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Published by Board of Studies NSW GPO Box 5300 Sydney 2001 Australia

Tel: (02) 9367 8111 Fax: (02) 9367 8484 Internet: www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au

ISBN 1 7414 7027 7

2004104

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2003 HSC NOTES FROM THE MARKING CENTRE BUSINESS STUDIES

Introduction

This document has been produced for the teachers and candidates of the Stage 6 course in Business Studies. It provides comments with regard to responses to the 2003 Higher School Certificate Examination, indicating the quality of candidate responses and highlighting the relative strengths and weaknesses of the candidature in each section and each question.

It is essential for this document to be read in conjunction with the relevant syllabus, the 2002 Higher School Certificate Examination, the Marking Guidelines and other support documents which have been developed by the Board of Studies to assist in the teaching and learning of Business Studies.

General Comments

In 2003, 16213 candidates attempted the Business Studies examination.

Teachers and candidates should be aware that examiners may ask questions that address the syllabus outcomes in a manner that requires candidates to respond by integrating their knowledge, understanding and skills developed through studying the course. This reflects the fact that the knowledge, understanding and skills developed through the study of discrete sections should accumulate to a more comprehensive understanding than may be described in each section separately.

Section I

Question	Correct Response
1	D
2	D
3	В
4	В
5	С
6	С
7	А
8	D
9	В
10	D

Question	Correct Response
11	D
12	С
13	А
14	С
15	А
16	D
17	В
18	А
19	В
20	А

Section II

Question 21

- (a) The majority of candidates were able to recognise and name two stakeholders of the Countrywide Bank who might be affected by the protest of angry local residents. Stakeholders identified included staff, customers, management, shareholders and employee groups.
- (b) The majority of candidates were able to recognise and name two skills of management that the branch manager would require in this situation. Skills commonly identified included people skills, problem-solving skills and strategic thinking skills.
- (c) Better responses provided characteristics and features of an informational role of the branch manager appropriate to the concerns of a stakeholder. These responses included the manager's role in terms of disseminating information, monitoring information and acting as a spokesperson.

Weaker responses described the informational role of management without linking it to a stakeholder.

Question 22

- (a) Better responses sketched in general terms two indicators of problems with effective cashflow management experienced by Gigabyte Computers Ltd. Indicators commonly identified included the accounts payable turnover period of 37 days exceeding the credit period of 25 days, the increase in the inventory turnover time from 27 days to 35 days and the current ratio of 1.5 - exceeding the industry average of 2.5:1. Weaker responses either sketched in general terms one indicator, or listed two indicators.
- (b) Better responses related the cause and effect of a strategy that would increase profitability. These correctly recognised the shift in the focus of the question from cash-flow in part (a) to profitability in part (b). Strategies to increase profitability that were commonly explained by candidates included finding a new lower cost supplier to reduce cost of goods sold, introduction of a just-in-time inventory control system to reduce costs of storage and/or setting up cost centres to monitor and control costs.

Weaker responses either outlined a relevant strategy with limited explanation, or made a broad reference to a strategy that could be used to improve profitability.

(c) Better responses were able to clearly articulate possible implications for the company and/or stakeholders of Ajax Computers Ltd taking over and closing Gigabyte Computers Ltd and selling off its assets. These responses recognised the ethical implications relating to asset stripping/corporate raiding. Falling sales and loss of a customer base were commonly analysed implications for the company. Commonly analysed implications for stakeholders included loss of employment, declining quality of life for employees, ethical considerations of taking advantage of Gigabyte's financial situation, and loss of a market for suppliers. Weaker responses either described two implications for the company and/or other stakeholders, or analysed only one implication.

Question 23

(a) Better responses sketched in general terms one appropriate employment relations strategy that Watermelon Electronics could use to overcome the shortage of skilled labour. Average responses outlined one appropriate strategy. Strategies commonly outlined included bringing in skilled labour from the parent company, setting up training courses, making greater use of technology and offering higher wages to attract personnel from other industries.

Weaker responses only identified one appropriate strategy.

(b) Better responses showed how two organisational structures that Watermelon Electronics may adopt to cater for the subsidiary were similar or different. Features of flat vs hierarchical, centralised vs decentralised and/or hierarchical vs team organisational structures were commonly compared. Concepts referred to included chain of command, span of control, levels of management and ease of decision-making.

