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BCS International Diploma in Business Analysis Syllabus

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Regulators - Ofqual, Qualification in Wales, CCEA or SQA

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Change History

Any changes made to the syllabus shall be clearly documented with a change history log. This shall include the latest version number, date of the amendment and changes made. The purpose is to identify quickly what changes have been made.

Version Number	Changes Made
Version 3.0 January 2019	Knowledge-based specialism removed as a knowledge area. Generic items within this knowledge area moved to earlier in the syllabus. Sectors of the economy removed.
Version 2.4 December 2016	Strapline regarding regulated statement has been added
Version 2.3 Nov 2014	Updated the reading list.
Version 2.3 June 2013	Renamed 'IT Enabled Business Change' to 'Business Change' Removed time limit for Organisational Context to be accepted as the knowledge-based specialism. Updated the details of the Michael Blackstaff book Finance for IT Decision Makers (3 rd Edition)
Version 2.1 June 2012	Added 'International' to the Qualification Title
Version 2.0 March 2011	Removed references to ISEB and replaced logos with BCS. Changed Business Analysis Essentials to Business Analysis Practice. Renamed Section 1 Added new Sections: 1.3; 1.5; 1.6; 3.8; 6.2;6.3 Extended Sections: 1.7; 2.1; 2.5; 4.1;4.3; 4.4; 5.1; 5.6;5.7; 6.5
Version 1.2 July 2011	Document updated to reflect the BSD refresh

Rationale/Background

The oral examination for the BCS International Business Analysis Diploma is taken by candidates on successful completion of a set of written examinations. It focuses on the application of their knowledge and also provides an opportunity to assess their interpersonal and problem solving skills. This is the highest level qualification within the business change section of the Professional Certifications qualifications portfolio.

Aims and Objectives

The BCS International Diploma in Business Analysis provides a professional qualification for business analysts. It sets a standard by which business analysts may be assessed. Holders of the qualification will have had to demonstrate competency in a range of skills and techniques and will have passed examinations that assess performance across knowledge levels 2-5.

Target Group

This qualification is aimed at business and IT professionals who wish to demonstrate that they have a detailed understanding of business analysis best practice.

Entry Criteria

The entry criteria for this examination are:

- Examination passes in the BCS Certificates in Business Analysis Practice (formerly known as Business Analysis Essentials) and Requirements Engineering.
- An examination pass in one of the knowledge-based specialist modules defined below.
- An examination pass in one of the practitioner specialist modules defined below.

It is recommended that candidates sit the oral examination within 12 months of completing the pre-requisite modules.

Knowledge – Based Specialist Modules

BCS Foundation Certificate in Business Analysis
BCS Foundation Certificate in Business Change
BCS Foundation Certificate in Project Management
BCS Certificate in Commercial Awareness *

* Organisational Context (the predecessor to Commercial Awareness) is accepted as a knowledge-based specialism.

Practitioner Specialist Modules

BCS Certificate in Modelling Business Processes
BCS Certificate in Benefits Management and Business Acceptance
BCS Certificate in Systems Development Essentials
BCS Certificate in Systems Modelling Techniques
BCS Certificate in Data Management Essentials

IIBA Exemption

Candidates holding the IIBA CBAP qualification are exempt from the BCS Certificate in Requirements Engineering and the knowledge-based specialist module.

IREB Exemption

Candidates who have completed IREB's Certified Professional for Requirements Engineering (CPRE) Foundation level will be exempt from taking the BCS Certificate in Requirements Engineering to achieve their Business Analysis Diploma.

Candidates who have completed the BCS Certificate in Requirements Engineering will be exempt from taking the IREB CPRE Foundation level to progress to the IREB's Advanced level.

Structure of the Examination

The examination is conducted by two oral examiners and lasts for 50 minutes. Candidates are not allowed to take any written material into the oral examination. The questions are concerned with the application of the business analysis techniques and approaches defined in this syllabus and the practitioner specialist module syllabus nominated by the candidate.

Objectives of the Oral Examination

The objectives of this oral examination are:

- To assess the candidate's level of knowledge of the business analysis topics defined in this syllabus.
- To assess the candidate's ability to apply the business analysis techniques defined in this syllabus.

