



GENERAL COMMENTS

The 2013 VCE VET Business examination assessed the essential knowledge and an understanding of the essential skills outlined in the elements and performance criteria of the following units of competency.

- BSBWOR301B Organise personal work priorities and development
- BSBINM301A Organise workplace information
- BSBITU306A Design and produce business documents
- BSBINN301A Promote innovation in a team environment

The 2013 examination comprised two sections: Section A, which contained multiple-choice questions, and Section B, which contained short-answer questions and a scenario.

Students who had prepared well achieved good results. However, the responses in this year's examination once more demonstrated a lack of business language when answering questions. Responses to questions often required greater detail to show an understanding of the knowledge acquired through the study. Students are encouraged to read a question several times to comprehend all of its requirements. Following instructions is an integral part of business practice.

The following approaches continue to be used when assessing students' responses.

- The competencies taught and being assessed relate to the business industry; therefore, the language used needs to reflect that industry. Responses such as circling an entire section in Question 1a. were not specific enough. Responses such as 'to ensure that everything required is inserted in the document' when responding to Question 1b. were inadequate, and 'bumps along the way' for Question 16 was not appropriate.
- Responses that did not address the subject of the question were not given any marks. Responses must be clear and relate to the question.
- If contradictory answers were given, no marks were awarded.
- If a question asked for a number of examples or reasons to be given and the student gave more than was required and no answers had been crossed out, only the required number of answers was considered. For example, if three responses were required and four responses were given, only the first three responses were assessed.

Students and teachers should also note the following information.

- Students should be encouraged to read the units of competency as well as the textbooks to gain more understanding of the course structure.
- Students need to use the reading time prior to the commencement of the examination to carefully read through the paper several times.
- Students should read each question again before answering and may benefit from underlining key words to ensure that their answers are clear and relate to the question asked.
- Students should attempt to answer all questions.
- The question should not be repeated in the answer as this wastes time and space.
- The space provided and the marks allocated should be used as a guide to the length of the answer required.
- Students should re-read their answers before submitting their papers.



SPECIFIC INFORMATION

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

This report provides sample answers or an indication of what answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

The statistics in this report may be subject to rounding errors resulting in a total less than 100 per cent.

Section A – Multiple-choice questions

The table below indicates the percentage of students who chose each option. The correct answer is indicated by shading.

Question	% A	% B	% C	% D
1	18	51	9	22
2	86	5	5	4
3	11	38	44	7
4	10	14	12	63
5	52	2	44	3
6	13	78	3	6
7	2	0	94	4
8	15	1	4	79
9	2	1	88	9
10	11	12	3	74
11	62	15	7	16
12	3	5	3	88
13	18	2	79	1
14	85	7	3	4
15	2	90	6	2
16	9	50	37	4
17	42	20	22	16
18	8	76	8	7
19	14	65	9	13
20	7	83	9	1

Section B – Short-answer questions

Question 1a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Mean
%	6	5	8	25	56	3.2

- The date should have been 18/11.
- Rego should have been BAE 567.
- Total Payment should have been \$750.50.
- Method should have been cheque.

McMahon was also accepted as the ‘n’ was in a different font.

Question 1b.

Marks	0	1	Average
%	28	72	0.7

Any of

- for readability, accuracy and consistency in language, style and layout
- to ensure documents meet organisational requirements
- to maintain a professional appearance.

This question was answered well.

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Question 1c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	17	30	39	14	1.5

Any three of

- finance or banking problems, as cash and cheques would not balance
- problems monitoring vehicle movements if the registration was not correct
- customers may not return, which would not be good for the company's reputation
- potential legal action
- gives an unprofessional impression.

Question 2

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	27	21	52	1.3

Email (any of)

- for informal communication
- for urgency/speed
- when sending electronic attachments

Business letter (any of)

- for a formal letter
- to meet legal requirements
- following policy and procedures
- at a client's request
- if a client does not have access to email

Some students provided reasons that applied to both email and business letters, such as when you need to attach documents. This response was not awarded a mark.

Question 3

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	21	17	23	22	17	2.0

Four parts of a letter from the following were required. A letter part and correct description needed to be provided to receive a mark.

Part	Function
date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • legal requirement • indicates when letter was produced (not necessarily sent)
salutation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • courtesy greeting • depends on the formality of the letter; for example, Dear Sir or Dear John
inside name and address	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • included to ensure that the correct person receives the correct letter and that the letter corresponds to the envelope
body of letter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • purpose of the letter
complimentary close	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • indicates the end of the letter • courtesy ending, depending upon the formality of the letter; for example, Yours faithfully or Yours sincerely
signature panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • allows room for the author to sign the letter and the typed name helps to identify the signature if it is obscure
enclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • indicates to the reader that there is an enclosure with the letter

A well-formatted business letter conveys professionalism and attention to detail, ensuring the customer that the company has knowledge of business communication practices and is able to reply to the sender with all the appropriate information.

