

Chief Moderator's Report: GNVQ Intermediate Business June 2006

1. Introduction

The standard of work presented by the majority of candidates was good and was appropriately assessed. Assessment decisions were, in the main, accurate and consistent. The majority of centres showed assessment that was to National Standards demonstrating the appropriateness of the assessment decisions in the centres. Many centres continued the good assessment practice demonstrated during both June and November 2005 moderation windows. A number of centres acted upon the advice given in their moderator reports or in responses to questions sent to the Chief Moderator and improved their assessment practice. Centres made better choices of organisations for their candidates to investigate including more local businesses, work experience placements and far fewer franchised organisations being used. The candidates at such centres show an understanding of the business they are investigating. However a number of centres use large organisations' web sites and/or case study material, e.g. Ford, McDonalds, Boots. In these cases, the candidate never gets "the feel" for the organisation and in some units cannot provide the detailed evidence required to achieve assessment criteria.

There was a general improvement in the quality of work submitted and in the accuracy of assessment.

All moderators applied the guidance from the Joint Council for General Qualifications on small parts missing, September 2002, where appropriate.

There were 1146 units registered for moderation at Intermediate level of which:

- 0% were not submitted or withdrawn
- 98% were assessed accurately and consistently
- 2% were outside of the allowed tolerances.

The majority of centres submitted all required portfolio units for the required deadline. Some, however, did not include the correct sample by: sending the wrong number of portfolios; failing to include the highest and/or lowest points score; or failing to include the OPTEM sheets.

Those centres which had attended INSET training usually implemented good practice discussed at those events. The same was true for those centres that had emailed or phoned in queries to Edexcel as these were passed onto the Chief Moderator to respond to.

A number of centres submitted work that covered the full grading range of Distinction, Merit, Pass and Referral.

The approach used varied. Most centres produced assignment briefs that set the assessment criteria into realistic vocational context. Some centres addressed all Pass criteria, then all Merit followed by all Distinction criteria, other centres addressed themes within the assessment grid producing tasks that addressed the Pass, Merit and Distinction criteria associated with that specific theme. Centres must ensure that any assignment briefs do cover all the criteria.

Centres must ensure that candidates address the banner; this usually sets the context of the portfolio work for the unit. There were a number of issues connected with the banner at Intermediate level. Where the banner contains aspects of higher grades (Merit/ Distinction) this often presents impossible hurdles for candidates who will just achieve the Pass grade. Where aspects of higher grades are contained in the banner moderators ignored these aspects when deciding if a candidate had fully addressed the banner. This will continue to be the case for future moderation.

There were examples of a very small number of centres incorrectly using nesting of levels. In these centres the Foundation and Intermediate candidates attempted a mixture of units from both levels. The samples from these centres were moderated by a senior moderator.

Centres must ensure that candidates cover all aspects of each assessment criterion.

Many candidates included much irrelevant material in their portfolios, e.g. history of organisation being investigated, this often resulted in candidates not effectively covering the evidence requirements as they were distracted from assessment criteria.

It was clear that in some centres candidates not only did not realise that the "What You Need to Learn" section is a useful guide for them but they had also not seen the section.

In many cases the analysis and synthesis required for the higher grades was not carried out, candidates achieved Pass grades and did not produce any work for the higher grades. Where evaluation is required in units this was often not undertaken.

Many candidates included vast amounts of source material e.g. leaflets, downloads from the Internet, company reports, etc. that was not required and did not add to the assignment.

Internal moderation was evident in many of centres, however in a small number of centres, internal moderation had not been effectively implemented. In these centres the Internal Moderator had not identified inappropriate assessment or having identified issues had not made changes to grades/ points scores or actioned the assessment decisions. In some centres internal moderation had occurred so late in the year to have any useful outcomes.

There was evidence of good annotation of candidate work and good written feedback to candidates giving excellent support in a number of centres.

Group work often presented problems resulting in the centre's assessment decisions being overturned by the moderator. Candidates must present their own work, cover all criteria individually, and not submit group work, tasks carried out by other group members, etc.

The inappropriate choice of business(es)/ organisation(s) to study did cause problems for some candidates who had difficulty achieving Pass standard. Problems usually occurred when the banner required a specific sized organisation e.g. medium or large sized, and candidates researched organisations that did not meet the size requirement i.e. the banner was not covered. The second set of problems occurred when candidates researched franchised organisations (not meeting size or ownership requirements) or a local branch of a national company without reference to the whole organisation and so not being able to demonstrate the appropriate knowledge and understanding.

