## 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version Number</th>
<th>Changes Made</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Version 2.4 March 2015</td>
<td>Updated language requirements for extra time and use of dictionary. Check the document so that it conforms to accessibility reading issues. Standardised the trainer requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Version 2.3 May 2014</td>
<td>Added updated syllabus sections and related comment. Reading list updated. This 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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Version 2.2 September 2012</td>
<td>Updated the additional time requirements and removed definition of terminology. Included a section to cover excerpts from BCS books.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Version 2.1 July 2012</td>
<td>Added details of extra time for foreign language candidates.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Version 2.0 August 2011 | 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. 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 |
# BCS Certificate in Business Analysis Practice Extended Syllabus

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Introduction

This certificate is concerned with some of the fundamental aspects of business analysis. Its focus is on using a holistic approach to the investigation and improvement of business situations with a view to developing effective, feasible business solutions.

There are two key elements to the syllabus: the development of a business strategy and the exploration of a business issue, whether a problem or opportunity. For the first element, candidates are required to understand a range of strategic analysis and performance management techniques. For the second element, they are required to be able to apply business analysis techniques within a defined framework.

The syllabus requires that the candidate should be able to describe the following aspects of the framework:

- The structure (for example, milestones/stages/phases)
- The activities (for example, the workflows or detailed steps/tasks described within an approach)

For each technique, the candidate should be able to:

- Describe the technique
- Interpret and develop the documentation derived from the use of the technique

This extended Business Analysis Practice syllabus is designed to support the centralised Business Analysis Practice examination paper. The original syllabus is defined in black and the extensions in red and italicised. 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.

Objectives

Holders of the BCS Certificate in Business Analysis Practice should be able to:

- Describe how a business strategy is developed
- Apply strategic analysis techniques
- Explain the need for project discipline
- Explain techniques to investigate an organisation's business systems
- Describe an approach to improving business systems
- Explain the importance of stakeholder management and use a stakeholder analysis technique
- Use techniques for the analysis and conceptual modelling of business systems
- Describe how recommendations for business improvements may be identified
- Describe the contents of a rigorous business case for the development and implementation of business changes
- Identify costs, benefits, impacts and risks for an option in a business case
Duration and Format of the Course

Candidates can study for this certificate in two ways: by attending training courses provided by BCS Examination Providers or by self-study.

It is the view of BCS that, for full coverage to be achieved, training courses leading to the certificate should normally run for a minimum of 14 hours over 2 or 3 days.

The course can be delivered a number of different ways from traditional class-room based training to online e-learning.

Eligibility for the Examination

There are no specific pre-requisites for entry to the examination; however candidates should possess the appropriate level of knowledge to fulfil the objective shown above.

Duration and Format of the Examination

The format for the examination is a one hour written open book examination based on a business scenario with 15 minutes reading time. Candidates who are awarded a pass for the examination are awarded the BCS Certificate in Business Analysis Practice.

Additional time for candidates requiring Reasonable Adjustments

Candidates may request additional time if they require reasonable adjustments in line with the BCS reasonable adjustments policy. It will be the Examination Provider’s responsibility to make a decision regarding candidate eligibility and keep a record of the decision. This is subject to audit by BCS.

Additional time for candidates whose native language is not that of the examination

If the examination is taken in a language that is not the candidate’s native / official language then they are entitled to 25% extra time. If the examination is taken in a language that is not the candidate’s native / official language then they are entitled to use their own paper language dictionary (whose purpose is translation between the examination language and another national language) during the examination. Electronic versions of dictionaries will not be allowed into the examination room. It will be the Examination Provider’s responsibility to make the decision regarding candidate eligibility and keep a record of the additional time allowed. Candidates must request additional time in advance of the examination to allow the Examination Provider enough time to make suitable arrangements with the invigilator.
1. Rationale - (10%)

1.1 A lifecycle for business change (1)
   - Alignment
   - Definition
   - Design
   - Implementation
   - Realisation

1.2 The role of the Business Analyst within the lifecycle for business change (2)
   - Strategy implementation
   - Business case production
   - Benefits realisation
   - Specification of IT requirements

