Candidate Guidelines for Oral Examinations
Business Analysis Diploma

Introduction
The Business Analysis oral examination is the final element of the programme leading to the ISEB Business Analysis Diploma qualification. The examination may be taken by a candidate who has passed four written examinations; one examination for each of the three core business analysis certificate modules plus one examination for a module selected from the set of specialist certificate modules.

Preparing for the oral examination
The oral examination is always based upon the latest ISEB syllabus for each module. The set of current syllabuses for these modules is at the back of this guidance document in Appendix A. Please note that all of the syllabuses for the specialist modules are included but candidates need only study the module selected for the diploma oral examination. It is your responsibility to prepare for the oral examination and to ensure that you have sufficient knowledge of the topics in each syllabus. Where an accepted equivalent has formed part of your diploma submission, you will be examined on the syllabus for the new module rather than the accepted equivalent.

Attending the oral examination
Candidates are informed of the date and time for their oral examination. It is important to arrive at least 15 minutes ahead of the time allocated as this helps to keep the examination schedule running smoothly. You should note that sometimes delays occur during the oral examination session and your examination may begin later than the scheduled start time. It is advisable to consider this when making travel arrangements.

You should consider the oral examination a business interview and dress accordingly. Part of the examination considers your professionalism and ability to work with staff at all levels in an organisation.

Format and content of the oral examination
The oral examination leading to the Diploma in Business Analysis consists of an interview session lasting up to 50 minutes. The session is conducted by two examiners each of whom will have been provided with a copy of the candidate’s form BSD6. It should be noted that where a candidate has previously failed the oral examination, the oral examiners will not be informed that his has occurred and will not have access to the assessment document, form BSD7, for the earlier oral examination.

The oral examination will take the following format:

1. Introductions and discussion of experience based upon form BSD6, the candidate registration form. This will be led by the examiner initiating the oral examination.
2. Questions from the initiating examiner. This should last for approximately 25 minutes.
3. Questions from the other examiner. This should last for approximately 25 minutes.
4. Oral examination close.

The oral examiners will ask questions covering a range of the topics studied in the core modules for the Business Analysis diploma. These modules are Business Analysis Essentials, Organisational Context and Requirements Engineering. In addition, candidates
will be asked questions relating to a selection of the subjects covered in the specialist module selected.

The nature of the questions
The questions asked by the oral examiner will require candidates to discuss and apply the subjects studied in the four modules leading to the examination. They may require you to demonstrate knowledge of a specific subject area, or to apply knowledge to a given scenario. The questioning may cover a topic in overview or may require more detailed knowledge. The questions are designed to explore the interconnections between the different subjects and to examine the candidate’s ability to apply techniques or combinations of techniques to different situations.

The examiners are looking for you to demonstrate the following aspects of performance:

- Knowledge of the key principles and content of the subjects studied.
- The part each of the techniques and concepts plays in business analysis
- How you might apply the techniques and concepts in the workplace.
- The purpose of the techniques and concepts.

While you may be involved in using some of the techniques in the workplace, you should avoid turning every question into a description of your own organisation. It is important that you demonstrate an ability to take a broader perspective with regard to the techniques and concepts. The examiners will be looking for this broader perspective when considering candidates’ responses to their questions.

Techniques
Candidates will not be asked to draw any models for a case study scenario but you may be asked for your opinion of their usefulness and relevance. You will be expected to understand how the range of techniques studied during the diploma may be used, when you would use them and how they could help you with business analysis work.

Assessing candidates
The examiners complete a form BSD7 in order to assess the performance of a candidate. Any comments made about a candidate’s performance in the oral examination will be passed on to the candidate with the oral examination result.

Notification of oral examination results
Candidates are notified of the result of the oral examination within two weeks of the date of the interview. Notifications are issued in writing by post. No results will be issued verbally on the day of the oral examination.

Conclusion
The oral examination is an assessment of a candidate’s suitability to work as a business analyst. The award of the ISEB Diploma in Business Analysis signifies that a candidate has successfully demonstrated the ability to work within a business analysis team. The diploma is also intended to provide an employer with an assurance that an individual will be able to work successfully, albeit with some supervision, in the role of a business analyst.
Appendix A

Syllabuses for BA Diploma Modules

Syllabus for Organisational Context

1. Law and Government

2. Professions and professional bodies

3. Types of organisation
   3.1 Private sector organisations
   3.2 Public sector organisations
   3.3 Not-for-profit organisations

4. Financing a start-up company
   4.1 Why capital is needed
   4.2 The business plan
   4.3 Sources of finance

5. Financial accounting
   5.1 The balance sheet
   5.2 The profit and loss account
   5.3 Financial ratios
   5.4 Liquidity
   5.5 Gearing