Some students' responses demonstrated a good knowledge of business letters. Other students confused letter parts with parts of a report, gave no responses at all or were unable to label a particular part of a letter correctly.

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Question 4

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	17	10	17	15	22	12	6	2.8

Columns

- description: a structure to organise data known as fields; a grouping of cells that run from the top to the bottom of a page; text is formatted in short lines going down the page; sections run side-by-side
- example: telephone list; price list; newspaper article; newsletters

Footers

- description: appear in the bottom margin of a document to provide information about the document
- example: page numbering; date; filename; author

Merging

- description: a procedure used to create multiple personalised documents from a single main document and a list of variables
- example: client letters for appointments; standardised paragraphs, for example, in a Will; client invoices

This question was poorly answered. One mark was awarded for each of the three descriptions of the functions and one mark for each of the three examples of the functions.

Question 5

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	4	4	11	26	55	3.3

Part	Purpose
cover sheet	It is the first part of a report that the reader will see, so it should be clear, concise and eye-catching.
table of contents	Enables the reader to see where a particular section of the report can be located.
abstract or executive summary	Gives an overview of the contents of the report. This is read first to determine whether to read on.
introduction	Introduces the report and its parts.
body of report	Contains the full details of the report – the topics and ideas.
conclusion	Summarises the report contents.
recommendations	Makes suggestions for further action.
bibliography	List of references used in compiling the reports.
appendices	Attachments to the report. Can include tables, charts, diagrams, or other material not included in the body of the report.

Students needed to provide four parts of a report and a correct description in order to receive full marks.

Question 6a.

Marks	0	1	Average
%	16	84	0.9

Any of

- word processing
- desktop publishing.

Microsoft Office was not an acceptable answer. This question was answered well.

Question 6b.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	18	33	49	1.3

Appropriate software packages included: spreadsheet package such as Excel or desktop-publishing package such as Publisher.

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One mark was available for the features required of the software package. Unfortunately, most students repeated the stem of the question; for example, images, tables and text. Few students included formulas in their answers.

The second mark was awarded for why these features would be needed. Some students did not read the question well and failed to answer the part about technology.

Question 7

Marks	0	1	Average
%	49	51	0.5

Acceptable responses included

- Publisher
- Front Page
- Macro Media Dreamweaver
- Ninja Web Design.

Chrome was not accepted as this is a browser.

Question 8

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	5	38	57	1.5

Any two of

- it is required by law in order to safeguard and protect workers from hazards and risks of injury
- to ensure technology is used appropriately to avoid damage to the equipment or injury to workers
- to inform workers of appropriate safety procedures in case of emergency
- to maintain productive and safe working conditions.

Students must ensure that their examples do not mean the same thing; for example, 'to minimise accidents' and 'to ensure employees are not in danger of accidents'. Answers such as 'to ensure everyone is safe' were too general and did not exhibit appropriate business language.

Question 9a.

Marks	0	1	Average
%	88	12	0.1

Folders that have been placed on a network for selected groups of people to access

This question was poorly answered. Students were confused between the terms 'folder' and 'files'. Many student responses described the function of the shared directory rather than the definition.

Question 9b.

Marks	0	1	Average
%	49	51	0.5

Any one of

- to avoid losing or misfiling electronic documents
- work is less likely to be duplicated
- documents on the same or related subjects are located together
- documents are quick and easy to access.

Question 10a.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	33	37	30	1.0

Any two of

- discuss goals and how to achieve them
- identify tasks to be completed in order to achieve set goals
- identify task measures (quantifiable and time-limited)
- determine whether goals are short term or long term

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- budget limitations
- use SMART technique (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-framed).

Question 10b.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	23	32	45	1.2

Any two of

- goals
- objectives
- staff involved
- facilities/equipment needed
- timelines
- priorities/deadlines
- other tasks requiring completion.

