



2011 Industry and Enterprise Studies GA 3: Written examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

The 2011 examination was the last to be based on the *VCE Industry and Enterprise Study Design 2006–2011*. During the life of this study design there has been a significant improvement in the depth of student responses and students' ability to apply their knowledge of the course to specific questions. In this subject it is vital that students look for links between the course and events in the real world, including considering how their workplace learning relates to individual aspects of the course.

The following information may help students prepare for future examinations.

Preparation for the examination

Preparing for the examination should not be limited to the time immediately before the exam. It should happen throughout the year. Students should complete a range of questions on each area as it is taught. In addition, they should complete whole examination papers to practise examination skills, including time management, to revise areas of study already covered and to identify links between areas of study. Careful reading of past years' Assessment Reports will help identify areas to focus on and common mistakes made by students.

It is vital that students do not use prepared answers in the examination. They need to develop the ability to respond accurately and comprehensively to the question asked. This will be enhanced if students complete a variety of questions on each area of study as part of their preparation. A useful strategy is to write answers on areas using different task words (these include 'define', 'describe', 'discuss' and 'evaluate').

In the examination

If students have worked consistently throughout the year, they should approach the examination confident that they will do their best. Students need to use reading time carefully. If they finish reading the paper before the reading time is over they should have a plan for the remaining time. This may be to mentally prepare a longer answer. As the examination is in a question and answer booklet, students may respond to questions in any order. The marks per question and the number of lines provided for the answer indicate approximately how long should be devoted to each question. Students should also allow time at the end of the examination to reread their responses and make changes if needed. If the extra space in the examination booklet is used, students must ensure that this is clearly indicated in the answer space and number the question appropriately in the 'extra space' section.

The implementation of the *VCE Industry and Enterprise Study Design 2012–2016* in 2012 will mean changes to the examination format. This was the last year of the current format for Section B of the examination and students and teachers should ensure that they are aware of the new format for 2012. The 2012–2016 examination specifications and sample examination are available on the Industry and Enterprise study page on the VCAA website.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Note: Student responses reproduced herein have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual information.

For each question, an outline answer (or answers) is provided. In some cases, the answer given is not the only answer that could have been awarded marks.

Section A

Question 1a.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	37	22	41	1.0

This examination frequently requires students to define key terms, therefore it is vital that they prepare and practise the definitions of as many key terms as possible. In a subject called Industry and Enterprise, 'enterprise culture' is one obvious term. It was therefore disappointing that some students were not able to accurately define it.

Following is an example of a high-scoring answer.

Being enterprising involves being prepared to take risks and to 'think out of the box' in developing solutions to problems. The term culture refers to the typical way of behaving within a workplace. Therefore, a workplace with an enterprise culture is one

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where people are imaginative and creative, rather than being reluctant to take risks. This can be done by organising people into teams, where they are encouraged to make decisions for themselves, providing they keep in line with the objectives of the organisation as a whole.

Question 1b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	24	3	10	12	16	9	25	3.2

A range of different characteristics were accepted, including:

- effective communication skills
- an ability to recognise and solve problems
- distributed leadership
- widespread innovation
- initiative.

Students were not required to directly reference a specific work or personal setting, but this proved to be an effective way for many students to structure their answer.

Following is an example of a high-scoring answer.

Three characteristics of enterprise in my work setting at the local hospital were:

Continuous improvement: During my work placement I was rotated through a number of departments in the hospital. In each department all workers were expected to accept responsibility for their work so that patient outcomes are continuously improved. This meant that individuals planned and checked their work and provided feedback to others. As teams they met weekly to discuss ways to improve all aspects of their customer service.

High levels of motivation: Workers were driven to complete their duties to a high standard, they were able to work independently without constant supervision. In addition they seemed to enjoy their work and took pride in the way they did their work.

Clear and effective communication: Communication is effective if the sender is able to transfer information in a way that it accurately received. At the hospital workers spoke to each other and patients with respect and carefully selected words that patients would understand. A combination of written, verbal and graphic communication was used depending on the audience.

Question 1c.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	44	24	32	0.9

Students were expected to select a work setting and describe how enterprise was applied. It was pleasing that many students appeared to have prepared for this type of question and were able to respond at a high level.

Following is an example of a high-scoring answer.

The farm where I worked initiated new ideas to maintain their market share. The owners spoke with industry representatives and found that they could package their product in a more durable way so that they could then export their vegetables to the Asian market and do so at a cheaper price. They expanded on this by using the Internet to keep up to date with best practice overseas and sought to see how they could apply ideas to assist their business.

Question 2a.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	9	53	38	1.3

Students were required to provide a comprehensive definition of lifelong learning. Many found it useful to use an example to illustrate their definition.

Following is an example of a high-scoring answer.

Lifelong learning is the process of education and training to improve an individual's knowledge and skills which occurs throughout life and can take place in a number of settings. This contributes to productivity and enterprise in the work place and increases the employability of the worker.



