

Business Analysis Practice

BCS Practitioner Certificate



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Introduction

The BCS Practitioner Certificate in Business Analysis Practice is for candidates who want to develop or further their skills in the understanding and application of the skills required in pre-project work.

The learning in this certificate is shaped to place emphasis on valuable business analysis skills and toolkit, rather than the Business Analyst role. Focusing on these skills should ensure alignment with business objectives, strategic business analysis and a fit-for-purpose solution.

This syllabus provides an outline of the qualification including the learning objectives and assessment. Further guidance on each **learning objective** (the “what”, i.e. what you expected to know and be tested on) has been provided within each topic in the syllabus through the inclusion of **indicative content** (the “how”, i.e. the main points/concepts to be covered in the learning and assessment) as well as general **guidance** (the “why”, i.e. the relevance, context and expectations on how candidates may be tested on a particular learning objective where there is an need to apply or demonstrate their understanding of a topic).

Qualification Suitability and Overview

While there are no mandatory pre-requisites for candidates to be able to undertake this certificate, information within the BCS Foundation Certificate in Business Analysis (launched December 2020) precedes the knowledge level of this certificate. Candidates will also need to possess a good standard of written English.

This syllabus explores the personal qualities, business knowledge and professional techniques required to complete successful business analysis activity. It is recommended that candidates who are inexperienced in the field of business analysis, or who have not previously completed the BCS Foundation Certificate in Business Analysis, should thoroughly understand chapters 1 and 2 of the Business Analysis 4th Edition prior to embarking on further study.

This qualification has been designed to provide valuable learning for those in roles such as business analyst, business architect, business systems analyst, data analyst, enterprise analyst, management consultant, process analyst, product manager, product owner, project manager, and systems analyst.

This certificate provides value for candidates in entry-level, associate and management level roles. Candidates can study for this certificate by attending a training course provided by a BCS accredited training provider or through self-study.

Total Qualification Time

18 hours

Assessment Time

1 hour

Trainer Criteria

It is recommended that to effectively deliver this certification, trainers should possess one or more of the following:

- Hold a relevant qualification in Business Analysis or another, relevant discipline.
- Have a minimum of 2 years' training experience.
- Have a minimum of 3 years' practical experience in the relevant subject area.

SFIA Levels

This award provides candidates with the level of knowledge highlighted within the table, enabling candidates to develop the skills to operate successfully at the levels of responsibility indicated.

Level	Levels of Knowledge	Levels of Skill and Responsibility (SFIA)
K7		Set strategy, inspire and mobilise
K6	Evaluate	Initiate and influence
K5	Synthesise	Ensure and advise
K4	Analyse	Enable
K3	Apply	Apply
K2	Understand	Assist
K1	Remember	Follow

SFIA Plus

This syllabus has been linked to the SFIA knowledge, skills and behaviours required at level 4 for an individual working in Requirements Definition and Management.

KSB01

Acquiring a proper understanding of a problem or situation by breaking it down systematically into its component parts and identifying the relationships between these parts. Selecting the appropriate method/tool to resolve the problem and reflecting critically on the result, so that what is learnt is identified and assimilated.

KSC04

Applying techniques which help investigating, analysing, modelling and recording a business area or system of interest. Example, but not limited to: business environment analysis and process modelling.

KSC19

Applying standards, practices, codes, and assessment and certification programmes relevant to the IT industry and the specific organisation or business domain modelling.

KSC97

Performing a proof of concept or prototyping exercise to demonstrate or evaluate the feasibility and potential benefits of applying a particular technological business change in order to meet a business need.

KSD04

The selection and application of information elicitation methods, tools and techniques which are appropriate to the information required and the sources available. Examples, but not limited to: focus groups and surveys/questionnaires.

KSD07

Organisational structures; their mission, objectives, strategies and tactics adopted by organisations; measures of performance such as critical success factors and key performance indicators; organisational cultures and cultural dimensions.

SFIA Levels

KSD25

Methods and techniques for writing clear, accessible and persuasive business and technical reports.

