

GENERAL COMMENTS

The 2014 VCE VET Business examination assessed the elements, performance criteria and underpinning knowledge and skills in the following units of competency.

- BSBWOR301B Organise personal work priorities and development
- BSBINM301A Organise workplace information
- BSBITU306A Design and produce business documents
- BSBPRO301A Recommend products and services
- BSBCUS301B Deliver and monitor a service to customers

The 2014 examination comprised two sections: Section A, which contained multiple-choice questions, and Section B, which contained written responses, including a case study.

Students attempted to answer most questions in the examination. The use of business language to answer questions was good.

Students should avoid answering questions with one word or one phrase unless it is necessary, such as in a list. Responses to questions should be clear and succinct, but show the necessary detail to demonstrate an understanding of the knowledge acquired through the study. Students are encouraged to read a question carefully and respond to what has been asked. Students should avoid simply writing what they have learnt; instead, they should write responses linked to given scenarios and case studies. Reading time should be utilised, and students should read a question several times if necessary to comprehend all of its requirements. The ability to follow instructions is an integral part of business practice.

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

- The competencies that are taught and being assessed relate to the business industry, therefore, the language used by students needs to reflect that industry.
- When responses to questions requiring more than one example are the same or the equivalent, full marks cannot be awarded. For example, surveys and questionnaires were considered the same in Question 13, as were colleague and manager in Question 7a.
- Responses that did not address the subject of the question were not given any marks.
- General responses that did not demonstrate the specific knowledge required were not given any marks.
- 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 and understand all of the units of competency, including the range statement, and reference several textbooks to gain greater understanding of the program structure.
- Scenarios provided as part of a question in the examination paper are not an answer source for a different question in the same paper.
- Students need to take care to use the reading time prior to the commencement of the examination to read through the paper several times.
- Students should read each question again before answering it; they 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 for clarity before handing in their papers.

SPECIFIC 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 resulting in a total more or 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	2	2	3	94
2	2	78	2	18
3	15	72	6	8
4	4	4	4	88
5	92	0	6	2
6	4	6	86	4
7	75	2	18	5
8	21	54	21	4
9	9	13	67	11
10	7	3	23	67
11	89	3	5	3
12	2	11	86	1
13	3	87	2	8
14	16	12	14	58
15	92	3	3	3
16	8	14	46	31
17	2	8	83	7
18	79	5	11	5
19	5	5	12	78
20	12	7	2	79

Section B – Short-answer questions

Question 1

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	21	33	29	17	1.4

Term	Definition
<i>goal</i>	broad purpose or aim; long-term aim; what you are wanting to achieve within a timeframe
<i>objective</i>	gives clear direction and targets; short-term aim; steps/tasks required to achieve a goal
<i>legislation</i>	Act of Parliament; statute

Students had difficulty distinguishing between a goal and an objective. ‘Government Act’ was not accepted as the definition for ‘legislation’.

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Question 2a.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	17	30	53	1.4

The self-review can assist the administrative assistant in the following ways (two of):

- to be able to realistically accept their own strengths and weaknesses and acknowledge the areas that could benefit from improvement
- to understand or reflect on their own abilities and areas they are not good at
- to rate the quality of their own work
- by providing evidence of appropriateness of training that has been undertaken or is required.

This question was answered well.

Question 2b.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	41	32	28	0.9

Any two of:

- a program such as a certificate in first aid or customer service (conflict management was also acceptable)
- training, mentoring/coaching, peer support or a course relevant to their work, such as equal employment opportunities (EEO), occupational health and safety (OH&S) and anti-discrimination laws
- reading training manuals (not just books)
- internship.

Question 3

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	26	40	29	5	1.2

- section break: it allows for different layout within a document, including different headers, footers or page orientation
- paste: it allows you to copy and then insert, or include, images or text (and/or data/tables/information) into your document or relocate text or images within a document; quicker production
- bullets/numbering: applied to lists, these make the document easier to read and draw the reader's attention to certain points

Most students lacked knowledge of section breaks and could not describe how they assist in the production of a document.

Question 4

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	11	20	69	1.6

Any two of:

- company logo
- photos
- description of the business
- description of the products and services
- a map of where the business is located
- an update about current promotions/products/events
- contact details
- forum
- feedback section, including positive feedback about the company
- catalogue.