6. Management accounting
   6.1 Costing approaches
   6.2 Principles of budgeting
   6.3 Cash flow forecast

7. Investment Appraisal
   7.1 Payback
   7.2 Discounted Cash Flow
   7.3 Internal Rate of Return

8. Structure and management of organisations
   8.1 Organisational models
   8.2 Depth of structure
   8.3 Centralisation

9. Business Functions
   9.1 Sales
   9.2 Marketing
   9.3 Operations
   9.4 Procurement
   9.5 Finance
   9.6 Human Resources

10. Legal issues
    10.1 Anti-discrimination legislation
    10.2 Software contracts and liability
    10.3 Intellectual property rights
    10.4 Data protection, privacy and freedom of information
    10.5 Internet issues
    10.6 Computer misuse
Syllabus for Business Analysis Essentials

1. Rationale
1.1 A lifecycle for business change.
1.2 The role of the Business Analyst.
1.3 A comparison of the business analyst and systems analyst roles.
1.4 Purpose of analysing and modelling business systems.
1.5 Overview of business analysis approach (overview model showing roadmap/workflow).

2. Strategic analysis in context
2.1 Identifying the business domain.
2.2 Internal environment analysis.
2.3 External environment analysis.
2.4 SWOT analysis.
2.5 Overview of areas of strategy, including IS strategy
2.6 Critical Success Factors and Key Performance Indicators
2.7 The Balanced Business Scorecard

3. Project discipline for business analysis studies
3.1 Terms of reference/project initiation.
3.2 Business and project objectives.
3.3 Deliverables from business analysis studies

4. Understanding the situation/issues
4.1 Stakeholder analysis
4.2 Overview of investigative techniques.
4.3 Representation of the business situation.

5. Business perspectives
5.1 Identifying different perspectives.
5.2 Defining business perspectives.
5.3 Identifying and resolving conflicts.

6. Analysing and modelling business activities
6.1 Identifying activities
6.2 Identifying dependencies
6.3 Building a business activity model
6.4 Business events/activity triggers
6.5 Business rules/constraints

7. Identifying potential solutions
7.1 Gap analysis - comparing the ideal and existing systems.
7.2 Defining a new business model (the processes, people and organisation).
7.3 Identifying IS/IT requirements to support the new business model.

8. Making the business case
8.1 Structure of a business case
8.2 Identifying options for business change
8.3 Identifying costs and benefits
8.4 Identifying impacts
8.5 Identifying risks
8.6 Principles of risk analysis and management
8.7 Presenting a business case

9. Accepting the business case
9.1 Testing the system for user acceptance
9.2 Managing the implementation of change
9.3 Realising the business benefits
Syllabus for Requirements Engineering

1. Lifecycle for business change
   1.1 Business plans and objectives

2. Nature and problems of Requirements

3. Hierarchy of Requirements
   3.1 The Business rationale – Terms of Reference/Project Initiation Document (PID)
   3.2 Functional Requirements/Non-functional requirements
   3.3 General/Technical Requirements – relationship with the Business Case
   3.4 Service Level Requirements

4. Stakeholders in the Requirements process
   4.1 Project stakeholders
     • Project Manager
     • Business Analyst
     • Developer
   4.2 Business stakeholders
     • Project Sponsor
     • Domain expert
     • End users and managers
   4.3 External stakeholders
     • Customers
     • Regulators
     • Suppliers

5. Requirements Elicitation
   5.1 Knowledge types – Tacit and Non-tacit
   5.2 Elicitation techniques:
     • Interviews
     • Workshops
     • Observation:
       o Formal/informal
       o Shadowing
       o Ethnographic study
     • Prototyping
     • Scenarios
     • Document Analysis
     • Special Purpose records
     • Questionnaires
   5.3 Mapping techniques to situation

6. Use of models in requirements engineering
   6.1 Developing a process/functional model
   6.2 Read a static (data) model

7. Documenting the requirements
   7.1 Requirements Catalogue
     • Identifier
     • Description
     • Acceptance criteria
     • Source/Owner
     • Rationale/Benefits
     • Non-functional requirements
     • Priority
     • Related requirements/documents
     • Version control/status

8. Requirements Analysis
   8.1 Prioritising requirements
   8.2 Congruence with business objectives
8.3 Overlapping requirements
8.4 Identifying and negotiating conflicts between requirements
8.5 Requirements ambiguity
8.6 Requirements realism/feasibility
8.7 Requirements testability

