2021 VCE Industry and Enterprise external assessment report

General comments

In the 2021 Industry and Enterprise examination most student responses showed a sound grasp of the study design's key knowledge. The majority of students attempted all questions. Stimulus material was used well to support responses. Students who performed to a high level across the entire examination demonstrated sound content knowledge and associated skills. They were able to express themselves in a clear, detailed and precise manner and showed an accurate understanding and ability to apply task words. Some students spent too much time defining terms when a definition was not specifically required. If definitions are not requested, no specific marks are allocated for their provision.

Students should:

- use paragraphs and signposting to structure extended responses (Questions 5 and 7c.)
- correctly label responses when continuing these at the end of the booklet
- only provide the stated number of reasons, types or strengths/weaknesses asked for; in these types of questions the first responses will only be marked (Questions 1a. and 1b.)
- avoid writing prepared answers for questions as these will rarely address the specifications of the questions asked
- only define specific key terms if the question requires it as it is only in these circumstances that marks have been allocated to definition. A good response will often contain implicit definitions of key terms anyway.

Specific information

Question 1a.

Mark	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	1	3	31	20	45	3.0

The majority of students handled this question skilfully and identified two work-related skills, then showed how they had demonstrated them in a work setting. Some responses described the skill rather than illustrating how they had demonstrated it. Some students wrote about more than two skills. Students are reminded that when more than the stated number of examples are given only the first are marked.

The following is a possible response.

I demonstrated the work-related skills of planning and organising and communication when I was responsible for organising and running children's birthday parties at my workplace. After a booking was made my role was to ensure that any special requirements, including dietary requirements, the cake and party activities, were met. I used a spreadsheet with completion dates to ensure that I had addressed all requirements. This task meant that I had to use my communication skills to liaise with the kitchen staff, verbally and in a written document, as well as with the party goods supplier to order and check that orders

arrived in time and were complete. I also phoned the parents of each child 48 hours before the event to make sure that I had met their requirements.

Question 1b.

Mark	0	1	2	Average
%	4	25	71	1.7

To be awarded full marks for this question, students needed to identify and describe a type of workplace training they received prior to or during their work placement. The most common answers focused on informal training and completion of occupational health and safety (OH&S) training. Other acceptable responses included on-the-job and off-the-job with an accurate description of the training types named.

Question 1c.

Mark	0	1	2	Average
%	11	31	59	1.5

This question required students to outline how they demonstrated the training selected in Question 1b. in the workplace. Students are reminded that they sometimes need to consider a question in the light of subsequent questions that draw on that response. In a subsequent response students may be asked to develop or elaborate on a response to a previous part of a question.

The following is a possible response.

My OH&S training was used throughout the planning of the party and on the day as I had to make sure that all arrangements minimised risks to other employees and people attending the venue at that time. This included stressing to the party attendees that they needed to wear suitable clothes and shoes to minimise the risk of falls in our playground. This training was very useful when the day was very hot and two children showed signs of heat stress which I recognised and responded to in line with my training.

Question 2a.

Mark	0	1	2	3	Average
%	3	19	49	29	2.1

To be awarded full marks for this question students were required to explain how the organisation's response to safety was enterprising. Students were required to explicitly use relevant material from the stimulus in their response. In addition, they needed to demonstrate an understanding of the concept of enterprise and the characteristics of an enterprising response, for example, encouraging employees to show initiative and problem-solving skills. The most common reason for responses not achieving full marks was a failure to demonstrate knowledge of the application of an enterprising response.

The following is a possible response.

The workplace demonstrates an enterprising response to safety by taking a proactive approach to the management of safety. This was enterprising as it supports open and effective communication, encourages the application of problem-solving skills and encourages employees to show initiative, work in teams and be adaptable. Employees and volunteers were enabled to contribute to and shape the changes through sharing safety knowledge and having their say.

Question 2b.

Mark	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	1	5	19	41	33	3.0

The majority of students scored highly on this question. High-scoring responses described two work-related skills that could improve safety levels in the workplace. Responses that did not score well either referred to more than two work-related skills or did not adequately describe the skills.

The following is a possible response.

> *Two work related skills that would assist employees in the management of safety are teamwork and problem-solving. Problem-solving is the ability to respond to an issue that an individual or team identifies. This requires employees' ability to unpack the problem, consider alternative responses and then decide on, and implement, the best course of action to eliminate or reduce the problem. Teamwork is the ability of employees to work in groups to achieve common goals in the workplace. Teams need clear roles for all team members and open lines of communication to work properly.*

Question 2c.