Weaker responses only described two organisational structures that might cater for this subsidiary without making any comparison.

(c) Better responses made a judgement about the management's response to a labour law variation. Such responses varied from exploiting this difference and the ethical issues involved, to applying Australian standards and the issues involved. Differences in labour laws commonly evaluated included EEO and anti-discrimination legislation, minimum labour standards and OHS requirements.

Weaker responses simply described a possible management response to a variation in labour law without attempting any evaluation.

Question 24

- (a) The majority of candidates correctly listed two characteristics of the four-wheel drive segment of the magazine market from the reader profiles provided in the stimulus material. Such characteristics included buyers being in the 40-50-year-old age bracket, earning a middle income and making purchases of the magazine once a month.
- (b) Better responses provided reasons in favour of an appropriate promotional strategy that targets 25-40-year-old male readers of Expo Publication's magazines. Promotional strategies that were commonly recommended included personal selling, use of opinion leaders, strategically placed advertising and a range of below-the-line promotions.

Weaker responses simply described a promotional strategy aimed at 25-40-year-old male readers without providing any reasons in favour of the selected strategy.

(d) Better responses made a judgement on the ability of two appropriate product strategies to increase magazine sales for Expo Publications. Appropriate product strategies included changing the magazine's quality and presentation, repositioning the magazine and adding further features to the magazine.

Weaker responses either described two appropriate product strategies that would increase magazine sales, or made a judgement on the ability of only one appropriate product strategy to increase magazine sales for Expo Publications.

Question 25

- (a) Better responses correctly calculated a profitability ratio. Many candidates failed to calculate profit (revenue minus expenses) and therefore failed to calculate the appropriate answer.
- (b) Better responses calculated and interpreted Lim's liquidity ratio (1:1). There was more than one possible interpretation, eg that liquidity was adequate or that liquidity was of concern, as current assets barely covered current liabilities.
- (c) Better responses provided reasons in favour of Margie's Kitchen Shop as the most appropriate investment, based mainly on liquidity, profitability and/or efficiency analysis. Weaker responses identified the correct investment choice but provided limited reasons in favour of this recommendation.

Section III

The syllabus provides that this section comprises ONE question that requires an answer in a business report format. This question will incorporate elements from two or three of the topics in the HSC course.

The Syllabus does not specify the form or structure of a business report. Typically a business report will address issues raised in the question, using headings which correspond to the issues to assist with structural development of the report.

Question 26

This question focused on the topics 'Financial Management and Planning', 'Marketing' and 'Global Business'. Although responses took a variety of approaches, most followed the sequence presented in the question, addressing sources of funding, marketing and financial management. Another popular approach was to present a SWOT analysis and/or a Marketing Plan.

The large majority of candidates wrote in report style with a significant number showing evidence of good planning and structure. Some candidates unnecessarily repeated some or all of the question. Most candidates used business terminology, the extent and quality of which varied greatly. Candidates referred at length to the stimulus material with some candidates

addressing elements of it not required to answer the question, especially 'management of marketing on a global scale'.

Excellent responses presented a sustained, logical and well-structured business report. Candidates clearly communicated using features of a business report with appropriate business terminology and concepts. These candidates answered the question holistically, integrating funding, the development of a marketing process and global financial management.

These responses clearly indicated appropriate sources of funds available to Aussie Thongs including equity (share issues to existing shareholders or floating the company on the Stock Exchange), and a range of mainly debt alternatives including term loans, mortgages and venture capital. They were alert to the existing slight excess of debt over equity mentioned in the stimulus material, a factor that caused them to lean towards equity as a source of funding. Candidates typically recommended a funding mix that met short and long-term business requirements.

Excellent responses also proposed a detailed process for the development of a new and global marketing plan, utilising the syllabus headings of Situational Analysis, Market Objectives, Target Market, Marketing Strategies and Implementation, Monitoring and Controlling. They provided detailed reasons in favour of a comprehensive range of strategies for the successful financial management of a global business making specific reference to Aussie Thongs. They outlined the risks associated with overseas expansion including currency fluctuations, non-payment, credit risks and transit damage. Candidates recommended a number of strategies to reduce the financial risk such as hedging, use of derivatives to cover the adverse effects of adverse currency movements and insurance to cover damage to goods and/or bad debts.