Where presentations or displays are required assessors must ensure that witness statements effectively address the content rather than simply the Key Skill requirements. The lack of effective witness statements supported by primary evidence, i.e. OHTs, handouts, photographs, etc. resulted in a number of changes to centre awarded grades/ point scores at moderation. Where video or audiotapes are being submitted as evidence, commentaries on the tapes identifying students and content covered/ criteria addressed and achieved must accompany the tapes.

Moderators moderate evidence using the Assessment Evidence, i.e. the banner and the grid and not to the Essential Information for Teachers section. Although the guidance in this section is useful and a good reference/ guide, where the guidance refers to number of occasions/ examples this is not mandatory. Moderators look for evidence that the candidate can effectively evidence the banner and the assessment criteria demonstrating the required knowledge and understanding.

A number of portfolios sampled were poorly organised and proved difficult to track, especially for assessor decisions.

2. Comments on Specific Units

The following comments cover the units seen and moderated in the June 2006 moderation window. All portfolio units were submitted for moderation.

Unit B201P: Investigating How Businesses Work

98% of portfolios were assessed accurately and consistently

2% of portfolios were outside of the allowed tolerances

0% of portfolios were not submitted or withdrawn

There were many good pieces of work produced for this unit and it was much better evidenced than in previous moderation windows. A better choice of organisation was evident but some candidates/ centres still investigated organisations that did not meet the size requirement.

An active approach to evidence gathering was evident, candidates undertook research, often visited organisations, or met with visiting speakers to enable them to gather information in order to cover the banner and the assessment criteria.

In a number of instances, centres did not provide any evidence for Pass 7 & 8, although this was not as common an occurrence as it was in previous moderation windows. Centres must ensure that they include all evidence to show achievement when they send portfolios for postal moderation.

A small number of centres used multiple organisations to cover the unit. This does not meet the unit requirements nor does it allow candidates to achieve.

In a number of cases the evidence presented was theoretical and often had little application to the organisation being studied.

The Banner requires that a large or medium sized organisation be studied. There were examples of candidates trying to cover the criteria using either one small organisation or a number of different businesses. These did not let the candidate produce appropriate evidence enabling coverage of the assessment criteria. A number of candidates used local branches of national businesses, e.g. supermarkets, chemists and other retail groups, and could not generate effective evidence to cover the evidence requirements. Those candidates who did research national groups and used local branches to highlight examples for the assessment criteria did usually manage to meet the evidence requirements.

Pass 2: This criterion was usually effectively addressed however in a number of portfolios the job roles were frequently missed. If the candidates attempted this assignment using a small organisation they could not provide sufficient evidence of four functional areas in addition to Customer Services. In some

cases the job roles were general or at Director level and not related to the specific organisation.

Pass 3: Equal Opportunities legislation was poorly covered despite Acts being listed in the “What You Need to Learn” section. Candidates often gave lists of legislation rather than applying their knowledge to the organisation being studied. Some candidates wrote about other legislation, e.g. COSHH, Health & Safety rather than equal opportunities.

Pass 4: Communication tended to be general rather than specifically related to the functional areas studied. Candidates often produced descriptions of a wide range of paper and non-paper based forms of communications, this is not what is required by the criterion and leads to much irrelevant information being included. The guidance in assessment strategies states “at least six different types of communication”, this is a useful measure but candidates are only required to evidence communication types used by their chosen organisation.

Pass 5: The comparison of structures was problematic; many candidates had taken a theoretical approach without discussing communication flows effectively, and did not demonstrate an understanding of the main features of different organisational structures.

Pass 6: Despite being a criterion that should be easy to achieve, many candidates were not precise enough in their list. A number simply listed “GNVQ Textbook” and/or “websites”. This is not acceptable evidence. A number did not produce any evidence.

Pass 7: Best Practice was often not understood; candidates often did not give suggestions for improvement. If the organisation was demonstrating Best Practice then there needs to be reference to this in the oral explanation explaining why no improvements are necessary. Witness statements, although improved on recent years were in some cases poor, these need to contain much more detail on the content of the presentation and be supported by original evidence, e.g. OHTs, cue cards, etc.

