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Predictability of the National Senior Certificate Examinations
Business Studies Report
DBE & IEB

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37 General Van
Ryneveld Street,
Persequor Technopark,
Pretoria

Telephone: 27 12 349 1510

Email: info@umalusi.org.za • Web: www.umalusi.org.za

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Name & Surname	**Subject**
Ms Cherylleen Gordon	Business Studies

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ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
DBE	Department of Basic Education
FET	Further Education and Training
GFETQSF	General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework
IEB	Independent Examinations Board
MCQ	Multiple Choice Question
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSC	National Senior Certificate
SACAI	South African Comprehensive Assessment Institute
SAGs	Subject Assessment Guidelines

Section 1: Overview of the Subject

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) defines Business Studies as a discipline that equips learners with the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes required for informed, productive, ethical, and responsible participation in both the formal and informal economic sectors. The subject integrates business principles, theory, and practice to support the development of entrepreneurial initiatives, sustainable enterprises, and economic growth.

The primary purpose of Business Studies is to enable learners to acquire and apply essential business knowledge, skills, and principles to operate productively and profitably in dynamic and evolving business environments. It aims to develop learners' ability to identify and create business opportunities, apply creative problem-solving and responsible risk-taking, and demonstrate respect for the rights of others and environmental sustainability. Furthermore, the subject promotes the development of leadership and management competencies, encouraging effective collaboration in order to achieve business objectives. It also prepares learners for further education, formal employment, entrepreneurship, and self-employment by equipping them with the competencies required to manage business activities responsibly and effectively.

This report presents the findings of an evaluation of the predictability of the Business Studies examination papers administered by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and the Independent Examinations Board (IEB) between 2022 and 2024. The findings are presented according to each examinable topic outlined in the CAPS and the IEB Subject Assessment Guidelines (SAGs). In addition, the report provides topic-specific recommendations for both the DBE and the IEB.

Section 2: Research Design

The study employed a qualitative research design based on document analysis to examine the predictability of DBE and IEB Business Studies examination papers administered between 2022 and 2024. Document analysis was considered appropriate because the study relied on pre-existing materials, enabling a subject expert to systematically examine and interpret examination papers and marking memoranda.

Purposive sampling was used to select ten high-enrolment subjects offered by the DBE and IEB. The South African Comprehensive Assessment Institute (SACAI) was excluded from the study due to the close alignment of its examination guidelines with those of the DBE. Business Studies was selected as one of the high-enrolment subjects offered.

Data were collected by a single subject expert who analysed all relevant examination papers over the three-year period using evaluation instruments grounded in the principles of content and construct validity. The conceptual framework underpinning this study is discussed in detail in the *NSC Predictability Overview Report*. The subject expert examined each examination item, compared trends across the three years, and assessed the alignment of the examination with the CAPS and the Abridged CAPS topics. A structured Microsoft Word-based instrument, comprising tables and thematic questions, guided the analysis of topic coverage, question types, cognitive skills assessed, and mark allocation. This approach enabled a comprehensive evaluation of the predictability of the examination papers. The thematic questions used in the evaluation are discussed in detail in the *NSC Predictability Overview Report*.

Section 3: Findings from the Evaluation of the DBE and IEB Question Papers

This chapter presents the findings of the evaluation of the DBE and IEB National Senior Certificate (NSC) Business Studies examination Papers 1 and 2. The findings are based on a systematic analysis of examination papers administered between 2022 and 2024 and provide an overview of patterns relating to examination predictability.

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate whether the upward trend in learner performance in the NSC examinations reflects genuine improvements in learner competence or whether it may, in part, be attributed to increasing levels of predictability in examination design. By analysing selected subjects over three consecutive examination cycles, the study sought to generate evidence-based insights to strengthen Umalusi's quality assurance and standardisation processes. In doing so, the study contributes to broader scholarly discourse on the validity, fairness, and integrity of high-stakes examination systems.

The findings are presented separately for the DBE and the IEB in Sections IIIA and IIIB, respectively, and for each discourse paper. The analysis is organised according to the thematic questions in the evaluation instrument, which are discussed in detail in the research design section of the *NSC Predictability Overview Report*.

For each examinable topic, the findings are summarised in tabular format and accompanied by a discussion based on six themes: topic coverage, content coverage by subtopic, topic weighting, item types by subtopic, subtopic–skill pairing, and scenario–subtopic–skill pairing.

The analysis of these themes is presented in Sections a to f for each table. It evaluates the extent to which the components reflected in each table may have contributed to the predictability of the topics assessed in the Business Studies Paper 1 and Paper 2 examinations between 2022 and 2024.

Before presenting the findings, the six analytical themes are defined in Sections a to f below. These definitions apply to the analysis of both Paper 1 and Paper 2 across the two assessment bodies.

a. Topic coverage

The topics prescribed for examination of the NSC subjects are outlined in Section 4 of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) or the Abridged CAPS. These guidelines ensure alignment between the examination and the intended curriculum. The analysis of topic coverage focused on the frequency with which each topic was examined over the three years, specifically identifying any emerging patterns that may have contributed to the predictability of topic selection.

b. Content coverage

This section examined the extent to which specific content areas or subtopics within the selected topic have been assessed over three years. By analysing the frequency and repetition of subtopics in the Business Studies final examination question papers, the aim was to determine whether any patterns of content selection have emerged that may contribute to the predictability of the question paper.

c. Weighting of the topic

This section explored the distribution of mark allocation or weighting assigned to the selected topic over three years. By analysing whether the marks allocated to this topic have remained consistent, increased, or decreased across examination cycles, the aim was to determine the extent to which predictable emphasis may have emerged.

d. Variation in item types

To evaluate the extent to which question design contributed to the predictability of examination papers, it was essential to examine how specific item types have been used to assess a given topic over time. This included analysing the variety of item types used (such as multiple choice questions [MCQs], essays, calculations, and practical scenarios), the distribution of marks allocated to each type, and the variation in difficulty levels and cognitive demands. Additionally, the use of command words, terms that guide the expected cognitive response, can influence question predictability. This section examined these dimensions over three years to identify patterns that may signal repetition or predictability.

e. Topic and skill pairing

To evaluate the predictability of examination question papers, it was crucial to examine how specific cognitive skills have been paired with particular topics over time. Consistent assessment of the same skills, such as interpretation, calculation, analysis, or explanation, when linked to a specific topic across multiple years, may signal a recurring pattern, potentially leading to predictability. Conversely, variation in skill pairing can help ensure a more comprehensive assessment of the intended learning outcomes. This section explored the extent to which skill demands associated with this topic have remained consistent or varied across the past three years and determined whether such patterns suggest predictability in assessment design.

f. Scenario framing of items for a topic

Some examination questions use scenarios, visual stimuli or real-life contexts to test skills within a given topic. The variety or repetition of such contexts over multiple years can influence the anticipation of question types. Consistent use of similar scenarios may contribute to predictability, whereas diverse and novel contexts encourage more profound understanding and critical thinking. This section explored how the contextual framing of questions for each topic has evolved over the past three years and sought to determine whether predictability patterns existed.

3.1: BUSINESS STUDIES PAPERS 1 & 2

This section presents an analysis of the final examination question papers for Business Studies Papers 1 and 2 from 2022 to 2024. The findings for each topic are summarised in Tables 3.1.1–3.1.5.

Table 3.1.1 below summarises the analysis conducted to determine the level of predictability for the Business Environment topic in DBE Business Studies examinations from 2022 to 2024.

Table 3.1.1: Findings on the Predictability of the Business Environment Topic for the DBE Business Studies Examinations from 2022–2024

Topic: Business Environment							
Year	**Topic examined (✓) or not examined (X)**	**Content area/subtopics covered, including mark allocation**	**Overall weighting of the topic in marks**	**Item type/types (e.g., MCQ, essays, short answers, table, etc.) and marks allocated per content area/subtopic**	**Level of difficulty per item type used to examine the subtopic**	**Cognitive level per item type used to examine the subtopic**	**Skill assessed per subtopic**

2022		Subtopic 1: Impact of Recent Legislation (68 marks)	116	Subtopic 1: Impact of Recent Legislation MCQ (4) Choose the correct word (2) Matching items (2) Scenarios (8) Paragraphs (12) Essay-type questions (40)	Subtopic 1: Impact of Recent Legislation MCQ – Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1 Matching items – Level 1 Scenarios – Levels 1 & 2 Paragraphs – Level 2 Essay-type questions – Level 2	Subtopic 1: Impact of Recent Legislation MCQ – Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1 Matching items – Level 1 Scenarios – Levels 1, 2 & 3 Paragraphs – Levels 1, 2 & 3 Essay-type questions – Levels 1, 2 & 3	Subtopic 1: Impact of Recent Legislation Comprehension Identification, Application, Interpretation, Explanation, Writing of essay
		Subtopic 2: Business Strategies (42 marks)		Subtopic 2: Business Strategies	Subtopic 2: Business Strategies	Subtopic 2: Business Strategies	Subtopic 2: Business Strategies

				Choose the correct word (4) Matching items (2) Scenarios (14) Short answers (2) Paragraphs (20)	Choose the correct word – Level 1 Matching items – Level 1 Scenarios – Levels 1 & 2 Short answers – Level 1 Paragraphs – Levels 1 & 2	Choose the correct word – Level 1 Matching items – Level 1 Scenarios – Levels 1, 2 & 3 Short answers – Levels 1, 2 & 3 Paragraphs – Levels 1, 2 & 3	Comprehension Identification, Application, Interpretation, Explanation
		Subtopic 3: Business Sectors and their Environment (6 marks)		Subtopic 3: Business Sectors and their Environment MCQ (2) Short answers (4)	Subtopic 3: Business Sectors and their Environment MCQ – Level 1 Short answers – Level 1	Subtopic 3: Business Sectors and their Environment MCQ – Level 1 Short answers – Level 1	Subtopic 3: Business Sectors and their Environment Comprehension
2023		Subtopic 1: Impact of Recent Legislation	116	Subtopic 1: Impact of	Subtopic 1: Impact of	Subtopic 1: Impact of	Subtopic 1: Impact of

		(42 marks)		Recent Legislation MCQ (4) Choose the correct word (2) Matching items (4) Scenarios (4) Short answers (4) Paragraphs (24)	Recent Legislation MCQ – Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1 Matching items – Level 1 Scenarios – Levels 1 & 2 Short answers – Level 1 Paragraphs – Levels 1 & 2	Recent Legislation MCQ – Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1 Matching items – Level 1 Scenarios – Levels 1 & 2 Short answers – Level 1 Paragraphs – Levels 1 & 2	Recent Legislation Comprehension Identification, Application, Interpretation, Explanation
		Subtopic 2: Business Strategies (63 marks)		Subtopic 2: Business Strategies MCQ (2) Choose the correct word (2)	Subtopic 2: Business Strategies MCQ – Level 1	Subtopic 2: Business Strategies MCQ – Level 1	Subtopic 2: Business Strategies Comprehension Identification,

				Matching items (2) Scenarios (7) Paragraphs (10) Essay-type questions (40)	Choose the correct word – Level 1 Matching items – Level 1 Scenarios – Levels 1 & 2 Paragraphs – Levels 1 & 2 Essay-type questions – Levels 1 & 2	Choose the correct word – Level 1 Matching items – Level 1 Scenarios – Levels 1, 2 & 3 Paragraphs – Levels 1, 2 & 3 Essay-type questions – Levels 1, 2 & 3	Application, Interpretation, Explanation, Writing of essay
		Subtopic 3: Business Sectors and their Environment (11 Marks)		Subtopic 3: Business Sectors and their Environment Scenarios (9) Short answers (2)	Subtopic 3: Business Sectors and their Environment Scenarios – Levels 1 & 2 Short answers – Level 1	Subtopic 3: Business Sectors and their Environment Scenarios – Levels 1 & 2 Short answers – Level 1	Subtopic 3: Business Sectors and their Environment Comprehension Identification, Application, Interpretation

2024		Subtopic 1: Impact of Recent Legislation (74 marks)	116	Subtopic 1: Impact of Recent Legislation MCQ (2) Choose the correct word (2) Matching items (4) Scenarios (6) Short answers (4) Paragraphs (16) Essay-type questions (40)	Subtopic 1: Impact of Recent Legislation MCQ – Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1 Matching items – Level 1 Scenarios – Levels 1 & 2 Short answers – Level 1 Paragraphs – Levels 1 & 2 Essay-type questions – Levels 1 & 2	Subtopic 1: Impact of Recent Legislation MCQ – Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1 Matching items – Level 1 Scenarios – Levels 1, 2 & 3 Short answers – Level 1 Paragraphs – Levels 1, 2 & 3 Essay-type questions – Levels 1, 2 & 3	Subtopic 1: Impact of Recent Legislation Comprehension Identification, Application, Interpretation, Explanation, Writing of essay

		Subtopic 2: Business Strategies (38 marks)		Subtopic 2: Business Strategies MCQ (2) Choose the correct word (2) Scenarios (12) Short answers (2) Paragraphs (20)	Subtopic 2: Business Strategies MCQ – Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1 Scenarios – Levels 1 & 2 Short answers – Level 1 Paragraphs – Levels 1 & 2	Subtopic 2: Business Strategies MCQ – Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1 Scenarios – Levels 1, 2 & 3 Short answers – Level 1 Paragraphs – Levels 1, 2 & 3	Subtopic 2: Business Strategies Comprehension Identification, Application, Interpretation, Explanation
		Subtopic 3: Business Sectors and their Environment (4 marks)		Subtopic 3: Business Sectors and their Environment MCQ (2) Choose the correct word (2)	Subtopic 3: Business Sectors and their Environment MCQ – Level 1	Subtopic 3: Business Sectors and their Environment MCQ – Level 1	Subtopic 3: Business Sectors and their Environment Comprehension

					Choose the correct word – Level 1	Choose the correct word – Level 1	

Table 3.1.1 presents a comparative overview of the Business Environment topic across the three-year period. The analysis, presented in Sections a to f, evaluates whether the components reflected in Table 3.1.1 have contributed to the predictability of the DBE Business Studies' final examination question papers from 2022 to 2024.

a. Topic coverage

The findings indicate that in accordance with the CAPS, a minimum of 25% of the total marks in any Business Studies examination must be allocated to the main topic, Business Environments. Historical data indicate that this requirement has been consistently met, with the topic comprising 26% of the examination in 2022, 27% in 2023, and 25% in 2024. This pattern reflects a high degree of predictability and alignment with the CAPS specifications, thereby ensuring both compliance and stability in assessment practices. To sustain this level of predictability and adherence to the CAPS requirements, a checklist for the paper-setting and moderation process should be incorporated to confirm compliance prior to final approval.

b. Content coverage

An analysis of the assessment content over the three-year period reveals that certain topics were consistently examined. Specifically, provisions of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA), Porter's Five Forces Model, PESTLE analysis, defensive strategies, and steps in strategy evaluation appeared across all three years, albeit through varied questioning formats. Additionally, topics such as the pillars of BBBEE, functions of SETAs, intensive strategies, strategic management process, and business sectors and their environments were assessed in two of the three years. A notable concern is the persistent omission of the National Skills Development

Strategy, the Human Resource Development Strategy, and the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act (COIDA) from Sections B and C; these topics were assessed exclusively in Section A throughout the three-year period. Additionally, the rights of consumers as stipulated in the NCA/CPA were interchangeably assessed across the three years.

The repeated inclusion of specific topics across the three years, as well as the interchangeable use of content, introduces a potential element of predictability. Although the application of varied questioning formats partially mitigates this risk, the consistent presence of certain content areas may enable candidates to anticipate their inclusion. Furthermore, the regular omission of some topics from Sections (B and C) could exacerbate this predictability, as learners may assign lower priority to these areas during their preparation. To maintain this level of predictability without compromising fairness and reliability, question design should consistently include core curriculum concepts, while varying cognitive verbs to encourage higher-order thinking, ensuring that the expected responses align with the cognitive demands of the verbs.

c. Weighting of the topic

The analysis reveals that the allocation of marks for the main topic, Business Environments, remained consistent at 116 marks across the three-year period, in accordance with the specifications outlined in the 2021 Examination Guidelines. In contrast, the distribution of marks among the subtopics exhibited notable variation. Specifically, the subtopic Impact of Recent Legislation was allocated 68, 42, and 74 marks over the three years, respectively. Similarly, Business Strategies received 42, 63, and 38 marks, while Business Sectors received 6, 11, and 4 marks, respectively. This variability in subtopic mark allocation suggests a degree of unpredictability, thereby reducing the likelihood of accurately anticipating which subtopic would appear in Section C, the essay-type question, which carries the highest weighting in the examination for this main topic. It is recommended that the examination panel design and implement a standardised template to systematically guide the development of examination question papers, thereby promoting consistency and ensuring proportional representation of all subtopics.

d. Variation in item types

The evaluation indicates that, across the three-year period, a range of item types was employed to assess the main topic, Business Environment, including MCQs, "choose the correct word" items, matching items, scenario-based questions, paragraph responses, and essay-type questions. It is important to note that the differentiation among scenarios, paragraph responses, and essay-type questions primarily lies in the cognitive verbs utilised.

The mark allocation for Section A, comprising MCQs, "choose the correct word", and matching items, remained constant at 16 marks throughout the three years. Similarly, Section B maintained a consistent allocation of 6 marks for short-answer questions, while scenario-based questions were assigned 22, 20, and 18 marks, respectively, over the three years. Paragraph-type questions reflected allocations of 32, 34, and 36 marks across the same period. Individual paragraph questions consistently carried between 4 and 6 marks, suggesting a degree of predictability, as candidates were generally required to study approximately three facts per concept within the topic. Likewise, scenario-based questions were allocated a maximum of 4 marks per question, reinforcing this predictability.