Students' answers demonstrated that they had a good understanding of this area. 'Customer service charter' was not accepted.

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Question 5a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	38	20	21	21	1.3

- It describes the way the organisation wants all publications and correspondence presented. Among other things, it covers the font and font size to be used; how documents such as letters and reports are to be presented; how emails should read in terms of greetings and salutations; and how the company logo should be used. It is the house style.
- It ensures that individuals in the organisation take a uniform approach to professionally presenting business information.
- It saves time and cost in preparing documents.

Students struggled to explain what a style guide was, but could adequately demonstrate its benefits.

Question 5b.

Marks	0	1	Average
%	35	65	0.7

A thesaurus can assist when composing a business document, because it adds to professionalism by:

- avoiding repetition
- providing alternatives to words in documents to improve writing.

This question was answered well.

Question 6

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	49	40	11	0.6

Any two of:

- power outage
- recipient's inbox is full
- attachments are too large
- firewall blocks email
- server is down
- blocked by administrator
- blocked by virus blocking system.

This question offered students the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge by providing answers using business terminology; however, this question was not answered well. Some students made reference to incorrect email addresses, which they were specifically asked to avoid (incorrect address included all forms – wrong address, old address, etc.). Other incorrect answers included 'recipient was away from desk, on holiday or unavailable', as the email would still be delivered to their system. If the email goes to a junk mail or spam folder, they have also received it. Another incorrect answer was 'slow internet connection'.

Question 7a.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	26	45	29	1.1

Any two of:

- training or procedures manual
- help desk
- colleagues/manager
- 'Help' button in Word document
- FAQs in Word document.

Incorrect answers included:

- the style guide
- look at previous or old templates
- Organisational Policies and Procedures.

Students are reminded not to include the same resource using a different name; for example, colleague and manager.

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Question 7b.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	20	39	41	1.2

Any two of:

- document planning and design has already been undertaken to ensure efficient entry of information
- it maximises the presentation and unifies the appearance of information
- it preserves corporate style/professional image
- it is cost- and time-saving – documents are already formatted and styled according to policy
- it increases productivity as the document body has already been created
- increased readability
- neat format
- simplifies document creation
- it is easy because the design is already there.

Many students were able to identify the benefits; however, some students missed out on marks because they included ‘consistency’ in their answers, which was already provided. Students are reminded to read the question carefully. ‘Easy to use’ was not acceptable.

Question 7c.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	44	37	19	0.8

Students needed to name a convention and provide an example of a filename. Possible answers included:

- the filename should describe the contents of the document
- logical/meaningful
- not too long
- includes version control.

Examples of filenames are lettertemp and accttemp.

Students struggled with naming conventions; however, some reasonable filename examples were given.

Question 7d.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	69	16	15	0.5

A shared directory, so that all office staff can access it

Students struggled to identify shared directory as the answer. It is important to have an understanding of a shared directory, as they are widely used in business.

Question 8

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	41	45	14	0.8

Any two of:

- the file can be opened even if they do not have the same software used to create the original document
- PDF files are more secure, with password capability
- PDF files have signature capability
- PDF files cannot be edited or changed without authority or appropriate software.

Many students could identify one advantage only.

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Questions 9ai.–ii.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	23	49	27	1.1

Question 9ai.

A line graph plots changes over time or to compare statistics

Student responses were generalised, such as ‘the line chart shows increases and decreases’, but this question required detailed information.

Question 9aii.

Any of: column or bar chart, table, scatter chart or area chart, as they all show data over time.

This question was generally answered well. ‘Graph’ alone was not accepted.

Question 9b.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	11	6	82	1.7

Any two of:

- customers respond well to text messaging
- posted mail is not an effective method of communicating with clients
- emails are an effective way of communicating with clients.

Students demonstrated a good understanding of this question.

Question 10a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	13	21	33	33	1.9

Question 10b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	15	19	31	34	1.9

Task	Equipment	Input or output device?
1.	photocopier	output
2.	printer/photocopier	output
3.	scanner/photocopier/printer	input

In each case, one piece of equipment (for example, just ‘photocopier’) was acceptable. Where students listed more than one piece of equipment, the first item only was marked. ‘Computer’ was unacceptable, as it was not specific enough to answer the question.

Many students had difficulty distinguishing between output and input.