Pass 8: Often not evidenced. There must be some statement from the assessor covering all aspects of this criterion. Most frequently an image was not used. Witness statements often missed the aspect of “keeping to the subject”.

Merit 1: Interaction was poorly addressed, many candidates described the functional areas as if they existed in isolation. There was little link back to aims and objectives.

Merit 2: Few, if any, examples were given for this criterion in a number of candidates’ portfolios. Answers often simply listed the legislation. Some candidates gave excellent examples related to Employment Rights, Sex Discrimination, The Race Relations and the Disability Discrimination.

Merit 3: The linkage between effective communication and the achievement of aims and objectives was not clear in many candidates' work and in some cases there was no link to the aims and objectives.

Distinction 1: A daunting criterion which was attempted by only a small number of candidates and in some cases was only descriptive in nature.

Unit B202P: How Businesses Develop

98% of portfolios were assessed accurately and consistently
2% of portfolios were outside of the allowed tolerances
0% of portfolios were not submitted or withdrawn

The chosen businesses must be “contrasting” and this was not always the case in the work that was seen during the moderation window.

Pass 2 and Pass 3: Candidates had difficulty in distinguishing between trends for that activity and trends for that sector. Often the trends described were not applied to the business studied. Statistical information was, generally, poorly interpreted and used. The statistics were used indiscriminately.

Pass 4: Reasons for location were very poorly explained with candidates only giving one reason for location. In a number of cases, the prime current reason of “inertia” was overlooked. In some cases location maps were included with no accompanying explanation being supplied.

Pass 5: Few centres tackled the issues relating to “current changes in interests and expectations”. Some candidates simply listed stakeholders with little or no link to business being studied, making the achievement of M2 and D3 almost impossible.

Merit 1: The trends in the growth or decline of sectors were often not applied to the business studied. In some cases out of date statistics were used, or inappropriate figures had been selected for use.

For higher grade candidates, Distinction 2 requires a summary comparison of the two businesses and Distinction 3 was often not well done, requiring more evidence than was presented.

Unit B206P Consumer Protection

98% of portfolios were assessed accurately and consistently
2% of portfolios were outside of the allowed tolerances
0% of portfolios were not submitted or withdrawn

The banner for this unit was not sufficiently addressed in some cases. In particular: the comparison of charters with an explanation of their purpose and how they help consumers; Evidence of a role play/oral presentation demonstrating the application of three basic consumer rights; and evidence of

whether the problems identified in the role plays would be dealt with in a civil or criminal court and explain what remedies are available.

Although many candidates understood the need for consumer protection evidence for Pass 1 was often not detailed.

Pass 2: There was a tendency to supply source information without any explanation and comparisons were weak. There were instances of one charter being described by no comparison being made with a second one.

Pass 4: Frequently candidates presented excessive information relating to Acts of Parliament without any context. There was rarely any case law provided to show application.

Pass 5/ Banner: The major problem however was evidence relating to the role plays sometimes they were not attempted and on other occasions candidates did not specify which legislation or legal remedy applied to which role play. There was no justification/ application of the law to the remedies suggested. Inappropriate role plays have been noted, e.g. sale of illegal items, inappropriate behaviours and language. These are not acceptable evidence.

Unit B207P: Administrative Systems

96% of portfolios were assessed accurately and consistently

2% of portfolios were outside of the allowed tolerances

2% of portfolios were not submitted or withdrawn

Work presented for this unit was generally better than that seen in previous moderations windows.

The administrative system of one business should be covered (macro) followed by the more detailed study of the administrative systems of one department in the business (micro). Evidence submitted seemed to be in the form of a collection of tasks rather than the presentation of the whole system.

The Banner was not always fully covered even though moderation ignored the effectiveness aspect of the first bullet point, for Pass level candidates, which is part of the Merit criteria.

The business context was not always addressed with theoretical answers being submitted. Where a more practical approach was taken the evidence was much better addressed. Some candidates used their work experience.

Pass 1: This should look at the full business and not just one department. A number of candidates simply described the administrative system and did not cover how it is used to support the operations of the business

Pass 3: Processing was not understood by the majority of the candidates and coverage of storage was generic in nature. It was rare to see collection, processing and storage covered. This has consequences for Pass 4.

Pass 4: Again, poor evidence presented here as candidates could not link the information to decision making.

Pass 5: This criterion was either answered very well or badly. The issues included use of wrong legislation, out of date legislation (data protection), customer protection rather than current legislation on data protection, health & safety, etc. Some centres did not include witness statements with the sample of evidence.