1.3 Other roles within the lifecycle for business change
   - Project manager
   - Developer
   - Tester

1.4 The framework for business analysis activities
   - Relationship of business analysis to strategic analysis and definition and to IT systems analysis (3)
   - The holistic approach to business analysis (4)

2. Understanding the strategic context - (15%)

2.1 Internal environment analysis (1)

2.2 External environment analysis (2)

2.3 SWOT analysis (3)
   - Links to the internal business environment analysis (strengths and weaknesses)
   - Links to the external business environment analysis (opportunities and threats)
   - Using the SWOT analysis
2.4 Critical Success Factors and Key Performance Indicators and Performance Targets (4)

- Critical Success Factors (CSF) – statements of the areas in which the business considers vital to its success; these may be industry wide or organisation specific
- Key Performance Indicators (KPI) – areas to be monitored to measure whether each CSF is being achieved
- Performance Targets – targets set for each KPI

2.5 The Balanced Business Scorecard as a framework for identifying Critical Success Factors and Key Performance Indicators (5)

3. Project discipline for business analysis studies (5%)

3.1 Terms of Reference/Project Initiation (1)

3.2 Business and project objectives (2)

- Business objectives – these define what the business wishes to achieve as a result of the project
- Project objectives – these define what the project is required to deliver

4. Understanding the situation/issues (10%)

4.1 Stakeholder identification

- Stakeholder wheel (1)

4.2 Overview of investigative techniques

- Techniques to investigate the current business situation (2)
- Interviews
- Observation
- Workshops
- Document Analysis
- Focus Groups
- Questionnaires/Surveys
### 4.3 Representing a holistic view of the business situation

- **Techniques to document the current business situation (3)**
- **Rich pictures**
- **Mind maps**
- **Fishbone diagrams**
- **Rationale for taking a holistic view (4)**

### 5. Analysing stakeholder perspectives (15%)

#### 5.1 Stakeholder analysis and management (1)

- **Power/Interest Grid**
- **Stakeholder management strategies**

#### 5.2 Identifying different perspectives

- **Stakeholder world views (2)**

#### 5.3 Defining perspectives

- **CATWOE (3)**
- **Contrasting different perspectives (4)**
6. Analysing and modelling business activities (20%)

6.1 Developing a conceptual business activity model (1)
- Definition of conceptual model
- Using a business perspective as the basis for a business activity model
- 5 types of activity – definitions and application
- Dependency – definition and application
- Process and notation for building the business activity model

6.2 Identifying business events
- Types of business event (2)
  - External
  - Internal
  - Time-based

6.3 Analysing business rules
- Types of business rule (3)
  - External constraints
  - Internal policies
  - Internal procedures
- Levels of constraint resulting from business rules

6.4 Building the consensus business activity model
- Identifying differences between business activity models
- Negotiating to resolve conflicts
- Rational for the consensus business activity model
- Approaches to developing the consensus business activity model

7. Identifying potential solutions (10%)

7.1 Gap analysis – comparing the ideal and existing systems (1)
- Process for gap analysis
- Inputs to gap analysis
- Outputs from gap analysis
- Business process models in gap analysis

7.2 Defining a new business model (2)
- Areas for change - processes, people, technology and organisation
7.3 Identifying IS/IT requirements to support the new business model

- Using the business activity model and business process models to identify requirements (3)
- Names of models used to document and analyse requirements: (4)
  - Use case diagrams
  - Class models
  - Entity-relationship diagrams

8. Making the business case (15%)

8.1 Structure of a business case (1)

8.2 Identifying and shortlisting options for business change (2)

- Identifying a range of options, including the ‘do nothing’ option
- Assessing the feasibility of each option

8.3 Identifying and categorising costs and benefits

- Tangible and intangible costs and benefits (3)
- Investment appraisal techniques: (4)
  - Payback period or break even analysis
  - Discounted Cash Flow/Net Present Value analysis
  - Internal Rate of Return analysis

8.4 Identifying and categorising risks and approaches to their management (5)

- Identifying risks
- Assessing the impact of the risks
- Assessing the probability of the risks
- Risk management approaches:
  - Risk avoidance
  - Risk mitigation
  - Risk transference
  - Risk acceptance

8.5 Identifying impacts (6)

- Impacts on the organisation’s culture
- Impacts on the organisation’s behaviour

8.6 The lifecycle for the business case (7)
Commentary

1. Rationale

(1) The lifecycle for business change specified in this syllabus is described in the BCS Business Analysis 3rd Edition publication and the associated text. Candidates are expected to be able to relate this lifecycle to the examination scenario.