Examination and Training Organisation Information

This qualification is examined and awarded by BCS and there is no training pre-requisite for the written or oral examinations. However, where the oral examiners identify omissions or errors in the training provided by accredited BCS Examination Providers or BCS Training Organisations, feedback regarding such issues will be provided to the relevant provider/organisation.

Candidate Information

Candidates are not required to attend training courses prior to sitting the oral examination. However, it is recommended that candidates revise thoroughly the subject areas identified in the syllabus content below. Although attendance at an Oral Examination Preparation Day offered by an accredited training provider is not mandatory, attendance is strongly recommended to gain a better understanding of the structure and format of the oral examination. An oral preparation day will also help candidates understand the rationale for the questioning approach adopted by the oral examiners.

Candidates who pass the oral examination are awarded the International Diploma in Business Analysis. Candidates who fail the oral examination are provided with feedback that identifies the particular areas of weakness identified during the oral examination.

Additional time for candidates due to a disability

Candidates who have a disability which may impact their ability to take and pass the oral interview may be eligible for additional time. An example would be if a candidate has a speech impediment. Please advise BCS at the time of booking the oral examination

Where candidates have been granted extra time during the oral examination, BCS will try to allocate the final interview slot of the day so that there are fewer time restrictions. Please inform BCS as early as possible so that the best time slot can be allocated. In exceptional circumstances, it may be possible to allow written responses to the interview questions.

Syllabus

The syllabus is structured into sections relating to major subject headings and numbered with a single digit section number. The syllabus content identifies the subject areas and topics to be examined. The knowledge (K) level from Bloom's Taxonomy is shown for each subject area. Bloom's Taxonomy is explained in a later section of this syllabus.

1. The business context (K Level 4/5)

1.1 The rationale for business analysis

- Why is business analysis important?
- What benefits can business analysis offer organisations?

1.2 The holistic view of a business system

- The importance of taking a holistic view
- Aspects of a holistic view
 - People
 - Process
 - Organisation
 - Information and Technology

1.3 Competencies of a business analyst

- Business domain knowledge
- Personal and behavioural skills
- Professional skills

1.4 Professionalism and business analysis

- The role of BCS in professional development of business analysts
- The importance of a code of conduct/ Professional standards

1.5 Business environment analysis

- A technique to analyse the influences from the external business environment.
- A technique to analyse the capability of the internal business environment.

1.6 SWOT analysis

- Links to the internal business environment analysis (strengths and weaknesses).
- Links to the external business environment analysis (opportunities and threats).
- Using the SWOT analysis.

1.7 Business performance measurement

- Critical Success Factors (CSFs)
- Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
- Performance targets
- The link between CSFs, KPIs and performance targets
- The Balanced Business Scorecard

- 1.8 Business analysis within the lifecycle for business change
- Stages of the lifecycle:
 - Alignment
 - Definition
 - Design
 - Implementation: the emotional curve and organisational culture
 - Realisation
 - Key differences between Waterfall and Agile solution delivery

2. Business analysis techniques (K Level 4/5)

2.1 Investigating and documenting business situations

- Investigation techniques:
 - Interviews
 - Workshops
 - Observation
 - Shadowing
 - Questionnaires
 - Document analysis
 - Focus groups
 - Sampling
 - Special purpose records
 - Scenarios
 - Prototyping
- Advantages and disadvantages of the techniques
- Applying the techniques to different business situations
- At least one technique used to document existing business situations.

***Note** the technique to document a business situation must provide a means of representing the various aspects of the existing business situation, not just one view. For example, an 'as is' business process model may be a supplementary technique but would not provide sufficient information to document the entire business situation.

2.2 Stakeholder analysis

- Techniques used to identify stakeholders
- Categories of stakeholder
 - Business stakeholders – project sponsor, business managers, end-users, subject matter (domain) expert
 - External stakeholders – customers, suppliers, regulators
- One technique to analyse and prioritise stakeholders
- Strategies for on-going stakeholder communication and management
- Rationale for understanding stakeholder perspectives
- One technique to analyse a stakeholder perspective
- Approach to resolving conflicts in stakeholder perspective

- 2.3 Modelling business activities
 - Rationale for modelling a conceptual view of activities for a specific perspective
 - A technique to model a conceptual view of business activities
 - Types of activities
 - Dependencies between activities
 - Relationship between the business perspective and the corresponding business activities