Pass 6/ Merit 4: Often evidence was photocopied (group work) with no evidence of what had been produced by whom. Centres are reminded that each candidate must individually cover each assessment criterion. Group work is not acceptable evidence. The minutes or follow-up actions submitted in many cases did not link into the decision making process.

The higher criteria were often not addressed.

UNIT B208P: Personal Finance

98% of portfolios were assessed accurately and consistently

1% of portfolios were outside of the allowed tolerances

1% of portfolios were not submitted or withdrawn

Generally well attempted and candidates appeared to have been encouraged to produce some appropriate guides, which were both relevant and suitable for their purpose. Guides were in a variety of interesting formats, with good use of IT packages to aid explanations, and make these interesting for the user. There was some confusion for some candidates between business finance budgets and personal budgets.

Weaker candidates produced a portfolio of documents, with no attempt to draw this into any sort of guide, simply covering the Pass requirements.

The personal budgets were also well set out, generally making good use of spreadsheet packages.

Banner point 2 is essential, although not specifically required within the Pass criteria. However, the majority of candidates did include “sources of advice” although there was a tendency to “list” with no clear explanation within the guide about why these would be helpful.

Banner point 5 : An explanation of methods of ensuring accuracy was required here.

There was a variable approach to explaining the decisions made within the budget. This is often constrained by the case studies as there is no scope for the candidates to make a rationale and realistic choice

The case studies would be of more use to the candidates if they allowed the learners to develop their own budgets. This could be achieved by allowing the candidate to find relevant adverts for a job , flat, etc. and then develop a budget based on them setting up a home on their own, with all activities financed through the relevant type of work.

Where candidates are supplied with centre supplied case studies, a copy should be included with the sample.

Pass 1 – 3: Generally well covered and providing sufficient evidence. However, where Pass requirements were not completed in sufficient depth and detail, candidates struggled to achieve the higher grades. Some candidates' evidence was poor on comparing different methods of saving for young people. The concept of planning, however was weakly attempted by some candidates. In particular in P2 there was often mention of monitoring but little attempt to cover how to monitor.

Pass 4: It would aid the moderation process if Centres provided copies of the case study used for the personal budget, to confirm selection of data by the candidates.

Pass 5: Where information was taken directly from the case study, with little opportunity for choice/decision, it was difficult for candidates to provide a logical rationale. The personal budget was often poorly addressed, the budgets were often from text books or had no rationale for their content.

The candidates need to be able to make their own choices and case studies are prescribing the choices the learners can make.

Merit 1: Planning was generally well covered, although monitoring in less depth and detail.

Merit 2: Weaker candidates simply provided evidence of saving/borrowing methods from banks/building societies. The more able could give appropriate analysis.

Merit 3: Generally well attempted.

Distinction 1: Could only be achieved where candidates had produced an actual guide (i.e. not possible from a "portfolio of documentation" only).

Distinction 2: The given case study often limited achievement, as there was little opportunity for choice when preparing the budget.

Unit B209P: Customer Service

96% of portfolios were assessed accurately and consistently
3% of portfolios were outside of the allowed tolerances
1% of portfolios were not submitted or withdrawn

This was the most popular option unit. Generally, the unit criteria and Banner were well covered, with a mix of simulations and real work experience used to provide evidence and demonstrate competence within a customer service environment.

Criteria issues:

Banner point 2/ Pass 2: Candidates need to demonstrate a clearer understanding of how the organisation meets the needs of internal and external customers, candidates tended to focus on the external thus limiting further development for Merit 1 & 2 and Distinction 1.

Banner point 3/ Pass 3: Candidates need to describe the follow through of customer complaints to show how they may be dealt with in the future and indicate improvement, supporting Merit 3 and Distinction 2.

Pass 4: Greater detail required in recording the candidates involvement within the real or simulated situation, especially to show the changes in performance and activities to deal with a wide range and variety of customers. The types of records used needed developing in many cases.

Banner points 7 & 8/ Pass 6 & 7: Centres need to provide thorough witness, tutor and/ or organisational staff comments/ statements to confirm candidate's performance in handling and communicating with customers, including the quality of the communication for Merit 4 & 5 and Distinction 3. Inappropriate role plays have also been noted in this unit, e.g. sale of illegal items, inappropriate behaviours and language. These are not acceptable evidence. It should be noted for, P6 & P7 there is a requirement for candidates to include evidence to demonstrate an understanding of the legal aspects affective Customer Service. There is often a lack of any legal understanding demonstrated in this evidence presented for this unit.