Section C, comprising the essay-type question, adhered to the CAPS prescription of 40 marks across all three years. The level of difficulty remained stable across item types: Level 1 for MCQs, "choose the correct word", matching items, and short-answer questions; Level 2 for scenarios and paragraph-type questions; and Levels 2 and 3 for essay-type questions, contingent upon the cognitive verb employed. Cognitive levels were similarly consistent, with Level 1 applied to MCQs, "choose the correct word", matching items, and short-answer questions; Level 2 for scenario-based questions; and Levels 2 and 3 for paragraph and essay-type questions.

The assessment structure across the three years exhibits a clear pattern of predictability. Item types remained consistent, and mark allocations within sections showed minimal variation, with Section A fixed at 16 marks, Section B maintaining 6 marks for short answers,

and the essay question in Section C consistently allocated 40 marks, as prescribed by the CAPS. Scenario and paragraph questions showed slight fluctuations but remained within narrow ranges, reinforcing predictability. Cognitive levels and difficulty ratings were stable: Level 1 applied to objective items and short answers, Level 2 to scenarios and paragraphs, and Levels 2–3 to essays. This uniformity in structure, mark distribution, and cognitive demand indicates a standardised approach that reduces uncertainty for candidates. Teachers should be provided with a framework outlining item types, approximate cognitive levels, difficulty levels, and mark ranges, so that candidates understand expectations without knowing exact details. Predictable progression should be maintained from lower-order to higher-order questions across sections, to support fairness and comparability. Section totals should be maintained, but individual question marks should vary slightly to reduce predictability without compromising fairness.

e. Topic and skill pairing

The Business Studies examination question papers, which assess the main topic, Business Environment, primarily evaluate interpretation and application skills through real-world scenarios across all subtopics. Candidates were also required to explain, discuss, or describe concepts and, in some instances, to provide advice, recommendations, or suggestions. Section B demonstrated a scaffolded structure, progressing from lower- to higher-order questions, with application-based tasks consistently appearing as the third and fifth questions over the three years. Essay-type questions exhibited a highly predictable sequence: an outline, explanation, discussion, and a conclusion with advice or recommendations. Although the topics varied each year, they introduced some degree of unpredictability.

The structure of Section B and the essay questions indicate a moderate to high level of predictability, particularly in the sequencing of questions and the cognitive demand. While variation in topics reduces complete predictability, the consistent placement of application questions and the fixed essay structure enable candidates to anticipate the format and required skills. It is recommended that the examination panel rotate the position of application-based questions within Section B to reduce structural predictability and

vary the sequence and types of cognitive verbs to encourage higher-order thinking. Topics should be updated annually to preserve fairness and reduce rote preparation. General expectations should be shared regarding cognitive levels and item types, while avoiding disclosure of fixed sequences.

f. Scenario framing of items for a topic

In the 2022 and 2023 examination papers, candidates were required to identify concepts from given statements, although these were drawn from different content areas. Similarly, legislation-based scenarios appeared in 2022 and 2024, but they focused on different Acts. The question types within these scenarios varied, shifting from "quote and discuss" in 2022 to "name and describe" in 2024. Likewise, scenarios assessing various aspects of Business Strategies were included in the 2022, 2023, and 2024 papers, consistently targeting the same skills. The contextual framing of these questions can therefore be considered predictable, as the initial question typically required candidates to name, quote, or identify the concept, followed by tasks such as explaining, describing, discussing, making recommendations, or providing advice. The examination papers exhibit a moderate to high level of predictability in terms of question structure and cognitive progression. While the specific topics varied across years, the underlying question patterns remained consistent.

For instance, scenarios involving legislation and business strategies appeared repeatedly, assessing similar skills. Moreover, the question framing followed a predictable sequence: the initial task required candidates to identify, quote, or name a concept, followed by higher-order tasks such as explaining, describing, discussing, or providing recommendations. This recurring structure enables candidates to anticipate the format and cognitive demand, even when content changes introduce some variability. To reduce excessive predictability while maintaining fairness and CAPS compliance, it is recommended that question sequencing be varied, cognitive verbs be diversified, and integrated question formats be introduced to combine multiple skills. Additionally,

expanding contextual variety through different real-world scenarios and providing transparent guidelines without revealing fixed patterns will help balance predictability with rigour and authenticity.

Table 3.1.2 below summarises the analysis conducted to determine the level of predictability for the Business Operations topic in DBE Business Studies examinations from 2022 to 2024.

Table 3.1.2: Findings on the Predictability of the Business Operations Topic for the DBE Business Studies Examinations from 2022–2024

Topic: Business Operations							
Year	**Topic examined (✓) or not examined (X)**	**Content area/subtopics covered, including mark allocation**	**Overall weighting of the topic in marks**	**Item type/types (e.g., MCQ, essays, short answers, table, etc.) and marks allocated per content area/subtopic**	**Level of difficulty per item type used to examine the subtopic**	**Cognitive level per item type used to examine the subtopic**	**Skill assessed per subtopic**
2022		Subtopic 1: Human Resources Function (38 marks)	114	Subtopic 1: Human Resources Function MCQ (2)	Subtopic 1: Human Resources Function MCQ – Level 1	Subtopic 1: Human Resources Function MCQ – Level 1	Subtopic 1: Human Resources Function Comprehension

				Choose the correct word (2) Matching items (4) Scenarios (13) Short answers (7) Paragraphs (10)	Choose the correct word – Level 1 Matching items – Level 1 Scenarios – Levels 1 & 2 Short answers – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 2	Choose the correct word – Level 1 Matching items – Level 1 Scenarios – Levels 1 & 2 Short answers – Level 1 Paragraphs – Levels 2 & 3	Identification, Application, Interpretation, Explanation
		Subtopic 2: Quality of Performance (76 marks)		Subtopic 2: Quality of Performance MCQ (2) Choose the correct word (2) Matching items (2) Scenarios (6) Paragraphs (24)	Subtopic 2: Quality of Performance MCQ – Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1 Matching items – Level 1	Subtopic 2: Quality of Performance MCQ – Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1 Matching items – Level 1	Subtopic 2: Quality of Performance Comprehension Identification, Application, interpretation, Explanation, Writing of essay

				Essay-type questions (40)	Scenarios – Levels 1 & 2 Paragraphs – Level 2 Essay-type questions – Level 2	Scenarios – Levels 1 & 2 Paragraphs – Level 2 Essay-type questions – Level 2	
2023		Subtopic 1: Human Resources Function (38 marks)	114	Subtopic 1: Human Resources Function MCQ (2) Choose the correct word (2) Matching items (2) Scenarios (6) Short answers (4) Paragraphs (16) Table (4)	Subtopic 1: Human Resources Function MCQ – Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1 Matching items – Level 1 Scenarios – Levels 1 & 2 Short answers – Level 1	Subtopic 1: Human Resources Function MCQ – Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1 Matching items – Level 1 Scenarios – Levels 1, 2 & 3 Short answers – Level 1	Subtopic 1: Human Resources Function Comprehension Identification, Application, Interpretation, Explanation

					Paragraphs – Level 2 Table – Level 2	Paragraphs – Levels 2 & 3 Table – Levels 1 & 2	
		Subtopic 2: Quality of Performance (76 marks)		Subtopic 2: Quality of Performance MCQ (2) Choose the correct word (2) Matching items (2) Scenarios (12) Paragraphs (18) Essay-type questions (40)	Subtopic 2: Quality of Performance MCQ – Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1 Matching items – Level 1 Scenarios – Levels 1 & 2 Paragraphs – Level 2 Essay-type questions – Level 2	Subtopic 2: Quality of Performance MCQ – Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1 Matching items – Level 1 Scenarios – Levels 1 & 2 Paragraphs – Levels 2 & 3 Essay-type questions – Levels 2 & 3	Subtopic 2: Quality of Performance Comprehension Identification, Application, Interpretation, Explanation, Writing of essay
	2024	Subtopic 1:	114	Subtopic 1:	Subtopic 1:	Subtopic 1:	Subtopic 1:

		Human Resources Function (76 marks)		Human Resources Function MCQ (2) Choose the correct word (2) Matching items (2) Scenarios (12) Short answers (8) Paragraphs (10) Essay-type questions (40)	Human Resources Function MCQ – Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1 Matching items – Level 1 Scenarios – Levels 1 & 2 Short answers – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 2 Essay-type questions – Level 2	Human Resources Function MCQ – Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1 Matching items – Level 1 Scenarios – Levels 1 & 2 Short answers – Level 1 Paragraphs – Levels 2 & 3 Essay-type questions – Levels 2 & 3	Human Resources Function Comprehension Identification, Application, Interpretation, Explanation, Writing of essay
		Subtopic 2: Quality of		Subtopic 2: Quality of Performance	Subtopic 2: Quality of Performance	Subtopic 2: Quality of Performance	Subtopic 2: Quality of Performance

		Performance (38 marks)		MCQ (2) Choose the correct word (2) Matching items (4) Scenarios (6) Paragraphs (24)	MCQ – Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1 Matching items – Level 1 Scenarios – Levels 1 & 2 Paragraphs – Level 2	MCQ – Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1 Matching items – Level 1 Scenarios – Levels 1 & 2 Paragraphs – Levels 2 & 3	Comprehension Identification, Application, Interpretation, Explanation

Table 3.1.2 presents a comparative overview of the Business Operations topic across the three-year period. The analysis, presented in Sections a to f, evaluates whether the components reflected in Table 3.1.2 have contributed to the predictability of the DBE Business Studies' final examination question papers from 2022 to 2024.

a. Topic coverage

The findings indicate that in alignment with the CAPS, a minimum of 25% of the total marks in any Business Studies examination must be allocated to the main topic of Business Operations. Analysis of historical examination data demonstrates consistent adherence to this requirement, with the topic accounting for 24% in 2022, 23% in 2023, and 25% in 2024. This trend indicates a high level of predictability and conformity with the CAPS specifications, thereby promoting both compliance and stability in assessment practices.

To maintain this level of consistency and ensure ongoing compliance with the CAPS standards, it is recommended that a formal checklist be integrated into the paper-setting and moderation processes to verify alignment prior to final approval.

b. Content coverage

Within the subtopic Human Resources Function, several patterns emerged across the three examination papers. The question "State four aspects that should be included in an employment contract" appeared consistently in all three papers. The purpose of induction was assessed in both the 2022 and 2024 examinations using different cognitive verbs; however, the expected response remained unchanged. In contrast, while the same concept was assessed in 2022 and 2023, the questions differed, requiring varied responses. The question about the role of the interviewer prior to the interview in 2024 was an exact replication of the 2022 question. Similarly, the reasons for terminating an employment contract were assessed in 2022 and 2024 using different cognitive verbs, yet the anticipated answers were identical. Although salary determination methods were tested across all three years, the questions were framed differently, eliciting distinct responses.

In the subtopic Quality of Performance, comparable trends were observed. The question on ways in which Total Quality Management (TQM) can reduce the cost of quality appeared in 2022, 2023, and 2024, employing the verbs "explain", "suggest", and "recommend", respectively, while the marking guidelines reflected similar answers. Likewise, the role of quality circles was assessed across all three years, using "advise" in 2022 and 2023, and "explain" in 2024. The impact of poorly implemented TQM was examined in both 2022 and 2023. Similarly, questions on how businesses can apply the PDCA cycle to improve product quality and the benefits of an effective quality management system were assessed in both 2022 and 2023.

Analysis of assessment trends within the Human Resources Function and Quality of Performance subtopics indicates a consistent recurrence of core concepts across the three years, suggesting a degree of predictability in content coverage. However, variations

in cognitive verbs and question structures introduce differing levels of cognitive demand, reducing predictability in question formulation. Furthermore, when different cognitive verbs are employed but the same response is expected, the predictability of content remains high, while that of cognitive complexity diminishes.

To preserve predictability without compromising fairness and reliability, question design should consistently incorporate core curriculum concepts while varying cognitive verbs to promote higher-order thinking, ensuring that the expected responses align with the cognitive demands of the verbs used.

c. Weighting of the topic

The total marks allocated to the main topic, Business Operations, remained constant at 114 across the three-year period. Within this topic, the subtopic Human Resources Function maintained an allocation of 38 marks in 2022 and 2023 but increased significantly to 76 marks in 2024. Conversely, the subtopic Quality of Performance was consistently allocated 76 marks in 2022 and 2023, but its weighting decreased to 38 marks in 2024. Notably, when a subtopic was assessed through an essay-type question, its weighting increased substantially, accounting for approximately 66% of the main topic's total allocation. This pattern indicates that the distribution of marks among subtopics within Business Operations was unequal and inconsistent across the three years.

The allocation of marks for the main topic, Business Operations, remained constant at 114 across all three years. In contrast, significant variation was observed at the subtopic level, particularly in 2024, where the weighting for Human Resources Function doubled while the allocation for Quality of Performance was halved. Furthermore, essay-type questions exerted a strong influence on mark distribution, creating disproportionate emphasis on certain subtopics and contributing to unequal weighting patterns within the main topic. This trend reflects unacceptable predictability, as the weighting appears to be driven by question type rather than a balanced representation of curriculum objectives, potentially leading to inequitable preparation strategies among candidates. To address this,

it is recommended that the assessment body standardise subtopic weightings within a reasonable range across years and limit the influence of essay-type questions on overall marks by setting a fixed maximum percentage allocation per subtopic. Controlled variation in question types should be maintained to ensure fairness, while preserving alignment with learning outcomes.

d. Variation in item types

An analysis of question allocation in Section A reveals a mixed pattern of consistency and variation across subtopics and years. The allocation for MCQs and "choose the correct word" items remained constant at two marks per subtopic from 2022 to 2024, indicating high predictability for these question types. However, matching items varied for Human Resources Function, decreasing from four marks in 2022 to two marks in 2023 and 2024, while Quality of Performance increased from two marks in 2022 and 2023 to four marks in 2024. Scenario-based questions demonstrated notable fluctuations: for Human Resources Function, the number of scenario questions shifted from 2 in 2022 (13 marks) to 1 in 2023 (6 marks) and back to 2 in 2024 (12 marks). Conversely, Quality of Performance scenarios alternated between 1 question (6 marks) in 2022, 2 questions (12 marks) in 2023, and 1 question (6 marks) in 2024. Short-answer questions remained constant at two per year but were restricted to the Human Resources Function, with marks ranging from 7 in 2022 to 4 in 2023 and 8 in 2024.

Paragraph-type questions for the Human Resources Function fluctuated between two, four, and two questions, totalling 10, 16, and 10 marks respectively, while Quality of Performance showed a steady increase in the number of paragraph questions (three, four, and five) with marks totalling 24, 18, and 24 across the three years. Essay-type questions were consistently allocated 40 marks, but the focus shifted from Quality of Performance in 2022 and 2023 to Human Resources Function in 2024. The level of difficulty remained constant, with Level 1 assigned to MCQs, matching items, and short answers, and Level 2 applied to scenarios, paragraph questions, and essays. Cognitive weighting followed a similar pattern: Level 1 for recall-based items, Level 2 for explanatory tasks using verbs such as "explain", "discuss", and "describe", and Level 3 for evaluative tasks requiring verbs such as "recommend", "suggest", and

"advise". Overall, while certain question types and difficulty levels exhibit acceptable predictability, the variation in scenario-based and paragraph-type questions, as well as shifts in essay focus, indicate unacceptable predictability at the subtopic level, which may lead to uneven preparation strategies. To address this, it is recommended that the assessment body maintain a consistent distribution of question types and marks across subtopics while introducing controlled variation in cognitive demand to ensure fairness and alignment with curriculum objectives.

e. Topic and skill pairing

The findings provide evidence that the skills assessed for this topic remained largely constant across both subtopics and the three-year period, consistently including comprehension, identification, interpretation, application, explanation, and essay writing. The only notable variation occurred in the allocation of essay-writing skills, which were assessed under Quality of Performance in 2022 and 2023, and then moved to Human Resources Function in 2024. This trend reflects acceptable predictability in the overall skill set, with minimal variation confined to the placement of essay-writing tasks. However, while such consistency ensures alignment with curriculum objectives, it may also lead to unacceptable predictability if candidates can anticipate the required skills without broader preparation. To mitigate this, the assessment body should consider introducing controlled variation in cognitive demand by incorporating higher-order skills such as evaluation and synthesis across different subtopics, rather than concentrating essay writing within a single subtopic. This approach would maintain fairness and promote comprehensive skill development.

f. Scenario framing of items for a topic

The patterns observed show that an analysis of scenario-based questions within the subtopic Human Resources Function reveals a progression in contextual framing and cognitive demand across the three-year period. In 2022, scenarios were brief and focused on recruitment and induction, requiring candidates to identify the recruitment method, explain its advantages, quote the purpose of induction, and describe its benefits. In 2023, the emphasis remained on recruitment but shifted slightly, requiring the identification of

the recruitment method and an explanation of the interviewee's role. By 2024, the complexity increased, as candidates were expected to quote legal requirements and provide advice on reasons for contract termination, introducing evaluative skills. Similarly, for Quality of Performance, scenario-based questions evolved from asking for ways in which TQM can reduce costs in 2022, to identifying TQM elements and motivating responses with evidence from the scenario in 2023, alongside explaining the benefits of a high-quality management system. In 2024, candidates were required to identify and explain quality indicators of a business function.

This trend demonstrates moderate predictability in the thematic focus, recruitment and induction for Human Resources and TQM for Quality of Performance, but introduces variation in cognitive complexity and task requirements over time. While the recurring themes may lead to partial predictability, the evolving nature of the questions suggests acceptable variation. To maintain this balance, the assessment body should continue to diversify scenario contexts and integrate higher-order cognitive skills, e.g., evaluation and recommendation across subtopics, ensuring alignment with curriculum objectives.