- 2.4 Business events
 - Types of business event
 - External
 - Internal
 - Time-based
 - Rationale for analysing business events

- 2.5 Business rules
 - Types of business rule
 - Constraints on the organisation, including external legal and regulatory constraints
 - Internal policies
 - Internal procedures
 - Relevance of business rules to business process and system process modelling

- 2.6 Gap analysis
 - The process for gap analysis
 - Techniques used in gap analysis:
 - to represent the existing business situation
 - to represent the desired business situation
 - to analyse areas of activity
 - to identify potential actions for business improvement
 - Identifying actions and options for business change

3. Business case development (K Level 4/5)

3.1 Rationale for making a business case

3.2 Contents of a business case

- Background description
- Options and their descriptions (see 3.3)
- Costs
 - areas of cost
 - tangible and intangible costs
 - quantifying costs

- Benefits
 - areas of business benefit,
 - tangible and intangible benefits,
 - quantifying benefits
 - Cost/benefit analysis using investment appraisal techniques (see 3.5)
 - Risks
 - areas of risk
 - types of risk
 - risk analysis (see 3.6)
 - Impacts (see 3.7)
 - Recommendations – the preferred option
- 3.3 Options
- Defining a range of options
 - The ‘do nothing’ option
 - Perspectives to evaluate feasibility: business, technical and financial
- 3.4 The financial case
- Rationale for making the financial case
- 3.5 Investment appraisal techniques
- Rationale for different investment appraisal techniques:
 - Payback period or break-even analysis
 - Discounted Cash Flow/Net Present Value analysis
 - Internal Rate of Return analysis
- 3.6 Risk analysis
- Assessing the impact of the risks
 - Assessing the probability of the risks
 - Risk management approaches
 - risk acceptance
 - risk avoidance
 - risk mitigation
- 3.7 Impact analysis
- Analysing the impacts on the organisation’s culture and behaviour
- 3.8 Lifecycle for the business case
- Rationale for business case reviews/gateways
- 3.9 Terms of reference
- Rationale for terms of reference for the selected solution
 - Content of a terms of reference: business and project objectives

4. Requirements definition (K Level 4/5)

4.1 Requirements engineering

- Rationale for requirements engineering
- Definition of a requirement
- Hierarchy of requirements
- Elements of the requirements engineering approach
- Requirements planning and estimating

4.2 Requirements elicitation

- Techniques to elicit requirements (see list of techniques in 2.1)
- Applying the techniques when eliciting requirements
- Knowledge types
 - Tacit
 - Non-tacit/Explicit
 - Relevance of techniques when eliciting different knowledge types

4.3 Requirements analysis

- Separation between requirements analysis and elicitation
- Requirements analysis tasks
 - Checking congruence with business objectives and the business case
 - Checking feasibility
 - Structuring the requirements
 - Prioritisation – the structure and application of a technique to allocate a priority to each requirement. The link between the prioritisation technique and the lifecycle for delivery of the solution.
 - Packaging requirements for delivery
 - Use of scenarios and prototyping in requirements analysis
 - Dealing with overlapping, duplicate and conflicting requirements
- Quality characteristics of the requirements
 - testable
 - unambiguous
 - relevant
 - clear
 - complete
 - consistent
 - traceable

4.4 Requirements validation

- Rationale for requirements validation
- Requirements validation process
- Stakeholder concerns and responsibilities in requirements validation

5. Requirements management and documentation (K Level 4/5)

5.1 Requirements management

- Rationale for requirements management
- Elements of requirements management
 - Identifying requirements
 - Source of the requirement
 - Owner of the requirement
 - Cross-references for the requirement
 - Change control
 - Version control
 - Storage of the documented requirements
- Traceability
 - Vertical traceability
 - Horizontal traceability

5.2 Change control

- Change control process

5.3 Version control

- Configuration management process
- Levels of configuration item – individual requirement or document
- Version numbering

5.4 Tools in requirements management

- Functionality provided by tools
 - Storage of documentation and models
 - Linkage and cross-referencing
 - Change and version control
 - Access restrictions

5.5 Types of requirements

- General business requirements
- Technical requirements
- Functional requirements
- Non-functional requirements

5.6 Legal issues and business analysis

- Data protection: rationale, principles and impact on requirements
- Disability access: rationale, principles and impact on requirements

***Note** this section is not concerned with the detail of the relevant laws but the underlying rationale for each area and the relevance to the business analyst.

