Section B
Students must answer **two** of the three structured questions in this section. The questions are based on stimulus material. The maximum number of marks available for this section is 40.

Internal assessment

General

Introduction
Internal assessment is an integral part of the Diploma Programme business and management course and is compulsory for both HL and SL students. It enables students to demonstrate the application of their skills and knowledge in business and management without the time limitations and stress associated with written examinations.

Guidance and authenticity
The teacher should play an important role in helping students to plan and to work on the research project (HL) or written commentary (SL). It is also helpful if teachers encourage students to be responsible for their own work and so take pride in the finished product.

It is the responsibility of the teacher to ensure that students are familiar with:

·   the requirements of the type of work internally assessed

·   the means by which the work is assessed

·   the assessment criteria.

Teachers and students need to discuss the investigation. Students should be encouraged to initiate discussions with the teacher to obtain advice and information, and should not be penalized for seeking guidance. However, if a student could not have completed the work without substantial support from the teacher, this must be recorded on the appropriate form in the *Vade Mecum*.

Teachers must ensure that the work presented is entirely the student's own work. Teachers are required to sign the internal assessment (IA) coversheet to confirm that the work of each student is his or her own unaided work.

When authenticity is in doubt, the teacher should first discuss this with the student. In addition, one or more of the following actions may be helpful.

·   Compare the style of writing with work known to be that of the student.

·   Check the references cited by the student and the original sources.

·   Interview the student in the presence of a third party.

·   Use one of the many web sites set up to detect plagiarism.

As part of the learning process, teachers can give advice to students on a first draft of the written report (HL) or the written commentary (SL). Advice on improving the work can be given, but this first draft must not be heavily annotated or edited by the teacher. Constant drafting and redrafting is not allowed, and the next version handed to the teacher after the first draft must be the final one.

HL research project

Weighting: 25%

Introduction

The research project enables HL students to demonstrate the application of their skills and knowledge to real organizational issues or decision-making. Students must select a real organization, not a fictional one, and the issue or decision under investigation must also be real. The expectation is that a student should gather **primary research** from the organization. The style and format of the report should be in the form of a useful working document for management.

Requirements

HL students are required to:

· design and undertake research that **either** addresses an issue facing an organization or range of organizations **or** analyses a decision to be made by an organization or range of organizations

· produce a research proposal that should be used as the primary planning document and be presented in terms of an action plan

· provide a title for the research project that, to give focus and direction, must be framed as a question

· produce a written report that does not exceed 2,000 words.

More than one student is allowed to choose the same organization for their research, provided that the written report reflects the student's own individual work, interpretation and analysis.

Choice of research topic

Students should, with the teacher's guidance, choose their own topic and organization. Ideally, students should find their topics interesting and motivating.

The teacher should approve each topic before work is started, and ensure that it complies with the requirements for internal assessment.

For a variety of reasons not apparent at the start of the project, for example confidentiality, some organizations fail to provide data, which will undermine the quality of the final report. Students must therefore make sure before starting their investigations that they will be able to obtain the necessary data from the chosen organization.

Students must be aware of ethical considerations when undertaking any research. There is a need for tact, sensitivity to other people and respect for confidentiality.

Research proposal and action plan

The internal assessment must start with the research proposal and action plan. These will become the primary planning documents, giving direction to the research project.

The research proposal and action plan must outline:

· the research question

· the rationale for study

· areas of the syllabus to be covered

· possible sources of information

· organizations and individuals to be approached

- methods to be used to collect and analyse data, and the reason for choosing them

- anticipated difficulties

- the order of activities and timescale of the project.

Required format for research proposal and action plan

- Research question

- Theoretical framework

- Methodology

- Anticipated difficulties

- Action plan

Students should use the research proposal and action plan as their primary planning documents, reviewing them regularly with the teacher and modifying or rewriting them as necessary should circumstances change.

The maximum achievement level for criterion A, research proposal and action plan, is four (see "HL internal assessment criteria"). Students who fail to produce a research proposal or action plan will be awarded zero for this criterion.

Students should consider the possible difficulties they may face when carrying out their research, for example, limited or biased sources.

Research question

The research question should be forward-looking rather than descriptive **and** should require the student to make recommendations for further action.

Written report

The written report, which follows the research proposal, is the second part of the internally assessed research project.

The report must follow acceptable practice in report presentation, reflected in the required format for the written report shown below.

Required format for written report

- Title page

- Acknowledgments

- Contents page

- Executive summary (abstract)

- Introduction

- Research question

- Procedure or method

- Main results and findings

- Analysis and discussion

- Conclusions and recommendations

- Bibliography and references

- Appendices

The 2,000 words does not include supplementary information such as the title page, executive summary, diagrams, figures, tables of data, references and appendices.

The executive summary should be a concise, clear and explicit summary (maximum 200 words) of the document, including any recommendations or conclusions. The research question and executive summary should guide the reader to the substance of the report.

To be of practical value to management, the report should be forward-looking and support the decision-making process.

The appendices should contain only information/data that is required in support of the text, and should be clearly referred to at relevant points.

Time allocation

The fact that internal assessment is an integral component of the HL course, contributing 25% to the final assessment, should be reflected in the total time allocated to the research project.

It is recommended that approximately 30 hours should be allocated to the research project. This should include:

- time for the teacher to explain to students the requirements of the project, including codes of ethical behaviour and confidentiality

- class time for students to work on their projects

- time spent by the student making arrangements with the selected organization and visiting to collect data

- additional time spent outside normal class time for students to work on their own

- time for consultation between the teacher and each student

- time to review and monitor progress, and to check authenticity.

SL written commentary

Weighting: 25%

Introduction

The SL internal assessment is a written commentary. Students need to demonstrate the application of business and management tools, techniques and theories to a real business issue or problem.