(2) The role of the Business Analyst is described in the BCS Business Analysis 3rd Edition publication. Candidates are expected to be able to relate the activities in this role to the examination scenario.

(3) These relationships are discussed in BCS Business Analysis 3rd Edition publication. Candidates are expected to be able to discuss the relevance of these relationships within the context of the examination scenario.

(4) The holistic approach involves considering four aspects of a business system: the processes, the people, the organisational context, and the technology. These are discussed further in the BCS Business Analysis 3rd Edition publication. Candidates are expected to be able to consider these aspects within the context of the examination scenario.

2. Understanding the strategic context

(1) Candidates are expected to apply one technique for the analysis of the internal environment. Suitable techniques include:


Candidates for central examinations should be prepared for questions based upon either a MOST analysis or a Resource Audit.

(2) Candidates are expected to apply one technique for the analysis of the external environment. Suitable techniques include:


Candidates for central examinations should be prepared for questions based upon either a PESTLE analysis or Porter’s Five Forces.
3. **Project discipline for business analysis studies**

(1) Candidates should recognise the importance of a formal Terms of Reference (or Project Initiation Document) for every project. A suitable acronym for the minimum contents of such a document is OSCAR (objectives, scope, constraints, authority and resources) (BCS Business Analysis 3rd Edition).

(2) Objectives should be SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound) so should always have a quantifiable element (so that they are measurable) and a time within which they are to be achieved (so that they are time-bound).

4. **Understanding the situation/issues**


(2) Candidates need to understand the relevance of the following techniques when investigating a current business situation:

- Interviews
- Observation
- Workshops
- Focus Groups

BCS Business Analysis 3rd Edition publication. It should be noted that candidates need to appreciate the rationale for using these techniques to understand an existing situation; candidates are not required to demonstrate an understanding of how to apply the techniques within this certification examination.
(3) Candidates need to understand the following techniques when documenting a current business situation:

- Rich pictures
- Mind maps

See BCS Business Analysis 3rd Edition publication. It should be noted that candidates may be examined on the techniques identified above; other documentation techniques described in the reference text will not form part of this certification examination.

(4) BCS Business Analysis 3rd Edition

5. Analysing stakeholder perspectives

(1) See BCS Business Analysis 3rd Edition publication.


(3) Candidates should be able to use the CATWOE technique to identify differences between stakeholder perspectives and explain the implications of those differences.

6. Analysing and modelling business activities

(1) BCS Business Analysis 3rd Edition.


7. **Identifying potential solutions**

(1) BCS Business Analysis 3rd Edition. Also see BCS Business Analysis Techniques: 72 Essential Tools for Success publication p118-121.

(2) Candidates need to be able to identify the data and processing required to support activities on a business activity model or tasks on a business process model.

(3) Candidates need to be able to name these models and distinguish between the technique for modelling functionality (use case diagrams) and the techniques that model data (class diagrams/entity relationship diagrams).

8. **Making the business case**

(1) Candidates should be aware that a business case should include:

- A background description, including an introduction, a management summary and a description of the current situation,
- A set of options (including a ‘do nothing’ option), with the costs and benefits, including a cost-benefit financial appraisal, the risks and the impacts identified for each option,
- A recommendation of the preferred option.
- Any appendices to provide supporting information.


Candidates should be able to identify this information for completing the business case from the examination scenario.


