



## 2008 Industry and Enterprise Studies GA 3: Written examination

### GENERAL COMMENTS

Responses to the 2008 Industry and Enterprise examination showed that many students had not only acquired the key knowledge and skills of individual areas of study, but that they had also developed an understanding of the relationship between them. Unfortunately, a number of students did not answer all required examination questions. Students and teachers are reminded that the examination can be based on any of the material covered in the study design. Therefore it is vital that, as part of their examination preparation, students cross-reference their study to the study design and complete past examination questions on each area both during the year and as they revise.

As has been commented on in previous Assessment Reports, work placements and case studies continue to be a rich source of learning for students. They assist students to link and scaffold their learning and to increase the depth of their responses. However, students must carefully select aspects of case studies and their work placement to ensure that they are appropriate to the question. They may be assisted in this if they undertake this planning as part of their examination preparation.

Examinations require students to know and understand the study and to be able to demonstrate their knowledge in the context of specific questions. The quality of student responses will be improved if students use the 15 minutes of reading time to carefully read all questions and consider not only the information required, but how the information is to be communicated. This includes identifying:

- all sections of the question. Each year a number of students do not answer the second part of questions. For example, in Question 1a. many students did not give an application
- the task word. It is vital that students understand and can respond to the demands of the task words. For example, in Question 3d. many students failed to evaluate the role and importance of training
- the organisation of longer responses. Students need to use the task word and the number of marks allocated to a question to assist them to frame a response that is appropriate in length and depth. Their response should be planned so that it is logically ordered
- key terms and concepts that are relevant to the question. Better responses used glossary terms in their answers.

Students are advised to consider these points as part of their preparation for the examination, especially when they are revising and completing questions from past examination papers.

Students also need to be familiar with the difference between an industry and a workplace, and to ensure that their examples are relevant to the question asked.

### 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	3	4	5	6	Average
%	1	13	21	17	21	9	18	3.5

Students are reminded to avoid using the term they are defining as part of their definition. Some students failed to address the second part of the question which required them to provide an example of their application in the workplace. Many students were confused by the term 'competency-based training' and responded with answers on key competencies. A number of students asserted that multi-skilling was the ability to complete two or more tasks simultaneously.

The following is an example of a successful response.

*Competency-based training is geared to the attainment and demonstration of capabilities to meet the set standards rather than to an individual's achievement relative to that of others in the group An application in the workplace is where workers complete an*

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*OHS module as part of the induction process and the assessment centres on their ability to successfully demonstrate a range of required variables.*

*Teamwork is an approach used by many workplaces as a method for organising work and carrying out daily activities. There is an implied sense of collaboration, interdependence and specialisation in tasks. An efficient team will frequently generate synergy. An application in the workplace would be when workers are allocated specific tasks to enable a project to be completed.*

*Multi skilling is the ability of a worker to perform a range of tasks. It is linked to functional flexibility and allows workers to work across the workplace. An application on my workplacement was that while I normally worked on the register I was also trained in how to stock shelves and do electronic stock control so that I could complete these tasks if required.*

## Question 1b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	16	11	25	21	27	2.3

This question was generally handled well. Students demonstrated knowledge of the key competencies and an ability to link them to effective participation in work and society. Students who commented on the communication key competency should be aware that communication is much broader than simply talking to others. Many students cited their own experience of work to support their response.

## Question 2a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	8	28	25	39	2

Students were expected to comment directly using the ideas in the article. Some students may have misread the question as the two pressures they identified were not conflicting.

## Question 2b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	23	26	27	23	1.5

Students were required to provide a comprehensive definition of globalisation. It was disappointing that again this year some students limited their definitions to international trade. A number of logical and interesting impacts were suggested in the second part of the question. It was pleasing that students frequently used the stimulus material to support their answer.

Following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*Globalisation is the growing interdependence among countries as reflected by improved mobility of goods, services, technology, people and ideas. Globalisation was a pressure for change behind the decision to dredge the bay. If our industries are to compete with producers in other countries we must find innovative ways to increase our competitiveness. When the dredging is complete we may as Mr Brumby states have more economic security as we will be able to increase the volume and speed of trade.*

## Question 2c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	10	12	33	14	30	2.4

Students interpreted this question in a number of ways. If answers were logical and explained comprehensively, they were awarded marks. Responses to this question illustrated the need for students to respond to the instruction in the question, as many merely identified and described the possible benefits of improved transportation but did not explain them.

Following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*Australian industries must compete on a world stage if they wish to survive in the global economy. The quality of the transport infrastructure is an important variable in their ability to do this. Improved transport may benefit Australian industry by an increase in the speed and reliability of the supply of good. A second possible benefit is a reduction in the cost of the supply of goods due to an increase in the volume of goods supplied. These benefits will make trade with Australia more attractive due to cost savings and increased certainty of supply. This may increase demand for production and profits for individual firms as well as improving the reputation of industry.*

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## Question 3a.