Question 11a.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	60	28	12	0.5

Any two of:

- the needs of the organisation
- the accommodation of further growth
- who will need access to the files
- what level of security will be required
- what types of documents will be stored
- filenames should be consistent
- what types of directories will be required.

Some students were able to identify one issue to consider when designing an electronic filing system; however, others answered the question as if they were asked to design a paper-based filing system, which was incorrect.

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Question 11b.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	21	37	43	1.2

- Back up: To save data, in case of computer crash, virus or simple loss of file
- Archive: Easier to find current information or files/less time and space to backup files/legal requirements

This question was generally answered well.

Question 12

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	19	33	48	1.3

A social media network can be used as an effective contact point between an organisation and its customers. Possible answers included:

- It is effective as it allows the organisation to be very current, photos can be included and communication to and from the client can occur in a very timely fashion.
- Allows customers to view information on new products, services and trends without going to the store.
- It is easy to access; it reaches a broad number of people (many people use it).
- Timely promotion of other services/products the organisation offers can occur.
- Customer feedback can be collected easily.
- Any unmet (outstanding) customer needs can be identified through a complaints page.

Stating that the social media network was environmentally friendly and free was incorrect. Students demonstrated a good understanding of this question.

Question 13

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	30	41	29	1

Any two of:

- customer satisfaction surveys/questionnaires/feedback
- face-to-face observations
- repeat customers/custom
- audit documentation
- audit reports
- testimonials
- returned goods
- service calls
- complaints.

Many students were able to identify one example of verifiable evidence; however, some students included surveys and questionnaires as different points, but they are considered the same and therefore one mark only was awarded. 'Written work' was not accepted as it is too general.

Question 14

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	36	27	37	1

- internal customer: other individuals in the same organisation (such as those in other departments) who require your services
- external customer: individuals or organisations outside your own organisation who buy goods/services from your organisation; these can be existing or future clients

Some students had difficulty differentiating between the internal and external customer.

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Question 15a.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	31	36	33	1

Possible answers included:

- make better-informed choices and decisions, and provide more detailed information to customers (i.e. answer questions)
- identify or take advantage of opportunities
- identify areas of concern
- gain a competitive edge
- develop expertise in your job and industry to show new skills and ability to supervisor
- earn the trust and respect of employer/customer – provide customer satisfaction.

Many students were able to identify one reason, but had difficulty in providing further explanation.

Questions 15bi.–ii.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	15	19	26	24	17	2.1

Question 15bi.

Any one of:

- provide additional services; for example, online vouchers, online forms and online forums
- provide more assistance to customers; for example, help desk facility
- expand services to further meet customer needs.

Many students could make a recommendation, and some students were able to provide further explanation.

Question 15bii.

Any two of:

- identify existing problems/issues and implement steps to overcome these problems
- improve quality standards
- improve customer relationships (with particular demographics in mind)
- identify further training needs of employees.

The answers provided demonstrated a good understanding of this question. ‘Eliminate old or outdated work practices’ was an incorrect answer as it was a new company.

Question 15c.

Marks	0	1	Average
%	55	45	0.5

Any of:

- environmentally friendly
- cost-saving for company
- helps customers keep their records organised
- easily re-sent if deleted/lost.

While some students demonstrated a good understanding of this question, others answered it from the customer’s point of view. It is important for students to read the question carefully.

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Question 16a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	18	22	27	32	1.8

Promotional activity	Purpose
media announcements	communicate with many people through TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, catalogues, newsletters and/or brochures
advertisements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> communicate with a large and diverse audience highlights products/prices, e.g. TV, billboards, magazines
client functions	offer customers a discount, demonstration or networking opportunities at an exclusive event
product and service launch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> conduct a large or small demonstration invite guests and make order forms available
website promotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> advertise products, promotions and current information such as price lists other features include feedback forms and hit data large-scale promotion to gain new/potential customers

Students demonstrated an understanding of the differences in promotional activities generally, but some answers lacked detailed information to demonstrate thorough knowledge.

Questions 16bi.–ii.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	46	30	16	8	0.9

Question 16bi.

Any of:

- influence purchase decision
- change the perception/attitude about Branding Specialists
- greater knowledge
- greater awareness of product and/or services
- easy to make a decision on whether you would repeat the activity based on level of success
- builds rapport.

This question was not answered well. ‘Customer satisfaction’ was not an acceptable answer.