Table 3.1.3 below summarises the analysis conducted to determine the level of predictability for the Business Ventures topic in DBE Business Studies examinations from 2022 to 2024.

Table 3.1.3: Findings on the Predictability of the Business Ventures Topic for the DBE Business Studies Examinations from 2022–2024

Topic: Business Ventures							
Year	**Topic examined (✓) or not**	**Content area/subtopics covered, including mark allocation**	**Overall weighting of the**	**Item type/types (e.g., MCQ, essays, short answers, table,**	**Level of difficulty per item type used**	**Cognitive level per item type used to**	**Skill assessed per subtopic**

	examined (X)		topic in marks	etc.) and marks allocated per content area/subtopic	to examine the subtopic	examine the subtopic	
2022		Subtopic 1: Management and Leadership (48 marks)	116	Subtopic 1: Management and Leadership MCQ (2) Matching items (2) Paragraphs (4) Essay-type questions (40)	Subtopic 1: Management and Leadership MCQ – Level 1 Matching items – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 2 Essay-type questions – Level 2	Subtopic 1: Management and Leadership MCQ – Level 1 Matching items – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 2 Essay-type questions – Levels 2 & 3	Subtopic 1: Management and Leadership Comprehension Identification, Application, Interpretation, Explanation, Writing of essay
		Subtopic 2: Investment: Securities (25 marks)		Subtopic 2: Investment: Securities MCQ (2)	Subtopic 2: Investment: Securities MCQ – Level 1	Subtopic 2: Investment: Securities MCQ – Level 1	Subtopic 2: Investment: Securities Comprehension

				Choose the correct word (2) Matching items (2) Scenarios (6) Short answers (3) Paragraphs (6) Calculations (4)	Choose the correct word – Level 1 Matching items – Level 1 Scenarios – Levels 1 & 2 Short answers – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 2 Calculations – Level 2	Choose the correct word – Level 1 Matching items – Level 1 Scenarios – Levels 1 & 2 Short answers – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 2 Calculations – Level 2	Identification, Application, Interpretation, Explanation, Calculations
		Subtopic 3: Investment: Insurance (19 marks)		Subtopic 3: Investment: Insurance Choose the correct word (2) Scenarios (5) Short answers (4) Paragraphs (8)	Subtopic 3: Investment: Insurance Choose the correct word – Level 1 Scenarios – Levels 1& 2	Subtopic 3: Investment: Insurance Choose the correct word – Level 1 Scenarios – Levels 1 & 2	Subtopic 3: Investment: Insurance Comprehension Identification, Application, Interpretation, Explanation

					Short answers – Level 1 Paragraphs – Levels 1 & 2	Short answers – Level 1 Paragraphs – Levels 1 & 2	
		Subtopic 4: Forms of Ownership (14 marks)		Subtopic 4: Forms of Ownership Matching items (2) Paragraphs (12)	Subtopic 4: Forms of Ownership Matching items – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 2	Subtopic 4: Forms of Ownership Matching items – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 2	Subtopic 4: Forms of Ownership Comprehension Explanation
		Subtopic 5: Presentation and Data Response (10 marks)		Subtopic 5: Presentation and Data Response MCQ (2) Identify from statements (4) Paragraphs (4)	Subtopic 5: Presentation and Data Response MCQ – Level 1 Identify from statements - Level 2	Subtopic 5: Presentation and Data Response MCQ – Level 1 Identify from statements - Level 2	Subtopic 5: Presentation and Data Response Comprehension Identification, Application, Interpretation, Explanation

					Paragraphs – Level 2	Paragraphs – Level 3	
2023		Subtopic 1: Management and Leadership (16 marks)	114	Subtopic 1: Management and Leadership MCQ (2) Matching items (2) Scenarios (6) Paragraphs (6)	Subtopic 1: Management and Leadership MCQ – Level 1 Matching items – Level 1 Scenarios – Levels 1 & 2 Paragraphs – Level 2	Subtopic 1: Management and Leadership MCQ – Level 1 Matching items – Level 1 Scenarios – Levels 1 & 3 Paragraphs – Level 2	Subtopic 1: Management and Leadership Comprehension Identification, Application, Interpretation, Explanation
		Subtopic 2: Investment: Securities (24 marks)		Subtopic 2: Investment: Securities MCQ (2) Matching items (2) Scenarios (6) Short answers (2)	Subtopic 2: Investment: Securities MCQ – Level 1 Matching items – Level 1	Subtopic 2: Investment: Securities MCQ – Level 1 Matching items – Level 1	Subtopic 2: Investment: Securities Comprehension Identification, Application, Interpretation,

				Paragraphs (12)	Scenarios – Levels 1 & 2 Short answers – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 2	Scenarios – Levels 1 & 2 Short answers – Level 1 Paragraphs – Levels 2 & 3	Explanation
		Subtopic 3: Investment: Insurance (16 marks)		Subtopic 3: Investment: Insurance Choose the correct word (2) Scenarios (8) Paragraphs (6)	Subtopic 3: Investment: Insurance Choose the correct word – Level 1 Scenarios – Levels 1 & 2 Paragraphs – Level 2	Subtopic 3: Investment: Insurance Choose the correct word – Level 1 Scenarios – Levels 1 & 2 Paragraphs – Level 2	Subtopic 3: Investment: Insurance Comprehension Identification, Application, Interpretation, Explanation
		Subtopic 4: Forms of Ownership (14 marks)		Subtopic 4: Forms of Ownership MCQ (2)	Subtopic 4: Forms of Ownership MCQ – Level 1	Subtopic 4: Forms of Ownership MCQ – Level 1	Subtopic 4: Forms of Ownership Comprehension Identification,

				Choose the correct word (2) Paragraphs (10)	Choose the correct word – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 2	Choose the correct word – Level 1 Paragraphs – Levels 2 & 3	Application, Interpretation, Explanation
		Subtopic 5: Presentation and Data Response (44 marks)		Subtopic 5: Presentation and Data Response Short answers (4) Essay-type questions (40)	Subtopic 5: Presentation and Data Response Short answers – Level 1 Essay-type questions – Level 2	Subtopic 5: Presentation and Data Response Short answers – Level 1 Essay-type questions – Levels 2 & 3	Subtopic 5: Presentation and Data Response Comprehension, Explanation, Writing of essay
2024		Subtopic 1: Management and Leadership (14 marks)	114	Subtopic 1: Management and Leadership MCQ (2) Scenarios (6) Paragraphs (6)	Subtopic 1: Management and Leadership MCQ – Level 1 Scenarios – Levels 1 & 2	Subtopic 1: Management and Leadership MCQ – Level 1	Subtopic 1: Management and Leadership Comprehension Identification,

					Paragraphs – Level 2	Scenarios – Levels 1 & 2 Paragraphs – Level 2	Application, Interpretation, Explanation
		Subtopic 2: Investment: Securities (50 marks)		Subtopic 2: Investment: Securities Choose the correct word (2) Matching items (4) Short answers (4) Essay-type questions (40)	Subtopic 2: Investment: Securities Choose the correct word – Level 1 Matching items – Level 1 Short answers – Level 1 Essay-type questions – Levels 2 & 3	Subtopic 2: Investment: Securities Choose the correct word – Level 1 Matching items – Level 1 Short answers – Level 1 Essay-type questions – Levels 2 & 3	Subtopic 2: Investment: Securities Comprehension Explanation
		Subtopic 3: Investment: Insurance (14 marks)		Subtopic 3: Investment: Insurance	Subtopic 3: Investment: Insurance	Subtopic 3: Investment: Insurance	Subtopic 3: Investment: Insurance

				Scenarios (2) Short answers (2) Paragraphs (6) Calculations (4)	Scenarios – Level 2 Short answers – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 2 Calculations – Level 2	Scenarios – Level 2 Short answers – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 2 Calculations – Level 2	Comprehension Identification, Explanation
		Subtopic 4: Forms of Ownership (16 marks)		Subtopic 4: Forms of Ownership MCQ (2) Choose the correct word (2) Paragraphs (12)	Subtopic 4: Forms of Ownership MCQ – Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 2	Subtopic 4: Forms of Ownership MCQ – Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 2	Subtopic 4: Forms of Ownership Comprehension Explanation
		Subtopic 5: Presentation and Data Response (20 marks)		Subtopic 5: Presentation and Data Response	Subtopic 5: Presentation and Data Response	Subtopic 5: Presentation and Data Response	Subtopic 5: Presentation and Data Response

				Choose the correct word (2) Scenarios (6) Paragraphs (12)	Choose the correct word – Level 1 Scenarios – Levels 1 & 2 Paragraphs – Level 2	Choose the correct word – Level 1 Scenarios – Levels 1 & 2 Paragraphs – Levels 2 & 3	Comprehension Identification, Explanation

Table 3.1.3 presents a comparative overview of the Business Ventures topic across the three-year period. The analysis, presented in Sections a to f, evaluates whether the components reflected in Table 3.13 have contributed to the predictability of the DBE Business Studies' final examination question papers from 2022 to 2024.

a. Topic coverage

The findings indicate that, in line with the CAPS, at least 25% of the total marks in any Business Studies examination must be allocated to the main topic, Business Ventures. Historical data shows consistent compliance with this requirement, with the topic comprising 27% of the examination in 2022, and 25% in both 2023 and 2024. This trend demonstrates strong predictability and alignment with the CAPS guidelines, ensuring stability and adherence in assessment practices. To maintain this level of consistency and compliance, it is recommended that a checklist be incorporated into the paper-setting and moderation process to verify adherence before final approval.

b. Content coverage

The findings show that the main topic, Business Ventures, comprises five subtopics. Within Management and Leadership, the role of personal attitude in successful leadership was assessed in both 2022 and 2023. In Investment: Securities, factors influencing investment decisions and the functions of the JSE were examined across all three years, employing different cognitive verbs. Similarly, in Investment: Insurance, the advantages of insurance were assessed using varied cognitive verbs over the same period. Additionally, strategies for handling feedback during presentations were tested consistently across the three years. In the subtopic, Forms of Ownership, there were no instances of similar questions or questions assessing the same content across the three examination cycles.

The assessment of Business Ventures demonstrates a high degree of predictability in content coverage, as core concepts, such as leadership attitudes, investment decision factors, functions of the JSE, insurance benefits, and presentation feedback, recur across the three years. However, the use of different cognitive verbs introduces variation in cognitive demand, thereby slightly reducing the unacceptable predictability in question formulation. In cases where the same response is expected despite changes in verbs, predictability of content remains strong, but the intended differentiation in cognitive complexity is not fully realised.

To maintain acceptable predictability while ensuring fairness and reliability, question design should consistently include core curriculum concepts and vary the cognitive verbs to promote higher-order thinking and the application of the content. Expected responses must align with the cognitive demands of the verbs used. Unlike other subtopics, Forms of Ownership showed no repetition of questions or overlapping content, resulting in low unacceptable predictability. This suggests intentional variation in focus, requiring comprehensive preparation.

c. Weighting of the topic

The allocation of marks for the main topic, Business Ventures, remained consistent across the three years, aligning with the CAPS requirement of 25% of the examination. However, the distribution of marks among subtopics varied significantly. For Management and Leadership, the allocation was 48 marks in 2022, 16 marks in 2023, and 14 marks in 2024. Investment: Securities received 25 marks in 2022, 24 marks in 2023, and 50 marks in 2024. Investment: Insurance showed relative consistency, ranging from 14 to 19 marks, while Forms of Ownership remained stable at 14 to 16 marks across all three years. In contrast, Presentation and Data Response varied considerably, from 10 marks in 2022 to 44 marks in 2023 and 20 marks in 2024.

The consistent weighting of the main topic reflects acceptable predictability, aligns with the CAPS, and ensures fairness in overall topic emphasis. However, the significant variation in subtopic mark allocation introduces an element of unpredictability, which is pedagogically sound and should be maintained to discourage narrow preparation. There is no evidence of unacceptable predictability, as the variation in subtopic weighting prevents learners from anticipating which areas will carry the most marks.

While maintaining the CAPS-aligned weighting for the main topic, the panel should continue varying subtopic mark allocations across examination cycles. This approach sustains an appropriate level of unpredictability, promoting comprehensive preparation and reducing the risk of rote learning. However, the variation should remain within reasonable limits to ensure balance and fairness.

d. Variation in item types

The number of questions assessing Business Ventures in Section A, consisting of MCQs, "choose the correct word" items, and matching items, remained consistent at 14 marks in 2022 and 12 marks in both 2023 and 2024. The mark allocation for scenario-based questions varied from 9 in 2022 to 20 in 2023 and 14 in 2024. Calculations were assessed only in 2022 and 2024, each for 4 marks. Questions requiring candidates to explain, using a variety of cognitive verbs, ranged from 38 marks in 2022 to 34 marks in 2023 and 36 marks in

2024. Despite the variation in verbs, these questions required similar responses, which introduces an unacceptable degree of predictability in the cognitive demand. Short-answer questions were consistently allocated 8 marks across all three years, while essay writing skills were assessed for 40 marks each year. The level of difficulty and cognitive demand weighting remained constant across the three years for all questioning techniques. Section A questions were easy, with a Level 1 cognitive weighting, and the short-answer questions were also easy, with low cognitive demand. Scenario-based questions, calculations, and essay-type questions were rated as moderately difficult, requiring middle-order thinking skills.

This consistency in question types, difficulty levels, and cognitive distribution indicates acceptable structural predictability, which supports fairness and alignment with the CAPS. However, the similarity in responses to questions using different cognitive verbs reflects unacceptable predictability in cognitive reliability, limiting differentiation in skill assessment.

To reduce this predictability, the panel should ensure that variations in cognitive verbs correspond to differences in expected responses and cognitive demand. Additionally, introducing greater diversity in question formats and integrating higher-order skills, such as evaluation and analysis, will enhance rigour while maintaining fairness and compliance with the CAPS.

e. Topic and skill pairing

The findings provide evidence that an examination of the assessment structure across topics reveals a moderate degree of predictability in the skills tested, with some variation observed within sub-topics over the three-year period. For the sub-topic Management and Leadership, the skills assessed (comprehension, identification, interpretation, application, and explanation) remained consistent across all years, indicating high predictability. Essay writing was additionally required in 2022, introducing minor variation.

In Investment: Securities, the core skills (comprehension, identification, interpretation, application, and explanation) were consistently assessed in 2022 and 2023. However, calculations were included in 2022, while essay writing was introduced in 2024, reflecting moderate variation. Similarly, Investment: Insurance demonstrated high predictability, with the same core skills assessed across all years, supplemented by calculations in 2024.

The sub-topic Forms of Ownership exhibited greater variation: in 2022 and 2024, comprehension and explanation were required, but identification and application were added in 2024. For Presentation and Data Response, the skills assessed shifted notably: in 2022, a comprehensive set of skills (comprehension, identification, interpretation, application, and explanation) was tested; in 2023, the focus narrowed to comprehension, explanation, and essay writing; and in 2024, only comprehension, identification, and explanation were required. This indicates a significant reduction in skill diversity over time.

High predictability was observed in the subtopics Management and Leadership and Investment: Insurance, whilst moderate predictability was apparent in Investment: Securities. Low predictability was observed in the subtopics Forms of Ownership, Presentation, and Data Response.

To eliminate unacceptable predictability: ensure comprehensive skill development, and introduce greater variation in questioning techniques for highly predictable sub-topics, such as Management and Leadership and Investment: Insurance. This may include integrating essay writing, problem-solving, or scenario-based questions.

The current variation should be maintained in the questioning techniques, while ensuring alignment with the learning outcomes. For sub-topics with low predictability, consider stabilising core skills while allowing controlled variation to prevent inconsistencies.

f. Scenario framing of items for a topic

The patterns observed show that in 2022, the assessment incorporated a brief, one-sentence scenario requiring candidates to calculate the interest rate. A subsequent question primarily tested recall, asking candidates to discuss the impact of fixed deposits. Another scenario-based item required identifying a type of compulsory insurance and explaining an alternative type. In 2023, scenarios were framed around leadership styles, factors influencing investment decisions, and insurable risks. The 2024 examination included a scenario requiring the identification of an insurance clause and a calculation of compensation. A second scenario-based question assessed the identification of a leadership theory and an explanation of an alternative theory. The final scenario-based question involved identifying visual aids and suggesting improvements, although the latter task was not directly related to the scenario.

The scenarios demonstrated moderate variation across subtopics and years. In 2022, scenarios were brief and primarily focused on financial calculations and insurance concepts. In 2023, the contextual framing shifted toward leadership and investment decision-making, introducing broader managerial contexts. By 2024, scenarios incorporated both technical (insurance clause and compensation calculation) and managerial elements (leadership theories), as well as presentation-related tasks. However, the depth and complexity of scenarios remained relatively limited, with some tasks (e.g., visual aid improvement) loosely connected to the scenario context.

The contextual framing of questions is moderately predictable. While the subtopics of securities, insurance, and leadership recur consistently, the specific real-life contexts and scenario complexity vary annually. For example, insurance-related scenarios appeared in all three years, but the nature of tasks evolved from identification and explanation (2022) to clause interpretation and calculation (2024). Leadership contexts were introduced in 2023 and maintained in 2024, suggesting emerging predictability in managerial themes. However, the inclusion of presentation-related questions in 2024 indicates occasional unpredictability.

Thematic consistency should be maintained while ensuring variation in scenario complexity and task requirements. This can be achieved by embedding authentic, real-world contexts that reflect current industry practices, while preserving alignment with curriculum objectives.

Table 3.1.4 below summarises the analysis conducted to determine the level of predictability for the Business Roles topic in DBE Business Studies examinations from 2022 to 2024.