9. Requirements Validation
9.1 Reviews
9.2 Prototyping
9.3 Sign-off of requirements document

10. Requirements Management
10.1 Stable and volatile requirements
10.2 Management of change to requirements
10.3 Traceability and ownership
10.4 CASE for Requirements Engineering

11. Benefits Confirmation
11.1 Requirements testing/User Acceptance Testing
11.2 Post-implementation Review
11.3 Roles of requirements actors
Syllabus for Modelling Business Processes

1. The context for business process modelling
   1.1. Relationship between business systems and automated systems
   1.2. Purpose of business process modelling
   1.3. Approaches to business process modelling

2. Identifying business processes
   2.1. Strategic context and business goals
   2.2. Value chain analysis and business performance
   2.3. The hierarchy of business processes and tasks
   2.4. Relationships between processes, including those at the same level and between levels of the hierarchy
   2.5. Building an organisational view of processes to produce an overall process map
   2.6. Differences between the process view and the functional view of an organisation
   2.7. Advantages of the process view
   2.8. Definition of a business process
   2.9. Importance of metrics and measurements

3. Modelling business processes
   3.1. Overview of different process modelling techniques
   3.2. Business process modelling notation and rules
   3.3. Modelling as-is business processes
   3.4. The types of events that trigger business processes
   3.5. The outcomes from business processes
   3.6. The actors involved with business processes
   3.7. The tasks carried out by the business actors
   3.8. The business rules that underpin the business process
   3.9. Identifying current standards and measures

4. Evaluating and improving business processes
   4.1. Identifying problems with the as-is process
   4.2. Analysing the work flow
   4.3. Analysing the tasks
   4.4. Staff performance issues
   4.5. Challenging the business rules
   4.6. Approaches to business process improvement
   4.7. Modelling the to-be business processes
   4.8. Identifying the new standards and measures

5. Transition
   5.1. Using the business process model to scope and identify the IT requirements
   5.2. Integration of business process modelling, requirements definition and systems development disciplines
   5.3. Implementation issues: Organisational design
       Procedure design
       Skills profiling and staff development
       Managing change
Syllabus for Systems Development Essentials

1. The role of the systems Analyst and Designer
   • Identify the Actors/Roles and Responsibilities within systems development and implementation (for example, designers, developers, testers, technical architects and others)
   • Characteristics of the systems analyst/designer

2. Systems Architecture
   • Different levels of Architecture - Enterprise, Systems, Infrastructure (networks, databases)
   • Inputs at Enterprise level
   • Inputs at System and Infrastructure level
   • Impacts of design decisions

3. Development Approaches
   • Component-based
   • Evolutionary/iterative/agile
   • Bespoke development
   • Software package solutions
   • Other appropriate approaches

4. Systems Development Lifecycles
   • Waterfall
   • V model
   • Incremental
   • Spiral
   • Other appropriate lifecycles
   • Advantages and disadvantages of each approach
   • Selection of an appropriate approach

5. Methodologies
   • Structure and content of a chosen representative method
   • Describe and interpret three representative models from the method, showing at least:
     ➢ Process perspective
     ➢ Data perspective
     ➢ Event perspective
   • Roles within the chosen method
   • Products within the chosen method

6. Systems Investigation
   • Fact finding approaches:
     ➢ Workshops
     ➢ Prototyping
     ➢ Interviewing
     ➢ Questionnaires (for usability or package selection, for example)
     ➢ Scenario analysis
     ➢ Other approaches
   • Functional Requirements Definition
   • Non-Functional Requirements Definition
   • Documenting system requirements
   • Human aspects of systems investigation and introducing change
7. System Design, Implementation and Maintenance
   - Aspects of the production environment
   - Design principles and constraints (legal, ethical, financial)
   - Sign off and hand over
   - Post-implementation reviews
   - Different types of maintenance

8. Quality Assurance
   - Definitions of quality
   - Requirements-driven testing
   - Types of walkthrough and inspection
   - Post-project reviews
   - Service Level Agreements

9. CASE tools
   - Features
   - Life-cycle coverage
   - Requirements traceability
   - Advantages and disadvantages
Syllabus for Systems Modelling Techniques

1. Systems modelling
   - The need for modelling and modelling standards
   - Rationale for the selected approach
   - The approach and a Systems Development Lifecycle
   - Place of models within the Systems Development Lifecycle
   - Modelling the system from different perspectives
   - Interaction of the selected models
   - Validating and verifying models

2. Systems modelling in context
   - Monitoring analysis against business objectives and system requirements
   - The bridge to design, software package selection and development

Plus one modelling standard. The UML and Structured approaches are described below.

