

# **BCS Certificate in Business Analysis Extended Syllabus**

**Version 2.4  
March 2015**



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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 2.4 March 2015	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.
Version 2.3 May 2014	Added updated syllabus sections and related comment. Reading list updated.  This <b>extended</b> 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	Updated the additional time requirements and removed definition of terminology.  Included a section to cover excerpts from BCS books.
Version 2.1 July 2012	Added details of extra time for foreign language candidates.
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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assuring business case removed from syllabus and objectives</li> <li>• Lifecycle for business change expanded</li> <li>• Role of the BA, and other roles, added</li> <li>• Minor restructuring of stakeholder analysis</li> <li>• Clarification of types of business events and business rules</li> <li>• Changed Section 1 from 15% to 10%</li> <li>• Clarification in Section 2.4 Critical Success Factors, Key Performance Indicators and Performance Targets</li> </ul>

# 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.

# Syllabus

## 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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:
  - MOST analysis – see BCS Business Analysis 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition publications, and BCS Business Analysis Techniques: 72 Essential Tools for Success, publication, p9-10. A Resource Audit – BCS Business Analysis 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, and BCS Business Analysis Techniques: 72 Essential Tools for Success publication, p10-12.

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:
  - PESTLE analysis – BCS Business Analysis 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, BCS Business Analysis Techniques: 72 Essential Tools for Success publication, p3-6.
  - Porter's Five Forces – BCS Business Analysis 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition and BCS Business Analysis Techniques: 72 Essential Tools for Success publication, p6-8.

Candidates for central examinations should be prepared for questions based upon either a PESTLE analysis or Porter's Five Forces.

- (3) A SWOT analysis should be derived from the internal and external analyses. For a description of SWOT analysis BCS Business Analysis 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, BCS Business Analysis Techniques: 72 Essential Tools for Success publication, p14-16.
- (4) See BCS Business Analysis Techniques: 72 Essential Tools for Success publication, p21-22 for a fuller discussion of critical success factors (CSF), key performance indicators (KPI) and performance targets. Candidates should be prepared to identify CSFs, KPIs and performance targets from the examination scenario.
- (5) BCS Business Analysis 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition and BCS Business Analysis Techniques: 72 Essential Tools for Success publication, p22-24 for a fuller discussion of the balanced business scorecard and its use as a framework for identifying CSFs and KPIs. Candidates should be prepared for a specific question asking for the application of the balanced business scorecard within the examination scenario. Also, candidates might find the balanced business scorecard useful when generally trying to identify CSFs and KPIs.

### **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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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**

- (1) See BCS Business Analysis Techniques: 72 Essential Tools for Success publication, p64-66.
- (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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition

## **5. Analysing stakeholder perspectives**

- (1) See BCS Business Analysis 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition publication.
- (2) See BCS Business Analysis Techniques: 72 Essential Tools for Success publication p71-74.
- (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 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition.
- (2) See BCS Business Analysis Techniques: 72 Essential Tools for Success publication p101-105.
- (3) See BCS Business Analysis Techniques: 72 Essential Tools for Success publication p110-112.
- (4) BCS Business Analysis 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition.

## 7. Identifying potential solutions

- (1) BCS Business Analysis 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.

BCS Business Analysis 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, for a discussion on the contents of the business case and BCS Business Analysis Techniques: 72 Essential Tools for Success publication, p123-156 for an explanation of techniques for evaluating options.

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

- (2) BCS Business Analysis 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, and the BCS Business Analysis Techniques: 72 Essential Tools for Success publication, p124-133 for a discussion on identifying and shortlisting options for business change. Candidates should be able to identify options for business change from the examination scenario.
- (3) BCS Business Analysis 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, and the BCS Business Analysis Techniques: 72 Essential Tools for Success publication, p133-141 for a discussion on costs and benefits. Candidates should be able to identify tangible and intangible costs and benefits from the examination scenario.
- (4) BCS Business Analysis 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.
- (7) BCS Business Analysis 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition for a discussion of the lifecycle of the business case.

## 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)

Level	Levels of Knowledge	Levels of Skill and Responsibility (SFIA)
7		Set strategy, inspire and mobilise
6	Evaluate	Initiate and influence
5	Synthesise	Ensure and advise
4	Analyse	Enable
3	Apply	Apply
2	Understand	Assist
1	Remember	Follow

## Format of Examination

Type	Scenario based written examination
Duration	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
Pre-requisites	None, although accredited training is strongly recommended
Supervised	Yes
Open Book	Yes
Pass Mark	25/50 (50%)
Distinction Mark	None
Calculators	Calculators are not allowed during this examination
Delivery	Paper based examination

## Trainer Criteria

Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hold the BCS Certificate in Business Analysis</li><li>• Have 10 days training experience a recognised training qualification</li><li>• Have a minimum of three years practical experience in business analysis practice</li></ul>
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## Classroom Size

Trainer to candidate ratio	1:16
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## 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 (7<sup>th</sup> 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