Table 3.1.4: Findings on the Predictability of the Business Roles Topic for the DBE Business Studies Examinations from 2022–2024

Topic: Business Roles							
Year	**Topic examined (✓) or not examined (X)**	**Content area/subtopics covered, including mark allocation**	**Overall weighting of the topic in marks**	**Item type/types (e.g., MCQ, essays, short answers, table, etc.) and marks allocated per content area/subtopic**	**Level of difficulty per item type used to examine the subtopic**	**Cognitive level per item type used to examine the subtopic**	**Skill assessed per subtopic**
2022		Subtopic 1: Ethics and Professionalism (16 marks)	114	Subtopic 1: Ethics and Professionalism	Subtopic 1: Ethics and Professionalism	Subtopic 1: Ethics and Professionalism	Subtopic 1: Ethics and Professionalism

				Choose the correct word (4) Scenario with table (6) Paragraphs (6)	Choose the correct word – Level 1 Scenario with table – Levels 1 & 2 Paragraphs – Level 2	Choose the correct word – Level 1 Scenario with table – Levels 1 & 2 Paragraphs – Level 3	Comprehension Identification, Application, Interpretation, Explanation
		Subtopic 2: Creative Thinking and Problem Solving (46 marks)		Subtopic 2: Creative Thinking and Problem Solving Paragraphs (6) Essay-type questions (40)	Subtopic 2: Creative Thinking and Problem Solving Paragraphs – Level 2 Essay-type questions – Level 2	Subtopic 2: Creative Thinking and Problem Solving Paragraphs – Level 2 Essay-type questions – Levels 2 & 3	Subtopic 2: Creative Thinking and Problem Solving Comprehension Explanation, Writing of essay
		Subtopic 3: Social Responsibility and Corporate		Subtopic 3: Social Responsibility	Subtopic 3: Social Responsibility and Corporate Citizenship	Subtopic 3: Social Responsibility	Subtopic 3: Social Responsibility

		Citizenship (12 marks)		and Corporate Citizenship Matching items (2) Short answers (4) Paragraphs (6)	Matching items – Level 1 Short answers – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 2	and Corporate Citizenship Matching items – Level 1 Short answers – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 2	and Corporate Citizenship Comprehension Explanation
		Subtopic 4: Human Rights, Inclusivity and Environmental Issues (22 marks)		Subtopic 4: Human Rights, Inclusivity and Environmental Issues MCQ (2) Choose the correct word (2) Short answers (4) Paragraphs (14)	Subtopic 4: Human Rights, Inclusivity and Environmental Issues MCQ – Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1 Short answers – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 2	Subtopic 4: Human Rights, Inclusivity and Environmental Issues MCQ – Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1 Short answers – Level 1	Subtopic 4: Human Rights, Inclusivity and Environmental Issues Comprehension Explanation

						Paragraphs – Level 2	
		Subtopic 5: Team Performance and Conflict Management (18 marks)		Subtopic 5: Team Performance and Conflict Management MCQ (2) Matching items (2) Scenarios (14)	Subtopic 5: Team Performance and Conflict Management MCQ – Level 1 Matching items – Level 1 Scenarios – Levels 1 & 2	Subtopic 5: Team Performance and Conflict Management MCQ – Level 1 Matching items – Level 1 Scenarios – 1 & 2	Subtopic 5: Team Performance and Conflict Management Comprehension Identification, Application, Interpretation, Explanation
2023		Subtopic 1: Ethics and Professionalism (18 marks)	116	MCQ (2) Choose the correct word (2) Paragraphs (14)	MCQ – Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 2	MCQ – Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1 Paragraphs – Levels 2 & 3	Comprehension Explanation
		Subtopic 2: Creative Thinking and		Subtopic 2: Creative	Subtopic 2: Creative Thinking	Subtopic 2: Creative	Subtopic 2: Creative Thinking

		Problem Solving (18 marks)		Thinking and Problem Solving Choose the correct word (2) Matching items (2) Scenarios (6) Short answers (2) Paragraphs (6)	and Problem Solving Choose the correct word – Level 1 Matching items – Level 1 Scenarios – Levels 1 & 2 Short answers – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 2	Thinking and Problem Solving Choose the correct word – Level 1 Matching items – Level 1 Scenarios – Levels 1 & 2 Short answers – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 2	and Problem Solving Comprehension Identification, Application, Interpretation, Explanation
		Subtopic 3: Social Responsibility and Corporate Citizenship (12 marks)		Subtopic 3: Social Responsibility and Corporate Citizenship Scenarios (6) Paragraphs (6)	Subtopic 3: Social Responsibility and Corporate Citizenship Scenarios – Levels 1 & 2	Subtopic 3: Social Responsibility and Corporate Citizenship Scenarios – Levels 1 & 2	Subtopic 3: Social Responsibility and Corporate Citizenship Comprehension Identification,

					Paragraphs – Level 2	Paragraphs – Level 2	Application, Interpretation, Explanation
		Subtopic 4: Human Rights, Inclusivity and Environmental Issues (18 marks)		Subtopic 4: Human Rights, Inclusivity and Environmental Issues MCQ (2) Matching items (2) Scenarios (6) Paragraphs (8)	Subtopic 4: Human Rights, Inclusivity and Environmental Issues MCQ – Level 1 Matching items – Level 1 Scenarios – Levels 1 & 2 Paragraphs – Level 2	Subtopic 4: Human Rights, Inclusivity and Environmental Issues MCQ – Level 1 Matching items – Level 1 Scenarios – Levels 1 & 2 Paragraphs – Level 3	Subtopic 4: Human Rights, Inclusivity and Environmental Issues Comprehension Identification, Application, Explanation
		Subtopic 5: Team Performance and Conflict Management (50 marks)		Subtopic 5: Team Performance and Conflict Management	Subtopic 5: Team Performance and Conflict Management	Subtopic 5: Team Performance and Conflict Management	Subtopic 5: Team Performance and Conflict Management Comprehension

				Choose the correct word (2) Matching items (2) Paragraphs (6) Essay-type questions (40)	Choose the correct word – Level 1 Matching items – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 2 Essay-type questions – Level 2	Choose the correct word – Level 1 Matching items – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 2 Essay-type questions – Levels 2 & 3	Explanation, Writing of essay
2024		Subtopic 1: Ethics and Professionalism (14 marks)	116	Subtopic 1: Ethics and Professionalism MCQ (2) Matching items (2) Scenarios (6) Paragraphs (4)	Subtopic 1: Ethics and Professionalism MCQ – Level 1 Matching items – Level 1 Scenarios – Levels 1 & 2 Paragraphs – Level 2	Subtopic 1: Ethics and Professionalism MCQ – Level 1 Matching items – Level 1 Scenarios – Levels 1 & 2 Paragraphs – Level 3	Subtopic 1: Ethics and Professionalism Comprehension Identification, Application, Explanation

		Subtopic 2: Creative Thinking and Problem Solving (12 marks)		Subtopic 2: Creative Thinking and Problem Solving Matching items (2) Short answers (4) Paragraphs (6)	Subtopic 2: Creative Thinking and Problem Solving Matching items – Level 1 Short answers – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 2	Subtopic 2: Creative Thinking and Problem Solving Matching items – Level 1 Short answers – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 3	Subtopic 2: Creative Thinking and Problem Solving Comprehension Explanation
		Subtopic 3: Social Responsibility and Corporate Citizenship (48 marks)		Subtopic 3: Social Responsibility and Corporate Citizenship Short answers (2) Paragraphs (6) Essay-type questions (40)	Subtopic 3: Social Responsibility and Corporate Citizenship Short answers – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 2 Essay-type questions – Level 2	Subtopic 3: Social Responsibility and Corporate Citizenship Short answers – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 2	Subtopic 3: Social Responsibility and Corporate Citizenship Comprehension Explanation, Writing of essay

						Essay-type questions – Levels 2 & 3	
		Subtopic 4: Human Rights, Inclusivity and Environmental Issues (22 marks)		Subtopic 4: Human Rights, Inclusivity and Environmental Issues MCQ (2) Choose the correct word (2) Scenarios (6) Paragraphs (12)	Subtopic 4: Human Rights, Inclusivity and Environmental Issues MCQ – Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1 Scenarios – Levels 1 & 2 Paragraphs – Level 2	Subtopic 4: Human Rights, Inclusivity and Environmental Issues MCQ – Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1 Scenarios – Levels 1& 2 Paragraphs – Levels 2 & 3	Subtopic 4: Human Rights, Inclusivity and Environmental Issues Comprehension Identification, Application, Interpretation, Explanation
		Subtopic 5: Team Performance and Conflict		Subtopic 5: Team Performance and Conflict Management	Subtopic 5: Team Performance and Conflict Management	Subtopic 5: Team Performance and Conflict Management	Subtopic 5: Team Performance and Conflict Management

		Management (20 marks)		MCQ (2) Choose the correct word (2) Matching items (2) Scenarios (8) Paragraphs (6)	MCQ – Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1 Matching items – Level 1 Scenarios – Levels 1 & 2 Paragraphs – Level 2	MCQ – Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1 Matching items – Level 1 Scenarios – Levels 1 & 2 Paragraphs – Level 2	Comprehension Identification, Application, Explanation

Table 3.1.4 presents a comparative overview of the Business Roles topic across the three-year period. The analysis, presented in Sections a to f, evaluates whether the components reflected in Table 3.1.4 have contributed to the predictability of the DBE Business Studies' final examination question papers from 2022 to 2024.

a. Topic coverage

The findings indicate that, in line with the CAPS, at least 25% of the total marks in any Business Studies examination must be allocated to the core topic, Business Roles. Historical data confirms consistent compliance with this requirement, as the topic accounted for 25% of the examination in 2023 and 2024, with a minor deviation in 2022. This trend demonstrates acceptable predictability and alignment with the CAPS guidelines, ensuring both stability and adherence in assessment practices. To maintain this level of

consistency and compliance, it is recommended that a checklist be integrated into the paper-setting and moderation process to verify adherence prior to final approval.

b. Content coverage

The findings show that the main topic, Business Roles, comprises five subtopics. A review of the 2022, 2023, and 2024 examination papers reveals the following trends:

- Ethics and Professionalism: The question of ways to conduct professional, responsible, ethical, and effective business practices appeared twice, in 2022 and 2024;
- Creative Thinking and Problem Solving: Questions on creating an environment that promotes creative thinking and the advantages of creative thinking were assessed in two of the three years, using different cognitive verbs;
- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): The impact of CSR on communities was assessed across all three years, while ways businesses can contribute time and effort to improve employee well-being appeared in 2023 and 2024;
- Human Rights, Inclusivity, and Environmental Issues: The role of health and safety representatives appeared in 2022 and 2024, using different cognitive verbs but expecting the same response. Human rights in the workplace were assessed in 2022 and 2024, though with different question types; and
- Team Performance and Conflict Management: Steps in handling conflict were tested in 2022 and 2024, while stages of team development appeared in various formats across all three years.

The assessment of Business Roles demonstrates consistent coverage of content, as several core concepts recur across years. However, the observed predictability in cognitive complexity is reduced due to variations in cognitive verbs and question phrasing. In cases where different verbs are used but the same response is expected, content predictability remains strong, but the intended differentiation in cognitive consistency is not fully achieved.

This should be maintained; the panel should strive to make it less pronounced by varying question phrasing and cognitive verbs to enhance cognitive rigour. Core curriculum concepts should remain consistent, but expected responses must align with the cognitive demands of the verbs used.

c. Weighting of the topic

The analysis reveals that the mark allocation for the main topic, Business Roles, remained consistent across the three years, aligning with the CAPS requirements. However, the distribution of marks among subtopics varied significantly:

- Ethics and Professionalism: 16 marks (2022), 18 marks (2023), and 14 marks (2024);
- Creative Thinking and Problem Solving: 46 marks (2022), 18 marks (2023), and 12 marks (2024);
- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): 12 marks (2022), 12 marks (2023), and 48 marks (2024);
- Human Rights, Inclusivity and Environmental Issues: 22 marks (2022), 18 marks (2023), and 22 marks (2024); and
- Team Performance and Conflict Management: 18 marks (2022), 50 marks (2023), and 20 marks (2024).

The consistency in overall mark allocation for the main topic suggests a predictable emphasis aligned with the CAPS. However, the variation in subtopic mark allocation introduces an element of unpredictability, which encourages comprehensive preparation and should be maintained in future assessments.

This should be maintained; the panel should strive to make it less pronounced by continuing to vary mark allocation among subtopics and adjusting question phrasing and cognitive verbs to enhance cognitive reliability.

d. Variation in item types

The evaluation indicates that the types of questions used to assess Business Roles remained consistent across the three years. Section A included MCQs, "choose the correct word", and matching columns, with the number of questions for Business Roles varying between two and three, totalling 14 or 16 marks across the three years. Scenario-based questions were consistently three per year, with mark allocations ranging from 6 to 8. Questions requiring candidates to explain, discuss, or recommend remained constant at six per year, although the mark allocation for these questions varied between four and six marks. In Section B, no question exceeded six marks, and the allocation for essay-type questions remained consistent at one per year, worth 40 marks. The level of difficulty for these question types remained stable across the three years, and the cognitive distribution was constant. Furthermore, the trend of similar responses for middle- and higher-order verbs persisted throughout the period. The format of the questions followed a predictable structure, beginning with a "name or list" question, followed by "outline", then a scenario, and concluding with "explain", "discuss", or "recommend".

This consistency in question types, cognitive distribution, and format indicates acceptable predictability in assessment structure. While this predictability supports fairness and reliability, it may limit opportunities for innovation and differentiation in cognitive demand. Therefore, while acceptable predictability is observed and should be maintained, the panel should strive to reduce its prominence by introducing subtle variations in question sequencing and by integrating more diverse cognitive verbs. This approach will enhance cognitive reliability while preserving alignment with the CAPS and overall fairness.

e. Topic and skill pairing

The findings provide evidence that the skills assessed in the subtopic Ethics and Professionalism were consistently comprehended and explained across all three years. Identification and application were assessed in 2022 and 2024, while interpretation was only assessed in 2022. Similarly, for Creative Thinking and Problem Solving, comprehension and explanation occurred in all three years. In

contrast, essay writing was assessed only in 2022, and identification, application, and interpretation were assessed only in 2023. In the subtopic Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), comprehension and explanation were assessed across all three years, while essay writing was assessed only in 2024.

Identification, interpretation, and application were limited to 2023. For Human Rights, Inclusivity and Environmental Issues, comprehension and explanation were required in 2022, while all five skills (comprehension, identification, application, interpretation, and explanation) were assessed in 2023 and 2024. In Team Performance and Conflict Management, comprehension and explanation were assessed across all three years; essay writing appeared only in 2023; identification and application were assessed in 2022 and 2024, and interpretation was limited to 2022.

It is evident that when essay writing is required within a subtopic, only comprehension and explanation questions are assessed in Section B. Interpretation questions are restricted to Section B and occur only when scenarios are used as a questioning technique. Although the analysis shows variation in skill-to-subtopic pairing across the three years, the overall skill demand for the topic is predictable because only certain skills are assessed in a Business Studies question paper. However, the predictability of which skills are assessed per subtopic remains low, introducing an element of unpredictability that should be maintained to encourage comprehensive preparation.

The analysis of skills assessed across the three years reveals a consistent emphasis on comprehension and explanation within all subtopics, indicating these as foundational skills in Business Studies assessment. Essay writing skills were assessed selectively, appearing only once per subtopic, and in different years, which suggests their use as a higher-order evaluation tool rather than a recurring requirement. Identification, application, and interpretation skills were assessed inconsistently, often limited to specific years and

question types, particularly scenario-based questions. Interpretation, in particular, was restricted to Section B questions involving scenarios, reinforcing its role in testing analytical ability.

Although the pairing of skills with subtopics varied across the three years, the overall skill demand for the subject remains predictable, as only a defined set of skills, i.e. comprehension, explanation, identification, application, interpretation, and essay writing, were assessed in Business Studies. However, the predictability of which skills will be assessed within each subtopic is low, introducing an element of unpredictability that encourages comprehensive preparation and prevents rote learning. This balance between predictable skill sets and unpredictable skill-subtopic pairing is pedagogically sound and should be maintained to promote deeper understanding and adaptability among learners.

While the overall skill demand in Business Studies remains predictable, the panel should maintain the current variation in skill-to-subtopic pairing to encourage comprehensive preparation and prevent rote learning. However, greater alignment between question types and targeted skills, particularly for higher-order skills such as interpretation and application, should be ensured. Introducing these skills more consistently across subtopics, rather than restricting them to specific years or question formats, will enhance cognitive reliability while preserving fairness and compliance with the CAPS.

f. Scenario framing of items for a topic

The patterns observed show that, across the three years, three scenario-based questions were consistently included in the Business Roles section. In 2022, these questions assessed the steps in handling conflict, unethical business practices, and stages of team development. The 2023 paper focused on diversity issues, employee well-being, and problem-solving techniques, while the 2024 paper assessed unprofessional business practices, stages of team development, and human rights in the workplace. Except for the repetition of stages of team development in 2022 and 2024, all other scenario-based questions addressed different topics.

However, there is a high degree of predictability in the contextual framing of these questions, as candidates are consistently required to identify content from the scenario, even though the wording varies slightly (e.g., "identify", "name", or "quote"). Furthermore, all scenario-based questions follow the same structure, consisting of only two sub-questions, and the mark allocation remains within a narrow range of six to eight marks. This uniformity in question format and structure introduces unacceptable predictability, as candidates can anticipate the question type and structure regardless of the topic being assessed.

To reduce this predictability, the panel should introduce greater variation in the structure and cognitive demand of scenario-based questions. This could include increasing the number of sub-questions, diversifying the verbs used beyond simple identification, and incorporating higher-order skills, such as analysis or evaluation.

Summary of findings and recommendations for the DBE Business Studies Papers 1 and 2

Table 3.1.5 below summarises identified patterns of predictability across key components of question paper design, along with corresponding recommendations to reduce predictability and strategies to maintain effective assessment practices, without compromising variability.

