



VCE Exam Advice – Unit 3 & 4 Business Management

The Business Management Study Design has been re-written for 2017-2021. This now means that the examination has changed – there is a new format and students should familiarise themselves with that new format – the examination will now be marked out of 75 rather than 65. There have now been 3 exams in this format (2017, 2018 and 2019). There are two sections to the examination:

- Section A – short answer and extended response questions. This section will total 50 marks and is similar in structure to the previous examination format. It will have a range of questions, some with multiple parts, some based on short scenarios. There will be one 10-mark question requiring students to draw on knowledge from several areas of study, possibly across both Units 3 and 4.
- Section B – a case study. Students will be provided with a case study and will be expected to respond to a series of short answer and extended response questions. This section will total 25 marks

The first step to take in examination preparation is to make sure you know exactly what you need to revise. The best way to do this is to print a copy of the Units 3 and 4 Study Design, and work through the Key Knowledge points as your revision checklist. It sets out exactly what the examination can cover. Follow it carefully.

There are several Business Management revision guides available. Use these to support your own revision programme. When you have revised the whole course, start completing practice examinations and ask your teacher to mark them and provide feedback.

With the new Study Design there are now 3 past VCAA examinations that students can use (2017-2019) – some questions from past examinations (e.g. 2010-2016) will still be helpful and students should ask their teachers advice on which questions can be attempted. Once attempted, students should use the Assessment Report for guidance as to how the question was marked, common errors made by students and tips for answering similar questions.

Recommended Examination Papers:

- VCAA sample examination 2017
- NEAP trial exam 2017-2020
- CPAP Trial exam 2017-2020
- VCTA trial exams 2017-2020
- PES trial exams 2017-2020
- Insight trial exam 2017-2020
- VCAA exams 2010 – 2016: *Note - these exams follow the previous Study Design and while useful, need to be used cautiously so as not to use questions that are no longer relevant to the course.

Examination revision texts such as VCE Business Management Checkpoints 2020, published by Cambridge, provide an extensive range of past exam questions and invaluable advice regarding examination technique and examiner expectations.

Format of Examination

- Two hours long with 15 minutes reading time.
- This contributes to 50% of your total study score.
- The total marks are 75.
- Two sections in the exam: Section A 50 marks and Section B 25 marks
- Answer questions in the question and answer booklet.
- Answer all questions. **Note:** There is one 10 mark question in Section A. This question will now be drawn from **ANY** part of the course. (See sample questions on VCAA website.)
- Marks appear at the top of each question. **Note:** Read how many marks are allocated for each question before starting your answer.

After the introduction of the new Study Design for 2017, the exam is now worth 75 marks. As it is a two hour exam (120 minutes), time management will be critical to ensure you answer all questions, devoting the appropriate time for each question. Some questions may relate to stimulus material and it is very important that you utilise this information in your responses. Remember to only use responses that fit the stimulus material. For example, if a decision has already been made then you would not use decision-making as a follow up skill.

If the question is a 'stand-alone' question; that is, not related to any stimulus material, then be sure to answer the question in a theoretical sense.

Be aware and ensure you know exactly what you need to revise. The best way to do this is to print a copy of the Units 3 and 4 Study Design, and work through the Key Knowledge points as your revision checklist. It sets out exactly what the examination can cover. Follow it carefully.

VCAA guidelines inform students that the examination covers the key knowledge from Unit 3 and Unit 4. Each Unit is weighted equally in terms. This should be reflected in the examination.

Examination questions may relate to one or more areas of study. The weighting of examination questions will reflect approximately the weighting of the outcomes in the **adjusted** study design for 2020.

	Approximate % of Study Design	The VCE Business Management Adjusted Study Design for 2020 only	Approximate % of Study design as marks
Unit 3		SACs for Unit 3 will contribute 30% to the study score.	
Area of Study 1	10%		10
Area of Study 2	20%		17
Area of Study 3	20%	Total marks for Unit 3 SACs = 100	17
Unit 4		SACs for Unit 4 will contribute 20% to the study score.	
Area of Study 1	25%		19
Area of Study 2	(*15% Adjusted 2020)	Total marks for Unit 4 SACs = 80	12

The table indicates that Unit 3 Area of Study 1 accounts for 10% of the course (Outcome 1 weighting). This should be reflected as accounting for approximately 7-10 marks in the examination. For the 2020 examination, Unit 4 Area of Study 2 has had a significant amount of key knowledge deleted which is not examinable, and therefore the contribution of Unit 3 coursework increased to 30% and the contribution of Unit 4 coursework reduced to 20%. It is reasonable to expect slightly more questions from Unit 3 in the examination. Generally, the examination writers balance the examination fairly and students should direct their revision accordingly. This year: 2020 is an exception and with the adjusted study design, students should carefully practice all areas of the course.

Examination Technique

- Using reading time effectively (you have 15 minutes). The questions on the examination are generally quite short and so it is possible to read the examination at least three times. As you read through the examination each time identify the questions you will start with and the questions that will cause you the most difficulty.
- Don't write in this time. Take a deep breath and focus on reading the material carefully in the exam. It will calm your nerves.
- Read the instructions and check for parts/sections to the paper. Questions may combine topics from different outcomes and even units
- Read and reread each question carefully and check how many marks a question is worth before writing your answer.
- Don't 'jump' at questions where the topic seems familiar without looking for the underlying concepts involved.
- Decide the order in which you will answer questions. Students should start with the question they feel most comfortable with and should ensure they allocate their time wisely – spending too much time on difficult questions at the expense of 'easy' questions may not pay off in terms of marks gained versus marks lost.
- Look carefully at any stimulus material.
- Read the questions carefully! Three reasons why students score zero marks on a question are:
 1. A lack of knowledge on a topic.
 2. Failing to answer what the question is asking.
 3. Running out of time.
- It is easier for the examiners to understand what you are saying if your writing and expression are clear. If they can't read and understand your answer, they can't give you credit for what you have written.
- Students should start with the question they feel most comfortable with and should ensure they allocate their time wisely – spending too much time on difficult questions at the expense of 'easy' questions may not pay off in terms of marks gained versus marks lost.
- Stay calm. Relax.
- Understand the meaning of these key TASK WORDS in questions:



BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Analyse, Apply, Compare, Define, Describe, Discuss, Distinguish, Explain, Evaluate, Examine, Identify, Interpret, Justify, Outline, Propose,

- Recognise which Task Words are used most often. Identify the key words that are used in examinations and their frequency.

Some task words are used more often than others – Explain, Describe, Justify and Discuss.

Some task words are associated with certain mark allocations – explain tends to be used for questions worth 2, 3 or 4 marks and discuss is used for questions worth 6+ marks.

- DON'T write in POINT FORM – no matter if you run out of time. Point form answers will not gain marks.
- DON'T use diagrams in your answers.
- A good way to structure 'Discuss' for most topics is to divide your answer into strengths and weaknesses (**on the one hand a strength of ...is... whilst on the other hand a weakness is...**) Always provide a strength then a weakness in your response so if you run out of time you will at least have provided a point on both sides of the argument and so will be able to access more marks. This is the same for 'Evaluate' however, you must also make an overall judgement as a conclusion when answering 'Evaluate'.
- Remember – the examination provides 4 lines for each mark for each question. Students are expected to use all the space provided. If you only use half the space then you likely to only be answering half the question and therefore may only be able to access half the marks allocated.
- Use a highlighter to highlight key words in the question. While you can't use a highlighter during Reading time, once writing time starts you are able to highlight key terms or words in the question. Do this and refer back to those highlighted terms to ensure your response is directed at the question.

Don't highlight the Task Word – you should know the Task Word. Highlight the next 'key word'. See the examples below:

Q1a 2015: Outline the **purpose** of a policy.

Q1c 2015: Justify a management style that would be **appropriate** for the management of Swanston Airlines to use when **implementing** its new policy.

The highlighted words are the terms students often gloss over and so don't always answer the questions correctly. Students should also avoid highlighting too much – the highlighting then loses its emphasis.

- DON'T re-write the question – assessors know the question and it is written on the page for you. It takes up valuable space and time.

If you are a student who struggles to not re-write the question, try stating the question in your head and then start writing.

Trial Exam Tips

When completing trial or practice exams the 'Top 6' tips for completing them are:

1. Complete them under examination conditions. Resist the temptation to look at your notes or check the solutions.
2. Don't 'take 5 minutes' to check your text messages or Facebook. Don't get up and get a drink or a snack. Let your parents know you are doing a trial examination so they don't interrupt you.

3. Ask your teacher to correct them for you – feedback is important.
4. You should be aiming to complete a minimum of 10 practice examinations before the actual examination.
5. Develop a timetable for yourself for completion of these practice examinations.
6. Where possible, complete these exams at the same time of day as the actual VCAA exam so you get used to sitting an exam at that time.

General Examination Advice

1. Prepare Diagrams/Flow Charts to help make it easier to remember key points in key topics. An example is: **The Employment Cycle**.
2. Prepare Tables to allow you to summarise and compare information on a topic – particularly useful for areas where a comparison or evaluation is required. An example is:

Maslow v Locke & Latham v Lawrence & Nohria Motivation Theories

3. Once prepared, these Diagrams/Flow Charts and Tables can be stuck on the wall where you study and can be referred to daily, just as a check. Or, take them down and give to your parents/brother/sister and ask them to quiz you. They don't need to know Business Management to do this and they can feel as though they are involved.
4. Revise your SACs. SAC tasks are like mini-exams. Ask your teacher for copies of the SAC questions and practice completing them – under test conditions.

Things to Avoid

- Avoid planning for specific questions to be on the exam.
- Management styles and skills seem to be a common problem area, as students are often unable to remember which is which.
- Avoid abbreviations.
- Avoid dot points.
- Avoid pre-prepared answers.

Mindset of an Assessor

Assessors tend to be teachers and as a result will mark papers after school or on weekends. Remember the following rules in the exam and your assessors will appreciate reading your paper. These are called the 1% Rules...

- Paragraphing.
- Use linking words such as firstly, secondly, another, etc.
- Always use stimulus material or examples where possible.
- Presentation is important in other words writing and expression should be clear and easy to read.

Final Suggestions

1. Bring plenty of new pens to write with – black or blue. Coloured pens might be fine for class or home but can be difficult to read and so shouldn't be used.
2. No white out – if you make a mistake or wish to add something in – use arrows or the space at the bottom of the page or the extra writing space provided at the back of the Question and Answer Booklet. Make sure if you do this you direct the Assessor to look there by using a highlighter and stating something like 'Continued at back of book'.
3. Bring a highlighter.
4. If a question seems too difficult do not panic! Move on to an easier question.
5. Be early to exam but don't sit with others discussing the potential questions. It may cause you to panic.
6. Drink plenty of water but stop about 30 minutes before the exam, go to the bathroom before you go into the exam room so you don't need to go during the exam.
7. Avoid studying on the day of the exam.
8. Enjoy the experience!

More subject specific advice will be issued to students at our "VCE Exam Revision Lectures".

Good luck with your exam preparations!
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vce exam highlights

COMPREHENSIVE EXAM REVISION LECTURES

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