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April 2013 marking window – Examiner’s report

4419-05-505 / 4419-06-605 Business Case and Business Plan

The following areas were noted during the marking of the April 2013 submission of the Business Case and Business Plan. A number of the points that will be discussed in this report have been mentioned on previous examiner reports. For centres that are submitting the Business Case and Business Plan (BC/BP) for the first time, care should be taken to ensure that these areas are addressed in future submissions.

Several of the topics chosen were operational and not management related. The guidance notes states that the chosen topic should focus on management and not operational, technical issues or mandatory change.

The executive summary should be of an appropriate length and function as an overview for readers summarising key points such as the aims, objectives, research carried out, recommendations and cost of implementation. The executive summary should not be too short – if it is completed in half a page the information presented will be insufficient. Equally, it should not be so long that it impedes on information presented in the rest of the plan eg information within the introduction should not be a repeat of the executive summary. It should be noted that in some instances, an executive summary was not provided. The executive summary should be produced once the Business Plan is complete, but is placed at the beginning of the overall BC/BP, as outlined within the guidance notes.

Centres need to ensure that candidates are presenting their Business Case and Business Plan in the correct format, as outlined within the guidance (see p7 3.4). Examiners may miss vital pieces of information when not presented under the correct headings.

There is a tendency for candidates to list the methodology they intend to use rather than describe the methodology they have employed to quantify the rationale which sits within the Business Case and not the Business Plan. Many candidates are failing to include a PESTLE or similar type analysis tool within the rationale for their chosen opportunity. The analysis would be within the Business Case. Several of the Business Cases did not follow the format as required in the guidance notes.

For some candidates, the recommendations contained within the Business Case were weak. If there is only one feasible recommendation for the BC/BP, it would be better to simply address this than attempt to include a list of recommendations that are not practical. In some instances, the recommendations appeared to be a list of steps that would have been better highlighted within the implementation stage of the Business Plan.



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2.2, 4.1 and 4.2 continue to be the weakest areas. The assessment of risk should explore identified and potential risks associated with the development of the opportunity. Reference should be made to risks associated with human resources, financial and organisational. Contingency planning on how to manage, monitor and control risks should be carried out. A strategy is required for monitoring and measuring which is an indication that this needs to be fairly robust in its content. Where the strategy is weak and the candidate fails, Assessment Criteria 4.1, 4.2 is not usually achieved.

2.1, the implementation plan – a number of candidates are presenting a table along with a gantt chart but no supporting information. The plan should link back to risks and contingency planning, but should not replace 2.2 at the beginning of the Business Plan.

Please note the BC/BP should be presented in the third person (see p7 3.4 of the guidance).