For the higher grades M4&5 and D 3 the evidence statements should include the depth and level of understanding to deal with customers.

Where Video or Audio material is included to support the role play etc. clear identification of candidates and supporting witness statements are required within the evidence.

Unit B210P Business Within The European Union

100% of portfolios were assessed accurately and consistently
0% of portfolios were outside of the allowed tolerances
0% of portfolios were not submitted or withdrawn

This is a challenging unit at Intermediate Level and only a small number of centres submitted work for it for Summer 2006. This is the least popular intermediate option. The majority of evidence presented was just sufficient to achieve or did not fully cover the assessment criteria. P3 evidence was often inappropriate, with candidates reproducing available published material e.g. from "Europe in the Round" or "Eurodata", without demonstrating understanding. Recommendations were superficial.

Intermediate B211 Setting up in Business

99% of portfolios were assessed accurately and consistently

1% of portfolios were outside of the allowed tolerances

0% of portfolios were not submitted or withdrawn

This unit was often approached by candidates in a superficial manner. Some ideas seen were often impractical and guidance from the assessor as to what would be acceptable, realistic and appropriate is a key to successful achievement of the unit.

It is important that the banner is addressed in detail and that realistic recommendations are made which would be convincing to a provider of finance.

Pass 1: It is not necessary to explore all business types with advantages and disadvantages of each being described. The decision on the type of business ownership is not an issue until Pass 7 and even here it is only necessary to provide evidence for the type of ownership chosen. With Pass 1 only the benefits of setting up in business are required.

Pass 2: There must be evidence of candidates seeking and acting upon advice.

Pass 3: Is often not addressed in the necessary detail with description rather than analysis being the approach adopted; in particular unique selling points, price and competition were not well covered.

Pass 5: Candidates frequently failed to identify the distinctive features of their product which would support its success in the market place and pricing rarely appeared to have been based on some strategy but was based upon a candidate's subjective opinion without any obvious support.

Pass 6: In general the physical resources were noted but the human resources were less detailed in coverage. Taxation, sources and costs of finance were also not well covered.

Pass 8: Is where many candidates fail to identify sufficient applicable legislation or to indicate how it will particularly apply to their business.

Pass 9: There were rarely well reasoned details of suitable sources of finance in terms of number or variety of sources or their appropriateness of these.

Recommendations to Centres

1. Courses need to be planned to meet the deadline date for the submission of portfolio units for moderation.
2. Questions concerning coverage and evidence requirements should be directed to Chief Moderator via Edexcel.
3. Assignment briefs must be developed that enable the candidate to produce evidence that meets all the Banner and the Assessment Criteria requirements.
4. Assignment briefs should allow progression through all the grades for those candidates who could achieve Merit / Distinction.
5. Internal Moderation must take place on assignment briefs prior to issue and on candidates' work at a time that allows candidates to undertake remedial work where required.
6. Group Work can be effectively used as developmental work in a number of units but centres must ensure that candidates each individually cover all the assessment criteria
7. Centres must monitor the choice of organisation to investigate and ensure that candidates choose organisations that enable them to cover the Banner and the Assessment Criteria.
8. Witness statements must be full, evidence the coverage of criteria, both content and depth, and be supported by source material, e.g. OHTs, cue cards, photographs, etc.
9. Care must be taken when using evidence downloaded from the web. Centres must ensure that candidates use this and other source material and do not simply copy it into portfolio assignments.
10. Centres must ensure that candidates have fully covered an Assessment Criterion before they award achievement of that Criterion.
11. Where "alternative evidence" is used, e.g. videos, audio tape, centres must include written commentaries to accompany this evidence as the videos/ audio tapes will not be played as not all moderators have the necessary equipment.
12. All centres must follow the guidance for the allocation of point scores to grades.
13. Centres must include some form of identification in packages sent to moderators for postal moderation.
14. Centres must ensure that they include all evidence to show achievement when they send portfolios for postal moderation.
15. Centres should avoid the inclusion of lots of leaflets and other source material in portfolios.
16. Centres must include the case studies used when work is sent for postal moderation.
17. Centre should ensure that candidates receive copies of the "What You Need to Learn" section.