Candidate Guidelines for Oral Examinations
Diploma in Business Analysis

Introduction

The Business Analysis oral examination is the final element of the programme leading to the BCS Business Analysis Diploma qualification. The examination may be taken by a candidate who has passed four written examinations:

- one examination for each of the two core certificate modules.
- one examination for a module selected from the set of knowledge-based specialist certificate modules.
- one examination for a module selected from the set of practitioner specialist certificate modules.

An oral examination place will not be allocated to any candidate who does not hold the correct modules/certificates.

It is recommended that a candidate sits the oral examination within six months of completing the set of written examinations. All candidates must take the oral examination no more than twelve months after receipt of the result notification for the final module examination. Candidates who do not take the oral examination within twelve months will not be eligible to attend the oral examination until they have taken and passed a further certificate examination.

Attending the oral examination

Candidates will receive an email prior to their oral examination. It is important that candidates take suitable photographic identification to the oral examination for validation prior to the exam (Driving Licence, Passport and named work ID badges are all acceptable). It is important to arrive at least 15 minutes ahead of the allocated start time as this helps to keep the examination schedule running smoothly.

You should consider the oral examination a business interview and dress accordingly. Part of the oral examination considers your professionalism and ability to work with staff at all levels in an organisation. Accordingly, your ability to communicate effectively is also considered.

Please note that sometimes delays occur during the oral examination session therefore your examination may begin later than the scheduled start time. It is advisable to consider this when making travel arrangements.
Preparing for the oral examination

The oral examination is based upon the latest BCS oral examination syllabus (refer to ‘Business Analysis Oral Examination Syllabus’). The syllabus sets out the topic areas that may be covered in the oral examination. It is your responsibility to prepare for the oral examination and to ensure that you have sufficient knowledge of the topics in the syllabus. Please note that the oral examination is not based solely on the topics studied in your certificate modules. Sections 1 and 6, in particular, may contain subjects you have not encountered during your previous study; the oral examiners may examine you on these topics in the oral examination. A reading list is included within the ‘Business Analysis Oral Examination Syllabus’ should you require any sources for additional study.

Bloom’s Taxonomy

Each section of the syllabus is allocated a Knowledge (K) level. These are based on Bloom’s taxonomy of knowledge in the cognitive domain and can be broadly interpreted as follows: K1 – Remember; K2 – Understand; K3 – Apply; K4 – Analyse; K5 – Synthesise; K6 – Evaluate. The Knowledge Levels are explained in greater detail in the ‘Business Analysis Oral Examination Syllabus’.

Format and content of the oral examination

The oral examination leading to the Diploma in Business Analysis consists of an interview lasting up to 50 minutes. The interview is conducted by two examiners each of whom will have been provided with a copy of each candidate’s form BSD6, the registration form for the oral examination. The oral examiners may refer to the information on form BSD6 during the oral examination. Please note that the oral examiners are not informed where a candidate has previously failed the oral examination and do not have access to the assessment document, form BSD7, for the earlier oral examination.

The oral examination will take the following format:

1. Introductions, identification check and discussion of experience based upon form BSD6, the candidate registration form. This will be led by the examiner initiating the oral examination.
2. Questions from the initiating examiner. This should last for approximately 25 minutes.
3. Questions from the other examiner. This should last for approximately 25 minutes.
4. Oral examination close.

The oral examiners will ask questions based upon the topics listed in the oral examination syllabus.
The nature of the questions

The questions asked by the oral examiner will require candidates to discuss and apply the topics in the oral examination syllabus. They may require you to demonstrate knowledge of a specific subject area, or to apply knowledge to a given scenario. The questioning may cover a topic in overview or may require more detailed knowledge. The questions are designed to explore the interconnections between the different subjects and to examine the candidate’s ability to apply techniques or combinations of techniques to different situations.

The examiners are looking for you to demonstrate the following aspects of performance:

- Knowledge of the key principles and content of the subjects in the syllabus.
- The part each of the techniques and concepts plays in business analysis.
- How you might apply the techniques and concepts in the workplace.
- The purpose of the techniques and concepts.

While you may be involved in using some of the techniques in the workplace, you should avoid turning every question into a description of your own organisation. It is important that you demonstrate an ability to take a broader perspective with regard to the techniques and concepts. The examiners will be looking for this broader perspective when considering candidates’ responses to their questions.

Techniques

Candidates are not asked to draw any models relating to a case study scenario but you may be asked for your opinion of their usefulness and relevance. You will be expected to understand how the range of techniques relevant to the diploma may be used, when you would use them and how they could help you with business analysis work.

Assessing candidates

The examiners complete a form BSD7 in order to assess the performance of a candidate. This form considers the candidate’s performance in each of the sections of the oral examination syllabus. The form also includes an assessment of the candidate’s competence with regard to logical reasoning, communication and professionalism. The oral examiners comment on any specific areas of weakness demonstrated by candidates who fail the oral examination.

Notification of oral examination results

Candidates are notified of the result of the oral examination within two weeks of the date of the interview. Notifications are issued in writing by post. No results will be issued verbally on the day of the oral examination. Where a candidate has failed the oral examination, the comments made about the areas of weak performance are passed on to the candidate with the oral examination result.
Conclusion

The oral examination is an assessment of a candidate’s suitability to work as a business analyst. The award of the BCS Diploma in Business Analysis signifies that a candidate has successfully demonstrated the ability to conduct business analysis work. The diploma is intended to provide an employer with an assurance that an individual will be able to work successfully, albeit with some supervision, in the role of a business analyst.