KSD85

Establishing relationships, analysing perspectives and managing stakeholders from a variety of backgrounds and disciplines. Adapting stakeholder engagement style to meet the needs of different audiences. The identification of key business stakeholders and an assessment of their level of power and interests, and their perspectives to inform the way(s) in which they should be considered and managed.

Further detail around the SFIA Levels can be found at www.bcs.org/levels.

Learning Outcomes

Upon achievement of the certificate, candidates will be able to demonstrate a practical understanding of:

1. The strategic context for business analysis.
2. How and when to select and apply a range of techniques and tools to analyse the current state of a business.
3. How to establish the target state of a business.
4. The value of ongoing stakeholder engagement and analysis.
5. The purpose and content of the business case.

Syllabus

1. Strategic Context for Business Analysis (20%) (K3)

Candidates will be able to:

1.1 Explain the purpose of an organisation's vision.

Indicative content

- a. Defines target state.
- b. Purpose and direction.

Guidance

A vision is a statement that defines the ideal state for the organisation. The organisation's vision exists to provide clarity on their purpose and reason for existing, whereas the mission provides guidance on how the organisation should run and can assist with current and future planning. Both should be used to inform project objectives and strategy.

1.2 Apply a suitable technique to analyse the internal environment of an organisation.

Indicative content

- a. VMOST.
- b. Resource audit.

Guidance

VMOST – Vision, Mission, Objectives, Strategy and Tactics. Resource audit can be applied by considering and analysing resource types – Physical, Financial, Human, Know-how and Reputation. These techniques may be applied to analyse the strengths and weaknesses which exist internally in an organisation.

1.3 Apply a suitable technique to analyse the external environment of an organisation.

Indicative content

- a. Porter's Five Forces.
- b. PESTLE

Guidance

The Porter's Five Forces Model and the PESTLE framework can be used to analyse the opportunities and threats for an organisation. Porter's Five Forces – Threat of new entrants, bargaining power or suppliers, bargaining powers of buyers, threat of substitute products and industry competitors. PESTLE – Political, Economic, Socio-cultural, Technological, Legal and Environmental factors.

1.4 Prepare a SWOT analysis.

Indicative content

- a. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats.
- b. Internal and external.

Guidance

A SWOT analysis is used to analyse the current state of both the internal and external organisational environment. Identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats which exists in an organisation helps the analyst the understand the strategic context around their activity.

Candidates should expect to prepare a SWOT analysis by identifying and allocating entries (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) into appropriate fields on a two-by-two matrix.

1.5 Use tools to measure performance.

Indicative content

- a. Balanced scorecard (BSC).
- b. Critical success factors (CSFs).
- c. Key performance indicators (KPIs).
- d. Targets.

Guidance

Performance measurement tools are used to establish how an organisation is performing in its' current state, against the organisation's objectives and strategy. Balanced scorecard (balanced business scorecard, BSC) is made up of four performance areas - financial, internal business process, learning and growth and customer.

2. Analysing and Managing Stakeholders (20%) (K3)

Candidates will be able to:

2.1 Explain the activities required to engage stakeholders.

Indicative content

- a. Identify stakeholders.
- b. Challenge and inform stakeholders.
- c. Negotiate stakeholder conflicts.
- d. Engage with stakeholders.
- e. Written and verbal communication.
- f. Support stakeholders and facilitate meetings and record outputs.

Guidance

A Business Analyst can provide value by supporting business change through effective and sustainable stakeholder collaboration, communication, and effective stakeholder relationship management.

Stakeholder engagement also comprises of other key skills that are becoming increasingly important in modern workplaces and will continue to be a part of future ways of working. In particular, collaboration, emotional intelligence and cultural awareness. These skills will offer an analyst an extra layer of understanding when understanding stakeholder needs and perspectives.

2.2 Identify generic stakeholder categories using the stakeholder wheel.

Indicative content

- a. Partners.
- b. Suppliers.
- c. Regulators.
- d. Employees.
- e. Managers.
- f. Owners.
- g. Competitors.
- h. Customers.

