



CARIBBEAN
EXAMINATIONS
COUNCIL

Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate®

Business Cognate School-Based Assessment Research Guidelines



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PREAMBLE

The School-Based Assessment (SBA) is an integral part of student assessment in the course covered in our syllabuses. It is intended to assist students in acquiring certain knowledge, skills and attitudes that are associated with the subjects. The activities for the School-Based Assessment are linked to the syllabuses and should form part of the learning activities to enable the student to achieve the objectives.

This document seeks to guide users in their attempt to satisfy the requirements for the SBA. It provides examples which were generated by participants in Teacher Orientation Workshops conducted by the Caribbean Examinations Council in May – June 2017 across the Region in collaboration with the Ministries of Education.

The examples are therefore expected to be used **ONLY** as a guideline for the generation of contextually relevant ideas and are not to be replicated by candidates.

For further details on the School-Based Assessment, please refer to the **CSEC®** Principles of Accounts, **CSEC®** Principles of Business and the **CSEC®** Economics Syllabuses.

CONSIDERATIONS WHEN DOING THE SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT

When you select your area of study for the School-Based Assessment (SBA) you should be able to answer “Yes” to **AT LEAST ONE** of the following:

Will it help me academically so that I can matriculate to further studies and pursue a career in the field?

Will it help me to find a job when I complete the course of study?

Can it help me to become an entrepreneur providing a good or service?

For your SBA you are encouraged to:

1. study/research areas of interest to you;
2. study/research manageable and meaningful components of the topic; and,
3. study/research areas that are affecting or likely to affect you, your home, school, community and/or country.



GENERAL SUGGESTIONS FOR SELECTION OF AREA(S) FOR RESEARCH

Teachers and students are at liberty to study/research any topic that is in the syllabus. The following ideas may be used to guide your choice:

1. Look around your home, school and community:
 - (a) and identify existing large or small businesses, and entrepreneurs. These may be successful or unsuccessful. Carry out an initial review of these to see if there are aspects that would lend themselves to research in which you may apply the concepts and principles that are found in the syllabus(es) you are studying, and make some recommendations for improvement or sustainability;
 - (b) to identify existing factors such as changing demographics, new technologies, social changes, and socioeconomics issues such as unemployment. All your other subjects and lessons such as Agricultural Science, Geography, Home Economics, Industrial Technology, Information Technology, Music, Physical Education, Science, Social Studies, and Visual Arts could help with your initial review of the situation. Examine the extent to which there are potential entrepreneurial opportunities. Use these observations as the basis of your research project with a view to recommending or planning the start-up of a business venture.
2. Follow the news via print or electronic media to see what is current on the local and international levels. Analyse the information being shared with a view to identifying aspects that are included in the syllabus(es) that you are studying. Where the issues being presented in the news may be occurring at the international level, or concern other countries, try to identify how this may impact your local situation and focus on that. Select manageable components and portions which will allow you to conduct a genuine and meaningful research and collect useful data.
3. While out on fieldtrips, assess the environment for breaches of the environmental laws and/or standards outlined in the syllabus(es) that you are studying. Use this information to guide the research problem on which you will focus with a view to recommending or developing creative and innovative solutions.
4. Discuss your interests with your teacher and get approval before embarking on your research.

THE RESEARCH REPORT

Table of Contents

The main headings in this document are listed using style and format appropriate for presenting a research paper.

For an example of a table of contents please see published books and other relevant documents.

Topic/Issue/Problem

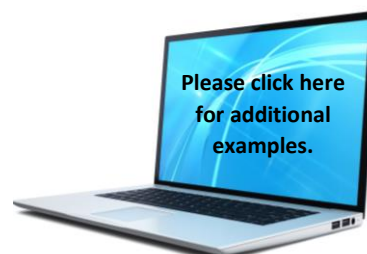
The exact topic/issue/problem on which the research will focus after preliminary review and observation of the 'bigger picture' is done.

- The component(s) or aspect(s) to be studied must be clearly and precisely stated.
- Once the exact topic/issue/problem is clear and precise, it is easy to state the Objective(s) of the Research.
- The details are reserved for the **Background/Overview** which comes later.

N.B. Get permission before using personal information, such as names, in a way that may 'harm' participants (research ethics). Different organisations have regulations that the candidate should verify before starting the research. These regulations must be adhered to at ALL times.

Examples:

- An assessment of the impact of imported peanuts on Mr Thomson's business.
- A study of the extent to which production cost at Zebra Company affects profitability.
- An investigation into the factors which contribute to the decline in the sale of soap in Farm Fresh supermarket.
- An investigation of the impact of the supply chain used by Bird Island Grocery Store.
- A study of the impact of the supply chain on the profitability of Apple Valley High School Cafeteria.