Table 3.1.5: Summary of Findings and Recommendations on the Predictability of 2022–2024 DBE Business Studies Final Examination Papers (1& 2)

Identified unacceptable predictability in topic coverage
In alignment with the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), a minimum of 25% of the total marks in Business Studies examinations must be allocated to each main topic: Business Environments, Business Operations, Business Ventures, and Business

Roles. Historical data confirms consistent adherence to this requirement, with only minor deviations across the three-year period. Consequently, no evidence of unacceptable predictability in topic coverage was found.
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability in topic coverage
To sustain this level of predictability, ongoing compliance monitoring should be put in place to ensure equitable mark allocation across topics. Additionally, examiner training should reinforce the CAPS-aligned weighting practices.
Identified unacceptable predictability in content coverage
An analysis of assessment content over the three-year period indicates that certain topics were examined with notable consistency. For instance, in Examination Paper 1 under Business Environments, recurring items included provisions of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA), Porter's Five Forces Model, PESTLE analysis, defensive strategies, and steps in strategy evaluation. Similarly, within Business Operations, aspects of employment contracts and strategies for reducing the cost of quality through Total Quality Management (TQM) appeared repeatedly. In Examination Paper 2, topics such as factors influencing investment decisions, the functions of the JSE, the advantages of insurance, and strategies for managing feedback during presentations were consistently assessed under the Business Ventures section. Furthermore, in Business Roles, the stages of team development were examined across all three years, using varied item types.
Recommendations to avoid predictable content coverage
Broaden the range of topics assessed within each main topic to reduce predictability and encourage comprehensive curriculum coverage. Implement a structured rotation system for frequently tested topics, to maintain fairness while minimising rote preparation. Incorporate higher-order cognitive demands and scenario-based questions to differentiate skill levels and improve assessment validity. Conduct audits of question papers to identify patterns of repetition and introduce new contexts and applications. Strengthen Moderation Processes.
Strategies to maintain content coverage that do not lead to a predictable question paper

Develop a rotation plan for frequently assessed topics to avoid over-representation. Ensure that all subtopics within each main topic receive coverage over time.
Identified unacceptable predictability in topic weighting
While the overall weighting of main topics adhered to the CAPS requirements, analysis reveals a misalignment in the representation of subtopics within them. Specifically, the inclusion of essay questions within certain subtopics resulted in disproportionate weighting for those subtopics in a given year, thereby limiting the representation of other subtopics in the same paper. For example, in Examination Paper 1, Business Environments allocated 68 marks to Legislation in 2022 and 74 marks in 2024, while Business Strategies received 63 marks in 2023. Similarly, in Business Operations, Human Resources was allocated 76 marks in 2024, whereas Quality of Performance consistently received 76 marks in 2022 and 2023. In Examination Paper 2, Business Ventures allocated 48 marks to Management and Leadership in 2022, 50 marks to Investment: Securities in 2024, and 44 marks to Presentation and Data Response in 2023. Likewise, in Business Roles, Creative Thinking and Problem Solving received 46 marks in 2022, Team Performance and Conflict Management received 50 marks in 2023, and CSR received 48 marks in 2024.
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability in topic weighting
Introduce clear parameters for maximum and minimum marks per subtopic to prevent disproportionate allocations. Design essay questions that draw on two or more subtopics within a main topic to promote balanced representation. Develop a Subtopic Rotation Framework and rotate essay questions among subtopics annually to ensure equitable coverage over time. Use historical analysis to track trends in subtopic representation and adjust future papers to maintain balance.
Strategies to maintain topic weighting that do not lead to a predictable question paper
While acceptable predictability is observed and should be maintained, the panel should strive to reduce it by continuing to vary mark allocation across subtopics and by adjusting question phrasing and cognitive verbs to enhance cognitive reliability.
Identified unacceptable predictability on item types

Findings indicate that structural consistency in question types, difficulty levels, and cognitive distribution ensures acceptable predictability, supporting fairness and compliance with the CAPS. However, the convergence of responses to items using varied cognitive verbs is insufficient, thereby constraining the assessment's capacity to differentiate higher-order skills and limiting its validity for skill-based evaluation.
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability on item types
Review and refine the use of cognitive verbs to ensure they elicit distinct cognitive answers, rather than similar responses. Incorporate clear descriptors to differentiate between levels of analysis, evaluation, and application. Revise the scenario-based and problem-solving questions to require synthesis and evaluation. Develop a framework for mapping cognitive verbs to specific skills and expected responses, and train examiners to avoid overlap in cognitive demand across different questions.
Strategies to maintain the assessment of item types that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Continue ensuring balanced coverage of main topics and compliance with the CAPS mark allocation. Maintain consistency in question types and difficulty levels to support fairness. Introduce variation in cognitive demand, without altering structural predictability. Use a combination of familiar and fresh contexts to prevent rote memorisation while maintaining alignment with the CAPS. Maintain the predictable distribution of item types (e.g., essays, short answers, multiple-choice) across papers.
Identified unacceptable predictability on topic–skill pairing
The structure of Section B and the essay questions indicate a moderate to high level of predictability, particularly in the sequencing of questions and the cognitive demand. While variation in topics reduces complete predictability, the consistent placement of application questions and the fixed essay structure enable candidates to anticipate the format and required skills.
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability through topic–skill pairing
It is recommended that the examination panel rotate the position of application-based questions within Section B to reduce structural predictability and to vary the sequence and types of cognitive verbs to encourage higher-order thinking.
Strategies to maintain topic–skill pairing that do not lead to a predictable question paper

Continue changing topics annually to preserve fairness and reduce rote preparation. Share general expectations regarding cognitive levels and item types, while avoiding disclosure of fixed sequences.
Identified unacceptable predictability in the scenario framing of items
The examination papers exhibit a moderate to high level of predictability in terms of question structure and cognitive progression. While the specific topics varied across years, the underlying question patterns remained consistent. Moreover, the question framing followed a predictable sequence: the initial task required candidates to identify, quote, or name a concept, followed by higher-order tasks such as explaining, describing, discussing, or providing recommendations. This recurring structure enables candidates to anticipate the format and cognitive demand, even when content changes introduce some variability.
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability in scenario framing of items.
To reduce excessive predictability while maintaining fairness and compliance with the CAPS, it is recommended that question sequencing be varied, that cognitive verbs be diversified, and that integrated question formats be introduced to combine multiple skills. Additionally, expanding contextual variety through different real-world scenarios and providing transparent guidelines without revealing fixed patterns will help balance predictability with rigour and authenticity.
Strategies to maintain scenario framing of items that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Continue using a clear progression from lower-order to higher-order cognitive tasks. Ensure that each question reflects a balanced cognitive progression, without abrupt shifts in complexity. Keep consistent mark allocation across main topics and subtopics to avoid disproportionate emphasis. Continue integrating higher-order questions after assessing foundational knowledge. Use historical data analysis to monitor trends and maintain acceptable levels of predictability.

Conclusions

Although Examination Paper 1 demonstrated acceptable predictability in the main topic, Business Environment, the main topic of Business Operations exhibited unacceptable predictability in shifts in essay focus, which may compromise the reliability of assessment outcomes and raise concerns about fairness. Although the skills assessed aligned with CAPS requirements, this alignment may introduce unacceptable predictability, as candidates could anticipate which skills would be tested.

Examination Paper 2 demonstrates unacceptable predictability, with the consistent recurrence of core concepts, while variation in cognitive verbs introduces differing cognitive demands, slightly reducing question predictability. While the assessed skills align with the CAPS requirements, this alignment may inadvertently create unacceptable predictability, enabling candidates to anticipate the skills being tested.

In conclusion, although acceptable predictability was evident in topic coverage, weighting, and topic-skill alignment, a limited degree of unacceptable predictability emerged in content coverage, item-type variation, and scenario framing. Overall, this does not make the 2022, 2023, and 2024 Business Studies final examinations predictable.

However, there is a need to mitigate the observed unacceptable predictability through ensuring that future assessments incorporate greater diversity in content representation, expand the range of item types, and employ varied scenario contexts. This approach will enhance cognitive differentiation, reduce rote anticipation, and strengthen the validity of skills-based evaluation.

3.2: BUSINESS STUDIES PAPER 1

This section presents an analysis of the IEB final examination question papers for Business Studies Paper 1 from 2022 to 2024. The findings for each topic are summarised in Tables 3.2.1–3.2.5.

Table 3.2.1 below summarises the analysis conducted to determine the level of predictability for the Business Environment topic in IEB Business Studies examinations from 2022 to 2024.

Table 3.2.1: Findings on the Predictability of the Business Environment Topic for the IEB Business Studies Examinations from 2022–2024

Topic: Business Environment							
Year	**Topic examined (✓) or not examined (X)**	**Content area/subtopics covered, including mark allocation**	**Overall weighting of the topic in marks**	**Item type/types (e.g., MCQ, essays, short answers, table, etc.) and marks allocated per content area/subtopic**	**Level of difficulty per item type used to examine the subtopic**	**Cognitive level per item type used to examine the subtopic**	**Skill assessed per subtopic**
2022		Subtopic 1: Business Environments	Overall mark: (102)	Subtopic 1: Business Environments	Subtopic 1: Business Environments	Subtopic 1: Business Environments	Subtopic 1: Business Environments

		(50)		MCQ (15) Choose the correct answer (6) Short answer questions (5) Paragraph (24)	• MCQ – Levels 1 & 2 • Choose the correct answer – Level 1 • Short answer questions – Level 1 • Paragraphs – Levels 1 & 2	• MCQ – Levels 1 & 2 • Choose the correct answer – Level 1 • Short answer questions – Level 1 • Paragraphs – Levels 2 & 3	Comprehension, Application, Explanation
		Subtopic 2: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) (26)		Subtopic 2: Corporate Social Responsibility MCQ (3) Choose the correct word (2) Short answer questions (9) Paragraphs (12)	Subtopic 2: Corporate Social Responsibility MCQ – Levels 1 & 2 Choose the correct answer – Level 1 Short answers –	Subtopic 2: Corporate Social Responsibility MCQ – Levels 1 & 2 Choose the correct answer – Level 1 Short answers –	Subtopic 2: Corporate Social Responsibility Comprehension, Explanation

					Level 1, Paragraphs – Level 2	Level 1, Paragraphs – Levels 2 & 3	
		Subtopic 3: Legislation in the Business Environment (Legislation) (26)		Subtopic 3: Legislation in the Business Environment Choose the correct word (2) Interpretation of statements (24)	Subtopic 3: Legislation in the Business Environment Choose the correct answer – Level 1 Interpretation of statements – Level 2	Subtopic 3: Legislation in the Business Environment Choose the correct answer – Level 1 Interpretation of statements – Levels 1 & 2	Subtopic 3: Legislation in the Business Environment Comprehension Identification, Application, Interpretation
2023		Subtopic 1: Business Environments (83)	Overall mark: (118)	Subtopic 1: Business Environments MCQ (2) Interpretation of statements (40) Short answer questions (9)	Subtopic 1: Business Environments MCQ – Level 1, Interpretation of statements – Level 2	Subtopic 1: Business Environments MCQ – Level 1, Interpretation of statements – Level 1	Subtopic 1: Business Environments Comprehension, Identification, Explanation

				Paragraphs (32)	Short answers - Level 1, Paragraphs – Levels 1 & 2	Short answers - Level 1, Paragraphs Levels 2 & 3	Application and Interpretation
		Subtopic 2: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) (17)		Subtopic 2: Corporate Social Responsibility Short answer questions (8) Paragraphs (9)	Subtopic 2: Corporate Social Responsibility Short answers – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 2	Subtopic 2: Corporate Social Responsibility Short answers – Level 1, Paragraphs – Level 3	Subtopic 2: Corporate Social Responsibility Comprehension, Explanation
		Subtopic 3: Legislation in the Business Environment (18)		Subtopic 3: Legislation in the Business Environment MCQ (2) Short answer questions (4) Paragraphs (12)	Subtopic 3: Legislation in the Business Environment MCQ – Level 1 Short answers – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 2	Subtopic 3: Legislation in the Business Environment MCQ – Level 1, Short answers – Level 1 Paragraphs – Levels 2 & 3	Subtopic 3: Legislation in the Business Environment Comprehension, Explanation

2024		Subtopic 1: Business Environments (64)	Overall mark: (86)	Subtopic 1: Business Environments MCQ (12) Short answer questions (2) Paragraphs (21) Essay (25)	Subtopic 1: Business Environments MCQ – Level 1, Short answers – Level 1, Paragraphs – Level 2	Subtopic 1: Business Environments MCQ – Level 1, Short answers – Level 1, Paragraphs – Levels 2 & 3	Subtopic 1: Business Environments Comprehension Identification, Explanation, Application, Interpretation, Writing of essay
		Subtopic 2: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) (10)		Subtopic 2: Corporate Social Responsibility MCQ (4) Paragraphs (6)	Subtopic 2: Corporate Social Responsibility MCQ – Level 1, Paragraphs – Level 2	Subtopic 2: Corporate Social Responsibility MCQ – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 2	Subtopic 2: Corporate Social Responsibility Comprehension, Explanation
		Subtopic 3: Legislation in the Business Environment		Subtopic 3: Legislation in the Business Environment	Subtopic 3: Legislation in the Business Environment	Subtopic 3: Legislation in the Business Environment	Subtopic 3: Legislation in the Business Environment

		(Legislation) (12)		MCQ (4) Choose the correct word (2) Interpretation of scenario Paragraph (6)	MCQ – Levels 1 & 2 Choose the correct answer – Level 1 Paragraph – Level 2	MCQ – Levels 1 & 2 Choose the correct answer – Level 1 Paragraph – Level 2	Comprehension, Explanation

Table 3.2.1 presents a comparative overview of the Business Environment topic across the three-year period. The analysis, presented in Sections a to f, evaluates whether the components reflected in Table 3.2.1 have contributed to the predictability of the IEB Business Studies' final examination question papers from 2022 to 2024.

a. Topic coverage

The findings indicate that the main topic, Business Environments, has demonstrated fluctuating representation in examination papers over the past three years. According to the CAPS, the main topic, Business Environments, should carry a weighting of 25%. However, the actual weightings in examination papers were 34% in 2022, 39% in 2023, and 27% in 2024, all exceeding the prescribed allocation, except for 2024, which was slightly above the guideline. This indicates a lack of alignment with the CAPS and contributes to the unacceptable predictability at the topic level. From a predictability perspective, the overall weighting of the main topic has varied considerably, indicating low predictability regarding its prominence across years.

The examination panel should align the weighting of Business Environments with the CAPS requirement of 25%, as the current allocations (34%, 39%, and 27%) exceed the prescribed guideline and do not provide acceptable predictability. Standardising the weighting will improve curriculum compliance, ensure fairness, and the reliability of the examinations.

b. Content coverage

The findings show that this topic comprises three subtopics: Business Environment, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), and Legislation in the Business Environment. An analysis of subtopics reveals a clear trend. In 2022, the allocation was slightly unbalanced, with Business Environment contributing 50%, Corporate Social Responsibility contributing 25%, and Legislation in the Business Environment contributing 25%. However, in 2023, the weighting shifted significantly, with Business Environment increasing to 70%, while Corporate Social Responsibility and Legislation in the Business Environment declined to 14% and 16%, respectively. A similar pattern persisted in 2024, with Business Environment dominating at 74%, and Corporate Social Responsibility and Legislation in the Business Environment further decreasing to 12% and 14%, respectively.

The subtopic distribution exhibits a consistent trend: Business Environment has become increasingly dominant, suggesting high predictability of its significance in future assessments. In contrast, Corporate Social Responsibility and Legislation in the Business Environment have shown a steady decline, making their future emphasis less certain and therefore less predictable.

While maintaining the prominence of the Business Environment subtopic, the examination panel should review and stabilise the allocations for Corporate Social Responsibility and Legislation within it. The current variability in their weightings creates an uneven, and potentially unfair distribution of marks within the main topic. Greater consistency will ensure balanced coverage, improve acceptable predictability, and align assessments with principles of fairness and curriculum intent.

c. Weighting of the topic

The analysis reveals that the distribution of subtopic marks showed a distinct trend over the three-year period. In 2022, the allocation was uneven: Business Environment contributed 50 marks, while Corporate Social Responsibility and Legislation in the Business Environment each accounted for 26 of the 102 marks assigned to the main topic. In 2023, this imbalance intensified as Business Environment rose to 83 out of 118, while Corporate Social Responsibility and Legislation in the Business Environment declined to 14 and 18, respectively. A similar pattern continued in 2024, with Business Environment dominating with 64 marks out of 86, and Corporate Social Responsibility and Legislation in the Business Environment further decreasing to 10 and 12 marks, respectively.

This trend indicates that Business Environment has become increasingly dominant, suggesting high predictability of its significance in future assessments. Conversely, Corporate Social Responsibility and Legislation in the Business Environment have shown a consistent decline, making their future emphasis uncertain and therefore less predictable. As the SAG does not specify weightings for these subtopics, it is recommended that the examination panel apply more balanced allocations to reduce unacceptable predictability and ensure equitable coverage of all subtopics.

d. Variation in item types

The evaluation indicates that the subtopic Business Environment shows significant variability in item types. MCQs fluctuated notably, with 15 marks in 2022, 2 in 2023, and 12 in 2024, indicating unacceptable predictability. "Choose the correct answer" appeared only in 2022, while short-answer questions varied from five marks in 2022 to nine in 2023 and dropped to two in 2024, further reflecting inconsistency. Paragraph-type questions were relatively stable, with 24 marks in 2022, 32 in 2023, and 21 in 2024, suggesting acceptable predictability. The introduction of interpretation questions for 40 marks in 2024 represents a sudden shift and a further indication of acceptable predictability.