Question 11

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	7	16	36	40	2.1

Area	Explanation
privacy	Being aware of privacy laws can help an individual or group to stop information about themselves from becoming known to people other than those they choose to give the information to. It is important to protect the privacy of those you work with and also of your customers.
codes of practice	It is necessary to be aware of the code of practice relating to your employment as it provides practical guidance on work health and safety requirements and how to achieve the standards required under the <i>Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004</i> .
ethical principles	To ensure that you follow the guidelines set by your employer and promote values such as trust, good behaviour, fairness and/or kindness to those you come in contact with.
anti-discrimination	To avoid discrimination in the workplace. The Act covers avoiding discrimination on the basis of age, race, sex, pregnancy, marital status and disability. To ensure that you, as a worker, are not discriminating against others while at work, or being discriminated against while at work.
occupational health and safety	It is important to know that there is an Act that has been set up to protect the health and safety of all workers, irrespective of where they are employed. It is the responsibility of the employee as much as it is the responsibility of the employer to make sure the workplace health and safety guidelines are followed to minimise risk of illness or injury.

One mark was available for each of three explanations. No marks were awarded for writing just an area from the list above. Knowledge of legislation and its application to work practices was poorly explained. Many students used simple terms or repeated the stem such as 'people need to respect each other's privacy'.

Question 12

It was evident that many students had not studied the unit and many students did not attempt some questions.

Question 12a.

Marks	0	1	Average
%	41	59	0.6

Key Performance Indicator

Many students were not familiar with this term despite it being included in the latest version of the unit of competency.

Question 12b.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	45	31	24	0.8

Any two of

- time taken to deal with a customer or telephone call

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- number of customer complaints or positive responses
- knowledge of or following company procedures/protocols
- appropriate behaviour – speech towards customers, engaging interaction or helpful advice offered
- repeat business
- quality assurance assessments
- workplace skills assessment
- sales target
- how well they have met a budget.

Question 12c.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	59	28	13	0.6

Any two of

- identify areas of further training needs
- employee assistance programs
- positive performance appraisal
- possible acknowledgment
- promotion
- extra duties or a pay rise
- awareness raising
- goal setting
- encourage personal reflection
- identify strengths and weaknesses
- how to improve.

Many students repeated their answer for Question 12b. in Question 12c.

Question 13a.

Marks	0	1	Average
%	17	83	0.9

Any one of

- workload: difficult, increasing, high expectations, competing demands and responsibilities, absence of colleagues, timelines, new technology, new procedures, poor resources, equipment failures
- personal: personality conflicts, difficult colleagues or clients, cultural issues and sensitivities, work and family demands, inadequate training or suitability for tasks.

This question was well answered. Incorrect answers listed symptoms of stress rather than sources of stress.

Question 13b.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	7	31	61	1.6

Any two of

- absenteeism
- high staff turnover
- poor morale
- interpersonal conflicts
- decreased efficiency/productivity
- illness – physical or emotional issues including lack of sleep
- behavioural issues
- lack of motivation
- poor performance
- substance abuse
- poor customer service.

Many students demonstrated an understanding of this area. A messy desk was an unacceptable response.

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Question 14

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	13	39	48	1.4

Any two of

- other work demands
- availability of resources and materials
- unforeseen circumstances – hazards, lack of knowledge of the task, missing details
- lack of time allocated to tasks
- idle chatter
- personal use of computer.

Some students used the response ‘stress’ from the previous answer to answer this question.

Question 15a.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	35	45	20	0.9

Any two of

- industry journals
- company’s customers
- company’s intranet
- Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Student responses tended to be general, such as ‘face-to-face conversations or interviews’. A one-word response without further explanation (such as ‘Managers’) was unacceptable.

Question 15b.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	55	36	9	0.6

Suggested answers included

- research sites and gather information on products, services, businesses, groups and individuals
- research legal or government publications and regulations
- through discussion forums, newsgroups, blogs
- access competitors’ and manufacturers’ sites
- social sites such as Twitter and Facebook
- online forms.

Students needed to focus on ‘how’ the internet could be used to collect sources of primary data. An in-depth description/explanation was awarded two marks, while bullet-point responses without appropriate explanation could only achieve one mark in total. Understanding of primary and secondary sources in relation to business was not strong and this question was poorly handled.

Question 15c.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	29	40	31	1.1

Suggested answers

- check information for relevance, timeliness (date) and accuracy by comparing different versions or copies
- clarify or check on the sources – authors of the information
- consider the experience or perspective of the source of information
- could check signatures and credentials of authors
- verify with someone in authority
- use refereed articles only

An in-depth description/explanation was awarded two marks, while bullet-point responses without appropriate explanation achieved one mark in total. ‘Bias’ was an unacceptable response.

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Question 16

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	15	45	40	1.3

Any two of

- it is a legal requirement
- to uphold the *Privacy Act*
- to maintain the integrity of documents and the organisation
- so that all staff are following the same procedures/protocol
- to reduce customer complaints
- to reduce the need to fix problems associated with not following quality guidelines
- to reduce the need to give/repeat day-to-day instructions
- to reduce the time needed to improve processes and systems.

