



## GCE AS and A level subject content for business

### Introduction

1. AS and A level subject content sets out the knowledge, understanding and skills common to all AS and A level specifications in business.

### Aims and objectives

2. AS and A level specifications in business must encourage students 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
  - apply numerical skills in a range of business contexts

### Subject content

3. Previous study of business should not be a requirement.
4. The AS course must provide a free-standing, coherent course of study.
5. A level specifications must further develop higher-level skills and extend beyond AS in terms of breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding.
6. 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.

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

- enable students to investigate different types and sizes of organisations in various business sectors and environments, with an awareness of local, national and global contexts, recognising that they face varying degrees of competition
- enable students to:
  - identify business opportunities and problems
  - investigate, analyse and evaluate business opportunities and problems
  - apply numerical skills, including those indicated in the Annex
  - make justifiable decisions using both qualitative methods and quantitative methods, including those indicated in the Annex
  - identify and understand how businesses adapt to operate successfully in a dynamic business environment
- promote an holistic understanding of business and enterprise

8. In addition, A level specifications must require students 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
- take a more strategic view of business opportunities, problems and issues

9. All AS specifications must cover the following core knowledge, understanding and skills. This core must constitute 60% 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The market</li><li>• Competition</li></ul>
Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identifying and anticipating customer needs</li><li>• Marketing mix</li><li>• Product life cycle</li></ul>
Accounting and finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Budgeting</li><li>• Cash-flow forecasting</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Break-even analysis</li> <li>• Ratio analysis</li> </ul>
People in organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motivation</li> <li>• Leadership</li> <li>• Organisation design</li> <li>• Employer/employee relationships</li> </ul>
Operations management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality</li> <li>• Productivity</li> <li>• Added value</li> </ul>

10. All A level specifications must cover the following core knowledge, understanding and skills. This core must constitute 60% 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different stakeholder and business objectives</li> <li>• Strategy and implementation</li> <li>• Risk and uncertainty</li> </ul>
Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying and anticipating customer needs</li> <li>• Marketing mix</li> <li>• Product life cycle</li> </ul>
Accounting and finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budgeting</li> <li>• Cash-flow forecasting</li> <li>• Break-even analysis</li> <li>• Ratio analysis</li> </ul>
People in organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motivation</li> <li>• Leadership</li> <li>• Organisation design</li> <li>• Employer/employee relationships</li> </ul>

Operations management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality</li> <li>• Productivity</li> <li>• Added value</li> </ul>
External influences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The market</li> <li>• Competition</li> <li>• Global context</li> <li>• Political, social, economic and technological factors</li> <li>• Ethical, legal and environmental issues</li> </ul>
Business analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forecasting</li> <li>• Data analysis</li> <li>• Market analysis</li> <li>• Decision making</li> <li>• Measures of performance: financial and non-financial</li> </ul>
Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Causes and effects of change</li> <li>• Managing change</li> </ul>

## Annex: quantitative skills in business

In order to be able to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding in business, students need to have acquired competence in the quantitative skills that are relevant to the subject content and which are applied in the context of a business A level, 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 results
- **interpret values of price and income elasticity of demand**
- **use and interpret quantitative and non-quantitative information in order to make decisions**
- **interpret, apply and analyse information in written, graphical and numerical forms**

Quantitative skills not in bold do not form part of the AS core content requirement; however, an awarding organisation may include them in their AS specifications.

The assessment of quantitative skills will include at least level 2 mathematical skills as a minimum of 10% of the overall AS marks and as a minimum of 10% of the overall A level marks.

These quantitative skills may be assessed across the assessment objectives.