Students must select a real issue or problem, not a fictional one, and must produce a commentary with a title presented as a question. The commentary must refer directly to a single business organization, but may consider industry-wide issues that impact on that organization.

The commentary must be based on primary and/or secondary data, selected for its suitability, depth and breadth.

The commentary

The issue or problem selected for the commentary must relate to the SL syllabus and refer directly to a single business organization.

The title of the commentary must be phrased in the form of a question.

The commentary requires the application of business tools, techniques and theory to a contemporary business issue or problem.

The commentary must not exceed 1,500 words. A word count must be included as part of the commentary.

The commentary requires analysis and evaluation of the business issue or problem. Judgments are likely to be made throughout the commentary, but are essential within a conclusion.

The student must attach to the commentary three to five supporting documents from which the majority of the information for the commentary has been obtained. Any additional sources, such as textbooks, class notes and DVDs/videos, must be referenced, but will not be accepted as supporting documents.

Students must highlight the parts of each supporting document that relate directly to their commentary.

All supporting documents and additional sources must be fully referenced and included in a bibliography.

Selection of supporting documents

The supporting documents must be of a contemporary nature and written a maximum of two years before the submission of the written commentary.

Students must select their own supporting documents, which must not be provided to the student by the teacher.

Students must work independently, and it is recommended that they do not use the same supporting documents as other students within the school.

HL internal assessment criteria

The HL business and management research project is assessed against five criteria that are related to the objectives for the business and management course. Criterion A refers to the research proposal and action plan, while criteria B–E are used to assess the written report.

When the work to be assessed has been read, the descriptors for each criterion should be studied until a descriptor is reached that most appropriately describes the achievement level. If a piece of work seems to fall between two descriptors, both descriptors should be read again and the one that more appropriately describes the student's work chosen.

Criterion A   Research proposal and action plan

Criterion B   Use of theoretical concepts, sources and data (written report)

Criterion C   Analysis and evaluation (written report)

Criterion D   Conclusions and recommendations (written report)

Criterion E   Value to management (written report)

A   Research proposal and action plan

Criterion A should be used to assess the research proposal and action plan only.

Achievement level	Descriptor
0	There is no research proposal or action plan.
1	There is a research proposal and action plan. However, elements of the research proposal or action plan are inappropriate.
2	The research proposal and action plan are generally appropriate, but they are not clear and focused.
3	The research proposal and action plan are appropriate, clear and focused. There is some identification of the theoretical framework and methodology to be employed.
4	The research proposal and action plan are appropriate, clear and focused. There is clear identification and explanation of the theoretical framework and methodology to be employed.

B   Use of theoretical concepts, sources and data (written report)

Achievement level	Descriptor
0	There is no use of theoretical concepts, sources or data.
1	There is a very limited understanding of relevant theoretical concepts, and these concepts have been misused. The sources and data are irrelevant or insufficient.
2	There is a limited understanding of relevant theoretical concepts, but these have not been applied effectively. The sources and data are generally relevant, but insufficient.
3	There is an understanding of relevant theoretical concepts and evidence of some of them being applied effectively. The sources and data are relevant and sufficient.
4	There is an understanding of relevant theoretical concepts and evidence of them being applied effectively. The sources and data are relevant and sufficient. There is some evidence of the sources and data being used effectively and related to the theoretical framework.
5	There is an in-depth understanding of relevant theoretical concepts and consistent evidence of them being applied effectively. The sources and data are relevant and sufficient. There is consistent evidence of the sources and data being used effectively and integrated with the theoretical framework.

C   Analysis and evaluation (written report)

Achievement level	Descriptor
0	There is no discussion, analysis or evaluation.
1	Findings are very limited and the discussion is superficial. The report lacks order and coherence.
2	Findings are limited and the discussion tends to be superficial. There is an attempt to sequence ideas and references.
3	There is some analysis of the findings but the discussion may be unnecessarily descriptive. There is some integration of ideas and issues in a logical order.
4	The analysis of the findings is appropriate. There is some integration of ideas and issues in a coherent order.
5	The analysis of the findings is appropriate and there is an attempt at evaluation. There is sound integration of ideas and issues in a coherent order.
6	The analysis and evaluation of the findings are appropriate. There is sound integration of ideas and issues in a coherent order, and some evidence of critical thinking.
7	The analysis and evaluation of the findings are appropriate. There is sound integration of ideas and issues in a coherent order, and consistent evidence of critical, reflective thinking.

D   Conclusions and recommendations (written report)

Achievement level	Descriptor
0	There are no conclusions or recommendations.
1	There are conclusions or recommendations, but they are inconsistent with the evidence presented.
2	There are conclusions or recommendations. Some are consistent with the research question, but may not be supported by evidence presented in the main body of the report.
3	There are conclusions and recommendations. These are consistent with the evidence presented in the main body of the report and with the research question, but are not fully developed.
4	There are conclusions and recommendations. These are consistent with the evidence presented in the main body of the report and with the research question, and are well developed.
5	There are conclusions and recommendations. These are consistent with the evidence presented in the main body of the report and with the research question, and are well developed. Future action to address limitations of the research is proposed.

E   Value to management (written report)

Achievement level	Descriptor
0	The report is of no practical value to management.
1	The report exceeds 2,000 words, or is of limited practical value to management.
2	The report has some practical value to management. There are significant omissions in the presentation of the report. Bibliography and referencing are inappropriate.
3	The report is of practical value to management. There are minor omissions in the presentation of the report. Bibliography and referencing are appropriate.
4	The report is of practical value to management. The report is well presented, forward-looking and follows the required written report format*. Bibliography and referencing are appropriate.

* See "Required format for written report" in the section "HL research project".