Responses required business terminology. Responses such as 'Not to fall into the wrong hands' were unacceptable.

Question 17a.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	29	51	21	0.9

Any two of

- set a regular time for filing
- create new files rather than overfilling existing files
- return files to the cabinet as soon as possible
- cull files as required
- pay attention to occupational health and safety issues; for example, close filing cabinet drawers when not in use and don't store files where they could be tripped over
- follow a retention schedule
- ensure that files are neat and follow an organised system.

Question 17b.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	24	45	31	1.1

Any two of

- shred unnecessary documents
- archive old documents
- scan documents for electronic storage
- store legal documents offsite
- introduce an electronic storage filing system
- use electronic communication.

A number of students responded 'buy a computer', but this was an unacceptable response.

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Question 18a.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	6	38	56	1.5

Any two of

- managers discussed the need to continue to grow with staff and sought staff input into decision-making
- managers held regular team meetings to check on progress
- managers encouraged ownership of staff ideas and promoted a sense of self-worth by rewarding a monthly chosen idea
- managers listened to their staff
- managers passed on information they obtained through professional development and held training sessions during working hours to disseminate this information
- staff were able to discuss problems with management
- staff felt trusted and valued
- self-worth was promoted through management's involvement and encouragement
- experimentation with the idea was encouraged in order to foster innovation
- managers developed a positive corporate culture that developed and promoted innovation.

Question 18b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	20	24	33	15	7	1.7

Appropriate definitions

- the sum total of the strengths of the team; that is, knowing what each team member is good at and working to those strengths to encourage innovative practice
- the interactions that influence the attitudes and behaviour of people when they are grouped with others

Reasons why it is important

- members benefit from the expertise of one another and gather strength and focus to seek innovative ways of working
- cooperation and respect are fostered, which helps bond people together to work towards the goal
- the combination of personalities encourages team members to reach their potential and to explore innovative ideas

One mark was awarded for an adequate definition, or two marks for a thorough definition. The remaining two marks were awarded for two valid reasons. Many students provided a basic definition only. It was evident that students were unfamiliar with the definition and lacked an understanding of why group dynamics is important.

Question 18c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	5	17	35	43	2.2

Suggested answers

- management discussed with staff the need for innovating in a very competitive industry and encouraged staff to participate by encouraging combined input between management and staff
- staff were encouraged to hold weekly meetings, put forward their ideas, vote upon them and then put these forward to management for discussion and feedback
- incentives were encouraged by management through the development of an 'innovative champions' team and monthly rewards for best ideas
- staff were allowed to 'test' out ideas before money was committed to a final product. This showed a willingness by management to listen to ideas
- management listened to ideas and staff advice and did not tolerate poor work behaviour
- management provided role models of best practice methods and work behaviour and, by listening to staff, morale was boosted as each staff member felt they had made a difference to helping company expansion/profitability
- incentives were encouraged by management and rewards given
- training sessions
- positive feedback from managers

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The focus of this question was on 'how' the managers inspired the staff to work effectively and an explanation of this.

Question 18d.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	35	28	25	12	1.2

Suggested answers

- management rejecting ideas without giving reasons why
- lack of cooperation between team members
- lack of trust between management and staff
- staff not understanding why it was necessary to work innovatively within the team
- inadequate funding
- risk avoidance
- siloing – working within departments but not as a whole towards the company objectives
- time commitments
- incorrect measures taken
- resistance to change
- conflict among team members

Three reasons or examples were needed for the three marks.

Question 18e.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	14	34	52	1.4

Suggested answers included (any two of)

- weekly team meetings where staff were able to present their ideas
- feedback provided to staff on suggestions made
- managers encouraged personal ownership of ideas and promoted a sense of self-worth by listening to ideas that had been voted upon by staff
- managers provided role models by modelling desired behaviour themselves (listening to, and respecting, each other)
- managers provided feedback to staff on professional development they had attended so that staff became aware of latest trends/ideas
- set of criteria
- staff attended training sessions run by management

Question 18f.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	41	41	16	2	0.8

Suggested answers

- weekly meetings to discuss ideas
- voting on ideas weekly
- presentation of ideas monthly to management – being able to answer questions as to why/how ideas would work requires reflection

This question was poorly understood.

Question 18g.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	20	31	49	1.3

Any two of

- bonuses, pay rise, monetary
- gift vouchers
- certificates of commendation
- staff recognition morning tea
- employee of the month

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- recognition in newsletter articles
- promotion.

This question was understood and satisfactorily answered. However, there was evidence again that some students wrote the same answers in different ways such as 'monetary rewards' and 'pay rise' or simply repeated the question stem, such as 'provide a reward system'.