Average responses included features of a business report and used some business concepts and terminology. These candidates answered the question descriptively with limited evidence of higher-order thinking. Some candidates answered only two parts of the question.

Candidates indicated the main features of one or more alternatives for funding business expansion or provided an extensive list of alternatives. Responses either distinguished between debt and equity, internal and external funding or listed appropriate sources of funding. Some made appropriate recommendations.

Candidates outlined in general terms a process for the development of a new marketing plan without always referring to the global expansion of Aussie Thongs. Two common approaches were:

- a. a basic process for the development of a new marketing plan, using all or some of the syllabus headings
- b. the presentation of a marketing plan for the new global business.

The latter approach indicated candidates were aware of the process even though they may have misinterpreted the requirement of the question.

Weaker responses either outlined in general terms reasons in favour of a limited range of strategies, or gave a brief explanation of a broader range of strategies for the successful

financial management of a global business. These often described financial management strategies without linking them to the minimisation of risk.

Weaker responses used basic business terminology and may have included some features of a business report. These responses often addressed only one or two parts of the question, with a tendency to identify or list. These responses made reference to some aspects of market planning and/or funding. They invariably showed limited understanding of the range of financial strategies or the reasons for developing new strategies for Aussie Thongs' move into a global market.

Section IV

The syllabus provides that Section IV incorporates elements from topics in the HSC course that were not the focus in Section III.

Candidates and teachers must bear in mind that the rubrics for both questions in this section mandate the use of relevant case study/studies. Some candidates may find it helpful to use a report style in answering questions in Section IV. Report style is NOT mandatory in this Section but it may provide a structure that assists some candidates to communicate a well-presented response.

Question 27

This question focused on the topics 'Business Management and Change' and 'Employment Relations'. Although a variety of approaches were taken, most responses described some aspects of how business can manage change effectively and referred to effective employment relations strategies. Although a mandatory reference to a case study/studies was included in the rubric, many candidates did not refer to a case study or made limited reference to one. Some responses included background information on business concepts which were not related to the question eg global business, marketing and finance. A number of candidates found it difficult to combine the two topics of 'Business Management and Change' and 'Employment Relations'. This difficulty was surprising as staffing is specifically mentioned in the syllabus section dealing with change. Furthermore the Employment Relations topic of the syllabus refers to:

'Students learn to:

use existing business case studies to investigate and communicate ideas and issues related to employment relations. The focus of these case studies will be to:

• analyse how conflict and change are managed in a business

• prepare and justify possible ways of resolving conflicts in the selected business organisations.'

Better responses were well-structured, often using report-style, incorporating relevant business terminology. The use of case studies varied from an integrated approach of a single case study to the illustrative approach using several case studies. These responses described a change process in detail, with appropriate reference to change models (force field and/or unfreeze/ change/refreeze), and creating a culture of change (encouraging teamwork approach

using change agents). They referred to the need to set achievable goals. Candidates were able to make clear judgements about the effectiveness of employment relations in achieving change. Judgements were supported with criteria such as levels of absenteeism, productivity, staff turnover, disputation, quality and benchmarking.

Weaker responses answered only one part of the question well. Answers were mostly wellorganised and used relevant business terminology. Candidates were able to describe a range of strategies used by businesses to manage change. However, they described rather than evaluated the effectiveness of employment relations strategies in achieving change. Some case study material presented was not specific to the question.

Question 28

This question focused on the topics 'Business Management and Change' and 'Employment Relations'. Candidate responses were generally organised by using one of two approaches. The first approach integrated both parts of the question - a description of the nature and sources of change and an evaluation of their impact on employment relations - illustrated throughout with reference to case study/studies. The second approach described separately the nature and source of change and then evaluated their impact on employment relations, followed by case study/studies.

Excellent responses were sustained, logical and well-structured, clearly communicating using appropriate business terminology and concepts. These responses were clearly supported by reference to relevant case study/studies. Candidates provided detailed characteristics and features of a variety of the nature and sources of change in business. They were also able to make a judgement based on criteria about the impact of these influences on employment relations.

