IB Business Management

Standard Level Internal Assessment
A Guide for Students

First examinations May 2016

Date	Action
September 2018	Secondary Research - review
October 2018	First Check – progress review
November 2018	Final Draft – uploaded into managebac – written feedback provided (only allowed 1 time)
January 2019	Complete IA Due –Uploaded into managebac and turnitin in MS Word format

** Exact dates provided closer to the due date.

Table of Contents

Instructions to students

Note that any text shown here is direct instruction from the IBO. Any text with a grey box has been added to highlight further expectations of students

Introduction

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

<u>SL Written Commentary</u>

Requirements

You must select a **real business issue** or **problem** for your written commentary that must relate to the **SL syllabus**.

You must refer directly to **a single business organization**, but may consider industry-wide issues that impact on that organization.

You must base your written commentary on **secondary research**, selected for its suitability, depth and breadth. *Primary research may be used as support.*

You must provide a **title** for the commentary that, to give focus and direction, must be framed as a question.

You must produce a written commentary that **does not exceed 1,500 words**.

You should include a word count as part of the commentary title page

You must attach to the commentary **three to five supporting documents** from which **the majority** of the information for the commentary has been obtained.

It is recommended that you provide the maximum five sources. No less than four.

You must **fully reference** all supporting documents and additional sources and include them in a bibliography.

How to frame Business Management internal assessment research question

Examples of appropriate questions

Examples of appropriate questions for the written commentary might be:

- "Can airline X successfully target segment Y?" The commentary could then examine business management topics such as market segmentation, consumer profiling, promotion, and measure of financial success.
- "Should company Y outsource its manufacturing?" The commentary could then examine areas within business management such as operations management and human resource management.

At the standard level, questions may be both backward or forward looking

The questions will be of a more general nature, given the limited number of sources available to answer. It is important that your question be achievable with the majority of information coming from the selected sources.

The annual report of a company is an excellent source and can be used to help provide analysis for just about every research question. Furthermore, it is only one source, but you can select random pages from it.

Supporting documents

The selection of supporting documents is very important. To achieve the highest levels of each assessment criterion, it is strongly recommended that the supporting documents present a range of ideas and views. For example, the selection of three to five documents published by a single company, or three to five surveys of similar populations, would not provide balance or objectivity.

The supporting documents must be of a contemporary nature and written within a **maximum of three years prior** to the submission of the written commentary to the IB. Submission of the written commentary occurs in April (or November) of the final year of the course, depending on the examination session of the school.

You must ensure all of your supporting documents were create on or after **May 2016.**

A maximum of one of the supporting documents may be a transcript of video/audio material. The transcript must summarize the essential points of the video/audio file used for the purposes of the commentary. Only video/audio material published by a reliable organization (such as the business organization itself, an organization commissioned by the business or an NGO) should be used. Particular attention needs to be paid to referencing the original video/audio file so that this may be traced.

The commentary **must be based on secondary sources** and may include primary data.

Examples of secondary sources include:

- articles from the local, national or international press
- business accounts
- business plans
- extracts from company websites
- transcripts of a relevant audio-visual file
- financial reports
- government and other statistics
- journal publications
- market research surveys
- mission statements
- web-based surveys.

Examples of primary sources include:

- responses to questionnaires (students should include a blank copy of the questionnaire and a tally/summary of results)
- results of surveys
- transcripts of interviews and discussions with focus groups.

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

Students **must highlight** the parts of each supporting document that relate directly to their commentary. **Any highlighted parts of supporting documents that are not in the language for which the student is registered must be translated**.

> I recommend you focus on documents in English. Even though only the highlighted parts need to be translated, it is difficult for the examiner to determine the usefulness of the document if the rest is in Arabic.

You should label each supporting document clearly, such as "Supporting document 1", "Supporting document 2" and so on. This will help with referencing in the commentary.

It is expected that students will include **in-text citations/references** of the supporting documents and a bibliography, which should be formatted in an appropriate way.

Any additional sources such as textbooks and class notes must be referenced but will not be accepted as supporting documents.

> Your supporting documents should not be theoretical concepts, but rather actual events or the result of analysis by another author specific to your business or issue

Supporting Documents Task

You need to provide 4 supporting documents. Each document needs to have the main idea(s) highlighted. This counts 5% towards your Semester report grade and will impact your predicted grade.