Mark	0	1	2	Average
%	11	43	47	1.4

Students generally responded well to this question. Responses that did not score well failed to establish the link of work-related skills selected to enterprise culture. Students are reminded that enterprise culture is a core element of this subject. Therefore, they need to be able to succinctly outline its meaning.

The following is a possible response.

> *An enterprise culture is one that proactively meets challenges by supporting effective communication and encouraging employees to be adaptable, demonstrate initiative, solve problems and take on leadership roles. These work-related skills contribute to the development of an enterprising culture as they allow employees to have a say and help shape operations at the workplace. In exploring the safety issues that may arise employees will feel confident and competent that they can show initiative and suggest solutions to or minimisation of any safety problems they encounter and that these observations will be listened to by managers.*

Question 3a.

Mark	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	8	21	28	29	13	2.2

This question required students to draw on their knowledge of the management of quality in a workplace or industry with which they were familiar. Many students demonstrated detailed knowledge of the application of quality approaches. Responses that did not score well tended to be pre-prepared narratives where quality was frequently not the main thread of the response.

The following is a possible response.

> *Quality in my manufacturing workplace means consistently producing high-quality goods, with a minimum level of waste, which meet customer expectations. Our approach to quality management is enterprising because of the role of the employees in all quality processes. We have a staff meeting once a week to*

discuss how everyone is managing their work. This meeting also includes discussing any quality-related issues that might arise in the day to day running of the workplace. Our boss has established open lines of communication so that we feel we can make suggestions if we see a problem with maintaining expected quality levels or an adaption to improve the quality of our processes and outcomes. Outside of meetings we take initiative to sort out quality issues during the manufacturing process. This has resulted in fewer quality issues for both staff and customers.

Question 3b.

Mark	0	1	2	Average
%	21	24	55	1.3

The majority of students were able to select an example of technology that was not enterprising or wrote a response that was not technology-based. Responses that scored highly outlined how technology had been applied in a way that supported enterprise.

The following is a sample response.

During 2021 my workplace used technology in an enterprising way when we implemented a new approach to our drive-through ordering system to reduce wait times for customers. The idea was suggested by an employee who was concerned about long wait times during peak periods and an increase in customer complaints during these peak periods. Employees were provided with wireless headsets to communicate with the kitchen. This was supported in the kitchen by a large screen to track orders and monitor the time taken to fill each order. Shift managers monitored the screen and were able to move employees during shifts if wait times were too long.

Question 3c.

Mark	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	9	19	32	27	13	2.1

This question required students to explore the relationship between technology and the development of an enterprise culture in a nominated workplace or industry. The majority of students showed a knowledge of technology and, to some extent, could explore the relationship between technology and enterprise culture. However, many struggled to analyse that relationship and link it to a specific workplace or industry. Students are reminded that the task word 'analyse' requires students to identify components or essential features and write about the significance of the relationship between them. Responses that scored highly used paragraphs and signposting to structure their responses. These paragraphs usually outlined a feature of an enterprise culture, perhaps adopting a proactive disposition or employee empowerment, and then explained how the use of technology can support the growth of enterprise culture.

The following is a possible response.

Being enterprising involves being prepared to take risks and to 'think out of the box'. The workplace has a large number of employees who work part-time or who travel to regional areas and other states for their work. This made it very difficult to hold meetings that all employees could attend. Managers thought that this meant that employees did not have the same knowledge base leading to inconsistent information to clients. After seeking possible solutions from employees, a decision was made to use technology to run hybrid meetings where some employees would be on site and others would join remotely. In addition to using the zoom platform technology was also used to provide a secure site to share confidential

information as well as collaborate on an electronic whiteboard during the meeting. The workplace was able to overcome the risk as they had already developed a strong enterprise culture.

Question 4a.

Mark	0	1	2	Average
%	1	13	85	1.8

This question was very well answered overall. The majority of responses demonstrated knowledge that on-the-job training is training that an employee receives while working simultaneously. It can take a variety of forms including a single session or an accredited course delivered over a long period of time. These responses were able to provide a logical example – perhaps an employee completing a cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training update or shadowing a mentor – to support their definition.

Question 4b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	3	12	20	23	32	11	3.0

Students needed to show a comprehensive understanding of training and workplace learning and be able to show how these can promote enterprise culture. A number of responses only conveyed a limited understanding of these and many failed to make clear links to the development of an enterprise culture. In addition, some student responses did not address the 'discuss' action word, which required them to show the opportunities and challenges in the relationship.

The following is a sample response.