Guidance

Identifying stakeholders is a key first step in stakeholder management, and the stakeholder wheel can be used to appropriately categorise them. Candidates should be able to recognise descriptions of stakeholders and the relevant categories.

2.3 Use the CATWOE technique to analyse stakeholder perspectives and identify similarities and differences.

Indicative content

- a. Customers.
- b. Actors.
- c. Transformation.
- d. World view.
- e. Owner.
- f. Environment.

Guidance

When implementing change within a business the business analyst may understand stakeholder differences by defining and analysing each CATWOE element. Individual stakeholder perspectives on transformation, customers, actors, owners and the environment may vary due to their world view. A CATWOE can be used to uncover areas of disagreement and encourage stakeholders to analyse their own differences in order to consider the future direction of a business.

2.4 Categorise stakeholders in terms of their power and influence and level of interest.

Indicative content

- a. Power/interest grid.

Guidance

The power/interest grid is a stakeholder analysis tool, used to map stakeholders according to their level of interest in a project and the amount of power or influence they have to support or block a project.

Each stakeholder should be plotted on the power/interest grid using one of nine possible combinations that combine a level of interest (low, some, high) with their level of power (low, some, high).

2.5 Choose an appropriate stakeholder management strategy.

Indicative content

- a. Watch, keep satisfied, constant active management, keep onside, keep informed, ignore.
- b. RACI.

Guidance

Based on the Power and Interest grid, stakeholders require various different management strategies and this too is likely to change as the project progresses. RACI charts may also be used to understand how the level of involvement from a stakeholder differs at each project stage by categorising a stakeholder as responsible, accountable, consulted or informed during each activity.

3. Analysing the Current State (15%) (K3)

Candidates will be able to:

3.1 Choose suitable methods to research the business situation.

Indicative content

- a. Background research.

Guidance

To establish the current state, research should be completed into the organisation's performance, structure and ways of working. This information may be sourced from websites, company reports or internal documentation.

3.2 Identify a suitable quantitative or qualitative investigation technique.

Indicative content

- a. Interviews.
- b. Workshops.
- c. Observation.
- d. Document analysis.
- e. Scenario analysis.
- f. Surveys/questionnaires.
- g. Data analysis.

Guidance

All investigation techniques can be classed as either quantitative or qualitative. Candidates should recognise when a situation requires either or both types of technique, and from this, be able to select a technique which is most suitable to a given circumstance.

3.3 Identify advantages and disadvantages of the different investigation techniques.

Indicative content

- a. Environment.
- b. Project.

Guidance

There are advantages and disadvantages to using any given investigation technique. Advantages and disadvantages can be dependent on the size of a domain to be investigated, location of the analyst and/or the domain to be investigated, the number of stakeholders to keep informed and the nature of the information being investigated.

3.4 Use tools to represent the current business situation.

Indicative content

- a. Customer journey maps.
- b. Rich pictures.
- c. Empathy maps.
- d. Mind maps.

Guidance

These tools exist to allow the analyst to record the findings of their investigations. Customer journey maps and empathy maps specifically show a process from the customer's perspective. Both can be used in conjunction with user roles and personas to provide further insight into the customer experience. Rich pictures and mind maps are useful in offering a visual representation of a whole solution, in a simple format. Candidates can expect to be examined on the application of these tools – using information to complete them or drawing information from them.

4. Establishing the Target State (15%) (K2/3)

Candidates will be able to:

4.1 Use a business activity model.

Indicative content

- a. How to construct.
- b. What, not how.

Guidance

A business activity model (BAM) is used to model activity, from a specific stakeholder perspective. Multiple BAMs are likely to be created to represent all stakeholder perspectives. BAMs will be used alongside target operating models (TOMs) and gap analysis to establish a view of the target state.

4.2 Identify the 5 activities included in a BAM.

Indicative content

- a. Planning.
- b. Enabling.
- c. Doing.
- d. Monitoring.
- e. Controlling.

Guidance

Within a BAM, there are five categories of activity to record, as shown. Candidates should expect to be examined on the use of these five categories by identifying which activities align with which category.