UML version

3. Modelling functionality
   3.1. Use Case Modelling
      - Modelling user requirements
      - Use cases
      - Actors and the system boundary
      - Use case diagrams
      - Generalising actors and use cases
      - Use case descriptions – template of the description, including pre-conditions and post-conditions
      - Use case descriptions – defining the main and alternative flows
      - <<include>> and <<extend>>

   3.2. Activity Diagrams
      - Activity diagrams – notation
      - Using activity diagrams to model processing
      - Using activity diagrams to model use case descriptions

4. Static modelling
   - Analysis class modelling rationale
   - Objects and classes
   - Class diagrams and object diagrams
   - Abstraction and encapsulation
   - Representing classes: name, attributes and operations
   - Defining attributes: adornments
   - Associations
      - Naming associations
      - Defining multiplicities (minimum and maximum)
      - Multiple associations
      - Reflexive associations
      - Constraints in associations
      - Association classes
   - Generalisation and inheritance
      - Modelling generalisation
      - Private, public and protected attributes
      - Concept of polymorphism

5. Dynamic modelling
   - Use case realisation
   - Sequence diagrams
      - Lifelines
      - Focus
      - Message notation
      - Populating the class diagram
      - Using opt, alt and loop in the sequence diagram
Structured version

3. Modelling functionality
   • Modelling processes using a Data Flow Diagram
     • Processes
     • External Entities
     • Datastores
     • Dataflows
     • Decomposition and levels
   • Elementary Process Descriptions
     • Documenting the processing
   • Types of Data Flow Diagrams – current and required

4. Static Modelling
   • Modelling data using Entity Relationship Diagrams
     • Entities
     • Relationships including cardinality, optionality, exclusivity, recursion, multiple, relationship names)
     • Resolving relationships (1:1, Many:many)
     • Attributes
     • Keys (primary and foreign)
     • Entity Super-types and Sub-types
   • Supporting documentation
     • Entity descriptions
     • Relationship descriptions
     • Attribute descriptions

5. Dynamic Modelling
   • Analysing the behaviour of entities
     • Events
     • Enquiries
     • Effects
     • Entity Access Matrix
   • Modelling the behaviour of entities
     • Constructs for sequence, selection and iteration
   • Documenting navigation paths
Syllabus for Benefits Management and Business Acceptance

1. Introduction (5%)
   1.1 The rationale for benefits management
   1.2 The rationale for business acceptance
   1.3 Lifecycle for solution development
       - Analyse requirements
       - Design solution
       - Develop or procure solution
       - Test solution

2. Defining the business benefits (15%)
   2.2 Developing the business case
   2.3 Contents of a business case
   2.4 Options for business change
   2.5 Ensuring strategic fit
   2.6 The value chain and value propositions
   2.7 Tangible and intangible benefits
   2.8 Drivers for business change
   2.9 Categories of benefit

3. Planning for benefits management (15%)
   3.1 Identifying benefit owners
   3.2 Role and responsibilities of the senior responsible owner
       - Producing the delivery plan for the benefits
   3.3 Stakeholders in benefits management

4. Testing for business acceptance (15%)
   4.1 The objectives of acceptance testing
   4.2 Principles of testing
   4.3 Roles and responsibilities
   4.4 Acceptance testing in the system development life cycle
       - The fundamental test process
         - test planning and control
         - test analysis and design
         - test implementation and execution
         - evaluating exit criteria and reporting
         - test closure activities
   4.5 Functional and non-functional testing
   4.6 Use of a model office

5. Test design techniques (10%)
   5.1 Test conditions and test cases
   5.2 Models to design tests and establish coverage
   5.3 Test cases from selected models
       - showing a clear traceability to the requirement
       - containing an expected result
   5.4 Test procedure specification

6. Test planning, management and confirmation (5%)
   6.1 Test progress monitoring and control
       - test progress monitoring
       - test reporting
       - test control
   6.2 Incident management
   6.3 Confirmation testing

7. Reviewing the business case (15%)
   7.1 Review gateways
7.2 Assessing the impact of changes
7.3 Revising the business case
7.4 Reassessing the benefits

8. Implementing the business change (5%)
8.1 Planning the implementation
8.2 Implementation strategies
8.3 Contingency planning
8.4 Managing stakeholders
8.5 Developing the required skills and knowledge

9. Benefits delivery (15%)
9.1 Embedding the business changes
9.2 Reviewing the achievement of predicted benefits
9.3 Defining and enacting actions and adjustments
9.4 Confirming delivery of the benefits plan
9.5 Assessing the potential for further benefits delivery
9.6 Signing-off the business case