Marks	0	1	Average
%	57	43	0.5

Many students were confident with this question. They were able to identify that flexible learning involves some form of choice. Better answers also stated that it frequently uses e-learning and has client needs as a priority. It was disappointing that many students did not gain the mark for this question. This was largely due to incomplete or inaccurate definitions. Students are reminded that they are expected to know correct definitions for key terms.

## Question 3b.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	7	34	59	1.5

Students were equally confident with this question and were able to identify and describe a range of benefits of training for employees. Many used their own experience of work as evidence to support their answers. Benefits students mentioned included greater safety, increased feelings of competence and confidence as well as enhanced employability after training.

## Question 3c.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	29	23	48	1.2

Some students struggled to see the potential benefits of training from the employer's perspective and merely restated the points they made in Question 3b. Acceptable answers could have identified improvements in the quality of production, productivity improvements, increased safety and enhanced reputation.

## Question 3d.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	6	11	22	28	20	12	2.8

A number of students made relevant points in this question but either did not address both elements of the question, that is, the role and importance of training, or did not develop their points to evaluate training in that particular workplace. Students are reminded that there is a strong relationship between the number of marks for a question and the length of their answer.

Following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*A workplace that I am familiar with is Metco, an insurance provider, where I completed my work placement. Training plays a very important role in the workplace as it is a tool used to increase the quality of the service provided and to assist the firm to achieve its objectives. Metco has a variety of training programs which all workers undertake. The firm uses a variety of delivery methods to ensure that workers assess training appropriate to their job descriptions. One example of the training provided as part of induction is that all workers complete an externally credentialed OHS module before they begin work. Training in this workplace not only allows the worker to build their skill base and increase their motivation but improves the quality and productivity of their work. It is also important because it increases the level of collaboration and trust in the workplace and encourages the development of an enterprise culture. Overall although the training program uses a significant amount of resources I believe it plays a central role in assisting the firm to provide a consistent high quality service and maintain its reputation in the community.*

## Question 4a.

Marks	0	1	Average
%	64	36	0.4

A disappointing number of students did not seem to understand the term 'work practice'. This issue has been raised in previous Assessment Reports. Students are reminded that they are expected to have an understanding of work practices and work organisation.

Following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*An innovative work practice used in my work placement at Whitehouse Professional Services was allowing a worker who had recently had a baby to return to work on a part time basis and undertake large parts of her work at home and send them to the office electronically.*

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## Question 4b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	20	25	33	23	1.6

Many students continued to struggle with the concept of innovation, frequently confusing it with initiative. Innovation is much more than simply doing what your employer wants or demonstrating the ability to work without close supervision. Given the importance of the concept to the study, students are encouraged to focus on this area. In addition, some students failed to address the second part of the question. Students are reminded of the need to develop strategies to ensure that they answer all parts of a question.

Following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*An innovative culture is one where employees are encouraged to try new or better ways to work. This mindset means that the value of innovation is woven into the daily activities of the workplace at all levels including in training. One way a workplace could encourage innovation is to adopt an open and collaborative approach to input from workers. This could be done by having regular team meetings where all workers consider real problems and issues and are assisted to develop and express problem solving strategies and are rewarded for this.*

## Question 4c.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	40	30	30	0.9

Employees may display innovation through (among other things) attempting to improve the efficiency of a process, developing a new way of doing something and finding ways to reduce costs by, for example, using resources more effectively. A small number of students made excellent use of their work placement to identify and explain how they had displayed innovation. Teachers may benefit from asking students to specifically address this concept during their work placement.

## Question 4d.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	24	11	22	24	19	2

A number of students identified innovations, such as computers, which were clearly outside the nominated 10 year time period. Students may be assisted if they develop timelines for innovation and technology. The question required students to identify an industry-wide innovation, not one for a particular workplace.

Following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*An innovation that has occurred in the last ten years in the retail industry is the widespread use of internet shopping. This innovation allows consumers to investigate available goods electronically and then to order and pay for the items without leaving home. The goods are then delivered to the consumer. This innovation has had significant benefits for many consumers, especially those who are very busy, house bound or live in remote areas. It not only allows consumers a greater range of choice but is easier to compare prices. This can be done in a very time efficient way. This method of shopping does have some costs including that consumers are not able to check the quality of goods and it can be difficult to ask questions about the suitability of goods. However responsible consumers are able to enjoy the advantages that this innovation offers.*

## Section B

Question chosen	None	1	2	3
%	2	11	66	22

### Part a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	9	14	31	20	26	2.4

### Part b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	13	18	18	13	12	7	19	2.9

In this section students were required to answer one of the three options. Students needed to use either their work placement or detailed knowledge of an industry or workplace to illustrate key parts of their response. Before answering questions, students are strongly advised to make sure that their 'real' example provides sufficient scope for the question asked.



**Question 1a.**

Students were able to select any of the employability skills identified in the preamble to the study design. Better responses demonstrated a broad and precise knowledge of the selected skill. Some students confused employability skills with either enterprise skills or key competencies. Students are reminded that, despite the complementary nature of enterprise skills, key competencies and employability skills, they are expected to be able to differentiate between them.

