

Moderation Feedback - Central

Assessment Panel:

Business Education

Qualification area

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

**Business Management
Intermediate 1 and 2, Higher**

Moderation Group 254

Central Moderation

General comments on central moderation activity

The bulk of the moderation activity involved Business Enterprise (D 049) and Business Decision Areas (D 050) at Intermediate 2 and Higher (11 and 12). Forty centres were moderated for the Business Enterprise unit and 10 for Business Decision Areas. Four centres were moderated for Business Activities (D 047 10) at Intermediate 1 level.

Overall, the standard of work produced by candidates continues to be good. There was also a continuing improvement in the way in which candidates approached the questions. It was much more common, at Higher level for example, to see candidates provide supporting explanations for their answers. Also, centres are developing their approach to internal assessment. There was, for instance, much evidence that internal moderation, often in the form of cross marking, is becoming standard practice in many centres. It is very encouraging from a moderation perspective to see this kind of continuous improvement. It has been apparent at each successive central moderation event and there is thus every reason to assume that it will continue.

The central moderation event was particularly well-organised and ran very smoothly. The new arrangements were greatly appreciated by all members of the moderation team who felt that they helped to make them feel valued and to work more effectively. The number of Moderators was sufficient for the amount of work that had to be done.

Specific issues identified

These should be seen in the context of the continued improvement noted above. The main issues identified were:

- ◆ The greater use of internal moderation and good practice associated with it. Some centres have developed a separate report form for internal moderation while many require that the internal Moderator uses a different coloured pen to comment on scripts. The best centres also note how differences of opinion between the IM and the original marker were resolved.
- ◆ The increasing tendency to provide full comments when oral assessment has been undertaken. More centres than in the past now make notes on the question(s) asked of candidates and the response(s) given.
- ◆ In some centres, candidates continue to produce answers which are longer than needed, although more and more centres are working towards encouraging candidates to focus on key words and concepts required in an acceptable answer.
- ◆ Some centres continue to use half marks which should only be used when stated in the marking guidelines.
- ◆ Similarly, in some cases, there was no obvious match between ticks on a script and the number of marks awarded.
- ◆ Not all centres followed the instructions for central moderation fully. In some cases, solutions to the NAB were omitted while there were cases where the Moderation Sample Form was not fully completed.
- ◆ Most centres have become much more attuned to the appropriate standards at all levels. However, there were still examples of marks being given for answers which required a supporting reason but where none had been provided. However, the number of examples of this is falling and this is good to see.
- ◆ Following on from the above bullet point, there are also centres whose marking is lenient. In almost all cases, the candidates had produced work of a suitable standard to gain a C grade pass mark but not to reach a B or an A grade. It is important to try to assess the performance of candidates as realistically as possible. Otherwise there is a danger that some candidates will gain a false impression of their likely performance in the external assessment.

Specific issues identified (continued)

Work from a very small number of centres did give rise to concern. This was largely where marks had been given for points not supported by examples and where, in general, marks were awarded generously by comparison to the majority of centres and with reference to the marking scheme.

Feedback to centres

Once again, it was very apparent that most centres work hard to ensure that internal assessment is conducted properly and effectively. In fact, there continues to be an improvement in the overall standard of work. This showed itself in the increased number of candidates who produced concise focused answers as well as through good practice like internal moderation. It was very encouraging to see that many teachers are still able to find time to make comments on the work submitted by candidates. Very often these demonstrated good practice, eg 'use the case study', 'no explanation, no marks' and many gave very positive feedback to candidates who had produced good work or who had made a determined effort.

Centres may wish to consider the following which may help good practice to spread even further.

- ◆ Enhancing internal moderation — although there were good examples of this (including signing internally moderated scripts, cross-marking using different coloured pens and a report form summarising IM decision), some centres seemed to play lip service to it. IM can be enhanced by incorporating the good practice already noted but also by other means. It is possible, for example, to annotate the marking guidelines after internal moderation to show how all markers should interpret the marking scheme. An internal moderation grid can be used to show which candidates work has been internally moderated. This helps to show easily what internal moderation sample has been used and provides a way to check that all markers have been subject to internal moderation. All this can help promote consistency of internal assessment decisions.
- ◆ Providing full details of oral assessment — increasingly centres who exemplify good practice indicate both the question(s) asked and candidate responses(s). Often the reply is written by the candidate after s/he has provided a suitable oral response. Oral assessment is generally conducted appropriately, ie when a candidate is just below the cut-off score.
- ◆ Encourage candidates to provide short answers which focus on the key points — this is increasingly the norm and centres which do this also ensure that candidates try to offer explanations and reasons where these are appropriate.
- ◆ Follow the marking scheme as closely as possible. In IA1 Q1 of Business Enterprise, full marks for part (a) can only be awarded if an explicit comparison is made. As noted above, centres may annotate marking schemes to indicate how they have interpreted parts which appear to be unclear. In marking, half marks should be avoided unless they are specifically part of the marking scheme. It assists moderation also if it is easy to see how marks have been awarded (eg where each tick on a script represents a mark).
- ◆ Using an alternative NAB where a candidate is a long way below the cut-off score at the first attempt. This approach is the one adopted by most centres and it does help to ensure that the candidate reaches a standard of work comparable to the external assessment.
- ◆ Ensuring candidates are at the appropriate level. Again, many centres have developed good strategies to place candidates at the level most appropriate for them. In some cases, however, candidates who appeared from their performance to have been better suited to Intermediate 2 had remained at Higher. In this case, there was a strong danger that their work was marked leniently to ensure that they did reach the cut-off score.

Generally centres have worked well and should be commended for the effort and commitment which they have displayed. The moderation process has confirmed that internal assessment in most cases is operating as it should. It has also highlighted the considerable attempts that many centres are making to improve the way they approach internal assessment and the good practice which many demonstrate.