Weaker responses communicated using relevant business terminology and concepts. They provided characteristics and features of the nature and sources of change in business and described the impact of these influences on employment relations. These candidates made only limited reference to case study/studies.

Business Studies

2003 HSC Examination Mapping Grid

Question	Marks	Content	Syllabus outcomes
1	1	Marketing/Customer and Buyer behaviour	H5.1, H5.3
2	1	Employment relations/industrial conflict	H4.2, H5.3
3	1	Global business/global business strategy	H2.1, H4.2, H5.1, H5.3
4	1	Marketing/ethical and legal aspects	H4.1, H5.3
5	1	Marketing – developing mandatory strategies place distribution	H2.1, H5.1
6	1	Financial management and planning financial markets – major participants	H5.1, H5.3
7	1	Employment Relations – measures of effectiveness	H2.1, H4.2, H5.1
8	1	Marketing – marketing strategies primary strategies	H2.1, H5.3
9	1	Financial planning and management – using financial information	H5.1, H5.4
10	1	Business management and change – nature of management	H3.3, H4.2
11	1	Business management and change management theories	H5.1, H5.3
12	1	Financial management and planning – types of financial ratios	H3.2, H5.1, H5.4
13	1	Financial planning and management cash flow statements	H2.1, H3.1
14	1	Global – methods of international expression	H1.1, H2.1, H4.2
15	1	Business management and change – understanding business organisation management progress	H3.1, H5.3
16	1	Business management and change – structural references to change	H1.1, H2.1, H4.2, H5.1, H5.3
17	1	Industrial conflict – perspectives on conflict	H2.1, H3.2, H4.2, H5.3
18	1	Marketing – ethical and legal aspects	H4.1
19	1	Employment Relations – ethical and legal aspects	H3.2, H4.1
20	1	Financial management – effective working capital management	H4.2, H5.3
Short answe	er		
21 (a)	1	Nature of management	Н5.3
21 (b)	1	Nature of management	H2.1, H5.3

Question	Marks	Content	Syllabus outcomes
21 (c)	2	Nature of management	H2.1, H5.3
22 (a)	2	Effective financial planning – ethical and legal aspects	H2.1, H5.3, H5.4
22 (b)	2	Effective financial planning – ethical and legal aspects	H2.1, H5.3, H5.4
22 (c)	6	Effective financial planning – ethical and legal aspects	H2.1, H4.1, H5.3
23 (a)	2	Legal Framework of Employment	H4.2, H5.3
25 (a)	2	Management global business/employment relations	114.2, 113.3
		Legal Framework of Employment	
23 (b)	4	Management global business/employment relations	H2.1, H2.2, H5.3
		Legal Framework of Employment	
23 (c)	4	Management global business/employment relations	H2.2, H4.2, H5.3
24 (a)	1	Analyse and evaluate marketing strategies	H5.1, H5.3
24 (b)	3	Analyse and evaluate marketing strategies	H2.1, H5.1, H5.3
24 (c)	6	Analyse and evaluate marketing strategies	H2.1, H5.2, H5.3
25 (a)	1	Using financial information	H5.1, H5.4
25 (b)	2	Using financial information	H5.1, H5.3, H5.4
25 (c)	3	Using financial information	H3.3, H5.1, H5.3, H5.4
		Management of funds	
26	20	Nature and role of markets and marketing	H2.1, H3.2, H4.2, H5.1, H5.2, H5.3
		Managing global	
27	20	Managing change effectively	H1.1, H1.2, H2.2, H3.2, H4.2, H5.3
21	20	Effective employment relations	111.1, 111.2, 112.2, 113.2, 114.2, 113.3
		Nature and sources of change in business	
28	20	Nature of employment relations	H1.1, H1.2, H2.2, H3.2, H4.2, H5.3
		Key influences on employment relations	



2003 HSC Business Studies Marking Guidelines

Question 21 (a)

Outcomes assessed: H5.3

MARKING GUIDELINES

Criteria	Marks
• Recognises and names two stakeholders who might be affected by the protests	1

Question 21 (b)

Outcomes assessed: H2.1, H5.3

MARKING GUIDELINES

Criteria	Marks
• Recognises and names two appropriate skills of management that the branch manager would require	1

Question 21 (c)