Question 16bii.

Any two of:

- flyer/brochure
- order form
- promotional letter
- catalogue
- newsletter.

While some students identified two correct promotional materials, many students suggested a free item be included, which was incorrect.

Question 16c.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	28	41	31	1.1

Any two of:

- shows what the customers like and dislike about the product/service
- helps when planning stock numbers and new products
- helps with staffing levels or staff who may need extra training.

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Overall, most students were unable to provide two examples, but some were able to identify what customers wanted or did not want. The customer feedback discussed was feedback to the company, not word-of-mouth promotion to other people.

Question 16d.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	28	24	30	18	1.4

Any three of:

- provide evidence when making recommendations
- give insight into where changes should be made to products/services
- evaluate product/service range
- help make recommendations on products/services
- continuous improvement to products/services
- opportunity for innovation
- identify promotion costs for future planning
- identify best sellers
- identify poor sellers
- identify promotion techniques that are successful
- identify products being purchased by different demographics.

The concept of market share and what it means for a company was not well understood.

Question 17a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	20	19	28	18	16	1.9

Responsibility no.: 1

Explanation: Data can be collected. This provides information on existing and prospective customers, products and services, etc. Competitor data can be useful for marketing purposes. Data can be entered into a database or file for easy retrieval by all company personnel – systematic processes.

Responsibility no.: 2

Explanation: The website and social media pages will be updated so that all information online is in line with organisational policies. The information is likely to be more accurate because it is up-to-date.

Responsibility no.: 3

Explanation: All information is updated to reflect changes and to ensure information for public use is accurate, with no discrepancies that cause customer grievances. Maximises the company's potential because new services are online.

Responsibility no.: 4

Explanation: There is an accurate, speedy and easy retrieval of information as it is updated. It is created quickly and found easily, meaning greater productivity.

Responsibility no.: 5

Explanation: Customer service is of a high standard, with responsiveness, continuous improvement and increased professionalism. Increased business is encouraged through positive word-of-mouth referrals.

Responsibility no.: 6

Explanation: The success or otherwise of the marketing campaign will be evaluated and reported, including an assessment of return of investment and accurate decision-making.

Many students were unable to clearly articulate the benefits, and many students simply repeated the responsibilities/duties already provided.

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Question 17b.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	31	42	26	1

Any two of:

- allows you to understand what your advantages are in the market
- allows you to gauge your position in the market and allows you to know your competitors
- helps you to build on new ideas
- assists with cost-setting.

Students had difficulty understanding the concept of market comparisons.

Questions 17ci.–ii.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	17	21	32	30	1.8

Question 17ci.

Any two of:

- the training manual will show the new staff how to lay out business documents, answer customer enquiries and use the diary without continually asking for assistance; thus, the staff will appear more confident and knowledgeable to the customer. The staff will rely less on existing staff; therefore, there will be fewer interruptions and staff can get on with their work
- saves time and effort researching information
- new staff will follow policies and procedures properly.

Question 17cii.

So the user cannot make accidental changes to that file

Question 17d.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	24	34	41	1.2

Any two of:

- develop a work plan/schedule/timeline
- meet with staff involved to prioritise tasks
- delegate to another staff member/seek assistance from another EA/PA
- hold a team meeting and delegate stationery task to staff in each section of the company
- proofread documents
- remove distracters and interruptions.

Many students demonstrated an understanding of the need and use of a timeline/schedule and prioritising; however, the concepts of asking for assistance and delegating tasks were less well understood. ‘Ask the supervisor to check work’ was an incorrect answer.

Questions 17ei.–ii.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	47	15	20	19	1.1

Question 17ei.

Policies and Procedures Manual/customer service charter

Many students could not identify the customer service charter or could not identify its contents.

Question 17eii.

Any two of:

- customer service standards
- product/service quality
- customer service feedback

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- equity principles and practice policies – for example, anti-discrimination and related policy, systems and processes, legal and organisational guidelines and requirements, payment options, pricing and discount policies, quality and continuous improvement processes and standards, quality assurance, refund policy mission statement
- goals/aims of organisation
- dealing with customer information (i.e. contact details).

Many students repeated ‘handling customer complaints’ as part of their answer. This information was already provided. This indicated that students need to read the question several times to ensure an understanding of what is being asked.