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April 2012 marking window – Examiner’s report

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

The Business Case and the Business Plan should be in line with the format outlined in the guidance and structured using the headings provided. There are implications for failing to structure in the required format. For example, where assessment criteria (AC) 2.2 (assessing the areas of risk) is placed in the implementation stage or alongside quality, it appears to assess the risk associated with the option elected for implementation. However, the criteria relates to assessing the risk to the opportunity as a whole, including the financial implications and is the reason why it appears early within the Business Plan. Because a high number of candidates presented AC 2.2 as part of their implementation plan, it was decided to award a mark for producing a risk assessment for the elected option.

An area of concern is the failure of many candidates to link their opportunity to organisational aims and goals. This does not have to be extensive and can be departmental if wider aims and goals are not in place or known. Some candidates link to their organisation’s mission statement and this was accepted. A small paragraph outlining this will deliver a clear and concise indication that the opportunity is in line with organisational aims and goals. In a number of cases, the makers searched for any minor indication and gave the candidate the benefit of the doubt.

Several of the areas chosen for investigation were operational and not management related. The current guidelines (page 17 of the Assessment guide for Business Case and Business Plan) outline that the chosen topic should focus on management and not operational or technical matters. The new guidance clarifies this further by stating that a top cannot be related to a mandatory change.

The weakest areas were AC 2.2, 4.1 and 4.2. The requirement is to produce a strategy for monitoring and explain the reasons. Stating that monitoring will occur via future meetings is not sufficient to meet the needs of the assessment criteria. The markers were very lenient with this outcome and the percentage of fails would have been much higher. Where quality was mentioned, it was agreed to award the mark even if it did not meet the assessment criteria. In some cases, it could not be justified. AC 4.1 and 4.2 should be a robust piece of work.

It is noted that the Business Cases do not follow the requirements of AC 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3. During the approval phase of the Business Case, centres should ensure that it will lead to the production of a viable Business Plan and assess the Business Case against the mentioned assessment criteria.

The word count is in place to provide guidance. Work that falls short of it is likely to be insufficient to meet the outcomes of the Business Case/Business Plan. A number of candidates produced work that went way above the recommended word count. In one



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instance, in order to assess that the large word count was not due to appendices and the Business Case, these were removed and the Business Plan still exceeded the recommended word count.