Outcomes assessed: H2.1, H5.3

	Criteria	Marks
•	• Provides characteristics and features of an informational role of the branch	2
	manager appropriate to the concerns of a stakeholder	
•	• Provides characteristics of the informational role of the branch manager	1
	without reference to the concerns of a stakeholder	

Question 22 (a)

Outcomes assessed: H2.1, H5.3, H5.4

MARKING GUIDELINES

Criteria	Marks
• Sketches in general terms two indicators that show problems with cash	2
flow management	
• Sketches in general terms one indicator that shows problems with cash	1
flow management	
OR	
Lists two indicators	

Question 22 (b)

Outcomes assessed: H2.1, H5.3, H5.4

MARKING GUIDELINES

Criteria	Marks
• Relates the cause and effect of a strategy that would improve profitability	2
Sketches in general terms a strategy to improve profitability	1
OR	
• Makes a broad reference to a strategy that could be used to improve profitability	

Question 22 (c)

Outcomes assessed: H2.1, H4.1, H5.3

Criteria	Marks
• Draws out and relates implications of this option to the effects on the company and/or other stakeholders	5–6
• Draws out implications of this option, and provides characteristics and features of these implications for the company and/or other stakeholders OR	3–4
• Draws out and relates one implication of this option to the effects on the company and/or other stakeholders	
Recognises and names implications	1–2
OR	
• Names an issue with some attempt to identify the implication/s or impact on a stakeholder	

Question 23 (a)

Outcomes assessed: H4.2, H5.3

MARKING GUIDELINES

Criteria	Marks
• Sketches in general terms one appropriate employment relations strategy	2
to overcome a shortage of skilled labour	
Names one appropriate strategy	1

Question 23 (b)

Outcomes assessed: H2.1, H2.2, H5.3

MARKING GUIDELINES

Criteria	Marks
• Shows how two organisational structures that cater for this subsidiary are similar or different	3–4
• Provides characteristics and features of two organisational structures that cater for this subsidiary	2
Names two organisational structures that cater for this subsidiary	1
OR	
• Provides characteristics and features of one organisational structure that caters for this subsidiary	

Question 23 (c)

Outcomes assessed: H2.2, H4.2, H5.3

Criteria	Marks
• Makes a judgement based on criteria of a management response to a labour law variation	3-4
• Describes a possible management response to a variation in labour law	2
Describes issues associated with a variation in labour laws	1
OR	
Names a possible management response	

Question 24 (a)

Outcomes assessed: H5.1, H5.3

MARKING GUIDELINES

Criteria	Marks
• Lists two characteristics of the 4WD segment of the magazine market	1

Question 24 (b)

Outcomes assessed: H2.1, H5.1, H5.3

MARKING GUIDELINES

Criteria	Marks
• Provides reasons in favour of an appropriate promotional strategy that targets 25-40 year old males	3
• Describes a promotional strategy aimed at 25-40 year old males	2
 OR Provides reasons in favour of a promotional strategy without linking to the 25-40 year old males 	
Identifies a promotional strategy	1

Question 24 (c)

Outcomes assessed: H2.1, H5.2, H5.3

Criteria	Marks
• Makes a judgement on the ability of two appropriate product strategies to increase sales	5–6
• Provides characteristics and features of two appropriate product strategies that will increase sales	3–4
OR	
• Makes a judgement on the ability of one appropriate product strategy to increase sales	
Recognises and names two product strategies that may increase sales	1–2
OR	
• Provides characteristics and features of one product strategy that may increase sales	
OR	
• Identifies two non-product marketing strategies and makes a judgement on their ability to increase sales	

Question 25 (a)

Outcomes assessed: H5.1, H5.4

MARKING GUIDELINES

Criteria	Marks
• Correctly determines from given figures a profitability ratio for Margie's	1
Kitchen Shop	

Question 25 (b)

Outcomes assessed: H5.1, H5.3, H5.4

MARKING GUIDELINES

Criteria	Marks
• Correctly determines from given figures a liquidity ratio and draws	2
meaning from the results	
Determines from given figures a liquidity ratio	1
OR	
• Comments appropriately on the liquidity without the use of a liquidity ratio	
OR	
• Comments appropriately on the liquidity based on an inaccurate calculation	

Question 25 (c)

