



Course Report 2016

Subject	Business Management
Level	Advanced Higher

The statistics used in this report have been compiled before the completion of any Post Results Services.

This report provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers, lecturers and assessors in their preparation of candidates for future assessment. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding. It would be helpful to read this report in conjunction with the published assessment documents and marking instructions.

Section 1: Comments on the assessment

Summary of the Course assessment

Candidate performance in the question paper was as expected. A number of candidates did very well. This is encouraging given that this is the first year of the new Advanced Higher, and the fact that all questions in the paper are now mandatory.

The number of candidates gaining a No Award is lower than in the previous Advanced Higher. This shows that candidates are aware of what is expected of them at this level.

Centres are to be commended for the hard work in preparing candidates.

Candidates performed better in the project than in the question paper.

Component 1: Question paper

The question paper is worth 80 marks and is divided into two sections: the case study and essay questions. Candidates can be examined in any area of the course content. All questions are mandatory.

In the case study, all questions/answers draw on its content. It is designed to be accessible for all candidates. In this section candidates can be awarded a restricted number of general marks for displaying knowledge of the course content. The case study proved to be very accessible for candidates and they were able to extract relevant information from it to answer each question.

The essay questions are more topic-specific, inviting responses of increased depth. Some of the essay questions are relatively wide to allow less able candidates to display knowledge. The majority of candidates attempted all questions.

Section two also includes questions of a narrower nature. These questions are more demanding and discriminatory, allowing stronger candidates access to the more difficult marks.

Component 2: Project

The project has a greater emphasis on the application of skills. Candidates have a free choice of topic (which allows for personalisation and choice), but it must be drawn from published course content, and linked to organisations which the candidate must research.

Candidates were able to display their knowledge and understanding of the course content in the context of a business topic and the chosen organisations.

This component allowed candidates to apply higher-order cognitive skills such as analysis and evaluation and, on the whole, many candidates did this well.

Section 2: Comments on candidate performance

Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1: Question paper

Section 1 – Case study

Candidates found the case study to be accessible and showed that they understood the business model. Candidates were able to extract relevant information from it to answer each question. As a result, very few general marks were awarded for this section.

Question 1: This was well attempted and most candidates scored highly.

Question 2: This question was well attempted, with many candidates managing to score full marks. Force field diagrams were accurately drawn with arrows of varying lengths pointing in the right direction or drivers and resistors weighted by numbers. Many candidates were able to relate their analysis of each point to what they showed in their diagram, eg relating the length of the arrow to the strength of the driver or resister.

Question 4: This was well done — candidates could give any impact on any stakeholder or Sky itself.

Question 5: This was generally well attempted with many candidates achieving 4 out of 6 marks.

Section 2 – Essays

Question 7: Candidates who clearly knew about the Classical School of Management scored well, with more than half achieving over half marks. Many candidates scored full description marks. Candidates provided some good examples of where the Classical School of Management is relevant today.

Question 9 (a): This was very well attempted with more than half of candidates achieving full marks.

Question 9 (b): This was also well attempted with around a third of candidates achieving full marks.

Component 2: Project

Introduction: Almost half of candidates achieved full marks for this section.

- ◆ Analysis and Evaluation: Candidates who referenced and evidenced their findings and who explained the impact of the aim of their project were able to gain many marks. Several candidates were able to gain full marks.
- ◆ Research: Many candidates used at least three significant research sources that were up-to-date and relevant to gain high marks for this section.

- ◆ Structure and referencing: This section was well done with the majority of candidates achieving 4 or more marks.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1: Question paper

Section 1 – Case study

There were few problems with the questions in this section. Candidates engaged with the organisation in the case study and made effective use of the material to produce well-constructed answers.

Question 2: Some candidates did find it difficult to differentiate between assets for change and drivers. Several candidates were unable to accurately name the headings in the diagram, eg drivers and resistors.

Question 3: Although generally well attempted, some candidates mixed up the revenue items and thought they were costs — advertising revenue. Some misinterpreted Dividends as Share Price.

Question 6: Most candidates achieved half marks for this question. However, many candidates wrote about the impact on Sky of training staff, such as reducing costs, and these points received no marks. This question was related to the ways the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) could develop the workforce, and candidates needed to refer to this.

Section 2 – Essays

Question 8 (a): Some candidates struggled to identify the aims of ASEAN, and many answered the question in relation to the impact of ASEAN on UK organisations. Several candidates talked about China when answering this question and not specifically ASEAN alone. This is a new topic area in the course and is identified in the Course Assessment Specification.

Question 8 (b): Many candidates based their answers around the general reasons for growth in multinational companies instead of the reasons that have allowed Chinese companies to grow.

Question 10 (a): This was fairly well attempted, although candidates rarely separated their answers into different activities, eg recruitment and selection etc.

Question 10 (b): This question was generally not well done. Candidates who did achieve high marks often used examples in their answers and this worked well as it helped them to describe exactly what they meant.

Component 2: Project

Introduction: Some candidates chose a Higher topic, or one that is not part of the course, eg motivation, PESTEC/external factors and leadership style theory. Candidates must ensure

that the topic they choose is in the course specification. In future, a very limited number of marks will be awarded in such cases.