Remember, if you have a document in a language other than English, you need to translate the highlighted portions

Criterion (Just for this task)

For each of your supporting documents, you will be assessed on

Supporting document 1

   / 1   The supporting document is relevant and provides sufficient depth

   / 1   The information selected from the document is appropriate

Supporting document 2

   / 1   The supporting document is relevant and provides sufficient depth

   / 1   The information selected from the document is appropriate

Supporting document 3

   / 1   The supporting document is relevant and provides sufficient depth

   / 1   The information selected from the document is appropriate

Supporting document 4

   / 1   The supporting document is relevant and provides sufficient depth

   / 1   The information selected from the document is appropriate

You then need to identify the main business tools, techniques or theories of your investigation. These should be relevant to the supporting documents and suitable for the commentary task

Tools, techniques and theories

   / 1   Some of the selected content is relevant and suitable, or there is insufficient content chosen

   / 2   All of the selected content is relevant and suitable, and there is insufficient content chosen. Maximum 200 word description.

SL Written Commentary

Although there is no required format for the written commentary, it should nonetheless be a structured piece of well-presented writing. An introduction that sets the scene, presentation, analysis and discussion of findings, and a conclusion that answers the commentary question provides an effective structure for the commentary. Good presentation additionally requires a title page, an accurate table of contents page, appropriate headings and sub-headings, consistent referencing, a complete bibliography and numbered pages.

The **introduction** should briefly demonstrate some background information about the business organization, to give a clear outline of the issue or problem under investigation and to explain the methodology used to investigate this issue or problem.

In the **body** of the commentary, findings from the supporting documents should be presented and analysed with the help of relevant business tools, techniques and theories. The findings should also be interpreted: what main themes emerge from the analysis of the supporting documents, and why and how are they helpful (or not) to answering the commentary question? An evaluative approach to this discussion of findings should be pursued: for example, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the various positions on the issue or problem and what are their implications?

In the **conclusion**, the commentary question should be explicitly answered. The conclusion should not introduce facts or arguments that have not been discussed in previous sections of the commentary. Rather, it is good practice to include those aspects of the commentary question that have not been fully answered in the commentary or that might need further investigation in order to be judged more effectively.

For presentation of references and bibliography, please see the information on acknowledging the ideas and work of another person in the "The Diploma Programme" section of this subject guide.

Title	A title page with the research question must be presented. Also include your student assessment code, a word count and your graduation date (May 2019). No Name!
Table of contents	Check page numbers match before final submission
Introduction	The **introduction** should briefly demonstrate some background information about the business organization, to give a clear outline of the issue or problem under investigation and to explain the methodology used to investigate this issue or problem.
Analysis of the findings	The findings of the research have to be analysed in the light of the title question, taking into account business theory and using, as far as possible, business tools and techniques. This analysis could be included as a separate section, or it could be included together with the findings (findings and analysis). The different supporting documents should be analysed in such a manner that their relevance to the question is

	clearly established. **The analysis should also show how the supporting documents relate to each other.**
Conclusion	The title question must be answered, based on the analysis of the findings and, in particular, on the analysis of the supporting documents. The conclusion should not introduce ideas or judgments that have not been discussed in previous sections of the commentary. It is good practice to include those aspects of the question that have not been fully answered in the commentary or that might need further analysis or investigation to be judged more effectively.
Bibliography and references	The commentary should contain correctly presented references and a bibliography. Only books and web pages actually consulted should be included. The access dates to the web pages consulted should be specified. If the student refers to sources of any type, these should be referenced through the use of footnotes. The bibliography should be split into 2 parts, the supporting documents, and then other sources.
Appendices: supporting documents	The appendices should only include the three to five supporting documents, chosen by the students as the structuring documents for the commentary. The chosen documents have to be included in **their complete form**, although relevant parts to the investigation have to be clearly highlighted.

Word count

The written commentary must not exceed 1,500 words. A word count must be included as part of the commentary. If the word limit is exceeded, the teacher's and moderator's assessment will be based on the first 1,500 words.

The following are **not** included in the word count:

- acknowledgments (if included)
- contents page
- tables of statistical data
- diagrams or figures
- equations, formulae and calculations
- citations (which, if used, must be in the introduction or body of the commentary)
- references (which, if used, must be in the footnotes/endnotes)
- bibliography.

Please note that footnotes/endnotes may be used for references only. Definitions of business management terms and quotations, if used, must be in the body of the work and are included in the word count. Please note that citation is a shorthand method of making a reference in the body of the commentary, which is then linked to the full reference in the bibliography.

Suggested word count…

Introduction: 200 - 250 words

Analysis of the findings: 1000 - 1100 words

Conclusion: 200 - 250 words.

The above is a suggestion only – and you may wish to change it, as long as your report does not exceed 1,500 words.

FINAL THOUGHTS

- **Quality of Language: Spelling, punctuation, terminology and grammar.**
- **Presentation: You can have photographs, tables, graphs, diagrams.**
- **Commentary structure: word processed, page numbers, fully referenced, bibliography.**

SL written commentary Criteria

The SL business management written commentary is assessed against seven criteria that are related to the assessment objectives for the business management course.