**Question 1b.**

Many students made powerful use of their work placement to analyse the application and development of employability skills. These students wrote with honesty about their experience of work. In general, they approached the question by identifying a range of employability skills and outlining how they had developed them. Their comments were reflective and thoughtful and showed great understanding and insight.

**Question 2a.**

This was once again a popular topic. Students identified a range of workplace technologies encountered during their work placement or study. This included information and communication technologies as well as machinery and robotics relevant to specific industries. Students needed to be careful that the example they selected allowed them to write an answer to a four mark question.

Following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*A type of workplace technology that I am familiar with are the developments in internet based information technologies. This technology requires a number of resources including home computers or laptops; printers and high speed internet connections. Other resources, including e cameras and white boards, can enhance this growing type of workplace technology. Once these resources are available a worker is able to communicate and engage with others who have access to similar resources. This means that work can be completed in a variety of settings, without physical presence, in real time. This may take a number of forms. For example a worker may complete a variety of tasks away from the workplace and send them to the workplace. The communication frequently takes the form of text but it is not limited to this. In addition video conferencing allows verbal communication, graphics can also be shared and software is available to allow workers in different locations to collaborate on the preparation of tables. Technology exists to translate communication into other languages and for multiple users to contribute simultaneously.*

**Question 2b.**

This question required students to consider the impact of the type of technology on the work practices and work organisation of an industry. It was not appropriate to comment on the impact of the technology on external stakeholders. Students are reminded that the examination requires them to apply their knowledge within the context of a specific question and not to produce a series of prepared points. Better answers discussed the impact of the type of technology, identified in Question 2a., on work practices and then on work organisation. This framework provided students with the best model to address all required aspects.

Following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*This type of technology has had a number of impacts on industries using it. ABS data shows that 2.3 million people work some hours at home. Many of these workers are teleworkers. The telecommunications industry is one example of an industry which adopted this technology. For example, Nortel is one firm in this industry making extensive use of this innovation. Approximately 8% of Nortel's workers work from home on a full time basis while another 65% complete some work activities using telecommuting. Firms adopting internet based technologies for telecommuting noticed changes in both their work practices and work organisation. The actual changes in these variables depended on the organisational structure and culture of individual firms. However in general changes in work organisation included a reduction in the need for physical work spaces like offices and associated facilities. Nortel has saved approximately \$22million in annual real estate and associated facilities. Firms have founds that they needed to audit their job descriptions and workplace agreements to ensure that they supported the innovation. For many firms this included a increase the level and availability of IT support. The role and nature of training also needed to change to ensure that workers were able to access and efficiently use the technology including in a safe way. Management needed to monitor implementation so that all required tasks were completed and that there was adequate storage of sensitive client information. Work practices needed to be adjusted to enhance the role of communication. In general regular teleconferencing has been introduced so that key workers can share information and learning. Some managers found it difficult to adapt to the lack of direct supervision. In many cases this was resolved by increasing the use of 360 degree feedback. Overall all workers had to adopt an innovative and flexible approach to the opportunity that was provided. Since implementation many firms in the industry have reported a reduction in staff turnover and an improvement in staff satisfaction and productivity.*

**Question 3a.**

Students were required to identify and outline the key features of an industry-wide quality system or process. The study design specifically refers to quality control, quality assurance and quality management. Better responses quickly



identified both the quality system or process and the industry. They then developed a number of points to describe the key features. Finally, they made explicit links between the nominated quality system and the industry.

Following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*Quality is the ability to produce and deliver goods and services which meet a customer's expectations and are consistently reliable. One example of a quality system or process is quality assurance. Quality Assurance is a process through which an organisation achieves a benchmark level in all aspects of the quality of the good or service they provide. The most widely used standard is ISO 9000. The quality assurance process focuses on the productive process as well as any finished product. Once the standard is verified by an external body the organisation is entitled to use the well known quality ticks. This type of quality control is widely used in the manufacturing industry where I completed my workplacement.*

**Question 3b.**

In general, students were confident in answering this question. Responses identified a range of stakeholders including employers, workers, shareholders, customers and suppliers. The most commonly mentioned stakeholders were customers and workers. Responses then discussed the various effects that the quality system or process had on each stakeholder group. Better responses came to an overall conclusion about the effect on the nominated stakeholder.

Following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*The widespread use of Quality Assurance in the manufacturing industry has had a number of effects on a variety of stakeholders. In general these very positive and assisted workplaces in the industry to achieve outcomes. Firstly, employers needed to provide an environment which supported quality. This often involved developing and implementing training and assessment of training. Policies and procedures frequently needed to be revised. These changes necessitated a reorganisation of time and the allocation of money to provide them. However the improvements in quality often led to a reduction in accidents and lost time and an improvement in customers' satisfaction and demand for their products. A second stakeholder group effected was employees. In my workplacement some employees resented changes to quality control as they felt that it increased their workload as they had to undertake more training and take a more active role in the productive process. However they did appreciate the fact that the increased training may make them more employable. Customers were another stakeholder group who benefited from the new system. The use of an internationally recognised credential provides quick and reliable information to consumers making their decision making easier. The cost of the program may increase the price of the product and this would be a negative to some consumers.*