Analysis and evaluation: Several candidates did not answer the aim of their project. Candidates must ensure they do this or they will not gain the analysis and evaluation marks.

A few candidates had two separate topics in their project, eg CSR on employees and growth of production in China. In this case, candidates will only achieve marks for one aim/topic, not several aims.

Candidates should be aware that the project is not just a general essay on a topic on the course. For example, a title such as 'Evaluating the impact of the UK exiting the EU' is not an appropriate title as it does not look at the impact on a particular industry or an organisation.

Some candidates struggled to understand the definition of corporate social responsibility and talked about general staff training or organisations following legislation. This was not sufficient to gain marks.

Conclusions and recommendations: Some candidates struggled to gain conclusion marks, and several introduced new points in this section, which meant they could not gain marks.

Research: Several candidates described what methods of research they had used in their project which is not required and gains no marks.

Structure and referencing: Several candidates referred to research they had undertaken, but did not put this in footnotes with details of the research.

Section 3: Advice for the preparation of future candidates

Component 1: Question paper

Section 1 – Case study

Centres should continue to encourage candidates to source all their answers to the questions from the given case study.

Candidates should be able to correctly identify all headings in the force field diagram to gain all four marks for this and should be encouraged to display these on the diagram.

Section 2 – Essays

Candidates should not write about ASEAN and China under the same heading if only one is being asked about in the question.

Candidates need to be aware that they can gain development marks for using real life examples of points they are making in the essay questions, and should be encouraged to do so.

Component 2: Project

Introduction: There is no need for analysis in this section.

Candidates must ensure they choose a topic from the course specification to gain marks in future.

The title or aim of the project should be succinct, and candidates should be encouraged to fulfil the aim of the project, eg if the candidate is aiming to examine the impact of something then they must ensure they describe the impact on the organisation. Candidates should be careful to remain focused on their aim or the question posed.

Candidates should be encouraged to choose their own topic and organisation.

Analysis and evaluation: When evaluating, candidates should be encouraged to give some level of scale not just 'huge impact' etc. An analysis point should provide a consequence or a positive or negative impact, whereas the evaluation should describe the degree of the impact.

Conclusions and recommendations: When making conclusions, the option chosen must be taken from the analysis and evaluation section. It should not be a new point. Candidates can describe why the option they have chosen is better than the alternative.

All findings must be referenced. No marks will be awarded to points made with no referencing or research.

Candidates should be undertaking their own research, not sharing the results of surveys with other candidates.

Research: Candidates should be reminded that research marks are awarded from evidence throughout the project, eg how many sources can be seen to have been used; are they relevant etc.

Candidates should be encouraged to show the currency of websites they have used and to show the date the article was written in the bibliography.

The use of end notes and in text citations should be discouraged and the use of footnotes encouraged, with a bibliography at the end. Candidates should include a proper bibliography and not just a copy of the footnotes.

If using an interview, candidates should show a transcript of the interview in the appendices.

If using a survey, candidates should show the results of the survey.

Graphs to show the results of surveys can be shown in the body of the project.

Structure and referencing: No marks will be awarded for a logo. For the mark to be awarded it must be a diagram or chart or relevant image connected to the analysis and evaluation; it

must add value. The diagram or chart or relevant image can be in the appendices as long as the appendix is referenced.

Appendices need to be clearly numbered. The bibliography does not count as one of the four allowed appendices.

Candidates should ensure consistent font in a minimum size of 11 point and one and a half line spacing.

Grade Boundary and Statistical information:

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2015	0
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Number of resulted entries in 2016	363
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Statistical information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of Course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of Course awards	%	Cum. %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark -				
A	25.9%	25.9%	94	84
B	27.8%	53.7%	101	72
C	25.6%	79.3%	93	60
D	7.7%	87.1%	28	54
No award	12.9%	-	47	0

General commentary on grade boundaries

- ◆ While SQA aims to set examinations and create marking instructions which will allow a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional C boundary) and a well prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70% of the available marks (the notional A boundary), it is very challenging to get the standard on target every year, in every subject at every level.
- ◆ Each year, SQA therefore holds a grade boundary meeting for each subject at each level where it brings together all the information available (statistical and judgemental). The Principal Assessor and SQA Qualifications Manager meet with the relevant SQA Business Manager and Statistician to discuss the evidence and make decisions. The meetings are chaired by members of the management team at SQA.
- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the exam is more challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.
- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the exam is less challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.
- ◆ Where standards are comparable to previous years, similar grade boundaries are maintained.
- ◆ An exam paper at a particular level in a subject in one year tends to have a marginally different set of grade boundaries from exam papers in that subject at that level in other years. This is because the particular questions, and the mix of questions, are different. This is also the case for exams set in centres. If SQA has already altered a boundary in a particular year in, say, Higher Chemistry, this does not mean that centres should necessarily alter boundaries in their prelim exam in Higher Chemistry. The two are not that closely related, as they do not contain identical questions.
- ◆ SQA's main aim is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and all levels and maintain comparable standards across the years, even as arrangements evolve and change.