Question 2b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	8	14	30	27	21	2.4

This question required students to contrast lifelong learning and workplace learning. It was not sufficient to just define and describe each term. Comments about the specific differences and/or similarities needed to be provided.

Following is an example of a high-scoring answer.

Lifelong learning is an approach to learning that sees every experience as an opportunity for learning and understands that these experiences are cumulative and transferable. Whereas, workplace learning is about the provision of a workplace based experience. The aim of workplace learning is to assist the worker to complete their duties. Some differences between the two are that lifelong learning is continuous while workplace learning may be more segmented. Workplace learning generally has a total vocational motive whereas lifelong learning may have benefits and motives beyond the workplace.

Question 2c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	13	28	30	19	10	1.9

A number of students found this question challenging. It was important that they recognised that they were required to show their understanding of how lifelong learning assists the working life and attitude of the worker, including their attitude to change.

Following is an example of a high-scoring answer.

When an employee has an attitude of a lifelong learner, they are open to developing new skills and knowledge. These new skills and knowledge help to keep the person up to date in their current area of work and also provide them with the ability to transition into new areas of work. They are more flexible and are likely to see the change as an opportunity rather than a threat. This will increase their confidence that they can adapt and learn more from the situation.

Question 3a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	20	20	22	16	10	12	2.1

Government can play a number of roles in the change process. These include as:

- an initiator of discussion about a change
- a participant in the debate about a change
- a respondent to an issue raised by industry about a change
- a legislator, mandating a change
- a shaper of the economic climate.

It is important that student knowledge in this area is up to date. For example, the application of tariffs is not a current policy of the Australian Government. However, it was relevant to discuss the removal of tariffs as a method of promoting change.

The role of government in promoting change in Australian industry is a fundamental element of this course. It was therefore disappointing that a number of students either struggled to interpret this question or did not know how to respond to it.

Following is an example of a high-scoring answer.

The government plays a significant role in promoting change in Australian industry. The government develops microeconomic policies which impact on industry. For example, the removal of tariffs while disruptive and possibly threatening may lead a industry to investigating more innovative and efficient ways to produce and sell. The government can also provide financial and non-financial incentives to encourage and support the change. The use of taxes is an important way the government can promote change. They can offer tax benefits for business who change. They can also impose new taxes, for example the carbon tax, to encourage a change in the behaviour of business. Governments promote change with legislation, for example OH&S, which forces changes in business behaviour.

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Question 3bi.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	27	16	24	33	1.6

Question 3bii.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	47	16	37	0.9

This question required students to demonstrate their knowledge of recent events in the economy and to relate these to the course. Students selected a wide range of policy initiatives by both the commonwealth and state governments. These included:

- water restrictions
- the carbon tax
- the solar panel buy back scheme
- subsidies for apprentices.

In selecting a relevant policy response, students needed to ensure that it was recent and specific, and that it enabled them to answer both parts of the question.

Following is an example of a high-scoring answer.

3bi.

A carbon tax is a tax on businesses that produce substances with a carbon base that can damage the environment. It is a policy instrument that sets a per-unit charge on emissions. Typically the system involves a tax on fuels that emit carbon dioxide when burned and on other greenhouse gas emissions. The most obvious objective of the policy is to reduce the impact of carbon emissions on the environment.

3bii.

Industry groups had deep concerns about the introduction of a carbon price in Australia because of the competitive impacts of the tax. Some industry participants began a campaign against the tax. This provided information to the public. They also paid for television ads to put pressure on government to change the policy. Industry leaders sought meetings with their members of parliament and approached the media to influence government policy.

Question 4a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	4	9	28	59	2.4

Most students were able to provide a relevant definition of innovation; however, a number did not provide a recent example. Students are reminded that computers, mobile phones and many other examples of technology are **not** recent innovations. A specific modification, for example the use of Skype to link branches of a business, must be explicitly described to establish that the innovation is new.

Following is an example of a high-scoring answer.

Innovation is the act of developing a new product, method of production or process or using an existing product, method of production or process in a new or improved way. An example is the use of GPS to assist farmers in ploughing and seeding or a trade person to improve the efficiency of their travel time.

Question 4b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	14	28	32	26	1.7

Many students could not explain the impact of innovation on production and competitiveness. A useful approach for students to take when unsure of how to answer a question may be to look at each element and comment on it.

Following is an example of a high-scoring answer.

Innovation is one of the most critical capabilities that successful organizations possess. It stems from creativity and is often defined by this variable. Innovation can make Australia more productive as it encourages an alert approach to the operation of individual businesses. This could include empowering staff by changing workplace practices which increase productivity and therefore reduces costs. If this approach is widespread the reduction in costs increases competitiveness.



Question 4c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	18	29	31	14	8	1.6

This was another question that many students struggled with. Various approaches were taken by students with high-quality answers to the question; some argued that innovation would improve the future by encouraging cleaner or more sustainable use of resources, while others focused on the link between innovation and quality.

Following is an example of a high-scoring answer.