Objectives

The specific purpose and focus of the research project, and therefore what the instruments, activities and report will cover.

These must be:

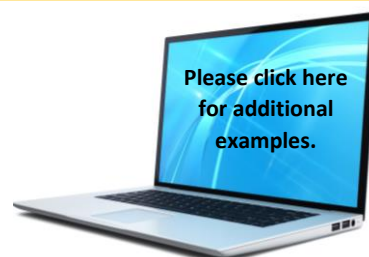
1. directly linked to the stated topic/issue/problem; and,
2. realistic/doable especially within the timeframe and requirements of the **CSEC®** level.

(Maximum 1,000 words for report)

**N.B. The Objective is NOT to satisfy the requirements of CXC® for the SBA.
It should be *to gather meaningful data and solve a problem.***

Examples:

- To identify the strengths and weaknesses of XYZ business.
- To describe how imported peanuts have affected sales at XYZ business.
- Identify how to restore XYZ business to profitability.
- To find out the source of capital available to young entrepreneurs in St Kitts.
- To identify the challenges associated with acquiring capital during a recession.





Background/Overview

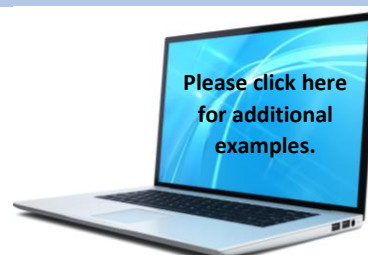
A description of the 'bigger picture' in which the topic/issue/problem falls. This includes but is not restricted to the history, development, socio-economic and environmental settings.

The establishment of the need or justification for conducting the research such as:

1. Why/how is the topic/issue/problem important to the student.
2. The impact of the topic/issue/problem on society.

Examples:

- The local Health Department has reported an increase in cases such as Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, deterioration in sight, poor circulation, and pain in the neck, shoulder, and back. The data suggests that many of the patients who present with these symptoms work in offices and business related environments.
- According to the Statistical Department of Antigua and Barbuda, 48 per cent of all taxi drivers experienced seasonal unemployment in 2016. This is a situation which can have significant implications for the well-being of their families as well as for the socio-economic climate of the country. Besides, this is a Caribbean phenomenon where many territories depend on the Tourist industry for a large part of their revenue.



Methodology

How the research was conducted.

- This includes sample, data collection instruments, and the strategies used to collect, present and analyse data during the research as well as in the report.
- These must be clearly described.
- They must be justified based on the nature and purpose of the research.
- Data presentation and analysis strategies must be related to and appropriate for the field of study and research. Ensure that you are au fait with the style and jargon of the discipline.
- The findings that are presented must be consistent with the analyses.
- Any limitations encountered **MUST** be clearly outlined. These may have significant implications for the validity of the research, and subsequently the reliability of the results and the credibility of the resulting conclusions and recommendations.

Examples:

Sample:

A community, business, office, sole trader, group of workers, product, service, an industry.

Data Collection Strategies:

Surveys, interviews, examination of documents, observation, focus group meetings.

Data Collection Instruments:

Questionnaire, Interview schedule, observation schedule, checklist.

Type of Data:

Quantitative and or Qualitative: Artefacts, records, financial statements.

Method of Presentation:

Tables, graphs.

Methods of Analysis:

Simple statistics such as Mean, Median and Mode, as well as relevant calculations using relevant formulae. The presentation and discussions must reflect knowledge of the style and jargon of the discipline.

Limitations:

Failure to access all relevant records from an organisation due to confidentiality issues.

Inaccurate records.

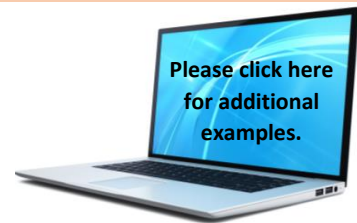
Conclusion

A restatement and summary of your findings to say what they mean in relation to the stated Research Objective(s).

- Must be logical and based on the findings.
- **DO NOT** be tempted to draw biased conclusions to suit what you thought was in the field. Use the data that you gathered.

Examples:

From our findings it is evident that the benefits derived from shopping online heavily outweigh those gained from shopping locally. As such, we conclude that it is indeed more economical to engage in e-commerce.