For Corporate Social Responsibility, MCQs appeared only in 2022 and 2024, and "choose the correct answer" was available only in 2022. Short-answer questions showed moderate variation, with 9 marks in 2022 and 8 in 2023, while paragraph-type questions declined steadily from 12 in 2022 to 9 in 2023 and 6 in 2024, indicating reduced predictability.

Similarly, Legislation in the Business Environment exhibited inconsistent patterns: MCQs were present only in 2023 and 2024, short-answer questions appeared once in 2023, and paragraph-type questions decreased from 12 marks in 2023 to 6 in 2024. Interpretation questions for 24 marks were assessed only in 2022, reinforcing unpredictability.

Across the three years, the weighting for difficulty and cognitive level remained constant across all item types, indicating acceptable predictability in this respect. MCQs were consistently classified at difficulty Levels 1 and 2, but their cognitive demand was limited to Level 1, suggesting they primarily assessed basic recall. Similarly, "choose the correct word" questions were adjudged Level 1 for both difficulty and cognitive demand, reinforcing their low complexity. The interpretation of statements was assigned a difficulty Level of 2, yet its cognitive demand remained at Level 1, reflecting a mismatch between perceived difficulty and actual cognitive engagement. Paragraph-type questions demonstrated greater cognitive rigour, with difficulty Levels 1 and 2 and cognitive Levels 2 to 3, making them the most demanding item type in terms of higher-order thinking.

The examination panel should maintain consistency in difficulty and cognitive weighting, while also considering increasing the cognitive demand for item types such as interpretation and MCQs to better reflect the intended assessment objectives and promote higher-order thinking skills.

e. Topic and skill pairing

The findings provide evidence that the skills assessed in the subtopic, Business Environments, varied across the three years. In 2022, only comprehension, application, and explanation skills were tested, indicating a narrow focus. In contrast, the 2023 and 2024 papers assessed a broader range of skills, including comprehension, identification, explanation, application, and interpretation, with 2024 additionally incorporating essay writing skills. This expansion reflects a shift toward higher-order thinking, but also introduces a level of unpredictability, as the inclusion of essay writing was sudden and not evident in previous years.

For Corporate Social Responsibility, the skills tested remained constant across all three years, limited to comprehension and explanation, suggesting acceptable predictability, but a lack of cognitive diversity. Similarly, Legislation in the Business Environment consistently assessed comprehension and explanation, but in 2023, additional skills such as identification, application, and interpretation were introduced, creating variability and acceptable predictability. The examination panel should continue to vary the range of skills assessed across years to ensure fairness and alignment with curriculum objectives.

f. Scenario framing of items for a topic

The patterns observed show that scenario-based questions were included in the subtopic Corporate Social Responsibility across all three years. However, in most cases, the scenarios did not significantly influence candidates' responses; questions such as "Define the term sustainability as mentioned in the scenario", or "Define the term Corporate Governance", could have been asked without a scenario. This indicates that, while scenarios were present, their functional impact on assessment was minimal. In contrast, the 2023 examination introduced questions where responses were directly dependent on the scenario, for example: "State two responsibilities the directors of Spar will have to ensure that Spar achieves the group vision", reflecting a shift toward genuine application.

For the subtopic Legislation in the Business Environment, scenario-based questions appeared only in 2024, with two questions totalling 21 marks that required candidates to base their responses on the provided scenario. This sudden inclusion represents low predictability, as previous years did not feature scenario-dependent questions for this subtopic. The examination panel should ensure that scenario-based questions are consistently integrated across years and subtopics, with clear alignment to application and interpretation skills. Scenarios should meaningfully influence candidate responses, rather than serve as decorative context.

Table 3.2.2 below summarises the analysis conducted to determine the level of predictability for the Business Ventures topic in IEB Business Studies examinations from 2022 to 2024.

Table 3.2.2: Findings on the Predictability of the Business Environment Topic for the IEB Business Ventures Examinations from 2022–2024

Topic: Business Ventures							
Year	**Topic examined (✓) or not examined (X)**	**Content area/subtopics covered, including mark allocation**	**Overall weighting of the topic in marks**	**Item type/types (e.g., MCQ, essays, short answers, table, etc.) and marks allocated per content area/subtopic**	**Level of difficulty per item type used to examine the subtopic**	**Cognitive level per item type used to examine the subtopic**	**Skill assessed per subtopic**

2022		Subtopic 1: The Entrepreneur as Leader and Manager (61)	Overall mark (97)	Subtopic 1: The Entrepreneur as Leader and Manager MCQ (4) Choose the correct word (2) Short answer questions (5) Essay (50)	Subtopic 1: The Entrepreneur as Leader and Manager MCQ – Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1 Short answer questions – Level 1 Essay – Level 2	Subtopic 1: The Entrepreneur as Leader and Manager MCQ – Level 1 • Choose the correct word – Level 1 • Short answer questions – Level 1 • Essay – Levels 1, 2 & 3	Subtopic 1: The Entrepreneur as Leader and Manager Identification, Explanation, Interpretation, Writing of essay
		Subtopic 2: Investment Opportunities and Insurance (36)		Subtopic 2: Investment Opportunities and Insurance MCQ (2)	Subtopic 2: Investment Opportunities and Insurance MCQ – Level 1	Subtopic 2: Investment Opportunities and Insurance MCQ – Level 1	Subtopic 2: Investment Opportunities and Insurance Comprehension Identification, Explanation,

				Choose the correct answer (2) Short answer questions (4) Paragraphs (28)	Choose the correct answer – Level 1 Short answer questions - Level 1 Paragraphs (28) – Level 2	Choose the correct answer – Level 1 Short answer questions – Level 1 Paragraphs (28) – Levels 2 & 3	Application
2023		Subtopic 1: The Entrepreneur as Leader and Manager (24)	Overall mark (80)	Subtopic 1: The Entrepreneur as Leader and Manager MCQ (2) Choose the correct word (2) Short answer questions (3) Paragraphs (17)	Subtopic 1: The Entrepreneur as Leader and Manager MCQ – Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1 Short answer questions – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 2	Subtopic 1: The Entrepreneur as Leader and Manager MCQ – Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1 Short answer questions – Level 1 Paragraphs – Levels 2 & 3	Subtopic 1: The Entrepreneur as Leader and Manager Comprehension, Explanation, Application

		Subtopic 2: Investment Opportunities and Insurance (56)		Subtopic 2: Investment Opportunities and Insurance MCQ (2) Choose the correct word (4) Essay (50)	Subtopic 2: Investment Opportunities and Insurance MCQ - Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1 Essay – Levels 2 & 3	Subtopic 2: Investment Opportunities and Insurance MCQ – Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1 Essay – Levels 2 & 3	Subtopic 2: Investment Opportunities and Insurance Comprehension, Explanation, Interpretation Essay Writing
2024		Subtopic 1: The Entrepreneur as Leader and Manager (19)	Overall mark (61)	Subtopic 1: The Entrepreneur as Leader and Manager Choose the correct word (2) Short answer questions (3) Paragraphs (14)	Subtopic 1: The Entrepreneur as Leader and Manager Choose the correct word – Level 1 Short answer questions - Level 1	Subtopic 1: The Entrepreneur as Leader and Manager Choose the correct word – Level 1 Short answer questions - Level 1	Subtopic 1: The Entrepreneur as Leader and Manager Comprehension, Explanation, Application

					Paragraphs – Level 2	Paragraphs – Level 2	
		Subtopic 2: Investment Opportunities and Insurance (44)		Subtopic 2: Investment Opportunities and Insurance MCQ (10) Choose the correct word (16) Paragraphs (18)	Subtopic 2: Investment Opportunities and Insurance MCQ – Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 2	Subtopic 2: Investment Opportunities and Insurance MCQ – Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1 Paragraphs – Levels 2 & 3	Subtopic 2: Investment Opportunities and Insurance Comprehension Explanation Calculation

Table 3.2.2 presents a comparative overview of the Business Ventures topic across the three-year period. The analysis, presented in Sections a to f, evaluates whether the components reflected in Table 3.2.2 have contributed to the predictability of the IEB Business Studies' final examination question papers from 2022 to 2024.

a. Topic coverage

The findings indicate that the main topic, Business Ventures, was assessed at 32% in 2022, 27% in 2023, and 21% in 2024, reflecting a steady decline in weighting over the three years. This trend is contrary to the CAPS requirement of 25%, indicating a lack of alignment with curriculum guidelines and resulting in unacceptable predictability at the topic level. The examination panel should ensure that

the weighting for Business Ventures aligns closely with the CAPS guideline of 25%, thereby improving predictability, promoting fairness, and supporting curriculum compliance.

b. Content coverage

The findings show that the main topic, Business Ventures, comprises two subtopics: The Entrepreneur as Leader and Manager, and Investment Opportunities and Insurance. The distribution of marks for the first subtopic was 63% in 2022, 30% in 2023, and 30% in 2024, while the second subtopic accounted for 37% in 2022, 70% in 2023, and 70% in 2024. Although this pattern reflects consistency over the last two years, the variance between the two subtopics is substantial.

In terms of content coverage, while The Entrepreneur as Leader and Manager was assessed across all three years, only one content area, entrepreneurial characteristics, was repeated, appearing in 2022 and 2024. Conversely, for Investment Opportunities and Insurance, no similar content was observed across the three years, indicating acceptable predictability.

To maintain acceptable predictability, the examination panel should establish clear guidelines for subtopic weighting and ensure consistent application across years. This includes narrowing the gap between The Entrepreneur as Leader and Manager and Investment Opportunities and Insurance, while maintaining balanced representation of content areas within each subtopic, to ensure fairness, reliability, and alignment with curriculum objectives.

c. Weighting of the topic

The analysis reveals that the main topic, Business Ventures, received 97 marks in 2022, 80 in 2023, and 63 in 2024, out of a possible 300, indicating a steady decline in its overall weighting. Within the subtopics, the Entrepreneur as Leader and Manager was allocated 63 marks in 2022, but dropped significantly to 24 in 2023 and 19 in 2024. Conversely, Investment Opportunities and Insurance increased

from 36 marks in 2022 to 56 marks in 2023, before decreasing to 44 marks in 2024. This decrease, however, is proportional to the overall reduction in marks for the main topic, and the allocation for this subtopic remained relatively stable between 2023 and 2024.

To maintain acceptable predictability and fairness, the examination panel should stabilise the overall weighting of Business Ventures in line with the CAPS requirements and narrow the gap between its two subtopics. Consistent mark allocation and balanced representation will improve alignment with curriculum intent and ensure equitable assessment across years.

d. Variation in item types

The evaluation indicates that, for the subtopic The Entrepreneur as Manager and Leader, the mark allocation across item types varied significantly across the three years. MCQs were allocated 4 marks in 2022 and 2 marks in both 2023 and 2024, while "choose the correct word" remained constant at 2 marks each year, indicating acceptable predictability for this item type. Short-answer questions declined from 5 marks in 2022 to 3 marks in 2023 and 2024, indicating moderate variability. Paragraph-type questions were introduced only in 2023 (17 marks) and 2024 (14 marks), while an essay-type question worth 50 marks appeared exclusively in 2022, reflecting unacceptable predictability for higher-order item types.

For Investment Opportunities and Insurance, MCQs were allocated 2 marks in 2022 and 2023, but increased sharply to 10 marks in 2024, and "choose the correct answer" rose from 2 marks in 2022 to 4 marks in 2023 and 16 marks in 2024, indicating significant variation. Short-answer questions appeared only in 2022 (four marks), while paragraph-type questions were allocated 28 marks in 2022 and 18 marks in 2024, and an essay-type question worth 50 marks was assessed in 2023. These fluctuations highlight acceptable predictability for most item types in this subtopic.

For difficulty and cognitive weighting across all three years, both remained stable, indicating acceptable predictability in this aspect. MCQs, "choose the correct answer", and short-answer questions were consistently classified as difficulty Level 1 and cognitive Level 1, assessing basic recall. Paragraph and essay-type questions were adjudged moderately difficult and targeted cognitive Levels 2 and 3, promoting middle-order and higher-order thinking.

While retaining cognitive consistency, the panel should ensure that MCQs, short-answer, paragraph, and essay questions within the topic are varied to prevent examinations from being predictable.

e. Topic and skill pairing

The findings provide evidence that in both 2023 and 2024, the assessment of subtopic 1, The Entrepreneur as Manager and Leader, emphasised comprehension, explanation, and application skills. Conversely, the 2022 assessment incorporated a broader range of skills, including identification, explanation, interpretation, and extended writing through essays. Regarding Investment Opportunities and Insurance, comprehension and explanation were consistently assessed across all three years, reflecting their foundational importance. In 2022, additional skills such as identification and application were included, while interpretation and essay writing were introduced in 2023. Furthermore, calculation skills were included in 2024.

The assessment trends across 2022 to 2024 indicate a high degree of predictability for core cognitive skills, such as comprehension and explanation, which have remained consistent across the subtopics and years. Application skills have also shown increasing prominence, particularly in The Entrepreneur as Manager and Leader, while Investment Opportunities and Insurance demonstrate a progressive diversification toward interpretation, essay writing, and calculations. This stability in foundational skills, coupled with incremental complexity, suggests a deliberate alignment with curriculum objectives and Bloom's taxonomy.

The current trajectory of maintaining comprehension and explanation as core anchors should be upheld, while continuing to integrate application and quantitative skills. However, consider reducing reliance on identification questions, which appear to be diminishing in relevance, and ensure balanced inclusion of interpretive and extended-response items to foster critical thinking and problem-solving competencies.

f. Scenario framing of items for a topic

The patterns observed indicate that scenario-based questions within the topic are inconsistently applied and poorly aligned with the question requirements. In 2022, the single scenario for The Entrepreneur as Manager and Leader lacked functional relevance, as the accompanying diagram did not meaningfully contribute to defining an entrepreneur or identifying characteristics. Similarly, in Investment Opportunities and Insurance, the essay question was preceded by two sources, a generic scenario and an image of an insurance company that offered no substantive value to the discussion prompt, which could have been posed independently. This suggests that scenarios were included for their contextual appearance rather than for cognitive engagement. However, by 2024, a notable improvement is evident, including a relevant scenario that enables candidates to calculate an insurance payout, thereby integrating context with applied reasoning.

The inclusion of scenarios should be maintained, but ensure they are pedagogically purposeful and directly inform or shape the cognitive demands of the question. Scenarios should not serve as superficial context; instead, they should provide essential data or conditions that require interpretation, analysis, or calculation, thereby enhancing authenticity and problem-solving skills. There was no unacceptable predictability, as scenarios were varied.

Table 3.2.3 below summarises the analysis conducted to determine the level of predictability for the Business Roles topic in IEB Business Studies examinations from 2022 to 2024.

Table 3.2.3: Findings on the Predictability of the Business Roles Topic for the IEB Business Studies Examinations from 2022–2024

Topic: Business Roles							
Year	**Topic examined (✓) or not examined (X)**	**Content area/subtopics covered, including mark allocation**	**Overall weighting of the topic in marks**	**Item type/types (e.g., MCQ, essays, short answers, table, etc.) and marks allocated per content area/subtopic**	**Level of difficulty per item type used to examine the subtopic**	**Cognitive level per item type used to examine the subtopic**	**Skill assessed per subtopic**
2022		Subtopic 1: Creative Thinking and Problem Solving (5)	Overall mark (31)	Subtopic 1: Creative Thinking and Problem Solving MCQ (3) Choose the correct word (2)	Subtopic 1: Creative Thinking and Problem Solving MCQ - Level 2 Choose the correct word – Level 1	Subtopic 1: Creative Thinking and Problem Solving MCQ - Level 2 Choose the correct word – Level 1	Subtopic 1: Creative Thinking and Problem Solving Comprehension, Application
		Subtopic 2: Professional,		Subtopic 2: Professional,	Subtopic 2: Professional,	Subtopic 2: Professional,	Subtopic 2: Professional,

		Responsible, Ethical and Effective Business Practice (10)		Responsible, Ethical and Effective Business Practice MCQ (2) Choose the correct word (2) Paragraphs (6)	Responsible, Ethical and Effective Business Practice MCQ – Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 2	Responsible, Ethical and Effective Business Practice MCQ – Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 3	Responsible, Ethical and Effective Business Practice Comprehension, Explanation, Application
		Subtopic 3: Teamwork and Conflict Management (16)		Subtopic 3: Teamwork and Conflict Management MCQ (7) Choose the correct word (2)	Subtopic 3: Teamwork and Conflict Management MCQ – Levels 1 & 2	Subtopic 3: Teamwork and Conflict Management MCQ – Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1	Subtopic 3: Teamwork and Conflict Management Comprehension, Interpretation, Application, Explanation

				Short answer questions (1) Paragraphs (6)	Choose the correct word – Level 1 Short answer questions – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 2	Short answer questions – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 2	
2023		Subtopic 1: Creative Thinking and Problem Solving (8)	Overall mark (24)	Subtopic 1: Creative Thinking and Problem Solving Choose the correct word (2) Paragraphs (6)	Subtopic 1: Creative Thinking and Problem Solving Choose the correct word – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 2	Subtopic 1: Creative Thinking and Problem Solving Choose the correct word – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 2	Subtopic 1: Creative Thinking and Problem Solving Comprehension, Application, Explanation
		Subtopic 2: Professional, Responsible, Ethical and		Subtopic 2: Professional, Responsible, Ethical and	Subtopic 2: Professional, Responsible, Ethical and	Subtopic 2: Professional, Responsible, Ethical and	Subtopic 2: Professional, Responsible, Ethical and