Training and workplace learning play an important role in developing an enterprise culture as they assist employees to develop skills, knowledge and capabilities to perform better. If a workplace provides a strong learning environment it will make it easier for the workplace to develop an enterprise culture where all internal stakeholders value lifelong learning, embrace change and continuous improvement. However, each workplace must also be aware of the potential challenges when devising and implementing workplace learning. The workplace must balance this priority with the imperative of still providing quality goods and services to clients in a timely manner. In addition, workplace learning can be very expensive and will therefore have an opportunity cost that reduces the ability of the workplace to focus on other areas like research and development.

Question 5

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	12	16	13	32	17	9	2.5

To achieve full marks in this question students needed to show a detailed and accurate knowledge of international trade and how it could create a need for change. Factors identified included the value of the Australian dollar, Free Trade Agreements, ease of transport, existing political relationships between countries and the relatively high cost of labour in Australia. Responses that scored highly used this knowledge to explore how they provided opportunities and challenges for change. Responses that did not score well generally did not show the required depth of knowledge of international competitiveness or its relationship to creating a need for change.

The following is a possible response.

International competitiveness is the degree to which a country's goods and service can meet the needs of international markets while still providing quality services to the domestic market. A number of factors affect this ability to compete. An important factor is the high labour costs in Australia. Our minimum wage of approximately A$18 per hour compared to the USA rate of A$10 is significantly higher than many other countries. This increases the price of goods produced in Australia and makes our products less attractive to the international market and in some case to the domestic market. This needs to be balanced against our relative high levels of labour productivity, stable and effective political, legal and economic systems and extensive and reliable infrastructure including efficient transport networks.

Question 6a.

Mark	0	1	2	Average
%	9	13	77	1.7

To achieve full marks in this question students needed to provide a clear and concise definition of natural resources and provide an example. Natural resources are resources that occur in nature and exist without any intervention from people. Examples include minerals, water, natural gas and sunlight.

Question 6b.

Mark	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	7	28	28	19	19	2.1

The majority of students showed a sound knowledge of social change and could make a link to how this could promote new businesses. The most popular change in social values mentioned was in attitudes to the environment and the need to address climate change, recycle, reuse and re-purpose. Other social values mentioned in responses included changes in the role of women and family structures and the need to be more inclusive of diversity. Responses that did not score well provided a brief statement of a value and did not make any, or a logical, link to how the change in the value can promote new businesses.

The following is a possible response.

In the past 20 years there have been significant changes in societal values about the need for businesses to behave in an ethical and socially responsible way. Many people now put pressure on businesses to reflect the emerging value. This has created the opportunity for new businesses to develop to capture the emerging market by reflecting this value. These businesses will often promote their ethical and socially responsible behaviour by employing disadvantaged or disabled employees. They frequently also pay careful attention to employee wages and conditions so that they can promote themselves as an employer of choice. An example of this is the Thank you Group which was established in 2008 after recognising a niche opportunity to establish a business which operated to reflect the changed value. They pay careful attention to sourcing raw materials from ethical sources, minimise waste, monitor wages for managers and provide significant financial support to a range of socially responsible enterprises like Sky Blue.

Question 6c.

Mark	0	1	2	Average
%	4	20	76	1.7

This question was well answered. To achieve full marks responses needed to explicitly use content in the stimulus material to illustrate how the business had supported sustainable use of natural resources. The most common response referred to the way they supported the sustainable use of natural resources through composting uneaten food. This approach will increase the quality of the soil, another natural resource, and should lead to higher productive levels. Other acceptable responses included their redistribution of food to charities. This reduced food going to landfill and possibly encouraged other businesses to be more aware of their production methods.

Question 6d.

Mark	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	7	5	49	25	13	2.3

To achieve full marks students were required to show how the business's actions to increase environmental sustainability created opportunities and challenges for two stakeholders. The most common stakeholders selected were employees and consumers. Other possible stakeholders included businesses in their supply chain and managers. Students are again reminded to think carefully about the choice of stakeholders to ensure they select an option that allows them to address the question in the detail required. Responses that did not score well were generally limited to a description of the stakeholder and a brief comment about the impact without any comment on the opportunities and challenges for the stakeholder group.

The following is a possible response.

Another stakeholder group are employees. The employees may be motivated to take action in their personal life to minimise waste by careful purchasing, re-cycling and composting. However, as many employees are probably low-wage earners their ability to do this may be limited.

Question 7a.