4.3 Explain the need for a consensus BAM.

Indicative content

- a. Stakeholder buy-in.
- b. Agreed perspective.

Guidance

As above, multiple BAMs are created in the first instance, with the objective being to create one, consensus BAM which all stakeholders find agreeable. This consensus BAM is a single model (a shared perspective) of what the business activity should look like and is a key part of stakeholder buy in and engagement. The analyst should apply the skills mentioned in this syllabus to manage the creation of the consensus BAM.

4.4 Explain the three types of business events.

Indicative content

- a. Internal.
- b. External.
- c. Time-based.

Guidance

When modelling a business process, there are three types of event which should be recorded, including internal – things which happen inside the business, external – things which happen outside of the business, and time-based – events which occur with advance warning or regular frequency. Candidates can expect to be examined on these event types and their explanations and descriptions.

4.5 Explain the use of a target operating model (TOM).

Indicative content

- a. POPIT™
- b. Gap analysis.

Guidance

A target operating model (TOM) is created to show how a business should be operating, to achieve their target state. The POPIT™ model (People, Organisation, Process, Information and Technology) is often used a basis for creating a TOM. By establishing the TOM, gap analysis can then be used to compare the current and target state.

5. Designing and Defining the solution. (15%) (K3)

Candidates will be able to:

5.1 Identify the stages of Design Thinking.

Indicative content

- a. Empathise.
- b. Define.
- c. Ideate.
- d. Prototype.
- e. Evaluate.
- f. Create.

Guidance

Design thinking is an iterative way of identifying, exploring and testing solutions, while focusing on the customer need. Candidates should expect to be examined on the stages of Design Thinking and the techniques used within them.

5.2 Describe the use of divergent and convergent thinking.

Indicative content

- a. Double Diamond model.

Guidance

As a Design Thinking model, the Double Diamond model of “discover, define, develop, deliver” uses the concepts of divergent thinking – where all ideas are considered – and convergent thinking – where ideas are refined to explore and define solutions.

5.3 Explain the process of gap analysis.

Indicative content

- a. Comparing current and target state.
- b. Developing options and process.

Guidance

Gap analysis is used to identify differences between the current and target state, by comparing tools and models mentioned in earlier topics such as rich pictures (current state) and TOM (target state). Where gaps are identified, the analyst should explore options to address these gaps.

5.4 Distinguish between areas of feasibility.

Indicative content

- a. Business
- b. Technical.
- c. Financial.

Guidance

Feasibility is important when considering a solution, with three key areas to consider.

1. Business – does the proposed solution align with the business strategy and objectives?
2. Technical – does the technology exist and is it available to deliver the solution?
3. Financial – can the organisation afford to fund the solution?

6. Developing a Business Case (15%) (K2)

Candidates will be able to:

6.1 Explain the rationale for the development of a business case.

Indicative content

- a. Purpose and use.

Guidance

A business case is created only after investigation into potential solutions has taken place, but before any commitment is made to a solution. The purpose of a business case is to present multiple courses of action to decision maker and make recommendations.

6.2 Identify the contents of a business case.

Indicative content

- a. Introduction.
- b. Management summary.
- c. Description of current state.
- d. Options considered:
 - Analysis of costs and benefits
 - Impact assessment
 - Risk assessment
- e. Recommendation.

Guidance

A business case should contain each of these elements, providing decision makers with enough detail to agree or disagree with the proposed recommendations. Candidates can expect to be examined on this list of contents and the type of information included in each section.

While not listed here, a project sponsor will often appear on a business case to support the project and demonstrate commitment from an executive level to the recommendations presented.

6.3 Identify tangible and intangible costs and benefits.

Indicative content

- a. Cost benefit analysis.

Guidance

The costs and benefits of a solution can be categorised as tangible or intangible. Tangible in this context meaning measurable or verifiable. Candidates can expect to be examined on the types of costs and benefits which would be included in the business case, and whether they would be categorised as tangible or otherwise. Examples include; staff training, recruitment, improved communication, customer satisfaction.