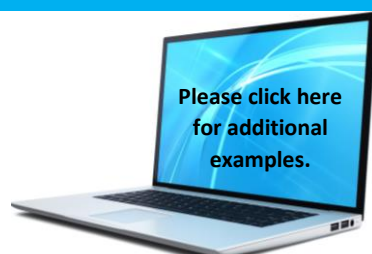
Recommendations

Your informed research-based advice given to the reader and the user of the research results. It includes:

- (a) **action that should/could be taken based on the research findings; and,**
 - (b) **suggestions for further research to focus on aspects of the issue not covered in your research, or to use a different or larger sample to gather additional data to support decisions that may need to be taken.**
- These must be realistic and informed by the findings.
 - They should contribute to a better understanding of the topic/issue/problem, or provide a creative/innovative solution to a problem.

Examples:

- Young entrepreneurs should do a thorough research of various sources of funding available for the type of business in which they are interested.
- Entrepreneurs should always weigh the advantages and disadvantages of different sources of funding.
- Local business owners should revise their current prices in order to increase sales and combat the threat of e-commerce.



References and Appendices

List of ALL resources used in the research. This includes primary and secondary resources, as well as electronic documents and links.

N.B. Appendices should be used to include artefacts as necessary to add to the credibility and academic quality of the Report.

Overall Presentations

- Use of language.
- Use of technology to achieve the **style and format appropriate for presenting a research paper.**

Appendix

Please see below for more examples to assist you in completing the Research Report.

Topic/Issue/ Problem

- An investigation into the impact of the use of ICT Tools and equipment to enhance efficiency at the workplace.
- To investigate how the relocation of Mr Brown's craft shop has affected his performance.
- The impact of increasing petrol prices on the small businesses in my community.
- To investigate the poor quality of food available at the San San Community College Cafeteria: cause and effect.
- An investigation into the cost effective methods of the movement of goods from Trinidad to Tobago.
- The benefits that government offers to small businesses in my community.
- To investigate the percentage of students who prefer not to purchase food at the Masters Food Court on the Riversdale School campus and their reasons.
- A study of how bad record keeping practices affect street vendors in the tourist zone of Long Beach.
- The effectiveness of implementing a point of sale system at a school cafeteria: a case study.
- An investigation into ways in which ICT affects what people do at home, school and the work environment.
- The role that government plays in the establishment of small business in my country.
- The impact of increasing petrol prices on the taxi operators in the community of Seaside.
- The impact of unemployment in my community.
- An investigation into the major factors that impact seasonal unemployment among taxi drivers at Port Sealey between May and August each year.
- A study of the impact of the requirements of lending institutions on the success of young entrepreneurs in Mt Piton.
- A study of the feasibility of offering a courier service to my community.
- An investigation to determine how the employed marketing strategy affects the demand for banana bread at Lue's Bakery.
- An investigation into whether or not it is economical to purchase clothing through e-commerce rather than purchasing locally in Antigua.
- A study of the extent to which having school fetes meets its objective as a major revenue earner for a particular school.
- How does the availability of resources affect production on the school farm.
- An investigation into the reasons why students prefer to purchase lunch from outside vendors as opposed to the school's cafeteria.
- A study of the extent to which the inventory controls system at Portside Shoe Factory is used effectively within the context of production and sales.
- A study of the feasibility of offering a telephone service to my schoolmates.

Objectives

- To identify the various costs associated with production at Campbell's Manufacturing Ltd.
- To outline how the various costs affect a firm's profit or loss.
- To identify the effects of relocation on a business.
- To identify the extent to which inflation affects standard of living in a community.
- To explain why some persons cannot find employment throughout the year.
- To explain why the prices of some goods are higher in my community as compared with those in the capital.
- To identify the provisions made by the companies in my parish to maintain health and safety standards of the employees.
- To gather data to facilitate the start-up of a business to provide affordable and nutritious meals for students in Apple Valley High School.
- To gather data to facilitate the start-up of a company to deliver goods in a cost effective and timely manner to businesses in my community.
- To determine the extent to which the flyers distributed by Rennie's Supermarket influence what customers purchase.
- To determine the most appropriate marketing strategies for fish cakes.
- To determine the effectiveness of the marketing strategies used by the Apple Valley School cafeteria.
- To find out the benefits of shopping online.
- To determine if e-commerce is a threat to local businesses in my parish.
- To assess financial performance of fundraising activities by the Drama Club over the last four years.
- To identify the best method of generating revenue for the Youth Club in my community.
- To determine the good/service provided by Plants Unlimited which has the least opportunity cost.
- To determine how much resources are needed by the school farm to produce at optimum level.
- To determine the factors that influence choice among the shoppers at Bobby's Grocery Store.