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.

There are seven assessment criteria for the written commentary.

- Criterion A: Supporting documents
- Criterion B: Choice and application of business tools, techniques and theories
- Criterion C: Choice and analysis of data and integration of ideas
- Criterion D: Conclusions
- Criterion E: Evaluation
- Criterion F: Structure
- Criterion G: Presentation

Criterion A: Supporting documents

This criterion assesses the extent to which the student selects three to five relevant supporting documents that address the issue or problem selected for commentary in appropriate depth and breadth. The criterion also assesses whether the student's choice and presentation of the supporting documents meets formal requirements.

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1	There are only one or two, or more than five, supporting documents, or they are of marginal relevance.
2	The supporting documents are generally relevant but some lack depth, or they were published more than three years prior to the submission of the IA to the IB, or they are not all translated in the language of submission.
3	The supporting documents are relevant and sufficiently in-depth.
4	The supporting documents are relevant, sufficiently in-depth and provide a range of ideas and views.

Criterion B: Choice and application of tools, techniques and theories

This criterion assesses the extent to which the student chooses business management tools, techniques and theories that are relevant to the issue or problem and applies these so that a greater insight into the situation of the organization ensues.

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1	There is a limited selection of business management tools, techniques and theories, and these are not applied.
2	There is a limited selection of business management tools, techniques and theories, and these are superficially applied.
3	There is an appropriate selection of business management tools, techniques and theories, but these are superficially applied.
4	There is an appropriate selection of business management tools, techniques and theories, and these are suitably applied.
5	There is an appropriate selection of business management tools, techniques and theories, and these are skillfully applied.

Criterion C: Choice and analysis of data and integration of ideas

This criterion assesses the extent to which the student uses data from the supporting documents effectively in order to understand and explain the issue or problem and is able to integrate ideas coherently.

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1	There is a limited selection of data from the supporting documents but no analysis.
2	There is a limited selection of data from the supporting documents with superficial analysis.
3	There is an appropriate selection of data from the supporting documents with satisfactory analysis.
4	There is an appropriate selection of data from the supporting documents with good analysis and some integration of ideas.
5	There is an appropriate selection of data from the supporting documents with skillful analysis and a coherent integration of ideas.

Criterion D: Conclusions

This criterion assesses the extent to which the student is able to draw relevant conclusions based on the analysis of the supporting documents and answer the commentary question.

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1	Conclusions are inconsistent with the evidence presented, or conclusions are superficial.
2	Some conclusions are consistent with the evidence presented.
3	Conclusions are consistent with the evidence presented and explicitly answer the commentary question.

Criterion E: Evaluation

This criterion assesses the extent to which the student evaluates his or her arguments and makes judgments that are well substantiated.

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1	There is limited evidence of evaluation.
2	There is evidence of evaluation, and some judgments are substantiated.
3	There is evidence of evaluation, and judgments are substantiated.
4	There is thorough evidence of evaluation, and judgments are well substantiated.

Criterion F: Structure

This criterion assesses the extent to which the student organizes his or her ideas into a structured commentary with an argument that is easy to follow.

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1	Limited structure.
2	Appropriate structure.

Criterion G: Presentation

This criterion assesses the extent to which the student presents the written commentary well. This involves a title page, an accurate table of contents, appropriate headings and sub-headings, consistent referencing, a complete bibliography and numbered pages.

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1	One or more of the above elements of a well presented commentary is missing.
2	All of the above elements of a well presented commentary are included.