		Effective Business Practice (6)		Effective Business Practice MCQ (4) Short answer questions (2)	Effective Business Practice MCQ – Level 1 Short answer questions – Level 1	Effective Business Practice MCQ – Level 1 Short answer questions – Level 1	Effective Business Practice Comprehension
		Subtopic 3: Teamwork and Conflict Management (10)		Subtopic 3: Teamwork and Conflict Management Short answer questions (2) Paragraphs (8)	Subtopic 3: Teamwork and Conflict Management Short answer questions – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 2	Subtopic 3: Teamwork and Conflict Management Short answer questions – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 2	Subtopic 3: Teamwork and Conflict Management Comprehension, Application, Explanation
2024		Subtopic 1: Creative Thinking and Problem Solving	Overall mark (73)	Subtopic 1: Creative Thinking and Problem Solving	Subtopic 1: Creative Thinking and Problem Solving	Subtopic 1: Creative Thinking and Problem Solving	Subtopic 1: Creative Thinking and Problem Solving

		(25)		Essay (25)	Essay – Level 2	Essay – Level 3	Explanation, Application
		Subtopic 2: Professional, Responsible, Ethical and Effective Business Practice (28)		Subtopic 2: Professional, Responsible, Ethical and Effective Business Practice MCQ (7) Choose the correct word (6) Short answer questions (11) Paragraphs (6)	Subtopic 2: Professional, Responsible, Ethical and Effective Business Practice MCQ – Levels 1 & 2 Choose the correct word – Level 1 Short answer questions – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 2	Subtopic 2: Professional, Responsible, Ethical and Effective Business Practice MCQ – Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1 Short answer questions – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 2	Subtopic 2: Professional, Responsible, Ethical and Effective Business Practice Comprehension, Application, Explanation
		Subtopic 3: Teamwork and		Subtopic 3: Teamwork and	Subtopic 3: Teamwork and	Subtopic 3: Teamwork and	Subtopic 3: Teamwork and

		Conflict Management (22)		Conflict Management MCQ (7) Choose the correct word (2) Short answer questions (3) Paragraphs (10)	Conflict Management MCQ – Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1 Short answer questions – Level 1 Paragraphs – Levels 1, 3	Conflict Management MCQ – Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1 Short answer questions – Level 3 Paragraphs – 1, 2	Conflict Management Comprehension, Application, Explanation

Table 3.2.3 presents a comparative overview of the Business Environment topic across the three-year period. The analysis, presented in Sections a to f, evaluates whether the components reflected in Table 3.2.3 have contributed to the predictability of the IEB Business Studies' final examination question papers from 2022 to 2024.

a. Topic coverage

The findings indicate that the main topic, Business Roles, was assessed at 10% in 2022, 8% in 2023, and 25% in 2024, reflecting a slight decline in weighting from 2022 to 2023 and a significant increase in 2024. This trend is contrary to the CAPS requirement of 25%, indicating a lack of alignment with curriculum guidelines and resulting in unacceptable predictability at the topic level. The

examination panel should ensure that the weighting for Business Roles aligns closely with the CAPS guideline of 25%, thereby achieving acceptable predictability, promoting fairness, and supporting curriculum compliance.

b. Content coverage

The findings show that across 2022–2024, the subtopic distribution within Business Roles reveals a clear weighting pattern: Teamwork and Conflict Management received the largest cumulative emphasis 52% in 2022, 42% in 2023 and 30% in 2024, though it is trending downward; Creative Thinking and Problem Solving increased from 16% to a stable 33% in 2023–2024; and Professional, Responsible, Ethical and Effective Business Practices fluctuated, peaking at 37% in 2024, from 32% in 2022, and 25% in 2023. While the main topic's overall representation was below CAPS in 2022 and 2023 of 10% and 8%, respectively, and aligned in 2024 with 25%, the subtopic pattern indicates moderate predictability: since 2023, Creative Thinking and Problem Solving is stable, Teamwork and Conflict Management is declining from a historically high base, and Professional, Responsible, Ethical and Effective Business Practices are strengthening.

The CAPS-aligned 25% allocation for Business Roles should be maintained and rebalanced within the topic to reduce the historical overemphasis on Teamwork and Conflict Management. Adopt an assessment plan that either targets comparable weighting across the three subtopics (e.g., 30-35% each) or deliberately rotates emphasis, while preserving minimum thresholds of approximately 25% per subtopic. This will sustain fairness, reliability, and trustworthiness.

c. Weighting of the topic

The analysis reveals that the allocation of marks for Business Roles varied considerably over the three-year period, increasing from 31 out of 300 in 2022 to 24 in 2023, and then rising to 75 in 2024. In 2022, the distribution across subtopics was 5 marks for Creative Thinking and Problem Solving, 10 for Professional, Responsible and Ethical Practices, and 16 for Teamwork and Conflict Management. The

2023 pattern shifted slightly, with 8 marks for Creative Thinking, 6 for Professional Practices, and 10 for Teamwork. By 2024, the allocation expanded significantly, with 33 marks for Creative Thinking, 37 marks for Professional Practices, and 30 marks for Teamwork.

The weighting for this topic increased substantially in 2024. The subtopic, Creative Thinking and Problem Solving, displayed a gradual upward trend in the first two years, followed by a sharp escalation in 2024, indicating moderate predictability. Similarly, Professional, Responsible, Ethical and Effective Business Practices experienced a slight decline in 2023 before surging significantly in 2024. This trend indicates a low level of predictability. The pattern for Teamwork and Conflict Management showed a minor dip in 2023, followed by significant growth in 2024. Lastly, the 2024 spike indicates a strategic shift, reducing predictability across all subtopics, which should be upheld.

d. Variation in item types

The evaluation indicates that analysing item types for Business Roles from 2022 to 2024 reveals a clear trend toward greater complexity and higher mark allocations for extended-response questions. For Creative Thinking and Problem Solving, the allocation began with three marks for MCQs in 2022, followed by two marks for "choose the correct word" in both 2022 and 2023. In 2023, paragraph-type questions were introduced, each worth 6 marks, and by 2024, an essay-type question carried a significant weight of 25 marks. Similarly, for Professional, Responsible, Ethical, and Effective Business Practices, MCQs increased steadily from 2 marks in 2022 to 7 marks in 2024. "Choose the correct word" questions rose from two marks in 2022 to 6 marks in 2024, while short-answer questions grew from two marks in 2023 to 11 marks in 2024. Paragraph-type questions remained consistent at 6 marks in 2022 and 2024. For Teamwork and Conflict Management, MCQs were allocated 7 marks in both 2022 and 2024, while "choose the correct word" questions remained at 2 marks across these years. Short-answer questions showed incremental growth from one mark in 2022

to three marks in 2024, and paragraph-type questions increased from six marks in 2022 to 10 marks in 2024. This indicates variation in item types which reflects acceptable predictability.

With regard to difficulty level, MCQs were generally judged to be easy to moderately difficult across all subtopics. "Choose the correct word" and short-answer questions were rated as easy, reflecting a lower-order cognitive demand. In contrast, paragraph-type questions and the essay question were rated as moderately difficult, requiring a middle-order cognitive level. This progression indicates a strong emphasis on higher-order thinking and written responses, with a clear shift from objective items toward constructed responses such as paragraphs and essays. This indicates diverse weighting of difficulty levels.

The item types, including their difficulty and cognitive levels, should continue to vary to maintain acceptable predictability.

e. Topic and skill pairing

The findings provide evidence that, for Creative Thinking and Problem Solving, the skills assessed have evolved over the three years. In 2022, the focus was on comprehension and application, while in 2023 and 2024, the scope expanded to include comprehension, application, and explanation, indicating a gradual increase in cognitive demand. For Professional, Responsible, Ethical, and Effective Business Practice, the assessment consistently targeted comprehension, explanation, and application across all three years. Regarding Teamwork and Conflict Management, the 2022 assessment included comprehension, interpretation, application, and explanation, whereas in 2023 and 2024, the emphasis narrowed slightly to comprehension, application, and explanation.

Across subtopics, there is a clear trend toward higher-order cognitive skills, moving from basic comprehension and application toward explanation and interpretation. The inclusion of explanation, in later years, suggests a growing emphasis on justification and reasoning, not just recall or application. Comprehension and application remain foundational skills throughout the years and should

be maintained in future examination question papers. While interpretation appeared in 2022 for Teamwork and Conflict Management, this should be continued in future examinations, as it leads to unpredictable exams.

f. Scenario framing of items for a topic

The patterns observed show that, across the three years, the use of scenarios in examination papers varied significantly. In 2022, a scenario was included that required candidates to apply their content knowledge, reinforcing real-world application skills. However, in the November 2024 examination question paper, the scenarios provided were minimal and not essential to answering the questions so that candidates could respond effectively without them. However, the teamwork pattern for future questions is based on these examples.

Table 3.2.4 below summarises the analysis conducted to determine the level of predictability for the Business Operations topic in IEB Business Studies examinations from 2022 to 2024.

Table 3.2.4: Findings on the Predictability of the Business Operations Topic for the IEB Business Studies Examinations from 2022–2024

Topic: Business Operations							
Year	**Topic examined (✓) or not examined (X)**	**Content area/subtopics covered, including mark allocation**	**Overall weighting of the topic in marks**	**Item type/types (e.g., MCQ, essays, short answers, table, etc.) and marks allocated**	**Level of difficulty per item type used to examine the subtopic**	**Cognitive level per item type used to examine the subtopic**	**Skill assessed per subtopic**

				per content area/subtopic			
2022		Subtopic 1: Human Resources/ Human Capital Function (25)	Overall mark (70)	Subtopic 1: Human Resources/Human Capital Function MCQ (5) Short answer questions (9) Paragraphs (11)	Subtopic 1: Human Resources/ Human Capital Function MCQ – Level 1 Short answer questions – Level 1 Paragraphs – Levels 2 & 3	Subtopic 1: Human Resources/ Human Capital Function MCQ – Level 1 Short answer questions – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 2	Subtopic 1: Human Resources/ Human Capital Function Comprehension Application, Interpretation
		Subtopic 2: Industrial Relations and Contemporary Business (20)		Subtopic 2: Industrial Relations and Contemporary Business	Subtopic 2: Industrial Relations and Contemporary Business	Subtopic 2: Industrial Relations and Contemporary Business	Subtopic 2: Industrial Relations and Contemporary Business

				Choose the correct word (2) Paragraphs (18)	Choose the correct word – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 2	Choose the correct word – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 2	Comprehension Explanation
		Subtopic 3: Marketing Department (16)		Subtopic 3: Marketing Department MCQ (4) Short answer questions (5) Paragraphs (7)	Subtopic 3: Marketing Department MCQ – Level 1 Short answer questions – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 2	Subtopic 3: Marketing Department MCQ – Level 1 Short answer questions – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 2	Subtopic 3: Marketing Department Comprehension, Application, Explanation
		Subtopic 4: Performance Management (9)		Subtopic 4: Performance Management MCQ (9)	Subtopic 4: Performance Management MCQ – Level 1	Subtopic 4: Performance Management MCQ – Level 1	Subtopic 4: Performance Management Comprehension

2023		Subtopic 1: Human Resources/ Human Capital Function (8)	Overall mark (76)	Subtopic 1: Human Resources/Human Capital Function MCQ (4) Choose the correct word (4)	Subtopic 1: Human Resources/ Human Capital Function MCQ – Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1	Subtopic 1: Human Resources/ Human Capital Function MCQ - Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1	Subtopic 1: Human Resources/ Human Capital Function Comprehension
		Subtopic 2: Industrial Relations and Contemporary Business (8)		Subtopic 2: Industrial Relations and Contemporary Business MCQ (6) Choose the correct word (2)	Subtopic 2: Industrial Relations and Contemporary Business MCQ – Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1	Subtopic 2: Industrial Relations and Contemporary Business MCQ – Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1	Subtopic 2: Industrial Relations and Contemporary Business Comprehension

		Subtopic 3: Marketing Department (22)		Subtopic 3: Marketing Department MCQ (8) Choose the correct word (4) Paragraphs (10)	Subtopic 3: Marketing Department MCQ – Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1 Paragraphs – Levels 1 & 2	Subtopic 3: Marketing Department MCQ – Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1 Paragraphs – Levels 2 & 3	Subtopic 3: Marketing Department Comprehension, Application, Explanation
		Subtopic 4: Performance Management (40)		Subtopic 4: Performance Management MCQ (10) Choose the correct word (2) Paragraphs (28)	Subtopic 4: Performance Management MCQ – Levels 1 & 2 Choose the correct word – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 2	Subtopic 4: Performance Management MCQ – Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 2	Subtopic 4: Performance Management Comprehension, Explanation, Application

2024		Subtopic 1: Human Resources/ Human Capital Function (20)	Overall mark (78)	Subtopic 1: Human Resources/Human Capital Function MCQ (2) Choose the correct word (8) Paragraphs (10)	Subtopic 1: Human Resources/ Human Capital Function	Subtopic 1: Human Resources/ Human Capital Function	Subtopic 1: Human Resources/ Human Capital Function
		Subtopic 2: Industrial Relations and Contemporary Business (20)		Subtopic 2: Industrial Relations and Contemporary Business MCQ (2) Choose the correct word (4) Short answer questions (3) Paragraphs (11)	Subtopic 2: Industrial Relations and Contemporary Business MCQ – Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1 Short answer questions – Level 1	Subtopic 2: Industrial Relations and Contemporary Business MCQ – Level 1 Choose the correct word – Level 1 Short answer questions – Level 1	Subtopic 2: Industrial Relations and Contemporary Business Comprehension, Explanation

					Paragraphs – Level 2	Paragraphs – Level 2	
		Subtopic 3: Marketing Department (28)		Subtopic 3: Marketing Department MCQ (6) Paragraphs (22)	Subtopic 3: Marketing Department MCQ – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 2	Subtopic 3: Marketing Department MCQ – Level 1 Paragraphs – Level 2	Subtopic 3: Marketing Department Comprehension Explanation
		Subtopic 4: Performance Management (6)		Subtopic 4: Performance Management MCQ (6)	Subtopic 4: Performance Management MCQ – Level 1	Subtopic 4: Performance Management MCQ – Level 1	Subtopic 4: Performance Management Comprehension

Table 3.2.4 presents a comparative overview of the Business Environment topic across the three-year period. The analysis, presented in Sections a to f, evaluates whether the components reflected in Table 3.2.4 have contributed to the predictability of the IEB Business Studies' final examination question papers from 2022 to 2024.

a. Topic coverage

The findings indicate that the assessment weighting for Business Operations aligns closely with the CAPS guideline of 25% per main topic, with recorded percentages of 23% in 2022, 26% in 2023, and 25% in 2024. This pattern reflects minimal fluctuation, a 3% increase

followed by a 1% decrease, indicating acceptable stability and predictability in topic representation. Such consistency supports curriculum trustworthiness and ensures equitable emphasis across the three years.

The current allocation strategy should be maintained, as it reflects acceptable predictability through compliance with CAPS requirements, and promotes balanced coverage. Future adjustments should only occur in response to substantive curriculum changes or pedagogical priorities, rather than minor percentage variations.

b. Content coverage

The findings show that the distribution of topic weightings within the main topic of Business Operations demonstrates alignment with the CAPS across the observed period. Analysis of subtopic trends reveals notable fluctuations. The Human Resources/Human Capital Function accounted for 35% in 2022, declined significantly to 10% in 2023, and subsequently increased to 27% in 2024. A comparable pattern is evident in Industrial Relations and Contemporary Business, which constituted 29% in 2022, decreased to 10% in 2023, and rose again to 27% in 2024. In contrast, Marketing Department exhibited a consistent upward trajectory, increasing from 23% in 2022 to 28% in 2023 and further to 38% in 2024. Conversely, Performance Management displayed significant volatility, rising from 13% in 2022 to 52% in 2023, before declining markedly to 8% in 2024. This indicates variation in how these topics were assessed.

The percentage of Human Resources/Human Capital Function and Industrial Relations and Contemporary Business showed a cyclical pattern: high in 2022, a sharp decline in 2023, and a partial recovery in 2024, while the Marketing Department subtopic demonstrated a steady upward trend each year. Performance Management increased in 2023 and dropped sharply in 2024, indicating low predictability. This suggests differences in the way these topics were assessed each year. The assessment body should continue with this practice to ensure that examinations are not predictable.

c. Weighting of the topic

The analysis reveals that the allocation of marks for the Business Operations section was 70, 78, and 74 in 2022, 2023, and 2024, respectively, out of a total examination mark of 300. In 2022, the distribution across subtopics comprised 25 marks for the Human Resources/Human Capital Function, 20 for Industrial Relations and Contemporary Business, 16 for the Marketing Department, and 9 for Quality Performance. A notable shift in weighting occurred in 2023, with Human Resources/Human Capital Function and Industrial Relations and Contemporary Business each allocated only 8 marks. Meanwhile, the Marketing Department and Quality Performance received substantially higher allocations of 22 and 40 marks, respectively. This pattern largely persisted in 2024, with the Human Resources/Human Capital Function and Industrial Relations and Contemporary Business Issues subtopics each allocated 20 marks, while the Marketing Department increased to 28 marks and Quality Performance was reduced to 6 marks.

An analysis of the mark allocation across the three-year period reveals a degree of predictability in the weighting of subtopics within the Business Operations section. While the overall allocation of marks remained relatively stable, notable patterns emerged in the internal distribution. The Marketing Department subtopic consistently received a higher weighting in both 2023 and 2024, suggesting a predictable emphasis on it.

Conversely, the allocation for the Human Resources/Human Capital Function and Industrial Relations and Contemporary Business subtopics fluctuated but generally reduced in weight in the latter two years compared to 2022. Quality Performance exhibited the greatest variability, with a pronounced increase in 2023, followed by a significant decrease in 2024, indicating limited predictability for this subtopic.