6.4 Identify risks and their potential impact.

Indicative content

- a. Types of risk.
- b. Risk analysis.
- c. Risk impact.

Guidance

Risks must be included for options presented in the business case. These risks should be analysed, and their probability, impact, countermeasures and owner must be recorded as part of the risk assessment.

6.5 Explain the rationale for the financial case and the appraisal techniques.

Indicative content

- a. Payback.
- b. Discounted cash flow and net present value.

Guidance

In a business case, the financial impact of paying for a solution (or not taking any action) must be considered. A payback calculation can be completed to show the costs of the solution, and the financial benefits over time. Discounted cash flow must be considered; this addresses the time value of money and how the costs and benefits may vary due to external economic factors. Net present value must also be considered; this uses discounted cash flow to discount future monies back to today's values. The net present value takes into account the time value of money and presents the value of investment in today's terms.

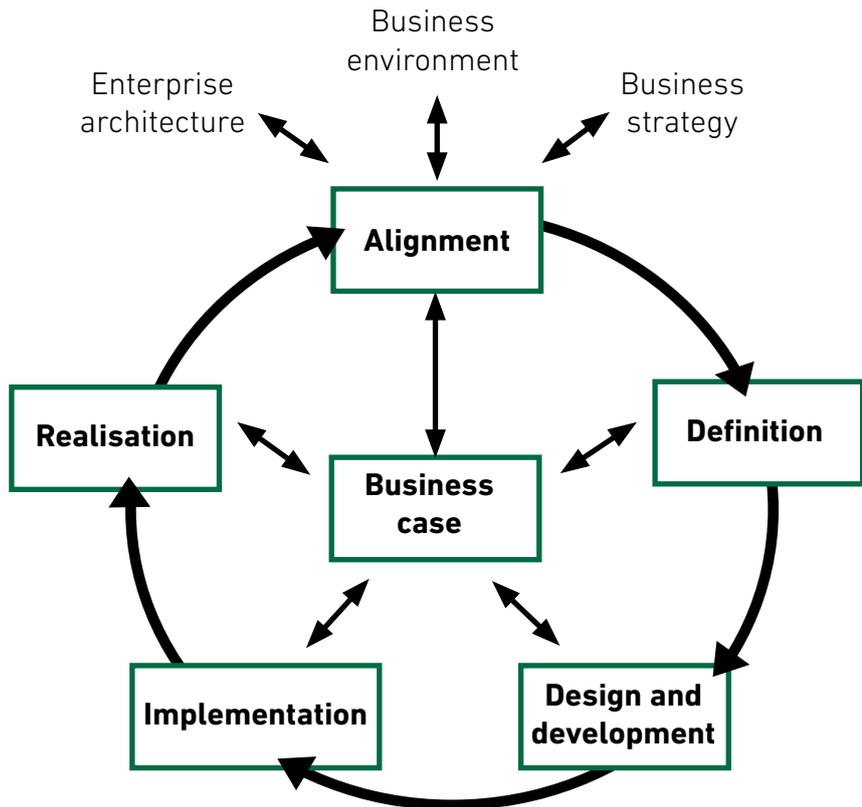
6.6 Relate the business case to the business change lifecycle.

Indicative content

- a. The business change lifecycle.

Guidance

The business case is central in the business change lifecycle. As demonstrated in the diagram, the five stages (alignment, definition, design and development, implementation and realisation) all feed into the business case, and likewise, the contents of the business case will impact the activity at each stage depending on its contents and recommendations.



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Examination Format

This certificate is assessed through completion of an invigilated online exam which candidates will only be able to access at the date and time they are registered to attend.

Type	40 multiple choice and multiple response questions
Duration	60 minutes
Supervised	Yes
Open Book	No (no materials can be taken into the examination room)
Passmark	26/40 (65%)
Delivery	Digital

Adjustments and/or additional time can be requested in line with the BCS reasonable adjustments policy for candidates with a disability, or other special considerations including English as a second language.



