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BCS International Diploma in Business Analysis Syllabus

Version 2.4
December 2016

This profession certification is not regulated by the following United Kingdom Regulators - Ofqual, Qualification in Wales, CCEA or SQA

Contents

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 December 2016	Strapline regarding regulated statement has been added
Version 2.3 Nov 2014	Updated the reading list.
Version 2.2 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 (3rd 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 PDS 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.

At least one of these examination passes must have been achieved within 12 months of the date of the oral examination unless an exemption has been agreed with BCS.

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

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 studied in the four certificate modules passed by each 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.
- To assess the candidate's personal qualities and demonstrated skills in relation to those required of a practising business analyst.

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. Form BSD11 is the BCS document used to provide this feedback.

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 the Provider is not mandatory it is strongly recommended that candidates attend one so that they get a better understanding of what the actual oral examination will be like. It will also help candidates understand the rationale of oral examiners questioning.

Candidates who pass the oral examination are awarded the Diploma and are sent the certificate confirming their success. Candidates who fail are provided with feedback that identifies the particular areas of weakness demonstrated in 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 stammer. Please advise BCS at the time of booking the oral examination

Candidates can request extra time for an oral examination if they have a stammer or stutter. BCS will try to allocate the final interview slot of the day so that there are fewer time restrictions. Please let us know as early as possible so that the best time slot can be allocated. In exceptional circumstances, we may consider written responses to the interviewer questions.

Syllabus

Syllabus Content and Learning Objectives

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 section 4.3 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 Sectors of the economy

- Public/Government sector
- Private/Commercial sector
- Not-for-profit sector
- Drivers for each sector
- Sources of finance for organisations
- Relevance to business analysts of understanding of sectors and sources of finance

1.3 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.

1.4 The legal and regulatory framework for business analysis

- Data protection for personal data
- Disability access provisions
- Business compliance
- The link between the legal framework and 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.

1.5 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.

1.6 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

1.7 Business analysis within the lifecycle for business change

- Stages of the lifecycle:
  - Alignment
  - Definition
  - Design
  - Implementation
  - Realisation
- Roles within the selected lifecycle:
  - Project manager
  - Business analyst
  - Developer
  - Tester

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 and business perspectives

- Techniques used to identify stakeholders
- Categories of stakeholder
  - Business stakeholders – project sponsor, business managers, end-users, 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 business perspectives
- One technique to analyse a business perspective
- Approach to resolving conflicts in business perspective

2.3 Modelling business activities

- Rationale for modelling a conceptual view of activities from a defined perspective
- A technique to model a conceptual view of business activities
  - Types of activities
  - Dependencies between activities
- Relationship between the business perspective and the business activity model
- Approaches to building a consensus business activity model

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
- Use of actions to define 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

3.4 The financial case

- Rationale for making the financial case

3.5 Investment appraisal techniques

- Payback period or break even analysis
- Discounted Cash Flow/Net Present Value analysis
- Rationale for 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

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 2.4)
- 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
  - testability
  - 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 Documenting requirements

- Contents of the requirements document
  - Background description
  - Use cases
  - User stories
  - Data model
  - Requirements Catalogue
  - Glossary of terms

- Requirements catalogue entries, 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
- Purpose of the requirements catalogue elements.

5.7 Requirements modelling

- Purpose of modelling requirements
- Modelling the system processing requirements
  - The notation and structure of a technique to model the system processing requirements including:
    - the actors associated with the processing
    - the functions to be delivered by the system
    - the associations between the actors and the functions
    - the boundary of the system
  - Use of the process modelling technique
- 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 concept of optional links between data groupings
  - Business rules and the data model

6. Knowledge-based specialism (K Level 2/3)

6.1 Relevance of the selected module to business analysis

- Rationale for gaining the knowledge from the selected module
- Relevance of specialist module techniques to business analysis work

***Note**: Candidates are required to be able to discuss the techniques covered in their selected specialist module.

6.2 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

6.3 Competencies of a business analyst
- Business domain knowledge
- Personal and behavioural skills
- Professional skills

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

6.5 Projects and business analysis
- Initiating a project
  - Project scope
  - Business and project objectives

7. Practitioner specialism (K Level 2/3)

For the selected module:

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

7.2 Relevance of the module to an organisation

7.3 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.