Mark	0	1	2	Average
%	11	23	67	1.6

Once again students showed a sound understanding of innovation. Innovation is the introduction of new ideas, methods or technology to increase the effectiveness and/or efficiency of the organisation. The change can be to the products, processes, technologies or services offered, or to the ways these are created or provided. Recent examples within the last four years include continued development of drone technology, changes in packaging of products to reduce landfill and the movement of some retail businesses to expanded online sales.

Question 7b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	5	17	13	21	13	19	11	3.1

This question required students to compare the key features of enterprise and innovation cultures. Responses that scored highly demonstrated a sound understanding of the requirements of the task word 'compare'. These responses were structured to comment in detail on the similarities and differences between the cultures. They used evidence and examples to support their answers. Responses that did not score well described some key features of each culture but did not engage in a comparison. They frequently used the words 'whereas' or however' to link these descriptions. This is not sufficient where a comparison is required. Clear statements with supporting evidence and examples were required to achieve full marks for the question.

The following is a possible response.

The similarities between the two are firstly that they are both examples of cultures. Enterprising and innovative cultures have a clear emphasis on high levels of employee empowerment and a proactive attitude towards all aspect of the business. These are shown in the values, norms and behaviours that characterise a business. An example of this is that initiative and problem-solving are engrained in all areas of business operations. A difference between the two types of cultures is that the outcomes the business is trying to achieve may not be the same. In an enterprise culture the main aim is to display a wide range of enterprise capabilities across all areas by all stakeholders. An innovative culture is focused on the enterprise capabilities together with other features, like research and development, leading to successful innovation of products or services.

Question 7c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	8	20	8	27	16	21	2.8

This question required students to evaluate a recent (within the last four years) example of innovation on a workplace or industry. Students are reminded that if their innovation is an extension of an existing product or process, they need to make the recent component clear. Examples used by students included the Rockman group's move from bricks and mortar retail outlets to online supply and Capilano Honey's changes to packaging. Many students did not achieve full marks because they focused on describing the innovation in detail rather than addressing how the innovation was used and impacted the workplace or industry. The task word 'evaluate' required students to comment on the innovation's impact, explaining the opportunities and challenges, then coming to an overall supported conclusion about the degree of success of the innovation in achieving its intended outcome.

The following is a possible response.

Although the workplace faced a number of obstacles, including an increase in the cost of the technology and difficulties in generating employee confidence and competence to use the technology effectively, the innovation has to a significant extent been successful. It has created a strong foundation for the workplace to continue to develop their innovation culture.

Question 7d.

Mark	0	1	2	Average
%	36	16	48	1.1

To achieve full marks students needed to identify a government (commonwealth, state or local) policy that supports innovation. They also needed to show how the policy selected promotes innovation. Many students found this question challenging and did not accurately identify a government policy that aims to promote innovation. Typically, these responses selected a government policy that was not related to innovation but was a response to the pandemic. By far the most common innovation policies selected were under the umbrella of the National Science Agenda. Other responses were CSIRO's Innovation Fund and policies flowing from the Victorian Government's Innovation Statement. Responses that scored highly were able to accurately describe the key features of the selected policy.

The following is a possible response.

One government policy that supports innovation is the Victorian Volunteering Innovation Fund. This fund will award $2 million in funding by 2023. The fund is available to community-led organisations involved in 'Victoria's Great Outdoors'. The funding supports organisations to develop inspiring ideas and fuel innovation in community-led projects. It is based on the idea that innovation requires changes in attitude and development of skills to devise and implement ideas supporting innovation.

Question 7e.

Mark	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	28	12	28	17	15	1.7

This question required students to analyse how the previously selected government policy supports innovation in an Australian industry. Many responses that did not score well were handicapped by poor choices in the preceding question. These responses generally only communicated a limited knowledge of how the policy supported innovation in an industry. Responses that scored highly drew on knowledge of the features and objectives of the policy in the context of an industry to complete their analysis.

Students were required to:

- demonstrate a knowledge of the essential elements of innovation
- identify and provide a brief overview of the industry selected
- describe how the policy can support innovation in that industry
- analyse how features of the policy can support innovation
- use detailed evidence to support their response.

The following is a possible response.

Another element central to the policy is the recognition that creative ideas and clear pathways to develop and implement the idea are essential to the development of high levels of innovation. This is supported by the application process which involves generating a viable funding idea and developing it in the application. This process must focus on the ongoing support of people to think creatively to develop ideas and then enhance their problem-solving skills to enact their idea. An example of this element is the work of the Southern Otway Landcare network which developed a people-focused innovation idea, which was funded under the policy, to reconnect the hills to the sea by restoring the Kennett River.