Outcomes assessed: H3.3, H5.1, H5.3, H5.4

Criteria	Marks
• Provides reasons in favour of the best investment using the financial information provided	3
• Provides limited reasons in favour of the best investment choice using the financial information provided	2
Names the correct investment choice	1

Question 26

Outcomes assessed: H2.1, H3.2, H4.2, H5.1, H5.2, H5.3

Criteria	Marks
• Presents a sustained, logical and well-structured business report and clearly communicates using features of a business report with appropriate business terminology and concepts	17–20
• Clearly indicates the main features of appropriate alternatives for funding of business expansion	
• Puts forward for consideration or action a detailed process for the development of a new marketing plan	
• Provides detailed reasons in favour of a comprehensive range of strategies for successful financial management of a global business with specific reference to Aussie Thongs	
• Presents a well organised business report and uses appropriate business terminology and concepts	13–16
• Indicates the main features of appropriate alternatives for funding of business expansion	
• Puts forward for consideration or action a process for the development of a new marketing plan	
 Provides reasons in favour of a wide range of strategies for successful financial management of a global business with reference to Aussie Thongs 	
• Includes features of a business report and uses some business terminology and concepts	9–12
• Indicates the main features of one or more alternatives for funding of business expansion or provides an extensive list of alternatives	
• Sketches in general terms a process for the development of a new marketing plan	
• Sketches in general terms some reasons in favour of a limited range of strategies for successful financial management of a global business which may refer to Aussie Thongs	
• Includes some features of a business report and uses basic business terminology	5–8
• Recognises and names an alternative for funding of business expansion	
 Recognises and names some of the steps involved in the process of development of a marketing plan 	
 Recognises and names a strategy related to financial management of a global business and may refer to Aussie Thongs 	
OR	
 Provides limited reasons for a different financial strategy in a global business situation and may refer to Aussie Thongs 	



•	Uses basic business terminology	1–4
•	Makes reference to some aspects of market planning and/or financial	
	management	
•	Shows limited understanding of the range of funding and/or financial	
	management strategies or the reasons for developing new strategies due to	
	the move into a global market	

Question 27

Outcomes assessed: H1.1, H1.2, H2.2, H3.2, H4.2, H5.3

Criteria	Marks
 Presents a sustained, logical and well-structured answer and clearly communicates using appropriate business terminology and concepts Provides detailed characteristics and features of how business may manage change effectively Makes a judgement based on criteria about the effectiveness of employment relations strategies in achieving change Clearly supports response with reference to relevant case study/studies 	17–20
 Presents a well organised answer and uses appropriate business terminology and concepts Provides characteristics and features of how business may manage change effectively Makes a judgement about effective employment relations strategies in achieving change Makes reference to relevant case study/studies 	13–16
 Communicates using relevant business terminology and concepts Provides some characteristics and features of how business may manage change effectively Describes effective employment relations strategies in achieving change Makes some reference to relevant case study/studies 	9–12
 Communicates using relevant business terminology Sketches in general terms how business may manage change effectively Makes some reference to employment relations strategies in achieving change May make some reference to case study/studies 	5–8
 Uses basic business terminology May refer to managing change May identify employment relations strategies May not answer both parts of the question 	1-4

Question 28

Outcomes assessed: H1.1, H1.2, H2.2, H3.2, H4.2, H5.3

Criteria	Marks
 Presents a sustained, logical and well-structured answer and clearly communicates using appropriate business terminology and concepts. Provides detailed characteristics and features of the nature and sources of change in business Makes a judgement based on criteria about the impact of these influences on employment relations Clearly supports response with reference to relevant case study/studies 	17–20
 Presents a well organised answer and uses appropriate business terminology and concepts Provides characteristics and features of the nature and sources of change in business Makes a judgement about the impact of these influences on employment relations Makes reference to relevant case study/studies 	13–16
 Communicates using relevant business terminology and concepts Provides some characteristics and features of the nature and sources of change in business Describes the impact of these influences on employment relations Makes some reference to relevant case study/studies 	9–12
 Communicates using relevant business terminology Sketches in general terms the nature and sources of change in business Makes some reference to these influences in terms of employment relations May make some reference to case study/studies 	5–8
 Uses basic business terminology May refer to the nature and sources of change May identify the employment relations function May not answer both parts of the question 	1–4