Question Weighting

Each major subject heading in this syllabus is assigned a percentage weighting. The purpose of this is:

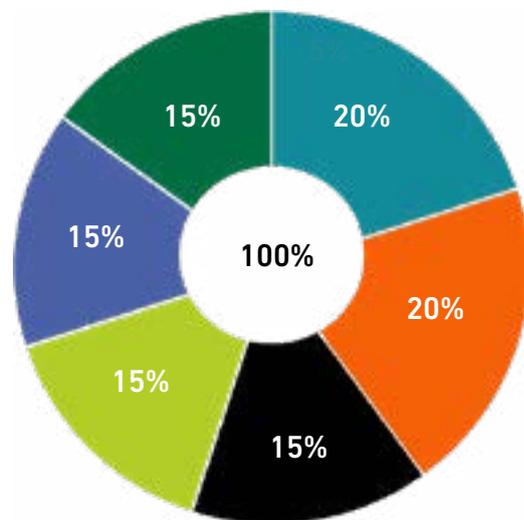
1. Guidance on the proportion of content allocated to each topic area of an accredited course.
2. Guidance on the proportion of questions in the exam.

Syllabus Area

- 1. Strategic Context for Business Analysis
- 2. Analysing and Managing Stakeholders
- 3. Analysing the Current State
- 4. Establishing the Target Sate
- 5. Defining the Solution.
- 6. Developing a Business Case

Question type

- Multiple choice and multiple response. **20%**
- Multiple choice and multiple response. **20%**
- Multiple choice and multiple response. **15%**



Syllabus Weighting



Recommended Reading

The following titles are suggested reading for anyone undertaking this award. Candidates should be encouraged to explore other available sources.

Title: Business Analysis (4th Edition)
Author: Debra Paul and James Cadle
Publisher: BCS
Publication Date: July 2020
ISBN: 9781780175102

Note: This title is **required reading** for this certification rather than recommended.

Title: Business Analysis Techniques:123 essential tools for success
Author: James Cadle, Debra Paul, Jonathan Hunsley, Adrian Reed, David Beckham, Paul Turner
Publisher: BCS
Publication Date: August 2021
ISBN: 9781780175690

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Document Change History

The below summarises any revisions made to this document since first publication.

Version Number Changes Made

Version 5.0
June 2021

All learning objectives rewritten. Introduction, SFIA mapping and suitability updated. Addition of indicative content and guidance.

Version 4.1
March 2020

Addition of Trainer Criteria and Classroom Size ratios. Additional wording of clarification to the pass mark.

Version 4.0
September 2018

Amended to closed book. Pass mark details amended post Angoff Review. Required and recommended reading list confirmed.

Version 3.0
July 2017

Syllabus review and amendments.
Change History introduction updated; Standardisation of use of capitals; full stops added to end of every bullet/paragraph; formatting updated to achieve uniformity across the portfolio. Refresh on syllabus content. Examination format changed to include multiple choice. All syllabus sections converted to learning objectives.

Version 2.4 March
2015

Updated language requirements for extra time and use of dictionary.
Document checked so that it conforms to accessibility reading issues.
Standardised the trainer requirements

Version 2.3
March 2014

Added updated syllabus sections and related comment. Reading list updated.
The extended Business Analysis Practice syllabus is designed to support the centralised Business Analysis Practice examination paper. A commentary has been added to aid candidates preparing for the centralised examination. There are numbers at the end of some bullet points which directly refer to points made in the commentary.

Version 2.2
September 2012

Added details of extra time for foreign language candidates.

Version 2.1
July 2012

Name has changed from the Business Analysis Essentials to Business Analysis Practice. Updated new BCS logo and strapline. Changed from ISEB to BCS. Added table of contents, levels of knowledge, levels of skill and responsibility, format of the examination, change history and definition of terminology.

Version 2.0
August 2011

Technical Content Changes:
Assuring business case removed from syllabus and objectives. Lifecycle for business change expanded. Role of the BA, and other roles, added. Minor restructuring of stakeholder analysis. Clarification of types of business events and business rules. Changed Section 1 from 15% to 10%.
Clarification in Section 2.4 Critical Success Factors, Key Performance Indicators and Performance Targets.



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