Other Syllabuses

The oral examination is based upon the latest syllabuses published by BCS. The syllabuses for the following qualifications provide the basis for the topics examined in the oral examination:

- BCS Certificate in Business Analysis Practice
- BCS Certificate in Requirements Engineering

Knowledge-based specialist modules – one selected for each oral examination

- BCS Foundation Certificate in Business Analysis
- BCS Foundation Certificate Business Change
- BCS Foundation Certificate in Project Management
- BCS Foundation Certificate in Commercial Awareness or BCS Certificate in Organisational Context

Practitioner specialist modules – one selected for each oral examination

- 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

Levels of Knowledge

Learning objectives are given indicators from K1-K6. These are based on 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), and can be broadly interpreted as follows: K1 – Remember; K2 – Understand; K3 – Apply; K4 – Analyse; K5 – Synthesise; K6 – Evaluate. Bloom's taxonomy is explained in greater detail in Section 5.1. All topics shall have learning objectives associated with them, each of which has an associated K level. The language used must, as far as possible, mirror the language used in defining Bloom's taxonomy to provide candidates with consistent pointers to the expected level of knowledge and a consistent way of expressing that level in words.

The levels of knowledge and SFIA levels are explained at www.bcs.org/levels.

Examination Format

Type	Oral
Duration	50 minutes. Candidates will be able to request additional time if they have a disability that would impact you during an oral examination such as a stammer.
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, no reading material is allowed during the oral interview.
Pass Mark	Pass or fail
Delivery	Interview by two oral examiners

Definitions of Terminology

Term	Writing the Question
Describe	The word describe can be used on its own or qualified in many ways e.g. describe how, describe when etc.
Explain	Very similar to describe but the emphasis here is to elicit specific points raised.
Discuss	This usually requires candidates to provide a balanced view of a topic. This may include, where appropriate, the benefits and drawbacks of a particular idea.
Compare	Need to describe those areas where the two processes are similar in objectives, techniques etc.
Compare and Contrast	Need to cover both similarities and differences – see the separate terms for examples of each.
Define	Here a precise definition is required. A full and descriptive definition which shows the marker that a candidate fully understands the term
Contrast	Need to describe those areas where the two processes are different, i.e. in scale, impact and timescales
Justify	Candidates will need to set out the reasoning behind a particular view. This would normally include a description of benefits that may result, the likely scenario if the action is not taken and the positive financial implications.
List	A simple list is needed.
List and Describe	More is needed here than a simple list. Each point will need to be expanded upon to include details of exactly what will be achieved, how this will come about and any other relevant details.
Outline	Similar to 'describe' but in overview form. This term is also often used where the examiners know that a very full answer could be given if there were no time constraints, but where a high level – broad answer is sought in the limited time available. It can be better to cover a wide area in less detail than just a very narrow point or two in great depth.
Identify the benefits	The positive outcomes of a particular activity. For example to an individual or an organisation.
Problems	Problems are best broken down into cause and effect. Care should be exercised to identify which problems are being sought. Problems for implementing a process differ from problems of creating a process.

Reading List

It is the responsibility of the oral examination candidates to ensure that they possess sufficient knowledge and understanding of the topic areas defined in Section 2-6 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
URL: http://shop.bcs.org

Title: Business Analysis Techniques
Author: James Cadle, Debra Paul and Paul Turner
Publisher: BCS
Publication Date: February 2010
ISBN: 978-1906124236
URL: http://shop.bcs.org

Title: Benefits Management: Delivering Value from IS and IT Investments
Author: John Ward and Elizabeth Daniel
Publisher: John Wiley and Sons
Publication Date: November 2005
ISBN: 978-0470094631

Title: Systems Thinking, Systems Practice
Author: Peter Checkland
Publisher: John Wiley & Sons
Publication Date: July 1999
ISBN: 0-4719-8606-2

Title: Finance for IT Decision Makers 3rd Edition
Author: Michael Blackstaff
Publisher: BCS
Publication Date: September 2012
ISBN: 9781780171227
URL: http://shop.bcs.org

Title: Professional Issues in Information Technology
Author: Frank Bott
Publisher: BCS
Publication Date: May 2005
ISBN: 1902505654
URL: http://shop.bcs.org

Title: Requirements Engineering
Author: Gerald Kotonya and Ian Somerville
Publisher: John Wiley and Sons
Publication Date: April 1998
ISBN: 978-0471972082

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

Title: Introducing Systems Development
Author: Steve Skidmore and Malcolm Eva
Publisher: Palgrave Macmillan
Publication Date: August 2003
ISBN: 978-0333973691

Title: Systems Analysis and Design
Author: Don Yeates and Tony Wakefield
Publisher: Financial Times/ Prentice Hall
Publication Date: September 2003
ISBN: 978-0273655367