**Background/
Overview**

- The community of Priestman's Valley was badly flooded last year due to the inappropriate disposal practices of that and other surrounding communities. Several plastic bottles were dumped all over the communities and when the rains started, all the drains and the river overflowed destroying the homes and farms of the occupants. This caused a severe setback for everyone and the government is trying to find ways of mitigating this. One proposal is incentives for manufacturing companies which implement different and innovative ways to package their products in order to reduce the quantity of plastic containers that consumers have to dispose of.
- The local school has seen an increase in the number of students who present with signs and symptoms of obesity. The school nurse has also had to rush a number of students to the local hospital after they fall ill in the classroom. Preliminary investigations reveal that a number of these students tend to take 'junk food' to school and also do not purchase lunch in the school cafeteria where only balanced and nutritious meals are served.
- Street vendors have been seen all around our neighbourhood selling for years. They form a part of the informal economy and contribute to the economic activities in the areas. Some have been successful, while others are barely surviving even though they have families for which they have to care. They also complain of challenges they face since they do not have evidence of contributing to the formal systems such as income tax, health insurance, and other social security schemes.
- The school cafeteria has been reporting losses over the last six months, even though they serve the same number of lunches each day and have even increased prices in some cases. The cafeteria uses the traditional system where cashiers manually conduct the financial transactions with the students, and then reconcile sales accounts and cash sales books with the school's accountant. However, this activity is not only time-consuming but could lead to a high level of inaccuracy which might have been contributing to the lack of profitability in the cafeteria. The use of a point-of-sales system can improve record keeping. This can benefit not only the owner of the cafeteria, but also the students as it will lead to improved customer service, for example, saving time.
- Mr Thomson has planted peanuts for a living for more than 20 years and has employed several persons in Southland. He sells his peanuts around the island and has been a very successful businessman. Recently there has been an influx of imported peanuts on the market at a cheaper rate than that offered by Mr Thomson. This could create a glut which could affect his business.
- According to Ms Warren, the Cafeteria Manager of Commissary High School, on a daily basis banana bread is a highly demanded item on the menu; and by 10:00 a.m. her stock is depleted.
- Over the years, fundraisers have been a major revenue earner for schools. The revenue is used to supplement government support to purchase supplies and even assist students as they pursue their education. It is not certain what assessment has been done from a business perspective to analyse the effectiveness of events such as Barbeques as a source of income, and whether or not such activities are worth the effort and time invested by school personnel. Besides, there are those who at times associate negativity with these activities as they overestimate the returns as well as doubt the true use to which the returns are put. There are also those who do not regard fund raising as the business of the school.
- The research becomes beneficial to society since it should help to provide a more stable supply of products, thus preventing shortage and leading to a spike in prices.

Conclusion

- There is no one marketing strategy that is appropriate for the marketing of banana bread.
- A review of the findings of the research suggests that while barbeques continue to be a major source of revenue for one school, the records of schools show that they lose from these events. All three schools recommend alternative events such as Walkathons and concerts.
- We can conclude from all the data collected that a change from the production of eggs to growing sweet potatoes can be done on a seasonal basis. During the Christmas season eggs were in higher demand while in Easter sweet potatoes were in a higher demand. It can also be concluded that both eggs and sweet potatoes can be produced by the school if there is an adjustment in the resources allotted to the Agricultural Science Department.
- An efficient use of the method of stock valuation was not in place due to the types of goods offered as well as the method of valuation used.
- The stock control between departments is inefficient since too many waste goods were found.

[Return to Topic](#)**Recommendations**

- Local business owners should add a website to their traditional brick and mortar establishments, so that consumers can shop comfortably from their own homes.
- Social platforms like Facebook and Instagram can be effectively employed to raise awareness of the clothing offered by locals.
- Schools should engage in less stressful fundraisers which do not occupy so much instructional time, and which yield higher returns.
- Schools should make their financial statements available to stakeholders to facilitate increased stakeholder satisfaction and opportunities for income generation through low stress activities.
- Institutions should implement more effective marketing strategies to reach the full target market and thus increase the possibility of more revenue.
- During the peak season for each product, more resources should be allocated to the production of that product.
- The Apple Valley High School should explore the possibility of establishing overseas markets, in the case there is a surplus of fruits produced by the school farm.
- Jack's Enterprise should arrange for better collaboration between departments in order for a better movement of stock.
- Terry's Department Store should employ a different method of stock valuation. LIFO is not working, so FIFO should be implemented to avoid goods from becoming obsolete.

[Return to Topic](#)