The aim of innovation is to improve the good, service or process. This implies that a better future is created as a direct result. Innovation means that new products and processes are developed which may be more efficient, cheaper to produce and of a higher quality. This allows for a better future as customer satisfaction will be increased by the improved quality especially if any cost savings are passed on to them. An important element of innovation in Australian industry is desire to innovate to increase safety for workers, the wider community and to produce in a sustainable way to preserve resources for the future. Obviously if workers are in a work environment where the productive process is safer their individual future is enhanced. These benefits will be extended to the broader community if resources are consumed for the future. An example of innovation improving the future is the introduction of wind turbines in Victoria. These turbines allow the production of energy which may be cheaper than alternatives and is definitely cleaner than fossil fuel alternatives. Importantly this power source has improved the future because fossil fuels are finite resources while wind power is not. Therefore we now have a source of power for domestic and industry consumption to help secure our future.

Section B

Question chosen	none	1	2	3
%	1	42	38	19

Question a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	6	14	31	24	25	2.5

Question b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	11	17	21	16	14	9	12	2.8

In the 2011 examination students generally responded effectively. Most students made a selection that enabled them to apply their knowledge clearly. They were able to define and describe the relevant term. Answers suggested that students need to continue to develop skills in evaluation. Students are advised to be sure they understand the meaning of key terms and to practise evaluating key concepts in the course.

Question 1a.

Quality is the overall standard of the goods or service. It is frequently measured against a set of indicators from within the workplace or by referring to the industry. The description of the quality process or practice should have provided an overview of the process itself and how it operates within the selected workplace. Quality processes or practices that could have been described included:

- ISO certification
- quality assurance
- TQM
- Kaizen
- Six Sigma
- quality circles.

Question 1b.

Students who performed well provided an evaluation rather than just a narrative of the quality process. The evaluation focused on the selected workplace and on the way the workers perform their roles. It provided some judgment by the student as to whether the application of the quality process has had a beneficial or negative impact (or neutral for that matter) on the workers themselves and/or the quality of the goods being produced or services provided.



There was flexibility in how students could construct their response, but good-quality responses included a discussion of several of the following points as well as a final evaluative comment:

- the various roles undertaken by the employees
- how the roles may have changed
- whether workers have been required to undertake further training and, if so, how this may have impacted on the workers
- positive and negative aspects of this process from the workers perspective; for example, are they working harder, better or more efficiently? Are they more stressed, or has stress been reduced?
- whether the method used to produce the goods or services has improved
- whether the introduction of the quality process has been beneficial, negative or neutral to the way workers perform their roles.

Question 2a.

Students need to define the term 'workplace flexibility'. Workplace flexibility is about when, where and how people work. Workplace flexibility enables both the employee and the employer needs to be met through making changes to the time/location/manner in which the employee works.

They then need to describe the extent to which workplace flexibility exists in that workplace. This might have included a description of:

- flexible rostering
- job sharing
- the ability to work from home
- flexi-hours.

Question 2b.

Students who performed well provided an evaluation rather than just a narrative about workplace flexibility. The evaluation focused on the selected workplace and on the way the flexibility is shown. It provided some judgment by the student as to whether the application of workplace flexibility has had a beneficial or negative impact (or neutral for that matter) on the workers themselves.

There was a variety of ways that students could construct their response, but good-quality responses included a discussion of several of the following points as well as a final evaluative comment:

- the roles of the workers involved
- specific skills, knowledge and/or abilities required by the workers
- how the workers performed their roles before the introduction of workplace flexibility
- how flexibility changed the way work was performed
- what tasks were changed with the introduction of flexibility
- whether the workers were able to perform tasks more efficiently and effectively
- whether the goods produced or service provided is better with the introduction of flexibility
- whether the introduction was beneficial, detrimental or neutral to the performance of the workers.

Question 3a.

Competency-based training is training specific to a job or role. Employees/students are required to demonstrate their ability to carry out required competencies or tasks and are assessed against these as competent or not competent. The completion of set modules usually leads to a recognised training award.

The description of the workplace varied from student to student but it should have related to the use of competency-based training in the workplace rather than just a general description of a training method. An area of concern in some responses was a fundamental misunderstanding of the elements of competency-based training. A number of students did not seem to be aware of the need to demonstrate the individual competency, instead using the term as a synonym for training.

Question 3b.

Students who performed well provided an evaluation rather than just a narrative of competency-based training. The evaluation focused on the selected workplace and on the way the competency-based training impacted on workers' ability to perform their roles. The student provided some judgment as to whether the application of competency-based training had a beneficial or negative impact (or neutral for that matter) on the workers' ability to perform their role.

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There was a variety of ways that students could construct their response, but good-quality responses included a discussion of several of the following points as well as a final evaluative comment:

- the roles of the workers being trained
- what skill/knowledge/issue has been targeted by the training provided
- why this area was identified as needing improvement
- how the training was conducted
- whether the training was time consuming or onerous
- how employees responded to the training
- in what ways the training changed the way the workers performed their roles
- whether the training was beneficial, detrimental or neutral to the workers ability to perform their roles.