(4) BCS Business Analysis 3rd Edition and BCS Business Analysis Techniques: 72 Essential Tools for Success publication, p146-151 for an explanation of these investment appraisal techniques. Candidates should be able to recommend appropriate investment appraisal techniques within the context of the examination scenario but will not be required to perform any calculations in the written Business Analysis Practice examination.
(5) BCS Business Analysis 3rd Edition, and the BCS Business Analysis Techniques: 72 Essential Tools for Success publication, p143-146 for a description of the identification and categorisation of risks, including measures to manage risks. Candidates should be able to identify potential risks within the context of the examination scenario and then be able to categorise these risks. They should also be able to suggest appropriate approaches to the management of those risks.

(6) BCS Business Analysis 3rd Edition and BCS Business Analysis Techniques: 72 Essential Tools for Success publication, p141-143 for a description of impact analysis. Candidates should be able to identify potential impacts on the organisation’s culture and behaviour from the examination scenario.

Levels of Knowledge / SFIA Levels

This course will provide candidates with the levels of difficulty / knowledge / skill highlighted within the following table, enabling them to develop the skills to operate at the levels of responsibility indicated.

The levels of knowledge and SFIA levels are explained on the website: [www.bcs.org/levels](http://www.bcs.org/levels)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Levels of Knowledge</th>
<th>Levels of Skill and Responsibility (SFIA)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Set strategy, inspire and mobilise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Evaluate</td>
<td>Initiate and influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Synthesise</td>
<td>Ensure and advise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Analyse</td>
<td>Enable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Apply</td>
<td>Apply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Understand</td>
<td>Assist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Remember</td>
<td>Follow</td>
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</table>

Format of Examination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Scenario based written examination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>1 hour preceded by 15 minutes reading time. Candidates are entitled to an additional 15 minutes if they are sitting the examination in a language that is not their native/official language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-requisites</td>
<td>None, although accredited training is strongly recommended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervised</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Book</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pass Mark</td>
<td>25/50 (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinction Mark</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calculators</td>
<td>Calculators are not allowed during this examination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery</td>
<td>Paper based examination</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Trainer Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hold the BCS Certificate in Business Analysis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have 10 days training experience a recognised training qualification</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a minimum of three years practical experience in business analysis practice</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Classroom Size

| Trainer to candidate ratio | 1:16 |

Excerpts from BCS Books

Examination Providers may include excerpts from BCS books in the course materials. If you wish to use excerpts from the books you will need a license from BCS to do this. If you are interested in taking out a licence to use BCS published material you should contact the Head of Publishing at BCS outlining the material you wish to copy and the use to which it will be put.
Recommended Reading List

Title: Business Analysis 3rd Edition  
Author: Debra Paul, Donald Yeates and James Cadle  
Publisher: BCS  
Publication Date: September 2014  
ISBN: 9781780172774  
URL: http://shop.bcs.org

Title: Business Analysis Techniques: 72 Essential Tools for Success  
Author: James Cadle, Debbie Paul and Paul Turner  
Publisher: BCS  
Publication Date: February 2010  
ISBN: 9781906124236  
URL: http://shop.bcs.org

Further reading

Title: Systems Thinking, Systems Practice  
Author: Peter Checkland  
Publisher: John Wiley and Sons  
Publication Date: 1999  
ISBN: 0471986062

Title: Learning for Action: A Short Definitive Account of Soft Systems Methodology, and Its Use for Practitioners, Teachers and Students  
Author: Peter Checkland and John Poulter  
Publisher: John Wiley & Sons  
Publication Date: July 2006  
ISBN: 0470025549

Title: Systems Thinking: Creative Holism for Managers  
Author: Michael C Jackson  
Publisher: John Wiley and Sons  
Publication Date: September 2003  
ISBN: 0470845228

Title: The Balanced Scorecard: Translating Strategy into Action  
Author: Robert S Kaplan and David P Norton  
Publisher: Harvard Business School Press  
Publication Date: September 2006  
ISBN: 0875846513

Title: Exploring Corporate Strategy (7th Edition)  
Author: Gerry Johnson and Kevin Scholes  
Publisher: Financial Times / Prentice Hall  
Publication Date: November 2006  
ISBN: 9780273651123

Title: The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization  
Author: Peter M Senge  
Publisher: Random House Business  
Publication Date: April 2006  
ISBN: 1905211201