative answers from candidates and, as in previous years, candidates seemed to enjoy this type of question with which they could identify.

Q6 (b) – the vast majority of candidates were able to explain and identify a branded product.

## **Credit**

Q1 (b) – on location factors was well done by the majority of candidates.

Q1 (c) – on costs and benefits was very well done by almost all candidates.

Q1 (d) – on the global market was well done by the majority of candidates.

Q2 (a) and (c) – on Boots was well done by the majority of candidates although many candidates did not achieve the full 6 marks. See below.

Q3 (a) and (b) – on NEC were well done by a significant number of candidates.

Q4 (a) and (c) – on team working and staff motivation were well done by the majority of candidates.

Q5 (c) – on reasons for business failure was well done by a significant number of candidates.

Q6 (a) and (b) – on Microsoft were well done by the majority of candidates.

## Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

### Foundation

- Q1 (c) – not very well done. Varied responses indicating that many candidates did not understand the question.
- Q4 (d) – many candidates did not know the advantages of a partnership.
- Q7 (b) and (c) – many candidates did not know the objectives of a charity or how they get their funds.
- Q10 (a) – many candidates gave the advantages to Nadia not to Tariq.
- Q10 (b) – many candidates listed 'customers' and 'suppliers' as resources.

### General

- Q1 (a) – Too many one word answers. Answers need to be more descriptive to gain marks.
- Q2 (b) and (c) – Some candidates confused the benefits/problems to the company with benefits/problems for Joe.
- Q2 (d) – many candidates did not understand that 'promotion' in the question related to a higher level of job and not to promotion in terms of sales/marketing.
- Q3 (a) – many candidates did not understand that J Khan was a sole trader and therefore gave 'shareholders' as stakeholders.
- Q3 (c) – there were many 'vague' responses.
- Q3 (e) – many candidates were confused by 'methods of presentation' often suggesting spreadsheet or ratios. Poor justifications were also given.
- Q4 (a) – candidates seldom gave the correct response to who runs a public sector organisation.
- Q5 (b) – candidates often gave changes which were not related to the product and many reasons given were often weak.
- Q5 (c) and (d) – this was a significant area of weakness – very few candidates were able to name a correct channel of distribution and this gave them problems with the next part of the question.
- Q6 (d) and (e) – disappointingly many candidates did not know desk research methods and this gave them problems with the rest of the question.

## **Credit**

- Q1 (a) – candidates were confused between Sectors of Industry and Sectors of Economy. A significant number of candidates responded with the Private Sector instead of Tertiary (or Secondary).
- Q2 (a) – very few candidates gained 6 marks for this question mainly because they did not follow instructions in the stem ie to suggest, describe and justify. (See recommendation to centres for more information).
- Q2 (b) – very few candidates offered suggestions of market segments other than age/sex.
- Q3 (c) – very few candidates understood what a 'service role' actually was. However, many managed to answer the implications in the next question!
- Q3 (c) – many candidates misunderstood that the implications were for the staff who were remaining in Japan and not relocating to China.
- Q4 (b) – some candidates missed the point that descriptions of how ICT 'improved' communication was actually required. Also many explanations were vague.
- Q5 (d) – very few candidates were able to give reasons for industrial decline.
- Q6 (c) – on the decision making model was very badly done by a significant number of candidates. This was the one main area in the paper where candidates left a blank answer. A few candidates mixed up the model with the product life cycle.

## Recommendations

### Feedback to centres

Centres should continue to prepare candidates for the external assessment through the use of real or realistic examples as found in the 2003 papers. Candidates coped well with the reading and concepts at all 3 levels.

Centres should consider the use of both paper and electronic sources of stimulus materials. Where appropriate in the 2003 papers, sources have been acknowledged so that centres can access similar materials.

On the whole, candidates were well prepared for the examination. At general and credit levels, in particular, centres should continue to encourage candidates to answer in sentences and paragraphs with clear descriptions and explanations. 'One word' answers are not normally acceptable, especially in questions for more than 2 marks.

At credit level candidates sometimes faced difficulty with 6 mark questions and found it difficult to gain all 6 marks. Centres are advised that this type of question is often broken down into 'suggest', 'describe' and 'justify'. Candidates must respond to all 3 parts of the question stem to gain all 6 marks. Candidates should also be encouraged to improve on their 'justifications'. Candidates must also be able to distinguish clearly between a description and a justification.

Centres should continue to encourage candidates to answer in the context of the question. For example at foundation level the question on David Beckham produced a wide variety of creative answers which gained marks. At general level the question on the hospital website and the Dyson vacuum cleaner, again produced imaginative responses which were awarded marks. At credit level the question on Ikea and the X-box, again produced good answers which were relevant to the product and business being examined.

Centres are advised that the use of business vocabulary is to be encouraged at all 3 levels. Many candidates are still answering in very simple terms instead of using the correct vocabulary. In addition and where appropriate candidates are expected to have more knowledge than simply relying with internet. If candidates use 'internet' in their answers more clarification is required eg an advertisement for a job would be placed on a job recruitment site on the internet. (NB candidates are not expected to know specific URL addresses).

A small number of candidates were not presented at the correct level, most noticeably at credit level.