BM – Internal Assessment (IA) Checklist for SL

Criterion	Mark	Level Descriptor	Subject Report Comments	Checklist	☑
Criterion A – Supporting Documents	0	No documents presented	Are relevant portions of documents highlighted? Documents are clearly labeled? "Supporting Document #" and full citation Are they relevant in terms of depth of analysis? Do they already contain some analysis? Are they recent? Written within three years of submission of IA? Date clearly evident	Highlighted portions in appendices and properly cited in body of paper. Documents labeled as "Supporting Document One?" etc. Written within three years of submission? Do the documents provide a number of views and ideas on the problem Do not include a price list. Annual reports are very good.	
	1	Documents are of marginal relevance, not enough or too many			
	2	Documents are generally relevant, but lack depth, too old or not in English			
	3	Documents are relevant and sufficient in depth			
	4	Documents are relevant, sufficient in depth and provide a range of ideas and views.			
Criterion	Mark	Level Descriptor	Subject Report Comments	Checklist	☑
Criterion B – Choice and Application of business tools, techniques and theory	0	No use of business tools, techniques or theory	Should not be using strategic analysis tools such as SWOT or STEEPLE unless looking at future strategic decision Tools are appropriate and useful in the area under investigation	Does the student choose from and use an array of tools, techniques and theory (TTT)? Is the TTT clearly connected to the research question? Does the TTT come from the SL part of the course? Are these skillfully applied? Meaning, are they used in way that demonstrates real familiarity and understanding – especially with regard to the synthesis of information provided in the supporting documents.	
	1	There is a limited selection of business tools, techniques and theory with no application			
	2	Limited selection of business tools, techniques and theory with superficial application			
	3	Appropriate selection of business tools, techniques and theory with superficial application			
	4	Appropriate selection of business tools, techniques and theory with suitable application			
	5	Appropriate selection of business tools, techniques and theory with Skillful application			
Criterion	Mark	Level Descriptor	Subject Report Comments	Checklist	☑
Criterion C – Choice and analysis of data and integration of ideas	0	No use of data from the supporting documents, or no highlighting	Must clearly show source of material (highlighting) Must directly reference the source material in the body of the commentary. Must footnote/cite when commentary information is used.	Identifies at the end of the intro or brief methodology section the 3-5 documents upon which they are basing the commentary. Clearly shows source of material in citations and/or footnotes. Bases analysis on source material Numerous details taken from supporting documents that support analysis. Ideas and contentions have coherence and flow logically from one to another.	
	1	Limited selection of data, but not analysed using business tools or theory			
	2	Limited selection of data, but only superficial using business tools or theory			
	3	Appropriate selection of data, satisfactory analysis using business tools or theory			
	4	Appropriate selection of data, good analysis using business tools or theory, some integration of ideas			
	5	Appropriate selection of data, skillful analysis using business tools or theory, coherent integration of ideas			

Criterion	Mark	Level Descriptor	Subject Report Comments	Checklist	☑
Criterion D - Conclusions	0	There are no conclusions	Should set conclusions out as a separate section. Overall conclusion should offer a direct answer to question or topic chosen.	Sets conclusions out as a separation section. Conclusion offers a direct answer to the question or topic Do NOT provide recommendation No new information included	
	1	Conclusions are inconsistent with the evidence presented, or superficial			
	2	Some conclusions are consistent with the evidence presented			
	3	The conclusions are consistent with the evidence presented and explicitly answer the commentary question.			
Criterion	Mark	Level Descriptor	Subject Report Comments	Checklist	☑
Criterion E - Evaluation	0	No evidence of evaluation	Must substantiate arguments. Substantiation is evident when the commentary is tied closely to the range and depth of views of and on the supporting documents. *Evaluate* means: Assess the implications and limitations; make judgments about the ideas, works, solutions or methods in relation to selected criteria.	Are there concrete examples of evidence from the supporting documents to support each contention? Does the student provide analysis that substantiates their contentions? Is the contention suitable for the real-world	
	1	Limited evidence of evaluation			
	2	Evidence of evaluation, some judgments are substantiated.			
	3	Evidence of evaluation, and judgments are substantiated.			
	4	Thorough evidence of evaluation, and judgments are well substantiated.			
Criterion	Mark	Level Descriptor	Subject Report Comments	Checklist	☑
Criterion F - Structure	0	Argument is not easy to follow, unclear	Should break body of commentary into appropriate section	Do I have sections in my body? Have I used subheadings to make these clear? Have I used paragraphs with topic sentences and conclusions?	
	1	Argument can be followed, but not very clear			
	2	Arguments easily followed, well organised			
Criterion	Mark	Level Descriptor	Subject Report Comments	Checklist	☑
Criterion G - Presentation	0	Very poorly presented		Title page incl. word count Table of contents – correct to actual pages and page numbers Heading for intro, analysis and discussion, conclusion and bibliography (plus others if necessary) Subheadings within analysis and discussion Bibliography alpha order correct style (supporting docs then other docs) Size 12 double spaced	
	1	Most of title page, contents page, headings and subheadings, referencing, page numbers, bibliography, correct font and spacing 1500 words			
	2	All of title page, contents page, headings and subheadings, referencing, page numbers, bibliography, correct font and spacing 1500 words			

General Observations on the BM IA from the Subject Reports

Key task: The supporting documents must help analyze a particular business issue or problem.

Must have supporting documents that are secondary sources. These documents should not be overly long. In totality they should provide a range of views and analysis.

The choice of supporting documents is strongly linked to performance on Criteria B, C, D and E – C being the most important.

They must be focused on a single organization and its industry

Commentary must be a *synthesis of ALL* supporting documents. There should not be an analysis of individual documents without integration.

There should not be a long rationale for the selection of documents.

There is a 1500 word limit (excluding bibliography and supporting documents)

Make sure to explicitly use theory, and then apply it appropriately to the business issue/problem

Make sure to reference appropriately and consistently throughout