

Proposed GCE AS and A Level Subject Content for Business

The criteria

Introduction

AS and A level subject criteria set out the knowledge, understanding, skills and assessment objectives common to all AS and A level specifications in a given subject. They provide the framework within which the awarding organisation creates the detail of the specification.

Aims and objectives

1. AS and A level specifications in Business must encourage learners to:
 - develop an enthusiasm for studying business;
 - gain an holistic understanding of business in a range of contexts;
 - develop a critical understanding of organisations and their ability to meet society's needs and wants;
 - understand that business behaviour can be studied from a range of perspectives;
 - generate enterprising and creative approaches to business opportunities, problems and issues;
 - be aware of the ethical dilemmas and responsibilities faced by organisations and individuals;
 - acquire a range of relevant business and generic skills, including decision making, problem solving, the challenging of assumptions and critical analysis; and
 - apply numerical skills in a range of business contexts.

Subject content

2. Previous study of business should not be a requirement.
3. The AS course must provide a free-standing, coherent course of study.
4. A level specifications must further develop higher-level skills and extend beyond AS in terms of breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding.
5. All content and assessment material included in A level specifications must represent a coherent whole and demonstrate clear and logical progression to further study and training.

6. Knowledge, understanding and skills set out in the AS and A level specifications must:

- enable learners to investigate different types and sizes of organisations in various business sectors and environments, drawing on local, national and global contexts, recognising that they face varying degrees of competition;
- enable learners to:
 - identify business opportunities and problems;
 - investigate, analyse and evaluate business opportunities and problems;
 - apply numerical skills, including those indicated in the annex; and
 - make justifiable decisions using both qualitative methods and quantitative methods including those indicated in the annex.
- promote a holistic understanding of business and enterprise.

7. In addition, A level specifications must require learners to:

- apply basic business concepts to a wider range of contexts;
- understand and apply more sophisticated concepts and techniques;
- analyse, interpret and evaluate more complex business information; and
- take a more strategic view of business opportunities, problems and issues.

8. All AS specifications must cover the following core knowledge, understanding and skills. This core must constitute 60-per cent of the AS specification content.

The following areas of study must be applied through a range of types and sizes of business organisations in different contexts.

Area of study	Amplification
External influences	The market Competition
Marketing	Identifying and anticipating customer needs Marketing mix Product life cycle
Accounting and finance	Budgeting Cash-flow forecasting

	Break-even analysis Ratio analysis
People in organisations	Motivation Leadership Organisation design Employer/employee relationships
Operations management	Quality Productivity Added value

9. All A level specifications must cover the following core knowledge, understanding and skills. This core must constitute 60-per cent of the A level specification content.

The following areas of study must be applied through a range of types and sizes of business organisations in different contexts.

Area of study	Amplification
Business objectives and strategy	Different stakeholder and business objectives Strategy and implementation Risk and uncertainty
Marketing	Identifying and anticipating customer needs Marketing mix Product life cycle
Accounting and finance	Budgeting Cash-flow forecasting Break-even analysis Ratio analysis
People in organisations	Motivation Leadership

	<p>Organisation design</p> <p>Employer/employee relationships</p>
Operations management	<p>Quality</p> <p>Productivity</p> <p>Added value</p>
External influences	<p>The market</p> <p>Competition</p> <p>Global context</p> <p>Political, social, economic and technological factors</p> <p>Ethical, legal and environmental issues</p>
Business analysis	<p>Forecasting</p> <p>Data analysis</p> <p>Market analysis</p> <p>Decision making</p> <p>Measures of performance: financial and non-financial</p>
Change	<p>Causes and effects of change</p> <p>Managing change</p>

Annex: Quantitative Skills in Business

In order to be able to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding in Business, learners need to have acquired competence in the quantitative skills that are relevant to the subject content, including:

- calculate, use and understand ratios, averages and fractions;
- calculate, use and understand percentages and percentage changes;
- construct and interpret a range of standard graphical forms;
- interpret index numbers;
- calculate cost, revenue, profit and break-even;
- calculate investment appraisal outcomes and interpret result(s)*;
- interpret values of price and income elasticity of demand;
- use and interpret quantitative and non-quantitative information in order to make decisions; and
- interpret, apply and analyse information in written, graphical and numerical forms.

The assessment of quantitative skills represents a minimum of 10% of the overall AS marks.

The assessment of quantitative skills represents a minimum of 10% of the overall A level marks.

These quantitative skills may be assessed across the assessment objectives.

** as this skill does not form part of the AS core content, it may still be assessed at AS but it must be assessed at A Level..*