5.7 Documenting requirements

- Requirements documentation styles
 - Use case diagram: (see 5.8)
 - User stories: purpose, format and content
 - Data model: (see 5.8)
 - Requirements Catalogue: purpose of the elements described for each requirement:
 - identifier
 - name
 - description
 - business area
 - type of requirement
 - author
 - source
 - owner
 - priority
 - rationale/justification
 - cross-referenced requirements
 - cross-referenced documents
 - acceptance criteria
 - status/resolution
 - version number and date

5.8 Requirements modelling

- The rationale for modelling requirements: eliciting, analysing and validating requirements
- Purpose of use case models and data models
- Use case diagrams and descriptions
 - The notation and structure including:
 - the actors
 - the use cases within the system scope
 - the associations between the actors and the use cases
 - the boundary of the system
- Modelling the system data requirements
 - The notation and structure of a technique to model the system data requirements, including:
 - the groupings of data
 - the degree of the relationships between data groupings
 - the types of optionality within relationships between data groupings
- Business rules and the data model

6. Practitioner specialism (K Level 2/3)

For the selected module:

- 6.1 Relevance to the business analyst role
 - Use of the approach in business analysis work
 - Use of the techniques in business analysis work

- 6.2 Relevance of the module to an organisation

- 6.3 Description of the module
 - The approach adopted in the module
 - Rationale for the approach
 - Overview of the approach
 - The techniques covered by the module
 - Rationale for using the techniques
 - Relevance of the techniques
 - Application of the techniques

Terminology Used

The terminology used in the oral examination will conform to that adopted in BCS publications on Business Analysis and related disciplines such as Project Management (see reading list at the end of this syllabus).

Levels of Knowledge

Each section of this syllabus has been assigned a knowledge level based upon Bloom's taxonomy of knowledge in the cognitive domain (ref Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, Handbook 1 – The Cognitive Domain, Bloom et al., New York 1956). Bloom defined six levels of knowledge, which can be broadly interpreted as per the table below.

Level	Levels of Knowledge
K6	Evaluate
K5	Synthesise
K4	Analyse
K3	Apply
K2	Understand
K1	Remember

The knowledge levels that apply to this syllabus are K2 – K5, which means that examination questions will test the candidate's understanding of the relevant syllabus topics at these levels only.

Example questions for each level are provided below.

Level	Sample question
K2	What is the purpose of producing a business case before initiating a project?
K3	In the scenario just described, how would you organise a workshop to identify the solution requirements?
K4/5	If you were at the start of a new business analysis assignment to help improve the effectiveness of a particular business area, what would you do first?

Examination Format

Type	Oral
Duration	50 minutes. Candidates are able to request additional time if they have a disability that would impact them during an oral examination such as a speech impediment.
Pre-Requisite for course and/or exam	Candidates must have passed written examinations in the two core modules, one knowledge-based specialist module and one practitioner module.
Invigilated/Proctored	No. Conducted by two oral examiners.
Closed	Yes. Reading material is not to be used during the oral interview.
Pass Mark	Pass or fail
Delivery	Interview by two oral examiners

Reading List

It is the responsibility of the oral examination candidate to ensure that they possess sufficient knowledge and understanding of the topic areas defined in sections 1-6 of the syllabus above. The reading list below is provided to support candidates in their study and revision for the oral examination.

Title: Business Analysis 3rd Edition
Author: Debra Paul, Donald Yeates and James Cadle
Publisher: BCS
Publication Date: September 2014
ISBN: 978-1780172774

Title: Business Analysis Techniques
Author: James Cadle, Debra Paul and Paul Turner
Publisher: BCS
Publication Date: September 2014
ISBN: 978-1780172736

Title: Benefits Management: How to increase the business value of your IT projects
Author: John Ward and Elizabeth Daniel
Publisher: John Wiley and Sons
Publication Date: September 2012
ISBN: 978-1119993261

Title: Developing Information Systems
Author: James Cadle (ed)
Publisher: BCS
Publication Date: August 2014
ISBN: 978-1780172453

Title: UML 2 and the Unified Process (2nd Edition)
Author: Jim Arlow and Ila Neustadt
Publisher: Addison-Wesley
Publication Date: June 2005
ISBN: 978-0321321275