To maintain an appropriate level of predictability while upholding the integrity of the assessment, it is recommended that the examination panel adopt a more consistent and transparent mark-allocation framework across years. Establishing indicative

weighting ranges for each Business Operations subtopic would ensure balanced coverage, while preventing disproportionate emphasis on any single area.

d. Variation in item types

The analysis of item types across the three years reveals partial predictability in both assessment format and cognitive demand, particularly at lower cognitive levels. In the Human Resources/Human Capital Function subtopic, a recurring combination of objective and constructed-response items was evident across all three years. While the specific weighting fluctuated, MCQs and "choose the correct word" items were consistently included, indicating a predictable reliance on lower-order item types.

Paragraph-type questions, although varying in mark allocation, were also assessed in 2022 and 2024, reflecting intermittent but anticipated inclusion of higher-order assessment. Across all years, MCQs, "choose the correct word", and short-answer items were predominantly classified as easy and aligned with lower-order cognitive levels. In contrast, paragraph questions were consistently rated as moderately difficult, and assessed middle-order thinking skills. This pattern demonstrates a predictable alignment between item type and cognitive demand.

In the Industrial Relations and Contemporary Business subtopic, predictability was less evident. Item types varied considerably from year to year, ranging from a limited selection of "choose the correct word" and paragraph questions in 2022, to predominantly objective items in 2023, and a broader combination of item types in 2024. This inconsistency reduces predictability in both format and cognitive demand. The Marketing Department subtopic displayed a more discernible pattern. Across the three years, paragraph questions were consistently included and generally carried substantial weighting, particularly in 2024. While the balance between objective and extended-response items shifted annually, the continued prominence of paragraph questions suggests a predictable emphasis on middle-order cognitive skills.

In the Performance Management subtopic, MCQs were consistently assessed across all three years, indicating a stable and predictable inclusion of objective items. However, the substantial weighting of paragraph-type questions in 2023, followed by their absence in other years, reflects variability that limits predictability at higher cognitive levels. To maintain an appropriate level of predictability while ensuring balanced assessment, it is recommended that the examination panel establish clearer guidelines for distributing item types across subtopics. Ensuring the consistent inclusion of both objective and paragraph-type questions each year would promote stable cognitive progression and equitable learner preparation. Such an approach would preserve assessment validity, while preventing excessive fluctuations in item format and difficulty across examination cycles.

e. Topic and skill pairing

The findings provide evidence that within the Human Resources/Human Capital Function subtopic, the cognitive skills assessed over the three-year period varied. In 2022, the questions assessed comprehension, application, and interpretation, whereas in 2023 assessment was limited to comprehension only. In 2024, comprehension and explanation were evaluated. With regard to the Industrial Relations and Contemporary Business subtopic, comprehension and explanation were assessed in both 2022 and 2024, while only comprehension was assessed in 2023.

In the Marketing Department subtopic, comprehension, explanation, and application were assessed in both 2022 and 2023; however, in 2024 assessment was confined to comprehension and explanation. Finally, in the Performance Management subtopic, comprehension was assessed in 2022 and 2024, whereas the 2023 examination included comprehension, explanation, and application. An analysis of the cognitive skills assessed over the three-year period indicates moderate predictability, particularly at lower cognitive levels. Across all subtopics, comprehension was consistently assessed each year, suggesting a consistent baseline expectation for cognitive demand. This recurring emphasis enables candidates and educators to anticipate a minimum level of engagement, with content knowledge which should be maintained. Overall, the pattern suggests variation in the assessed skills.

Greater consistency in the deliberate rotation or inclusion of higher cognitive levels would reduce predictability, without compromising assessment validity.

f. Scenario framing of items for a topic

The patterns observed show that in the 2022 examination question paper, a salary slip was included to assess content related to the Human Resources/Human Capital Function subtopic. This stimulus material was relevant to two of the four questions assessed within the subtopic. In the same examination, a scenario on Industrial Relations and Contemporary Business was provided; however, it had no substantive influence on the responses required of candidates. Similarly, in the 2023 examination question paper, a scenario pertaining to Performance Management was included, but it did not meaningfully inform or contextualise the expected responses. This indicates variation in scenario use, therefore limiting predictability of the examinations.

Purposeful and varied use of scenarios would enhance acceptable predictability by establishing clear expectations regarding the role of stimulus material in eliciting responses, while still allowing for varied and authentic assessment contexts.

Summary of findings and recommendations for the IEB Business Studies Paper 1

Table 3.2.5 below summarises identified patterns of predictability across key components of question paper design, along with corresponding recommendations to reduce predictability and strategies to maintain effective assessment practices without compromising variability.

Table 3.2.5: Summary of Findings and Recommendations on the Predictability of 2022–2024 IEB Business Studies Final Examination Papers (1)

Identified unacceptable predictability on topic coverage
The main topic, Business Environments, has shown notable fluctuations in its representation in Examination question papers over the past three years, accounting for 34% of the total marks in 2022, 39% in 2023, and 27% in 2024. In contrast, the topic Business Ventures has shown a consistent decline in weighting, from 32% in 2022 to 27% in 2023 and 21% in 2024. The topic, Business Roles, reflected a marginal decrease from 10% in 2022 to 8% in 2023, followed by a substantial increase to 25% in 2024. Meanwhile, Business Operations demonstrated strong alignment with the CAPS guideline of 25% per main topic, recording 23% in 2022, 26% in 2023, and 25% in 2024. These variations indicate inconsistent adherence to CAPS recommendations, contributing to unpredictability at the topic level. From a predictability standpoint, the overall weighting of main topics has varied considerably across the three years, suggesting low predictability in anticipating their prominence in assessments.
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability on topic coverage
It is recommended that the examination panel align the weighting of the main topics with the CAPS requirement of 25%, as the current allocations deviate from the prescribed guidelines. Standardising the weighting will enhance curriculum compliance, promote fairness, and improve the reliability and validity of the examinations.
Identified unacceptable predictability on content coverage
The main topic, Business Environment, comprises three subtopics: Business Environment, Corporate Social Responsibility, and Legislation in the Business Environment. Analysis of these subtopics reveals a distinct trend. The weighting for Business Environment increased significantly over the three years, from 50% in 2022 to 70% in 2023 and 74% in 2024, indicating growing dominance and high predictability. Conversely, Corporate Social Responsibility declined from 25% in 2022 to 14% in 2023 and 12% in 2024, while Legislation in the Business Environment decreased from 25% in 2022 to 16% in 2023 and 14% in 2024.

Within Business Ventures, the distribution of marks for the subtopic Entrepreneur as Manager and Leader dropped from 63% in 2022 to 30% in both 2023 and 2024. However, Investment Opportunities and Insurance rose from 37% in 2022 to 70% in 2023 and remained at 70% in 2024. Although the pattern reflects stability over the last two years, the disparity between the two subtopics results in an imbalanced representation within the main topic. For Business Roles, overall representation was below CAPS in 2022 (10%) and 2023 (8%) but aligned with the guideline in 2024 (25%). Subtopic trends suggest moderate predictability: Creative Thinking and Problem Solving has remained stable since 2023, Teamwork and Conflict Management shows a downward trend from a historically high base, and Ethics and Professionalism demonstrate strengthening over time. Finally, analysis of subtopics within Business Operations indicates notable fluctuations, suggesting low predictability. The Human Resources/Human Capital Function and Industrial Relations and Contemporary Business subtopics exhibit a cyclical pattern: high in 2022, a sharp decline in 2023, and partial recovery in 2024. Whilst the Marketing Department subtopic shows a consistent upward trend across all three years, indicating low predictability.
Recommendations to avoid predictable content coverage
Utilise case studies or scenarios that draw on multiple main topics and subtopics, reducing predictability and encouraging application of knowledge.
Strategies to maintain content coverage that do not lead to a predictable question paper
To maintain acceptable predictability, the examination panel should establish clear guidelines for subtopic weighting and ensure consistent application across years.
Identified unacceptable predictability in topic weighting
The subtopic distribution of the main topic, Business Environment, indicates increasing dominance of Business Environment (50%, 70%, 74%), alongside consistent declines in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) (25%, 14%, 12%) and Legislation in the Business Environment (25%, 16%, 14%). This pattern suggests high predictability for the Business Environment subtopic and diminishing emphasis, thus lowering the predictability for CSR and Legislation. Conversely, the main topic, Business Ventures, shows a steady

downward trend in weighting: 97/300 (32.3%) in 2022, 80/300 (26.7%) in 2023, and 63/300 (21.0%) in 2024, mirrored by shifts within its subtopics (Entrepreneur as Manager/Leader vs. Investment Opportunities and Insurance). The internal imbalance over time further reduces predictability. Mark allocations varied considerably in the main topic, Business Roles, moving from 31/300 (10.3%) in 2022 to 24/300 (8.0%) in 2023, and then rising sharply to 75/300 (25.0%) in 2024. While the 2024 weighting aligns with CAPS, prior variability indicates moderate predictability at the subtopic level. Total marks for Business Operations were 70/300 (23.3%) in 2022, 78/300 (26.0%) in 2023, and 74/300 (24.7%) in 2024, reflecting strong alignment with CAPS at the main-topic level. However, subtopic-level fluctuations (notably cyclical Human Resources/Human Capital Function and Industrial Relations and Contemporary Business, versus steadily rising Marketing Department) indicate low predictability.
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability on topic weighting
Align Weighting with the CAPS and keep main topics within 24–26% of total marks. Set minimum and maximum ranges for subtopics to prevent dominance or neglect. Alternatively, use an annual rotation plan so different subtopics receive higher weighting in alternate years. Distribute questions across all cognitive levels for each subtopic to maintain fairness.
Strategies to maintain topic weighting that do not lead to a predictable question paper
To maintain acceptable predictability and fairness, the examination panel should stabilise the overall weighting of all main topics in line with the CAPS requirements and narrow the gap between its subtopics. Consistent mark allocation and balanced representation will improve alignment with curriculum intent and ensure equitable assessment across years.
Identified unacceptable predictability on item types
Varied patterns in the use of multiple-choice, short-answer, paragraph-type, and interpretation questions reinforced overall unpredictability. However, the weighting for difficulty and cognitive levels remained stable across all item types over the three years, indicating acceptable predictability in this dimension.
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability on item types

To reduce predictability and fairness, the examination panel should continue to use varied item types across years. Assessment design should maintain a balance between objective and subjective items to ensure fairness and comprehensive skill coverage.
Strategies to maintain the assessment of item types that do not lead to a predictable question paper
To maintain an appropriate level of predictability while ensuring balanced assessment, it is recommended that the examination panel establish clearer guidelines for distributing item types across subtopics. Ensuring the consistent inclusion of both objective and paragraph-type questions each year would promote stable cognitive progression.
Identified unacceptable predictability on topic–skill pairing
Overall, analysis of cognitive skills across the three-year period indicates moderate predictability, particularly at lower cognitive levels. Comprehension was consistently assessed across all subtopics, establishing a predictable baseline expectation. This recurring emphasis ensures that candidates and educators can anticipate a minimum level of engagement with content knowledge. Furthermore, assessment trends from 2022 to 2024 demonstrate high predictability for core cognitive skills such as comprehension and explanation, which remained stable across topics and years.
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability through topic–skill pairing
The examination panel should standardise the range of skills assessed across years to ensure fairness and alignment with curriculum objectives. The examination panel should consider reducing reliance on identification questions, which appear to be diminishing in relevance, and ensure balanced inclusion of interpretive and extended-response items to foster critical thinking and problem-solving competencies.
Strategies to maintain topic–skill pairing that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Uphold the current trajectory of maintaining comprehension and explanation as core questions while continuing to integrate application and quantitative skills.
Identified unacceptable predictability in the scenario framing of items

Although scenario-based questions were included in the Examination question papers, in most cases, the scenarios did not significantly influence candidates' responses. This indicates that, while scenarios were present, their functional impact on assessment was minimal, suggesting unacceptable predictability in authentic scenario integration.
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability in scenario framing of items.
The examination panel should ensure that scenario-based questions are consistently integrated across years and subtopics, with clear alignment to application and interpretation skills. Scenarios should meaningfully influence candidate responses rather than serve as decorative context.
Strategies to maintain scenario framing of items that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Maintain the inclusion of scenarios, but ensure they are pedagogically purposeful and directly inform or shape the cognitive demands of the question. Scenarios should not serve as superficial context; instead, they should provide essential data or conditions that require interpretation, analysis, or calculation, thereby enhancing authenticity and problem-solving skills.

Conclusions

The overall weighting of main topics has varied significantly over the three years, indicating low predictability, while consistently high emphasis on specific subtopics creates unacceptable predictability. Question formats showed inconsistent patterns, reinforcing unpredictability; though cognitive level weighting remained stable, suggesting acceptable predictability in that dimension. Cognitive skills analysis reflects moderate predictability, particularly at lower levels, with comprehension consistently assessed. Although scenario-based questions were included, they had minimal impact on candidate responses, suggesting limited functional integration and contributing to concerns about predictability. The consistent emphasis on specific subtopics and core skills, combined with minimal impact from scenarios, makes the question papers highly predictable in terms of content and cognitive demand, despite some structural variability.

To mitigate unacceptable predictability, future assessments should incorporate greater diversity in content representation, expand the range of item types, and employ varied scenario contexts. This approach will enhance cognitive differentiation, reduce rote anticipation, and strengthen the validity of skills-based evaluation.

PART IV DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Section 4: Discussions, Conclusions, and General Recommendations

Sections 3.1–3.4 presented the findings of the evaluation of each topic assessed in the DBE and IEB NSC Business Studies examination papers. These findings were derived from a systematic analysis of examination papers administered between 2022 and 2024 to identify patterns of predictability across the sampled subjects. Building on these findings, this chapter discusses the results in relation to the study's conceptual framework and broader principles of educational assessment. It also presents evidence-based recommendations informed by the observed trends and concludes by reflecting on the implications of the findings for assessment quality, validity, and future examination design.

4.1 Discussions

Evidence presented in Sections 3.1–3.2 indicates that, across the majority of topics assessed in the DBE and IEB Business Studies Papers 1 and 2, there was consistent variation in question formats, subtopics, assessed skills, and contextual settings. This systematic variation enhanced content validity by promoting comprehensive coverage of the curriculum requirements, while simultaneously strengthening construct validity through the evaluation of a broad spectrum of cognitive demands. Across most DBE and IEB examinations, variation within the six analytical dimensions required candidates to demonstrate authentic understanding and adaptive reasoning rather than reliance on memorised or rehearsed responses.

However, closer analysis reveals areas where unacceptable predictability emerged. In DBE Paper 1, although acceptable predictability was observed in the coverage of the main topic, Business Environment, the main topic, Business Operations, demonstrated unacceptable predictability in the shifts of essay focus. This pattern may compromise the reliability of assessment outcomes and raise concerns regarding fairness. Furthermore, while the skills assessed aligned with CAPS requirements, this

alignment may inadvertently introduce predictability, as candidates can anticipate the types of skills likely to be tested.

Similarly, DBE Paper 2 demonstrated unacceptable predictability through the consistent recurrence of core concepts. Although variation in cognitive verbs introduced differing cognitive demands that slightly reduced question predictability, the sustained alignment of assessed skills with CAPS may have enabled candidates to anticipate the skills being assessed. In summary, while acceptable predictability was evident in topic coverage, weighting, and general topic–skill alignment, limited but notable unacceptable predictability emerged in terms of content coverage, item-type variation, and scenario framing. Importantly, these patterns do not render the 2022, 2023, and 2024 Business Studies final examinations predictable overall, but they do highlight areas requiring refinement.

The IEB examinations displayed a somewhat different pattern. The overall weighting of main topics varied significantly across the three-year period, indicating low predictability at the macro-structural level. However, the consistently high emphasis on specific subtopics within each main topic created unacceptable predictability in content focus. Question formats followed inconsistent patterns, reinforcing structural unpredictability, yet cognitive level weighting remained relatively stable, suggesting acceptable predictability in that dimension. Cognitive skills analysis further reflected moderate predictability, particularly at lower cognitive levels, with comprehension consistently assessed. Although scenario-based questions were included, their limited functional integration into candidate responses reduced their impact and raised concerns about predictability. Consequently, the persistent emphasis on specific subtopics and core skills, combined with the limited influence of contextual scenarios, rendered the IEB question papers highly predictable in both content and cognitive demand, despite some structural variability.

Overall, while acceptable predictability was evident in topic distribution, weighting patterns, and CAPS alignment, there was unacceptable predictability in some subtopics, including content emphases, limited item-type diversity, and constrained scenario framing, warranting attention in both the DBE and IEB question papers.

4.2 General Recommendations

It is recommended that examination designers adopt multi-year rotation matrices to regulate the recurrence of subtopics, skills, item types, and scenario framings across successive examination cycles. In addition, moderation processes at the assessment body level should include explicit cross-year comparisons to identify emerging patterns, particularly in subjects where upward trends in learner performance have raised concerns about examination predictability.

Furthermore, future assessments should incorporate greater diversity in content representation, broaden the range of item types, and employ varied, authentic, and meaningfully integrated scenario contexts. These measures will enhance cognitive differentiation, reduce opportunities for rote anticipation, and strengthen the validity and reliability of skills-based evaluation.

Finally, the routine implementation of predictability audits based on the six analytical dimensions presented in this report would support ongoing monitoring and help prevent the emergence of unintended patterns in future examination papers.

4.3 Conclusions

The three-year analysis demonstrates that, in both the DBE and IEB systems, the Business Studies examination papers achieved an appropriate balance between structural consistency and substantive variation. This balance aligns with the principles of content and construct validity and ensures that the examinations fulfil their intended high-stakes purpose without compromising fairness or the breadth of curriculum coverage. The findings indicate that the Business Studies examination papers administered in 2022, 2023, and 2024 did not exhibit evidence of predictability.